

KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA INVENTORY ON THE INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE

Name of the Element: Pasti: The Kalasha traditional system for the storage and preservation of food items and grains in an independent wooden storage unit. Pasti – (something which is at low height)

Brief Description: Pasti is an independent storage unit used by the Kalasha and local Muslim community of the region. It is used to store grains, seeds, fruits, dry fruits, vegetable oils, cottage cheese, honey and seldom dry meat and wine.

Pasti is usually made from cedar wood and is constructed purely from wooden joinery details. The length and width of Pasti is usually 6 feet by 6 feet and it is normally 6 feet and 6 inches high. Pasti being a detached unit is lifted (maximum 2 feet) from the ground and none of its wall, floor or roof are in contact or attached with any man made or natural structure in order to regulate the smooth flow of air and effective ventilation. The efficient and smooth air flow helps in keeping the internal temperature of Pasti favorable for the long term storage of food items. The extended joinery details of Pasti also serve as benches for resting and sitting.

The interior of the Pasti comprises of shelves, drawers and hangers for storage purpose. The interior space is only accessible through a single door and other than the single door no opening is provided in the unit.

The responsibility of maintaining Pasti rests with the female members of Kalasha community. Pasti is usually built and installed anywhere near the house but it cannot be placed/located in Pragata (impure) spaces such as Anachu (prohibited space for men such as a section of graveyard, spaces where women wash and clean themselves) Bashali (house of menstruation and childbirth) etc. Also the unit cannot be accessed by impure women (the one who is menstruating) and if located at onjesta (pure) space like Altar, cattle house etc.