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Cell : 9595 359 435, Ph No: 02172372010 Email: ayisrj@yahoo.in Website: www.aygrt.isrj.org

TRANSFORMING CITY CULTURE, FESTIVAL OF BAKRA EID: A
CASE STUDY OF SHAHDARA, DELHI



Pratibha Tomar

Research Scholar, Department of Geography, Delhi School of Economics.

Co - Author Details :

Sanchit

Assistant Professor(Geography),Central University of Haryana.



ABSTRACT:

Culture refers to "manner of life", 'style of belief' in everyday life; culture is the full limit of scholarly human act designs. The word was first taken in this manner by the pioneer English Anthropologist Edward B. Tylor in his book, *Primitive Culture*, published in 1871. Tylor said that culture is "that connected whole which comprise facts, faith, skill, rules, principles, tradition, and any other abilities and routines obtained by human as a part of social organization.". Culture refers to the manner, the patterns; in which class "manage" the unprocessed matter of their community and material existence' (Clerke et al. 1976: p.10). Presenting little on this, cultural' means the code with which context is build, carried, and perceived.

KEYWORDS

community and material existence , human identification , social organization..

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I. INTRODUCTION :

The religion is a section of the culture, with various contexts. It is a specific network of belief and devotion such as the Hindu, Christian, Muslim religions. It is the human identification of superhuman directing power especially of one's God or Gods and following as a result on conduct and way of thinking. It is something which makes centre and aim for life e.g. supernatural power (concise oxford dictionary, revised ed. 1976).

Anthropologists think religion in the idea of culture, which the network people have invented to meet the requirement of their "physical, social, and ideational" environments (ata, 1988: p.2). Religion connects to the combined needs of the latter and the human search for implied significance and reason in the creation of life. Combined needs find expression in symbolic networks, which apply at the same time on the cognitive, emotive, and directive level and hence, their influence (Hally, 1986:30).

"The religion identities are scholar and re- scholar as the immigrants introduce a new life in the new country" (Bouma, 1994:19).

The city culture is so complicated to scholar conduct designs and perceptions, communities are classes of interacting individuals by only one principle, that why city is known as "cultural hub", not only in terms of religion but also in terms of communication, species, custom value networks, and moral cultural tradition different from the others. In 20th century the entire world city saw their glorified beauty by growth planning, and marked change in form of the city in economic, political, and cultural contexts. In Delhi, Shahdara is one of the oldest cultural centres of Muslim inhabitants, and its name Shahdara is also Urdu term which means "doorway of the kings". The origin of the name lies in two Persian words: *shah* meaning "kings" and *dara*, a doorway or passage. Shahdara was set up by a Mughal king. The Muslim culture in Shahdara was roughly 17thc-18thc old, when Mughal came in India and set up the Mughal destiny, Shahdara was called in the historical time period as a food grain market and fifty two markets (*Mandis*) existed there and today there are only four *Mandis* remains.

Throughout the course of the division between India and Pakistan, a big number of migratory inhabitants came in Delhi and in Shahdara who were member of diferent spiritual classes. For that reason, present Shahdara is one of the most Multiculturalist centre in Delhi where individuals from all spiritual classes live at particular places. Marked change in the form of space arrangement of Shahdara has also its influence on spiritual affinity of the Muslim individuals and their method to make a marked change in their cultural application and trust network system, and mostly Muslim culture lost their earliest principles.

The Muslim culture has lived for a long time in the world and connects with the theory of only one God, there is no temple arrangement and temple ranking, and the prominence is on extending speaking networks between the believer and god and complete dependence to his will (Dean, 1985:202). In Muslim culture, individuals meet matter, emotional, and religious needs. Confusion and a feeling of sadness have made people to look up religion as a process of consolation. It is very conservative type because they do not adopt introduced things without worries, and they mostly conserve their cultural faith and moral system from generation to generation. Muslim culture presents the unity of all the cultures shaped by united faiths and applications. The advising spiritual fact and cultural features unite its individuals historically. The spiritual applications and faiths of Muslims are focused on the religion of Islam, and mostly trust in Quran, Sira and Hadith. The Quran is believed to be the source of most of the features of Islamic culture. In most of the cases, Muslim culture equips an

individual affinity and is believed to be in accordance with the nature and wanting of boundaries. For example marriage in Muslim culture, is predicted as a religious duty. In Muslim places there is no special value is given to celibacy.

The Muslim culture is fundamentally the religion of humility and agreement; and submission of the primarily to Allah, and to the teaching of the Allah as mediated through Mohammed in the Kuran (Webner, 1991). Their celebrations are the only one of its kind and immediately connected to the God i.e. Allah to raise souls, move facts and intensify neighborliness, they have brought into existence social elasticity. Dunstan' opinion finds same kind of judgment to those of Quinn who expresses that, if at the centre of every celebration is a space and a space-based groups actively producing their shared trust and moral networks; there is a significant sense in which these cultural contexts are deliberately reproduced to be studied by the outside world (2000:264).

Eid as a celebration that rise from the indigenous lived culture and allow inhabitants and migratories to comprise with their creation. Williams explains that by taking part in festivals we perceive a specific feel of life, a particular group of observance that hardly require justification (Williams 1965:57). Celebration, as intentional communal phenomena, allow meeting of undisputed expressions of culture. They present a sensual process that can be gained as knowledge (Getz, 2007:9).

The Eid al-Adha is a "celebration of the giving up something valued" also called meal of the Sacrifice, the Big celebration, the Greater Eid, Kurban Bayram or Eid e Qurban is a significant spiritual festival celebrated by Muslims world over to respect the wish of the prophet Ibrahim (Abraham) to give up his small first-born son Ismail (Ishmael) as an action of submitting to Allah's order and his son's accepting to being given up, before Allah stopped Abraham with a Lamb to give up as a substitute. In the lunar Muslim calendar, Eid al-Adha is celebrated on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijjah and is celebrated for four days. The Eid al-Adha comes from the 196th rhyme of the 2nd sura of the Quran. The word "Eid" is seen once in the 5th sura of the Quran, with the context "dignified celebration".

II. CULTURE OF BAKRA EID

Eid al-Adha festival begins after the descent of the Hajj from Mount Arafat. Religious ceremony of the practice of observing on the holiday lasts until sunset of the 12th day of Dhu al-Hijjah. Eid sacrifice may happen up to sunset on the 13th day of Dhu al-Hijjah, and on this day everybody is expected to wear their best clothing to accomplish Eid prayer in a big gathering in mosque. Rich Muslims, who have enough money to pay for, sacrifice their best halal home animals as a sign of Abraham's wish to sacrifice his only son. The sacrificed animals have to meet specific age and excellence levels otherwise the animal is believed to be an not allowable sacrifice.

The meat from the sacrificed animal is separated into three sections. One third of the share is for home; another third is given to known people of the family; and the other third is given to the impoverished section of the society. The daily assistance practices of those in need of the Muslim society are show evidences during Eid al-Adha by united efforts to see that no needy person is left without an opportunity to receive the sacrificial feast throughout these days.

III. CULTURE OF BAKRA EID IN SHAHDARA

Shahdara culture is so old, and mostly it has Muslim culture. Muslim culture came in Shahdara

when Mughal came in Delhi and ruled it for so many years. When people live at a particular space, they gain some "sense of place" (Stegner cited in Sandford, 1996). It gives special importance to parts such as an recognition of unique geography, the awareness and greatly admired history and how that is supported towards the future in present social groups and a cast of characters. The Muslim religion is one of the religions that practice all their festivals in a unique style and one of the festivals is Bakra Eid. This festival has great importance in the Muslim culture. This can be put to use to the relationship of people of different religion with celebration of community festivals as unique knowledge's are realized. Singles and group relationship with cerebrations as free time experiences can explain what Crouch (1999:257) says as one manner in which people apply space. He advises 'space is used to change the manner of making feel of being somewhere and doing something chosen on one's own principles' (ibid 266). Festivals can thus help in making feel of where people are through an unseen agreement of the stories and unseen features of life in societies. Crouch (1999:260) records the significance of photography in studying community arrangement in specific spaces as a method of making feel of space. The Bakra Eid festival in Shahdara is celebrated by sacrificing goat, camel and buffalo to give gift to God. Rich and wealthy family sacrifice camel continuously for three days but poor people sacrifice goat only on first day of Bakra Eid. After the sacrifice of a goat or camel, the meat is divided into the four parts, one of the parts is given to their son- in- law (damad), one third is given to the poor and needy people and only one part is kept for the family. Horne (1989:62) suggests on the essential announcement of communality in the context of specific celebrations. He explains celebrations are a religious ceremonial break from regularity that marks values in a place of joy in companionship.

On the day of Bakra Eid, Muslim people wear clean and new clothes and theme of the day is Adha (gift) to God and most of the women perform fast. They break their fast by eating heart of a goat that is scarified to the God, and the custom of sacrifice of a goat is done by the males of the family. Crang (1998) relates culture to the space in differing manners for various people. Every person makes sense freely or in groups, while Crang explains (1998: 14-15) that landscape indicates that the environment is being over all moulded in a continuing manner. This has put forward that the landscape, the place in which inhabitants and visitors find themselves, comes to think carefully about the current faith, applications and society.

IV.OBJECTIVES

- To understand the perception of different religion people about specific festival Bakra Eid.
- To understand the nature of transformation city culture specifically in Bakra Eid.
- To examine 'way to sustainably preserve 'Muslim culture of Bakra Eid in Shahdara town.

V.STUDY AREA

Shahdara, is a geographical area in Delhi, of 28.66 latitude and 77.28 longitude separately, which is located at the land alongside of Yamuna river. It is one of the oldest sites of Delhi and fundamental part what is called as *Purani Dilli* (Old Delhi). Shahdara is situated in east-northeast Delhi. It shares border with Uttar Pradesh. Shahdara may also be mentioned mainly as the trans-Yamuna area.

The Shahdara town is located at the central part of the Shahdara district. In history, main Shahdara is known by the name of purana Shahdara, and Shahdara town is called as slum of Yamuna

par. But recently the Delhi municipal government and city development authority emphasized to develop the Shahdara core area by the development of metro corridor in the main Shahdara region. Therefore, population of Shahdara is increasing very fastly and they have direct impact on the culture of city.

Various religious community groups live in Shahdara town as a separate pocket at a very strategic location, in which they regularly practice their cultural festivals and fairs but within different religion pockets also have some intermixing of religion. Hence, no separate boundary is found to distinguish different religions in Shahdara town. All religious communities live near the market of Shahdara town and central area is covered by the development planning by government at Shahdara metro station and in front is covered by the parking area. In whole Shahdara town there is only one parking space that is occupied by the city dwellers. Various religious groups that live in Shahdara show their cultural identity by having Temple, Masjid, and Grudhawa situated in a every street of a particular community (*naked mandir*) and at one place of Shahdara all religious structures are situated in a linear pattern, that represent Shahdara town as one of the cosmopolitan region of Delhi.

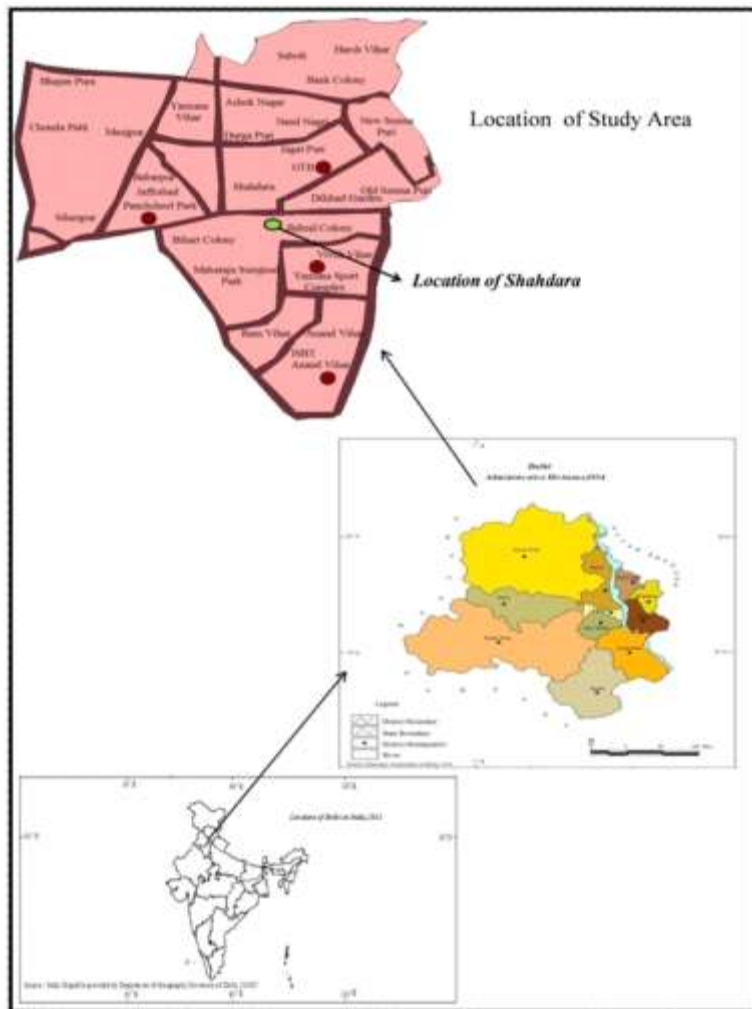


Figure 1: Location of Study Area
Source: Baseline Map by author from Google Map

VI.METHODOLOGY

VI.I. Semi- structured interviews

Semi- structured interviews are significant for managing different respondents view, based on odd sample at specific locations of Shahdara such as *Purana Shahdara*. Interviews are one of the most important source of case study facts. Interviews supply a factual deal to investigation that is concerned very much with everyone's aware encounter of circumstances. Throughout the interviews, people shared how they become aware, interpret and reveal the world in which they live. Open-ended, focused group's discussions are used.

The Interviewees were picked out because of their powerful bonds to the entertaining groups, their essentiality with the role of the case study celebration of Bakra Eid. The reason for selecting the Semi-structured interviews was that I have done a directional case study research and interview mostly relates with detailed information about the respondent views based on a particular issue. Like my one question of interview relates with respondent personal experience on Bakra Eid culture transformation and this question's answers was not given in yes or no manner by anybody. Similarly my major theme also relates with the religion and religion is also very sensitive aspect of the society. Hence I have chosen Semi- structured interview method for this particular theme.

Throughout each interview I found experiences of the transforming culture of Bakra Eid festival in different communities. Interviewees were invited to evaluate the key essential and/or outer interference that shape this change. Most of the Muslim community people so conservative types and when I firstly started taking interview, a Muslim person refused to talk to me with the reason that he was so surprised and thought that I came from a government agency. So he was not giving me information. But I think that he was fear of paper pen work. Then i decided to take interviews with the help of audio recorder. The Recorded interviews and subsequent written versions were stored, approached and used in time of research explanation on the specific topic.

Most of the respondent's interview depends upon the socio-cultural and political conditions that exist in a areal context predicting how decisions were made and who they regard the important stakeholders to be. Through this it became understood what public policy making plans are employed; any strains, restrictions, leaders, competition between communities, group chances, vulnerability of regional structure, the thresholds and momentum for feasible and sustainable celebrations can be predicted. These issues are at the focus to the study's objective.

VI.II. Focus groups

Focus groups provided information on the relationship of festival participants and other religion festivals. A focus group represents an unrealistic circumstance in which people are brought together to explain specific matters and ideas. As inhabitants of the entertaining communities these individuals were able to provide opinions of the community at play during the celebrations, as well as when the community attended to other features of daily life. This allowed for a conceded overview of the specific festival of Bakra Eid.

The focus group interviews help so much to know the different perceptions of each person because many of the Muslim people were not comfortable to give me individual interviews. Therefore,

they sit in a group and give me a detailed interview about the all features of social life.

VI.III. Participant observation

As I am too belong to the same district of Shahdara, as the respondents were, there was no difficulty in making report. In addition, the respondents seemed to be comfortable in discussing their life histories. Direct experience occurs when a field visit is managed throughout the case study (Tellis, 1997). This method is useful for understanding additional facts about the topic being studied. Nearly all supported that they were friendly with each other. Young women were very supportive. They also seemed to be comfortable in discussing their experience in the Babkra Eid time and its transformation in Shahdara. To make sure that the facts collected were close to the 'truth', facts were checked with other respondent who knew the interviewees. Furthermore, the key informants relates with Muslim community verified the information. Carlsen (2003:248) explains participant observation as a useful method to record main elements of an event. As a researcher, i was able to attend many of cultural functions, which provided very deep information about the particular festival. Like I attended the custom of late night celebration, in which all the family women gathered together beautifully dressed up and served delicious food to their husbands (*Shohar*), and their husband gave gift to the wife (Begum) to enjoy the festival (*Mela of Id*).

On the occasion of Bakra Eid, people from different religion gather in the Muslim families and ate the food of Bakra Eid, it seems important to mention here about a tradition that whenever a new Muslim family comes in Shahdara, they are invited to dinner by nearly all the families residing in the Shahdara. The warm welcome and company of people from the same motherland makes adaptation and easy. This type of ceremony helps to enjoy these customs and traditions again and again.

VII.THE DATA OF MY RESEARCH

Case study method: In this research paper, the case study method was adopted. Case study technique is a technique in which the research scholar inquires a single fact ("the case") bounded by time and action and collects in-depth facts by using a different types of data collection processes during a sustained period of time(marriam,1988; yin, 1989). The case study is based on the Bakra Eid celebration. It is a festival bounded with in a particular time period. Like the Bakra Eid festival is celebrated three days continuously and different types of customs and traditions are practiced in a particular time period.

The data of my research is the people, who have given me valuable information about my research theme. My research was based on people with in whom there is categorization in sample. It was strategically planned that what type of data can be collected. There is involvement of people from all the religions like Hindu, Punjabi, Muslim and Christian. Five persons are involved from a particular religion community i.e. Muslim into which the categorization of different gender wise religion population. For example among four women, two relate with others religion and two relate with particular community of Muslim) and five males (two persons relate with other religion and three are related to Muslim community). Data was collected by means of in- depth personal interviews based on a semi- structured interview guide. These personal interviews were useful for constructing a picture of individuals and families, the 'micro' view. For an understanding of the perception of Muslim

community, selected key informants in Shahdara were also interviewed.

The questions for these people involved selected items such as the development of organization (Muslim people member of a city development authority), functions of the organization and interaction within the community. To gain an even more big picture of the community and its social network, i attended all social functions as a participant observer.

A number of strategies were used to collect data. This initial semi- structured interview by face to face interview and participant observation were conducted, over the three days of Bakra Eid on 16th October to 18th October 2013. On the first day of Bakra Eid, only male persons were interviewed. The reason behind that on this particular day mostly male population is engaged in all of the activity related to Bakra Eid. On second and third day of bakra eid, interviews conducted were mostly of women population. There were many types of activities in weekly market and fair was organized in the cityscape of Shahdara.

VIII. CATEGORIES OF DATA COLLECTED:

First: Life histories of people, in which study of their experience of adaptation to changing socio-religious environment of Shahdara dwellers is done.

Second: The experiences of the younger population in Shahdara. Their experiences of growing up in poly- ethnic and multi- cultural society and their perception regarding their Bakra Eid culture transformation and construction a new cultural identity in the society is studied.

IX. DATA ANALYSIS

As per information of the above 30% Muslim population is residing in the area. The aim of the study was to identify the cultural transformation of Bakra Eid festival. So the sample was a purposive one based on the face to face interview of people of different religion. Qualitative data analysis is focused. The research method is people-oriented. The process of finding new things through observation and face-to-face interviewing includes formal and informal talking, non-verbal messages and expression. In this portion of study, i am focusing on the respondent interviews, in terms of their experiences, religious identity as well as cultural transformation of the festivals in Shahdara town.

Katz (1981:135) also explains the descriptive case study technique in his previous studies of the inclination toward formalisation and bureaucratisation that has afterwards been reproduced in other celebration management research (Getz, 1993). The Qualitative data analysis involves the organisation of similar categories and the development of relationships and process models based on constant estimation of the printed material based data (Jennings, 2001: 196).

X. SIGNIFICANT THEMES OF DATA

X.I. Unique Cultural Personality

People from different religion community live in Shahdara with unique cultural identity. Like mostly Hindu and Muslim religion people work in private sector (individual business). Most people give preference to their regional language like Sikh speak in Punjabi, Muslim prefer Urdu and Hindu people

talk in Hindi language. Schools in Shahdara teach Hindi and English language. Only one school exists in Shahdara which teaches Urdu language. Muslim and Punjabi population live in the Shahdara as minority groups than the Hindu population. Their native place is Pakistan (Sindh, Karachi, Lahour, and Rawalpindi) and Utter Pradesh, and Punjab.

Most of the population is living in Shahdara town for more than sixty years. When they came in Shahdara they were alone but in present times they live in a joint family with average family member's seven to eight. Usually Muslim people have seven to eight people in a single family with two or more wives.

X.II. Tradition and Customs

In Shahdara Muslim community people have maintained nearly all the customs related to birth, marriage and festivals and even death.

Bushra describes:

"Almost all the longly established traditions are maintained by the Muslims in Shahdara. In spite of the fact that the community is small in size, but we still keep our culture lively. For illustration, the children's take leave from school on Eid. The men go for the Eid religious services to the mosque. If the eid falls on some working day, then on Saturday and Sunday we have Eid Milan party at our relative home. On eid-al-Azha we give feast to our neighbors. We arrange Quran Khawani (a meeting in which Quran is repeated aloud) if there is a death in a family. At marriages we have the ceremony of mehendi (an occasion for singing and dancing before the wedding day)."

Rubina describes: *"I begun teaching Quran and namaz to my descendants form an early age. Every day in the evening i used to give them Quranic teachings. Before sleeping, i would teach them chapters from the life of Prophet Muhammad. i also teach them about the history of this place. I would read them the letters from homeland. We would speak about the friends in Shahdara. And the mother pretends at the same time as a mother, father, teacher and friend"*

On the day of Bakra Eid, mostly Muslim family buy a goat and in the name of elders of the family they give sacrifice to the God. They care the goat as an agent of God and on the day of Bakra Eid after they read Quran lesson, they sacrifice the goat to the God.

X.III. Cultural Transformation in Shahdara:

One of the characteristic of the culture is that it is never static. But there are variations in the degree of change in certain aspects of culture. In the present study, the following changes were noted.

Uzma says that in Shahdara there is no obsession to follow western way of life, like dressmode, sex, and dating. We who live in the Shahdara Muslim society has been changed with the passing of time like increase in level of education in Muslim women and i also go to regular college to get the education and the upper and middle class families about whom they were referring to are mostly well educated and live comparatively advantageous life. Women belonging to that tend to adopt western norms in order to maintain their social position picture.

"The concept of identity is difficult to find one referring to a person's self-identification. This could be reachable to observe by physical looks of a person as well as the internal emotions. So matters of identity have to be studied indirectly through perceptible pieces of facts." (gravers, 1989:110).

Ibaad Malik says that I came to Shahdara in the time of partition between the India and Pakistan country, and I was lucky to come in Shahdara in Delhi, because Delhi is a capital of India, and it gave me lots of opportunity to shine my personality and earn more money by the private business, and in cultural term a new place identity gives me liberty, which was not possible in the Pakistan with in-laws around.

But the social identity of some people have not been changed, mostly those who are oldest member of the Muslim family.

Nasreen Khan tells that "I am a Muslim; hence my way of life should be able to represent the Islamic way of life. As far as i remind my mother also told us, that since we belong to Muslim community we should behave in a way that should represent our culture. Thus the Muslim culture has been instilled in us from the very starting".

Mrs. Sawita says that " i am a local person of Shahdara town, and within my life history Shahdara has experienced lots of changes and it's not based upon one community but also every religious community experiences lots of changes in their culture. For example, at the time of Hindu festivals like Holi and Diwali, no one came home to give blessing in the past time but now whole community celebrates a festival as a family".

XI.THE CULTURE TRANSFORMATION OF THE BAKRA EID FESTIVAL IN SHAHDARA:

In 18th c to 19th c when the Mughal came in Shahdara, the Bakra Eid culture were very big in the Muslim community and at that time a very small community lived in Shahdara and mostly males participated in the goat sacrifice ceremony and women role was none in this type of customs. But in present times, the Bakra Eid culture has changed very fastly.

Like Zubeda Razwi, Muslim women say that "I am a widow woman, live with two daughters and i am not re-marring to the other person and I always celebrate all types of festivals and customs in Muslim community with my small family. For example, every year I sacrifice a goat to the God because i do not believe in rudimentary tradition in which women can't participate in religious works".

Sara says that Bakra Eid festival is a very important festival for me because my husband gives me special attention and give me lots of money for shopping, and this is a day when i meet all relatives at one point of time and celebrate joy with the others.

On Bakra Eid in ancient time period the goat or camel was sacrificed in the city centre (*beneath the tree, and chabutra*) but that culture transformed in the present days. Most people sacrifice the goat into the house. In the past time, the separation of caste in Muslim community was so wide. Mostly *siyas* and *shunni* community people live in separately but in present times both caste group houses are situated back to back each other.

In the 19th century phase the Bakra Eid festival in Shahdara town was celebrated with a great joy. Like city market on all the three days of Bakra Eid was full by the Muslim women and in the centre of Shahdara town was organised a *mela* of Bakra Eid. But in present days there no space free in the Shahdara town for organising any type of *Mela*. Therefore mostly people go to see to Bakra Eid Mela form city peripheral area, like Sunder Nagri in the north Delhi.

XII.ROLE OF DEVELOPMENT PLANNING IN SHAHDARA

On the one side growth planning gives lots of options to city inhabitants for development in terms of infrastructure, advanced economic growth. But that type of city planning by the government does not help people of different religions to live with peace. For example, the wall of metro corridor in Shahdara town divides different religious groups by the metro wall. But local people are not satisfied by that type of development given by the government. Because city dwellers think that they will not progress with a wall between them.

XIII.CONCLUSION

The special importance of the study is that it is based on religion. It lies in the fact that how different religion people adapted to a new way of city culture and how they preserve their old cultural importance. They affirm their faiths in its lessons and take it as something significant from which they can orient their behavior in all aspects of life.

In addition, these well- defined social borders of religious identity have given them a clarity that protect and increase their religion from the feature of a minority status. As a further matter, I would explain that their religion provide them with a source of dealing with the options and contradictions included within their social surrounding.

It is important to note that although the young generation people interviewed disapprove the present moral and social situations in Shahdara town, they are not marking a straight choice between being a Hindu and the Muslim. There is a suggested connection between various spiritual groups present in the Shahdara town, which has been expressed in the course of the interviews. Their deep ethnic and spiritual commitments are interrelated to establish their religious identification.

The cultural transformation of the Bakra Eid in Shahdara town is also based on some religious contradictions existing in Shahdara, but most of the Muslim population has faith in their traditional value systems and they adopt a new way for joying tradition value customs and tradition.

The overall goal of this research has been to identify and describe the transformation of culture among the Muslim of Shahdara. It focused on the religion not only in one aspect to transform the city culture but others aspects also contributes to transform the city culture. The social factors in liberal democratic society, with well – formed city space provided to different religious groups in Shahdara town that allow for a complexity of processes and responses in the cultural sphere.

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