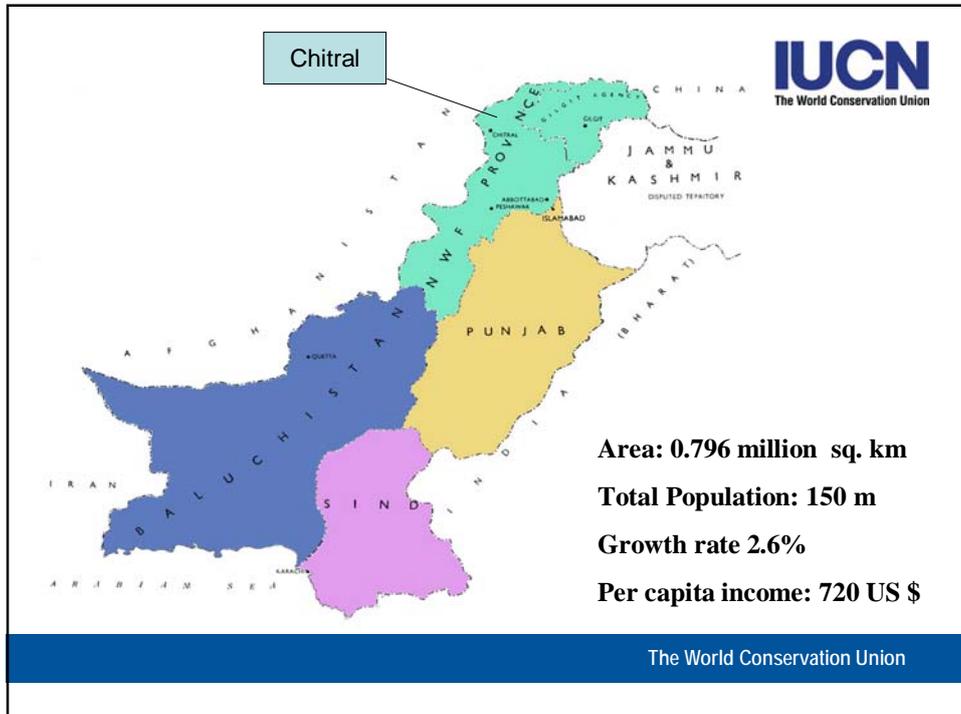
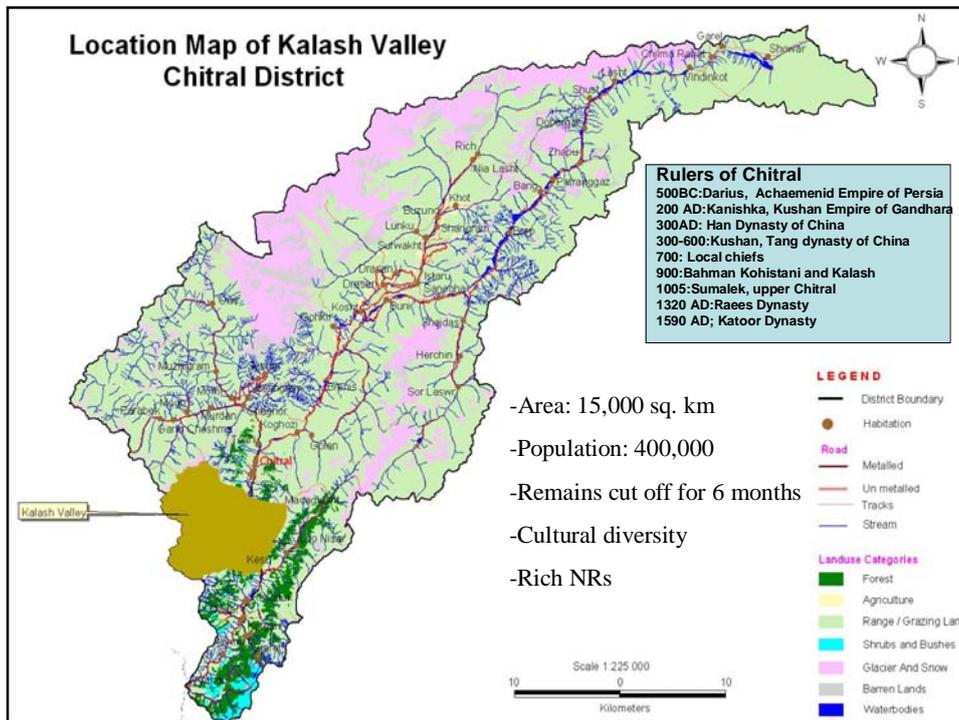


The Kalash - Protection and Conservation of an Endangered Minority in the Hindukush Mountain Belt of Chitral, Northern Pakistan



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Introduction



- The “Kalash” the most unique ethnic and religious minority of Pakistan has an outstanding universal value.
- Owing to this value, Kalash culture has been listed by UNESCO for consideration as World Heritage Site
- Efforts are being made to carry out a detailed study on mapping cultural assets of the Kalash during the year 2007-09



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Description of Site

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- The site is located in Pakistan's North West Frontier Province and it lies $35^{\circ} 41' N$; $71^{\circ} 40' E$ at 2800 m elevation
- Administrative part of District Chitral, 376 Km from Peshawar and approximately 500 Km from Gilgit.
- Rich in natural resources



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History and People

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- The Kalash are known as indigenous people to Chitral. Their ancestors migrated to Chitral from Afghanistan in the 2nd century B.C.
- The Kalash are considered to be a unique tribe among the Indo Aryan stock with a blend of Indo-European culture and traditions.
- By the 10th century A.D, the Kalash ruled a large part of present-day Chitral, Northern Pakistan
- Topographic and demographic information on Kalash shows that their abode "the Kalash valleys" have shrunk from 6000 sq. km to an area of 300 sq. km over the past 7 centuries.
- The Kalash population was subjected to mass conversion in the 14th century by invading Muslim Forces. They were reduced from 20,000 in 1320 to 8000 in 1951.
- The Kalash population further decreased from 8000 to 4000 in 2006



Origin of Kalash

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There are three theories about the origin of the Kalash:

1. Kalash are descendants of Alexander the Great.
2. Kalash are indigenous to Asia and come from what is now the Nuristan area of Afghanistan.
3. Kalash ancestors migrated to Afghanistan from a distant place in South Asia, which the Kalash call "Tsiyam" in their folk songs and epics.



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Distinctive Features of Kalash

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Kalash Architecture

- Kalash architecture is a unique mixture of ancient wooden craft and medieval traditions of figure art.
- A multi-storied Kalash building presents a spectacular view of beautifully carved wooden pillars and beams decorated with unmatched human and animal figures and effigies. Each one depicts certain myth and superstitions.

Kalash Handicrafts

- Due to their proximity to nature, the Kalash are fond of natural colors in handicrafts.
- Skills in spinning and weaving are exhibited in Rugs (Palesk), Carpets (Qalin), Belts (Chehari) and headgear (Copesi)



Distinctive Features of Kalash contd...



Kalash Festivals

- The Kalash celebrate four major festivals commemorating seasonal change and significant events in agro-pastoral life.
- These festivals are Joshi or Chilim Jusht, Uchal, Phool and Chawmas.
- The Kalash celebrate these festivals by offering sacrifices at altars, cooking traditional meals and dancing to traditional music during the week-long events.
- During the festivals they sacrifice animals at altars to please gods and goddesses. This religious ritual is performed with high regard for the supernatural beings, according to Kalash mythology.



Distinctive Features of Kalash contd...



Mythology

- Seclusion of women during special days
- singing and dancing on the occasions of funerals
- beliefs in astronomy and prophecies
- beliefs in 12 gods and goddesses

These are some of the remnants of an old religion not found elsewhere in the world (Anthropologists)



Endangered Kalash Culture



- The Kalash are one of the worlds endangered minority community. Their population decreased from 8,000 in 1951 to 4000 in 2006.
- Kalash places of worship, graveyards, Jastakhan, Bashali and other cultural monuments are also considered as threatened.
- Many features and monuments of Kalash are on decline because of forceful conversion of the community by neighbouring Muslims
- The traditional Kalash robes, embroideries and foods are changing with each passing day due to extreme poverty and availability of cheaper stuff and commodities in the market.
- The rich tradition of Kalash folklore, epics, love songs and idioms demonstrating a high standard of indigenous wisdom and human experience is believed to be vanishing.

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Current Management System



- At present the Kalash protection and conservation matters are being managed by the District Government of Chitral through its Tehsil Municipal Administration.
- The District has the support of the cultural department in Provincial Government of NWFP and the Ministry of Culture and Tourism in the Federal Government of Pakistan with technical assistance from The World Conservation Union (IUCN).
- The management practices include arrangements for cultural festivals, tourist information and facilitation systems and environmental protection measures.
- Under the current system financial resources are used by the public sector line departments.

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Suggestions for Project



- Holistic approach is needed for conservation of Kalash culture in the current scenario.
- Strengthening the process of conservation work in Kalash valleys in the field of religion and culture in coordination with UNESCO for the following three projects:
 1. Cultural mapping
 2. Conserving religious sites, monuments and practices
 3. Conserving material and non-material culture
- Launching awareness and mobilization campaigns in the proposed heritage site by organizing workshops ,seminars and other focused events.
- Building capacities of relevant human resource in the Kalash Community to take lead role in the upcoming project for conservation of the culture.

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Suggestions for Project contd...



The following issues will be focused on during designing the project:

- How the religious and sacred places of Kalash (Charsu, Malosh etc) should be improved and provided with the requisite facilities
- How Kalash schools should be established in all valleys and Kalash teachers should be trained and inducted in Kalash schools
- What type of incentives should be given to Kalash children to study Kalash language, religion and culture.
- How to provide facilities to Kalash religious and sacred places (*Jestakhan, malosh, madokjal* etc) and encourage Kalash community to perform and practice their traditions, culture and religious rituals in peaceful environment.
- Explore ways and means to declare Kalash Valleys (Bumboret, Rumbur and Birir) “World Heritage Site” through the good offices of Pakistan National Commission for UNESCO, Islamabad.

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Thank You