

## Traditional Wedding System and Marriage by Elopement among Kalasha Tribe of District Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan

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This study focuses the traditional wedding system and marriage by elopement conducted in Kalasha tribe of district Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan. The tribe (community) under study has segmentary system based on patrilineal descent. In such a system, lineage is defined through strict rules in the form of exogamy and prohibits intermarriages among agnates (Muslims and Kalash) and continues for generations i.e. from a common ancestor. The study is framed under qualitative approach of research whereas the data has been taken from a PhD research survey conducted in 2008-09 from 825 households through anthropological techniques including participant observation and in-depth interviews from 75 respondents (both male and female of age 15 and above in Anish and Brun Village of *Bomburet Valley Kalash*). The ethnographic details and field information indicate that marriage system was very stable in the past where it was guided by centuries old customs and traditions but with the invent of modern trends like education, influence of mass media and cultural contacts, a shift in the form of marriage and girls' elopement practices have been occurred among the members of research community. The practice of arranged marriages has been replaced by love marriages and marriage by elopement. The incidents of wives' elopements have created antagonism and feuds between lineages of ex-husband and abductor. Resultantly, compensations are paid to regulate the marital stability and to resolve socio-cultural and religious complications created by intermarriages between Muslims and Kalasha. In such a scenario, the second suitor must pay compensation in double as a bride price to the previous husband.

*Key Words:* Marriage, elopement, patrilineal, descent, Kalasha, bride price, dowry, exogamy, ritual

One of the dominant tendencies in human beings across history has been the desire to establish a family through a relatively universal social institution of marriage whereby two or more persons fulfill their major needs of sex regulation and reproduction within a specific relational framework (Horton and Hunt, 1984). Marriage, being a universal social institution intended to regulate the family system, but its implications; forms and functions are different in different cultures and societies of the world. As a durable and stable relationship between a man and women, it not only permits the couple to have a communal social standing but also a legal right to have children (Johnson, 1960). In this context, Malinowski (1929) views marriage synonymous with a social contract that aims at procreation and child maintenance. Similarly Lowie (1978) regard it a relatively durable or permanent attachment between mates which regulate and satisfy human desires.<sup>1</sup>

Most of the Anthropological studies invest their contributions in the context of recognizing marriage as a system and the extent to which it is prevalent in various societies. Further, they also have much concern with the consequences of mating relationship in various societies. In this regard, a major portion of Anthropological work has reached to the conclusion that marriage is a more or less permanent association of males and females that forms a family, satisfies human biological and social needs and gives sanctions to bear children. The structure and forms of marriage vary from culture to culture and society to society where it has several types based upon number of individuals united and the kinship relations between or among them. The contribution of marriage system is to form a social group of one or another kind that in either of the way influences other relational groups (Schwartz, and Ewald, 1969).

Much of the anthropological and sociological scholarships indicate that a variety of marriage systems exist in the world which is promisingly accepting the theory of cultural relativism (Naz, 2009-11, Mead, 1930). In this context, the most important is monogamy which is a common form of marriage of only having a single spouse at a

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given time (Robinson, 1997) or one spouse during the whole life (Williams, 2005). Monogamy includes social, sexual, genetic, martial, and serial monogamy (Lacy, 2009). In some societies, polygamy is practiced which is very common in Tiwi (Robinson, 1997). The different types of polygamy includes Polygyny (a practice in which a man is allowed to have one wife or sexual partner at a time) and Polyandry (a form of marriage ties that allows a woman to have more than one husbands). In fraternal polyandry (common in Tibet and Nepal) a group of brothers marries one woman. Marriage institution has now taken a different shape in the modern World. Same sex marriages i.e. Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual have become the norm in the western world particularly in the United States (Patrick, Rector, 2009). Similarly, Ghost Marriage has been practiced in many cultures when an influential or a wealthy childless person (particularly a male member) of a village died (Dennis, 2009) and her women is supposed to marry his ghost in a ceremony (usually, with the brother of deceased). Such marriages are common in Sudan, China, and Nigeria. This marriage resembles levirate marriage whereby at the death of the husband, a woman marries one of husband's brothers, mostly common in Middle East, and Asia (Paul, 2009). Studies also highlight arranged marriages in which no prior consent is obtained from the couple involved i.e. such marriages are performed through force, limitation put by tradition, courtships (Stone, 2006). Similarly, in many cultures, man and woman after marriage move to live somewhere depending on the pattern of culture i.e. the residence pattern is either Neolocal (the couple finds a new house of their own) Patrilocal (the new couple resides in husband's father's family) Matrilocal (the married couple moves to live wife house to live) and Avunculocal (the couple after marriage resides in husband's mother's brother) (Rao, 2004). In most of the Indian societies; marriages are performed by arrangement, thorough trial, elopement, by force, by love as well as by judging the level of residence (Chandra, 2005, Myrna, 2009). Thus, it is obvious that the practices of marriage prevailing in different parts of the world provide a unique and traditional identity to a group or society in a shared geographical area. Analyzing the context of the current study, the inhabitants of Kalash have various observable customs where the most important is marriage. Similarly, marriage through elopement is more frequent and is very common amongst married women (Sheikh, et al. 2013). Wife elopement is an important custom of Kalasha culture, and thus after marriage the husband has to pay to woman's family. However, if the female wants to leave her husband, and agrees to marry another man, then again the same procedure of payment will be involved (Sheikh, et al. 2013). The concept of marriage has been thus utilized to understand the union or establishment of relationship between a male and female which has been approved by Kalasha community in the area or the Muslim community in the research community. The concept of marital relationship has thus been undertaken in the current study for the analytic understanding of the relative position of the culture in the research area. In this regard, the Kalasha traditions for

wedding and marriage are unique and are treated as very sacred, deviation of any kind from which can attract misfortune and brings damage to the married couple and life of other family members as well. The research is thus an attempt to overview marriage and traditional wedding system in the unique culture of Kalash, along with an observable shift in its form and nature in the community under study.

### The Study Argument

It has been identified by research studies that the people of Kalasha adhere to follow the marital rules and rituals as existed since centuries but with the invent of modern trends, most of them especially youngsters are more prone to the changing patterns regarding marriage (Schwartz and Ewald, 1969; Wynne, 2001). The Kalasha community is simultaneously patriarchal and polygamous. Control over the family as well as the right of multiple marriages is available only to the male members of the community. The marriage system in Kalashian community is based upon tribal rules which can still be observed in the locality under focus. The words related to marriage in Kalash do not refer to relationship between parents rather such association and contract is transforming a female into wife (Wynne, 2001). In the local context of Kalasha dialect, the marriage of a female is known as *jathiaau* and *ja kai aavis* 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 *jadek*.

This study is based upon field information ethnographically collected during a PhD survey of 825 households in the year 2008-09. The study of traditional wedding and marriage practices as exist in the research locale has been taken into consideration along-with a change with regard to girl (wife of someone) elopement cases that occur in the Dardic speaking Kalasha community of Hindukush Mountain in District Chitral Pakistan. Historically, the Kalasha community follows a segmentary system of patrilineal descent where the lineage is defined by strict rules of exogamy, which prohibits intermarriages between agnates related within seven generations of a descent of a common ancestor. Centuries old customs and traditions laid down a set of strict rules and practices which provide a ground for the stability of such marriages in the area. However, due to modern trends like education, media and cultural exposure of the area, girl (wife of someone) elopement incidences have been occurring intermittently which create antagonism, rivalries, and conflicts between lineages of ex-husband and abductor.

Relationally, to regulate the marital stability, the mechanism of compensation has been designed, which is paid by the second suitor in double as a bride price to the previous husband. However, the shift in interpersonal rules is a threat to the stability and survival of the old cultural practices as well as identity of the culture. This study is thus part of the larger work which focuses changing patterns of

marriage and wife elopement practices among the local community and their impacts on the larger cultural patterns.

#### Specific Objectives of the Study

- To examine the Kalasha traditional wedding system and marriage by elopement in the target area
- To investigate the impact of bride price as compensation by the abductor to the ex-husband of eloped wife in matrimonial decision-making process
- To examine the socio-cultural and religious complications created by Muslim - Kalasha marriages

#### Method

The current study is purely qualitative and descriptive in nature which attempts to describe the phenomena in detail (to describe what happened) as highlighted by Bialy (1978). This method makes efforts in a systematic manner to examine the phenomena of marriage and elopement cases and their impact upon mate selection decisions as well as antagonism arising from the marital relations under conditions that actually exist among the natives of Kalasha community. The rationale for adapting this method was manifold - Description of field observations, collection and presentation of information and evidences on the basis of previous literature or theory, careful summarization of data obtained through interviews, observations and other anthropological techniques and analyzing results to draw meaningful conclusion and developing new knowledge.

In this regard, qualitative and descriptive approach has been adopted towards the events and issues related to the traditional marriage practices of Kalasha valley. The study is confined to both Muslims and Kalash (non-Muslim) residing in the valley of Hindukush mountains. The Kalash valley comprises of three valleys such as Bamburet, Birrir and Rumbor where the non-Muslims of Kalash are residing along with the Chitrali Muslims. The data was collected from 825 households through anthropological techniques: participant observation and in-depth interviews. The total number of respondents was 75 including both male and female of age 15 and above in Anish and Brun 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, the interviews are coded as R-1A, (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 conclusion has been drawn. The details of the ethnography and other field information are provided in descriptive form in the following passages:

#### Economic Exchange and the Traditional Marriage System

Research studies indicate that marriage is not only a social and economic institution but also a biological base for family formation (Mead, 1930; Horton and Hunt, 1996; Naz, 2012). The concept of bride price or bride money exists in most of the societies of the world; however the nature and shape of the custom vary from society to society and area to area (Naz, 2011; Khan, 2012). In this context, similar tradition also exist in Kalasha community where the ethnographic details and field information indicate that locally, the bride price (*mal`zuk*) is a fixed amount in the form of cash money or property as well as part of wealth or any other substance which is payable by the groom directly or by his family to the parents of a woman to accept the marriage. The gift paid in the shape of bride price has to serve the purpose of making the marriage association as durable and permanent and in case of any breach, the possible compensation is therefore made in advance to the bride or her family. For example, the view of a respondent has been recorded as

*"I believe that the fixation of the bride price among families provide more support to the groom. The marriage association is strengthened and in case of any mishap i.e. breach of marriage contract, the girl is compensated. I remember three cases of divorce and five cases of elopement where a huge amount of cash, property and many other material has been given to female and they are now living in a happy way with the children.....(From field notes R-5D)*

The custom of bride price has been a significant contributor to the safety of wife in case of any ill treatment or in situations of breaking the marriage ties by party other than the bride. In addition, the fixed amount in the form of bride price protects the wife from the imposition of divorce because the husband will then pay an obligatory amount in compensation. Among others, the bride price or bride wealth system plays a dominant role in streamlining the wealth and property arrangement and even distribute and organize the possible alliances in most of the societies (Loude, and Lievre, 1988). Thus the existing of the institution make it compulsory on the husband to help reserve a valuable amount of goods, money or any other such part for his wife during the process of marriage. Similarly, according to Gluckman (1953) in many patrilineal societies including Kalasha, the payment is also made for the rights to assign children to their father's family rather than to their mother's.

In light of field information, it has been observed that marriage, as an institution for Kalasha people is subjected to changes and transformation due to the influence of modernity and social changes during the past few decades. The matrimonial decisions were mostly arranged by family members or elders in the past as parents or family elders were regarded as the authority to decide matters related to family and their children. Similarly, the bidders who are ranked higher in bid to win the bride or female hand *bazawill* be called the successor. In such cases, the bride amount

usually consist of gun, animals, trunk, goats or sheep and even utensils for cooking or other purposes (Naz, 2009). Further, the mentioned things are then stored in a specified room of the house while both the parties are responsible for their confirmation during their first meeting. The preparation in this regard is based on the boy's lineage to have their contribution to maximize the level of gifts collection and help the lineage during the marriage. Thus the helping of the lineage is reciprocally received by other party when and where such time is reached. However, the helping process is only limited to close circle of the lineage and in specific cases, this may be extended to the whole of the lineage as well.

Furthermore, Wynne (2001), is of the opinion that the bride price includes things i.e. property (*mal*) in the form of objects, animals, grains, cheese, or even biscuits, sugar, tea, and oil with varying amounts. During 1970's, the amount for the bride wealth was up-to sixty articles (*soren*) and the same was payable before the marriage (Parkes, 1983). Similarly, the bride wealth also include the amount of food expenses utilized for wife's lineage or food items purchased for households in time of trouble i.e. funeral or items requested by affine (Parkes, 1983). From past till date, this amount is fixed as standard, however, a gift of cash is now included in the bride price ranging from 5,000 to 10,000 depending on the economic prosperity of the bride groom and his lineage. The terms of the bride price contract depends on a very careful consideration of the possession of the parties, their respective social position and reputation, and of what the man's household can materially provide to balance the women's promise to increase the size of "hive". The price of the bride also known as "*Kauk-Kauk*" literally child- child is basically the price of generation (Loude, and Lievre, 1988).

In similar context, another type of exchange of the economic means which are linked with the tradition of wedding is the concept of dowry which is also called *Jahez* and is mostly prevalent in the subcontinent region. The tradition of dowry is associated with transfer i.e. transfer in the form of wealth which is usually from the parents of female towards male (in some cases it is opposite) or in the form of cash money, land or even goods. Besides, the male member i.e. husband in case of dowry brings money, wealth or other such valuable material to household (i.e. the newly created) and the dowry in this case is taught as a donation to the wife and for the household (see Parkes, 1983). In some cases, the amount received in for dowry is treated like inheritance and such conception is relative to cultural structure and gender positions. The existence of the dowry system in a class and caste ridden society provide more social security where a female could enjoy her life in case the divorce occurs. Similarly, the wife in case of divorce is able to get all the amount of dowry from both the families and the greater amount fixation is a leading factor of wife's optimal satisfaction.

In the study area of Kalasha culture, two stages of *jahez* have been observed i.e. in stage one, the girl receives an amount from her family or parents and in stage two, she is getting an amount from parent or in laws or gifts once she gives birth to a baby. Similarly, the traditional main types of dowries included are *Coomon, Gajom, Merat and Serik Dyek*. However, the concept of receiving the *jahez* from natal family is a kind of expectation not compulsion. The ceremony takes place after the birth of the first child; because the birth of a child is surly the establishment of family and recognition of marriage. The Natal families or natural group in this case are responsible for organizing extensive meal for their daughter as well as In-laws of the daughter to share the meal. Such moments are thus a kind of celebration as well as honoring the daughter within the new family structure (Wynne, 2001) as well as to provide an emotional strength to married women in several ways. In a historical context, as identified by Parkes (1983) in his study during 1979, the normal weight or quantity of *jahez* included sheep (5-10 in number), having age of 15-20 *Muti* i.e. of age one year at minimum, cows or bull from 1-2 in number, blankets, bed and other valuable metal utensils and cups. Besides, the tradition is slight different among the well-off families and they provide an amount of Rs: 5000/- in cash or more which depends upon the nature of the family. Similarly, economically strong families provide fruit tress including walnut trees, apple or to the daughter that further support children in alien family. The amount of *jahez* given during the field work for the current study was the same. However; china ceramics, glass utensils, clothes, sweaters, jackets and tennis shoes are also included in the *jahez*. In this regard, one of the field interviews indicates that

*For my marriage, I have paid an amount of 50 thousand as cash, 20 sheep, 03 cows, five trees of fruits and even I have reserved a house for the bride as well. I could give even more to the female and this is because of the economic background .....(From field notes R-45G)*

#### **Kalasha Community and Traditional Weddings**

The traditions and practices regarding marriage are entirely different among the Muslims and the Kalash. In this regard, the procedure and ceremonial arrangements of the Muslim couple has been differently located and identified. The wedding ceremonies for a Muslim couple are adhering to strict Islamic laws and values. Similarly, most of the arrangements are initiated and followed by family members in consultation with elders and in most of the cases; the decision is taken by them. The female are prohibited to claim for choosing her life partner and such an act is treated as a stigma for the whole family. Dowry or bride price is fixed and the bridegroom receives the amount of bride price in various shapes i.e. property, cash amount, or any other material as agreed and consented by the parties. However, it is very critical during the marriage proposal to see and observe the economic condition and social standing of the bridegroom because among the local community, marriage is the only way through which a man and women have their social and

sexual legitimacy and approval of relationship in future. Similarly, any such contact without the bond of marriage is disallowed by Islam and is regarded as adultery which is a punishable offence. The extract of an interview is given as:

*As we are Muslim and we believe on the social, cultural and religious approval of the marriage relation, so we have the Nikah process as per our religious approval. A female was also punished for her illegitimate relations as I know some year ago as the act was adultery and was against the tradition of religion (From field notes R-26F).*

Among Muslims, marriage and wedding ceremonies are joyful occasions where the union of two individuals is accordingly celebrated and publicized. Such activities are long and continue for many days. A man and a woman enter into the marriage contract or bond while signing the contract paper usually called *Nikkahnama* in the Islamic way of marriage procedure. The *Nikkahnama* (written agreement on stamp paper) is prepared by the lawyers of both bride and bridegroom side. In this way, the groom represents himself and utilizes the assistance of two witnesses (*gawah*). The bride's maternal or paternal uncles or her brother may be presented as her lawyer (*wakil*), while father being her *wali*, the one who gives her in marriage. The alimony or *mahr* is paid at the time of *nikkah* which is the responsibility of husband and may be paid in cash, property or any movable objects to the bride himself. As the amount of *mahr* is not legally specified, however, moderation according to the existing social norm is recommended. The *mahr* may be paid immediately to the bride at the time of marriage, or deferred to a later date, or a combination of both. In this regard, the Holy Quran (4:4) clearly says that gives women their due *mahr* at the time of marriage or *nikah* and gives gifts to them as well. During the process of *nikah* both the parties i.e. nominees or the couple expresses willingness or *ijab* during the consent time and the other party expresses '*qubul* for acceptance and take the responsibility of the female in the open gathering or assembly of people. Similarly, the paper of the contract is prepared showing the agreement of both the parties (i.e. all the term and conditions are pre-determined) and finally signed by bride and groom along-with witnesses at the occasion. After the mentioned process, the approved and signed marriage contract i.e. *aqd-Nikkah* is made public and social approval is thus granted. At this time, prayers are offered and repeated by the assembly for the smooth running of the future family as well as happiness, prosperity and success of couple. The analysis of a case has been noted as an example:

*I am witnessed of several gathering of nikah process where the male and female has their own wali and the permit to solemnize the contract in front of a huge gathering. After the acceptance of the two parties, few verses of the Holy Quran are recited and then the whole gathering of the people pray for the long life and prosperity of the new family..... (From field notes R-45G)*

The study shows that many things are included in the preparation process of the wedding ceremony. In this context, the information and field data indicate that traditional dresses are common during the wedding process in the area and such dress is an integral part of the traditions. The bridal dress is *shalwar kameez* (made of silk), with a heavily embellished *duppata*, a *chaddar*, and shoes with embroidery (golden in nature) with embroidered cap is very common. Similarly, head band, jewelry and *burqa* is associated element of the dress code. In the context of the dress, *shalwar kameez*, golden and attractive waist coat, cap of *Chitrali* nature and even a beautiful shawl is proposed dress for the groom. The marriage party is arranged and the girls' relatives are warmly received while the common villagers gather together for the wedding celebration. The provision of dowry is essential in many parts of the country, but there is compulsion on the provision of dowry in *Chitral* community. In the research community, the amount is usually decided on the mutual consent of the parents and priority is given to the social and economic standing of the male member. In case, the male member is unable to pay the amount, the female is permitted to marry even in a single pair of cloth. However, if the male party is agreed and afford the bride price, the usual and most common items in the dowry includes embroidered bed sheets (4 or more than four in numbers), quilts (02 in number), at least one box (of clothes), gold jewelry i.e. bangles, necklaces, rings (silver is also allowed), shoes or footwear, animals (cow or goats etc) head bands, cuffs, hand bags, utensils and other such item are most commonly observable.

Similarly, in the *kho* culture, the marriage is always sought through family of the prospective husband while family of girl has no such role. In this context, a trusted and confidential proposal (*mozarodik*) is initiated and sent and if the girl's father shows an agreement, then the boys' father is given permission to bring other family members to ask for the hands of the girl known as *vechik* or *maskikin* the local language. The breakage of the engagement is considered very bad in the locality and such matter is resolved through *Jirga* of the elders (i.e. the *jirga* decides the case and the breakers are punished through mutual agreement). However, once again, much care is taken for the economic stability of the parties and according to the views of respondent;

*"We are much concerned with the economic position of the bride and groom's family and mostly the girl's family if less privileged, suffers the severe consequences. In such a situation, they have to give another daughter, or next to kin in matrimony to the aggrieved family (From field notes R-60C).*

#### **Forms and Types of Weddings in Kalash Valley**

The information obtained during field visits indicate that in Kalasha community, the traditions and customs regarding wedding are slightly different from Muslims traditions. In the context of the area, three forms or types of marriages are

practiced by the native people in Kalasha. The most common marriage pattern is marriage by arrangement (*Khaltabare*), marriage by love and by Elopement. The study is mainly organized to analyze the Wife (married girl) Elopement (the new trends developed in contemporary Kalasha community) which is the main focus of this study and which give rise to rivalries and antagonism.

#### **The Kalasha Arranged Marriage (*Khaltabare*)**

The most traditional and common method of marriages which is historically and customary approved among the local people is the arranged marriages. The elders of the family i.e. parents have the privilege and authority to decide their children's future. In such cases, the parents decide the choice of spouse, proper date and time for marriage as well as issues related to bride price. It is observed that the engagement (spouse selection) is usually made in a very young age as one of the respondents said;

*"It is very commonly practiced among the local people that a female in Kalash (locally called as tarizagauk) hand is given in her teenage. This is the time when she is not aware or even does not know the meaning of the word marriage and the relationship after marriage as well (From field notes R-33Z).*

Further, the data indicate that even the female at this stage has no such preference for selecting a person as her husband. Similarly, in many cases, the husband or male is much older than the girl or sometimes the hands of the girl are handed over to a person whose previous wife is either dead or eloped with a lover or promised into matrimony to a child of their own age. The age difference is not considered as an issue while the parents prioritize the prosperity, sustainability and safe future of their daughter.

The social structure is predominantly based on blood and marital relations through which the members of one group are linked to other groups in the community (Haviland and William, 1987). In this regard, to keep and maintain the purity of lineage, they do not allow or encourage their male child to marry outside their own ethnic group. This is a common practice in small and closed society because the small size of the group and lack of social mobility is compensated by extending restriction on marriage. Thus all women with whom one can trace a family relationship or kinship are prohibited (Strauss, 1958). Therefore, the eligibility of arranging a certain union, an institution is required which can establish the "genealogical suitability". In order to avoid the defiance and marriage within the prohibited blood relations or complexity of lineal descents, parents prefer to arrange the marriages during early childhood (Schuyler, 1974).

In case of intentional or unintentional violation, the defiant couple is not physically punished or banished from the society disgracefully. They experience a social boycott "Bahira". They are prohibited from entering the holy places

and participating in religious festivals. The immediate families though remain associated and interact formally, inherit the shame for generations. On the funeral of such cases the descendants are allowed to beat the tambourines. *Aspan* clan of Anish village Bumburet had suffered this condemnation but in those days due to less population and economic depression the rules were relaxed and on the basis of the sacrifice made to the goddesses to seek forgiveness for the crime committed by their elders and to salvage their family honor and prestige, were allowed to participate and attend the rituals and religious gatherings.

#### **Marriage by Love or by Elopement**

It is also one of the common and important types of traditional marriage practiced in the community under study. As indicated by field information that love marriage or marriage by elopement which is becoming a common tradition in many other communities of the country as well. Like that of the Muslims community, the difference observed in the age is usually ignored for the purpose of obtaining wealth as well as economic prosperity. In the current scenario of the area, as observed and with rapid and frequent interaction among the local people, the trend regarding decision making about marriage among couples have been changed and mostly the young generations are taking initiative regarding their own marriage choice. Analyzing such changes, one of the respondents expresses that;

*Currently, there is no such care for the old traditions and we have a change in our decision regarding the selection of a marriage partner, his or her age and even family to marry with.....(From field notes R-21N)*

The analysis indicates that the locale people (Kalash community) and mostly the family members and parents do not oppose the changing trend in decisions as taken by males or female regarding the selection or rejection of a marriage partner. Another reason as noted during the visit was the small size of the community in which the parents, children and other community members are aware of their children's choice and intentions. However, the parents do possess the skills of making adjustment and convince their children in case of any disagreement caused by any person to make an end to the relationship. Further, it has also been observed that whenever the children disobey the will of the parents, it is leading to the couple elopement and marriage. During such an act, the parents disassociate and break the relationship with their children however such disassociation is for a very short time. Mostly, the age limit for love marriage as well as marriage by elopement has been in the range of 14 to 15 years (for female) while it is in the range 17 to 20 (for male) members.

Among the people of the community under study, it has been indicated that during love marriage a friend of a boy acts like a mediator. In performing his role as a mediator, a boy is able to send and convey messages of his friends'

feelings and love for the girl (now it is up to the girl whether to accept or reject the message). In case if a girl confesses that she has any feeling of love for the boy, the next step is that both the boy and girl start meeting in places of isolation (mostly in pastures i.e. inside or even outside village). Such meetings on regular basis leads to an understanding between a boy and girl the thus is a leading factor in girls' elopement at the end. The process of elopement mostly occurs during social and religious festivals i.e. during the *chalm-josh* (spring festival) that held in May of every year is famous for elopements. In this regard, it has been extracted from the interview of a respondent that:

*"During the chalm-josh (spring festival), it is usual for us when we see maximum number of elopement of youngsters. It happen on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of festival that young male and female elope and few days later, the father, elder brother of the girl visit the husband's house to ask her whether she wants to continue living with the boy or not or she has eloped by choice or by force... (From field notes R-40D)"*

In this regard, the data suggest that if the parents of the girl feel any doubt or apprehension about the status or personality of the boy; his family or other matter, a visit is confirmed on the next day of elopement. During this visit, the girl tries to satisfy her family and parents and give her consent about elopement as well as future life to live with the selected husband. Further, it has been analyzed from the information that during Kalash weddings, the proposal of groom is led by the uncle (maternal) of the groom to female house. After the acceptance of the proposal, the parents of both male and female meet formally to make an agreement regarding the details of the wedding. The formal ceremony is announced and then all family members (groom family) visit the house of the girl along-with gifts, cash and other related items where they are served with Kalasha food including butter, cheese, bread (*tusali*) etc and then the guests leave for their homes (excluding groom). The groom is allowed to staythere (in-laws home) for some days and develops an understanding to accept the new environment. He is then sent back to home with many gifts (5-8 large loafs of walnut breads) and the date of wedding is finalized by few elders once the girl reaches to her puberty. A list of item is prepared and each and every item is carefully calculated as decided in the bride price. Both the families make visits and receive one another with great zeal and hospitality. Their stay is memorable for various activities including dance party at night as well as services of presented lavish food including meat, butter, bread and even wine in special cases. All the members finally perform the ritual of hand kissing and thus return to their homes back.

The formal wedding rituals start with a prayer in *jistakhan* (known as traditional sanctuary). The rituals are presented in front of lord known as *Jistak* which to them is the well-wisher and protector of family and is thus responsible for marriage, offspring and fertility of the next couple. The religious preacher i.e. Qazi solemnize marriage

and the preacher with other members of the bride groom sacrifice an animal (i.e. sheep, or a goat) while a fire is built in the middle of the hall. The sacrifice of the animal is performed with the ritual of throwing juniper leaves in the fire by two men with washed hand and then one among them cuts down the throat of the animal. The blood of the animal is picked by a person in their hands, then throws it in the fire and then sprinkles it on the *jestik-han* emblem while at the end, on the faces of both the wedding couple. Besides, the neck of the animal is separated and a small portion of ear for putting in the fire known as *saurus* (purification of the animal). The ritual is participated by persons where they offer and pray to god for providing safety, prosperity, affection and fertility to the new married couple and the ceremony ends with marriage (*shish-istangoce*) and the bride is considered as purified once she washes her hands (up to elbow), she hold five pure bread (*onjestajason*) in hands. The preacher (Qazi) burns the juniper leaves in fire while the bride revolves around the fire for three times. Similarly, the preacher also cuts the bread into pieces, throws it in the fire and gives few to the bride to eat and the couple is formally pronounced as a future husband and wife. The end of the wedding rituals is an indication for opening a new chapter of social relationship among the two families and invitation visits starts with the passage of time, for example a respondent told that

*"After we have pronounced for formal approval of the husband and wife, both the families give invitation where the bride family took the lead while the groom family is served with lavish food, clothes and other facilitation according to the economic status of the family....(From field notes R-63P)"*

However, the study findings indicates that if a female become pregnant during courting period, still the marriage is solemnized and the girl move to their in-laws family. The practice of such relation is not appreciated but is tolerated for the sake of their children and the offspring is treated as legitimate. In such cases, the couple must give a sacrifice of a goat (in *jestik-han*), then sprinkle blood in front of family and villagers to ask for the longevity, prosperity and purity of life. In case of failure of the sacrifice the couple is thought to have committed a sin "*sisa-istongas*" while the new baby is then treated as illegitimate and cursed.

#### **Wife (already married girl or woman of someone) Elopement in Kalash**

The ethnographic details and field information indicate that a shift has been occurred among the local community regarding marriage where the practice of wife elopement (a contemporary trend) create rivalries and antagonism among the people. Among the local community, elopement of one's wife is a third type of marriage. In such cases, it has been observed from the field data that a married female leaves the house of her husband (alive) and elopes with a person to whom she is in love. Further, it is again to be noted that in case of second marriage of the female, the first or ex-husband has the right to claims for bride price (double than

the original or initial payment (i.e. *don dond*). One respondent shared the following views;

*"I receive the initial payment of my first bride price as 4 bulls, iron dishes 20 in number, jugs (15 in number), 3 kg of tobacco, rifles (6 in number), 2 kg honey, goats 20 in number, while 10 kg of wheat which while converted into pebbles is  $4+20+15+3+6+2+20+10= 80$  item. This is what I have given to my bride.....(From field notes R-56Q)"*

The inventory is made with the agreement of both parties and the number of stones is doubled to establish the exact price of remarriage (Loude and Lievre, 1988). In addition, the husband will claim the right of children. If the new suitor fails to fulfill the doubled inventory, then the wife is returned (go back) to the previous husband, who possesses the right to keep her or to sell her off to the best bidder. Besides, if a husband suspects his wife for adultery, he can sell her. Adultery on the other hand is looked down upon as everywhere else in the world, but is not considered a taboo in the Kalasha community. Unlike other societies, in the research locality, the honor is associated with family honor and not with the events. The violation or crossing the limit of family honor is leading towards complications and even honor killing as well. For example, one extract from a case study shows that

*"I personally saw the death or killing of a women belonging to Muslim community when a female eloped with a male and she was then arrested by her brother from a nearby village. While bringing her to home, she was shot dead in the way and her death was announced as natural (From field notes R-710)"*

Furthermore, the field information indicate that in the past conditions. Males are allowed to marry second wife in cases of wife's (first wife) sterility or when she fails to produce a male child which is necessary to continue the family name. The wives often share the same roof and divide the portion of the house according to their requirement having separate stores (Robertson, 1896). The elder wife retains the symbolic privileged position but husbands are more inclined towards the mother of his heirs. Besides, bigamy is not appreciated and approved but the person concerned is not alienated from the society. It is left on the liking of the first wife that whether she wants to remain with the same man or leave him. She is partially a free woman, and can marry any suitable suitor or return to her parent's house. In case of having children, she has every right to claim and keep them. If she plans to marry again, the bride price will be paid to the father of the bride.

#### **Complications Raised from Muslim-Kalasha Marriages**

The ethnographic details and their analysis indicate that various complications of the husband's life when he marries a Kalasha female with and embraces Islam by replacing her traditional belief system. In this regard, one of the respondents exclaimed that

*Before marriage, I belonged to the Kalasha community observing traditional practices and cultural ways while there was strict adherence to the customary festival as well. However, by the grace of Allah, when I accepted Islam I changed my life style according to the teachings of Islam. There were few complications in the initial period regarding living, observing purdah, and family relations, but now with the passage of time, things are normal and I am happy....(From field notes R-3T)"*

The complications which are overtly observable in the research community with respect to such marriages (i.e. as discussed above) including issues in the distribution of inheritance. The male or female is disassociated by parents from property rights after marriage and thus deprives him or her of basic rights. The analysis further shows that with the birth of a child, parents forgive their daughters and the relationship becomes normal. The families of the Kalasha community are as much respected as that of the bridegroom's Muslim families and their relatives and there are few examples of disputes on inheritance as well as property among the local people. However, such disputes have been resolved through the intervention of the local *Jirga*.

Another very complicated case which was resolved through *Jirga* was about a married woman of Kalash who had left her husband with a small daughter. The female eloped with a Muslim community male. The husband (the deprived one) brought back his daughter according to Kalash tradition. The girl is now aged twenty one years and is married to a Muslim male after conversion to Islam. The Girl's father was highly frustrated and strongly objected the marriage and broke off relationship with his daughter. Now the father is dead, leaving his daughter "*chu*" and brothers "*baya*" as legal heirs of the property. The girl's father was a Kalash and a man having no legal share in her father's property according to Islamic law. The paternal uncles of the girl took charge of the deceased property. The case is now under consideration of the *Jirga*. However, in actual fact two cultural and social values and code of conduct are contesting on the basis of religious ideology, ironically both the parties involved have a fundamental legitimate ground on the property yet both are victims. The case involved decision on two points:

1. Whether the girl is entitled to inheritance under the particular circumstances after being excommunicated by the father on her getting married to Kalash Muslim.
2. When the girl is entitled to inheritance under the common law of land, then who should bear the expenses incurred on the traditional funeral rituals following the death.

various complications of the husband's life when he marries a Kalasha female with Muslim she is entitled to the property under the Muslim law. This issue was contested by the girl's paternal uncles although the Kalash custom is silent on this subject. Moreover, they agreed to pay the expenses incurred by her

paternal uncles on the funeral. The case was discussed in the *Jirga* for three days but no mutually agreed upon decision was made. The case was then to be heard by civil court of Chitral. The purpose of mentioning this particular case explains conflicts because of identity crisis emerging out of the relationships of persons belonging to two different cultural and religious groups. The whole thing was conducted with a detached approach without the tempers being lost of any side and in a very peaceful manner. To witness this is something very rare since we are aware of reactions regarding such situations in the so called civilized world.

### Conclusion

The study concludes that community identity is associated directly to the lineage or *Kam* where it decides, directs and re-redirects all the socio-cultural, religious, economic and political activities including marriage. The area under study was predominantly under the control of centuries old customs and traditions and provided a normative order which was considered final and unchangeable. The matters related to traditional wedding and marriages are carried out under such normative order whereby the local cultural expectations are given importance without any slight change. To them the relative cultural context is of utmost importance than the rest of the things occurring in the surrounding. The contemporary Kalash has an exposure to the outside world and particularly of the youngsters. Such exposure is mostly been supported by social change and development i.e. modern factors and trends in the form of educational attainment, easy access to media and more importantly, the cultural contacts has led the local people to support and opt for love marriage as well marriage by elopement. Thus, they had mostly given up the local and traditional old practices of marriage, selection of life partners as well as other such practices i.e. funeral and burial etc.

The information further reveals that majority of the youngsters are practicing and are in favor of marriage by elopement. The reason for observing this change is due to their viewpoint that such a marriage protects them from the various unreasonable demands and expectations put by their elders and families. It is less cumbersome for boy's family as they don't have to pay an exuberant bride price that they might have to pay if a more traditional root of marriage is employed. Avoiding the extra burden in the form of dowry and other expenses and complications, it has been found that youngsters follow an idealistic view in marriage whereby they prefer to marry for love and not for money.

The study found that marriage as one of the important aspect of human life leads to the formation of family, procreation of children and satisfaction of both husband and wife desires. Along with human facilitation and needs fulfillment, marriages become a burden over couple and other family members when they go to the normative order or compelled by strict customs and traditions. In such situations, in a traditional marriage, a couple is bound by

customs, traditions and family to stay together thus causing couples to stay in unhappy marriages and this may present an outward case of more successful marriage. Contrary to it, in case of elopement the couple decides more freely to leave a marriage rather than to stay in unhappy circumstances.

It is also obvious that traditional culture practices will remain unchanged if the society remains in isolation and there is no such communication with the neighboring communities or regions. In other words, such cultures exist only when there is a specific periphery and are bound to a specific genealogical territory. In such a relational context, this study found that with the invent of modern trends such as education, mass media and exposure of the local people to other nearby and comparatively modern parts of the country, a shift has been observed in the wedding and marriage patterns. The people of researched area are not no more caged in the clutches of strict and so-called customs and traditions regarding marriage. Such modern trends have influenced the way of their lives; their attitudes, approach, beliefs, class structure, and personality. Ideals and stances are confronted to continuous change and have been changed to larger extent that directly or indirectly have changed their socio-cultural aspects including marriage. A contestation has also been brought between the liberal and orthodox behavior while it has been the nature of orthodoxy to implement primitive, old and traditional way of living and make a resistance towards change and development. However, the more liberal forces have established a change and rhythm among the practices of the area and the refinement has been formed in the old ways of life to cope with the demands and requirement of the present day.

This study further concludes that people have been compelled to leave their cultural setting and in doing so they are inclined to sustain their traditional culture in a specific time. But fortunately culture cannot be bounded by the elements like time and space (Scaff, 2003), though it exists in an imagined space where people believe that they belong to the same space by utilizing technology, ideology and media. Further, all such spaces interact and have created a unique and distinguished cultural identity. Similarly, it has been found that Kalash culture is also subjected to various changes where most of the parents are unable to control inter marriages amongst the Muslims boys and Kalash girls and vice versa. The issues related to such acquaintances are tried to be resolved amicably by the intervention of the elders of the area and to maintain the smooth process of matrimony.

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