

„Pashto Poetry & Environmental Crisis in Swat: Understanding & Preserving the Ecosystem through Poetry“

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Abstract:

For last 2 decades Swat has witnessed changes in almost every aspect of culture, space, and ecology. Among these changes, the environmental crisis remains a major issue addressed by different media outlets and academic and nonacademic organizations. Along with popular narratives and discourses the poets also have their take on the environmental crisis of Swat though mostly ignored in research of cultural and environmental studies. This paper aims to investigate themes of Pashto poetry in context with the environmental crisis. The main purpose

of this paper is to investigate how Pashto poetry is situating the environmental crisis of Swat and how poetry works for the preservation of the environment. Findings are based on published sources of poetry, interviews, and informal discussions by using the vignette method for collection of data. The framework of social poetics is used to theorize the environmental crisis and how poets take on the crises. The findings suggest that the poetic expressions point out development and militancy as instruments of environmental crisis in Swat.

The paper further argues that different objects and elements in flora and fauna are romanticized and instrumentalized as symbols of beauty and love in Pashto poetry which works in the preservation of the ecological system of Swat. Moreover, poetry also produces themes of peace, condemnation of violence and unplanned development, resilience and hope to heal the wounded ecology of Swat.

Introduction

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), the district of Swat has unique status due to its rich ecological, cultural, and archaeological heritage. These reasons made Swat the focus of the national and international academia for many decades (Lindholm, 1982; Barth, 1982; Grima, 1998). However, later developments caught Swat in news bulletins and academia due to militancy, military operations, and natural disasters. It remained a hub of militants since 9/11 and counter militancy operations. Militancy and military operations caused huge dispossession and displacement of people from Swat.

Dispossession and vacation of Swat was made to launch military operations against militants' hideouts and positions. Moreover, Swat has also witnessed an increase in development in the last two decades where the towns turned to concrete areas, infrastructure was developed by government and locals (Shah, 2020). Militancy and development changed Swat's landscape, ecology, and culture.

The two developments brought an increase in humanitarian crisis and natural disaster. Every aspect of life has been altered by militancy, military operations and development (Hussain K. , 2013), (Shah, 2020). Among other, the issue of environmental crisis remained focus of print and electronic media as well as in public debates because of dying and drying up natural water streams, deforestations due to cutting and forest fires, mining for crushing plants and gemstones (Hussain H. , 2022). In recent weeks, the issue of forest

fires in Swat raises many questions both in public and relevant stake holders. A debate was started among people on social and electronic media as well as in private and public spaces about the reasons of fires and strategies to overcome natural calamities (Bacha , Muhammad , Zeyneb, & Muhammad, 2021). Furthermore, government and nongovernmental departments and organizations, academicians, and local activists are working on different aspects of the environmental crisis i.e., natural disasters, reasons of environmental crisis and strategies to overcome the environmental crisis in Swat (District Swat: Disaster Response Plan, 2022), (Bacha , Muhammad , Zeyneb, & Muhammad, 2021) though very little effort has been made to cover the cultural take of the environmental crisis of Swat. This paper is an effort to investigate voices of Pakhtun poets addressing the environmental crisis. The paper is designed in a way to investigate and document how Pashto poetry is addressing the issue of environmental crisis in Swat, and the main purpose of the paper is to analyze themes of Pashto poetry focusing on the preservation of the wounded ecology of Swat?

Methodology and Analytical Framework

The tools and techniques of qualitative research have been used for collecting and analyzing of data for the present research. In the first stage, a data log was prepared from published sources to identify relevant stanzas of poetry which discuss forests, trees, and used as similes (Metaphors) of plants in poetry to sensitize the

readers and people about the importance of ecology and natural landscape.

For enriching the data some of oral poetry was collected during fieldwork. Oral poetry and oral traditions were collected through 15 in-depth interviews, 10 informal discussions and 4 focus group discussions. A vignette method was used for deciphering poetry and collecting narratives of poets, audience, and experts on specific poetry couplets (Rhidian & Meg, 2012). After collection of published materials, interviews, informal discussions and focus group discussions, the data was proceeded and transformed step by step by implying acerotes, references, codes, refined codes, keywords, and basic themes. By step wise process patterns and classifications were discovered. Frequent and most occurred codes and basic themes in data helped in developing core themes.

The study was conducted in Swat, KP. Selection of Swat for study was ideal because Swat has beautiful natural landscape, forests, development, gemstones, agriculture for last 2 decades, and an engrafted militancy area. For last few years, Swat has been going through environmental crises and different government and non-government organizations are working for the preservation of natural environment. The Swat district also had a rich literary history which gave birth to many of poets who wrote poems on different themes.

We have used a theoretical framework “social poetics”. Social poetics combines different forms of art and practices to stimulate and bring collective awareness and wisdom for taking collective action (Nowak, 2020). Among other art forms and practices, writing and practicing poetry has a major contribution in bringing awareness among communities to struggle for different causes i.e., rights movements and ecological movements are example of it. *Jay Parini* in her book *Why Poetry Matters* discusses the interplay of poetry and politics with example from different cultures where poetry works in shaping alternatives to resist the violent and oppressive regimes and their dominant discourses (2008). Pashto poetry is no exception. Pashto poetry situates social issues of the society to work for the better future. In this way, Pakhtun poets situated the environmental crisis on one hand and use flora and fauna as symbols of beauty and love on the other hand. Moreover, Pakhtun poets use the

signification of flora and fauna as symbols of beauty and love to preserve the ecology.

Background of Environmental Crisis in Swat

The Swat District of the Malakand division is situated in the north of KP at 35° in north latitude and 72° and 30° east latitude (2022). Swat District in Malakand division has seen many vicissitudes in its political history. Before the arrival of the Pakhtun tribe Yousafzai, it was under the reign of the Darada Kings. In 11th century Swat came under the rule of the Ghaznavid Dynasty (though after Ghaznavid turned to India the area remained with the Darada Kngs (Torwali, 2016). In 16th century, Swat was occupied by the Yousafzai tribe and merged as a chiefly state from 1849 to 1926 and was recognized as a princely state by the British Indian government in 1926 and sustained its status of a princely state till its merger with Pakistan in 1969 (Rome, 2008).

After the US invasion of Afghanistan, Swat also engrafted into religiosity which in the later stage turned into a full fledged religious militancy. The wave of militancy in Pakistan in general in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has roots with the war in Afghanistan. After 2005, Taliban in Swat became strengthened and challenged the Writ of the State (Evans, 2011). In 2009, the government of KP had successful negotiations with militant Taliban and the government agreed to Taliban demands to announce and impose Sharia Law in Swat on the demand of the Taliban. The imposition of Shariah Law in Swat was result of an agreement between the Taliban and the government, but both parties did not adhere to agreement and the agreement could not last for long (Ali, 2013). After failure of compliance to articles of agreement, a full pledged military operation was carried out in Swat along with other adjacent areas of Malakand, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against militant Taliban. During the operation people of the area left their homes and moved as IDPs to districts of Peshawar Valley of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and to other provinces of Pakistan (2010). An 8 months military operation cleared the area of militants and people were resettled in their respective areas under strict clearance.

There are/were misconceptions about cutting of forests and it is said that before and during the

princely state the cutting of trees were strictly prohibited. However, in his book, *Sultan I Rome* negates these claims and has briefly discussed how the forests of Swat (lower and upper Swat, Kalam, and adjacent areas) were used by different people. After early occupation of Yousafzai and Mandanr tribes the Pakhtuns haven't invested in lands and forests due to *Sheikh Mali Daftar* where people were reallocated and changed every 5-10-15 years. While in the chiefly and princely states the Kaka'khel of Nowshehra used to cut the forests because of good relations with the Chief and then Walis of Swat (Sultan-I-Rome, 2016). After the merger the forests were still cut in one or another way by influencers¹.

The wave of militancy and military operations disturbed every aspect of life. Among others, the environmental crisis remains a big issue from the last few years. In the last 3 years, people of Swat witnessed fires in the forest, flooding, lowering of water table, changes in weathers and deforestation (Hussain H. , 2022). Militancy is one cause of the environmental crisis as both militancy and military operation played a vital role in deforestation and fires in the forest. Forests remain safe havens for militants, and provides them a shield against aerial gaze as well as their mobility from lower areas to the top of mountains. Furthermore, military operations and heavy gun fire also caused forest fires as local people recounted in their narratives during engulfing militancy.

Furthermore, the so-called development also played a destructive role in ecosystem of Swat. The development in Swat is more severe in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa than other districts. Most social scientists and experts on the area also relate the unplanned development in Swat with the war economy (Shah, 2020). Foreign remittances inflow plays major roles in the development of Swat,

as the remittances linked the local economy with inflow of international remittance, it created an increase in money circulation in the area. Peoples most favorite destination for investment is housing and property. Unplanned and unsocialized development made development a disaster of Swat. Natural forests and agricultural land are

cleared for building houses concrete and charcoaled roads. By cementing in open spaces of Swat, water is not absorbed soil, but it flows over the cemented spaces and causes floods in the area which further harmed the water table in the whole (Dawn, 2007). The ongoing project of Swat motorways is also destroying agricultural land and the locals are protesting time to time (Dawn, 2022). The spread of the population is another reason for destroying the agricultural land. Moreover, in past times there was no access to forests in high mountains and it wasn't possible for people to bring timbers from those forests situated at high altitudes. The development in the last two-three decades make it possible to cut even forests situated in high mountains (Sultan-I-Rome, 2022).

Natural Objects as Symbols of Beauty and Love

The relation of humans with their ecology is as old as the history of human civilization and have been depicted in culture and art (Salzman & Donald , 1998). In the context of Pashto poetry, the objects of ecology like trees, rivers, mountains, and birds remain symbols of beauty and love both in classical and contemporary poetry. The literary societies are named after objects of nature i.e., *Elum Adabi Tolana of Barikot* is named after a mountain called as *Elum*. Moreover, poets have pen names (pseudonym) after the objects of the ecology i.e., *Elum* (name of mountain crossing Bunir and Swat), *Ghar* (mountain) and *Daryab* (river). Poets also use objects of ecology as metaphors for their beloved ones i.e., *Sarwa* (cypress tree) and *chinar* (maple tree) for praising height of beloved. There are dozens of books of poetry and prose which are named to depict the ecology or its crisis i.e., *Pa Guldaro De Warawal Oorona* (You poured fire on banquets).

Along with modern forms of poetry, Pashto folksongs also signify flora and fauna i.e., *gudar* (bank of river from where water is pitched for daily use), *chinar* (maple tree), *cheena* (stream), *bagh* (orchard) and birds for different meanings. In these Pashto folksongs, pigeons are used as a symbol of peace and *gudar* as a symbol

¹ The wooden made houses and ceilings of houses, hujras and hotels made before and after the merger of Swat into Pakistan are examples of the illegal cutting of timbers. The same is discussed in *Sultan I Rome* book (2016).

turies old tradition in their writings and to preserve *gudar*, even if does not remain any more a center of socialization differently for both genders. In mountainous areas, the streams serve as *gudar* and are still used for pitching water, as a poet says:

يلک د هنيچ اد وناراي ورک هپت يچ ئخار
يبريک هُن هنيچ يډ هپ مه يسه هونديدي سوا

O friends! Let's sing about streams of our village

As there are no more love meetings on these streams (Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In this couplet the poet is asking his people to remember streams in poems as the days are gone where there were love meetings on these streams. In literal meaning the poet is remembering and romanticizing those gone days where there were love meetings and love stories on *gudar* and streams. Though, in conceptual meaning the poet is romanticizing *cheena* (stream) for purpose of preserving the ecology³.

Situating Environmental Crisis through Poetry

In the last few years, Swat has seen major changes which created an environmental crisis in Swat. The locals claim that the militancy and development among other reasons have major roles in the environmental crisis of Swat. Most of the local accounts also claim that militancy was a planned game to get hold of natural resources by hidden forces. Swat is home to mountains, forests, rivers, streams, wildlife and precious gemstones like emeralds. The locals claim that the conflict in Swat has disturbed the ecology of Swat. Talking about Swat and its causes of calamity a poet shared a couplet of *Abdur Rahim Roghani* (late) poetry, that is:

پرک نطو هپ يلب يېمل يم زامغ ريغ
يتسغ ران يچ، رتخن، يورس روا يېشکپ

The enemy has set my land aflame;
Every Sarwa, Nakhtar and Chinar is on fire
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

This couplet was quoted in a context where the poet was claiming that the conflict in Swat was a game for controlling the resources of Swat. He blames outsiders for the conflict of Swat which affected the natural beauty and resources of Swat. In the couplet the poet says that the outsiders have put fire to my land on fire where *Sarwi*, *Nakhtar* and *Chinar* had got fire. The poets not only blame the militancy as reason of war on resources but also links it to their poor-ness. Swat is rich of resources though our people work as laborers in different parts of the country and in other countries (Naaz Z. A., 2022). In the same line, a poet writes:

د لايخ يډ هت ونولال وا وناک نطو د امز
د لايخ يډ هت ونوسال يلاخ يلاخ يډ هرونومز

Do you see the stones and rubies of my land? /
And do you see our empty hands?
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In literal meaning the poet is talking about the richness of his land - that our land is rich with stones and gems though our people are out of money and with empty hands. Though in conceptual meaning that poet says that even though we have rich resources we don't have any rights to them. The poet further explained that in such a rich land our people go to Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirate, and other countries as laborers. Speaking of conflict days, another poet shared that, "Many times the forest in our village mountain gets fire in the night when there were shelling from Taliban or Military side" (Hayat, 2022). Speaking of incidents of fires a poet also quoted his couplet:

هډيسرو هت رغ يلك لپخ د يچ کواک کواک
هډيسرو هت رتخن يمخز وا وډي مش رانچ

Exhausted, as the mountains I reached, /
Chinars lay martyred and Nakhtars deeply injured. (Umeed, 2019)

In this couplet the poet says that when I reach the mountain of my village, I saw the trees were burnt. Speaking of the incidents of fires in the

³ Poetry of preservation is discussed in detail in the following pages under the heading of "Claiming and Preservation the Ecology".

forests the poet shared his story of burning trees in his village forest. The poet narrated that soon after months of military operation Swat was declared clear from militants and we (people of the area) came back to our villages. Late one evening, sounds of heavy firing and shelling were heard. Soon after exchange of fire and shelling, the forest of our nearby mountains caught fire. Due to tense situations, we couldn't visit our mountains at night though the next day in early morning, I, with my friends, visited the mountains and saw that the trees were burnt. It was very difficult to see the trees and plants of the forest burnt in the fire and I get refuge in those couplets I wrote about the situation that day (Umeed, 2022). Seeing situation of Swat another poet writes:

يږيک رگيځ ټپ يکيږځ امز متخوس هرې د
يږيک رغ ټپ اي مهمل ټپ يم فک ټپ يرهق

My grievous heart burns /

When I see my land and mountain stormed by
hails. (Sahir, 2017).

In this couplet the poet says that whenever I see rage hails on mountains and fields it makes my heart burnt. In conceptual meaning the rage hail depicts the situation which is causing environmental crisis in Swat. Speaking of the couplet a poet narrated, "We (poets) are sensitive people in society who always talk of the beauty of their land and have attachment with every object of the environment. Whenever the beauty of our land is harmed, it harms our feelings and emotions and so we write to explain the situation of environmental crisis and struggle to preserve the ecology". Discussing the environmental crisis and condemning the sponsors of violence, another poet shared his couplet while talking about the same incident:

يړکو يزد وغرم لوبو ردنس ټپ ات مهلاظ
ورک لب روا يدناب ونولگ ټپ وخ ات! مهلاظ
يپت ټپ يم د يو يلکيل ټپ مرنوم يچ هغه
ورک لب روا يدناب ونوران چ ټپ ردوگ د اچ

Cruel man, you have shot the melodious birds
And have set the flowers on fire;
The theme and rhyme our romantic songs,
The Chinar of Gudar, has been set on
fire.(Umeed, 2019).

In this couplet the poet is blaming those who started war in Pakhtun region and threatened flora and fauna of the region. Narrating the situation of forests and wildlife a poet stated; "We know who have started this ugly war in Swat and why". Moreover, the poet further argued that "The militants are sponsored by outsiders though Pakhtun are blamed for it". He further argued that "Swat has rich resources and the outsiders want to have hold of these resources" (Umeed, 2022). To him *gudar* also remained focus of the Pakhtuns and due to conflict, the elements of *gudar* i.e., trees were burnt. The conflict of Swat created an environmental crisis which has direct effects on mountains, forests, rivers, and wildlife. The poet also shared that, "A peaceful environment is not only the need of humans only but everything in nature needs peaceful environment" as he shared another couplet from his poetry:

يږيځ يروپ هنامسا هل ږرت تشحو د يچ يېم
يتاپېشک ران يچ ټپ هگنځ هياوخ هب ي غرم
يږيک

In terrible flames reaching up to the sky, /
How are birds going to survive in Chinars?
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In this couplet the poet says that when there are flames of fear and terror from trees till the sky then how it is possible for birds to reside in these trees. In conceptual meaning the poet is explaining and situating environmental crisis in Swat where trees were burnt, and the ecology became hostile for wildlife. The poet explained that, "Pashto poetry is among very few avenues where issues are discussed, and people recite in different places and spaces to alert people". Moreover, most times during the field work, locals have shown very keen interest in naming birds and animals who were once part of the ecology but now they are endangered or extinct. The poet also writes on the extinction of birds, as a poet writes:

مد يشوم اخ هيول هروخ يېشک نطو ټپ
متشن نچ يېشکپ ومغن د ولبلبل د

A grave silence has spread across my land:
The nightingales pipe not their notes.
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In this couplet the poet talks about the songs of nightingales which are missing in his land. Due to the situation, there is silence everywhere and the bird don't sing. Poets talk about every object of the ecology which had made it beautiful. The masses in general and the poets in particular relate the extinction of birds and animals with the environmental crisis of Swat (Rahman A. U., 2022). A healthy environment is needed for wildlife to inhabit, and these days Swat is facing an environmental crisis. This is the reason; wildlife is also disturbed. The poets don't talk about birds, trees, and plants only but also the cultural side of the environment. People do have attachment with different objects of the ecology and attached meanings to it. It is the reason poets' cry and express their feelings about the ecology in poetry, as a poet writes:

وش کيرش یدمغ یدابرب د نم چ د! لہلصف ے
یراکیش ہتار ہن یگمغ یوک یل یوسا مہ سوا اضف

O Fazal! The grief of the garden ruined you share
Has rendered the air sighing and sad
(Subhan, 2007).

In this couplet the poet writes that sharing my grief made the sky sigh from sadness. In conceptual meaning the couplet means that poets go through heavy grief while seeing the environmental crisis in their land. Through these poems poets on the one hand express their sad feelings while on the other hand sensitise and alert the masses about the environmental crisis (Rahman A. , 2022). Due to this environmental crisis the nature of *gudar* is also changed; girls are no longer going to *gudar* for collecting water and so there are no more love stories in *gudar*. This is the reasons a poet writes:

موشو مدوم مت ردوگ خرت ہب ےگنم یخار ہن سوا
مو ہن ہرمود ہکاوڑ وا دنوڑ د وخرد یم یتویپرپ

She no more visits the spring with a pitcher in hand,
My beloved had never been so tired of life.
(Ata, 2020).

In the literal meaning the poet laments about his beloved not coming to *gudar* anymore.

Though in conceptual meaning the poet depicts the situation which brought changes in life of Swat. For hundreds of years *gudar* remains the place of collecting water where lovers would see or meet each other. Development and militancy brought changes to the ecology where girls are no more collecting water from *gudar*. The poets also idealize and romanticize past times and call it “*zhwand*” (life) though modern-day life is not attracting girls to *gudar* for collecting water. It is the reason poets care for *gudar* and remember it in their poems and songs, as a poet writes:

لرک نارو ہنوردوگ وکلخ یچ ہم یئن ید ہب ہز
یخو و ہن یشامت د رگیزام یچ ہن یسہ وخ

I care not about the desolation of the *gudar*
But for the spectacle the afternoon no more.
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In this couplet the poet depicts his intimacy with *gudar* by saying that it is the place for seeing beloveds. The intimacy and attachment with *gudar* are forcing poets to write on *gudar* (Naaz Z. A., 2022). The poet also writes:

یہشکپ یروگ یردوگ یگنم تام د نامرا لپخ د
یخوگ ونوردوگ ہوش تام ہب مہ سوا یم ہرز تام

My broken heart seeks a desire in the debris of
pitchers
Haunting the springs ruined and desolated.
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

In literal meaning the poet says that he is searching for his broken wishes in ruined *gudar* though in conceptual meaning the poet is talking about situation of *gudar*. Speaking of the couplet the poet explained that “In the last two decades and specifically during and after the conflict of Swat a lot of changes came to our lands where girls are no more going to *gudar*. It is the reason we call *gudar* as ruined *gudar*. Through poetry we still remember *gudar* in our poems and it is because we have attachments in it (Naaz Z. A., 2022). Another respondent also shared that, “For us the modern lifestyle is not attracting us as it is full of tension and depression and so we write on the gone days and wish we could revive our old days”.

Preserving the Ecology through Poetry

Claiming and owning natural resources remain central theme of Pashto poetry from last four to five decades. Most of the poets, political leaders, and activists from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in general and from Swat in specifically relate the conflict of Swat with “rich resources of Swat”. Most of Pakhtun poets and activists claim that the capturing of resources is one major reason among some other which lead to the conflict in Swat (Naz, 2022). In post conflict Swat, poets condemn violence of state as well as state policy of countering violence through violence. There are different themes for claiming and preserving the ecology including the themes of love, beauty, peace, resisting violence, condemnation of war, poetry of peace, and poetry of resilience among other. The poets use these themes in one or another way to situate the environmental crisis and to claim and preserve the ecology. There are claims that Pakhtun have rules and unwritten laws about use of forests, mountains, and rivers. These rules are transformed and transmitted from generations through different folk genres where the natural resources were mostly safe. There are a lot of proverbs and stories which helped in the protection and sustainability of ecology. As a word “*gul'cheen*” is used for those who cut flowers and cutting flowers always considered as bad habit. As a poet writes:

موش لـتـاق و ن هـر کـېـر پـ ټـو غ ن لگ د ام
يوش احيـسـم وړک ټـرا ټـرا حـور ټـم ات

The flowering bud plucked, and a killer am I, /
A Messiah you pose having sawed my
soul. (Subhan, 2007).

In the couplet the poet says that I become a killer by cutting a single bud from a flower and you are called as Messiah even you have cut and wounded my soul. In Pashto literature the term “*gulcheen*” is use for those who cut flowers and it is considered a bad habit. The couplet on the one hand criticizes and condemn those who have brought conflict and development while on the other hand signify the meaning and function of the term “*gulcheen*” in Pakhtun culture which prohibit people from cutting flowers (Swati, 2022). A respondent explained, “It is poetry and other genres of language which construct humans’ attitude and it is the reason we have a lot

of myths attached with cutting of trees and which function in society”. The development and religiosity disturbed historical memory and conscious of our people which cause great harm to the ecology of our land (Khan H. , 2021).

Pakhtun poets also support those who grow flowers while condemn those who destroy flowers, as a poet writes:

د راک نارگ هر موخ لوريز نوگنر وا نه ولگ
د راک ناسا هر موخ لومتخ نوگنر وا نه ولگ

The sowing flowers and colors come hard by
The erasure takes sweat and time none.

In this couplet the poet says that it is too difficult to grow flowers while it is too easy to destroy those flowers. A poet explained, “It takes dozens of years to develop gardens and hundreds of years to develop forests though it takes only a moment to destroy those gardens and forests”. The poets on the one hand condemn the conflict and unplanned development which played such a destructive role in the ecology while on the other hand support those who spent their lives to develop gardens and forests. A respondent also argued that, “We need to sensitize the stake holders that it is very difficult to develop forests, and the existing forests have taken hundreds and thousands of years, and so we see these forests. It will take hundreds of years to develop forests and heal the ecosystem of Swat”. Poets on the one hand condemn acts of violence which have direct effect on the environment while on the other hand preserve and promote objects of the ecology and designate them as symbols of love and peace, as a poet writes:

مېراو غ فن گنج د نهون اديم فز
مېراو غ یردوگ مل ونوت فل ا فز
مراپ د کسپوک د مل گنج نم د
مېراو غ یرکېنېل مل ونوت ب ح م

I seek not fields of war
I seek a spring for love
To support the war of peace
I need battalions of love.

In this couplet the poet condemns war on the one hand and asks for peace and love on the other hand. Speaking of the couplet the poet explained

هرک لتق ینیم د امز بالگ ره ینسکپ هک ات
هرکو هب یتوب لب ینسکپ د نطو امز اد

Every flower that betokens my love you killed,
These and more I shall regrow, my land I know.
(Naaz Z. A., 2020).

While mentioning those who have brought wars to the land of the poet if you have destroyed all the flowers of my love, it is my land, and I will again sow more and more flowers in it. In conceptual meaning the poet means that we are working to make and build our land. The poetry has themes of resilience which make people work for betterment of their ecology. Seeing the injustices against the environment, poets express great grief and concerns and give messages of hope for a better tomorrow, as a poet says:

یش ددیل یرتس لصف د چ رظنم د
یش ددیربص هلک ملق هراق یب
ورک هلاو الات نم چ امز نازخ هک
یش ددیکوتار مه ایب وخ هنولگ اد

This sight when Fazal perceives,
His pen restless shall remain
The autumn may have ruined my garden/
But the flowers can again be sown (Subhan,
2007).

In the couplet the poet says that how can I stop myself to not write on the situation of my land. He further says that if autumn (situation) has destroyed my land, the flowers can grow again. In the couplet the poet on one hand expresses his grief on the situation in his land while on the other hand he also gives messages of hope. Speaking of the mentioned couplet a poet commented that, "The message of hope in the couplet aims to end hopelessness and to alert the people to come forward and work for the claiming and preserving of their ecology". He further added that, "poets are rays of hope in our society" (Uddin, 2021). Seeing awareness among people poets are hopeful for a better tomorrow, as a poet writes:

یلت یرزو ایب یوش دنویپ یئ یرزو یتام
یراکنن یساد هد هلاو وتولا نما د یغرم
ملخاو یریز ینسک رس یگنخ د هو یدیل یچ اچ
یراکنن یساد هد هلاو ودیک لگ یئ یتوغ هغه

Her wings broken have healed
The peace bird seems ready to fly
The flower bud seen once on the tree
Is about to blossom it seems. (Umeed, 2020).

In the couplet the poet is talking about wounded birds and trees where he sees a better future for them. The poet is hopeful for a better tomorrow and so he sees the wounded bird ready to fly and so the blades of tree branches turning to flowers.

Conclusion

Pashto poetry is not free from the time and space factor as the objective conditions of history and the present have impacts on its thoughts and themes and its other associated parts like genre, etc. In these objective conditions, the past two decades remained very hostile for the Pakhtun region and specifically for Swat in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The situation not only harmed humans but also ecology of the Swat. Among academicians, writers, and activists the poets portrayed in a way that shows us an alternate perspective. The poets of Swat have written on different themes using different genres of poetry to link their expression with ecology. In these themes the themes of peace, non-violence, condemnation of war and resilience to claiming and preserving of ecology, the Pakhtun poets did their best to alert people, preserve knowledge about forests, animals, plants and the importance of healthy ecosystem for humans, animals, birds and plants. In preservation of ecology, poets used flora and fauna as themes of beauty and love. Furthermore, poets also depicted the environmental crisis in the context of violent conflict and destructive progressive development. At a time of chaos and chaotic conditions, Pakhtun poets show their resilience and resistance to reverse the impact of environment and conflict on environment and ecology. These themes in the poetry of various poets as documented in this paper helped on one hand to situate environmental crisis of Swat and on other hand tried to claim and preserve the ecology of Swat.

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