KALASH

The challenge of development with identity

MEANINGS AND ISSUES

By
Javed Ahmed Malik & Arshad Waheed
Institute of Social Policy
Islamabad
Contents

1. Prelude ........................................................................................................................................01
   1.1 The Position ............................................................................................................................01
   1.2 Unfolding the world of Kalash ..................................................................................................06
2. Kalasha of today: Life and times ..................................................................................................15
   2.1 Identity, rights and voice .........................................................................................................15
   2.2 The state of (under) development in Kalash ...........................................................................25
3. Details of some of the key institutional arrangements .................................................................36

Annexure: 1 Some of the Kalasha terms .........................................................................................41
Annexure: 2 Some models of development management in Chitral ..............................................42

Acronyms

ILO International Labor Organization
UC Union Council
MMA Muthihada Majlas Amal
PRA Participatory Rural Appraisal
NGO Non Government Organization
FGD Focus Group Discussion
MMR Maternal Mortality Rate
IMR Infant Mortality Rate
AKHS Aga Khan Health Services
AKRSP Aga Khan Rural Support Program
SRSP Sarhad Rural Support Program
KISP Kalash Ingenious Support Program
UNESCO United Nation’s Educational, Science and Cultural Organization

Authors Note:

We acknowledge the services of Arshad Bhatti, Durri-Shahwar Mirza, Tahira Sarwar and Staff of Institute of Social Policy, Islamabad. Without their support this paper could not have taken the present shape. We also acknowledge the services of Lakshan Bibi, Ifitikhar Durrani and many others who were extremely helpful in actual management of the field research. Lastly, we acknowledge all the members of Kalasha tribes and families for their willingness to cooperate with us during the field investigation exercise for this position paper.

Islamabad November 2005
Sandai piSTyak-o dün/a jāgeme, ki-khe ~ baru pariu.
From here afterwards the world I will look at, just how time will go.
(A local Kalashi song)
1.1 - The Position

Minorities and their rights in Pakistan have always been subject of heated debates in Pakistan. Various regimes, military as well as democratic ones, have actually followed their own political motives rather than any just rights based policy to set an agenda for minorities’ social, economic and political rights. No wonder that they generally worked more for Muslim majority than for minorities and the minorities’ right to practice their own belief system with dignity.

Although, there are constitutional provisions and safeguards available for minorities in 1973 constitution which give them equal rights, the state has generally failed to take affirmative action to actually mainstream minorities’ representation and voice on national scene until recently. Minorities’ recent extra appearance in public representative institutions due to their quota in elected assemblies at local, provincial and national level is due to pre 2002 electoral reforms of current government led by President Musharraf. However, this important step in terms of increasing political representation needs to be followed by measures which could actually improve their life chances\footnote{A term widely used by Weber while discussing that life chances are equal for all individuals in a society as against Marx arguments of class division for such chances. Our quote here is not in the backdrop of this ideological discussion but is used in general terms.} in economic and social arenas. Moreover, within minorities, there are indigenous groups and communities which need even more protection. Most of the indigenous communities around the world as well as in Pakistan are struggling hard to develop without changing much of their culture. Modernization without any checks carries a great risk of changing their control over their natural resources and can make them even more vulnerable. The fact that some
minorities do not share the same culture and religion like other minorities, and are less in numbers, living in geographically far flung areas add extra responsibility on the state and society for their rights protection. The state of their rights and identity protection needs state’s attention and it is there where Pakistan really lagged behind. First, the indigenous populations and groups could never become the central point of political debate due to their sheer less number, and therefore political irrelevance. Second their exclusion has been so systematic that they were not even attended by media, researchers or intellectuals. It is only recent that the issue of land ownership in development projects has raised concerns on national level that how modern development actually can deprive local indigenous people of the resources they owned since centuries. And yet the level of debate still has to add a lot of content and seriousness in order to make majority aware and sensitive to indigenous people’s rights. The sustainable development practice demands policy makers to put rights in the heart of development planning and implementation. The old age isolationist and therefore exclusionist development model which only catered the needs of selected urban populations is not relevant for minorities and indigenous groups. They should rather be put in the center of policy and planning for development.

Among the indigenous groups, it is the Kalasha tribes in Northern Pakistan which represent one of the oldest minorities’ cultures. Known as Kafirs or infidels, Kalasha actually represent a unique culture of a very old and primitive society in the world, dating back to at least 3000 years. Some call them descendents of Alexander the great. Once scattered all over Chitral with far more political and social clout, now they are located in three main valleys of Ramboor, Bumburaite and Birir, and have reduced to 3,4000 people in number. Over time, due to their rate of conversion to Islam, high infant and maternal mortality rate in Kalasha women, and increasing trend
of migration of many Muslim outsiders to Kalasha valleys, their population, influence and clout is slowly decreasing in the area. If situation remains the same, the danger is that Kalasha culture will be wiped out from the face of world.

In pre 1900 Kalash, for instance, there still were some red Kafirs in upper Chitral area\(^2\) and Dobash was their headquarter. They were called Red Kafirs because they used to wear red. Afterwards Afghani Muslims attacked them and converted all of them to Islam. Now red Kafirs simply do not exist. Converted red Kafirs now are Pashto speakers and live mostly in upper Chitral. Their disappearance is the evidence of diminishing phenomenon of Kalash. Yet the pre-British conversion process was different than the post British phenomena, because at that time, market and political forces were not very active here. The situation worsened further due to current state institutions’ lack of capacity and insensitivity to deal with minority concerns.

In lower Chitral and in the valleys of Birir, Rumboor and Bumburaite, Black Kafirs survived due to the economic self sufficiency of their core valleys in times when the economic pressures were far less and market forces were not aggressively exposed to rural societies of Kalasha. Now the conditions are different. Their number is very low and market forces are far more aggressive. Muslim traders from down country are coming and buying their land, forests and other resources. The inflow of outsiders is expected to increase in future as an all year running road connecting Chitral with

\(^2\) In-depth interviews with several key informants in Ramboor, Bumburaite and Barir from Sep 22 to Sep 29 2005.
Peshawar will start working after the construction of Lawari tunnel. This will fasten the process of commercialization in Chitral and Kalasha region and making its culture even more vulnerable.

Unless a whole new set of legal, administrative and financial measures is taken to actually preserve and enact Kalasha culture, the danger is that simmering Muslim majority, lack of culturally sensitive education for Kalasha children and increased commercialism and consumerism will eventually ravage Kalasha and perish them from the world scene. That will be a great loss and would make Pakistan poore in terms of its cultural diversity. It is a challenge for Pakistan state’s ability to protect its diverse populations and cultures from social, cultural and even political standpoint for Pakistan. Some people also argue that from an economic and tourism standpoint, Kalasha’s disappearance would actually mean end of any kind of Tourism in Chitral at least, if not in all northern areas. That would take away much needed revenue and international image and reputation of Pakistan. However, the fact that the Kalasha people can survive with their own belief systems and culture is far more important than any other economic concerns. They are actually now having the status of endangered species. Pakistan is custodian of a heritage of thousand of years’ history and it should rise to the occasion to protect this culture. If we are not able to save them from social, culture and commercial aggressions, then we as citizens of this world are not doing a good job.

This position paper, therefore, aims to state that:

i. Kalasha culture, having a unique history and belief system is one of world’s oldest primitive traditions and therefore is part of international heritage.
ii. Kalasha culture and population have visible and potential threats from non-Kalasha dominated social, political and cultural institutions in the area.
iii. How this context is contributing in general state of underdevelopment of Kalasha region and its people
iv. And finally how a market force led by state’s pro growth tourism policy at the expense of natural resource degradation is actually is in direct conflict with Kalasha cultural preservation cause.
v. Finally the paper attempts to document the change processes in order to reach
some broader sustainable development implications for Kalash community which could help in designing culturally sensitive development program for the Kalash culture and area.

1.2 Unfolding the world of Kalash

1.2.1 Identity Contextual debates and meanings in Pakistan

The world is at the threshold of what most historians predicted as a complex era in terms of socio-politico and cultural transformation. Human beings are increasingly becoming transient than belonging to one place at a time. Their roots have faded behind the growing phenomenon of globalization while man-made boundaries and geographical locations are forcing them to be categorized as a nation they don’t identify themselves with. It becomes important, therefore, today than ever before, to research and analyze the issue of “identity” especially among those who feel left out of the main-stream population with a defined geographic and geo-political region. The issue of development of indigenous Kalasha people of northern areas and protection of their identity lies exactly at the center of this debate. The preference for identity in Pakistan and its geographical vicinity is based on the clan-oriented nature of the society, which values and actively seeks similarities in social group identity based on several factors, including religious, sectarian, ethnic, and tribal/clan affiliation. Religious affiliation is itself multi-layered and includes religious considerations other than being Muslim, such as sectarian identity (e.g. Shia or Sunni, etc.) and religious orientation within the sect (Ishshar, Ismaili etc). Mainstream politics in India and later in Pakistan, small wonders, really did not touch the diverse and delicate issues of various group’s representation and their politics as a core issue of their political concerns.

---

3 ISP is thankful to Aziz Jan at Aga Khan Development Network, Washington D.C for providing background research support on the issue related to the concept of identity.

4 (Parish, 1999)

5 The issue of trailing ones roots is in itself controversial as many historians think that geographical circumstance rather than human race defines ones roots.

6 Identity is not “what you are but what you ought to be”. Man must have preferences for being known as a social unit of a clan, caste, religion or ethnic division but he finds himself in a limbo over who he really is.

7 (Marfat, 2000)
The issue of identity in Northern Areas

Being a diverse lot, the countries making the Central Asia⁸ have a common denominator—the harshness of their shared landscape, sweeps of desert and near desert raven by soaring mountain chains: the Himalayas, Karakorums, Hindu Kush, the Pamirs, the Safed Koh⁹. Mountains mean life in this area¹⁰. Snowmelt feeds the rivers that support cities and farms; like in Pakistan the Indus nourishes one of the most intensely irrigated regions on earth.

The British historian Arnold Toynbee¹¹ has written in ancient times that, the Central Asia was a “round-about,” a traffic circle, with routes converging “from all quarters of the compass and from which routes radiate out to all quarters of the compass again.” Those routes—silk roads and spice roads arcing across mountain passes, leaping from spring to well to river valley—knitted Afghanistan and the other countries into a single line. Mighty conquerors strode these routes: Cyrus and Darius of Persia, Alexander, Attila, Mahmud, Genghis Khan, Tamerlane, Babur. The number of dynasties, domestic and foreign grew to more than a score¹². From India in the third century B.C came Buddhism with Asoka, a bloody conqueror who became an evangelist of peace, renouncing the killing of any living thing. Buddhism endured for hundreds of years, time enough and more for artisans to carve soaring Buddhas in the rock of Bamian.

The harsh and often remote high mountain valleys of the Western Himalayas, Karakorams, and Hindu Kush¹³ are among the most demanding settings in the world for social and economic development. About 900,000 people scattered over the rugged territory of the Northern Areas are living a life unlike those in rest of Pakistan.

---

⁸ Many consider Northern Areas of Pakistan more closer to Central Asia than main lands of Indu Pakistan. Even the politics of Chitral, for instance, has been influenced more by Afghan invaders and colonization of British India really did not affect Chitral in administrative terms. The Chitral rulers had an agreement with British for this arrangement.

⁹ These are the extensions of the existing gigantic mountain ranges.


¹¹ His treaties on civilization and history


¹³ The most noteworthy mountain ranges in the N. Areas which itself forms the cross-section of these rocky mountains.
As a background to the religious, historical and socio-cultural factors that have helped define the bounds of cultural diversity for Muslims in undivided India and more specifically since the creation of Pakistan\(^4\), the people in the Northern Areas often find themselves at odd with history and civilization. And indigenous tribes of Kalash in Northern areas were no exception that had the challenge of identity and rights protection in Muslim dominated Chitral where religious identity actually played a crucial role in politics.

1.2.2 Identity, culture and Indigenous people

zinagani ta samun/ -mi hule, mai des ze dunya.

Life so-muchindeed became, (for) my community and world.

(A fake song in Bumbraiite)

Indigenous people have been at disadvantage earlier on as it took time to actually establish their status. There are conflicting positions in literature over the definition of being indigenous. Lately, international human rights system has enabled the world to come up with consensus definition\(^5\). ILO, for instance, defines indigenous people as “the decedents of original inhabitants of a geographic region prior to colonization who have maintained some or all of their linguistic, cultural and organizational characteristics”\(^6\). Later, the UN’s draft universal declaration on indigenous rights has adopted similar definitions. Moreover, self identification of related communities that they are indigenous is a fundamental criterion to consider who is indigenous?\(^7\).

There is strong evidence from around the world which shows indigenous people being disadvantaged on almost all social indicators. Mostly they are

\(^4\) In Pakistan both ethnic affiliation (e.g. Sindhi, Baloch, Punjabi, etc.) and membership of specific Biraderis or Zaat/Qoms are additional integral components of social identity. Within the bounds of cultural integration defined by the knowledge of historical demography and contemporary social stratification can be valuable in understanding the changing patterns.


\(^6\) convention no 169 on Indigenous and Tribal peoples in independent countries adopted in the draft OAS Declaration on indigenous rights in 1989

\(^7\) ibid.
poor with high mortality rate and low literacy levels\textsuperscript{18} and are generally located in most of the fragile eco-systems. And yet indigenous people have developed the capacity to use the environment in a sustainable way and without destroying it\textsuperscript{19}. Their practices in using and living with the environment provide the feasible model for the integrated and sustainable use of natural resources\textsuperscript{20}. But the question is who is going to affect whom in the larger picture of sustainable development?

Despite the unique nature and relevance of indigenous people, their social and economic state of underdevelopment and mostly their political powerlessness make them extremely vulnerable to manage and control the change process on their own terms. The core issue from the sustainable development stand point is that how to actually achieve what the vice President of Bolivia stated at Inter-American Bank Headquarter that “development for indigenous people is development with identity”.

Kalasha people are living in the Northern most district of Pakistan, Chitral. Together, they exhibit, perhaps, one of the oldest and ancient traditions and cultures. Although, less in number and threatened by society, market and prevailing majority biased democracy, they still are able to display the most colorful way of living and celebrating their culture. Kalasha are tolerant people and have survived centuries of subtle, and elaborate onslaughts on their culture which included invasions from Afghanistan and upper Chitral. However, the society is yet to contribute in giving them their due pride and identity which they deserve being the son of the land and fellow citizens. State needs to come forward and treat them as a special case to restore their confidence, put safeguards to protect their identity and create conditions in which they could fearlessly practice their culture and living.


\textsuperscript{20} ibid
In the following sections, we will try to make a case for preemptive social economic and administrative measures to safeguard Kalasha tribe in a way that they could deal with their development challenges and empower themselves enough to protect from economic, social and political onslaughts on Kalasha21 culture and identity.

1.2.3 The Kalash culture, religions and its festivals22
The Kalash people are resident of currently Ayon union council in District Chitral and live in three valleys known as Bumburaite, Birir and Ramboor. Kalash is an ancient tribe consisting roughly of 3000-4000 inhabitants23 and is able to maintain its ancient culture which is as old as 2000 BC24.

Kalash culture is based on a series of inter related stories of thanking God and have certain symbols to represent him. Then there is a whole set of rituals and festivals to cherish health and crops and fruits they have. There are social events where relatives pay tribute to their relatives and children. Finally, the sacrificial and celebrations which is a community event. All of this belief system is disciplined by local clergy headed by Kazi, an elected position held generally by old men and women. Different times and places are used for various rituals and most of them are community events. All such ancient places have their own peculiar archeology where even the design details and symbols have meaning for Kalasha traditions. There is also difference in the meaning of some rituals in three Kalasha valleys. For instance the festival of Pool is celebrated in Birir in which no one can eat the grapes and other fruits until they are not fully ripe. Community has a system in Birir to make others to observe that. On a given day, all eat it together and celebrate. This tradition is non existent in Bumburaite and Ramboor (Please see the map).

21 Kalsha as a word is used locally in Chitral to explain them as a separate community. It is more like the word “Europeans” which means people who live in Europe.
22 <http://www.indigenouspeople.com/kalash.htm> as well as established from several FRA sessions conducted in Ramboor, Bumburaite and Birir.
23 Give a specific reference or discussion around their exact number,
Figure 1. Map of three areas of former Kalasha world.
This shows the aspect of diversity even in three valleys. Below is some detail of their religious places and their significance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jastak Han</td>
<td>Village Dancing Place where Kalashas go during the festivals. It exists in each of the village. The place has a peculiar look with huge wooden room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bashulini</td>
<td>The place where women during their pregnancies and menstruation periods are sent to stay, to ward off impurity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Warin</td>
<td>An open place (some times covered) in village where Kalash go to ask for goodness of God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greemoon</td>
<td>Similar place where Kalash go to ask some questions to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paraba</td>
<td>A place for prayer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahadev</td>
<td>Only site where goats’ sacrifice is given. Only men go there and offer prayers and then come back with meat. After that all go to the dance party.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engro,</td>
<td>A prayer and sacrificial place for different time of the year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yatz</td>
<td>Place where wheat cultivation celebration is done</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eathein</td>
<td>Kalasha people’s collective pilgrimage place</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deradool</td>
<td>Pilgrimage made once in year for happiness and disease prevention</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Festivals
The Kalash people thank the Creator during their festivals. The festival is meant to give thanks to the almighty for blessing them. Their dancing is one way of showing happiness and thankfulness towards the Creator.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Festival</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JHOSHI 14th - 15th May</td>
<td>This celebration is organized to pay thanks to the Almighty. They celebrate the arrival of the spring season with new hopes and aspirations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UCHAO 20th August</td>
<td>Kalash people observe Uchao, the harvest celebration to pay homage to the Almighty that blessed them with fruits and other crops. They prepare cheese, buttermilk and corn to celebrate Uchao.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHOIMUS 7th - 22nd December</td>
<td>Choimus is the function of giving thanks to the Creator for their bumper crop, fruit, animals and food stored for the winter. People sacrifice animals in the name of the Almighty; rejoice with all the blessings such as fruit, cheese and corn. They show their thanks by dancing and singing together, enjoying every moment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Kalasha of today: Life and times

2.1 Identity, rights and voice

2.1.1 The Kalash and their identity protection
The indigenous people and communities living in Northern Areas and the issue of their identity have never remained central question in a social or political debate. Kalash suffered even more than other minorities because they are not only non-Muslims but are also very little in numbers. As a result, they could never become the core concern of policy makers and political parties dealing with issues of rights of various communities.

Additionally, the scenic beauty of the area coupled with the uniqueness of Kalash culture attracts large numbers of domestic tourism which is not trained to respect the diversity of Kalasha culture. Such uncontrolled tourism and its related market can oppress local culture and its living. This is in addition to non Kalasha preachers’ efforts to change their belief system. As prevailing legal, social and economic system is not sensitive to their unique cultural needs, there are hardly any constitutional safeguards for this perishing tribe to protect its culture and way of life. Along with an unavailability of Kalasha’s cultural specific education, Kalasha children have been studying Muslim Curriculum in Schools for years, many of the converters, small wonder; belong to the age bracket of 10-25. High infant and maternal mortality rates and expensiveness of the some of Kalasha rituals are major cause of their decreasing number. In this situation there is a real need of integrated developmental, administrative and cultural preservation measures to prevent the threat of being perished from the world scene.

---

25 The term adopted from Ayesha Jalal’s work on Muslim politics in Pre-partition India in which she discusses Jinnah’s politics as working for constitutional safeguards for muslim minority in Hindu majority India. It is well perhaps for Kalash in Pakistan even now. For details see Ayesha Jalal (1985) The Sole Spokesman Jinnah, the Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan, Cambridge South Asian studies.

26 Established from PRA exercise in Bari 28 Sep
2.1.2 Political representation of Kalash

In 1974, the Government of Pakistan took a bold initiative and gave security to the Kalash culture through an executive order by declaring that the Kalash culture will be freed from the pressure of alien forces and preserved for future\(^\text{27}\). However this executive order could not be translated into a policy and practices at the local level which could have actually set the conditions for Kalasha’s rights protection. Much of it is related to the political dynamics at the local level.

Kalasha are insignificant in the political equation of Chitral due to their extremely low population as compared to other communities living in the area. Upper Chitral is dominated by Ismailies who are politically integrated in mainstream political parties like Pakistan Peoples Party and Muslim League. They are also now more educated, developed and posses a good social capital mainly due to successful long term development program implemented by Aga Khan Development Network’s sector agencies. Within mainstream majority Sunnies, Jamaat Islami holds political power and influence although pockets of staunch Deo-Bundi voters of Jamiat Ulma Islam also exist. Then there is neo-conservative mainstream political parties with support from ex royal family who have reasonable political and social clout\(^\text{28}\). Royals are politically still significant though not as important as they once used to be in local power dynamics. They are still well respected due to their egalitarian views and enjoy a considerable social clout.

People of Chitral have mainly lived together as an independent country for centuries, partly due to its land locked nature of geography. There are 14 different languages spoken\(^\text{29}\) in Chitral and over time it managed to develop its own tolerant culture and world view. Many local level branches of mainstream political parties although assert their influence, but in the end negotiate and co-exist in a peculiar tolerant Chitral way. Due to the same


\(^{28}\) In Aug 2005 local bodies elections, Shahzada Mohyadin, a royal and a Muslim league candidate lost election to Jammat Islami supported by Peoples Party.

reason perhaps, in the literalists\textsuperscript{30} regime of Mutaihida Majlas Amal, MMA, surprisingly the local civil society groups were able to hold Jashan e Chitral festival. Jashan Chitral is a traditional festival where local tribes come, display and celebrate their culture. It was not being held for the last 27 years mainly due to consistent opposition by Jammat Islami and Jamiat Ulma Islam, the two main parties of MMA. But due to local civil society groups like Chitral Mountainous Association (CMAT), Jashan e Chitral was restored and has been organized. MMA provincial and local government preferred to remain silent on these occasions mainly due to many informal rapprochements from civil society groups and MMA workers at local level and avoiding a major conflict. The point is that there are many such informal channels which Chitralies use as a mean to negotiate power relations and adjust political and social space accordingly and therefore coexist peacefully.

In this political wrangling, Kalash has not been in picture to present its own worldview and position over the issues. Most of the time their role has remained passive even about their own affairs. Their extremely low population of 3-4000 as against majority Ismailies and Sunni Muslim, although have earned them a minority seat in district council for a very long time, yet it failed to integrate them politically and give voice to their unique culture. For years Islamabad based minority MNA MP Bhandara has been their representative. However, as he is not from the area and cannot be as effective as some local politician who could appreciate and interact with common Kalasha’s on day to day basis, and help in increasing their local level political clout over time. District local government system has given a final blow to their participation. It also has treated Kalasha as a normal minority which could live with only one seat in a Union Council to safe guard its rights. But this is not enough to stop the phenomenon of their diminishing. For that you need far more political control to change social policy at the local level. Out of 13 seats at Union Council level, they only could win one seat at UC level. Although they had representation at tehsil and district assembly.

\textsuperscript{30} Means they follow the literal interpretation of Islam as opposed to following the spirit and real objectives of various Ihka’m in Muslim Shariah. This has important policy related implications. In their bid to protect their Muslim identity they can encroach much of the public space of those who do not follow them ideologically. One of such incident took place in Peshwar where local traders, sign boards carrying women’s photos were destroyed on the part of Jammat e Islami workers for being obscene. In Chitral, therefore, relative tolerance for Chitral festival is an important event.
with one representative in each forum on minority seat. Their role, as previous speaker of district assembly says, has been at best negligible due to lack of capacity of Kalash representative to articulate their case and of course due to nature of their political insignificance coupled with their perceived low social status for being Kafir.

A. Why democracy could not safeguard Kalash’s interests as opposed to many other communities?

Minorities in Pakistan are related to one or another kind of religion whose followers and traditions are available in sub-continent and world at large. However, Kalash is a different kind of minority. Their culture, way of living and world view is non-existent anywhere in the world and over time there is strong evidences that they are reducing in number even from existing Kalash valleys of Ramboor, Bumburaite and Birir. The sheer reduction in their number over time and their presence in one land locked area of Pakistan coupled with the fact of their political, social and cultural loneliness should have made a strong case for a supportive treatment for them. Their minority status is not properly recognized like many other minorities in Pakistan. They should have been treated as perishing tribes who needs special political and social arrangement to protect their rights and identity. Chitral conservation strategy developed in 2004 already asked to take special measures to preserve the Kalash culture. It is now 2005 and already much of the time has passed. Unless special geographic, economic, social and political safeguards are ensured by state, with this rate, they will be perished in 20 years. The moment their number is reduced to less than 2000, there would be sudden land slide of Kalasha conversion to mainstream religion, giving a formal end to Kalasha civilization. Mainstream belief system’s overwhelming support in local communities and its relative simplicity as a religion with low social and economic retention cost, state’s culturally blind policies for the special needs of Kalasha tribe, and above all lack of their political voice would be the chief factors in their elimination.

All three Kalasha valleys are consisting of small and big hamlets ranging from few household to 100 on average except Sheikananday which is having 400 predominantly Muslim households. Sheihnanday is also last village of Bumburaite valley. After this, Afghan border starts after crossing a day long
walk. Sheikananday village inhabitants also came from Afghanistan and are ethnically and culturally different people. Kalash still remember how they attacked their villages and converted many to Islam 100 years ago\textsuperscript{31}. On the surface, although, there is no tension between the two tribes yet any development program implementation should take into account the potential threat of both communities’ conflicts and power dynamics.

**B. Cultural Vulnerability: The Phenomenon of Conversion**

The mainstream society of Pakistan, which exercises subtle and elaborate economic, social and cultural pressures and makes environment extremely convenient for ambitious preachers to convert Kalash community. There is a consistent effort as preachers from down country to come and preach Kalash to convert. This is primarily being done by Tableeghi Jamaat whose sole mission is preaching Islam in Muslim and non Muslim communities. Kalash has become their natural area of interest. Even though, Tableeghi Jamat is not violent, their consistent presences actually embolden some of recently converted Kalash to aggressively speak and challenge Kalasha primitive cultural rituals.

In a small community of thousands in which every other Kalash house is having a converted Muslim, Kalash culture has become stranger in their own locality and place due to this consistent challenge at their door step. Kalasha culture is having an oral tradition with not having any religious book \textit{per se}. Their stark difference from Muslim culture and the fact that they are alone to defend it in the whole world make them vulnerable to defend themselves with any additional support or with the help of any logic. As opposed to Muslim’s repeatedly narrated historical pride, morals, stories, their high self image and social support from community at large, Kalashas have been on the defensive since long time, the general tolerance level of Chitral notwithstanding

The other important root cause of Kalasha conversion to Islam is unavailability of Kalasha cultural specific schooling; Kalasha community does not have different syllabus and teachers to cater the cultural needs of Kalash people.

\textsuperscript{31} There are conflicting reports that when this incident exactly happened. Many Kalasha says it was somewhere 1950s but Greek Volunteer, A Greek NGO working in the area determine the year 1890.
If they have to get educated, they have to read mainstream religious texts, also delivered from Muslim teachers. One of the students told that teachers always preach in the class that evry Kalasha will burn in fire after their death and life hereafter. Over time this preaching bears its fruits making the youth to start abhorring Kalasha culture and finally leaving it. The Muslim teachers in the area are apparently failing to draw the line between their actual roles to teach all students while respecting their respective identities and help them in becoming an individual who could exercise his choice to adopt whatever culture he wants to adopt. The premature indoctrination has led many Kalasha to keep their children out of school. However, teachers’ behaviors is working within the web of laws and protocols from their education department which seemed totally ignorant over the issue of managing diversity in the education system in the peculiar context of Chitral.

There has been a late effort in establishing some Kalasha schools but they are in no way different from Muslim schools. Even they continue to teach Islamiat as a subject for not having Kalasha books. Years of conditioning make Kalash youth to suspect their own identity in their own place where they are living for thousand of years.

Another important factor is the role of Chitral based and further down country rich traders. Their control of local economy has further consolidated non Kalasha power in the valley. Most of Kalsha communities work in these hotels as laborer and other such positions which are considered socially low. Besides, an uncontrolled arrival of local tourists in large number without any proper orientation with Kalash culture is making Kalsha extremely unsafe to practice their belief system independently. This on one hand makes them insecure over their identity and put a consistent social pressure on their unique culture, and makes them socially vulnerable to confront non Kalasha in public space on the other.

---

32 Interview with Robi Gul a Kalash girl in Rumboor. Date 26 September

33 Kalsha as a word is used locally in Chitral to explain them as a separate community. It is more like the word “Europeans” which means people who live in Europe.
Case: Mir Qawut Khair new Muslim name is Amnatullah

Mir Qawut was an average Kalash young boy in Bumburaite. He was seven when got converted to Islam. According to him, he got early teachings of Islam from School where he came to know the simplicity of the message of Islam. His teachers in School were especially kind with him telling him how Kaslah culture actually represents the early paganism and infidelity.

Mir Qawut Khair says that he was not under any oppression when he accepted Islam as a way of life. Mir Qawut Khair was then supported by Ayon based worker of Jamat Islami who helped him to get in Jamia Ashrafia, Muslim Town , Lahore. Qawut studied there for some time before deciding to go to Karachi where he studied for eight years in Jamia Hanfia, He returned back to Barir two years ago and now help in running a mosque for Muslims. Mir Qawat Khair’s mother Rani is Kalash. Mir Qawat Khair says he does not have any problem in having a Kalash mother. If she is not Muslim, it is her choice because Islam does not have any Jabar. Mir Qawat Khair married with a Kalash girl who is also now Muslim. Mir Qawat Khair Alias Asadullah says it was Allah’s special attention that he was accepted by Allah to become a Muslim.

(Actual identity of Qawut is changed in this text)

2.1.3 Economic cost of retaining Kalasha Culture

Kalasha culture essentially is a culture of celebration. The three main festivals are actually celebration of various events in Kalasha people’s lives. Jhoshi, for example, one of their main festivals, is actually celebration of spring seasons’ new hopes while thanking Almighty. Similarly Uchao and Choimus are celebrations of fruits and crops. Kalasha express their celebration by eating their goats, drinking wine and dancing. On death ceremony also, the family gives sacrifice of 30-40 goats. Sacrifice of 30-40 goats on a death ceremony alone in a basic agrarian primitive economy is actually a
huge cost for Kalash tribe and religion. This internal economic pressure has become one of the arguments for new converters who abhor Kalasha living as an unbalanced way which excludes poor to stay with it. Such an expensive way of living need reforms from within. But perhaps external threats to local culture have hardly allowed Kalash tribes to reflect on some of expensive ways of performing rituals in their culture.

There are also some reported cases of youth specially boys actually developing habits of drinking heavily, not educating and equipping themselves enough for a long term profession. Kalasha young man tends to wait for tourists for small scale jobs or selling wine in Chitral occasionally and not really trying to learn skills to have a permanent profession. This keeps them poor, forever; their sources of income remain highly dependent on chance factors. Many waste months and months in waiting. The wastage of youth in Kalasha becomes a social argument against Kalasha culture. There is a recent trend in Kalasha girls to look for a Muslim husband because they have more stable sources of income as opposed to Kalasha men. This again influences the Kalasha population negatively as their number decrease over time.

2.1.4 Changing gender roles in Kalasha Culture

Kalasha women always have remained the focal point of Kalasha culture and assumed far more power and authority than other cultures. Even now she is having the central role in many of the rituals and customs. Her dress gives her uniqueness making her symbol of Kalash identity. Kalasha men have left their traditional dress since ages. Now they cannot be distinguished as Kalasha as they wear the same dress which many other local Chitrali men wear what is locally called the Muslim dress. Kalasha women, also is the sole decision maker in picking the man of her choice and leaving him whenever she wants. It is culturally acceptable if woman leaves her husband to live with another man. The new husband simply has to pay back some of cost to have his wife, locally that is equal to double the number of goats which he gave to his wife on wedding. Kalasha women also have been sole decision maker in home, controlling the house socially and economically. They are also a symbol of community’s social pride as their dance is the core dance in each social
event. Much of this however, has been subject to Kalasha women’s residence in Kalasha area. Their movement outside valley and to Chitral area has not been culturally approved by Kalasha community as a whole. There is little evidence to conclude that there are other Kalasha families living in Karachi or Lahore with the same customs practicing. It is perhaps the coping strategy of Kalasha community to live together and protect their culture within a mega Muslim majority. This allowed Kalasha women to sustain her important position over time.

There are evidences of Kalasha women’s changing role over time. As governments bureaucratic infrastructure is largely urban based, it put Kalasha community in pains to know how to deal with the requirements of modern state. As Kalasha women are distinguishable from their dress and are therefore subject to all kind of harassment from outside world, Kalasha men first time came into limelight to deal with the world outside Kalasha area. Their increasing interaction with the outside world gradually took away much of the economic power from Kalasha women.

Their representation in political forums at district, tehsil and union council level and their subsequent interaction with bureaucratic offices increased Kalasha men’s social status at the expense of historically higher status of Kalasha women. The changing women role has also changed women’s own perception about themselves and the way they want to see and interact with the world. It is not surprising, therefore, that many of them have started idealizing middle class Muslim women’s values and want to implicitly adopt them. The idea of having a strong man with character might have come as a result of this changed gender role. This also resulted in many Kalsha girls marrying with Muslim youth than with Kalasha men. This is mainly happening as Kalasha girls are educationally performing better then Kalasha men. They are also conditioned by Muslim’s way of living due to Muslim Syllabus and lately think like a middle class Muslim girl rather than indigenous Kalasha women. Changes in values bring change in identity conveniently facilitated by marrying a Muslim man.


2.1.5 The Effects of Market

Kalash cultural uniqueness has attracted huge crowds and has been generally able to attract western tourists. But late arrival of local travelers in large numbers has started developing an uncontrolled market mechanism to start making inroads in Kalash valleys, typically making Bumburaite a business hub. All of these new restaurants and motels are owned by outsiders from Chitral or further down country Pushtun or Punjabi businessmen. All of such investors are non Kalasha. Kalashas work in these hotels as porters, guides, drivers or other such jobs. Their heavy economic dependence on Muslim businessmen, also applies a sustained subtle pressure to toe the Muslim line and keep them happy. This in turn affects their own identity and pride and put them under consistent pressures to express their mind freely and that also in public space.

The phenomenon of markets affecting Kalasha culture and identity will increase over time. The execution of all year road mega project called Lawari Tunnel would link Chitral with rest of the world on a much frequent basis. All tourists who come to Chitral, actually come to see Kalash culture and nothing else34. It is feared that as number of local tourists increase in Kalash, outside investors and land mafia would come and buy almost all resources from Kalash in no time. The businessmen would also accompany with them missionary Muslim middle classes who will suddenly find a mission in Kalash and will not take much time in eliminating whatever is now called Kalasha culture.

But there is another kind of tourist which would play perhaps the final and most fatal blow to what now we call Kalash heritage. The free spirit of Kalash women and men, their ability to make and sell wine and dance is great attraction for down country rich domestic tourists who even now perceive Kalash a place to have girls and wine on cheap rates than Dubai or Bangkok. Once such tourists are frequent, investors would be happy to make inroads in Kalash communities to lure many of them to provide both. There is evidence that a portion of Kalash would resist that but not many would be able to do that due to heavy economic benefits. Intellectually and politically,

34 DC Chitral interview.
we may see Kalash becoming battleground of liberals and conservatives and both of them may like to have their respective dream world in Kalash in order to settle their down country rivalries at the expense of Kalash culture.

**Conclusion**

We started our discussion of Kalasha culture and its identity from rights’ perspective and attempted to establish that they are actually having the risk of being completely wiped out due to external onslaughts on their culture. We showed from our examples that various state interventions actually weekend their identity, changed gender roles and affected their own self-image about themselves. The market is bringing with itself a far more pronounced challenge. Something, which Kalasha cannot, and will not be able to resist unless they are equipped with new political, social, administrative and institutional arrangements in their own territory.

### 2.2 The state of (under) development in Kalash

The bad time went away, changed it became, for goodness and affection.

(A local Kalasha Song)

Kalasha is having a legal status of a minority. The general low status of minorities in Pakistan notwithstanding\(^{35}\), Kalash faces a systematic process embedded in economic, social and political spheres which is gradually eliminating their culture and existence to the extent that they are virtually at the brink of being perished. According to 1951 census their population was 6000. Other areas bearing similar number at that time, now are having the population in the tune of 18000, a figure which is three times more. Kalash on the other hand now is in the range of 34 thousand only\(^{36}\). Biggest source of this low number is conversion and high mortality rate.

\(^{35}\) [www.bhrp.org.pk](http://www.bhrp.org.pk)

\(^{36}\) In-depth Interview with PTDC officials in Bumburaite, September 26.
Both of them are symptoms of deep-rooted political and developmental challenges, which Kalasha of today are facing alone, and on their own. Except a single project of the worth of 26 Million rupees undertaken by Government of NWFP37, there is virtually no evidence that Government was able to show cultural sensitivity in its operations to protect Kalasha culture and tribe. In many ways state itself has been responsible for their developmental and political deprivation which are the key sources of their cultural deprivation. Following core needs in basic amenities of life actually demonstrate that.

2.2.1 Access to education

i. Almost half of the year Kalash valley becomes a land locked area as heavy snow blocks all the incoming unpaved Kacha roads to the valley. In winter, therefore, most if not all government facilities and markets remain closed; agriculture activity almost becomes negligible and life comes almost to a standstill. In summer such routes get clear and life comes back to normal. Again the limiting factor is 60 KM of unpaved 6 ft road which does not allow quick traffic inflow into the valley and limit the performance of government and market equally, despite limiting indigenous people’s own efforts to integrate with fellow Kalasha living in neighboring valleys.

ii. On almost all other development criteria Kalash can be easily counted in the place with poorest quality of life in Pakistan. There is low enrolment rate of around 50 percent as per liberal estimates in Primary schools, primarily due to the issues of access and parent’s lack of awareness about education. Then there are high dropout rates due to economic reasons to have maximum goats in the family, and children in Kalash actively support their families for taking animals for grazing and other related chores. There are dropouts at higher school level due to access factors as there is only one high school which on average takes hours on foot to reach and come back from schools.

2.2.2 Health Services, hygiene, water, and sanitation

i. ISP participatory research establishes high prevalence of infant and maternal mortality rates in Kalash valleys. This is further substantiated by relatively lean government run health programs with substandard facilities. There are issues of basic hygiene and cleanliness which are sources of permanent diseases in Kalasha communities. Some of the cultural rituals like sending so called impure expecting mothers to Bashulini\textsuperscript{39}, an isolated house in the village where they have to reside till their normal days come back, further deteriorate the status of health in the valley. There is need to come up with a holistic primary health care programming dealing with preventive and curative needs of the community throughout the year in order to reverse this trend. Historically, Chitral has been among the areas where a high maternal mortality rate has been in the range of 186/1000 in 1987, which has been recently reported much more curtailed mainly due to Aga Khan Health Services (AKHSP)\textsuperscript{39} interventions.

ii. Most of communities in three valleys of Kalash lack access to clean drinking water and sanitation facilities at their homes. This puts extra pressure on women’s work and their health. Sanitation is even bigger issue in Kalash valleys. Less than ten percent of the families have latrine at their house. There is also no coherent solid waste management system and water sanitation existing at community level. Kalash low population and thin density in the valley have helped in containing the issue at least for present.

2.2.3 Livelihoods
Severe weather conditions, low literacy rate and level of skills have made the livelihood options quite limited for Kalash valley people. Around ninety percent of the people depend on agricultural area, though the individual land holding is very small due mountainous nature of the area. In most of the cases, farmers sow one crop throughout the year, which is the main reason for food insecurity in the area. Lack of land, low income and low fiscal space has led Kalashas to slowly loose control

\textsuperscript{39} A place in village where Kalasha women live during their menstruations period. Expecting mothers are also live there.

\textsuperscript{39} In-depth Interview with Dr.Ahmed at AKHS, Chitral. Also see Chitral Regions annual report (2004) Aga Khan Health Services, Chitral. Page 22 for status of current health indicators including Maternal Mortality Rate.
over their resources. Khowar speaking Chitral town area business persons or
down country traders have therefore already captured most of Kalash market
and motels in Bumburaite.
There are other important areas where the income level of Kalash people
can be improved substantially. Livelihood programming has to be built on
community’s strengths and Kalasha people can offer their unique wood
carving handicrafts, sewing skills and designs to set the basis for more
sustainable long term livelihood programs. There is also need to regulate
tourism in order to flatten its economic benefits for the larger use of Kalash
communities. Controlled land market, development of eco tourism, and
making Kalash culture more accessible to selected group of high paying
tourists can become basis for a long term livelihood program in the area.

2.2.4 Identity, voice and inclusion
In many ways democracy excludes tribes like Kalash on the basis of their
inability to compete with their counterparts in matching numbers game.
Kalash tribe is located in three valleys Bumburaite, Rumboor and Birir where
their population is almost equal to Muslim population. However, they are
annexed with a nearby town Ayon in government’s basic administrative unit
to make a union council. This allows Kalash to win only one seat out of 13
in the union council leading them to have a lean voice in the house of 13.

Kalash status as minority provides them an opportunity to have a member
in District and Tehsil council. However, Kalash representatives have not been
able to perform confidently due to either lack of capacity or lack of enough
political support from other quarters in Chitral district for Kalasha rights.
Considering the diminishing population of their tribe over time in the
presence of multiple social and economic pressures on their culture, they
need to be taken as endangered minority rather than a simple minority.
Therefore, they need a completely new set of governance structure, which
could give them enough administrative and financial authority to Kalasha
people. It is evident that in present administrative and political circumstances
they would never be able to have an effective political voice.
2.3 Tourism in Kalash

Tourism is one main source of market development in Kalash. Conventional thinking takes tourism as the sole opportunity Kalash have if they want to develop themselves. In many ways it is correct too. Tourism brings with it money and people and their consumable goods. All this provides new jobs and work opportunities to local population. Essentially, opening a free market for tourism is basically opening a primitive basic agrarian economy to uncontrolled profit maximizing market forces. Market forces are actually manifestation of people and their behaviors around the host of market related institutions and arrangements. Uncontrolled market mechanism at play in Kalash is bound to bring in money from outside which would buy and develop local resources (in a limited sense) and make money. Most of this money will be taken away by non-locals. What locals will get in the end at the cost of all of their resources would perhaps be the same economic and even lower social status. Kalash culture will not be able to stand uncontrolled cut throat market forces. They will surely be marginalized over time.

It is actually a tight rope to balance the state role, community rights and private sector incentives in a way that locals benefit from it without compromising their own culture and control over their resources. In designing future course of actions we will need to investigate tourism sector in detail and see what opportunities we can have out of existing policies and what new will be needed.

2.3.1 The National Tourism Policies: Key features\(^{40}\)

- Tourism shall continue to be treated as an industry, contributing more aggressively towards socio-economic growth.
- A paradigm shift from promoting seasonal tourism to year round tourism.
- A qualitative improvement/development in environment, human resources, tourist services and the tourist product.
- Federal & Provincial Governments to bring all legislation in consonance with demands of the tourist industry.
- Stimulate private sector involvement in tourism through provision of industry support constructs.

\(^{40}\) http://www.pakboi.gov.pk/Policies/tourism_policy_.html
2.3.2 Goals and Targets

- To increase foreign visitors arrivals from 0.42 million in year 2000 to 6.3% annually over the next five years.
- To increase foreign exchange earnings from US$ 385 million in year 2000 to US$ 500 million over the next three years.

2.3.3 Incentives

- 10% customs duty on import of plant, machinery and equipment.
- Tax relief: Initial Depreciation Allowance (IDA) @50% of machinery & equipment cost
- Tourism Projects to be allowed the status of industry.
- 50% income tax exemption be allowed to tour operators who bring in at least 500 inbound tourists in the form of group tours in that calendar year.
- Number of taxes covering the Hospitality Sector will be restricted to a maximum of six or seven taxes at the federal and provincial levels.
- On the recommendations of the Ministry of Tourism, land for hotels, motels, recreation parks, fun lands, athletic clubs, cultural centers etc., to be provided on non-commercial rates and on long lease basis by the development authorities at the Federal and Provincial levels.
- 10% customs duty on import of plant, machinery and equipment.
- Tax relief: Initial Depreciation Allowance (IDA) @50% of machinery & equipment cost
- Tourism Projects to be allowed the status of industry.
- 50% income tax exemption be allowed to tour operators who bring in at least 500 inbound tourists in the form of group tours in that calendar year.
- Number of taxes covering the Hospitality Sector will be restricted to a maximum of six or seven taxes at the federal and provincial levels.
- On the recommendations of the Ministry of Tourism, land for hotels, motels, recreation parks, fun lands, athletic clubs, cultural centers etc., to be provided on non-commercial rates and on long lease basis by the development authorities at the Federal and Provincial levels.
2.3.4 Analysis: Pro-growth concept of tourism industry

The key theme of tourism policy goes along with the neo-liberal view of economy which seeks to increase the profit even at the expense of environmental degradation. In many cases the environmental degradation cost of natural zone like Kalash surpass its so called developmental cost. Much of it is related with investment in mega projects in natural resource management which take the broader pro-growth view of economy. Mostly however, the fruits of such growth go to central government in the form of taxes or to investors leaving the local communities conveniently out of the picture. Marginalization, poverty and a sense of rights deprivation increases in locals over time leading to unrest or even civil wars. World’s freedom movements, small wonder, are mostly based in dense forests and resource rich islands. The politics of identity comes becomes more important in this situation. Pakistan’s tourism policy is fraught with all such pro-market notions with virtually no mention of cultural preservation as a policy goal. With the domestic tourism reaching to 42.8 million in 1995 as opposed to international tourism 494000[^1], there is real danger of resource capture by investors in tourist friendly places. This is even more threatening for a perishing tribe like Kalash.

Perhaps, there has been some soul searching within tourism department in order to balance its pro-growth tourism policy with the broader sustainable development and environmental conservation goals. Shah Alam Khan, for instance, further explains this as: “..... (the announced tourism policy of 1990s although acknowledges environmental preservation concerns) however, the policy recommendations are based on strategy of growth, without any reference to the efforts or expenditures needed in order to restore, manage and sustain natural resources as well as cultural resources. This is example of a particular governmental agency assuming it can unilaterally discharge its responsibilities concerning the environment. In fact, the tourism environmental policy should be a component of the national development goals.”[^2]

[^1]: Shah Alam Khan, Environmental Management of tourism development in Pakistan. (source: tourism ministry’s website)
[^2]: ibid.
And the fact that tourism industry has actually counted only for the financial value of its resources tinted its vision for ever. Beside the financial value of the resources there is also and perhaps most important natural value which has its importance. Keeping natural resources intact and sustainable for future generations is also an important aspect of development. And then around the concept of natural value, the industry can actually develop whole new kind of tourism which perhaps would not change its financial targets and yet the change in the goal post would actually help the cause of cultural preservation, natural resource preservation and issues of identity of local communities.

**Box: Past initiatives in Chitral cultural preservation initiatives from IUCN strategy**

Local intellectuals felt the threat and challenge confronting the cultural heritage of Chitral in the 1950’s. From 1957 onwards, a number of efforts have been made to revive the cultural heritage of Chitral. The following initiatives were undertaken by various agencies:

**Anjuman-e-Taraqi Khowar**
Shahzada Hissam-ul-Mulk and his colleagues established an NGO, Anjuman-e-Taraqi Khowar for the preservation of Chitrali culture in 1957. To date, it has published 32 books on the folklore of Khowar. Anjuman-e-Taraqi Khowar has also envisaged plans for documentation and dissemination of cultural material related to Chitral by organizing seminars and conferences. It has held three Hindu Kush cultural conferences at international level. The Oxford University Press, Islamabad, has published proceedings of the conference in 1990. These conferences have created awareness on cultural matters among the masses and intelligentsia of Chitral.

**Jashn-e-Chitral**
To preserve local customs and traditions, Jashn-e-Chitral, an annual event, was started by the then political administration in 1961. The weeklong festival was a rare opportunity for artists and craftsmen/women from far-flung areas of Chitral to get together and display their skills. The last festival of Jashn-e-Chitral was held in 1976. It was abandoned due to the opposition of politico-religious forces to Kalash women’s dances.

**Chitral Polo Association**
Apart from Jashn-e-Chitral, special efforts were made to promote the traditional game of polo, in primitive style, by establishing a Polo Association to collaborate with the provincial government, the district administration, district council and tourism department. It arranges seasonal polo tournaments in May and September at different places in Chitral.
Jashn-e-Shandur
The District Administration Chitral organizes Jashn-e-Shandur for the promotion of folk heritage of Chitral. Since 1989, it has become an annual event. Apart from polo, folk games and dances are the main activities of this event. It attracts tourists and serves in promoting the rich culture of Chitral.

Lok Mela
Lok Virsa, Islamabad, organizes Chitrali cultural troupe to participate in the annual Lok Mela held in Islamabad. So far, five such events have been held. The Lok Virsa has also produced documentaries on Chitrali culture. This has helped a lot by introducing Chitrali culture in the main land and encouraging Chitrali singers, artists and artisans. It also provides documentation facilities to various components of Chitrali culture.

Kalash Environmental Protection Society
Recently, an NGO, Kalash Environmental Protection Society (KEPS) has been established with a view to protect the Kalash culture from victimization and exploitation. The organization has taken bold initiatives in promoting ecotourism through guided tours by training Kalash youth in the field of tourism. Kalash tour guides have been trained by this organization. In this way the famous Watchtower in Birir has also been used as a small museum. Other museums have to be established in the area.

Kalash Valley Development Project
Another initiative to save the culture of the Kalash is the Kalash Valley Development Project initiated by the GoNWFP with a participatory approach. This project has a good deal of cultural component in sharp contrast to other development agencies, which had no consideration for the promotion of culture. Work on the project has been delayed due to financial constraints.

Chitral Museum
An important initiative was taken by the Government NWFP through District Administration and District Council Chitral for the establishment of a Cultural Museum in Chitral in 1981. Work on the museum building was completed in 1985. Cultural artifacts were also collected but the scheme is still pending with the culture and museums department for proper launching.

Chitral Scouts
Chitral Scouts have adopted the Chitrali cap as part of its ceremonial uniform. The example is also being followed by some private schools in the district. They are also keeping Chitrali dances alive by training young soldiers through their senior ranks.

Source: Chitral Conservation Strategy, IUCN
But such national level policy tensions apparently between pro-market and environmentalist lobby with in government notwithstanding, in NWFP, government and NGOs have worked together to develop Sarhad Provincial Conservation Strategy which give way to the development of Chitral Conservation Society (CCS) in 1990s. Preservation of the unique cultural heritage and promotion of ecotourism in the area are included in the priority areas of the CCS with an elaborate tourism sector paper to highlight the same aspects with special reference to Chitral. Participation and ownership of all stakeholders in preparation of CCS is the hallmark of the exercise which gives the cultural preservation issues a great legitimacy and support at local level and provides a necessary starting point to work further in the linkage of tourism, culture and environmental conservation. But CCS in itself is not enough unless it is used in district level development planning and implementation. Most of the development and funding decisions in district Chitral (between 2001-2005) for instance have been done on political basis with little consultation from CCS\(^4\). The lack of political buying in the environmental agenda is perhaps the biggest failure of CCS. It has to be supported by host of economic, administrative, social and political measures at Chitral level. But there is no doubt that we can build on CCS with special reference to Kalash region’s tourism and cultural preservation goal in which this paper is especially interested in.

In developing approach for tourism what are the local livelihood needs and what should be key principles to do that to balance local livelihood needs and having tourism are described in the following table;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kalash regions tourism related local level resource</th>
<th>Kalash tourism and cultural development opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Kalash cultural sites</td>
<td>- Increase in eco-tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kalash festivals</td>
<td>- Sustainable NRM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Scholarly anthropological research opportunities</td>
<td>- Preservation and development of Kalash cultural identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Natural resource and their sustainable use</td>
<td>- Ecologically, economically and culturally a sustainable tourism model</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Co-existence studies opportunities</td>
<td>- Controlled investment in eco-tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Kalash forts</td>
<td>- A role of public, private sector with community voice</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{43}\) According to a government official in Chitral.
The above table has been prepared with help of cross community PRA data with us. It gives us a basic tourism related livelihood framework for Kalash communities. This also helps us in coming down to chalk out some key principles to develop culturally sensitive tourism program for Kalash communities ensuring their control and rights over resources.

i. Tourism in Kalash is bound to be culturally sensitive but should also take into account Kalash economic needs and market development requirements.

ii. By all means the controlled marketing mechanism does not mean suffocating investors to an extent that they lose interest in the valley. It is actually facilitating, guiding and educating them to invest in certain kind of project for a different kind of customers. The investors will still make money but it will not be at the cost of natural resources degradation, cultural pollution and resource capture.

iii. The income distribution in Kalash and Muslims living in Kalash area should get flattened with everyone at least making more than Rs. 1800\(^44\) a month.

iv. Controlled tourism will lead to heavy government intervention in business and society which may lead to corruption. This heavy interventionist government has to be local to be less corrupt and should be accountable to masses. The strong democratic tradition in Kalash local government is the key to sustain Kalash culturally sensitive development and governance program.

v. Tourism development albeit in a controlled should not be done at the expense of Kalasha’s already existent agriculture, livestock and handicraft development professions. It should rather build on that. Diversification of Kalasha professions is key to their economic and therefore social empowerment.

\(^{44}\) Estimated with respect to UNDP benchmark of US$ a day earning for each individual.
3. Details of some of the key institutional arrangements:

From here afterwards the world I will look at, just how time will go.

A. Kalasha Cultural Protection Zone
We already have discussed in previous chapters, Kalasha cultural and social threats need to have administrative and governance measures which could save this readily perishing tribe. Before presenting its possible arrangements and a suitable option, following table show various actors and their interest in the Project\(^{45}\).

\(^{45}\) The same table is used in proposal document with slightly less details. The table depicts stakeholders analysis as of November, 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Stakeholder interest(s) in making Kalasha a protected zone</th>
<th>Assessment of Impact</th>
<th>Potential Strategies for Obtaining Support or Reducing Obstacles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NGOs working in the area (AKRSP, Greek Volunteer, SRSP)</td>
<td>High (maximum involvement and growth)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Use more participatory approaches to reach out to the maximum and diverse communities on a sustained basis. Seek partnership, exchange information and coordinate on project components identical to existing programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central government</td>
<td>High but relate with the current President’s own point of view. It is not an institutional interest</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Try to broaden the support base in federal, provincial and district bureaucracy while still maintaining high level political contacts with all political parties.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Government</td>
<td>Low (Collaboration in implementation of the Project on its own without federal government orders)</td>
<td>High but is related with support from central project</td>
<td>Ensure balanced involvement of the local governments in the project implementation and monitoring.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KISP</td>
<td>High (Image and expectation)</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Implement the project with the help of diversified donors. Be ready to include others in controlling the project.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Sector</td>
<td>High (tourism regulation would have impact on individual business)</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Consult them for promotion of regulated tourists.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Media</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Have a project visibility and public relationing strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donors</td>
<td>Medium to high</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Have a full-scale development plan and gather donors around.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Parties</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>From earlier on take their top leadership on board and contain their possible misperceptions. Manage them politically and boldly without being antagonistic forwards them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PML-PPP</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ensure that these natural allies stand behind KISP and its programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type Zone</td>
<td>Complete Autonomy</td>
<td>Quasi-Autonomy</td>
<td>Sharing the powers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>-------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics</td>
<td>A special status with a governance structure having relationship with district and provincial government. May eventually need a change in the constitutions.</td>
<td>Kalash valleys are made a separate UC with special powers. Board approved by government of Pakistan with representation from Government is guiding and using UC forum for policy implementation and law making. The projects are approved and executed by KISP but with in government structures and departments.</td>
<td>Have developmental authority led by a 20 grade officer, Union Nazim and KISP all working thorough an institutional arrangement of a Kalash board of cultural preservation with individual organization working independently and yet coordinating in important ways.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A permanent and sustainable solution with a hope to have other nation wide zones for other such communities. Will have ability to design their own institutions without much intervention from district and provincial system.</td>
<td>Control is still with KISP yet government structures and bureaucracy is being utilized in most important ways. Over time public sector even outside Kalash region will get sensitive with cultural sensitive public policy implementation.</td>
<td>Likely to have maximum support from bureaucracy and will be a sustained arrangement with final say going to those who will bring more money. KISP is most safe politically in this arrangement with burden of governance and markets management still with government but it can easily be affected by KISP.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flaws</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will be politically thorny and may end up in bureaucratic and political quagmire.</td>
<td>Bureaucratic wrangling may actually risk the project. It would need a trained KISP personnel, expert in using program based approaches.</td>
<td>KISP is in implicit control which may lead it to be secretive</td>
<td>Will work well with the development interventions but will fail to contain market and therefore will have limited affect on preserving culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key贻问题</td>
<td>Can be actually achieved in this regime but will need strong back up support from at least PPP and PML.</td>
<td>May be an easy buy in by bureaucracy</td>
<td>Relatively easy in political terms and therefore will have a built-in sustainability angle.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The above table gives us several institutional arrangements aiming to achieve a balance between the program implementation options and respective governance structure. All options have subtle variations and differ in most important ways. Any option would lead to a different kind of peculiar bureaucratic organizations involving KISP, the government and the community. In the end it would be a political process between KISP representatives and KISP which would determine the shape of Kalash protected zone and its governance structure. Following policy goals, however, should be kept in mind to be achieved as an impact of the project following through any zoning option. If the goal seems difficult to be achieved by any particular administrative option, that should be dropped immediately and the most suitable one should be selected.

We propose that President’s special order for declaring Kalash special zoning would be enough for project start and its timely implementation. And yet it would need wider support from various quarters especially in district Chitral to at least agree on some basic principles to protect Kalash identity. That would not come overnight. That would need a consistent and uninterrupted constructive engagement with political leaders of all shades. The political parties should not be given the impression as if the project is hinging too much on their approval yet they should also be made aware of various activities being undertaken and the approach being followed. In many ways informal rather than formal channels work in Pakistan’s political environment.

After the Zoning arrangements finalization would come the consolidation and institutionalization of the presidential order into a working framework in which local level bureaucracy, line agencies, community and local government could work together. However, it would be a great challenge. A full scale capacity building program would be needed to deal with the situation on consistent bases and to achieve the very objective for which the zoning has been proposed.
This Position paper concludes by elaborating following points:

Our own assessment of the situation and learning from the cited cases actually allow us to suggest following key steps with some further implementation steps:

- Develop an integrated program encompassing cultural preservation and enactment, governance and development for three Kalash valleys named as Bumburaite, Rumboor and Birir for its inhabitants which include Kalash and Muslims as well.
- Work with all other individual and donor funded program in the area and making a coherent model around which all actors are organized around.
- Adopt a holistic sustainable development approach giving due role to government, market, community and civil society.
- Make gender, rights, environmental preservation, sustainability and inclusion as core programmatic principles.
- For successful implementation of the proposed program, following key implementation steps would be undertaken.
- Development of long term integrated culture based sustainable development program.
- Agreement on key principles of Kalash protect zone while closely working with the office of President, Government of Pakistan.
- Donors conference and fund raising efforts, and at the same time hiring relevant staff and establishing offices.
- Simultaneous media campaign and visibility managing the political side of the project at local and national levels. Using the uniqueness of the project as a key tool for fundraising overseas.
- Making up of detailed project implementation strategies and training of teams.
- Implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
Annexure: 1

Explanation of some key Kalasha terms

Jasta Khan: Village Dancing Place where Kalash go during the festivals exists in each of the village. The place is having a peculiar look with huge wooden room. When some body dies his/her body is kept there where people dance around that body. Then some rituals are performed when children actually change their shalwar with their uncles.

Bashilini: A place in the village where women are sent when they are expecting or having menstruation. The women who are sent there are considered impure for that time.

Sajgore: Place where people come and give goats for God. They only go there annually, dance, eat and then come back.

Warin: An open or covered place in village where Kalash go to ask for goodness of God.

Greemoon: Similar place where Kalash go to ask some questions from God.

Paraba: A place for prayer.

Mahandev: Only site where goats sacrificial is given. Only men go there and offer prayers and then come back with meat, and then all go to dance party. Also a dancing place on festival and eat cheese and only male humans do that ibid.

Each one of following is a sacrificial and prayer place for different time of the year

Yatz: Place where wheat cultivation celebration is made

Engro: Another such place

Eathein: Kalash people collective pilgrimage place

Deradool: Pilgrimage made once in year for happiness and disease prevention

Jhoshi: 14th - 15th May - This celebration is organized to pay thanks to the Almighty. They celebrate the arrival of the spring season with new hopes and aspirations.

Uchao: 20th August - Kalash people observe Uchao, the harvest celebration to pay homage to the Almighty that blessed them with fruits and other crops. They prepare cheese, buttermilk and corn to celebrate Uchao.

Choimus: 7th - 22nd December - Choimus is the function of giving thanks to the Creator for their bumper crop, fruit, animals and food stored for the winter. People sacrifice animals in the name of the Almighty; rejoice with all the blessings such as fruit, cheese and corn. They show their thanks by dancing and singing together, enjoying every moment.
Annexure: 2

Some models of development management in Chitral:
We will now discuss three elaborate cases from northern areas all dealing with the issue of tourism, cultural preservation and in some ways identity, in order to learn some lessons for broad program development in the area. A program which on one hand opens the door of good quality of life for Kalasha society and on the other hand could give them pride to practice and express fearlessly their own culture with a confidence that their rights are restored. For the sake of study purposes, we have identified three different organization, all three of them have actually achieved success in their own terms in the area and have contributed in some way to local culture and heritage and tourism development. These organizations are Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation, Greek NGO called Greek Volunteer and Aga Khan Rural Support Program.

1. Pakistan tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), Bumburaite

PTDC has presence in five different places in Chitral. Beside located in Bumburaite, Kalash has also have their resorts in Mastuj, Bilmulasht, Buni and Chitral. All of them are directly managed from Islamabad although Chitral office serves the purpose of central office in Chitral but it does have not have any administrative or policy related powers to affect the working of other offices. They are independent of each other in many ways.

PTDC Bumburaite is a good facility for national or international tourists. Although, its own sprawling building actually imported its design from elsewhere, its local leadership is sensitive to Kalasha cultural needs and requirements. They also tried to ask their VIP guests to actually visit Kalasha villages to appreciate their culture and dance rather than asking for in house dance sessions, which used to be the earlier practice. PTDC Bumburaite is not organizationally bound to promote Kalash culture or tourism. Neither, they had any Chitral specific policy mentioning Kalasha cultural uniqueness and its marketing methods. However, their local leadership itself tries to arrange some small festivals for Kalasha cultural promotion. They cannot, however, do it internationally which can be their major market. Local people also want international tourists which are economically and even culturally more beneficial for their needs. There was also no evidence of recently held intra department monitoring or learning forums which could have drawn some lessons for re-directing or repositioning tourism in Kalash.

PTDC Bumburaite is now profitable, although even in the peak times in summer its occupancy rate is never above 50 percent. Following table will give the summery of its previous year’s revenue sheet. The last five years revenue record shows 9/11 hugely impacting tourism in Kalash but quickly came back to normal and even showing better trajectory due to some local level PTDC initiatives (like conferences etc impacting more guests coming in to stay in PTDC Bumburaite).
PTDC local manager hailing from local royals showed a great cultural sensibility for Kalasha culture and their well being. He was trained from abroad and had a specialized training on tourism development as well as seemingly local level clout. He says which was helping him in taking successful cultural preservation measures. However that is not enough and a comprehensive area specific planning and marketing strategy is required which could have helped the staff in improving upon agreed targets and coming up with ideas weather they were working or not? There was also missing promotional material and resources as well as international linkages which could actually give tourism in Kalash a great break. But the bureaucratic and highly centered organization of PTDC was not helping in any respect local level planning, promotional and implementation needs. Even the newly created Malakand Tourism board created some years back to support PTDC Gilgit office in promoting tourism did not seem to have any role. And the core reason has been over centralization and lack of accountability in public sector.

2. Greek Volunteer, Work Bumburaite

Atheens Lerons in Bumburaite is surely of a rare breed. Hailing from Greece and a teacher by profession, Athens is spending every year over seven months in Kalash valleys to protect, preserve and develop Kalasha culture, through his NGO called Greek Volunteer. He first time came in Kalash in 1994 and was fascinated by Kalasha ancient civilization. He also felt the looming social and economic threats this culture was facing. He went back to Greece and managed to approve the multi sector project from Greeks ministry of foreign affairs section for foreign aid called Hellenic Aid. As of today Greek Volunteer has been able to complete 18 small community based projects in education and water besides making of a full cultural complex in Bumburaite consisting of a very well developed Kalasha museum, hospital, school, seminar hall and a wide community courtyard.

All projects are identified, designed and monitored by community and their organizations. All projects are annually checked with community participation and much fan fair. There seems to be a good chemistry already developed between the community and the NGO. All projects are also done with prior permission of Pakistani government and Greek Embassy in Islamabad. Greek Volunteer have only one permanent staff in the form Atheens in Bumburaite who actually live and work with community is almost a Kalasha in spirit.

Kalasha Museum is by far the most impressive contribution by Greek Volunteer to Kalasha people and Pakistan. It is of international quality and has been developed after thorough painstaking efforts by individuals like Atheens. The texture and building map have been evolved from ancient Kalasha buildings style. Greek Volunteer has an unforgettable role in Kalasha cultural development and will be remembered forever for this locally, nationally and internationally.

3. The AKRSP

The development in the Northern Areas is led by community-based organizations that the Aga Khan Rural Support Program has inspired and assisted for over 20 years. Two thousand new irrigation, road, and other construction schemes have been completed. Thousands have been trained in productive skills, villagers have come together to manage their own affairs, thousands of small loans have been made and repaid, and new agricultural technology has spread widely.
Incomes have risen, welfare improved, lives made a little easier, and a start made on helping women to realize their potential. As a result, word has spread, and the highly successful techniques of the AKRSP are being used and adapted in similar social situations throughout Pakistan and elsewhere.

The AKRSP has achieved remarkable results over both the life of the program and over the most recent five-year period. While weaknesses have appeared in some program components, they are matched by strengths rarely found in rural development interventions. Furthermore, based on the AKRSP’s history of quick and creative responses to emerging problems, the program can be expected to modify its strategy and tactics as new priorities and opportunities appear.

By adopting a flexible approach and learning from experience the AKRSP has maintained substantial relevance to the development priorities of Pakistan and the program area. More recently, however, the continuing relevance of the program has been threatened by persistent weakness in public sector development capacity; declining frequency of village infrastructure investment; increased pluralism in community organizations; limited progress in bringing women fully into the development process; declines in saving and credit flows; and an increase in overdue repayments in microfinance. These issues are being addressed.

The efficacy of the AKRSP is substantial: incomes have increased greatly, certainly beyond the original target of doubling in real terms. Both economic analysis and analysis of the 1991 and 1997 socio-economic data suggest that a share of these benefits—more than sufficient to justify the cost of the program—is attributable to the AKRSP.

Replicability also has been fully achieved; at least eight major programs or projects in Pakistan have drawn substantially from AKRSP experience.