

## **Representation of Dawoodi language and culture of Mominabad tribe (Hunza): A step towards revitalisation**

A loss of linguistic identity is interconnected with the loss of cultural identity and a sense of isolation among the language speakers; this situation is evident in the case of Mominabad's tribe. In this qualitative research, we examine the reasons behind the present-day status of their language (Dawoodi) being declared as severely endangered<sup>1</sup>. Through analysis of interviews (both individual and focus group ones) of Mominabad's tribespeople, this paper intends to present the causal effect of the previously misnamed Dawoodi language of the Mominabad tribe as Domaaki. This paper also aims to clear the misconceptions about the Mominabad tribe as the first step towards Dawoodi language and culture revival. The interviews with Mominabad's people represent their point of view on how in Hunza (located in Gilgit-Baltistan, the northern part of Pakistan) they have been socially and economically stigmatised by the other local tribes in the region who used to call them by a derogatory name Dom (low caste singers and dancers) and their language Domaaki (derived from Dom). These terms gained such popularity in the region that the researchers (such as Lorimer, 1939; Schmid, 2007; Weinreich, 2010) who came to the Hunza Valley to research the tribe's language and culture, accepted the narrative of other tribes in the region and called them Doms and their language Domaaki, Domni, Bericho, or Doma: all derogatory terms. This situation has led to certain misconceptions about Mominabad tribespeople, their culture and their language. They eventually got themselves officially named Mughals in 2012. The current generation has become economically strong with good standing in the society, but they still face repercussions regarding their language and culture. They have recently renamed their language Dawoodi (Torwali, 2020) but need it to be recognised officially. The main reason that Dawoodi is near extinction is that due to the social marginalisation, the younger generation has preferably adopted Burushaski (Hunza's regional language) and deliberately stopped using Dawoodi to avoid identity malignation at the hands of other tribes in the region. The elders of the tribe fear that if not revived, not only their language would become silent, but their cultural identity would also be lost forever.

**Keywords:** Dawoodi, Domaaki; endangered language; language revitalisation

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ethnologue.com/language/dmk>).