

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of the Element: Cuibut'i ka Pakik Dai: Cuibut'i = Braids and Pakik Dai = to go, The above title describes the ritual of going to the streams and river for washing hair, making braids and taking bath; this is carried out by the adult Kalash women.

Brief Description: In the Kalash community, when a girl reaches the age of menstruation, then she no longer can wash her hair, comb or take bath in the house. For all these, she has to go down to the river side. Mostly a group from a village gathers and goes down to the river. Any spot is selected where the woman sits. The she opens her braids one by one, combs it, washes it with water, then applies either soap, shampoo or sicinnon (material from the Russian olive tree bark) to clean the hair. After continuously combing and cleaning, then braids are made. The numbers of braids differ among women; some make 3, other make 5. Then the women wash their face, hands, arms, neck and the beads that they wear. At the end she takes bath and the water is heated at the river side by using logs.

These days the Islamic Relief has funded and made bathrooms for these women at the river sides for the convenience of these women. Earlier there were many trees so these women could take bath easily without getting visible, however, as time has passed the trees have either been cut of decreased due to floods; these bathrooms are a blessing in disguise.

This is a common belief of the people that if any woman tries to either wash hair or take bath or even comb their hair in the house, then the entire community will face a calamity such as flood, earthquake etc.