

SOCIO-CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF RELIGIOUS CONVERSION IN KALASH
COMMUNITY DISTRICT CHITRAL



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A thesis submitted to the Department of Anthropology, in partial
fulfillment of the degree of Master in Anthropology

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Formal Declaration

I declare that this thesis was written wholly by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a degree, in whole or in part. The work presented is totally my own, except where stated otherwise by reference or acknowledgment.

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Final Approval of Thesis

This is to certify that we have read the thesis submitted by Ms. Hasina Naz. It is our judgment that this thesis is of sufficient standard to warrant its acceptance by the Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad for the award of the Degree of M.Sc in Anthropology.

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Abstract

Kafiristan, or the country of the black kafirs (The land of Kafirs), is a region east of the Hindu-Kush range that sits between Pakistan and Afghanistan, where the inhabitants practiced their religion and customs and lived in the three valleys of Bumbour, Bomboret, and Birrir. Oral traditions, hymns, legendary stories, and the specific dress styles they observe form the foundation of their faith.

There is still ongoing resistance to any social change among the locals, and the residents are attempting to maintain and preserve their original cultural identity. Kalash people have distinct and unique cultural patterns, dresses, and traditions that effectively differentiate them from other tribes living in the same geographical area.

The region's paganistic commonalities are the main attraction for anthropologists, historians, tourists, and archaeologists. The Kalasha rites were specifically designed to protect the purity of their people and valley from the polluted surroundings. In contrast to their genetic grading qualities of Muslims coexisting with them in their common geographical region, the oratory political life open continuously emphasizes that all Kalasha are impoverished and equal.

The data for this study came from an MSc research survey of 110 households done in 2021-22 using anthropological methodologies such as participant observation, case studies, and in-depth interviews with 30-35 respondents (both male and female of age 15 and above the Krarkal, multhah, and Brunvillage of Bomburet Valley Kalash).

A descriptive analysis of the data was carried out, which was well-supported by secondary data. As a result of the relationship analysis, the residents of the area have a distinct future in terms of attire, religion, culture, and even death and funerals. However, modifications have been noted in several aspects, indicating that the local culture is gradually becoming more open to change

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INTRODUCTION

The beginning of the discipline of anthropology some anthropologists have been tasked with investigating the culture of people who live in societies with no written history. The people of those societies are traditionally small in scale, territory, and range of social contacts, and who have simple technology and little specialization of social practices. Moreover, in these civilizations are the subject of anthropological research, with the expectation that essential social institution characteristics will be more visible here than in modern metropolitan communities.

The Kalash have a distinct culture with a small-scale tradition. Kalash people live in Pakistan's District Chitral, in the small valleys of Rumbor, Bomborait, and Birir. They've set a fantastic example of cultural resistance. Because they are less exposed to the outside world, their culture's originality and survival are preserved. They rely on animal husbandry and agriculture to meet their subsistence needs. Only in the last several years has money begun to play a big influence.

Although the major attractions for tourists, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, professional photographers, and archeologists of the world is in their specific and unique culture, wearers of the black robes. Kalash is the smallest group, about 3000 in number among the religious minorities of Pakistan. Being the ancient ethnic group of south Asia the Kalash are famous all over the world for their distinctive culture and religion. These valleys with these ethnic people are one of the central motives are Chitral to be very famous for tourism. Between the Afghan border and Chitral valley, Kafiristan is located. (Rickett, Oscar, 2011)

The history of Kalash is not clear in many hypotheses about the origin of the Kalash, tribe of Chitral. The two major hypotheses have been strongly developed about the

origin of Kalash i.e., Indo-Aryan origin. George Morgenstierne, R.C.F. Schomberg Karl jettmar, and peter parke supported the hypothesis giving the imprint that the kalasha is relatively recent newcomers or Greeks in origin. This hypothesis was expressed by H. singer and is supported by two French anthropologists, jeans Yves loud and Viviane livre. In recent times DNA tests were made to examine the greek origin of kalasha. Dr. Qasim Ayub determined through the DNA tests that the Kalash people do not have a Greek origin. But they supposed that the kalasha belong to the Aryan stock.

The Kalash is one of Central Asia's few remaining non-Muslim tribes. For thousands of years, these strange people have managed to keep their ancestral religion, archaic culture, and distinctive way of life intact.

“Nowadays their culture and traditional way of life are under risk after urbanization, industrial change, and tourism in addition, being bounded by Muslims from every direction (Luke, 2013).

The Kalash individuals face discrimination and inconstant stress to adopt the culture of the majority surrounding them. lots of Kalash are adopting the religion Islam just for better economic opportunities. (Fazal, K., 2011)

Muslim populations surrounding the Kalash settlement are rising every year. There is a lack of curriculum for the minorities in a government school, therefore Kalash students are compellingly educated islamiat and forced to convert. (Declan, 2011)

There is a lack of legal defense of cultural beliefs and assets of the Kalash in the main legal system of Pakistan. the Kalash culture is an oral tradition executed basically.

However, the lack of organizational and financial assistance to preserve the Kalash culture and the lack of organizing culturally sensitive development programs have made Kalash culture even more susceptible. (cacopardo, 2011).

Migration and settlement of outsiders in Kalash valley and outsider control on the Kalash economy are some causes of culture erosion in Bumborat valley. (Declan, 2011).

So, the unique culture of Kalash is under threat from these factors and there has been less work done on the preservation of the Kalash tribe. These are minorities in Pakistan and for their survival and security, they have no other choice than to follow the culture majority. They are bound to leave behind their own culture which is famous for its uniqueness. So, the focus of my study is to identify the factors behind people's conversion towards Islam. as is mentioned above that these people have a unique culture and their conversion to Islam might change their unique identity.

1.1 Definitions of the key terms

1.1.1 Religion

From the religious point of view, the humans are related to that which they regard as holy, sacred, spiritual, or divine.”

Different authors have defined religion differently. Some of the definitions are:

A religion is a unified system of notion and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and prohibited set of beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community called a Church, all those who adhere to them." Religion is "the self-validation of a society using myth and ritual (Émile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*).

“Religion is the set of symbols that acts to establish powerful, persuasive, and long-lasting moods and motivations by formulating conceptions of a general order of existence and clothing these conceptions with such an aura of factuality that the moods and motivations seem unique.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this research is to determine the religious conversion of Kalash community district Chitral, this research has been conducted in village Bumboret in District Chitral, the respondent of this study was those women who belong to Kalash religion and were still in the practice of the specific religion.

The main purpose to conduct this research is mainly to explore the religious conversion of the Kalash community to know about the socio-religious dimensions of conversions. This research will explore the social factors which affect the conversion, following the Kalash rituals and religion the women are not so empowered considered impure and dirty, and customarily the Kalash religion is patriarchal.

On the other hand, in social customs like marriage, the women are empowered and free to choose their life partner. This research also identifies the confusion of whether women are more autonomous in the religious sphere or social, this study will explore that, what are the factors that affect the socio-economic status of women. This study will explore the main problems which are faced by the people of the Kalash community. Are the working women being discriminated against in society? What types of threats the people of Kalash are facing in society? Are the Kalash people free in their society? Do they have the right to decision-making? To know about the social status of women in the Kalash community? All

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1.3 Scope of the study

At the academic level, the findings from the study will generate knowledge and understanding of the socio-cultural dimensions of religious conversion of Kalash community district Chitral. I trust, this dissertation study would not only fulfill the requirement of my Master's degree but also comprehensively orient me on the concepts and dynamics of the Kalash community. I understand, this study will potentially help me peruse my future studies in the same field. Thereby I can further explore the same phenomenon in a more scientific fashion of advanced frame in different societies of the world. This is a mixed-method study in which two methods were used to collect primary data. The primary data have been collected through interviews and surveys, while secondary data was collected from existing literature on

the subject, such as books, journals, articles, documentaries, etc. The Libraries, magazines, and newspapers have also been consulted for this study.

1.4 The Rationale of the study

The main purpose to conduct this study is; the Kalash community is on the brink of extinction. Forced religious conversion is a massive structural violation of Human Rights. The people of the Kalash community are worried about the situation in their area. This study aims to highlight the status of religious conversion and its implication on the community.

1.5 Rapport Establishment

I needed to make a hasty and unauthorized visit to the location for a two-day survey. I knew it was a tourist hotspot and that I could easily get a hotel for two nights there. This warm-up tour assisted me in identifying boundaries and gaining an understanding of the community gatekeepers. It was not simple to gain entrance to the center area.

The community is neither physically concealed nor confined by rigorous laws for outsiders; rather, one of the difficulties I needed to overcome was access over the bounds of community humility. Because of the sensitivity of my inquiry, I even had to deal with offensive impulses inside the community at times.

At a funeral, I had my first encounter with the community's vigilant instinct. The decision to do a warm-up visit had paid off handsomely.

Bringing in a seemingly insignificant but crucial communal activity for someone like me When a kind local Muslim informed me of a Kalasha community member's death at Krakal village, I was rambling like a tourist down a rock-strewn road, snapping random shots. I began heading towards the settlement, both excited and perplexed. I

followed the crowds as they made their way to the ceremonial performances from various Kalasha valleys. I wasn't sure what kind of response I would get. A visitor from the outside.

However, because my husband and I are traveling in March, the weather is harsh and there is snowfall. In March, the temperature in Bumborat averages a high of 15 degrees and a minimum of 5 degrees. In March, there are 11 days with rain, totaling 34mm., apprehensively approaching towards something extremely community private would undoubtedly raise a few suspicious eyebrows. It will be dry for 19 days this month in Kalash, and on average, it shows one day in March. After introducing myself and discussing my reason for visiting, I pulled over to inquire a young man about the deceased residence. "Before you resume your action, you must issue a NOC." He was a cop, to my surprise. Because of his position, he had a legitimate objection.

As I expected, he became slightly upset, possibly because the deceased person was his grandfather. I never received an answer and walked back to the next house to complete my interviews, dejected.

It is critical to recognize that the Kalash people benefit from considerable tourism and have devised a variety of techniques to entertain visitors. Of course, the onlookers included not only tourists but also researchers. While in Chitral, I went to Chitral University to meet the kalasha students who had already registered there, and I also conducted some interviews relating to my study topic. Zareena, Leena, and Salahudin are the students that will be interviewing me. I introduced myself to the students below and told them about my Kalash research.

1.6 Research objectives

- Socio-Religious Context of Kalash community in Chitral.

- To know the reasons behind religious conversion and its socio-cultural impacts on the Kalasha community.
- Rites of passage in Kalasha community.

1.7 Significance of the study

Because of being a far-flung area of district Chitral, the problems of the Kalash community are usually not discussed in the media. Coverage is usually given to cultural and religious festivals of the area and the hidden problems like forced religious conversion have never been highlighted. Media usually show a clear picture of the area. This research intends to highlight the issue of religious conversion nationally and internationally so that the responsible authorities and Human Rights Organization could address the issue and arrange possible measures to curb it. The anthropologist has different views from sociologists and political scientists. I have tried to explain what the people of Kalash think about their conversion, the people for the interview were selected randomly and it also included females. This way we can get unbiased answers to the question in the field. In the wake of the bombing in New York, Madrid, and London, and the context of the so-called war and territory. The Muslim community in the world has come under increased scrutiny and suspicion. The visible “otherness” of the Muslim community, expressed through their ethnicity and culture, is highlighted and Islam is often linked with extremism and terrorism. Converts to Islam, present a paradox as they have, through free choice, assimilated a “non-indigenous” religious identity and have joined a majority group in Pakistan which is generally perceived in negative terms and seen to be inferior to the majority in the world. Muslims all over the world face the problem of being extremists and terrorists as perceived by western media. Instead of all impressions, people are

converting to Islam. Questions are arising in people's minds about such conversions. People of Kalash have also some motives behind converting to Islam. The importance of the study can be established by answering the question resulting in their conversion. Different theories present different views about the conversion of non-Muslims towards Islam. These theories are about forced conversion and the free will of the local people. It is important to understand which theory implies in Kalash. Bomborat results cannot be generalized to the other valleys of Kalash; however, we do get an idea about these converts.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

A literature review is a formal word for reading what others have already written about a subject and judging its strengths and inadequacies, which is how cultural anthropologists often find a topic to explore. A restudy, or fieldwork was undertaken in a previously examined community, is another idea for a research endeavor. Many earlier studies provide a basis on which future research can be built, providing insights into changes that have occurred or providing a fresh perspective.

Although I was inspired to conduct this research over causes and effects of religious conversion after watching a short BBC documentary. Later I figured out that some people have already done this research. But he had failed to highlight certain very important features, rather were major reasons for religious conversion. Some propagation proposed by the authors was under-researched and needed reconsideration which I would be discussing in the following paragraphs.

The kalasha is known as the kalasha (black kafirs) by their Islamic neighbors, who practice a religion that appears closely related to that of the 'Kafir' or non-Islamic peoples of eastern Afghanistan before their conversion to Islam at the end of the nineteenth century. Many Kalash deities are cognate with Kafirs deities and many features of their respective ritual practices appear identical. But one notable contrast is the apparent poverty of religious mythology among the Kalash (Morgenstien, parkes, 1951, 1986).

Before the advent of Islam in the Kalash, at the end of the nineteenth century, they were called Kalash kafirs by the Muslim neighbors' as they practice their faith that resembled distinctly non-Islamic people in eastern Afghanistan. Most of the Kalash

divine figures are similar to that of the kafirs deities and also have some customs and rituals that are being practiced by Kalash that are in accord with idolaters. The only missing link is the absence of history in the Kalash religious mythology; that points to a stark difference from the letter mythology. (Parkes; Peter, 1991)

The Kalash converts of Chitral, on the contrary, appear to have equated all parts of Chitral culture with Muslim culture: to them, acting as a perfect Muslim meant acting like a perfect Chitrali. Thus, starting with the very conformation of their houses, which have been changed to suit the Chitrali model with an internal court surrounded by high walls, they have taken great care in attempting to eliminate all elements of even material culture that may be a mark of Kalasha identity, starting with the very conformation of their houses, which have been changed to suit the Chitrali model with an internal court surrounded by high walls? With the consequence that, in most instances, the very location of the village has had to be altered, moving the whole settlement to a nearby site. In several instances, even the name of the village has been changed.

In this article, the author expresses that the people of Kalash are in minority in Chitral as well as Pakistan. the conversion from Kalash religion means the whole conversion of the family of a person from one culture to another, living the same locality and the same house Kalash convert, fully ignore his her entire thinking and do not go near his her past cultural activities i.e. customs, tradition, and relatives. The conversion from Kalash to Islam means total adoption of chital culture does not necessarily whether the customs are Islamic. (Cacopardo, Alberto, 1991)

Unlike the other settlements visited by us, many significant memories of the pre-Muslim past are still alive (and burning) in Urtsun and Jinjeret Kuh, and the Kalasha language is still known and used by people of all ages, including children, though

there is the clearly stated intention of abandoning it in favor of Khowar. Since their position is therefore quite different from the other areas visited by us, Urtsun and Jinjereet Kuh shall be treated in separate articles, which form the second and third parts of the present report.

The author states that the major essence of pre-Islamic memories is still in better shape unlike most of the settlements that are prone to change with a period in places like urtsun and jinjereet Kuh. Kalash language being a primary language is spoken by the people belonging to every walk of life that includes children, old fellows, and younglings but interestingly there is talk of deserting this language and adopting the Khowar language instead of it. (Cacopardo, December 1991)

According to Zaidi (2001), there are various causes behind Kalasha's quick conversion. One of the main reasons, he says, is the impact of Tablighis and Afghan refugees. According to him, several Tablighis who carry Kalash nikovs regularly has murdered a large number of Kalasha who refuse to convert to Islam. Such heinous atrocities are carried out to convey a clear message to the population, leaving them with no alternative but to convert to Islam. Another motive for conversion has been recognized as poverty. According to Zaidi (2001), the government does not lend to 'Kafirs,' hence the Tablighis are their only source of funds. Because of poverty, the Kafirs (Kalasha) cannot pay back the loan and hence the only option that remains with them is either to convert or to surrender their properties to the money lenders.

There are so many researchers, who had worked on Kalash people as well as their cultural identity, customs, traditions, marriage, death, rituals, and religious conversion to the other religion and so many topics, but this article is mainly focused on conversion. The researcher Zaidi in 2001 has connected many reasons for religious conversion. He focuses that Tablighi Jamat of the Muslim community and Afghan

refugees as the main reason for conversion. According to Zaidi, he said that many Tablighi Jamat has forcibly converted to the Kalash people to change their religion. Many people argue that poverty is the core reason for religious conversion as the people of Kalash cannot complete their expenditures to fulfill their religious obligations in the shape of performing rituals and mandatory cultural bindings. According to Zaidi, the government of Pakistan did not give loans to minorities easily, so they depend on the Muslim community to get a loan which caused their inclination towards the Muslim majority. As I have observed during my interviews with different Kalash members, I found that the Kalash mainly converts due to the surrounding majority population for getting good support. Poverty is a core reason for their conversion but it does never mean they get any direct money for the sole reason of conversion. (Zaidi, 2018)

According to study studies, the people of Kalasha adhere to the same marital customs and traditions that have existed for generations, but with the invention of current trends, most of them, particularly the youth, are more susceptible to altering patterns of marriage (Schwartz et al, 1969). The kalasha community is patriarchal and polygamous at the same time. Only the male members of the community have control over their families and have the right to multiple marriages. The kalashian community's marriage system is founded on three rules, which can still be seen in the area under investigation. The worlds related to marriage in Kalash do not refer to the relationship between parents rather such association and contract is transforming a female into a wife (wynn, 2001)In the local contact of kalsha dialect, the marriage of a female is known as jathiaau and JA kai aauis used for the male marriage of a female is known as jathiaau and JA kai aauis used for male marriage while the act male

marriage is known as asjanik. Besides, the parents give their dik i.e. daughter to a person in marriage called jodek.

The author states that for centuries the Kalash people stuck to traditional marriage rules and rituals but as the modern world arose the youngsters were keener to adapt to these changing times. Interestingly the kalasha community is based on polygamy and patriarchy as the right of multiple marriages and being the chieftain of the houses is reserved for the male member of the house the old traditions and norms are still being practiced among the locality. The marriage of females in the local dialect is called jathiaau and JA kai aaius is the term reserved for male members while asjanik is associated with male marriage. Dik is the word used for giving daughters hand in marriage to a person which in turn is called jadek.

(Ali, Wajid et all, 2018)

“The converts viewed their life before conversion as a time when they were "not following moral or ethical standards." It was a time when the converts were jahil (illiterate), leading chaotic lives. It's worth noting that the practices only became "immoral" after conversion, which is why it's one of the main reasons for their conversion. Their "personal disturbance" was caused by their engaging in "sinful" and "deliberate violation of moral norms" activities. The entire moral and immoral framework was flipped on its head. The converts described their earlier lifestyles as being characterized by dishonor (darkness) and moral degeneration. Most of the converts were contemptuous because they were not as “hygienic” and “honorable” as they became after accepting Islam. “Hygienic” was the most frequently used word in the narratives of the Kalash. The differences between the unhygienic (filthy) and the hygienic were understood by them as the main difference between the old and new

religions: as a binary opposition. The converts referred to the performing of ablutions (washing) that Islam emphasizes.”

I have related this debate to the argument of diffusion of ideas from dominant religion into the minds of the minorities. This phenomenon is also known as acculturation which ultimately results in changing one’s faith.

“Tourism poses another threat to Kalash communities. All three valleys now have several large hotels, mostly owned and managed by Chitrali Muslims. Foreign tourism remains undeveloped, still largely restricted to back-packers or small adventure groups who visit the valleys by jeep for one or two days, particularly during festivals like Joshi. More problematic are local tourists from other regions of the northwest frontier, often lured to the valleys by sexual fantasies about the supposed ‘freedom’ of Kalasha women.”

Not just the tourism industry is falling out from the hands of the Kalash economically but it also brings along potential for converting the community members. Tourism is also influencing the realm of conversion. People who arrive here as tourists, sometimes develop an understanding with the local Kalash women on a personal basis and influence them into marriages. (Parkes, Peter, 1991)

The next day, everyone from the community him/herself to get purification for the whole year. The rite shishao to purify the women performed walnut bread, water, and fir. The walnut bread is baked by men. The hands of men should be clean and men should not touch anything. Even themselves. Each woman and girl receive five pieces of bread. The day of the purification is considered the most sacred time of the year. At this point, the kalasha society has to follow some obligations and restrictions. The kitchen utensils and other articles are replaced with new ones. Milk or tea is forbidden and imported goods and also illegal and not allowed to use. The kalasha who have

converted to Islam must leave the village and further sexual intercourse is banned for a week. The mandaik is the sixth day of the great festival, chawmos. Mandaik is time to recall the souls of the dead people of the community. On the day of the mandaik: the kalasha women bake walnut bread and pumpkin. As Akiko Wada writes the mandaik is a communicational ritual among kalasha with their ancestor' souls. The Kalash believe that during the ritual the dead come back to share their meals. The celebration of this day starts in the evening when all the food is amassed along with fruits in the jastak han, the door of all houses are kept closed while an elder calls loudly to the soul of the dead saying come and eat some food is placed outside of the temple for ancestors and rest of the baskets full of food are put inside the jastak han for rest of the people. Akiko was a observes that a signed fire is lit to attract ancestors for sharing the food

Through the purification ritual shishao, every member of the community cleanses themselves for a year using walnut bread water, and fire. Restrictions are at play in baking bread having sexual relationships followed by the exodus of the reverts outside the village as the ritual is considered sacred. According to words of loud and liever the washing away, non-affinity with religion is broken away and a reestablishment link with divine power is observed.

Mandaik happens on the sixth day of the festival chawmos in which the resurrection of the dead is observed. Kalasha women while wearing black dresses prepare eatables. According to writes, it's a mode of communication with dead ancestors in which meals are believed to be consumed by the dead. All the food is placed in jastak han behind closed doors. The announcement is made by the elderly inviting the dead to eat. Some food is placed outside the hall while mostly inside for consumption by the

dead and the rest of the people. A fire is made as a signal to draw ancestors for the meal. (Ali & Chawla, 2019)

CHAPTER 3

Research Methodology

To deal with the phenomenon chosen, a researcher must design a set of methods. These methods are tools and schemes used to carry out research. The procedures and techniques help the researcher to collect relevant data and to generate the solution if required. Research methodology contains a systematic procedure to obtain, identify and explain the issue or a situation. It engenders the work plan to conduct research. I will also use some anthropological tools to administer my research. A brief description of the methods adopted is in the following. Ethnographic research

Ethnography is defined as an illuminative account of social life and culture in a particular social system based on multiple detailed observations of what people do in the social setting being observed. My research was mostly based on observation. I stayed for more than three months in Bumburet valley to extract and classify my data.

3.1. Rapport building

Rapport is defined as a trusting relationship between the researcher and the population under study. The primary purpose of the research in the early phases is to create relationships with key community leaders or decision-makers who may act as gatekeepers (people who formally or informally control the access to the group or community).

As mentioned, before I was welcomed in the community openly, yet I felt obliged to present some souvenirs for those who welcomed me. Thus, gaining rapport was not a difficult task at my disposal as there had been many researchers who had come here before me and the local populous had sufficient idea of my involvement with them.

3.2. Observation

My prolonged stay at the site or fieldwork resulted in an in-depth extraction of subtle issues about almost every aspect of social, economic, and political structure and its connection to religious conversion. Observation was profoundly my immediate tool to reason and conclude my findings. Mere walks across the valley brought forth valuable information and data. Equipped with a Digital camera and other sound recording tools, I captured practices, rituals, and mundane activities. I observed and participated in festivals and mundane activities. For observing mundane activities, I was a guest to a Kalasha family and articulated my activities around their daily routines. While for festivals I was more treated as a tourist and had to limit my participation.

3.3. Participant observation

It is the process of organizing the daily behaviors and routines of people through extensive observation. During participant observation, a researcher needs to include in all the activities of a group to become a part of that group being observed. It is considered as a foundation of many qualitative disciplines. In anthropological research, it is believed as a substratum of a study that facilitates a researcher with a complete understanding of the culture being studied. As an anthropological researcher, I will also participate in the set activities to reveal the activities of socio-cultural dimensions of religious conversion of Kalash.

3.4 In-depth Interviews

An interview is a method of acquiring verbal information by asking questions or leading a guided conversation. It has a different tone than casual talk. An interview may consist of only two persons, the interviewer, and the interviewee, or it may consist of multiple people, as in group interviews or focus groups. I took initially

various spontaneous interviews which were purely conversational or more like gossip to know the individual psyche developed as a result of the culture and environment they resided in. I interviewed young and old, male and female, Muslims and Kalash. This helped me in multiple ways. Firstly, these spontaneous interviews introduced me to the community. Secondly, the community members started to put confidence in me as the word of my presence spread around. This led to gaining deeper access into the core of the community, further helping to pave the path for me to start structured Interviews that involved sensitive questions like reasons of conversion from one faith to another. Due to the essence of my topic, my main method to extract data was Interviews. To know about the reasons for conversion was only possible through asking local people questions like what motivated them or what shortcomings did they face in Kalash that they were forced to leave this religion of theirs

3.5 Sampling

Sampling is done to get more information and data about the topic in limited time and with few resources because it is difficult for the researcher to conduct interviews of the whole community at the time. Sampling is the method to secure the time and money of the researcher. And it can be more intensive to analyze things from many points of view. There are various types of sampling but I have used purposive sampling for my field purpose. My sample size of almost 60 respondents. In my research, I had used purposive sampling because I just took those whom I could easily access. In my research, I also took the sample of those people who are involved in religious conversion they were their family members and the same community. Purposive sampling helped me to collect which is the direct aim of my research. Although I took the sample of local people as well as the families of the kalasha

people, I also took the sample of the University of Chitral and the local government of Bumborat valley in Chitral.

3.6 Purposive sampling

This technique depends on the nature of research objectives and the choices of a researcher to whom he/she is going to include in the sample. In this sampling, the researcher search for individuals who meet the criteria of research questions, and the selected sample is tied to study objectives with the judgment of the researcher.

I have selected purposive sampling to choose my research sample because my study question focuses on the socio-cultural dimensions of religious conversion of the Kalash community. People who have knowledge of religious conversion and have spent time in Kalash people will be included in the study. Religious ulema, educationalist nationalists will be interviewed for the research as they know the issue in question. Rapport building method will also help to recognize people fulfilling the research criteria.

3.7 Unit of Data analysis

This revolves around the idea that who or what I am analyzing for study. For instance, when I was concerned about tourism and its impact on local culture, I looked for local tour guides. As they would give me the authentic, advanced, and exact information that any random person from the community would provide. Similarly, when concerned with some religious aspect, I looked for those people who were religiously aware and authoritative or had some kind of religious position or status.

3.8 Audio recording

The audio recording method becomes a significant research tool in qualitative research that has replaced handwritten notes during an interview. During interviews and discussions, it is difficult for a researcher to completely capture the narrations of respondents. It is also essential to focus on the body language of an interviewer rather than only capturing the verbal information. This method enables the researcher to conduct a successful interview without any interruption. After the informed consent of respondents, I will record a formal interview and focus group discussion. The recorded data will be transcribed and analyzed later.

3.9 Videos and pictures

I also carried with me a DSLR and my cell phone, which recorded both video and audio both. Most of my interviews were conducted in the working presence of this modern equipment. This helped me to recall interviews and activities in detail. Now that I am writing this thesis down, it is certainly helping me to study and extract things that I have missed live.

3.10 Daily notes

Daily notes are the product and accurate description of observation. What is observed during research is only considered as data when written or recorded. Field notes are Data Collected during participant observation and informal discussion with respondents, their routine, and activities. Daily notes are kept daily during fieldwork. It is difficult for a researcher to memorize every small piece of information for a long period, so I will also make field notes on daily basis.

CHAPTER 4

Area Profile

4.1 Chitral

Chitral is known throughout the world for its rich cultural heritage and attractive beauty. It is situated in the northwestern part of KPK. It is surrounded by Badakhshan and in the northwest and Nuristan south-west by; Dir and Sawat Districts of Pakistan are located on the south of the valley while the northern areas of Pakistan are neighbors on the east. It was a state-run up to 1969 after it was combined into Pakistan as a region of the province Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK). The Chitral culture itself is very rich and attractive but the culture of a small group of people within the region, so-called the Kalash, and their culture are extra beautiful, the three famous Kalash valleys are Birir, Rumbur, and Bumborate the home of the Kafir-Kalash a primitive pagan tribe.

In the Chitral district, 1-2 percent of the total area is suitable for cultivation. Due to rough ecology, it has a low population density i-e approximately 80 individuals per kilometer. Ninety-five 95 percent of its land, suitable for agriculture is fed through traditional water channels (kool). In the past, this land was utilized only for one crop of maize, but now due to the introduction of a new variety of seeds and fertilizers, about forty percent of the land is used for two crops in a year. Now people of the area have started cultivation of wheat as an alternate crop and fruit trees.

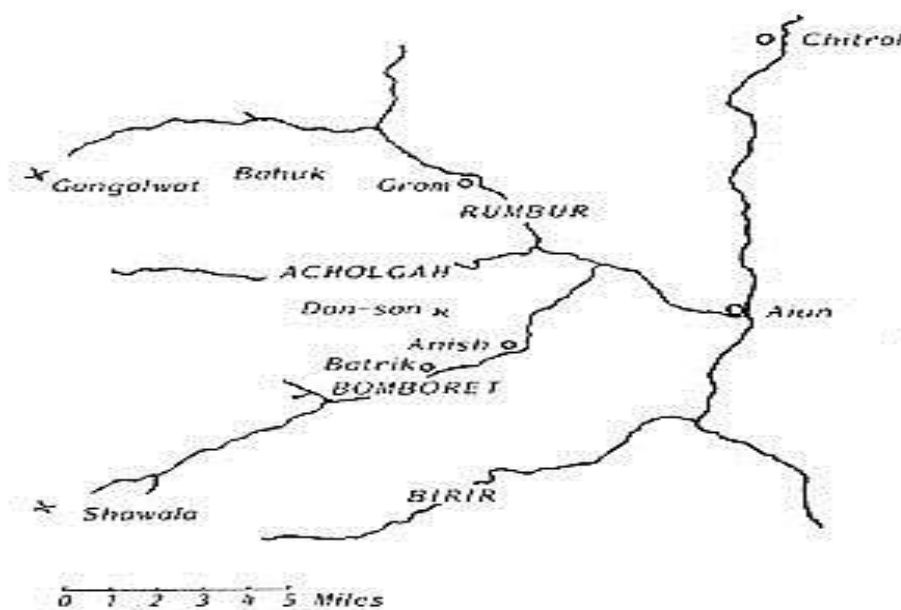
In the south, the road links it with the rest of the country via lower pass and is complicated, risky, and even impossible during the winter month, because all the area is covered with the heavy snow. Chitral lies in the rain-shadow of the lower range, the

major reason for the aridness of the area. Agriculture is dependent on irrigation systems developed artificially. The Chitral river is too fluctuating and wild to allow drainage of water through the irrigation canals. So the human settlements at the altitude of 1480 meters, and the fields situated on old terraces, are irrigated by water from the tributary streams coming out from the side valleys.

The natural vegetation in district Chitral can be divided into zones up to the mountainside, however, the altitude of a given vegetation zone varies, with the start and rise of a slope. The lowest part is covered with, willows and popular trees along the streams. Higher up a zone of evergreen holm oak forest covers the land/ridges. The humidity increases due to the rise in altitude so that clouds and dew deep aid help in the growth of coniferous vegetation. “Between the pine vegetation and snow line, a subnival pioneer vegetation grows, but in area poor in the rain, there are no forest zones at all”. (Sperber Birgritte Glavind, 1992)

4.2 Locale and Infrastructure

Figure 1 Field map of Chitral



4.3 Locale

The research will be conducted in district Chitral. The present state of Chitral is found in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. This state was once a single country, with borders reaching up to Badakhshan Bashgal in the northwest and the Kunar valley in the south to Chaghaswari. However, due to the continual development of the neighboring states of Gilgit and Kashkar, the state's border was not permanent. Kalash's Bumburate valley is part of Chitral, and it claims a territory of steep slopes 35 kilometers south of Chitral, which opens up to the Kunar River. The kingdom of Chitral was annexed to Pakistan in 1959. The total area of bumburat valley is 180 km sq out of which 51 km sq is habitable and cultivable. There are six main pasture units at an elevation of 3500m above sea level and occupy about half of the total geographical area of the valley. The Kalash villages in all three valleys are located at a height of approximately 1900 to 2200m the climate is generally semi-arid. The valley is inhabited by the Kalash people and has become a tourist distinction. However, their populations are rapidly declining. As of 2019 only 37 households in the valley still followed traditional practices. In this regard, a qualitative and descriptive approach has been adopted towards the events and issues related to the socio-cultural dimension of religious conversion practices of Kalasha valley. The study is confined to both Muslims and Kalash (non-Muslim) living in the valley of harsh mountains. The Kalash valley is composed of three valleys i.e. Bamburet, Birrir, and Rumbor where the non-Muslims of Kalash are residing along with the Chitrali Muslims. The data was collected from 75 households through anthropological techniques: participant observation and in-depth interviews. The total number of respondents was 30-35 including both males and females of age 20 and above the krakal and muldah village of Bomburet Valley Kalash. The collected information has

been thematically narrated and extracts from interviews have also been given in support of the narrated data. Besides, (Respondent, Number, and Name) and complete confidentiality is ensured for the secrecy and exposure of the data. Finally, the data has been classified and the results have been given in the form of separate headings (for each category) and a conclusion has been drawn. The details of the ethnography and other field information are provided in the descriptive form in the following passage.

4.4 Architecture and Housing of Kalash

It was indeed a pleasant sight entering Bamburet valley. Sky blue river tributary flowed aggressively down on our left and the right-side was completely walled with pointed hills with sharp slopes, scoring a dangerous height. The moment we enter the first village of the valley, our brains are aroused with the fragrance of juniper wood because of carpenter workshops. Steadily the low-profile markets begin to appear projecting surreal handcrafts and Kalasha ornaments at multiple souvenir shops. The first kalasha village Palawande was pointed out by the driver far above the street level. Clustered together we could see the homes, eloquently fixed into each other midway up the hill, denoting unity in a compromised space. Those houses were made from wood and stone.

Climate and geography influences communities, at a certain time and place, both physically and mentally. A sheer presence of humans in any environment molds the routine behavior of the members. I would like to emphasize here that the material needed for constructing an indigenous house is extracted from the immediate environment a community dwells in. For instance, in Punjab plane land villages, houses are constructed with a mixture of clay and hay, as the soil is most abundantly available in that part of the country. The material used in the construction of houses in

Chitral is directly connected with what is abundantly available in the environment. Stones from the hills and woods are what I saw most abundantly in Chitral and surrounding valleys, hence, the construction even of the recent houses were done with these materials. Very rarely do I see any house constructed from processed bricks and cement. This directed me to reconsider my definition of culture slightly. Culture is derived from the word cultivation. The latter means the manipulation done by indigenous people upon the environment for personal usage and subsistence. Therefore, culture most immediately emerges with the innovative activities and practices carried out in the environment by people living in that space. However, a difference of faith rarely affects the sort of material used for house construction. I saw Muslim homesteads as well, that were made from the same material. Therefore, culture sometimes travels across the mundane culture.

Figure 2 A typical Kalash homestead made from wood and stone only



Source: Fieldwork

4.5 Language

The Kalash language, also known as kalashmun, is a member of the Dardic group of the Indo-Aryan languages. Kalashmun is closest neighboring of Khowar language. Kalasha was formerly spoken over a larger area in south Chitral but it is now mostly confined to the western side valleys having lost ground to Khowar.

Income of Kalash people

The Kalash people are shepherds, farmers and a few of them own personal businesses, even fewer of the estimated 3,800 kalasha have government jobs. They are \on their livestock and farming.

Table 1 : Monthly income of respondent

Category	Frequency	Percentage
0-10000	2	10.5
10000-25000	10	52.6
25000-36000	5	26.3
40000 and above	2	10.5
Total	19	100

Table no 4 shows of the respondent at house hold level the frequency about 15 respondents has income about 30000-40000 which shows the medium range of the people, and about 20.5% have the lowest income while at the same percentage of 20.5% shows the high income per month.

Table 2 : Respondent occupation

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Former	9	40.9
Government servant	5	22.7
Private job	6	27.2
Self-business	2	9.0
Total	22	100

Table no 2 shows the occupation of the respondent, the higher frequency of 9 respondents which represent 40.9% of the data. Due to illiteracy, the number of former has been increased. But nowadays women are preferring education and doing a job which is about 40% and the ratio of self business is quite down the reason is the unavailability of such market.

Table 3 : Qualification of Respondent

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Lliterate	7	38.8
Primary	2	11.1
Middle	1	5.5
Matriculation	5	27.7
Secondary	2	11.1
Bachelor	1	5.5
Total	18	100

Table no 3 shows the higher percentage of the respondent are illiterate about 7 respondents are illiterate out of 18 and about 38% choosing higher frequency illiterate

because all the society has the same ratio, the number of matriculation is the second-highest percentage about 5% choosing such women as a respondent because they have little bite idea about women autonomy.

4.6 Climate

The climate of Bumburait is extreme. The winters are always below freezing point temperatures starting in November/ December and last during march. During this time, the valley receives heavy snowfall, covering everything with snow. Restricting life and movements, confining every family to their house. Agriculture activities also come to a halt, “although the annual amount of rainfall varies from year to year, yet it falls regularly in winter when cyclones from the Mediterranean region reach here”. (Sperber, Birgitte Glavind, 1992)consequently, the only activity carried out in this intensely cold season is still feeding i.e. caring for livestock in the stables, which are brought down in autumn from their alpine pastures.

4.7 Seasons

Spring starts from March and lasts till the end of May when the moderate temperatures start to rise. In some ways, the end of winter and the beginning of spring is a different time for the villagers because their food and fodder supplies are almost finished, living a theme to cope with harsh conditions for one or two months before reaching favorable conditions again.

4.8 Economic Organization

Historically a goat herding and subsistence farming people, the Kalash is moving towards the cash-based economy whereas previously wealth was measured in livestock and crops. Tourism now makes up a large portion of the economic activities

of the Kalash. To cater to these new visitors, small stores and guest houses have been erected, providing new luxury for visitors of the valleys. The Kalash people are now moving towards education. The people of this area encourage their children to get an education.

According to economic aspects, the researcher wants to analyze the community and how women are empowered in economic affairs are they facing problems in such matters.

4.9 Decision making for economic affairs

Cacopardo (1989) in the Kalash community practiced of women in decision making in symbolic and indirect women exert on their spouses. Women's decision-making power, about the distribution of power, right resources increase women's autonomy (Neilo, Domingo, 2015) With the time women are considering decision making in their basic right, all women are participating fully in economic affairs every aspect. For purchasing and selling of any assets, the man must consult with their wives. The daughter with a teenager and married daughters are not consulted in such matters. The women are not only consulted without their satisfaction the mal could not do anything. Men and women are equal in such matters.

I am going to put one of my respondents who have given me an explained interview she said says about her husband.

One of my respondent's age told

“I personally a former my husband in doing job in a government institute, before a year my husband decides to buy local transport vehicle but I have personally disagreed with him. I told him that our roads are badly damaged through floods it will not give us surplus, at the end, I convinced my husband.”

4.10 Freedom and common nature of jobs

Women enjoy more freedom in Kalash valley, They go outside their jobs. The women who earn money and have cash income, have greater control over their family decision making, paid work also the source of satisfaction of women (Hogan et al, 1999)the Kalash women are free to do the job there is no kind of restriction or pressure on the female for doing the job. As culturally the female job is agriculture but the distribution of the land and natural disaster has brought some kind of change in there a local setting, lessness of land property encourage the female toward the job, because according to sexual division the female could not look after the animals, so, the female is performing to do the job. The common nature of the job is performed by the women is affiliation with force, like police, frontier core, and scout. But all Kalash women are preferring teaching because it is a kind of local job and a kind prestige full job for the women. On the other hand, the Kalash women are free to do the job inside the district and beyond the local, there is no restriction in touching the matter by their family.

My respondent name Rima age of twenty said

“I belong to Kalash tribe and I am a government employee and performing my duty in warsak Peshawar, with government forces of frontier core, I am free to do the job. My family has no restriction in this matter. but due to poverty and unemployment, our women are adopting this kind of job. As compared to other communities Kalash women enjoy free their social life and freedom to do the job and live.”

House Hold Industrial Units and Source of Income

According to etic evidence, the researcher observed that their main source of women's income is mainly generated from the selling of wine which is very famous all over the district and available for all seasons. 1.5 litter of wine Rs.2500 which is the main

source of their income. According to emic evidence, their source of income is handicrafts which they make and sell in their local and beyond the local market. For starting and entrepreneur NGOs(Non-governmental organizations) like AKRSP(Aga khan rural support program) is supporting and facilities loan program with the collaboration of first microfinance bank, through which they are selling and generated income. They prepare their traditional dress and sell them to the tourist who is visiting the area and buying the product as a gift for their family.

Another source of income is the sex trade which they are performing by Kalash women. Dancing is also the source of income which is not quite enough because it will distribute through the group member but sexual trade is individual income which is enough for the women. Due to poverty, the females are doing such kinds of acts.

Male respondent age of thirty said

“The main source of income of Kalash women is sexual trade, but not whole Kalash women are involved. There is a group of women who considering them self-upper class, are involved in this kind of activates they have the customer from the district and outside the district who come and pay to them, we make a civil society to protect this kind of shameful activity but the women and their family who are involved in such kind of game they have a link with high-class people cut FIR (first information report). against us and send us prison.”

According to researcher emic evidence, only the source of income is handicraft, the second emic evidence is a response by the male which is not the respondent according to the methodology. The third is etic evidence observed during data collection.

4.11 House Hold Industrial Units and Source of Income

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4.11 Female Employment

In underdeveloped countries women are using their income under their control, women using less for themselves and their more focus is on child and family nutrition and basic family needs. (Blumberg, et al, 1988) In the Kalash community, women's earnings are considered women's assets, the male has no such role on female earning but the women are sharing their income to run the daily household expense children's education, health expenses are contributed to the family but the male has no control on women earning.

One of my respondents reported.

“We as a life partner (husband and wife) have to work our children well being. We are sharing our assets to our family basics needs my husband never controls over my earning I am free to use my assets according to my desire but, what should I do my income on my own? We are sharing in our household”.

4.12 Economic expenditure

According to the collected data, the women are to use their self-earning by their own choice. The sharing of the cash income with their husband and family is also the common trend if they would not share their income the male member of the family could not force them to share it. but the backwardness of the area and poverty of the people allow them to share the income and to maintain the daily expense of their household. Commonly the male and women share their cash according to the need of the family. the common trend of the image of their income in the education of child which is the first preference of the female, secondly the usage of the income is by their own choice the male member of the family has no control by utilizing the cash.

And it is not considered the family earning the earning is consider the women own earning and it is the result female work.

On my respondent age twenty-seven told;

“I am personally a government employee now, before this job I was the social working with some NGOs in the development sector of Kalash valley. My family never expect me to support the family I was saving my salary, the family expenses were under taken by my father and brother. Before one-year y family has passed some crises, my father got heart operation, my brother accident in Lahore, at this moment I have enough amount to support my family but now the both get well and supporting my family, In during these religious festivals (Cheem jusht) I spend seventy thousand for buying new cloth to my family by my own choice.”

4.13 Religion of Kalasha

The Kalash are a group of indigenous people who live in KPK's Chitral area. The Kalash people are Pakistan's smallest religious and ethnic group. Their traditions and habits are incompatible with Islamic and Pakistani civilizations. The Kalash religion is a polytheist faith comparable to ancient Hinduism, and its adherents make god sacrifices.

According to Kalash, they are not a polytheistic religion. They worship only one God whom they call Dezau or the one who creates. All their prayers during festivals are directed towards this deity yet they claim that cannot pray to him directly. They are assisted by some intermediary deities which can also be related to as angels. When asked about the super natural deities one of my respondents Arstu responded

“In various books, people have constructed a pantheon (family of God and Goddesses). We have four sets of alters where we go and pray. One set has Gods

which has Gods that are related to Hindus. Then we have only one God which is the God of Mongol, Shinghan.

And our ancestors tell us when the last war we fought with Mongols in Mistuj, and when we pushed them away from Wakhan corridor, we took with us their God. Even today we have it in our custody. Kalashi uses various names of Supreme God. Every festival possesses a different name. And these names are not associated with any place, stone, tree, or wall. Dizk is a common name which means to give a shape, to create.' Dizi La Dizau' means creator of all the creation. Mulavah means Maula. Balimayin is the name for the same entity Dizau which is used in only Chowmas. At Joshi, Malihesh is used, and rest of the 12 months you won't hear this name. But at the Joshi festival, the Qazi or priests perform prayers and everyone says Ameen behind him, and the name he is praying to is Malihesh. Mulawa, Paydagarrau, Dizau are names that go around the year. We don't claim that Kalash religion is the best. Kalash people state explicitly that when someone claims that he is best then he becomes a beast. We think that all the people who are born, know the right path right in front of their noses who have a mind and two eyes. Kalash does not think about unification that everyone should be similar. In many other religions where there is no permission on certain participate in certain things, even within Kalash valleys, people don't enter in each other's certain rituals. We don't condemn anyone based on Religion, yet based on actions and works, we do condemn people and even have fought battles."

I asked Aqib wali that does a creation myth exist in Kalash religion? He responded "Kalash relies on Abrahamic religion Myth. Interestingly, we call the human body 'Adam' and call grandmother 'Awah', hence a close relation with that Myth. More than half of the traditions have vanished from the Kalash religion. We don't practice

numerous rituals and traditions. For instance, the beard used to be a traditional thing, now it only remains a grievance over a deceased person. In older times people used to put on beards according to a religion known as 'Bashara Chown'. According to the surroundings, people tell us that you cannot put on a beard because you are Satan's eggs. And we accepted this submissively in our subconscious and left this trend of beard. Other than this Kalsah has no personal creation Myth."

Creation Myths are certainly the foundations of any religion. Yet Kalash is relying upon the myth of Abrahamic Religions. This reliance makes Kalash religion weak or we can say that the Abrahamic creation myth subsumes the Kalash Myth. This generates a potential for Kalash members to convert to Abrahamic faiths as they find scripted philosophical groundings.

Further when I asked him, what do you think about Islam? He replied

"Islam is a universal religion. It's a very strong power. To consider Power is better. It is the power that does all the worldly work. But every religion just gives only thinking about everything. Past, present, and future. Nothing else, neither food nor clothes. Every religion defines life differently. Other than that this religion does nothing, but we respect Islam. There are various practices similar within Kalash and Islam. That is why fifty percent of things have been eliminated in the Kalash religion because most of them were similar to Islam. we tell us we people are two bonds of each other means Islam and Kalash"

This gradual elimination of Kalash traditions is also causing it to lose its grounding.

4.15 Dress patterns

The kalsha women commonly wear long black frocks with cowries shells embroidered on them. In this case, they were referred to as "the black kafirs" in Chitral, and they were dressed in Pakistani shalwar kameez, with children wearing

tiny versions of adult attire after the age of four, and women wearing shushat headgear. is a band of hand-woven woolen cloth that fits over the head with a wide decorative streamer hanging down the back. The shushat is normal wear for all Kalash women and girls.

Figure 3. Kalashi girls dresses



Source: Fieldwork

4.16 Marriage Arrangement

Marriage is one of the most well-known worldwide social institutions for managing and controlling mankind's life. Marriage generally alters the roles and responsibilities of two people. It has a close relationship with the family organizations. In reality, both institutions are complementary to one another; nevertheless, unlike other civilizations, marital institutions have unique ramifications. Its functions may vary depending on the culture, yet it is present always as a foundation (Botticini, 1999). Marriage, according to anthropologists, is a way to explain how different communities shorten and silence the punishment of mating. (Smith, 1986)

I have conducted a detailed interview with Shahkeel Ahmad he is one of my respondents and also my key informant who gave me an interview that in every topic

as well. *“I think there are two factors of Kalash conversion; first female conversions are getting increase day by day, it is due to ‘Love’ and getting boyfriend with Muslim males and boys. First, they are engaging with love affairs and then getting married to them. In this way, the Kalash girls are converting into Muslims. Second, Kalash is converting by their own choice and this conversion is rare. After conversion, neither we nor they face any threat from each other, but the converted one can’t live with us in our homes and we don’t consider them as a part of our culture, they have to set up their own separate homes. However, it doesn’t mean we have a social boycott with them, they come to our homes and we do as well. If they are relative, like us, as we have three brothers and one converted sister, she use to come to our homes and we also give them love and affection as other Kalash brothers give love and affection to their Kalash sisters. My sister converted because of a love marriage”.*

Figure 4 Shahkeel while giving me interview



Source Fieldwork

Chapter 5

Socio-Religious Context Of Kalash Community In Chitral

This chapter mainly focuses on the socio-religious dynamics of the kalasha community and this chapter will discuss the general status of women as well as the religious beliefs, the religious conversion, the type of religion they have better understand the kalasha community with its socio-cultural and religious dimensions.

5.1 Oral history

Kalasha's history is enveloped in mysteries. The most popular held belief about their origins germinates from the time of Alexander the Great. It is most commonly known that Kalash is the decedents of his army. Despite that, many of my Kalash respondents including rashma held a different belief. They proclaimed that Kalash is an indigenous tribe. Thousands of years old that had its roots across Northern Pakistan up till Kashmir, Gilgit, and some parts of Afghanistan. They have migrated from a lost city of Tsiam which they believe can be somewhere around Syria/Sham. This could be quite probable as the earliest civilizations of mankind, during Neolithic Revolution, begins from the Middle East also known as the fertile crescent.

The DNA that Kalash people carry is unique. Professor Paulo Graziosi who is a professor of Anthropology and Pre-history has mentioned in London News, March 30th, 1963 that Kalash has purely European traits. They reflect reminiscent of Mediterranean people or the Alpine race. This is a sub-race of the original Caucasian race which is believed to be the origins of the white race overall. Hence if Tsiam, was located somewhere in this region then these are very old people who migrated from central Asia a long time ago and have no connection whatsoever with Alexander.

Shakeel Ahmad, my first Kalash respondent and one of my key informants has told me that the story of Alexander is commercially developed organically for promoting tourism. *“He said that this story then has been deliberately popularised to attract tourists. People from as far as Canada only come to visit this place to get to see the last survivors of the army of Alexander the Great. Greeks have taken up this story quite seriously and have even established a preservation center for the Kalash community in Brun village”.*

I happened to have a detailed interview with one of the locals who was a tour guide as well and was very informative, Ashfaq Ahmed. He narrated to me about the origins of Kalash and the stories of Alexander to be half true.

“These are the indigenous people. They lived here long before Alexander the Great. This used to be one nation of Kafiristan from northern Afghanistan up till Gilgit. Two types of Kalash lived here, Red Kalash and Black Kalash. Around 1830, during the war of Ameer Abdur Rehman, some got converted by force, some of their will, and others escaped. Alexander’s small troop did come here and cross Afghanistan through Kunar, but not Alexander himself came here. Among that troop, some people were exhausted and injured. Kalash culture fascinated them as well. Few remained and got married. Only this part of the story is true. But there is not the case that these are purely people from Greece or remnants Alexander the Great”.

5.2 Status of kalasha

Kalasha the sole pagan tribe of Pakistan and indigenous people live in the remote northwestern part of Pakistan in the Chitral district in KPK. The kalasha people belong to Indo-Aryan stock and speak the kalasha language (it is also called Kalash-mun and kalashwar): a language of the Dardic group. The total population of the Kalash tribe is approximately four thousand. The kalasha is strongly attached to their culture and

religion, however, during the 1970s and 1980's the kalasha people and the valley observed drastic changes like means of communication tourism, religious conversion, demographics, values, burial practices, and change in social institutions like bashali and budalak. The Kalash community of Chitral is the most Festo community of Pakistan as the kalasha dastoor rotates around the festivals, throughout the year, primarily the kalasha celebrates two types of religious festivals, one type is purely religious festivals with rituals only. while the other type is a mixture of religious and cultural ceremonies: a combination of rituals, singing, and dancing.

5.3 Religious aspects of Kalash people

Throughout the world culture and religion had to define norms and values to the society, which shaped roles and relations between males and females in the society through which people practice their life according to the defined role in the society. (Zachariassen et al, 2012) religion was the most powerful institution in the Kalash tribe which shaped the whole social structure of the Kalash society. the Kalash religion is being practiced by the people about three thousand souls (Khan taj, 2009)6the basic components of religion are based on the concept of purity(onjesta) and impurity (pragata) and these two concepts shaped their whole tradition and culture structure. (Mohyuddin Anwar, et al) Mainly religion defines the sex role and which leads to the sexual division of labor. Beyond this, they have their religious norms, values, myth, tradition, customs, festivals, language, and rituals (Choudhary, 2017)all these things are in practice still now.

5.4 Women autonomy in a religious and social setting

Women's empowerment in every society is being defined according to the religious aspect of society. According to Kalash tradition, women define their culture or

religious sphere. According to religious beliefs, women are considered impure or dirty, and some kinds of myths are attached to women that affect their empowerment. The dispute in some especial customary law and women's rights become very difficult because of the patriarchal nature of customary law (Kaganas, and Murray, 1994)

In the area, some places (secrete places), some foods especially meat of male goat honey which produces inside their house are forbidden for the women, places for sitting in their own houses are being assigned for the women, taking bath and combing hairs inside the house is considered as a taboo, but through the modernity, these are considering deviant, in according to them when the women are in (Bashlani¹) they could not attain the religious ceremonies as well as they could not move about from village, according to the Kalash rituals the women are considered as impure during the menstruation period and at the time child birth the women during these special days are not allowing to live in their house(Graziosi, Paolo, 1961) But when she gets ill in bashaleni she could move down word not allow to upward, the local people construct hospital below the Bashaleni.

According (Qmar A. sayeed Khan, 1997) argued that when women die during the menstruation period the dead body directly shifted to Jasta khan treated by young children, there should be a singing party but not dancing. according to collected data when women die in bashaleni the death of women could not be done by Kalash men, they take the services of Muslims to bury the body. And pay them as they wish. And in case of refusal by Muslims, when they buried the dead body they sacrifice a male goat and look at the blood, and peel some blood in their head to become pure.

On the other hand, according to social aspects of women's autonomy women are quite free in their life in their life they have all authority regarding decision making, getting

¹ Bashaleni is a place that kalasha women leave in their menstrual period and child birth time.

marriage, getting an education, movement, participation in politics, economic affairs, and all the aspects of social life. But somewhere there is the influence of religion women's autonomy has been quite destroyed.

One of my respondents told that:

“Before a month our religious festivals took place on those days I was at bashaleni, in because of menstruation period, therefore, I could not have attained the religious ceremony. This is a part of our religious belief when the women are in bashaleni they could not attain that kind of religious activity. When the woman hides her condition and attains it there should be a bed and a tough time for the whole community. In those days when I was reading in college in Chitral. Our college has been off for seven days I very happily went home before reaching home my menstruation period started I directly attain the Bashaleni I stay there for seven days my vocation has been ending and I come back to college rather than to go home”.

5.5 Women status in religious aspects:

The circumstances in Pakistan are, to the social and cultural values, tradition and religious affiliation). (Bushra, et al, 2015) according to Kalash religion species are categorized into two spheres, the purity, and impurity. As a religious aspect women are also considered impure. The gendered nature of the division of work and beliefs suggest the difference in work and family role which are in practice and experience by male and female (Gerson, Kathleen, 1994)the sexual division of labor leads women for domestic work and in the field of agriculture and man hunting look after the cattle (Tarakan. Sophie M, 1975)The sexual division of labor is based on this concept of purity and impurity. The religious aspect of Kalash customary laws denies gender equality in the community. According to religious belief someplace like pure place e.g high mountain pasture above the village places, some animals e.g goat, and houses are

considering pure the women are facing some problem regarding these things. High mountain pastures are forbidden for women which disturb their movement freely in such places. Pure animals like goats milk and meat the women could not eat and honey which produced inside house women could not use,

The consideration of purity of house and attaining the menstruation house is somehow affected their health. During childbirth, the women must attain the Bashaleni, where the women could not get proper kind of treatment. While the women could not comb their hair, are take bath inside their own house, they have to go stream for a bath. Inside their home-specific places have been assigned to them for washing their face. According to Kalash religious women's status is not so enjoyable for them, but the women are happy and satisfied with their religious laws and practices.

5.6 Participation in religious ceremonies

According to Kalash religion, the women are free to attain the religious ceremonies by their own choice, there is no restriction for the women that the women could not attain that their religious ceremonies, but the only restriction for women participation are that when the women are in the state of impurity as at Bashaleni she could not attain the ceremony. Because during that day women should considered impure and dirty, the religious ceremonies are pure therefore the women could not attain such kinds of religious activities.

One of my respondents said that:

“This year during the occasion of chelim just ceremonies I was at the Bashaleni, therefore, I could not attain that epical event. Being Kalash when we (women) are not in the condition of purity we are not allowed to attain the pure and religious ceremonies, when we could not obey our religion we will not be considered as a Kalash, all because of us our whole community will be trouble. When our religious;

laws are not obeyed fully, disaster and bad days will come. And which will be difficult for the whole”.

5.7 Difficulties Regarding Kalash Religion

As being minorities the Kalash people are not so satisfied with security in the valley. Being Kalash they are facing any kind of threat and are being pressurized by the Taliban and the Muslim mullahs. The second difficulty regarding to our religion is the conversion of Kalash to Muslim, when we avoid any member of our community for conversion the Muslims are threat us

One of the respondent's age thirty argue

“Being Kalash we are declared as a kafir (non-believer). The influence of Muslims and their majority are a threat to our property and assets. Before three months some Muslim youth theft our money and assets from my shop and committed a robbery in two shops of our community. Now they are in prison”.

5.8 Patriarcy, Social and Religion

According to the meaning of patriarchy, society should be male-dominated. According to the collected data, there is no practice of any kind of patriarchal force on women. They are free from the social and economic aspect of their life but somehow some strict kinds of customary laws are also existing. According to Kalash religion, the only patriarchy is observed the strictness of their religious beliefs leads to some kind of male dominancy. according to Kalash community purity and impurity are the basic function of the society which is derived from religion. High mountain pasture, looking after animals (goats) and some secrete places are related to men, while the women are related to agriculture and Bashaleni. These kinds of laws lead to some

kind of patriarchal nature of religious society. The consideration of women's impurity defines women's power lessens in the community.

Patriarchy is not practiced in the social setting of the community where the women have the equal right in every aspect of their social life, the women are fully participating in decision making and getting an education, they are quite free in their movement and decision making for mate selection, doing the job and taking care of their health. One of my respondents who was a social worker of the valley argues:

“A patriarchy is a social phenomenon is not areligious. All over the world religion has to define role and regulation for believers, like other religion our religion also define the role of men and women through believing that laws we are spending our life easier and with full of satisfaction. We can't say that our religion is patriarchal some activities are forbidden for women, but no one could disagree that some kinds of activities are forbidden for men too. Women practices and Bashaleni is forbidden for male member there is kind equality in and liberal in our religion”.

Chapter 6

To Know The Reasons Behind Religious Conversion And Its Socio-Cultural Impacts On The Kalasha Community

In my second objective I have to explain the three festivals of Kalash and as well as the main reasons for religious conversion and its socio-cultural impact on the Kalash community and life as well.

6.1 Festivals of Kalash

There are many festivals celebrated around the year the three main Kalash festivals are namely chilam jusht (spring festivals). And the next one is choimus (winter festivals). And the last one is the uchal (summer festival).

Kalash is a happy person, generous, humorous, and loving. Kalash women have a withdrawal way that is charming, delightful, and unexpected. Kalash has four intrusting carnivals. Each spiritual ritual is complete by dancing and lyrical recite. Women wearing their black robes and decorated with dyed jewels, dance is a group. One hand is apprehended around the waist of the companion and the other around the shoulders. Ancestral chiefs in unusual dresses recite stories of past days and events. To the Kalash, these festivals are the culmination of religious life and they unite the people. , One of my respondents said;

“ The kalasha community gets foreign aid from the European countries for celebration and arrangements of three festivals.”

Figure 5 Kalash dance during their Joshi festival



Source: Fieldwork

6.1.1 Joshi/Chilimjusht

This festival is held in spring in the mid of May. This festival is in the respect of the fairies that protect the goats and shepherds when they go the high meadows. Formally the festivals all the women and girls gather flowers and decorate their houses. Then native wine and milk products are united. All the women sprinkle milk on the goodness “jestak.” After that, the festival initiates at Rumbur when the group leader parade to the “Malosh altar” and sacrifice has done. Late the festival transfers to Bumborate then conclude at birir.

6.1.2 Uchal festivals

In this festivals are celebrated in August at the time of harvest of wheat and barley and at this time cheese from heigh summer fields. This festival is notable in Bumborat and Rumbur both. previously in July the young girl and boys start dances to protect the maize crop which is the so-called “Ranat”.

6.1.3 Phoo festivals

Phoo festivals are only celebrated in Birir valley which marks the reaping of walnut and grape crops. The grape is the main important crop for the Kalash people because

they make wine from it and which is preferred on a specific day and for happiness and jolly. At these festivals, marshals were rescued from high fields.

6.1.4 Chomos festival

Chomos festival begins about mid-December (18th to 21st December). The festival is celebrated to welcome the new year. Valley is cleaned earlier to the upcoming year. On night torch is directed from entirely the near villages ending at the “Charsue” which is the central dancing place. All the community stayed inside and the festival was celebrated through eating. Drinking and laughing till the chief who sits on mountain top observing the sun getting the circle at that time announce the start of the new year. After that, they perform their dance and sacrifice goats at the Goddess “jastak” (Robertson, 1976)

6.2 Washing hair (Kaphal nigik)

At home, women are not permitted to wash their hair. As per their religion's requirements, they preserve them stitched together in the form of beads. In the Kalasha religion, women's hair loss is considered impure, as it may cause harm and bring ill-luck to the family. Males, on the other hand, are not bound by this requirement. Women from the villages come down to the stream every other day to wash their hair with the icy water that flows right from the glaciers, swiping the fallen hair and redoing their beads.

Even they are not allowed to wash their clothes in homes and they take their dirty clothes along with them and wash them by the stream. During winters this process becomes more severe and troublesome because of the snow and cold weather. Some households claim to no longer engage in this behavior. They do their hair washing at home. But does this not imply that they are disobeying their religion's

commandments? This also points to the idea of Kalasha's religious principles being weakened and degraded. If fundamental ideals are not upheld, the Kalasha community will continue to lose ground and eventually vanish.

6.3 Tradition of Bashalani

Bashalani practice is a part of Kalash's religion and culture. Their religion and culture can't allow staying in the village during their menstrual period and childbirth time. So in the menstrual period, the Kalash people kept their women in bashleni and considered that, that the women is impure. Pure (onjesta) in Kalash's religion and culture, is associated with gods, men, and goats. Impure (pragata) is intimately associated with women. Kalasha people believed that bashaleni are impure, so nobody can touch the bashaleni women and the institution. Even the tourist and visitors are not allowed to touch this institution if someone touches the bashaleni so thos people are not allowed to enter the village because of impurity. In case the kalasha (male-female) touches the bashaleni hut and bashaleni women, after the purification ceremony that person is considered to be pure and allowed to enter their village and homing also.

Figure 6 Outside of Bashaleni



Source Fieldwork

6.4 Conversion due to the festivals

Many festivals are held in the Kalash valleys. These festivals include hypnotic dancing and animals sacrifice, fueled by the grape wine with which the Kalash lace their gatherings. Converts to Islam say, though, that these rituals quicken the decision to leave the Kalash, the main thing wrong in the Kalash culture are the festivals, said 39-year-old Shakeel Ahmad “ when someone dies the body is kept in that house for three days” Muslim usually bury people the day they die the body is kept in that house for three days” they slaughter up to a hundred goats and the family in mourning, but those around them are celebrating, beating drums, drinking wine and dancing why are they celebrating this? That’s wrong.”

A group of five four girls, converted to Islam, interviews has some thoughts. They were not happy with the festivals and dancing of women so often. We don’t like to dance every day, it makes us tired mentally and physically, “said Rina. *“some people do it for money because the tourists pay them money it is not honorable for women to dance for money that was the main reason why I converted to Islam, a religion whos give me freedom from such festivals.”*

Not all areas Muslims feel this way. Qari Barhatullah is the imam, or priest, at the jami masjid in Bumborat valley’s shikanandeh village. He stresses that many of the valley’s Muslims value the Kalash contributions to the area's tourism industry and contends that Kalash festivals run parallel to their own. He admits that there is tension between the two communities. Unveiled Kalash girls in color full of homemade skirts and headdresses grow up alongside Muslim women covered by the all-enveloping burqas. The Kalash girl is also free to marry who they chose, in a country where arranged marriages are common, “we do support the Kalash-Islam teach us respect for other religions. But there are people here, maybe they are not as educated- who don’t

like the Kalash because of their religion,” Barhatullah said. Akram Hussain oversees the kalasha dur, a cultural center devoted to promoting and protecting the Kalash culture, a stunning structure of elegantly crafted carved wooden beams and stone where Kalash children are educated. It also houses a library, clinic, and museum, which are open to both the Kalash and Muslim communities.

“Some of the Muslims here don’t want to educate the Kalash people. They don’t want us to have an education” he said. without more schools that cater exclusively to the Kalash, Hussain worries his community and culture will disappear. “There are few Kalash teachers and there aren’t schools for older children, so they go to secondary schools and learn about Islam. the Muslim teachers are brainwashing them. They tell the children that Islam is the only right way and that we are going to hell,” he said.

A provincial spokesman said the regional government is funding development projects for the Kalash and that Pakistan was committed to protecting their unique heritage. “ we have said aside 15 million rupees over three years for projects such as improving roads, water supply, system, and community centers,” said Ahmad Hussain.

“whatever the Kalash say they need” others in the Kalash valleys through saying development should cease and insist the adoption of Islam should continue, despite the impact on the Kalash culture.

Rima, the Kalash converts, says his eventual aim is to convert his entire community to Islam. “I m trying my best to convert many of the Kalash myself. i m trying to convert as many as I can,” she said. “The people who are trying to preserve the Kalash culture as doing wrong. They are committing a mistake. The Kalash should convert to Islam.

6.5 Why Women Convert to Islam

The common view of Islam is that it oppresses women, takes away their rights, and degrades them to the level of men's property. Even so many women have willingly converted to Islam. (Shatziller, 1996) Dr. sheriff Abdel Azeem, who has researched female converts, estimates that the ratio of women who convert to Islam when compared to male converts is four to one. (Ahmad, 2018) these female converts say that Islam liberates them and gives them more power than they had ever felt before converting. Female converts state that equality and women's rights in Islam date back to the time of prophet Muhammad. In sixth-century Arabia, many pagan practices treated women harshly: parents buried unwanted female newborns, the husband owned women as possessions, and women were not allowed to be educated. (2003, p. lisa Beyer) during the seventh century, Islamic law changed many of these practices, making the education of girls secured and giving them right the to own and inherit property. (lisa beyer, 2003) “ *Muhammad (PBUH) said that a husband had to treat each of his wives equally*”. (Lisa beyar, 2003)Each of these examples gives these women converts fuel to state that at its heart, Islam has always had feminist aspects. Many women who convert to Islam cite numerous passages from the Quran to support their belief that Islam liberates them sexually and spiritually. These passages support their right to education, to work, and to keep the money that they earn. (Bunting , 2003) in addition, they state that both sexes are not only equal but also complement each other.

“The fourth sura of the Qur’an is the sura of the women or the sura al-nisa. It reads, O mankind! Be careful of your duty to your lord who created you from a single soul, created, of like nature, his mate and from them twain, scattered (like seeds) countless

men and women. Reverence Allah, through whom ye demand your mutual(right) and reverence the wombs (that both you), for Allah ever watches over you” (chihti, 1987)

This passage state that males and female are equal; they can both gain a place in heaven, and they can both become “the vicegerent of God of earth.” (chishti, 1987)another translation states, “I created you from one soul, and from that soul, I created it mate so that you may live in harmony and love.” (Bunting, 2003) the addition of “harmony and love” emphasizes the biological psychological and social complementary roles of the sexes.(chihti, 1987)

Kalash in Pakistan is believed to be a paradise located in the northwest part of the country; lakes, waterfalls, green forests teeming with wildlife, snow, and a mellow sun. but it is not just the place itself that fascinates; it is the women of Kalash, part fairy and part-human whose beauty, as the story goes, can make amen lose his religion. “when a Kalash woman drinks water, you can see it streaming down her throat. One can count the veins on her body,” is the standard text regarding the Kalash women delicateness. They are believed to be whiter than white. (magi, 2001)

The rights given by Islam to women are attractive and beneficial as well. The women of Kalash are treated as second-class citizens. They are considered inferior to men and are only made for work and pleasure purposes. Women while their specific period, are kept away from the community can meet this woman. If someone is especially a girl meet is shaking hands with these women then she would be treated the same way. A separate house is built for this purpose and the women in this stage are kept in this house. Girls feel like they are treated as slaves. The time when they are to be treated well, they are thrown in that house. These women and girls are taken out of the house when they get cleaned.

Aged women, who are treated more respectfully by Muslims, are made to work on farms in Kalash. It is their tradition that women should work even at the later part of their age. Weak in bones and eyesight they work the whole day. The male members would not work in farms as these are to be done by females of the house. This feeling of disrespect attracts women towards Islam. Some of the respondents interviewed were very happy after the conversion as it liberated them from slavery.

6.6 Attitude of others to conversion

The researcher asked how the respondent would describe the attitude of their family to their conversion to Islam. The majority of the respondent reported that their family had a negative attitude towards their respondent's conversion to Islam. Only a small percentage reported a positive response. Some had neutral attitudes and others had a mixture of attitudes (One respondent pointed out that “*this question assumes everyone in the family has the same attitudes, which they do not*”) those who reported negative said that their family attitude changed to a positive over time, while some stayed negative.

The respondent was asked to what extent the media provides fair representation of people who convert to Islam in Kalash. The majority of respondents said the media representation was unfair. Given that western media reporting of conversion stresses the link with terrorism and fundamentalism and the general public perceptions of Islam as foreign, intolerant, misogynistic, violent, and cruel religion, it is conversion. However, over time the negative attitude is replaced by a neutral or has become neutral. This may be explained by their families coming to terms with the conversion and by converts convincing their families that their conversion is not a “bad” thing.

The lush green Kalash valleys, which are sites below snow-capped peaks of the Hindu Kush, have been a magnet for tourists, both for the scenery and for the people, who are

indigenous to the area. Most are fair and with light eyes, which they say proves their descent from the army of Alexander of Macedonia that passed through the area in the 14th century BC to invade India. the community brews its wine and women are not veiled. But the smooth co-existence between the Kalash and Muslims has been fading in recent months and the area is suffering from many of the religious tensions marring the rest of Pakistan. the conversions are causing split among the Kalash converts become overcast overnight, describing many as “*dead to their families*” “ *when a Kalash converters we do not live with them in our houses anymore,*” said former asil khan, sitting on a neighbor’s balcony. *Our festivals and our cultures are different. They can’t take part in the festivals and are the way they live,*” some in the area are so concerned that they believe segregation is the only way to protects the Kalash. “*we should move the Muslim out of the valley to make more room for the Kalash.*” Said gull zareen, a Kalash member of the border police who lives in Bumborat valley. “*this area should be just for us. We dislike these conversions, it disturbs our culture and our festivals, and it reduces our numbers.*”

6.7 Difficulties faced after conversion to Islam

The researcher asked if, after converting to Islam, the respondents had experienced difficulties in particular areas. A majority of respondents experienced difficulties because of the reaction of friends and family. half or marginally under half of the respondents experienced difficulties with acceptance within the local Muslim community.

Some level of understanding of the Arabic language is generally seen to be an advantage for any Muslim, and so it is to be expected that converts would wish to learn Arabic. However, learning Arabic due to the use of different alphabets and scarcity of courses will be a challenge for any Kalash person and so it is not surprising

that this is the most common area of difficulty for the respondents. The prominence of the reaction of family and friends was reconfirmed by the respondent that their family initially had a negative attitude towards the respondent's conversion to Islam.

6.8 Experience of Converted people

Case study#1

“When they use to teach us the Holy Quran, it truly happened to resonate with me. For this reason, I converted. At schools, we were taught Quran. I always liked the Quranic verses and used to read them when I was a Kalash. Other than this I have no other reason. Kalash has no book of its own. No one has forced me to do this. I always looked forward to Islam since I was a child. But people don't let children convert to Islam. Hence I had to wait for a while. I went to a madrassa to convert to Islam. My parents supported me. My thought process was changed after I spent two months in the madrassa at chumorkon. I am married in District Dir now, and I no more attend any kalasha festivity. I did not like the way every kalasha would enter the home of another Kalash. They enter without permission and this is unethical.”

The conversion of Saira was quite a controversial incident. She said the day she got converted; her parents came to her in Madrassa and asked whether she converted on her own will? She said she did and her parents were happy with her decision and did not create an issue.

But when she returned to her place, she innocently wore back her Kalash dress. Muslims who saw her that day got enraged and started throwing stones at her house. They claimed that converting to Islam is not a joke, one moment you are a Muslim and the other you are not. Sara's case caught huge media attention and she has

pronounced on media directly that nobody has forced her to convert and that it was her mistake to wear Kalash dress after conversion and a misunderstanding.

Case study#2

A Girl named Gull Zareen (after conversion). Went for education to Chitral and lived with a Muslim family. She was impressed by their ways of living and how they treated women. The status of women is not of second class but they were treated equally. Muslim girls are not kept outside the house they get pure. She shared her views about Islam after converting to Islam.

I have conducted this interview in 11 minutes. She describes her story as a whole I am very thank full to her. The interview was conducted in the local chitrali language “Khowar”. I have recorded her whole interview on my mobile, and this interview was taken as a phone call interview.

Yes, “since my youth I have been greatly impressed by Islamic civilization and all its aspects, its poetry, and architecture; and very often I have told myself that a people who could give to the world so vast a treasure of beauty and significance in a very branch of culture, must also have attained to the highest level both in philosophy and religion. In my enthusiasm for Islam, I began to study all religions, from the most ancient to those of the present day, comparing each with the other, and subjecting them to very close criticism; and little by little, I became convinced that the Muslim worshiped is the true religion and that the noble Quran contained what every soul mostly requires for its spiritual elevation.”

Case study#3

“My name is Aqib wali my age is 33 we have three sisters and two brothers and I am the youngest one and now I am married I have no child yet, I am converting in my

own choice but I cannot forcefully be converted to Islam. It was Islam the religion which was impressed me due to conversion. I used to meet my all Muslim friends and ask about Islam and sometimes take different books on Islam and read them. And I am also read a translation of the Quran. The purity and simplicity of Islamic faith, its freedom from dogma and sacerdotalism, and its obvious truth made a special appeal to me. As I examine the honesty and sincerity of the Muslims, too, are greater than anything when I see in my previous religion. And another beauty of Islam is its equality. It has only Islam that has real equality maintained between men and women and no other religion has anything like it. The faith of Islam generates unity. They deem Islam is also the cleanest religion in the world because Muslims have to wash the exposed parts of the body five times a day a practice not found in any other religion throughout the world, I am the luckiest one that I have converted to Islam.”

I have conducted this interview within 20 minutes. He explains his story as a whole I am very thank full to him. The interview was conducted in the native language (Khowar). I have written his whole interview in my diary because he is not allowing me to record his interview in my cell.”

Case study#4

Hayat ud din story his father’s conversion to Islam and his views

Do you have any relatives who got converted to Islam? And why?

“Yes, there is my father is converted to Islam and Now my father age is 60+ and he was converted to Islam after 20 years of old and the reason of his conversion is he is migrated in a town district, he lives in Karachi and he sees in everywhere and decides he think that he lives in an Islamic country. and the majority of peoples are Muslims he impressed to Islam we were very lucky because my whole family is Muslim Allah has blessed with my whole family and we were very happy being a Muslim those

people who have converted to Islam with due to unawareness of Islamic rules and regulation and those people who converted to Islam due to immature and too strong Islamic laws they can't continue the Islamic rule and returned to Kalash religion for the free living hood."

Figure 7. Hayat udin while giving me his interview



Source: Fieldwork

6.9 Why does Kalashi Convert?

"First reason is that Kalash themselves don't know about themselves. Kalash is disintegrating dangerously. Moving into different directions. Some people want to marry off to Hindus, others to Persis and Greeks. When a person doesn't know himself (Identity crisis) then he can be anything. Or when a human becomes materialistic, as Guru Nanak once said that greed for materials makes man blind, those people who will keep on fighting over material resources, grab upon it will fall into a black hole and live in hell for eternity. All parents make their children learn the thought process of their religion, what does their religion say. There is no system of preaching Kalash Religion. Neither at the communal level nor in families. No father tells his son what their religion wants. People tend to blame our religion as the

reason for our underdevelopment, thus even Christians and Parsi come here to preach their religion. Moreover, Kalash's religion itself is ambiguous. When people ask me that do I have any books, I tell them that they are being published continuously. More material over Kalash on social media is causing Kalash religion to become more ambiguous. But these are not our people writing books upon us, God sends guidance via people. (Sarcastic remark), they write and we also read it if we have time. People write and say different things about us makes Kalash more skeptical and ambiguous. Those Kalashi who don't have a mind to think they will go astray. Those who look for leisure and easiness in life cannot carry the religion. Kalash is a difficult religion. In all these advanced religions, the relation of God and mankind has become soft. You do any sin then beg for repentance during meditation, and you are pure once again. But not in Kalash. Whatever sin you commit, you have to gather around people. You must admit in front of them also that you have committed a sin and a sacrifice. For small forgiveness, you must pay huge. This consumes time, economics and the sin of that person are no more behind a curtain. Hence Kalash's religion is difficult to handle. For instance, in the case of adultery, the process of purification requires 7 animal sacrifices. Either one cow or 7 small animals. Their meat will even not be eaten. Either you will bury them or throw them in the river. Man needs to confess his sins in front of an audience. All these things later make life difficult in the future”.

6.10 Reasons behind religious conversion

There are so many reasons behind the religious conversion of Kalash people such as marriage issues falling in love with Muslim boys, rich culture, various expenses and so so.

The main reasons for religious conversion from the Kalash community to Islam are due to heavy religious expenses in performing of Kalash festivals and religious rituals in the time of death, on the other hand, and the Kalash women wear their specific dresses which are also very expensive. And the Kalash people have celebrated their festivals thrice a year because it is mandatory and necessary that one must have new clothes for each festival and all these effects also caused religious conversion from Kalash. In past reportedly the Kalash people were converted to Islam forcefully but nowadays we see that the conversion is different the females are converted to Islam mostly love marriages with Muslim boys and the other hand the educated class also converted to Islam due to meeting with the Muslim community in school, colleges and university as well.

One of my respondents said,

“ Karim Ahmad one of the Kalash has his view about religious conversion. His age is 38 and he is married and he is a high school teacher recently he is posted in the government high school Birir.

“Yes, the main reason of religious conversion from Kalash community to Islam is due to heavy religious expenses in performing of Kalash festivals and religious rituals in the time death of any house member of Kalash community the whole Kalash community reached the deceased house and deceased family is bound to feed them with rich food of including mutton and beef, to meet these expenses one must have to keep ready and so he must keep a good number of cattle the managing of cattle is a difficult job so most of the male members involve in caring of these cattle. Due to these complexities, Kalash culture is ebbing and people prefer to live simplicity that's why the conversion rate is high.

On the other hand, the Kalash women wear their cultural dress which is also very expensive and thrice a year Kalash celebrate their festivals and it is mandatory and necessary that one must have new clothes for each festival this factor also caused effect for conversion from Kalash is to maintain this religion.

Yes, in past reportedly the Kalash people wear converted to Islam forcefully nowadays the scenario of conversion is completely different the female folk converted to Islam mostly due to love marriage with Muslims, and the educated class also converts to Islam due to gathering with the Muslims community in college and universities.

Another main factor of conversion is social pressure the local Muslim community always passed pinching remarks unknowingly and make ridiculed Kalash religion. Which caused the minority Kalash to convert to Islam and connection he reported that one aged Kalashi baba was crossing in the pedestrian he was mocked by the Muslim community men to live Kalash religion as enjoyed it well.”

6.11 Perception of Kalash people about conversion

Case study#5

There are a lot of Kalash women and men who have their perception about Muslims, I met a girl named Hazrat gull, who lives in bumboat valley. She was 36 years old with beautiful green eyes, fair color, brown hair, and tall height. She was educated and very clear in her thoughts, the experience she shared with me about Kalash religion and behinds its conversion.

She argu that

“ I am a lady health worker I have 3 daughters and one son my husband is school teacher according to me about the conversion of Kalash in Islam is so many reasons

mainly but being a Kalash woman I think there are so many religion in worldwide, and every religion is his way of praying Muslim have different Kalash have different, etc but why people forced us to conversion to other religion, Allah Pak has unlimited powers, if Allah wants he would have created us in Muslim family but he created us in Kalash family it is not our fault to be a Kalash. Every human being has been created by one almighty Allah so he is naturally bound to worship Allah in either way. So I am being Kalash fully understand that the only power is managing affairs of a universe if there were more than one the organized system of the universe could never be operated in the way. There are thousands of religions are existing throughout the globe, which is why Kalash is being considered by the fellow Muslim community as untouchable. My great concern to the fellow Muslim community is to show tolerance and follow the principle of co-existence. the main reason for religious conversion from Kalash community to Islam is due to heavy religious expenses in performing of Kalash festivals and religious rituals in the time death of any house member of Kalash community the whole Kalash community reached the deceased house and deceased family is bound to feed them with rich food of including mutton and beef, to meet these expenses one must have to keep ready and so he must keep a good number of cattle the managing of cattle s difficult job so most of the male members involve in caring of these cattle. Due to these complexities, Kalash culture is ebbing and people prefer to live simplicity that's why the conversion rate is high. The Kalash women wear their cultural dress which is also very expensive and thrice a year Kalash celebrates their festivals and it is mandatory and necessary that one must have new clothes for each festival this factor also caused effect for conversion from Kalash. The social pressure of the dominated Muslim community also plays a vital role in conversion from Kalash to Muslim”.

Figure 8. Hazrat gull while giving me her interview



Source: fieldwork

6.11 Rites Of Passage In Kalasha

In my third and last objective, I have to express the different types of practices that kalasha people do for example the marriage system, childbirth, and death practices that all are attached to the cultural rituals.

6.11.1 Child Birth Rites

Female Kalash women are ideologically polluted in general, with extreme pollution in females during menstruation, as well as pre and post-delivery situations. During this time, women leave their houses and live in a seclusion house (Bashleni) designed specifically for such occasions. After menstruation, women leave after purification and bathing, but after delivering a baby, the mother and child stay for forty to ninety days, depending on the mother's and child's health.

Before entering their own home, the mother and child are led to just a hand for the rite of cleansing. Mother washes her arms up to her elbows and stretches them out to avoid contacting them with her body during this process. Any of her male relatives delivers her five wheat pieces of bread (Jason) in her stretched-out hands. These

unique loaves are baked with wheat flour by mals and then backed in a goat stable, making them ritually pure and sacred. The Qazi (priest) burns the juniper and presents the smoke to the emblem, then circles the flaming shoot of the juniper three times around the female, then tears little pieces of bread from the pieces of bread and throws them into the fire set in the middle of the hand. Shishao is a type of shishao that is used to complete a meal (female purification rite). The priest looks at the youngster. A male relative cradles the youngster in his outstretched arms. Another man stretches a lamb on his knees, and a poor boy (onjusta Suda) slices the lamb's throats after pouring juniper in the fire, then takes types of blood in his hands, sprinkles the justak symbol, and then separates the lamb's necks comp and chops a tiny portion of the lamb's ear. And after it has been thrown into the fire, the mother and child can return to their home. During the performance of the ceremonies, the priest and the elders, present their keep on murmuring the badly asking for the leanage's fecundity and fertility, and to request God for the child's fate, good reputation, and actions to the family and lineage.

One of my respondents and my key informants argue

In a detailed interview about childbirth practices in Kalash culture, she said in her culturally practices ceremony due to childbirth time that what types of rituals are attached with it?

“ She said that a Kalasha women stay in Bashalani it oder to give childbirth. After ten (10) days of childbirth, the women leave Bashalani and come to his house. All relatives and close friends come together and celebrate. At the same time, the pious person of the community cut the child's hair and hang it on a tree (practices for longer life of the child)”.

6.11.2 Initiation Rites

Another rite of passage custom is observed in Kalash culture. Children of rite-of-passage age are not considered ordinary members of society until they participate in a ritual ceremony. If any of the children die before the rituals are performed, no ordinary dead rites are performed, and the event is treated as a non-communal occurrence. Every youngster must go through a rite of passage to be recognized as a regular member of society. A boy goes through this procedure twice during his life, while a girl only goes through it once.

In the first step, a boy youngster is required to wear a shirt and a handcrafted cape secured with a clump of bear fur. In the second stage, the boy child wears Kalash pants (boots) with a handwoven belt with bells and ornaments. It is only done once for a girl child when she is three or four years old. She is clad in a piran² (Kalash maxi) and compass (headgear³) made of hand-woven raw sheep wool material, as well as kauris.

On this occasion, the child is dressed up by Mother's brother. Heavy utensils, honorable robes, dried mulberries, walnuts, grapes, and all available fruits are presented to all kin-folk by the family. Depending on the relationship, the quantity fluctuates. The chief-quest of the event is represented by the mother's brother, who dresses up the child. He brings a variety of supplies, including all of the clothing and livestock, as well as goats, usually he-goats, the purest and precious animals used in ritual sacrifices, particularly during the rituals of the male kid.

Because of the patrilineal pattern of social organization, males are seen as more prestigious, and the male-child is regarded as a source of prestige among the Kalash.

² Known as chitrali magsii

³ A covering or protective device for the head

The honor and return of many present goods as usable items, such as utensils, cloth, robes, deified fruits, and everything else, demonstrates the acknowledgment of the female leanage's fertility and fecundity, as well as a return of thanks and compassion; to allow her to reproduce for the current family. Other relatives are given showman's around their necks as a token of concern and relatedness at this time. This occasion also reaffirms the female donor-recipient relationship as a societal status symbol. Because no rituals are conducted, this ceremony is more social than religious, and it takes place in the state of Uttarakhand. It is also critical that society recognizes the function of the child as a regular member of society with the capacity to play both masculine and female roles in the future.

In the Kalash economy, the Goshink (rite-of-passage) plays an important role. On this occasion, the child's mother's brother brings several goats, mostly he-goats, which are used in ritual sacrifices and whose meat is served to the community at the initiation feast. In a society where social and economic status is determined by the number of goats one owns, this occasion is very important because a ceremonial exchange of goats in exchange for woolen robes, hounurs' robes, large utensils, and dried fruit takes place.

The second stage of initiation (Goshink) is more crucial in the case of a boy-child. In the second stage, the child is brought in Jestak Han at the age of seven to eight years, where he is dressed in traditional Kalash pants and shirts made of sheep wool, with a wrapped boundary around the waist, special goat-skin shoes (Kuta-wait), and a turban on ahead around the cape, representing the traditional Kalash ancestral shepherd, it represents the ancestral re-birth. On the evening of this ceremony, these young

gossink children say goodbye to the dev-a-dura, the place of devs(sacred), from the Jestak han⁴

6.12 Marriage system of kalasha people

Marriage is a type of social structure that assists people in meeting their biological and social requirements. It's also a social pact between both parties to complete the life cycle. Marriage is an essential component of a healthy society and an individual's well-being. It is a procedure that allows a person to become self-sufficient and start a family. The entire process of evolution, from any perspective, is dependent on marriage because it allows society to expand and people to live with unique identities. Monogamy and polygamy are the two most popular types of marriage. In the Kalash community, love, planned, and elopement weddings are popular. In the Kalash society, love marriage is one of the most essential and common types of marriage. The Kalash community's way of life is unusual, and its cultural practices are unique around the world. Their ladies have unlimited autonomy over who they marry. . (Wjid ali, et al, 2018)

‘A mixed method was used for the collection of data. For this purpose, a well-designed open and close-ended questionnaire was used and data was collected from different respondents in the target area. Qualitative data was interpreted in description while quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS version 20.0. From the study, it is concluded that most of the people commonly practiced monogamy along with endogamy marriage in some families.

Jestak is believed to beguard and protector of the family, married life, children, fertility, and fecundity. So marriage among the Kalash takes place in the hand in front of the Jestak Han emblem.

⁴ Jestak Han is an important sacred place of worship.

The Qazi (priest) of the lineage which is one of the kin, bride, groom, a few members of the family, and a sacrificial animal preferably sheep, or a goat, walk up to Justak Han. A close relative of the groom brings pure (onjusta) bread (Jason) baked by any male relative, in the goat-skin sack which is new touched but any women. He also bring juniper shoots, always considered and used for ritual purification.

After reaching to the hand, a fire is lit in the middle of the hand. Two of the males wash their hands up to their elbows and stretch them out to avoid touching them with their bodies. one of them picks up the sacrificial animals, stretching on his knees. the second person throws juniper shoots into the fire and cuts the throats of the animals. He picks the blood of the animals in his hands, throws it into the fire first, then sprinkles on the justak emblem, and in the last sprinkles on the faces of bride and groom. Then separates the head of the animal, cuts a small portion of the ear to put it in the fire, which is termed as a source of the animal (the purification of the animal).

During this ritual performance of sacrifice and blood sprinkle, priest loudly and other males in murmurs, pray to God for love, sincerity, and affection among the couple and for fertility and the fecundity of the bride to bring prosperity and prestige to the grooms family through strong, healthy and beautiful children. All of them ask Jestak Han to take their prayers to the God Almighty (Khudai). This ritual process of marriage is known as shish-instance, which completes the ceremony.

After shush-istangoe, the bride has to go through ritual purification for which she washes her arms up to her elbows and holds five pure breads given by any of the male relatives present, in her hands stretched out in front. The priest burns the juniper's branches, waves its smoke round the Jestak and revolves it around the bride three times, and throws it to fire. Then he tears off small pieces of bread from the hands of the bride and throws them into the fire. The left bread is given to the bride to eat

herself afterward. This ritual is called shisho the purification of the females. The ceremony of the marriage ends with this ritual performance.

Figure 9 Kalashi traditional marriage



Source Fieldwork

6.13 Result of love marriage with a Muslim boy

Sana's story before and after conversion to Islam highlights what condition did she face in her married life?

Case study#6

I met a girl named Sana who lives in bumboat valley. She was 20 years old with beautiful blue eyes, fair color, brown hair, and tall height. she was very clear in her thoughts. The experience she shared with me was about a Muslim boy, with whom she fall in love. The boy was a Muslim and lives in a different village. After falling in love they started meeting each other quite regularly. They become used to each other. After meeting once they used to wait for the next morning. this went for very long. She decided to marry him, she asked him to marry her take her to his house. He said it was only possible if she converts to Islam, then they could marry each other. She was

blind in his love that could not see anything which can separate them, even if it is their religion. She accepted this condition and embraced Islam as her soul religion. She openly challenged her family that she is not Muslim and she would not follow her previous religion and traditions. She wanted to remain aloof from the culture which was against the religion of the boy she loved. She told her family that she is going to marry a Muslim boy for whom she converted.

A shocking incident that occurred and made anyone be in tears was when she was raped by a gang of boys including the one for whom she was ready to leave her family. After some weeks of her embracing Islam, the boy took her to the village with some of his friends and they took her towards some strange place. She thought that he is taking her to get married, however, she was wrong. She was taken to some strange place and was raped by these boys, after three to four days Sana came from nowhere in the worst condition. Her family asked her what did happen but she was in condition to tell anything. She was yelling and screaming. Her family was shocked about her condition, but nobody knew where she was and what did happen to her. They thought to file a case against the culprit and went to the police, however, the boy's family had a strong background. He threatened her family and even beat them, so they took their case back and stop any further processing. This incident makes her feel bad about Islam and Muslims and she started hating Muslims. She never converted back to her religion and never told anyone that ever embraced Islam.

6.14 Marriage, another reason due to conversion

Abu Talhah al-Ansari was offered a dowry of accepting Islam to Umm Sulaym (mother of Anas ibn Malik). She also gave him logical da'wah concerning his idol worship. Abdul-'Aas who was married to the prophet's daughter, Zaynab, was separated from her by the prophet (PBUH) and was later ransomed from among the prisoners of Badr

by Zaynab. In both of these cases, marriage to a Muslim woman was a factor in their conversions.

It has often been suggested that marriage plays a major role in people's decision to convert to Islam (particularly for women). In most of the studies where people are questioned, marriage played a large part in their decision to embrace Islam. The possible reasons for the preponderance of women converts are the marriage factor.

In my research most of the women who embraced Islam is due to marriage. They had married a born Muslim and eventually converts as well. It was not easy to find the percentage because the converts had moved to other cities after marriage. Some women were divorced as well. The interviews might not provide an insight into the reasons behind conversion, in at least most of the cases there does not seem to be any direct link between conversion and marriage.

One of my respondents argue

"I think there are two factors of Kalash conversion; first female conversions are getting increase day by day, it is due to 'Love' and getting boyfriend with Muslim males and boys. First, they are engaging with love affairs and then getting married to them. In this way, the Kalash girls are converting into Muslims. Second, Kalash is converting by their own choice and this conversion is rare.

After conversion, neither we nor they face any threat from each other, but the converted one can't live with us in our homes and we don't consider them as a part of our culture, they have to set up their own separate homes. However, it doesn't mean we have a social boycott with them, they come to our homes and we do as well. If they are relative, like us, as we have three brothers and one converted sister, she use to come to our homes and we also give them love and affection as other Kalash brothers

give love and affection to their Kalash sisters. My sister converted because of love marriage”

The follow-up study, which sought clarification on respondents' material histories, gave more information (four of the thirty-two respondents were single). Four of the interviewees said clearly that they had converted to marry: three females and one male. However, the respondent in two of these cases went on to say that the conversion was not 'forced' ("if he had 'forced' me, I would not have married him") and "I feel I converted at some point regardless." I believe the marriage was a catalyst"). Another married a convert, but later divorced and remarried. Five other women (all female) married a Muslim but did not convert until after the marriage (one of them stated, "I wanted to do it (convert) for Allah, not to be married").

Responses to the primary study's question "what one piece of advice would you give to someone considering converting?" bolstered the notion that marriage does not play a significant role in conversion. Almost 15% of respondents (almost all of them were female) specifically advised against converting for marriage:

While marriage may be the primary motivation for conversion in the case of 'converts of convenience,' it is clear from the findings of interviews and follow-up research that marriage is a major motivator for the majority of converts of conviction, and converting solely for marriage is frowned upon. At least for marriage, it appears to be a myth for converts of conviction. And converting just for marriage is disapproved of by such converts. For converts of conviction ‘ at least, conversion for marriage appears to be a myth.

6.15 Restriction Regarding Marriage

There is no such kind of restriction according to Kalash culture. Kalash believes in extended family or clan system believers therefore within the family like cousin

marriage is considered taboo. Marriage with close relatives is forbidden like the first cousin and she consider as a sister and it is also forbidden like the first cousin and she considered as a sister and it is also forbidden about seven generations of a lineage from the same ancestor (Parkes, Peter, 1995). But with the passage of time and diminishing of their population they mary up to three generations but cousin marriage is not in practice in the community. According to one of the respondents aged, 44 stated

“ We are observing some changes regarding marriage, we were heard from one ancestor; that according to Kalash religion it was forbidden about twelve generations of common lineage to get married and was consider taboo, but now our populations have been diminished and therefore we took flexibility in our religious belief to preserve our religion.”

6.16 Arrange marriages in the kalasha community:

The perception of arranged marriages in the Kalash community is as follow the Kalash people are mostly in falling love they mostly love marriage in their thrice festivals, as well as the kalash, are no practices in arranging marriages as well so that's are so many reasons attached here with many of my respondents that they will argue that's in their points of view.

6.17 Independent to visit the doctor:

Health is the basic necessity of every human being. According to the kalasha community, they do not parda like Muslims. Therefore there is no issue for the Kalash female to visit the doctor, in local hospitals they are

Free to visit. When they got a serious disease, and move away from the village they will have any family member with them because in case of emergency he could help them.

One of my responses and key informants said that

“Two days before I was doing work at my farm, the temperature was quite high I felt some kind of imbalance was not in my house. I think in the health matter there should not need to get permission from the husband”

6.18 Independent to Visit Relatives and Attend Ceremonies

According to the Kalash culture and religion, the females are considering themselves as their husband's property. Before visiting the relatives they have to get permission from their husband without giving permission the female could not visit her relatives. As to attend the ceremonies rather than religious they have to get permission from their male member of the respected family as well. And if it is a religious ceremony there is no need to get permission because without female participation the religious ceremony is mined less. As the uniqueness of their culture, they are being introduced all over the world when they attend the ceremonies beyond the local that is the source of their income but getting the permission is the necessity.

One of my respondent's age 48 argues that

“I attend many ceremonies inside and outside the country and local district Chitral. Islamabad, Karachi, and ceremony as well. This is the source of my income I have no restriction from my husband but according to Kalash tradition, I consider myself as the property of my husband. therefore it's my responsibility to get permission from my husband. if he is not satisfied with my movement I can't attend any ceremony. Only in religious ceremonies, there is no need to get permission”.

6.19 Death

Another important ceremony i.e. of death takes place in Jestak Han. In the Bumborat valley when someone dies, after bathing and dressing the dead body into unused new

clothes, and new traditional hand-made goatskin shoes (sherskundali), white turban on the head in case of the male, and Kalash women dress (Piran), headgear (cupass) and head woven socks made of wool (pushp) in the case of female, place death on a bier in the middle of the Jestak Hanak Han. The information is disseminated to all those concerned, and in case of any honorable and prestigious male to all the three valleys. The close kin and family members along with other Kalash people gather in the Jestak Han. All the close female relatives regardless of age remove their headgears (shushood) and wear cupass. The very close women folk such as sister, mother, father's sisters, mother's sisters, wife in case of a male, undo the plaits of their hair (Chul) and wrap a small cloth in the head. Respondent argues:

"In our community when someone is dead we inform all Kalash people. They come within 24 hours and bury it like Muslims but we use boxes made from wood and we put the dead body into this box and bury it. The close relatives use to mourn for three days and don't make meals; people other than close relatives offer their meals to them. After seven days close relative scarifies 20 to 30 goats in the memory of the dead one".

The female, sit around the dead body on their feet, and the elderly women relatives, i.e mother's sister, father's sister. Mother of any other close relatives bend over the dead body, wave her right hand from head to feet and back murmuring peace for the soul. The drum beats with a slow mourning beat, on which other present females present dance in a semi-circle wrapping their arms around each other's waist, making a chain. In low voice, they sing the mourning songs for the death and to ease his/her soul. This ceremony goes on up to three days or only one day depending upon the death's or family's social-economic position because it also involves a lot of food, cheese, wheat bread, and grapes wine. The invitation from all the three valleys also

depends upon the foodstuff available and the stars expected from the lineage members. The people from outside the village come in groups. They fire their guns several times when they reach near the village indicating their arrival, and to fear demons and evil spirits. When the group reaches the Jestak Han, the elderly among them come forward, near the bier of the dead person and by pointing his stick towards the dead and sometimes towards the skies shouts the great deeds of the deceased's ancestors and his lineage. The leader praises the bravery, generosity, social prestige, and faithfulness of the death and his ancestors. After the praise, all the group is served bread and cheese. In the case of females, praise is done to her husband's lineage and her services, because of patrilineal social organization.

All the days and nights dead body lies either in the Jestak Han or on the platform in front, covered with bright colored spread cloth. The drumbeat outside the Jestak Hanon is the platform, and dance goes on there. Inside the Jestak Han dance, drums and songs are not allowed. All the people gather in the Jestak Han then the blood male relatives pick up the dead to people return to the dead-house where a large number of goats is slaughtered. Along with wheat bread, butter oil, and gravy made of meats soup and wheat flour, lumps of cooked meat are distributed among the mourning participant. They eat and take the leftover with them to their respective homes.

The role of Jestak Han initiated with the first purification rites after birth ends up with one's death and its ceremonies. It shows the pivotal importance of the Jestak Hand in the Kalash life cycle which starts from jestak Han. Another feature that shows the importance of jestak Han in the Kalash life is its role, as a newborn, as an initiated before the puberty marriage ceremony, and death rites. It all shows that justakHand encircles Kalash people all through their life.

Figure 10. The ancient Graveyard of the kalashi people



Source Fieldwork

6.20 Sacred vows

All the sacred sites in Kalash are prohibited because the exit beyond the line, where to go for females is restricted. Females have only one place where they can pray and offer their entities, i.e. Jastak Han. The relation of males with valley life as well as with high mountains relate them to worldly affairs while females are restricted within the deep valley so their role is considered more family-oriented, revolving around brothers and children. To have their family problems solved, such as disease and ailments, females make vows in Jastak Han is considered as a female vowing place, where females ask God to help in their affairs regarding their health and that of their children. In this respect, Jastak Han plays an important role in the life of Kalash, especially for females.

6.21 Funeral practices in the kalash community (Breek)

One of the strongest cultural practices that I happened to witness was during the funeral of a Kalash member. It is indeed an exotic experience and certainly, a common man will find him/herself in a cultural shock. This is an excuse for a community gathering, feasts, and an element of joy is also discerned amidst grief and sorrow. The dead body is placed in 'Jestak Han' a Kalash holy temple that is built in every village. Members from all the three valleys pour to the village of the demised member and initiate their ritual dance around the dead body. Kalash defines this dance as not symbolic of joy but a sorrowful farewell. Drums in the background, swirling around the dead body with clutching and releasing of fists with raised arms symbolize life and death. For a non-local on-looker, this activity casts a mystifying effect on their minds and they receive an exotic experience of their lifetime.

Qazis, or priests, who subsequently keep on coming from around the villages initiates a sermon pitching in the direction of the deceased and his ancestor's good deeds. Music and dancing stop for a while, and everybody listens to the priest quietly. The moment he is done, the rolling of the drums begins again and people again start dancing around the dead body. Until the next group from another village led by another priest arrives and the whole sequence begins again. Gun fires are shot in the honor of the dead one. Most of these activities are in the honor of the male demise.

Some Muslim members are offended by this activity. They think that it is disrespectful to dance around a dead body both ethically and religiously. Practices like these certainly make vulnerable minds change their religion. One such example is of Rima , who was a convert and shared her story with me about his conversion. During my interview with her, she stated that

“But I have never contributed for a funeral, as they drink and dance around the dead body which is a mockery. They further debate around the dead body narrating the attributes of the dead one and praising him. As all Praise belongs to Allah.”

It is a problem when it comes to serving the guests in huge numbers. A lot of money is required for this purpose. Earlier it was the duty of the demised household itself to pamper the guests. This became a very exhaustive exercise for poor families and is also one reason told to me by one of my respondents, Feroz shah for conversion. He said

“Funerals have been very expensive for Kalash in history. This had been a major reason in the past for the conversion. But now the trend has changed considering the economic situation of most tribal members. Now the affluent factions of the village contribute in the funeral expenditures.”

Still, some of my respondents stated that most people help with perks. Which does not help the poor family the way it is required to nullify at least one reason for conversion. People think about this before they die and mostly convert at old age for Islam offers a modest funeral and only close family of Kalash then attends the funeral and not the whole community

Figure 11. Kalash dance at a funeral



Source: Fieldwork

6.22 Role of Jestak Han in death

After the death of any lineage member of the body is placed in the jestak Han⁵ for the initial funeral rites. The dead body of a man is put inside the jestak Han for three days.

While for women ceremony extends only one day. The dead person is dressed in new clothes. Women are dressed in each they ever wore previously, and men dressed in Shalwar Qamees, a turban around the head, special leather shoes “Shera Kundali” made of lamb skin traditionally used in the past either by some dignity or by the dead person. The body is placed in the center of the Jestak Han, covered with a bright colorful cloth covering neck to ankle. The concerned women and lineage sisters remove their headgear “Shushud” undo their plaits and tie a piece of cloth on their head. All the family brother of the deceased turn their caps. Inside out and gather in Jestak Han. The drum beats in the morning rhythm, men and women dance individually spreading their arms out towards the sky, closing their opening fists, stepping in circular movement the women move in slow rhythmic steps, to and fro, in the row embracing each other with their stretched arms around each other’s waist or on shoulders. The mother, mother’s sister, or father's sisters sit beside the bier and wave hands for the departure to ease the soul. Generally, on the occasion of death, all the Kalash of the valley and other valleys are invited. The people reach in group and when they reach near the village they fire shots from their guns as a symbol to inform their arrival. Whenever groups reach, the leader comes to the bier and narrates the achievements, glory, and praises of the deceased, his lineage, family, ancestors and of his kindness and generosity in a loud voice, apparently looking towards him and pointing his stick as all is said to him, in this way all the gather of Jestak Han, with

⁵ Jestak Han is an important sacred place of worship.

occasional mourning and ancestral songs and dance to the slow morning beat of the drum. All these activities go on day and night. The family of the deceased along with their close relatives pool their cheese and wheat flour saved especially for this purpose to serve all the quests and participants. This activity goes on in Jestak Han until the burial. But these ceremonies can only be carried out for the members of the lineage, which own the Jestak Han. All other uses open gardens for such purposes.

Summary

In northern Pakistan, within the territorial boundaries of district Chitral situated three Kalash valleys, namely Rumbor, Bumborat, and Birrir holding a very traditional and exotic culture. The kalasha is very famous in the name of kalasha kafirs known as (Black kafirs) up till to-date the origin of these peculiar people could not be traced out who are approximately 3000 in number. But slowly and gradually the kalasha people are converted to Muslim and their population is very less in number most of them are converted in their well and many of them are forcefully converted.

There are Descendents of a few of those non-Islamic tribes, who escape from Afghanistan under the oppression and forcible conversion to Islam, by Hayat uddins grandfather, escaped from forcible conversion and seclusion in these three valleys for a long time saved their religious and social identity.

During these speculations. They kept on perpetuating their ancestral traditions based on transhumance pastoral economy with the cultivation of cereal in their fields, during the second half of the 20th century their existence was discovered with their mountain within the Hindukush enclave by the same high government officials, features of the culture made the accessibility easy through constructing a jeep road from Chitral, via ayun, this jeeb road, on the one hand, made the journey for the tourists and visitors of these valleys to witness their traditions, on the other hand, brought a greater exposure of the outer world, to the local, Kalash of these valleys bear similar customs, social rules and cultural norms, this similarity in their social ideology catalyzed their relationships and cooperation in match selection feud settlement, and strengthen the bond, despite many similarities there are few dissimilarities which can be judged through keen observation and sharp inquires.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, this study does not attempt to investigate all of the many methods by which individuals in the subcontinent became drawn into Muslim society. This is a complex phenomenon involving a variety of distinct processes, some of which had nothing to do with conversion. For example, from the thirteenth century onwards, thousands of Tuks, Afghans, and Iranians emigrated to the subcontinent, and Muslim communities grew slowly as a result of intermarriage between Muslim men and non-muslim women. Even when discussing conversion, this study skirted around the subject of Kalash conversion in places like Chitral, Nuristan, and Kalash. Similarly, a thorough investigation on the conversion of Kalash to Islam would have to cite examples of well-thought-out, well-executed conversion initiatives, such as the Sunni's, which successfully integrated the people of Kalash into the Muslim community. Rather, the goal of this study was to bring attention to a facet of the conversion debate that had hitherto gone unnoticed: mass Islamization of the Indo-Muslim state's geographical perimeter, as well as the relationship between environmental change and religious change. I believe that widespread conversion to Islam, at least in Kalash, was a slow and steady process with two distinct aspects: accretion and reform. These aspects of conversion movement are, in some ways, behaviors. That is, for that Kalash who followed the Islamic faith., Local religion's symbols, rituals, and practices act as "models of or descriptions of the social order and its religious life." Thus, a Punjabi Sufi could simply declare an ancient, pre-Muslim behavior Islamic, and that would be that. However, Islam was considered as a cohesive set of absolute standards, beliefs, and practices to which one must bend oneself and one's fellows if one is to be rescued in its reform aspects. As Geertz

pointed out, Islam served as a "model for" behavior and was crucial not because it explained but because it created the social order.

The difference in Kalash dialect, the sequences of celebration of the seasonal festivals, the type and sequences performance of certain rituals – maybe because of the differences in lineage and the roots along with the valley conditions. Ecology molds human culture and living patterns, which can be seen obvious among Kalash, who celebrate their festivals according to the seasonal and climatic changes.

The kalasha life cycle starts with the spring when snow in the valley melts and flowers blossom everywhere Yoshi festival marks the people of the spring. People wear flowers and celebrate the festivals with new cloths, women weave traditional woolen cloth for their headdresses and made a new one for the festivals shepherds leave with their hearts, to the high pastures and women starts their agriculture cycle uptill autumn, the time of harvest, at this movement snowfall starts in the high pastures and the shepherds return to the valley stable, with their hearts and traditionally dichotomy of Kalash male and female into pure and impure, wild and domestic chores.

The harvest festivals in barrier valley express the attributed of human creatures for this bestowment fertility of lands resulted in the harvest, winter indicates the restricted movement confinement in the houses because snow covers in everywhere in the valley winter brings a stagnancy in the life, sort of death, revives again in spring,

A period of climate hibernation, although winter brings cold life, kalasha initiate their children during winter festivals, which has a great significance.

In the traditional society, initiation rites are important and performed at different ages according to their customs. Among the Kalash initiation rites are performed at the age of three to four years in which mother brother brings goats and clothes for child and

dresses him/her which give recognition to the child as a regular member of the community, who is mourned in case of death before the Goshnic (initiation rites) the mourning and the death rites is never performed for children's death, boys go through the initiation twice, in first step recognition in the community as overall and the second stage, he acquires his membership of the pure male world when dress in the typical Kalash shepherds dress at the age of 7 to 8 years.

The rituals clothing of children takes place in Jestak Han, the sanctuary of justak, the protector of family, lineage, and domestic affairs, it is the only secret place in the Kalash pantheon which is situated in the village built as a house which has four walls covered with a roof. All the other four altars are situated above the high water channels (kool) along the slopes of the mountains in the pure are, prohibited for women. Prabha, warin, mahandeo, and greemon are the deities where males offer sacrifices and pray for God's help. Kalash believes in a khudai (the creator).

The importance of justakhand among the Kalash deities is obvious, of its presence in the valley where everyone has access without any gender differentiation. The second feature which differentiates Jestak from all other secret places is the building from which does not exist normally. The justakhand of Guru was built by Awazay and Babura in raja katore's time. It took seven years of hand and regular labor of valley people and the rajas army. A big feast was given for erecting a hand and installation of justak emblem in it. in the vicinity of Chitral, the first one is built-in Shishi Koh, the justak hand of Guru is the replica of it.

Initially, its sanctity was kept by the Kalash people. They performed all the rituals related to the family life directly as initiation marriage, death. The roof of justakhand is revered and no women every any non-Kalash male is never allowed on its roof, because of the notion of pollution related to them. the regular influx of Muslims is

afterward kalasha conversion to Islam was dangerous, so the advice of Kalash shaman, the justak is taken to the individual houses, to save its sacredness. The shift of justak from the justakhand has transformed the role of justakhand. And all the rituals performed in the justakhand previously started operating in the house, in front of the justak. The installation of justak in the hind wall behind the fireplace which is the purest area in the house brought a prohibition for the women to access the roof.

While there is a diversity of opinion amongst converts (as with any group) generally take a “moderate”

On many matters, the clear majority rejects "extreme" views outright rather than taking a "conventional" position. It is important to use the terms "moderate," "traditional," "fundamentalist," and "extreme" with caution. The definitions of these terms are not set in stone, and the terminology will have varied meanings for different groups. There is no agreement on whether the particular phrases should be viewed as having positive meanings (for example, any Muslim classifies themselves as "fundamentalists" in a positive sense, meaning they believe in the fundamental principles of Islam). For this study, "moderate" refers to someone open to a rational and conciliatory approach to conflict resolution while rejecting extremism.

Based on their responses to a series of questions regarding their personal beliefs on a variety of issues, the majority of the converts in the study can be classified as "moderate." There is relatively little support for complete gender segregation across the board. Only a small percentage of Muslims believe that celebrating birthdays, listening to music, or reading fiction is forbidden by Islam (all things that tend to be considered as prohibited by extremists). Fewer respondents believe that attending a family festival dinner is forbidden, while almost half believe that it is permissible (as

long as it is not used as an excuse to consume alcohol) and should even be encouraged to strengthen family ties.

Converts have a strong sense of Islamic identity, and they believe it is important for individuals they meet and interact with to know they are Muslims. Converts value marriage and having children, and they believe religion is vital in their children's development, yet the majority would prefer their children to attend secular schools. Adult "second generation" converts have been observed, according to anecdotal evidence (that is people brought up as Muslims in families where one or both parents are converts)

Recommendations:

This study is conducted in serious issues of religious conversion in kalash community chitral, some recommendation that are given below;

- Socio-economic of religious conversion in kalash community.
- Marriage system of kalash community.
- The festivals of kalash are also unique

All the recommendations and suggestions will not be beneficial because the government itself flourishing their business by all these societal remedies. Government policy applied in any region of Pakistan especially on kalash on any issue because the conspiracy and thrown game confinement live till end.

Annexure

Aanga	Fingers
Angooti	Guest room
Angar	Fir
Aaya,naan	Mother
Apak	Mouth
Brar	Brother
Bachi	Aunti
Bazu	Arm
Bhoot	Shoes
Bas	Day
Bermugh	Walnut
Bashalni	Women seclusion house
Break	Death
Bijlee	Torch, light
Bagi	Passage
Baaru,Mosh	Husband
Cheer	Milik
Chamos	Winter solstice
Choo/xur	Daughter
Choose	Robe
Chuchi	Tomarrow
Cupass	Women's headdress major and formal,
Daada	FB, and all the horizontal male relatives

Dalum	Promegrante
Dost	Friend
Droch	Grapes
Dur	House/home
Daar	wood
Dugur	Nail
Gaak	Cow
Gardan	Neck
Gordug	Donkey
Gach	eyes
Gik	Coming
Host	Hand
Hanun	Today
Hairs	phur
Hayman	Winter
Ishchar	Sister
Istor	Horse
Ishponik	Gravy is made up of meat soup and wheat flour.
Istangoes	Purification rites for the males.
Istree	Women
Jameeli	Sisters of the same lineage.
Jestak Han	Is an important sacred place of worship
Kai	Bhbi/ brother wife
Kar	ears
Koe	Why

Kura	Who
Korum	Work
Khaltabarry	Relation because of marriage
Kaphal Nigik	Washing hairs
Legeeni	Tongue
Lai	Blood
Lagawore	Festivals of crows
Miki	uncle
Manu	Guest
Mashkik	Search
Mandajoo	Kalash graveyard
Mass	Moon/Month
Mooghe	Raining dogs and cats
Mangal	fir spot, angathi
Mosh bok	Husband wife
Naan Taat	Parents
Naree	men/man
Nesheey	Sit
Naano	Mother's sister father's sister all the
Horizontal female relatives	
Oshak	Cold
Piran	shirt
Phirbal	Touser
Phunk	Dance
Phur	Hairs

Plongustoo	Ring
Pattoa	Non-kalashi Chitral
Phanak	Chees
Paati	Band of hand-made cloth to tie at waist
Phasti	Wooden store
Pakhti	Rice
Qazi	Priest, the man with knowledge of tradition
Shun	lips
Shish-istangose	Marriage rites
Shishoo	Purification rites for the female
Shushat	Women head dress minor and informal
Shuman	Waist band
Shushoik, shali	Beautiful/Handsome
Surak, yor	Sun
Saruss	Juniper
Shavei	Pearl
Sha	Black
Shato	Lasi
Trin	Yogurt
Thoam	Smoke
Thone	Pillars
Xurap	Socks
Yoshi	Spring festivals
Zah	Salan

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Interview Guide

Q.1: Do you think the religious conversion of the kalash community is a threat to the overall social set of the society?

Q.4: Do you agree that most people say that religious conversion in the kalash community is a forced conversion?

Q.5: Do you agree that forced religious conversion is a human right violation?

Q.6: Do you agree religious conversion of the kalash community is a threat to its unique culture?

Q.7: What do you think are the factor responsible for the religious conversion of the Kalash community?

Q.8: Do you agree freedom of religion is a fundamental human right?

Q.9: What are the consequence of religious conversion for the over the peace full environment of Chitral?

Q.10: What should be the role of governments to control the forced conversion of the Kalash community?

Q.11: What do you think the government and human rights commission should do to control the forced religious conversion?

Q.12: Do you agree that socio-economic problem is the causes of religious conversion are yes how?

Q.13: Do you agree that POVERTY is also a cause of religious conversion?

Q.14: Do you believe people mostly convert to other religions without knowing their effects on their culture and social setup?

Q.15: Do you think the role of the Kalash community itself is necessary to aware people of forced conversion?

Q.15: Do you agree that Kalash people cannot afford their expertise and that is why they convert their religion yes or no?

Q.16: Do you think the religious conversion of the Kalash community is a threat to the overall social set of the family?

Q.17: What are the main reasons for love marriage in the Kalash community?

Q.18: Why did the Kalash people convert to Islam if there is any force conversion or by choice?

Q.19: What are the main factors due to conversion and why?

Q.20: How many festivals that Kalash people can celebrate in a year?

Q.21: Do you agree that most girls or women are converted if any facts are not?

Q.22: Do you know if there is any foreign help to Kalash people yes or no?

Q.23: Do you agree that the outsider comes and say you people are so unique please do not convert your religion?

Q.24: Do you explain how the Kalash people celebrate their marriage ceremony?

Q.25: Do you agree that mostly klesha people have got love marriage due to their festivals yes or no?

Q.26: How the Kalash can bury the dead body?

Q.27: Do you highlight that what is the status of Kalash people in the Muslim community?

Q.28: Why you people are converting towards Islam?

Q.29: Are you satisfied with Islamic culture?

Q.30: Do you think that Islam is good religion?

Q.31: Do you feel good being Muslim?

Q.32: Is there are a specific group of people who are inspiring them towards Islam?

Q.33: Do you feel that the people of Kalash are converting towards Islam more?