

## **AIPS STRG Abstract- Muntazir Ali**

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Muntazir Ali AIPS Short Term Grant Proposal 2023 Chitral as a “tribal” region: The promise and perils of integration, 1947-1969 Summary: In the Summer of 2023, I propose to conduct archival and ethnographic research for my dissertation chapter in Chitral, Pakistan. I will work in Archives Library, Peshawar; the library of the University of Chitral, the Municipal Library of Chitral, District Records, and two private collections. Research Statement: My dissertation, provisionally titled *Between Samarkand and Delhi: Space, Place, and Belonging in greater Badakhshan, ca. 1750-1969* is about conceptions of space and place-making practices in Chitral, a node in the historical “greater Badakhshan” region and a mountainous district in today’s north-western Pakistan, between ca. 1750 and 1968 C.E. The project concerns the multiple ways in which the experience of space and place structures how people relate to the world and each other. “Experience” here refers to both physical engagements with space, such as travel and building roads, as well as intellectual interactions, such as descriptions of place in poetry, historical narratives, folk stories, travelogues, epistolary material, tourism pamphlets, and ethnological and military reports. Foregrounding space as a crucial factor in the formation of memory, the past, social relations, and identities, the project focuses on how particular experiences of space are enacted in both oral and written sources, their religious and sociopolitical antecedents, and their social functions during three distinct phases of Chitral’s history. The first of these eras covers the period from ca. 1750 to ca. 1860, the second from 1880 to 1940, and the third from 1947 to 1969. At the core of this project is an attempt to imagine alternative forms of sovereignty and belonging, substantiated through close attention to historical and contemporary representations from and about the region. Program of Study: For my archival research, I want to look at a broad range of material including, but not limited to, official documents, project reports, tourism pamphlets, visual artifacts (videotapes and photographs), airline brochures, travelogues, poetry, songs, and stories. The focus is on developing a picture of the multiple representations of Chitral as a geographic and cultural region and their mutual conversations during the period 1947 to 1969. Chitral was among the first “princely states” to accede to Pakistan in 1947 and its “princely state” status was abolished in 1969 when it became part of the Malakand Agency and a “provincially administered tribal area.” The period saw the emergence of new forms of representations of Chitral, forms that sought to valorize the indigenous culture of the region at the same time as harnessing it in the service of Pakistani national integration. Preliminary forays into the available material suggest that these representations intersected and communicated with each other along quite distinct ideological axes: nationalist, pre Islamic/indigenous, and pan-‘greater Badakhshani.’ The ethnographic component of this research seeks to collect oral histories about the period, especially recollections of the abolition of Chitral’s “princely state” status to embed storytelling and humanize the historiography of this period in the region’s history.