

Soniwals' Gold Washing Culture and Their Livelihood Strategies in Diamer, Gilgit-Baltistan



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Acronyms

AC	Assistant Commissioner
ALAC	Assistant Land Acquisition Collector
ASGM	Artisanal Small-Scale Gold Mining
BC	Before Crist
DBD	Diamer Bhasha Dam
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GB	Gilgit-Baltistan
Km	Kilometer
KKH	Karakorum Highway
NA	Northern Areas (of Pakistan)
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
RAP	Resettlement Action Plan
Rs.	Rupees
SDPI	Sustainable Development Policy Institute
Sq	Squire
SWT	Subhanaho Wa Taala
UNESCO	United Nation Economic and Social Council
WAPDA	Water And Power Development Authority

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Abstract

Soniwals are people living in Diamir District of Gilgit-Baltistan. They are evidently indigenous people and have a distinct culture. They wash gold out of the sand of river Indus and its tributaries. This research spotlights the realities of the said culture, people and their unique economic activity, gold washing. Exploratory research design has been used while snowball and purposive sampling techniques have been used in this research. Epistemological position of Interpretivism is adopted to find the realities.

Glossary -1

Soniwals

The indigenous community in Northern Pakistan who washes gold from the sand on the river banks, Particularly river Indus.

Indigenous people

“Indigenous communities, peoples and nations are those which, having a historical continuity with pre-invasion and pre-colonial societies that developed on their territories, consider themselves distinct from other sectors of the societies now prevailing on those territories, or parts of them. They form at present non-dominant sectors of society and are determined to preserve, develop and transmit to future generations their ancestral territories, and their ethnic identity, as the basis of their continued existence as peoples, in accordance with their own cultural patterns, social institutions and legal system.”

(Cobo, 1982, p. 2)

Soniwal Kot

One settlement of Soniwal people, on the left bank of Indus near Chilas, in Gigit-Baltistan area. Other settlements of Soniwal people have different names like Gais Paeen, Gais Bala, Yashokal Das, Thor, Thak etc.

Gold Washing

The process of getting gold by washing and separating its particles from sand.

Livelihood

Means of living or of supporting life.

Diamer

District of Gilgit Baltistan

Khorap

Boat like container , an Indigenous tool of Soniwals

Chapai

Stick mesh, an Indigenous tool of Soniwals

Thli :

Wooden Pan, an Indigenous tool of Soniwals