

**EXPLORING MARRIAGE PRACTICES OF KALASH COMMUNITY IN DISTRICT CHITRAL****Wajid Ali\***

M.Phil (Sociology) PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

Corresponding author Email:\* [wajid.booni@gmail.com](mailto:wajid.booni@gmail.com)**Mrs. Faria Faisal**

Lecturer, Department of Sociology, PMAS, Arid Agricultural University, Rawalpindi

Email: [fariaibadmirza@yahoo.com](mailto:fariaibadmirza@yahoo.com)

&amp;

**Aamir Sohail Khatak**

M.Phil (Sociology) PMAS-Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi

Email: [sociologist305@gmail.com](mailto:sociologist305@gmail.com)**Abstract**

*Marriage is a kind of social institution that helps to fulfill the biological and social needs of human beings. It is also a kind of social contract among both partners to process the life circle. Marriage is an important element of a functioning society as well as an individual's wellbeing. It is a process that enables an individual to become independent and form a family. The whole processes of change in any perspective depend on marriage as it gives way to extend society and increase people's living with specific identities. Marriage has many types but the common types are monogamy and polygamy. Love, arranged and elopement marriages are commonly found in the Kalash community. Love marriage is one of the important and most common types of marriage in the Kalash community. The way of living of Kalash community is distinct and their cultural practices are unique at the world level. Their women have complete freedom to choose their life partners. A mix method was used for collection of data. For this purpose a well-designed open and close ended questionnaire was used and data was collected from different respondents in the target area. Qualitative data was interpreted in description while quantitative data was analyzed through SPSS version 20.0. From the study it is concluded that most of the people commonly practiced monogamy along with endogamy marriage in some families.*

**Keywords:** Marriage, Types of marriages, Society, Kalash, Culture.**INTRODUCTION**

Marriage is one of the universal social institutions well-known to manage and Control the life of mankind. The marriage custom usually transforms the roles and odd jobs of two persons. It is strongly connected with the organization of the family. In truth both the institutions are matching to each other. The institution of marriage has unusual implications unlike cultures. Its purpose function and form may differ from society to society but it is

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there all over as a foundation (Botticini, 1999). Anthropologists know marriage as a way to explain how diverse societies sort out and silent the penalty mating. Westermarck in ‘the past of Human Marriage defines marriage as the extra or less strong relationship among male and female long-term outside the simple proceed of broadcast till after the birth of children. According to Malinowski “marriage is a deal for the creation and maintenance of children”. Robert Lowie describes marriage as a “rather permanent bond between permitted mates”. For Horton and Hunt “marriage is the official social outline whereby two or extra persons start a family” (Smith, 1986).

Marriage is socially or usually professed union or legal agreement between life partner that built uprights and statements among them, most of them and their kids, and between them and they are in law. The import of marriage shifts as specified by different societies, however, it is primarily recognized in which interpersonal relationships, typically sexual, are identified. In a few societies, marriage is arranged or thought to be essential before in search of after any sexual movement. At the point when characterized widely, marriage is the vision as a social general. People may wed for a few reasons, including lawful, social, libidinal, passionate, monetary, profound and religious purposes (Tilly, Fuchs, Kertzner and Ransell, 1992). In a few regions of the world forceful marriage, types of marriage, polygamy, and exchange marriage might be honed as a social custom; on the other hand, such practices might be banned and punished in parts of the world out of attentiveness toward women right and due to universal law (Molho, 1988).

Marriage is an important element of a functioning society as well as an individual’s well being. It is a process that enables an individual to become independent and form a family. The whole processes of change in any perspective depend on marriage as it gives way to extend society and increase people living with specific identities. In easy words marriage brings together various groups or families and creates a forum where culture, economy, traditions, and customs are shared (Reher, 1998).

Marriage makes up a complete unite where combined group members share a diverse role and status. Everyone looks to similarly important in a family and is co-dependent with another related member. This joint process of a relative building gives the base to the function of a household as well as society as a whole (Engelen and Wolf, 2005). Marriage is a union for the produce and protection of kids (Malinowski) in a wide –achievement judgment, the U.S supreme court has stated that same-sex “wedding” is a legitimate right and that situation must decide the same-sex union (Sheehan, 1973). Marriage is well clear regularly by a diverse quantity of public researchers that strength is costumed in each social organizes or all cultures due to their different community locations and set shapes of cultures. The married society exists in all morals and culture. In a well-recognized size, times past of human marriage clear that “marriage is an association of single or more males to single or more females which is famous by culture or regulation and include specific rights and tasks jointly in a condition of gathering external into the mixture and in the position of

issue natural of it (Sheehan, 1978). Hence the practice of marriage exists in all societies while different societies have different marriage practices.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Kalash people have very small population who are living near the border of Afghanistan in Chitral district of KPK. There are various theories about the origin of the community but they themselves introduced about their origin with Alexander the great. The community is different from the rest of the nearer communities of Chitral district. The culture of the community is very unique and different from the rest of communities. The way of living of Kalash community is distinct and their cultural practices are unique at world level. There are many foreigners visit the valley and they have different views regarding the community's religion, origin and culture practices. They are very flexible and also live happily. "The Kalash way of life is finely balanced, allowing both men and women to do their duties freely. The Kalash society is not a male-dominated society like other communities in Pakistan. Our social organization is very effective, and ensures there is no cruelty or discrimination based on issues of gender. Kalash women feel comfortable living in a society which gives them respect and freedom." It is quite common that the community's women are independent about their choice of spouse and they have all freedom in the decision making of their own life. They are no bounded like other women of the nearer communities (Shkeikh, Rehman and Naz, 2013).

Kalash is endogamy marriage system in the community and they prefer marriage with their cousins but the trend has been changed from arrange marriage and love marriage. The trend of love marriage is increased in the community. It is because the system of marriage was failed in the community hence the pattern of marriage system was changed in the community. The practice of love marriage was adopted due to decrease the ratio of divorce among the spouse of the community. The community spends less money on marriage practices than the funeral practices. It is due to their cultural practices that more money is invested at the time of funeral practices of a person. Hence, it may increase the economic issues among the community (Rehmat, 2013).

They practice a single God. Their religion is also unique and their religion was misinterpreted by the people but they practice religious festivals at different time period of the year. They do not practice religion on daily basis like Muslim community. The festivals of the community are like a symbol of religious practices in the honor of Deza, a single God of the community. The community has strong believed system on the purity and impurity. The dress of the community is unique with multi-colors especially for women. The community people have fewer opportunities in their lives because they are bounded at a single place. Their culture is not still formatted into a proper documentation. They make struggle for saving of their culture for the coming generation. Now it is very difficult for the community to sustain their culture and religion due influence of nearer community (Naz, Khan, Daraz & Hussain 2011).

The valley has no much opportunity in context of development due to remote area of the district. The valley is in rich of natural resources and cultural practices. It seems that the government of Pakistan unseen the region for development context. There is no NADRA based ethnicity of the people. The people of Kalash are very simple and many visitors visit the region. The valley is a best source of tourism but no any initiatives would take from the government to develop the valley. Hence, most of the visitors face the issues at there while visiting the valley. The construction of the valley is very poor. Hence the natural beauty of the valley is hidden at national and international. No any positive steps were taken from the government about the culture of the community being a unique culture of the world as well as Pakistan (Khan, 1980).

The population of the community is going to become less due to preaching of Muslim community and make the people convert into Islam. Hence, it seems that the community and its culture and religion would be demolished very soon. Due to lack of support of the government the community is losing their identity. The circle of the community is becoming very limited due to growing the population of Muslim community. They have no choices to learn about their culture and religious practice and they are compelled to learn the culture of other community as well as religion of the community. They are facing issues of culture, religion and language due to social pressures of the rest of the community (Parwaish, 1993).

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To know females perception about their right in selection of the spouse
2. To examine cultural complication of other and Chitrali marriages
3. To examine the Kalash traditional wedding system and marriage by elopement

#### **MATERIAL AND METHOD**

Qualitative and quantitative study allows us to make statement about a particular population in the society. Qualitative data interpret the results in more detail while in quantitative study we generalize the things for whole society. According to Chaudhry (1998) "a sample is the part of a subset of a population. Generally it consists of some of the observation but in certain situations it may include the whole of the population. The number of observations included in a sample is called the size of the sample and is denoted by the "n". 250 sample was chosen for quantitative data while for qualitative data 10 interviews and two focus group discussion was taken. Data was collected through a well-designed open and close ended questionnaire. Focus Group discussion among the respondent's was also organized randomly with some in-depth interviews for information in a more natural and open environment. For this purpose a key informant local councilor of village Bumburat valley was approached. Qualitative data was interpreted in descriptions while quantitative data was analyzed with the help of SPSS for this purpose Chi-Square test was used.

## RESULT AND FINDINGS

### DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS OF QUALITATIVE DATA

There were three kinds of marriage practices existing among the Kalash community. According to a respondent that the first kind of marriage is known as Khatabare in Kalashi in a language which means male partners would try to make convey the female partner's family members to make marriage conform. But in case a girl is small at that time for marriage then her family members would decide that marriage proposal would be accepted or rejected. This kind of marriage is not much common but in some cases this kind of marriage is prevailing among the Kalash community.

The second kind of marriage is elopement marriage which is commonly known as Aloghing in Kalashi language. The nature of this kind of marriage is different from the above kind of marriage. Elopement marriage means both partners like and loves each other and they also marry without the consensus of their family members. In simple that they both partners leave their houses and make marriage while believing in love hence they marry each other without caring for their parents.

The main reason for this marriage is love hence they leave their houses and make their ways of living and becoming of a life partner. If they marry through elopement then they parents of a male partner would send some people to the female family members about the marriage of both partners in a legal and accepted way so they both would arrange marriage practices openly. In some cases family members of females would also send some person to female partners that would the male partners forced you about marriage or she would agree with him. This kind of marriage is very common in the culture of the community and elopement marriage is also very successful. In Kalash, culture females have the freedom to make and select a male partner for life is.

The third kind of marriage practice is if a girl is forced by her family members about marriage without the consensus of girl and she loves another boy then she would reject the boy to whom she is forced to marry. She has the right to marry such a boy to whom she loves and likes. This kind of marriage is not common because mostly elopement marriage is very successful in the community. This kind of marriage is very different from the above because here woman has the right to ignore the wishes of their parents and make a decision by herself and also to marry whom she loves. There is complete freedom for both girls and boys regarding their marriage. It is due to cultural and religious freedom.

Arrange marriage was common but right now there was love marriage is very common among the community hence they had now adopted love marriage in their culture because they perceive that love marriage is more successful than arrange marriage. Moreover, arrange marriage has many problems in later life that result in elopement form of marriage but now in the community there is less elopement marriage system due to love marriage. One of the respondents is in favor of arranged marriage because she elaborated that there are parents' wishes are in the arrange marriage. Hence she accepts the wishes of her parents so she said arrange marriage should be adopted for the sake of parents' wishes with

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their children. Marriage is a kind of accepted religious thing hence it would be encouraged but the matter is that what means a person has to adopt. Therefore, arrange is to be also encouraged to follow the parents' wills hence there has a concept of arrange marriage that exists.

There are many problems created for those who marry from the out of religion such as a Kalashi girl wants to marry to a non-Muslim boy then the marriage does not work for a long time because the restrictions and limitations of Muslims would make a girl bound even though many cases of divorces occur. There is a huge difference in the cultural system of the community as compared to the rest of other communities of Chitral. In the opinion of respondents that love marriage is more successful and there was a huge trend of love marriage in the community. They argued that a Kalash girl would marry a Muslim boy but a Muslim girl still did not marry a Kalashi boy. It is due to cultural and religious freedom to Kalashi women and restrictions on Muslim women in case of their will and wishes about marriage.

Surprisingly, education is the major change in the culture of the community hence many new trends and means of life are adopted while the old practices of religion and culture are not becoming part of our daily lives. The young generation would lose their old customs and cultures due to education and they did not follow their cultural and religious traits. Most of the respondents are not in the favor of marriage in case a Kalash girl marries a Muslim boy. They thought that Muslims have less freedom for women and they treat their women in bad ways hence many family-based issues become the major causes of divorce. A respondent explained that a Kalash Girl has not to marry a Muslim boy because they do not properly treat their wives and Muslims have less concept of love marriage. In case of Kalash, all community supports each other in marriage especially in love marriage while they now rejected elopement marriage because there is more trend of love marriage that does not create such type of eloping marriage.

Mostly, girls and boys love and like each other at different events of culture and religion then they express their love. Their parents do not ignore the wishes of both girls and boys and they even support them in making of marriage settlement by both sides. This kind of marriage is very liked by the community. Hence arrange marriage system is very low as compared to the past. It is good that both partners have freedom of love and expression of love. Mostly elopement marriages are caused by arranging marriage hence mostly elopement marriage system was popular among the community. Love marriage has replaced the arrange marriage system hence the cases of elopement are very low in the community. It is commonly believed that if a girl marries into a Muslim family then she will bear many problems in later life resultantly divorce took place. A Muslim woman has less freedom as compared to the community and the culture of both communities is very different. A woman of Kalash cannot fulfill the all traditional and religious requirements of Muslims because a woman of Kalash feels to be free. It is also perceived that due to education among the young generation things are getting change.

## QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

Statistical analysis means to define the collected data from the fieldwork at a given area. The data is the nature of quantitative therefore SPSS software used to make tables for the quantitative data.

### Type of marriage at the Kalash community

Category	Frequency	Percent
Arrange Marriage	60	30.0
love marriage	100	50.0
Elopement marriage	30	15.0
exchange marriage	10	5.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table no is based on the type of marriage of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to the type of marriage of love marriage. The percentage of the above category of marriage is 50.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage while the lowest percentage is 5 of the type of marriage of the respondents.

### Marriage system of Kalash is different from other society

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	170	85.0
Agree	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on the marriage system of Kalash is different from other societies of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to the strongly agree. The percentage of the above category is 85.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

### Both male and female and choice of partner for marriage in Kalash

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	130	65.0
Agree	40	20.0
Neutral	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on both male and female and choice of partner for marriage in Kalash of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents were participated. The majority of the respondents belong to strongly agree. The percentage of the

above category is 65.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

#### **Women are free for love and elopement marriage system in Kalash**

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	140	70.0
Agree	60	30.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on women is free for love and elopement marriage system in Kalash of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to strongly agree. The percentage of the above category is 70.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 30 percent is the lowest percentage.

#### **Marriage ceremony celebration and cultural and religious**

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	30	15.0
Agree	140	70.0
Neutral	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on the marriage ceremony celebration and cultural and religious of the respondents, while there are 200 total respondents, was participated. The majority of the respondents belong to agree. The percentage of the above category is 70.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

#### **Ex-husband is paid much amount in case of his wife remarry**

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly disagree	30	15.0
Agree	170	85.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on the marriage ceremony celebration and cultural and religious of the respondents, while there are 200 total respondents, was participated. The majority of the respondents belong to agree. The percentage of the above category is 70.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

#### **Bride price is paid according to the economic position of a person**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	10	5.0
Agree	10	5.0
Neutral	50	25.0
Disagree	40	20.0
strongly disagree	90	45.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on the bride price is paid according to the economic position of a person of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to strongly disagree. The percentage of the above category is 45.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 5 percent is the lowest percentage.

**Female has full permission to meet with male before marriage**

Category	Frequency	Percent
Disagree	50	25.0
strongly disagree	150	75.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on a female who has full permission to meet with a male before the marriage of a person of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to strongly disagree. The percentage of the above category is 75.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 25 percent is the lowest percentage.

**Marriage satisfies human biological and social needs**

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	50	25.0
Agree	120	60.0
Neutral	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on the marriage system of the community and changing from of marriage of a person of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents participated. The majority of the respondents belong to agree. The percentage of the above category is 60.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

**Wife elopement is an important custom of Kalash culture**

Category	Frequency	Percent
strongly agree	40	20.0
Agree	130	65.0
Neutral	30	15.0
Total	200	100.0

The above table is based on wife elopement is an important custom of Kalash culture of a person of the respondents while there are 200 total respondents have participated. The majority of the respondents belong to agree. The percentage of the above category is 65.0 out of 100 percentages. It is the highest percentage and there are 15 percent is the lowest percentage.

**Cross-tabulation 1**

If married then what was the type of marriage and do you agree that both male and female are free to choice a partner for marriage in Kalash community

If married then what was the type of marriage	Do you agree that both male and female are free to choice a partner for marriage in Kalash community			Total
	strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	
Arrange Marriage	30	10	20	60
love marriage	70	30	0	100
Elopement marriage	20	0	10	30
exchange marriage	10	0	0	10
Total	130	40	30	200

The above table is based on cross-tabulation of two variables the one is independent and the other is dependent to find out the correlation and association among the variables. The first variable is based on types of marriage while the second one is the freedom of males and females regarding marriage choice of partner.

**Chi-square test**

Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
54.359 <sup>a</sup>	6	.000

a. 3 cells (25.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 1.50.

**Cross-tabulation 2**

Marriage system of Kalash is different from other society of Pakistan but it is basic aim is to mutual contract among spouse and do you agree that women are free for love and elopement marriage system in Kalash community

Do you agree that the marriage system of Kalash is different from other society of Pakistan but it is basic aim is to mutual contract among spouse	Do you agree that women are free for love and elopement marriage system in Kalash community		
	strongly agree	agree	Total
Strongly agree	110	60	170
Agree	30	0	30
Total	140	60	200

The above table is based on cross-tabulation of two variables the one is independent and the other is dependent to find out the correlation and association among the variables.

The first variable is based on the marriage system of Kalash is different from other societies of Pakistan but its basic aim is to mutual contract among spouse while the second one is women are free for love and elopement marriage system in Kalash community.

#### Chi-square test

Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
15.126 <sup>a</sup>	1	.000

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 9.00.

### CONCLUSION

It is observed and analyzed from the results and findings that the marriage system is a kind of source to cover any misshapes. Education is the major factor of change in the religious and cultural patterns of the community and the youths do not follow their all religious and cultural traits. Education is the only source of change that arrange marriage into love marriage but it leaves positive impacts over elopement marriage. Due to love marriage, there is less number of elopement marriages in the community. Love marriage is commonly used and practiced among the community regarding the collected data from the research area. While monogamous marriage is also commonly practiced in the community to use the process of marriage. The concept of endogamy marriage is also well known and commonly practiced. Marriage is considered a great thing because the people of Kalash believe that marriage is a holy thing for them. There is old traditional marriage practice being practiced among Kalash marriage. The marriage system controls tribal rules among the Kalash community and marriage is a kind of social power among the families to serve social well-being. Female has full permission to meet with a male before marriage due to understanding each other and later to make mind for marriage. Women are free for love and elopement marriage system in the Kalash community. Kalash women have no such restrictions as a Muslim woman has because of the different cultural, social and religious variations of both. Women and men wear their traditional dresses to make the event more harmful. In Kalash community elopement marriage is very common while arranged marriage is also common among Muslim communities. It is due to their culture and religious practices that permit their women hence women of Kalash have more freedom to choose their life partner as compared to the Muslim community.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Kalash community has a unique culture. Their population is dwelling day by day government need to work for their protection. Media also needs to come forward and to promote the culture of Kalash community. Strictly action needs to be taken against early marriages in community. Family group should be strengthened because it is the basic units of early society and the man and women

of full age have the right to marry and to found family. Most importantly need political will in the implementation of the law about minority in Pakistan.

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