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Ethnographic Report of Medical Colleges of Pakistan

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Introduction

It is a common perception that hostel life has unique impact on the life pattern of individuals; living in alienation makes them socially and behaviorally atypical. The boarding house or hostel life imprints deep rooted manners and socializes them differently from day scholars. A hostel mostly encompasses more than hundred inhabitants come from different ethnic, social, cultural, geographical and economical groups and they make a culture, within the hostel having distinct values, norms, bit different language and with their own mechanism of social control; the ways of interaction are different, and the individuals living in this “boarding culture” are bound to follow the *off the record* rules.

In hostel specifically Medical College Hostels (MCHs) are most divergent and culturally enriched as the culture of MCHs is too discrete from the culture and culture of other hostels of different schools/varsities on the basis of interaction, behavior and duration. Their unique lingual and non-lingual communication, their way of rigging the newcomers, MCHs common rooms, the method of stigmatization, the way of gossiping and interaction is identical and not found anywhere else, and these variations have always compelled me to ponder on why do they write like this? Why do they use abusive language? Why do they are so much integrated and why they act and think different? Even the boarders are unconscious that their way of conduct is different from the conventional boarders. Their lingual and non-lingual communication is so out of the ordinary that a third person is not able infer their terms and gestures easily, and the influence is so strong that hostel staff gets imprints of MCHs “culture” on their general behavior.

When asked about certain differences 80% of the boarders negate that they have a distinct culture, after coining some of major differences I was able to assure them that they got some values that are unusual and seems odd/somber for me being an outsider in them, and the Doctors explained the various aspects and rationales of their differences and why they uphold certain values and norm?

Objectives

To report various pigeonhole values, norms, ethics, behavior lingual and non-lingual gestures of Students of Medical College Hostel and account their validation and rationale.

Rationale

I have chosen this topic for the reason that whenever I visited MCHs I felt difference, miscellany and variation in the living pattern of boarder of MCHs. The MCHs are huge in size and facilitates boarders from across the country and they form a unique and outlier culture, unobserved due of estrangement from the mainstream. I felt that these students behave normal in the civic life but alter their attitude after entering or re-entering into MCHs .One may figure out the differences easily but the will skeptic about the grounds and rationale. Some of their terms and values may seem odd to a stranger, but any value or behavior does not erupt abruptly, the evolution of values in any culture is gradual and with sound justifications, my focal point was the presence, evolution and need of this unique culture. As I have been skeptic about this culture for years.

Biases

For I have spent merely five days in MCH so I would not be able to sketch the culture from an insider's view and would not be proficient enough to understand

the thing as they are rather I was examining the things and happenings as they were being presented to me. These boarders are thought to be the cream of nation and are esteemed by the society; being part of society I was reluctant to observe them independently as there was some element of reverence between me and them. I am student of Social Science and was studying sub-culture of professional Medical College and am myself a boarder for the last four years I may perhaps be ethnocentric while reporting and evaluating a culture of any other hostel trying compare MCHs and my college hostels. Living in Lahore and being obsessed with “Lahore Lahore hay” compel me to shield things appended to Lahore and in general Faisalabad is considered as the “Largest Pind” of Pakistan, so it was in my mind that whatever am observing is happening in a remote embryonic city which was my opinion despite the fact that Faisalabad is the third largest city of Pakistan.

Site

I surveyed three MCHs, The Ibne-Sina Hall & Iqbal Hall of Punjab Medical College, Faisalabad and the Hostel of Services Institute of Medical Sciences Lahore, but my focus was Ibn-e-Sina Hall and Iqbal hall due to distinctive culture and trends. These hostels are attached to the Medical Institutes and are adjacent to corresponding Institutes.

Methods

I tried to get insider’s view by observing the subject culture for 100 hours, I spent most of my time with the different groups of hostel and conducted interviews, both by letting them know that I am writing a report and without informing them am conducting a survey, formal and informal interviews were conducted and I tried my best to mingle in them so that I would be able to report their view and beseeched them to treat me like am their mate and to avoid giving me etiquette of guests.

Respondents:

I conducted more than eight formal interviews from boarders of different batches, but the number of informal interviews could exceed 20, including a now serving medical officer formerly a boarder at Ibn-e-Sina hall PMC.

Theme

There could be many more aspect to search on the subject culture, but I investigated the apparent features. Some of the observations are as under.

Communication

It was under observation that these borders have some exclusivity in the way they communicate with each other, their gossiping and calling is obsessed with abuses and this culture has developed its own expressions and idiom, when the question was raised to a First year student he said “ *Yahan aney sey pehley main bhot enthusiastic tha, medical college k hostel k barrey main bara socha tha keh bhot achey aur well-mannered banday hongay, but pehley do dinun mein hi pata chal giya, yahan ki galian aur isharey daikh kar banda hairan hojata hay k aysey b doctors hotey hain*”. The view of this first year student is spells out the uniqueness of their way of communication. But with the passage of time and due to socialization and narcotizing effect they use the same language which seemed unusual and nasty to them at first. They use an idiom “to write some one on ones genitals” mean to ignore someone, and this idiom is found only in PMC hostels. I haven’t heard such an idiom anywhere else. They thump, pat and whack extraordinary. When I asked a most senior about these manners he responded “*It’s because we have a longer tenure as boarders, and that we due to terrible nature of PROF can intermingle with our friends and family and have to stay in hostel so to enjoy few moments we pat and use our abusive language and the life without this environment will be terrible and none of us could survive here*”.

The insulting language or abusive language is common in them and they don’t feel any inconvenience of its excessive usage, as being jargons aren’t easy to understand by any outsider and these offensive words have no meaning for them, they don’t take it offensive, insulting or taboo. Some interesting abusive expressions are “*to have minus fifty temperature on one genitals*” refers to a person who is not good or interested in academic activities like attending lectures,

attending “WARDS”, “*genitals rider* ” means a parasite who always depends on his mates.” *Hoshiari*” is a term coined to refer Sexual frustration or desire.

L-Karana to cheat someone, *Level Hojana* something that exceeds limits, *Sawari Krana* Treat for 1st year after fooling, *Shootain marna* to tease girls specially at night by spurting light straight into eyes.

Stigmatization

By spending few hours in any MCH one can experience that everyone has a stigma attached to him. Why do they attach stigma? It is a question that I was unable to figure out, but every attached stigma has its own rationale. They have uniqueness in stigmas, mostly terms from Medical Science, like *Perichondrium* for someone with failed love (Nakam Aashiq), it's a name of a tissue which envelops the cartilage, *Chicctorus* for anyone with fair complexion (Pathans & Kashmiries specially).

Theta (θ) the eight Greek symbols is a stigma attached to the bookworms and one who crams the books the whole day or is concerned with curricular activities only, calling someone theta mean to ask for his wrath, theta is taken as harsh and explicit abuse and no one tolerates to be entitled theta. *Khuska* is another expression for thetas with low magnitude of seriousness towards studies. I asked various thetas about this stigma, by no means they accepted that they are thetas; it was a strange response from two thetas am familiar since childhood.

Scooter stands for Day scholar and the boarder have enmity towards day scholar considers them “*genital rider*”, covetous and green-eyed. When day scholars join boarders in no time they form two confronting groups. The Scooters and boarders, and start arguing for no reason, however it doesn't have an effect on the hospitability and sociability of the boarders, but the boarders prefer their hostel mate to share and to be with.

Luu'nds are the boarders having non-serious attitude towards academic activities, these are the one who are the real inhibitors of the MCHs culture and are responsible to uphold the values, though during PROFs they hibernate and seize their activities for exams, but the most active and unrestrained creature found in MCH are *Luu'nds*. The superlative form of *Luu'nd* is "Minus 50 temperature on genitals".

Gluing wish Cards on Doors of Mates

Affixing "Best Wishes" cards on doors of senior mates is a tradition has developed into a long-established custom or belief passed on from one generation to another in this culture. It happens during the PROFs, they believe that by affixing cards they can show the respect and care, and it matters a lot for the person who is being wished. A final year student said "*third year mein mujhey ksi ney wish nahin kia, mjhey both bura feel hua, then main ney apni social interface barha di..... Jab wish kia jata hay bohot acha lagta hay, sari tension muk jati hay, bnda thora sa relax feel karta hay.*"

No one knows about its evolutions how it started, but they are swollen with pride of it, a third year student said "*States mein PROF kay dinun main family ka koi bnada request kar k hostel main sath rehney aajata hay, takeh 18-24 ghantey parhney waley student ki care karey, but hum aik dossrey ki khud care kartey hain, aik burger, pizza, cold drink PROF ki tyari dinun main bhot bari cheez lagta hay, aap ka "morale" high ho jata hay, thori dair k lieyey aap ki attention divert ho jati hay, ap relax ho jatey ho*". This tradition is rare in any other boarding system, it only prevails in this culture only. And these cards are thought to be the status symbols, anyone having scores of these cards is thought to be one with broader social circle and have some significance among others.

More over I observed during the PROFs they have immense pressure of study and go irrational, I observed one of the students there worte "*Yeh waqt guzar jayey ga*" and "*ik jis peh haq tha gamme doran ka main ney wo sans bhi tery liyey rakh chori hay*".

Group Cohesion

Though group cohesion is found among the boarders every where, but I notice a strong group cohesion between the boarders of MCHs, they observe it as a need. *“Agar ksi aik larkey kay sath bhi masla hota hay to 300 larkey akhtey sarak peh nikal atey hain,, Quon keh ham sab ka muffed isi main hay k ham akhty rahain aur aik dusrey ko support karain, agar aisa na karain tou ksi ka kam na nikley”*. Said a final year student of Iqbal Hall.

Rigging

The practice of making fun of newcomer is common in boarding house, but these Hostels have their own way of Rigging the new comers, very offensive, odious and cruel. *“ Aisa sirf aap sochthey hain, yahan peh sab theik lagta hay, ham ksi ki beyzti nei kartey, aik tou yeh custom hay, aur dusri bat yeh ki ham yeh sab is liyey karty hain keh jo naya Larka atta hay wo aik dum sey na bhaggay, Rigging kay bad Sawari karwatey hain, aur usko boltey hain k yeah aik mazzaq tha, ainda jab bhi koi problem ho to freely bata daina”* said a senior student defending an assault on their customs. It is not intended to harass or to insult someone, rather the motive is to socialize the newcomer and to loosen up his annoyance. *“Start mein bari beyzti feel karta hay specially jab gandi gandi batain aur ganday ganday kam krwatey hain, but Sawari kay bad sab samjh ajata hay aur ham apni problems easily share kartey hain seniors sey”*

Conclusion

- Medical College Hostels forms a distinct culture, and have out of the ordinary rules, and traditions.
- These customs and traditions makes their tough and stretched period at hostel easy and comfortable to live, lacking this lingo and culture it would be different than normal life.
- Every cultural and social divergence has its own rationale behind it, and gone through a process of evolution, some traditions have been overlooked and they are not in practice since they are not needed now.
- The way of living is an amalgam of different cultures, social groups and economic classes. Making it more divergent and exclusive.
- It has deep rooted impact on the approaching life the “Doctors” and makes them capable to understand people from different region across the country and globally as they interact with foreigner borders too.

Appendix I Terms and Idiom

MCHs	Medical College Hostels
A Luund	Non Serious
Chicttorus	One with Fair complexion
Genital Rider	A parasite, green-eyed person
Hoshiari	Sexual desire
Level Hogia	To happen something unusual
L-Kraana	To deceive some one
Qanon ko hath mein laina	To grab own genitals
Sawari Krana	Treat for 1st year after fooling
Scooter	“Saraiki” and day scholars
Shehzada	Remains absents mostly
Shootain marna	To put light with torch on
Theta/Khuska	Parhako
To have Minus 50 Temperature on genitals	Tension less
To write on genitals	To ignore Some One

Appendix II Pictures





