

SAGA OF SURVIVAL

A REPORT ON

THE PROTECTION, PRESERVATION AND

PROMOTION OF CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS

OF

INDIGENOUS KALASH PEOPLE



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS

Letter from the Chairman

Ishapata!

The Kalash are a unique people and Bumburate, the biggest of the three valleys inhabited by them, is the cradle of their culture. The valleys hold their places of worship, the burial grounds, and the *Bishalini* house where women shift during their periods and pregnancy and are fed by the community. There is a culture that has flourished since remote antiquity and can be juxtaposed with the once thriving culture of the Kafirs of Nuristan in Afghanistan. The legend is that they are the remnants of people who came with Alexander the Great.

The Kalash, today, face a lot of pressure on this culture and with the non-Kalash population overwhelming them, they face threats of extinction. Some of the immediate threats are unwilling conversions and cajoled marriages with non-Kalash. They have become vulnerable in this context because it is an open society and women partake with men, the husbandry, and all the rest of day-to-day life. They join in music and dance as a part of their festivity and because of their accessibility they are exploited.

Another is the settlement of land, which took place about five years back and in which they did not participate – with a protest – that has taken away their rights in land and forest.

Their customary law is a spoken word, which will ultimately be forgotten if it is not recorded. Since they do not have a script, a methodology has to be evolved for codification of their customary law before some of the well-versed elders in the matter die. The NCHR offers itself for purposes of codification of customary law, which will also relate to different aspects of day to day life of Kalashas.

As there is no specific operational quota for their employment in government services this is causing hardship. No college exists in the valleys of the Kalash. The school education is also poor. Unfortunately, the Kalash are not taught anything of their culture and are made to read books from the curriculum meant for the Muslims. Is it conversion through subtle indoctrination? Or is it lack of interest on the part of the provincial government or the Ministry of Heritage in the federation? This conundrum shall have to be answered.

Now we have about 4,000 of the Kalash reflecting diversity and uniqueness of a culture bedecked in the beautiful valleys of the Kalash; handsome people with pretty dress and wonderful health need the caress of the state for their preservation. I think their preservation is like a S.O.S. call and it cannot be overlooked. This Commission knocks at the doors of the federation and the province to take responsibility and help.

The Kalash are a people and a culture from which there is much yet to learn, but if these problems are not resolved it will be very hard for Kalash culture to thrive. The time for Kalash is now and there is not a moment to waste, for we fear that there is much to lose. As an example of the diversity of our great nation, it is on individuals and institutions to raise their voices in unison to protect the rights of a minority that has prospered in these valleys for centuries and now are face-to-face with an existential threat.

Justice (R) Ali Nawaz Chowhan
Chairman NCHR

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INTRODUCTION

The kaleidoscope of Pakistani society is shaped by the diverse regional and ethnic cultures and subcultures, each bejewelled with its own rich history and traditions. Amongst the world's oldest, most exotic peoples and cultures inhabited within Pakistan are the "Kalash" or "Kalasha"; one of the few surviving indigenous communities of the world who continue to practice their way of life amidst and despite all the socio-economic turbulence and upheavals occurring around them. *"The Kalasha Kafirs of Pakistan, a Macedonian people who trace their ancestry with Alexander the Great are an ethnic minority who speak a Dardic Language and adhere to an ancient polytheistic-animistic belief system and hence termed as "Kafirs" or non-believers. They are currently living in three valleys of Rumbur, Bumburet, and Birir in Chitral District, in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province of Pakistan. Only 3,000 left, according to the estimates of Maggi and A.S. Cacopardo, Klimburg (2008: 195-209).¹*

The advance of Islam into the mountains, starting from the sixteenth century, gradually brought about the conversion of the whole area by the end of the nineteenth, with the sole exception of the Kalasha of Chitral who still practice their ancient religion to this day².

Although paraded and exhibited for decades, by Pakistan's Government and media, as a well-preserved, happy and hospitable indigenous stock of people, the Kalash have rarely come under the microscope in terms of their socioeconomic problems. For decades, the Kalash made the headlines only for the celebration of their seasonal festivals, as if they had no life, needs and requirements except merry making and dancing. But recently, focus of the

¹ Malik, Shabnam Bahar, KAL'AS'A DUR Museum and Cultural Centre: The Rebirth of a Dying People and Culture, 2013, Asian Social Science; Vol. 9, No. 2.

² Augusto S. Cacopardo, A World In-between The Pre-Islamic Cultures of the Hindu Kush, <http://lear.unive.it/jspui/bitstream/11707/5845/1/A%20World%20In-between%20Augusto%20S.%20Cacopardo.pdf>

mainstream human rights discourse in Pakistan has shifted to the genuine problems of the Kalash after the realization that there may not be any indigenous culture left to celebrate due to the rapid conversions of the Kalash people to Islam and the increasing number of Muslim settlers in the valleys of Bumburate, Rambur and Birir.

The aforesaid demographic changes in Kafiristan can be attributed to the encirclement of Kafirs by Islam for the past three centuries and the ensuing cultural diffusion i.e. the spread of **cultural** beliefs and social activities from one group to another. All the material and ideological transgressions and encroachments from the Indian subcontinent and Afghanistan have gradually withered away the traditional ways of Kalash community. The traditional festivals of Kalashas, holding great religious and spiritual significance are Zhoshi, Ratnat, Po'n'(Phool), Chawmos and Madaik. However, Kalashas are facing difficulties in celebrating these festivals in some form or the other because of security situation, pressure from non-Kalasha neighbours and inappropriate behaviour of the tourists. For instance, the festival of Ratnat has not been celebrated for the past 10 years. Similarly, the festival of Rhuzhias, celebrated to punish the King Satan, is only celebrated in Birir after three years. In Bumburate, this festival is known as "Bhutrmishek" but has been abandoned since many years. ³

Moreover, the interaction of NCHR with the Kalash reveals that there are multiple socio-economic factors and pressures, which may be nudging Kalashas towards abandonment of their culture and religion such as land grabbing, intolerance towards religious minorities in Pakistan, the looming threat of border incursions by Taliban into Chitral from Afghanistan, limited opportunities of socio-economic progress and poor infrastructure of roads, health and education.

³ Interviews with Kalasha locals.

By drawing parallels with other ethnographic researches on other indigenous communities, this report will identify and explore some of the factors which are endangering the culture and identity of Kalash people.

METHODOLOGY

This report primarily relies on the input of Kalash elders and civil society activists, acquired by NCHR team during a Focussed Group Discussion in Bumburate Valley. The NCHR team consisted of following members:

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| i. | Justice (R) Ali Nawaz Chowhan | Chairman |
| ii. | Ms. Fazila Aliyani | Member |
| iii. | Syed Khizar Ali Shah | Director |
| iv. | Mr. Raza-ur-Rehman Asad | Coordinator |
| v. | Mr. Ahsan Kazmi | Coordinator |
| vi. | Mr. Haider Ali Zafar | Coordinator |

Secondary sources include scholarly articles, books and news reports. The objectives of this report is to identify the areas of cultural erosion of Kalash people, recommend remedial action by the State and to propose further areas of research for protection of culture and other constitutional rights of Kalash people.

CULTURAL IDENTITY OF KALASH COMMUNITY IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Political and cultural Islam rapidly surged in Central-Asian countries and Indian Subcontinent at the start of the previous millennia. However, due to the remoteness of the area and difficulty, Islam's progress was extremely delayed in Kafiristan i.e. the three valleys of Chitral where the Kalash population is concentrated and therefore, Kalash cultural identity remains poignantly manifest in the history of Indian subcontinent. *"Islam gained its first footholds in the Hindu Kush only in the sixteenth century it was only through the missionary efforts of the Sunni Kashmiri deputy Nathu Shah around the middle of the nineteenth century, that serious*

attempts were made at strict enforcement of Islamic tenets. From the south, the advance of Islam was mainly due to the pressure of the Pashtun tribes immigrated from Afghanistan, who managed to convert the Dardic locals between the end of the eighteenth century and the first half of the nineteenth.”⁴ Afghan Amir Abdur Rahman Khan’s military campaign in 1895 obtained the submission and the conversion of some the remaining independent polytheistic communities. “None the less a tiny shred of the polytheistic world of the Hindu Kush-Karakoram managed however to survive: the Kalasha people of southern Chitral, a population of only a few thousand, escaped the effects of military campaign and still practice their ancient religion to this day in the three small valleys of Bumburet, Rumbur and Birir.”⁵

The British account of the Kalash reflects a certain degree of discrimination and stigmatization of Kalash people. According to “**Military Report and Gazetteer on Chitral, 1928**” Kalash were once the rulers of the “*whole Chitral but were gradually driven into their present narrow limits.... The Kalashis are a very degraded branch of the Kafir race It may be noted as showing the former subordinate position of the Kalash Kafirs, that a Kam Kafir on his way to Chitral walks into a Kalash village and claims his food, etc, as a matter of right... The Kalash at present do a great deal of dirty work for the mehtar*”. This British version of Kalash provides important insight into the historical marginalization of this community and indicates that they may be vulnerable to further exploitation in recent times.

⁴ Augusto S. Cacopardo, A World In-between The Pre-Islamic Cultures of the Hindu Kush, <http://lear.unive.it/jspui/bitstream/11707/5845/1/A%20World%20In-between%20Augusto%20S.%20Cacopardo.pdf>

⁵ Ibid.

CULTURE AND IDENTITY LINKAGES

E. B. Tylor defines Culture as "that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society." Alternatively, in a contemporary variant, "Culture is defined as a social domain that emphasizes the practices, discourses and material expressions, which, over time, express the continuities and discontinuities of social meaning of a life held in common".⁶

The Universal Declaration of Cultural Diversity succinctly defines culture as a "set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group...that...encompasses, in addition to art and literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs".⁷

*Cultural and /or racial identity can have a significant effect on mental and physical health, even when controlling for the effects of minority discrimination (Harrell, Hall & Taliaferro, 2003). Members of minority social groups demonstrate enhanced self-esteem and wellbeing by exploring and identifying with their group (Ghavami, Fingerhut, Peplau, Grant & Wittig, 2011).*⁸

Culture may be considered one of the broader social layers in the bio-ecological model, but could be seen as operating at several levels including the cultures of family, school, peers and the broader society. Continuity of this cultural layer or layers is suggested to provide a backdrop of stability for adolescents who are most at risk for losing a sense of their personal

⁶ Guillory, RM, & Williams, GL 2014, 'Incorporating the Culture of American Indian/Alaska Native Students into the Classroom', *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 155-169

⁷http://arisepartnership.org/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/CITC_Cultural_Wellbeing_Measures_Review__Table_20160930_FINAL.pdf

⁸ Davis, Ben, "Cultural Connectedness as Personal Wellness in First Nations Youth" (2012). Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/403>

identity due to developmental changes (Chandler & Proulx, 2006).⁹

As per above definitions and the research of many esteemed historians, Kalash qualifies as a separate culture with an elaborate spiritual and worldly philosophy controlling every aspect of life including values, beliefs and traditions.

CULTURAL DIFFUSION AND INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

Kalash by all definitions and historical accounts can be bracketed as indigenous people of Kafiristan. According to some researches, Kalash people and religion may even predate Hindu and Zoroastrian religions in this area with the possibility of some influence on the beliefs of these religions.

Indigenous communities are often at a disadvantage when pitted against a dominant culture in the context of cultural diffusion. There are numerous reasons for this including the disparities in the relative size, education, technology and financial status of the communities. This unequal relationship amongst the dominant and indigenous communities invariably leads to the submergence of indigenous culture in the deluge of influence of the dominant culture¹⁰. Indigenous peoples have to *“contend with the conflicting pressures of acculturation to western society and beliefs, whilst trying to maintain their own racial identity (e.g., Sinclair, 2007). Additionally, they frequently experience subtle, endemic messages which stereotype and denigrate their heritage culture, thereby instilling and reinforcing a negative group perception (Cournane, 2007)”*¹¹. This has significant implications for adolescents and children

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Burtis, Amber T. "Managing Indigenous Knowledge And Traditional Cultural Expressions: Is Technology The Solution?." (Summer 2009)

¹¹ Davis, Ben, "Cultural Connectedness as Personal Wellness in First Nations Youth" (2012). Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository. <http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/403>

who can possibly *achieve identity at a younger age for particular salient factors such as race or culture.*"¹²

FINDINGS OF THE FIELD VISIT OF NCHR

The field visit of the NCHR team and FGD held with the local elders was focussed on the issues threatening the cultural existence of Kalash community. In light of these interviews held with the communities, subtle and direct factors threatening the distinct culture and identity of Kalash people have been summarised as under:

i. LAND SETTLEMENT

During the discussions held with the Kalash elders and civil rights activists, land settlement emerged as the most overwhelming problem of the Kalash community. The commission was informed that the land settlement process in the three Kalash valleys is being carried out without the involvement and willingness of the local people. The Kalash elders alleged that the grand public gathering for resolving the local disputes over land demarcations has not been held and the officials of the land revenue department have not held any meetings with the locals regarding their historical claims on their ancestral lands. The Kalash elders were deeply suspicious about the intentions of land revenue officials and expressed their apprehension that the Muslim settlers are likely to encroach on their lands with the connivance of the land revenue department.

The most distressing grievance of the Kalash elders was that they are being deprived of their historical claim of ownership of Silver Oak forests in Kalash valleys granted to them by the Mehtar-e-Chitral about three centuries ago. Since then, the forests have been

¹² Ibid.

fundamental to the sustenance of the Kalashas who have used them mainly as grazing grounds for their livestock and for firewood purposes. However, now the land revenue officials have told the Kalash people that the Silver Oak forests are a part of “Shamilaat”, which means that a Kalash family cannot exercise its privileged right over the Silver Oak forest rather it would have to share the forest with all the concerned land owners of the area.

The Kalash elders were of the opinion that the deprivation of Silver Oak forests will strike at the heart of subsistence economy of the Kalash people. More significantly, the gradual loss of Silver Oak forests of Kalash valley is threatening the existence of a Kalash cultural symbol and severely endangering the indigenous identity of Kalash people.

The phenomenon of erosion of cultural symbols and its impact on indigenous community has been a subject of many ethnographic researches. Bourdier, 2006 states that *“Ethnographical investigations have revealed that the kinship relations which constitute the basis of social, political, economic and ritual organisations are deeply connected with territorial arrangement. As such, one cannot understand the way people deal with natural environment without knowing the social structures.”*¹³

Bourdier has based his thesis on the study of indigenous people of upland Cambodia who were *“forced to adopt a sedentary lifestyle, resettle along the biotope rivers, work ‘rationally’, dress ‘decently’, build solid houses and learn Khmer. The refusal on the part of inexperienced civil servants, incapable of understanding highlanders’ points of view, combined with their disregard of ancestral land-use rights and their failure to consider highlanders as development associates, inevitably led to conflicts.”*¹⁴

Research on aboriginal people of Australia also reveals that natural resource management with the active involvement of indigenous people benefits them financially,

¹³ Frédéric Bourdier, 2006, Socio-ecological transformations in a tributary region of the Mekong in Cambodia: Culture of resistance or resistance of culture?

¹⁴ Ibid.

socially and culturally¹⁵. *“The cultural benefits are extremely important to Indigenous people themselves and include cultural heritage protection, intergenerational cultural knowledge transmission, and an increased sense of identity and confidence, especially for young people.”*¹⁶

To further explain the predicament of Kalash people in terms of the potential loss of ancestral land, attention is invited towards the **World Bank’s Operational Directive 4.20, which contains the definition of Indigenous people** as under:

*“a close attachment to ancestral territories and to the natural resources in these areas; self-identification and identification by others as members of a distinct cultural group; an indigenous language, often different from the national language; presence of customary social and political institutions; and primarily subsistence-oriented production.”*¹⁷

The above definition reaffirms the inviolability of the right of the Kalash people over their land, natural resources and the culture associated with these resources. World Bank’s policy toward indigenous people further emphasizes that *“issues concerning indigenous communities, for instance threats to their environment and natural resources, should be identified through environmental assessments and, therefore, appropriate measures should be taken also under policies focusing on the matter”*.

Article – 23 of Pakistan’s Constitution grants every citizen the right to acquire, hold and dispose-off property. However, this constitutional provision is yet to be implemented in letter and spirit by the Government and the State of Pakistan in the case of Kalash people. This is evident in the numerous complaints of Kalashas regarding the lack of the promised compensation for the land acquired by the government departments on various pretexts. Kalash elders and activists informed that in many cases Kalashas were not given the promised government jobs or the market price of the land as compensation.

¹⁵ J. Hunt, J.C. Altman & K. May, 2009, Social benefits of Aboriginal Engagement in Natural Resource management, Centre for Aboriginal Economic Policy Research, Australian National University.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ STEFANIA ERRICO The World Bank and Indigenous Peoples: the Operational Policy on Indigenous Peoples (O.P. 4.10.) Between Indigenous Peoples’ Rights to Traditional Lands and to Free, Prior, and Informed Consent

ii. **EDUCATION**

According to official figures, the literacy rate of Chitral for males is 73% and for females is 44% which is similar to the national average of 69% for males and 45% for females¹⁸. During the FGD, Kalash elders expressed their resolve to get their young generation equipped with modern education and claimed that there is 100% enrolment at the primary level in the Kalash areas. However, they were particularly concerned about the lack of the required education infrastructure in the Kalash valleys. Kalash children cannot pursue college education in the Chitral city due to poverty and for the majority of Kalash people surviving on the subsistence economy, it is not possible to meet the expenses of hostel accommodation. It is also worth remembering that Kalash do not have extended families or tribal affiliations outside the three Kalash valleys. Therefore, they cannot rely on any intercommunity support for the Kalash students studying in Chitral city.

Moreover, due to the lack of the quality education in schools, Kalash children are struggling to compete with the students of Chitral for admissions in colleges. Hence, poverty and poor quality of school education combines to form a glass ceiling, which is depriving Kalash children from higher education.

Kalash elders have forcefully demanded that they may be granted a quota, separate from other minorities, for admissions in colleges and universities and some rooms must be reserved in the hostel of Chitral Degree College. They also demanded that in view of the extremely difficult socioeconomic conditions of Kalash, its students must be granted exclusive scholarships or stipends to be able to continue their education.

The nature of the syllabus is another aspect of school education which is aggravating the process of cultural diffusion and erosion of Kalash culture. **Article 30 of United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** expressly protects the right of Minority or indigenous children to learn about and practice their own culture, language and religion. The current syllabus of primary education does not contain any material on the Kalash way of life and therefore, Kalash children are internalizing values which are totally alien to their ground realities.

¹⁸ "Pakistan Economic Survey 2015-16 (Education)".

“Research on minority education in general shows that teachers’ lack of understanding about students’ cultural backgrounds can lead to student alienation and disengagement from school. Research shows that academic performance of indigenous students improves considerably when a school curriculum promotes the culture, and specifically the values, ideas, mores, and language, of its respective communities.”¹⁹

This state of affairs is likely to lead to cognitive dissonance in the Kalash children. *“In the field of psychology, **cognitive dissonance** is the mental discomfort (psychological stress) experienced by a person who simultaneously holds two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values. The occurrence of cognitive dissonance is a consequence of a person's performing an action that contradicts personal beliefs, ideals, and values; and also occurs when confronted with new information that contradicts said beliefs, ideals, and values.”²⁰* The ensuing mental stress and confusion in the young Kalash people is again detrimental for the survival of Kalash culture.

iii. **FORCED CONVERSIONS**

NCHR team had a candid discussion with Kalash elders regarding the alleged incidents of forced conversion of Kalash people to Islam. The elders unanimously rejected the notion of any systematic attempt to forcibly convert Kalash people, particularly young girls. None the less, they tacitly admitted that the overall socioeconomic and political conditions of the area are influencing the decisions of some Kalash people to abandon their religion and culture. Kalash elders also admitted that due to the freedom and security enjoyed by girls and women of Kalash, some of them opt for marriages with Muslim men which eventually results in their conversion.

On the other hand, despite the remarkable interfaith harmony of Kalash people, Kalash elders expressed serious reservations on the reported divorces of Kalash women immediately after their conversion and marriage to Muslim men without any social and financial arrangements for their sustenance. Kalash elders requested NCHR to take notice of this cruel practice as a grave violation of the rights of Kalash women. Kalash elders reiterated that Kalash society is a remarkable model of interfaith tolerance where the practitioners of

¹⁹ Guillory, RM, & Williams, GL 2014, 'Incorporating the Culture of American Indian/Alaska Native Students into the Classroom', *Diaspora, Indigenous, and Minority Education*, vol. 8, no. 3, pp. 155-169

²⁰ Festinger, L. (1957). *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance*. California: Stanford University Press.

Kalash religion and Muslims are living in harmony and peace. To protect and promote the tranquillity of Kafiristan, state and the government must uphold the constitutional rights of religious freedom granted to every citizen.

iv. **ROAD AND TRANSPORTATION NETWORK**

The inauguration of Lowari Tunnel marks a watershed for the improvement of road and transportation facilities for District Chitral. Contrarily, the dilapidated condition of roads leading to Kalash valleys are in a stark contrast to the scale and quality of the project of Lowari tunnel. NCHR team's visit to Kalash establishes without a shadow of doubt that the difficult and hazardous road conditions are a major impediment in the socioeconomic welfare of Kalash people. It appears to be highly ironic and paradoxical that the celebrated, cherished and recognized stock of indigenous Kalash people remains deprived of the most basic facility of a decent road.

EFFORTS FOR THE PRESERVATION OF KALASH CULTURE

Article – 28 of Pakistan's Constitution states that *“any section of citizens having a distinct language, script or culture shall have the right to preserve and promote the same and subject to law, establish institutions for that purpose”*. Hence, the diminishing of many Kalash cultural practices is a bitter and unfortunate violation of constitutional rights of Kalash people. For instance, Kalash people are no longer able to hold their funerals and maintain their graveyards as per their traditions. The ritual of open coffin can no longer be practiced due to the continued vandalization and desecration of the coffins and land grabbing by the outside

In this context, National History and Literary Heritage Division (NHLD) has set an admirable example for the preservation of Kalash Culture by ensuring the acceptance of the nomination of Kalash practice of 'Suri Jagek' on the 'UNESCO's List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding' in May, 2017. 'Suri Jagek' is a traditional Kalash metrological and astronomical practice of observing the sun, the moon, stars and shadows with respect to the local topography²¹. This is a significant milestone in the preservation of Kalash culture as after the acceptance of "Suri Jagek" UNESCO will assist and strengthen the efforts of Pakistan to protect the cultural heritage of Kalash people. The success of NHLD should become a beacon

²¹ <https://dailytimes.com.pk/8948/kalash-suri-jagek-tradition-to-be-added-to-unesco-heritage-list/>

of inspiration for all the government departments and NGOs willing to help the Kalash people. National Heritage Division in partnership with UNESCO is striving to develop Intangible Cultural Heritage Inventory of Kalash culture consisting of more than 40 cultural practices and symbols.²² The efforts of National Heritage Division need to be appreciated and supported so that Kalash people can freely practice and preserve their culture.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view the gravity of the situation and to preserve and protect the cultural heritage and fundamental constitutional rights of the Kalash community, certain immediate as well as long term measures are recommended as under:

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The successful registration of Suri Jagek in UNESCO's urgent safeguarding list establishes the fact that Kalash culture is endangered and threatened on many fronts. Therefore, NCHR recommends that federal and provincial governments should immediately adopt the UNESCO's prescribed measures to protect the Kalash culture.
2. The practice of Suri Jagek has been traditionally used as a calendar to identify the dates of the various cultural festivals and harvesting and sowing seasons. This practice was gradually abandoned under the pressure of the government to celebrate festivals on fixed dates. NCHR recommends that Kalash may be allowed to celebrate festivals on the basis Suri Jagek rather than the Gregorian Calendar. The District Administration should be mindful of this fact while making decisions in regard to their festivals.
3. District Administration and Provincial Government must take immediate notice of the reservations of Kalash people with respect to the on-going land settlement process. The historical claim of the Kalash people on silver oak forests must be carefully examined and verified. Any indifference on this matter on the part of the state machinery may lead to grave and unpleasant consequences.
4. NCHR noted with concern that the traditional summer Kalash festival (wheat harvest) of Ratnat has not been celebrated for the past 10 years due to threats from religious

²² Interview with Mr. Naeem, Dy. Secretary, National Heritage Division.

extremists. NCHR recommends that Kalash community may be provided necessary security to celebrate this festival with freedom and comfort.

5. Educating the young generation about its cultural heritage holds the key to preserving the Kalash culture. Article – 25 (A) of Pakistan’s Constitution regarding compulsory education for all children, read with Article – 22 of the Constitution regarding protection of the right of minorities to receive religious education of their choice, enjoins the state to provide a substitute of Islamiat to non-Muslim students. In this context, Provincial Government needs to take a lead in introducing syllabus with the required social and cultural content about the Kalash. NCHR strongly recommends that the Honourable Chief Minister and Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa should, under the existing constitutional and legal provisions, ensure the provision of books and teachers of optional subjects instead of Islamiat.
6. K.P Elementary and Secondary Education Department and K.P Text Book Board should utilize the existing printed education resources available in Kalasha language such as Kalasha dictionary written by Gregory R. Cooper , Australian national
7. and Ronald L. Trail , US national and it was published by National Institute of Linguistic, Quaid-e-Azam University, school workbooks in Kalasha language published Kalasha Dur school, folk tales, songs and proverbs published by Ayun and Valleys Program, Kalasha grammar book published by Aristotle University Greece, Kalasha Awaaz Book published Greig and Cooper.
8. The present circumstances of Kalash community fully justify the grant of stipends and scholarships for Kalash students to acquire quality education.
9. Immediate administrative steps, such as reservation of rooms in hostels of government colleges in Chitral, must be taken to facilitate the stay of Kalash students in the educational institutes of Chitral.
10. The protection of legal and marital rights of the newly converted Kalash girls is the fundamental constitutional responsibility of the state and local administration. The Nikah of the converted Kalash girls must be solemnized only by the government's approved Nikah Registrars, who should ensure that all the legal rights of the bride, particularly age determination, the presence of the Wali, proper Haq Mehar and the right of divorcing the husband are secured in the Nikah form. The local administration must also ensure that there is no element of coercion in such marriages.

11. Kalasha religion has been included in the database of NADRA for N.IC purpose. However, the same is not reflected in other official databases such as passport and birth certificates. NCHR recommends that all the official databases should be synchronized with respect to the recognition and identification of Kalasha religion.
12. There have been recent reports regarding looting of Kalasha graves in various places in District Chitral particularly near Wakhan Border. Provincial Government and law enforcement agencies should take immediate administrative steps to prevent the violation and desecration of Kalasha graveyards and other historical sites.

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

13. In the context of the allegations of forced conversions, albeit unproven, State machinery must take all necessary measures to ensure religious freedoms guaranteed under the constitution are preserved. Kalash people must be extended all the support required to protect or renovate their religious and cultural places.
14. To mitigate the current sense of neglect and deprivation of Kalash people, prompt measures are required to drastically improve the road transportation facility for the Kalash people. Prima facie, this project is likely to be technically simpler and less costly in comparison to some of the other challenging road projects such as tunnels alongside the Attaabad lake leading to Khunjarab pass and the Lowari tunnel project.
15. The Kalash Museum in Bumburate must be supported, upgraded and maintained by the government as a centre of excellence for collecting, preserving and advocating Kalash culture.
16. A dedicated section for the promotion and preservation of Kalash community should be maintained in all national and provincial museums.
17. In the context of Kalashas recognition - nationally and internationally - as distinct Non-Muslim minority, NCHR recommends that Kalasha customary personal law may be codified and legislated for protection and preservation of culture and customary laws.
18. Informational brochures containing do's and don'ts on Kalash culture and short tele films depicting the nuances of Kalash culture need to be produced with the patronage of Government departments such as Directorate of Electronic Media and Productions.
19. NCHR team observed that tourism to Kafirstan is not sensitive to the culture and sensibilities of Kalash people who are often paraded and showcased as products and

commodities rather than a distinct culture with its own sensibilities. NCHR recommends that tourism should project the richness of Kalash while according the necessary respect to their personal and cultural dignity.

20. A percentage of the Revenues of the tourism industry generated by non-native entrepreneurs should be used for the development of Kalash people and culture.
21. It was strongly felt by the NCHR team that the current lack of coordination between district administration and security agencies is leading to the harassment of visitors and feeling of insecurity amongst the general public. Henceforth, NCHR recommends that SOP's for security clearance for Kalash valley should be clearly drafted and provided to the concerned visitors by the office of District Commissioner, Chitral. The communication between district administration and security agencies must be improved regarding security clearance for the visitors to the Kalash valleys.
