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### Crack a Book: An Ethnographic Account of Dreams' Interpretation in Pakistan

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#### ABSTRACT

Reams have always been an important area of concern for the scientists both in natural as well as in social sciences. From theological to scientific stages of human rationale, dreams remained a widely discussed topic. The current research work was interested to have an ethnographic account of dreams and their interpretation under the umbrella of symbolic anthropology in one of the traditional villages in capital city of Islamabad, Pakistan. This was a qualitative study which utilized certain qualitative research tools such as transit walk, rapport establishment, participant observation, IDIs, key informants, case studies, field notes, and visual aid. Forty-seven respondents selected on the basis of snow ball sampling were interviewed for getting the data. One of the main objectives of the study was to seek the insiders' view about the importance of dreams and their interpretation in the locale. The study found that dreams are having extraordinary importance in the lives of natives and so on they seek to have their interpretation. It was further observed that the two mainstream practices (cultural and religious) of dream interpretation were followed by the respondents. The study concluded that dreams were considered to be the source of guidance from supernatural powers by the natives. The study recommends having ethnological approach towards the study of dreams and their interpretations across the diverse societies.

## INTRODUCTION

The current research work was designed to explore the traditional knowledge about the dreams and its interpretations under the umbrella of symbolic anthropology. Dreams have always been considered an integral phenomenon in the character of societies that's why religious and cultural attempts to understand and interpret the language of dreams have always been a subject of great interest for scientists since ancient times. The emphasis on the division, nature, context and value of dreams varies from culture to culture. Humans have been exploring and analyzing their dreams under the dominion of curiosity about their life, death, soul, destiny, morality, and universe and these explorations have been conducted under the heading of religious tradition. Thus, if a modern researcher wants to have truly comprehensive understanding of dreams and dreaming, he/she must draw upon the historical work of religious studies (Grunebaum and Callois 1965; Kelsey, 1968; O'Flaherty, 1984).

Dreams are considered as integral part of all world religious traditions. In the beginning, religion was the sole field of dream study. The earliest writings on dreams are also marked by those texts which are characterized by their religious significance (Bulkeley, 1993). In some societies, dreams are generally defined as fake, illusionary, and subjective figments irrelevant to the important concerns and course of day-to-day life. In other cultures, people mark dreams as important sources of revealing insights about future - events or happenings, about the spiritual and physical being of one's self. While in other societies, dreams are considered to be space or ground for action like waking life (real), or a channel for communication with ancestors or with the supernatural entities. In many cultures, dreams are marked with faculty to provide knowledge of the future in literally, symbolically and metaphorically terms (like the dreams interpreted by Joseph in the Qur'an). The interpretation of dreams as omens is considered as a universal attribute of dream lore under the religious and cultural makeup of any respective society.

Previous studies on dreams were highlighted under the theme of religion and philosophy but with the passage of time and specifically with Freud's and Jung's psychoanalytical theme of dreams, a whole new subject matter was introduced in dreams studies. In early 20<sup>th</sup> century, researches on dreams were also marked by the universal applicability of psychoanalytic theory but they ignored the cultural aspects of dreams, their interpretation and how culture impact on individual and upon the form and content of her/his dreams. The current study has helped in understanding and exploring the religious aspects of dreams and their interpretation under the theme of symbolic anthropology. The current research work will be useful for further academic and anthropological research on symbolic significance of dreams and their interpretations.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Dreams played an imminent role in all the world's religious traditions (Bulkeley 2007; 2008; 2009; Doniger and Bulkeley 1993). This commends that most

humans consider dreams to be a special event in their lives. Roy D'Andrade's (1961) cross-cultural survey of dreams from ethnographic literature proposed that significant part of cultural traits affiliated their dreams to respective religious systems.

The earliest history of dream interpretation marked the curiosity about the very subject of dreams and their significance on the lines of cultural and religious paradigms. Subject of dream interpretation has always been regarded as gravitational force by many ancient peoples, though different cultures had differing beliefs, each acknowledged the significance, mystery and usefulness of dreaming on all fronts. It is believed that dream analysis provided significant information that could be used in developing strategies for interpreting dreams for useful waking life purposes. Moreover, history of dream interpretation underlined an interesting, recurrent theme: Conversation between God and people through dreams, and dream-like revelations or exposition. The following procession is not meant to be blanket nor encyclopedic. It is determined as a sampling of the well-heeled and varied influences that dreams and dream interpretation have played in many religions and cultures lengthened of written history.

Documented dream history can be delineating back to Mesopotamia (from what is now Iraq) in 3100 B.C., where the dreams of kings were preserved on clay cylinders and tablets. This record is one of the earliest evident of the colligate between gods and dreams, and further, it is apparent the early belief that gods not only interact to people through dreams and visions but also direct people to religious acts of worship and reverence (Castle, 1994).

From the very beginning of Islamic history, there has developed rich and dynamic discourse on the nature and expression of imagination, dreams and waking visions introduced a new realm in the studies of dreams. The Prophet Muhammad's (PBUH) dreams and subsequent visions had introduced and announced the beginning of Islam. Furthermore, visions of one kind or another were also marked as an important aspect of Sufi culture in each of its many forms; both visions and dreams also played decisive roles in many other fields of Muslim life, from Philosophy, historiography and medicine, to folklore and magic (Azam, 1992).

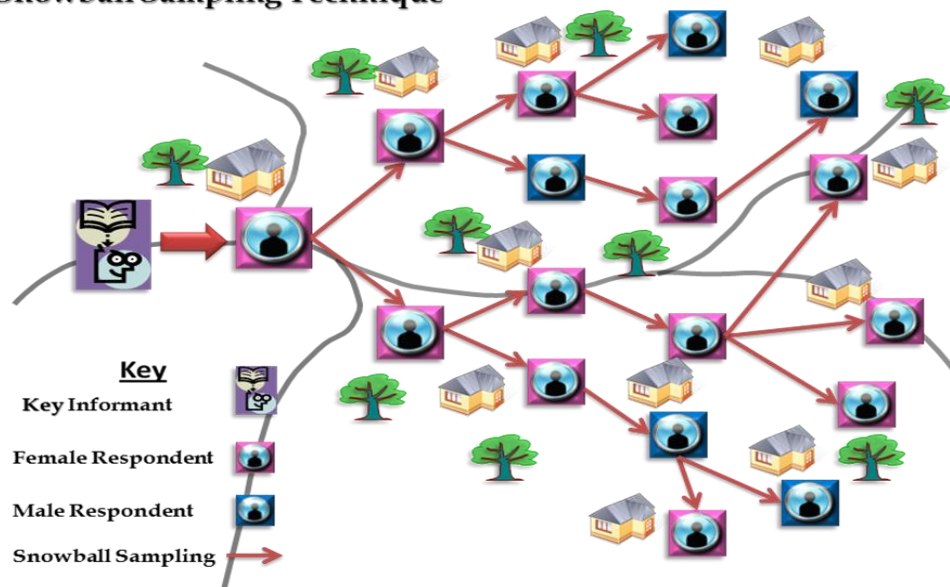
There is a strong declaration worldwide for an intimate relationship between dreaming and religion. Dreams are omnipresent human inwardness and they form cultural propositions in folk traditions (Bulkeley 2008; Lohmann 2003; Doniger and Bulkeley 1993; D'Andrade 1961) and religious rituals, such as pilgrimages and dream incubation (Bulkeley 2008; Preston 1986). Dreams are inhabited with several dream versions of living people dreamers apprehend, deceased relatives and ancestors, those far away, and those who are also sleeping. Their apparent presence inclines a matter for thought upon awakening, particularly in cultures where a "nor-nonsense" cultural dream theory predominates, as among the Raramuri of Mexico (Native American people of northwestern Mexico).

## MATERIAL AND METHODS

The present study was imparted in Shah Allah Ditta which is a Union Council stationed at the footprints of Margalla Hills in the Islamabad Capital Territory and distance 3.5 Km from Golra Sharif. The Researcher determined particular locale due to the spiritual and cultural weight of respective Shrine of Shah Allah Ditta which abet in discerning and investigating the religious and cultural constitution of inhabitants' folk knowledge and interpretation regarding dreams.

In the present inspect, the researchers have employed snow-ball sampling technique to get indispensable information from the target population. Specifically, the researcher preferred snow-ball sampling technique for this peculiar research as it is not possible to append or guaranteed the participation of all the natives of that peculiar locale for this reflection because the essence of study appealed those natives who compass belief, engross and occupied folk knowledge around dreams and its interpretation. Notably, our key informant executed eminent role in introducing female respondents specifically Aged because it sustained us in unearthing their societal outlook about dreams and their male family members or relatives, who had any knowledge about dreams, take interest in dreams interpretation or have faith on dreams.

### Snowball Sampling Technique



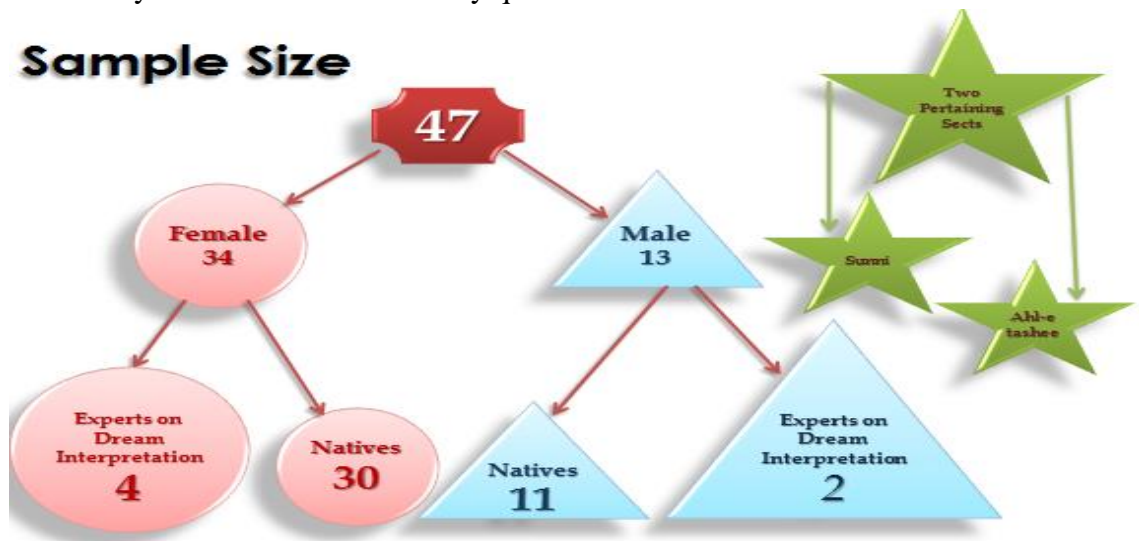
## RESPONDENTS

Forty-seven respondents were interrogated under the snow ball sampling technique. Majority of the sample size subsumed of female respondents (Thirty-Four) while sample of thirteen males were tabbed under the snow-ball sampling technique. Furthermore, out of thirty-four female respondents, thirty were natives while four were experts on dream interpretation. Equivalently, among thirteen male respondents, eleven were inhabitants while two were experts on dream interpretation.

Exclusively, two livable sects elucidate the whole religious outlook of Shah Allah Ditta under *Sunni* and *Ahl-e-Tashee* as deciding factor in exploring subject of dreams and its interpretation.

This study has been characterized by qualitative research and we had utilized

## Sample Size



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tools as per the nature of our research to gather target information about folk knowledge of dreams and symbolic significance of dreams in a culture. Principally, we required someone to familiarize us with the natives about our intendment of study, importance of their collaboration in investigation of this research and handiness of compliance in the field. The approaching stated issues were resolved primarily with the help of our key Informants. we elucidated natives about purpose and justification of our research.

Notwithstanding, participant observation in the locale was difficult but intriguing due to the very nature of respective anthropological perspective of dreams and its symbolic significance in selected locale. we made several visits to our locale before we field stay. During the course of our visits, our key informants acclimatized us with respective locale, inhabitants and they introduced us to their very neighborhood, private school Principal and Owner of Women Welfare Trust for further advancements. Categorically, we developed participant observation. we used to have detailed discussions with our key informants. We shared everyday life experiences, gossips, jokes, different aspects of dreams and even our own past experiences regarding dreams by the end of the day. we compensated our key informant in their domestic chores. Moreover, fetching water from the spring down the hill *Chasma* (springs) was another enriched experience, and it also contributed towards better understanding of respective locale.

During our field stay, we had dreams about our key informants and certain locale which we shared with our informants and interestingly they had dreams about us. we also facilitated one of our respondents in preparation of her Masters' Dissertation. we accompanied our key informant and paid greetings to one of her

friend's mother arrival from *Umrah* (pilgrimage to Mecca) and also felicitated child birth of her well-known neighbors. we also gratified "our respondents" with their particular dress code and language which was decisive factor in securing their trust and mutual understanding. we approached local people to know about perception about dreams and their interpretation. we talked with elderly people to apprehend information about the history of Shah Allah Ditta, folk knowledge about dreams, their subjective life experiences and schemes of life in respective community.

For the purpose of present study, we categorized our interview guide into two segments -- Natives and Authority on Dream Interpretations. Because we had to interview natives about their folk knowledge of dreams and those religious or traditional authorities from whom those natives seek guidance or interpretation (religious and cultural) concerning their dreams. Thirty-five questions employed their significance in respective Interview guide under the above-mentioned research questions.

In the very beginning, intentionally, we executed informal interviews and deliberately made paired interviews during the course of our field stay. Being engaged in these kinds of interviews gave contingency to informants to converse deliberately and to share information voluntarily. Furthermore, it accelerated mutual understanding and provided them with the enough space to recall and reflect their subjective past experiences about dreams. During the flow of study, purposely we discounted certain questions related to socio-economic status of respondents such as caste, sect and monthly family income due to peculiar circumstances. However, we covered these areas in twofold sessions with our respondents as mention earlier.

Throughout the research, interview guide was justified to be a very befitting tool to accumulate information about natives' beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and interests about dreams and its interpretation because of its resilience. we also catechize the natives about different aspects of dreams. we probed the respondents to ruminate about their subjective past dream experiences and we, additionally, shared our own dreams and past experiences in this regard.

We also employed visual support to accredit and validate peculiar field experiences. Primarily, Shah Allah Ditta elucidates enriched historical and archeological sites: Sadhu ka Bagh, Lamra, Historical Dispensary and Historical Mosque. One of our key informants also introduced us with above mentioned archeological sites. we sojourned 'Labana' adjacent small-sized village located at the eastwards of Shah Allah Ditta. we inspected various segments of our respective locale through the eye of a camera. we also visited Shrine of Shah Allah Ditta Al-Bakhri, Shrine of Bibi Pak Daman and *Aastana* (portal) of Zinda Pir -- Saghir Hussain Shah (Baba Geera).

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

We have accumulated this chapter in accordance with one of the main objectives of respective research i.e. to study the 'Traditional Knowledge' about dreams. we have categorized respective cultural knowledge about dreams under the several headings such as, concept of dream and reality, types of dreams, classification of mind or soul, categories of dreams, myths and rituals associated with the narration of dreams, religious and cultural aspects of dreaming. we asked natives about recalls, causes and nature of their dreams. we found multiple categories such as one remembers, remembers and forgets as well, mostly forgets, remembers only important/good one and remembers those on which one wake upon. Thirty seven percent of the respondents reported that they do remember their dreams due to certain reasons such as if their dreams turns into reality and having extremely good or bad dream.

One of female respondents, aged 23 and married said:

*"Yahi jo haqeqat mai khwaab hoty hain na to woh insan ko yad rehty hain, jab khwaab mai insan jis halat mai hota hai to bedaar jab hota hai, dar, khoof, khushi ya jis halat mai hota hai islia yaad rehta hai. Aur usi halat mai daikhta hai khud ko."*

### **Translation:**

*"Those dreams which are reality that one always retains, when one is in that situation in which when wake upon like fear, happiness or whatever, retained. And see oneself in that situation as well."*

One of female respondents, aged 22 and single said:

*"Jo bohat acha ho ya bohat bura ho to woh yaad reh jata hai, aur uski nishani say pta chal jata hai."*

### **Translation:**

*"Those which are good or bad dreams, they usually retain in our memory, and become evident from their symbols."*

Twenty percent of the respondents reflected that they do remember their dreams but with the passage of time they forget as well. They stated that those dreams which are related to social life and those close to reality retain as well. Twenty four percent of the respondents added that they mostly forget their dreams. Most of the respondents were of view that they never tried to remember their dreams due to which they forget. Respondents also counted other reasons such as short duration of dreams, conscious attempt to escape from memories of bad dreams and to feel free and relaxed.

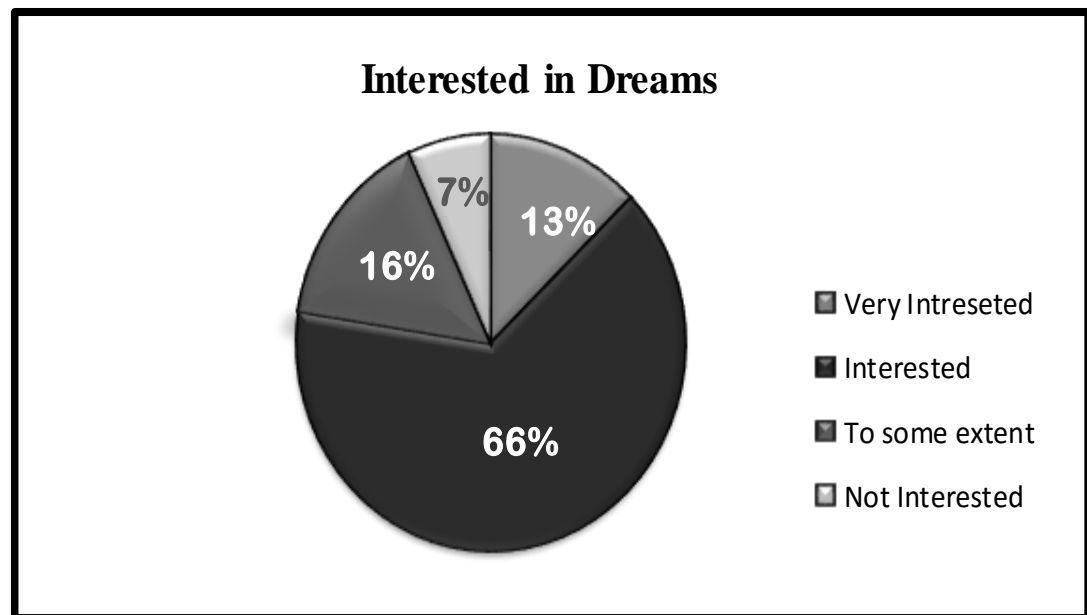
One of the dream interpreters also quoted reference to Hadith,

*“Jo khwaab bhooljaye woh acha hota hai.”*

**Translation:**

*“Those dreams which we forget are good ones.”*

While 15% of the respondents reflected that they remembered those dreams which they thought significant or good in nature for them and 7% mentioned that they retain those dreams on that very moment on which they wake upon due to activation of unconscious mind. And fail to retain those dreams in early morning.



we inquired natives about their interest which they generally take in dreams. we explored certain levels of respondents' interest in dreams such as, those who are very interested, to some extent and not interested. As figure above shows 66 % of the respondents mentioned that they were interested in dreams, 13% were very interested, and 16% marked interest to some extent while 7% showed no interest in dreams. Furthermore, we accumulated from research findings that 56% out of 66% of the respondents who reflected their interest in dreams were female respondents while remaining 11% of the male respondents stated their interest in dreams. Similarly, 13% were those who showed very interested behavior towards dreams were also female respondents. While those 7% were also males who assigned no interest towards dreams.

Under the course of our research, we ascertained various concepts of dreams in respective locale. First of all, we would like to direct attention towards their reference which they ascribed to dreams as something which is proportionate with night and which ascends towards dreamer, for instance,



*rati khwab ai si..., khaab takya, Khaab aajuly etc.*  
*“Jo asi sochny aa wohe khwab vich dikhny aa.”*

**Translation:**

*“Whatever we think about, we see in dream.”*  
*“Khwaab tay sachy hony ay.”*

**Translation:**

*“Dreams are true.”*  
*“Khwaab tay ek ishara honda ay.”*

**Translation:**

*“Dream is a signal”*

Categorically, under the course of our research we explored certain concept of dreams, which are as following:

1. Dreams are believed to be reflection of one's thoughts, daily activities, interests and desires.

One of the male respondents, aged 29 and educated mentioned:

*“Whatever one thinks about or wants to do something in life, he sees in dream.”*

Most of the respondents were of view that their dreams were reflection of their own thoughts, problems, distress, interests and desires which are in accordance with their lives as well.

One of female respondents, aged 22 and educated reported:

*“Jis taraf apka interest ho to aur zehn jaye to us tarah kay khwaab aajaty hain aur kbhe agr zehn nahe ho to bhe khwaab aajaty hain.”*

**Translation:**

*“Whatever is your interest and you think about it then dreams come accordingly.”*

2. Dreams are from beginning.

Thirty percent of the respondents quoted several references about history, nature and significance of Prophets' dreams. They argued that dreams are universal in nature and happening.

3. Dreams are representation of suppressed desires.

One of female respondents, aged 34, married

*“Khwaab humary zehn ke kamzori hoty hain, jitna mai smjhte hun—phir sochte hun kay nae yeh zehn ke kamzori nae balky humary dil mai aik sadma sa hojata hai.”*

**Translation:**

*“Dreams are fragility of our own mind and sometimes I think as they are the representation of our grief (tragedy).”*

**Interpretation Of Dreams**

The earliest history of dream interpretation marked the curiosity about the very subject of dreams and their significance on the lines of cultural and religious paradigms. Subject of dream interpretation has always been regarded as gravitational force by many ancient peoples, though different cultures had differing beliefs, each acknowledged the significance, mystery and usefulness of dreaming on all fronts. Some cultures had a keen sense of the symbolic language of dreams. The antediluvian gallop of dream interpretation has been marked by an interesting, recurrent theme: conversation between God and people through dreams, and dream-like revelations or exposition.

The whole scheme of dreams' interpretation (cultural and religious) in the present study can be understood under the statement of an elder person in this regard. When we asked her about the subject of dreams' interpretation, she replied with an emphasis on the traditional and religious entities. She attributed *Borhy* (old person) to the cultural makeup and *Quran* with the reference to religious demeanor of interpretation of dreams. One of the female respondents, aged 65, who belongs to upper class stated:

*“Sangh karo ya to borhy say ya phir Qur'an say!”*

**Translation:**

*“One should have comradeship with either the golden ager or with the Qur'an!”*

Ethnographic attempt has recognized dependent causal interaction among dreaming, culture, and society. Cultural values, categories, expectations, and social transactions determined and motivated subject of dreams, interpretations and its coating on societal fabric.

Majority (70 percent) of the respondents believed that dreams reveal meaningful information about themselves and their surroundings. Moreover, they were of view that their dreams endure more meaning than similar waking thoughts. I have also ascertained different notions about the term 'interpretation' among the respondents. They have apprehended interpretation as *mouhy samny aa gai naa* (it turns into reality), *khoob mai sai kary oo* (consulted my dream). When we asked one of female respondents about the subject of interpretation that how she came to know about significance of her dreams. She stated that whenever she uses to

discuss dreams with her parents, they comprehended it as *changi* (good) or *mandi* (bad) one.

*“Mai apny maa piyo nay bataya kay ye hosi -- changi ay mandi ay. Phr us day sabq parhni aa: Durood Sharif parhni aa, Ayatul Kursi parhniaa, oo phr apny tay phonkniyaa!”*

**Translation:**

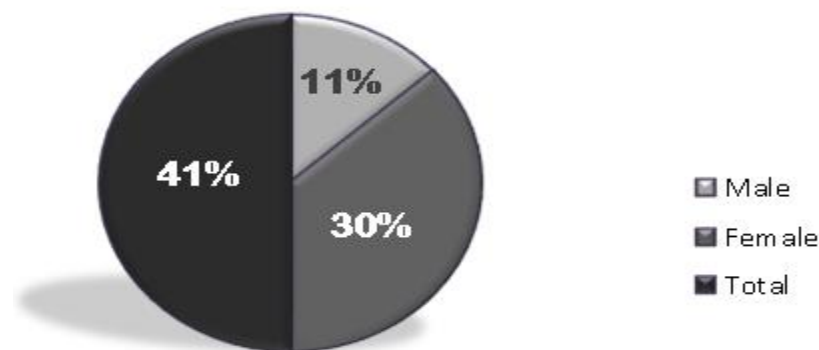
*“My parents used to tell me that -- dream will prove to be good or bad one. After that I recited recommended duas: Durood Sharif (a Dua in praise of Prophet Muhammad), Ayatul Kursi(The Throne verse) then I blow it on myself.”*

Similarly, one of the male respondents aged 45, and married believed:  
*“Khwaab ke tabeer hoti hai. Jo sach bhe hojate hai aur jhoot bhe.”*

**Translation:**

*“Dream has a meaning. That may turn true or false.”*

### Dreams Trun into Reality



**Figure shows** the ratio of those respondents who reflected upon their dreams as proved to be reality based. Forty one percent of the respondents reported that their dreams turn into reality. Out of which 30% were females while 11% were males and they also narrated their dreams in this regard. They narrated 12 dreams to weigh their dreams. Dreams of the male respondents were highlighted by several themes: (1) fulfillment of one’s desire to visit shrines and having ideal life partner, (2) killing snakes (self-defense against an enemy), (3) tragedy (foreseen): mother’s death and heavy loss in business. While dreams of the female respondents were backed by certain themes: (1) satisfaction of one’s longing for children and keen interest towards shrines (to visit), (2) studies (acquiring knowledge), (3) family matters, and (4) got solution of some problems.

*Profile of Dream Interpreters*

Sr. No	Dream Interpreter	Age	Marital Status	Education	Profession	Caste	Sect	Family Structure
i.	Ms. A	75	Widowed	Illiterate	Housewife	Mughal	Sunni	Joint
ii.	Ms. B	29	Married	Double Masters in Arabic & Aalima Course	Self-Employed (running a jamia)	Sayyed	Ahl-e-Tashee	Nuclear
iii.	Ms. C	30	Married	Graduation & Aalima Course	Self-Employed (running a Madrassa)	Chaudhry	Sunni	Nuclear
iv.	Ms. D	60	Married	Masters	Govt. employee (School Principal)	Sayyed	Ahl-e-Tashee	Joint
v.	Mr. A	25	Married	Graduation & Aalim Course	Govt. Job	Yousafzai	Sunni	Nuclear
vi.	Mr. B	29	Married	Graduation & Aalim Course	Govt. Job	Malik	Sunni	Joint

*Source:* Socio-economic census form

Table illustrates the profile of dream interpreters. Six dream interpreters were interviewed, out of which four were female interpreters while two were males. Ms. A and Ms. D categorized under the traditional authority on dreams while Ms. B, Ms. C, Mr. A and Mr. B encompassed exclusive religious authority on dreams. Ms. B mentioned that her husband (*Agha Sahab*), is also religious scholar and people consult him regarding dreams interpretation and *Istikhara* (asking Allah to guide one to the right sort of action concerning an important endeavor). One of my key informants justified the traditional authority of Ms. A (being an aged and experienced person in our neighborhood) we usually discussed our problems with her and most of time got solutions as well. She added that usually we share our dreams (good or bad) with her and get its interpretation as *ay khaab ache ay* (good dream) -- *sach hosi* (will turn into reality), *ay buri khaab ay* (bad dream) -- *tay sadaqah dyoo* (giving out voluntary charity) etc.

Verily, from the beginning of Islamic history, there has developed rich and dynamic discourse on the nature and expression of imagination, dreams and waking visions introduced – Tabir is the Muslim science of dream interpretation. Some Hadith (reports of statements or actions of Islamic Prophet Muhammad, or of his tacit approval or criticism of something said or done in his presence) elucidate the prophet's interpretations of specific images and symbols in the dreams of his followers. Moreover, other verses tell of Prophet Muhammad own dreams and his interpretations of them. A word association was considered as one of the prophetic advices in the scheme of dreams interpretation (Bulkeley, 2002). Majority of the respondents enunciated the significant nature of dreams as underlined in the Islamic Holy Scriptures (Qur'an and Hadith). Therefore, it became useful to comprehend with an overview of the main religious aspects of dreams in respective locale. Furthermore, they counted other sources of dream interpretation included books of dreams interpretation such as *khwaab namah*, *Imamia Jantri* and *faal namah* (books for dream interpretations).

Respondents were of view that dreams can be interpreted according to verses from Holy Qur'an, or in terms of Hadith and sayings of *Sahaba* (Companions of Prophet Muhammad) and dreams of Prophets. They have elucidated several dream symbolism which they properly interpreted on the line of Qur'an:

**a,** **Water** is a symbol of knowledge, good fortune, and great advantage, as is stated in Qur'an:

“*And We have made from water every living thing.*” [21:30]

“*And it is He Who has created and from water, and has appointed for him kindred by blood, and kindred by marriage.*”[25:54]

**b,** **Gardens** are indicative of blessing, good fortune, fertility and wealth, as in the verse:

*"I said (to them): 'Ask forgiveness from your Lord, verily, He is Oft-Forgiving He will send rain to you in abundance, 'And give you increase in wealth and children, and bestow on you gardens.'" [71:10-12]*

**c, Fruits** are indicative of provision, children and blessings, because of the verse:

*"And We bring forth from it grains, so that they eat thereof."*[36:33]

*"They will call therein for every kind of fruit in peace and security."* [44:55]

**d, Eggs** are taken symbol of a women, abundance and good fortune, because of the verse:

*"as if they were closely protected eggs."* [37:49]

**e, Raw Meat** is indicative of slander, bad fortune and troubles.

*"Do not slander one another; would any one among you like to eat flesh of his dead brother? So you will hate that!"* [49:12]

**f, Clothing** connotes one's spouse, as it is written in Qur'an:

*"They (women) are clothing for you and you are clothing for them."* [2:187]

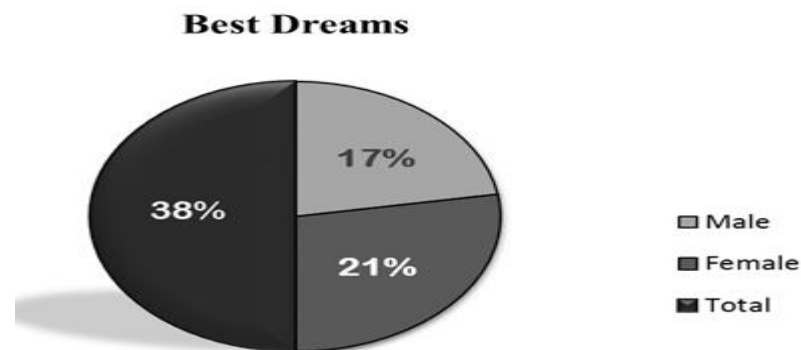
One of the female respondents, aged 30, married and graduated also quoted one of the Hadith about the significance of dreams:

*"Sacha Khwaab wahi ka iktalieeswah hisah hai."*

### Translation:

*"The pious dream is the forty-sixth part of Prophecy"* (Sahih Muslim).

One of the female respondents, aged 79, married and belongs to Sayyed family also elucidated the symbol of vegetation especially crops with the fertility, happiness, success, and longevity. She highlighted this symbol in accordance with the Pharaoh's dream and Prophet Joseph prediction as seven years of myriad followed by seven years of famine in Egypt.



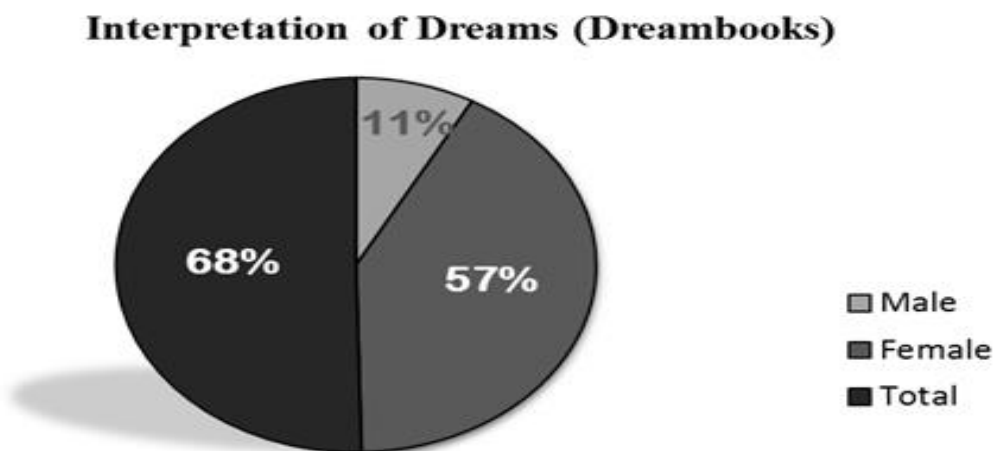
**Figure showing** Best dreams

When we inquired about the concept and context of best dreams, respondents indicated religious symbolism to identify their dreams. As is shown in above figure, Thirty Eight percent of the respondents reported best dreams under the heading of religious symbolism. Twenty One percent were female respondents while 17% were males who derived the concept of best dreams out of religious symbolism. They narrated ten dreams which were guided by the symbolism of Mosque, Kaaba, Shrines, Prophet, and ride on white horse (symbol of angel). One of the female respondents, aged 75 and widowed narrated her dream as

*"I drank water from the fountain in Madina, I dreamt about Masjid Nabawi as well."*

Furthermore, she added that if one dreamt about offering prayers or saw an elder person is also indicative of best dream.

### ***Religious Interpretation of Dreams: Dream books***



**Figure showing** Interpretation of dreams: Dream books

With reference to the religious interpretation of dreams, we inquired them about the dream books for interpretation. As shown in figure above, majority (68 percent) of the respondents reported that they consulted different books for interpretation of their dreams. Fifty seven percent were female respondents who showed their interest in books of dream interpretation while 11% were male respondents who reflected upon different books as well. We have mentioned earlier that there are two pertaining sects in Shah Allah Ditta. Similarly, we have found different schemes of dream books among followers of these two sects: Ahl-e-Tashee and Sunni. They have enlisted different dream books such as, *Khwaab namah -- yousaf*, *Imamia Jantri* (a magazine like book, appears to be Shia book), *Bahishti zewar* (a volume of Islamic belief) and *Faalnama* (a book of omens used by fortune tellers). *Imamia jantri* and *faalnama* were mostly inculcated in Ahl-e-

Tashee. Under the course of rapport building, respondents (belongs to Ahl-e-Tahsee sect) entrusted me. They also showed and provided me with their historical and religious books on dreams. Positively, one of aged female respondents, widowed belonging to Sayyed family, displayed her precious treasure of sacred objects: religious booklets, *janamaz* (prayer mat), *Tasbih* (prayer rope), *khak-e-shifa* (soil of Karbala), *Attar* (natural perfume oil), and several gems and stones (also told me about their uses and functions): *Yaqut* (*Opal*) for beauty and dignity; *Feruz* (*Turquoise*) for acquiring divine help and victory; *Aqiq* (*Carnelian*) to protect himself from enemies and all types of misfortunes.

## DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

The current study was designed under the course of certain research objectives including traditional knowledge about dreams and natives' perceptions about dream and reality. Another objective was to explore the cultural beliefs about the nature of dreaming. Along with this, the relationship between natives' socio-economic characteristics and their interpretation of dreams was also comprehended. Furthermore, construction of dreams narratives was also emphasized. These four objectives were distributed into three main chapters.

Folk knowledge about dreams has been categorized under the several headings such as, concept of dream and reality, types of dreams, classification of mind or soul, categories of dreams, myths and rituals associated with the narration of dreams, religious and cultural aspects of dreaming. It has been examined that dreams are dealt within respective culture on underlying perspectives: respondents' beliefs about the nature of dreaming; accustomed systems by which people interpret particular dreams; the social context in which dreams are shared (or not shared) and discussed; and last but not the least, the ways in which dreams are utilized. Telling a dream is considered as one of the significant disclosures in respective society. People also counted certain social rules that governed appropriate settings under which particular kind of dreams need to be shared.

Similarly, 35% of the respondents reflected that their elders, parents and teachers advised them to share good dreams with all which will bring more happiness to them and to all. They emphasized that one should tell or share his/her true dreams. In some cases, respondents also directed researchers' attention towards avoidance about telling the bad dreams. They stated if one saw *roula* (misery, tragedy) in dream should not tell it to others because it might cause trouble or tension in one's social circle. Majority (90 percent) of the respondents reflected that they had shared their dreams. Seventy three percent of the female respondents showed their aptitude in telling their dreams while 17% of the male respondents assured their practice of dream sharing. Respondents' beliefs about the nature of dreaming are characterized under certain themes: creation of one's mind, wandering soul, desires and longings, indigestion, mental disturbance, desire to meet dead relatives (parents, grandparents, spouse, children, maternal and paternal relatives etc.).



There were two main systems of dream interpretation one was cultural (individual & traditional) and the other was religious. Furthermore, source of cultural interpretation embedded in norms, values, traditions and morals of respective culture while religious interpretation of dreams nested in Qur'an, Hadith, *Khwabnama* (Book of Dreams), *Faalnama* (Book of omens used by Fortunetellers), *Imamia Jantri* (a magazine like book). People also counted certain social rules that governed appropriate settings under which particular kind of dreams need to be shared.

Dreams are omnipresent human inwardness and they form cultural propositions in folk traditions. Majority of the respondents acquainted with the knowledge of Prophets' dreams. They also narrated several dreams of Prophets such as dream of Prophet Ibrahim, Prophet Joseph and Prophet Jacob. Some of the respondents also mentioned considerable passages of the Holy Qur'an which contain discussions of dreams and dreaming, including description and comments on 7 dreams within 4 *Suras* (chapters). Religious symbolism was highly considered in identification religious aspect of dreaming. Seventy percent of the respondents mentioned several religious symbols such as Prophets, Angels, *Kaaba* (one of the most sacred sites in Islam), Shrines, Reciting Qur'an, Offering Prayers, *Panjtan Pak* (The Ahl-e Bayt) etc. considered as source of good fortune, honor, piousness, blessings and victory. Furthermore, nexus between dreams, time and space has been identified.

Fifty two percent of the respondents reported various parts of night, which were significant in locating true dreams (glad tidings) for the dreamer. They were of the view that dreams in the last part of the night (before Fajr) are most likely to come true. One of the respondent also quoted that the dreams which are seen after Fajr *Azaan* (the call of prayer) are false dreams and sent by *shaitan* with intention to *Qaza* (to miss) one's *Namaz* (Fajr prayer). In some cases, respondents also stated interpretation of dreams in accordance with Islamic Lunar Calendar. Most of the respondents differentiated between daydreams and dreams in particular as: daydreams are fantasies, wishful thinking, false, *numberguzari* (time pass) and short in span as compared to dreams (night) are somehow reality based, true, and needs comprehension.

The whole scheme of dreams' interpretation (cultural and religious) in the present study can be understood under the statement of an elder person in this regard. One of the female respondents aged 65, who belonged to upper class stated:

*"One should have comradeship with either the golden ager or with the Qur'an!"*

Around 70 percent of the respondents believed that dreams unfold important about individuals and their surroundings. Moreover, they were of view that their dreams endure more meaning than similar waking thoughts. Forty percent of the respondents reflected that they used to get interpretation of their dreams out of

*waddy wadeery* (ancestors), *bary* (elders), *maa piyo tou* (from parents) and spouse's experiences and percepts. They were of view that it has been transmitted from generation to generation – oral tradition.

Most of the respondents (69%) declared that they had interpreted their dreams by themselves. In some cases, respondents also shared certain dream experiences and narrated different dreams that how they came to know about the interpretation of their dreams. Fifty four percent of the female respondents reflected that most of the times they think a lot about dreams because they viewed them as *ishara* (signal) to be followed. They also mentioned that intentionally they tried to comprehend dreams (good or bad). Moreover, they correlate it with their own knowledge, status (socioeconomic characteristics), life experiences (good or bad), environment, etc.

Thirty three percent of the respondents highlighted their dream experiences which led them to the solution of their problem. Twenty five percent of the female respondents narrated seven dreams in accordance with the problem-solving scheme of dreams. People have counted several symbols and characteristics which they associated with the interpretation of dreams, conceptualized to be good or bad for the dreamer. Cultural interpretations of dreams have been marked by their norms, values, knowledge, traditions, morals etc.

Researchers have accumulated and enlisted different dreams' symbols and their meanings which people associated in different contexts. The Researcher categorized those symbols into various themes such as religious symbolism, natural phenomena, celestial objects, terrestrial objects, colours, vegetation (gardens, crops, trees, fruits, and flowers), animals – those whose meat is permissible to eat and not permissible to eat, aerial creatures, architecture, the human body, clothing, occasions, death, miscellaneous etc. With the reference to the interpretation of dreams as predictions of the future (main theme) in the respective locale, majority (69 percent) of the respondents reported that they heard about that dreams presaged the future. Out of which 54% were females while 4 percent were male respondents who shared and referred different experiences about the dreams as they foretold future. Ninety four percent of the respondents were of view that dreams were foretelling future. Among respondents, 70% were females while 24% were males who reflected that dreams were held to provide knowledge of the future.

Fifty four percent of the respondents believed in guidance facet of their dreams. They emphasized that dreams work like a guide and deprecate dreamer towards so many things. Eleven percent of the male respondents showed their yearning towards guidance and warning which they employed from dreams. Forty three percent of the female respondents reported eight dreams which they associated with the guidance, persuasions, and warnings they have derived from their dreams. They reflected several dream experiences in which they persuasions from their dead ancestors. Thirty eight percent of the respondents reported best dreams

under the heading of religious symbolism. They narrated ten dreams which were guided by the symbolism of Mosque, Kaaba, Shrines, Prophet, and ride on white horse (symbol of angel).

Majority (68 percent) of the respondents reported that they consulted different books for interpretation of their dreams. Fifty seven percent were female respondents who showed their interest in books of dream interpretation while 11% were male respondents who reflected upon different books as well. There were two pertaining sects in Shah Allah Ditta namely Ahl-e-Tashee and Sunni. It has been found that dream narratives themselves are one way through which knowledge is amalgamated and transferred among bodies. The study revealed important insights about the folk knowledge of dreams and dreams' interpretation under the course of cultural and religious' perspectives.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The current study was conducted to unveil the symbolic significance of dreams in a culture and has some limitations. Due to time and financial constraints, the current study focused only on social, cultural and religious perspectives of dreams and its interpretation. There is a need to explore multi-dimensional themes and myths associated with dreams such as *Istikhara*. Consequently, this would contribute towards the subject of dream interpretation, especially under the umbrella of symbolic anthropology.

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