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M Y Ganai

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We are also highly thankful to all the peer reviewers.

Editor's Note

I recall the times when faculty members in the School of Social Sciences were anxious to have a journal in order to provide them a platform for the publication of their papers. But it could not materialize for a long time, mainly because there was no tradition of teamwork among our predecessors. No denying the fact that most of them have made significant academic contributions, but it is largely in their individual capacity. Thanks to the innovative efforts of Prof. Nisar Ali, who after taking over as Dean Social Sciences, launched the "Kashmir Journal of Social Sciences". The first issue was accordingly published in December, 2006. He not only persuaded the authorities to earmark a budget for it, but in addition to it, he requested the Jammu and Kashmir Bank for some financial assistance. Prof. Abdul Rashid Bhat from the Shah-i-Hamdan Institute of Islamic Studies also did a commendable job in editing various volumes of this journal. The issues for the year 2019 and 2020 could not be published, perhaps because of political turmoil and Covid-19 situation. Had there not been intermittent gaps in its publication, I believe that on the basis of its quality, the journal would have been enlisted in the UGC Care list.

Just after taking over as Dean of the School in March, 2021, I had a meeting with the young teachers from various departments wherein we resolved to take up its publication with all vigour and commitment. We also decided to continue with its publication without any break so that it is enlisted in the UGC Care list in near future.

Keeping in view the recent advances in social sciences, the journal primarily focuses on issues reflective of latest trends in different disciplines viz, history, political science, sociology, anthropology, archaeology, etc. For making the journal vibrant and inclusive, we are looking forward to have more contribution from faculty and research scholars from the discipline of social science within and outside the university. We are optimistic that serious scholarly contributions would be made in the future issues of the journal.

M Y Ganai

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Text and Context: Situating Kalhana's Narrative in the Archaeological Landscape of Kashmir

Abdul Rashid Lone

Abstract: *This paper examines the archaeological potential of some of the sites mentioned in a variety of contexts by Kalhana in his Rajatarangini. Majority of these settlements are referred as either religious edifices erected by kings, queens, and wealthy persons or the towns established by them. The present archaeological landscape of the Valley exemplifies the architectural grandeur of these establishments, though majority of them at present are in ruins. The antiquity of some of them was established by the European scholarship. However, recent archaeological reconnaissance surveys have also helped much in locating these settlements and quantifying the magnitude of their archaeological profile. The present paper is also directed to look into the antiquity of these settlements as spelled by Kalhana and to fix their archaeological potential. Moreover, the significance of these sites in the historical traditions of Kashmir is also undertaken.*

The *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana is the earliest extant historical chronicle of South Asia. The text was composed in the middle of the 12th century in Sanskrit. It records events of the kings and queens of the Kashmir Himalaya from the earliest times to the twelfth century. Written in verse in the Sanskrit *Kavya* style, the chronicle is divided into eight cantos (or *tarangas*), which contain 7826 verses. The text narrates the past events of Kashmir from its origin as a lake up to the middle of twelfth century. 'The *Rajatarangini* is exceptional in the fact that Kalhana did search for reliable evidence on the past from a variety of sources, so his narrative is infused with events and their explanations, many of which are historically insightful.'¹ Kalhana relied on a number of older chronicles including those of *Suvrata*, *Padmamihira*, *Chavillakar* and

¹ Romila Thapar, *The Penguin History of Early India: From the Origins to AD 1300*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 2002, p. 468.

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Kshemendra's *Nrpavali*² for the earlier centuries and narrated events of his own times in detail. While it is primarily concerned with the succession of kings and queens who ruled Kashmir during this period, the text is a rich narrative of social, political, and cultural history of Kashmir.

The text was translated into English by number of scholars in the 19th century. Aural Stein's translation was critical in establishing the contours of the work as a legitimate Sanskrit text. Preceded by a critical edition of the text, Stein's two-volume translation was published in 1900. Stein was thus responsible for giving *Rajatarangini* physical form and legitimizing it as a historical *Kavya* in Sanskrit that could take its rightful place as part of the Sanskrit canon.³

Kalhana meticulously mentioned various sacred and pious foundations, many of which were in existence in his own times. He very carefully noted the name of the builders, mostly kings, queens and officials. There are numerous references to the erection of Buddhist stupas, viharas, chaityas and Brahmanical temples by the ruling kings, thereby focusing on the cultural landscape of ancient Kashmir.

When we interrogate the cultural landscape of the Valley, some of the places or monuments mentioned in the text can be identified and located easily and with great certainty. However, majority of the towns, cities, temples and public buildings referred in the text cannot be located physically on the ground. There is lack of ample archaeological evidence in Kashmir through which one can fix the present boundaries of the ancient localities mentioned in the text. With the help of Kalhana's invaluable information, modern scholars like A. Cunningham and M.A. Stein had been able to identify, reclaim and date the remains of many monuments. However, a large number of them are still waiting for the light of the trowel to be properly identified. Stein has not furnished all the details of the places or ancient relics. Even antiquity of

² M.A. Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1900, i. 11-19.

³ Chitraklekha Zutshi, "Translating the Past: Rethinking Rajatarangini Narratives in Colonial India", *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 2011, V. 70, No. 1, pp. 5-27.

some of these places is not proven accurately. The authorship of some of the monuments ascribed by Stein to the early rulers is based on tradition and consequently has to be proved by detailed exploration and excavation.

Keeping this lacunae of place name identification in view the present attempt has been dedicated to resolve the problem of factual identification of certain ancient localities mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* with the present villages and towns in different parts of the Valley. A three-tier identification of few ancient localities is thus proposed; the references in the *Rajatarangini* to an ancient locality in a certain context, secondly, its identification by modern scholars like Stein and others, and lastly the present archaeological potential of the locality as gauged by modern archaeological reconnaissance surveys undertaken by the author.

There is a reference in first Tarang of the Kalhana's chronicle to the establishment of three towns—Hushkapura, Jushkapura and Kanishkapura by Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka respectively.⁴ Stein identifies these towns with the modern hamlets of Ushkara in Baramulla, Zakura in Srinagar and Kanispura in Baramulla, respectively. It is worthwhile to discuss the correlation between the textual evidences and the archaeological potential of these localities.

Ushkara: Hushkapura of the *Rajatarangini*,⁵ founded by Hushka or Huvishka, is the modern Ushkara—a small hamlet and an important archaeological site bearing the Buddhist remains, in Baramulla. The identification of Hushkapura with Ushkara was first proposed by Alexander Cunningham⁶ with a small village approximately three kilometres to the south-east of Baramulla,⁷ on the left bank of the Jhelum River. Yuan Chwang also mentions the name of this town. The Chinese pilgrim entered the Valley from the west by a stone gate, and

⁴ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 168.

⁵ Ibid., i. 168.

⁶ A. Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, New Delhi, Low Price publications, 1871 (reprint 1990), p. 84.

⁷ G.M. Sufi, *Kashmir: Being a History of Kashmir, From the Earliest Times to Our Own*, Delhi, Light and Life Publishers, 1974, Vol. 1, p. 10.

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halted at the Buddhist temple of *U-sse-kia-lo*⁸ or Hushkara, built by Amritaprabha, queen of Ranaditya, who patronized Buddhists. Baron C. Hugel mentions the ruins of a Buddhist temple at a distance of 'about two miles from Baramulla' in his travelogue.⁹ But it is not clear from his statement whether he is referring to the same temple or monastery as mentioned by Yuan Chwang. Lalitaditya built a shrine of Vishnu, named Muktasvamin and a large vihara with a stupa here.¹⁰

In 1882, Garrick of the Archaeological Survey of India carried out extensive excavations at Ushkar.¹¹ He excavated a stupa of squared stones, held together with iron clamps. He was determined to excavate copper plates which contained the engraved proceedings of a Buddhist conference held in the reign of Kanishka in Kashmir, as put by Yuan Chwang.¹² Garrick's excavations were thorough, but unsuccessful. Ray¹³ and Sahni¹⁴ suggest that the remains of the basement of this stupa may represent the one built by Lalitaditya. However, this stupa seems to have been built over an older structure nearly of the same type, which was perhaps commissioned during the Kushana times and had affinities with Buddhist period.¹⁵ This is attested by the discovery, outside the north-eastern corner of the surrounding wall, of eleven terracotta human heads, besides a number of fragmentary limbs of figurines which display the unmistakable influence of the Gandhara School of Art of the third and fourth century CE¹⁶

⁸ Shaman Hwui Li, *The Life of Hieun Tsang* (Tr. Samuel Beal), London, Kegan Paul, 1911. p. 68.

⁹ B.C. Hugel, *Travels in Kashmir and the Punjab*, Delhi, Nirmal Publications, 1833 (reprint 1986), p. 173.

¹⁰ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, iv. 188.

¹¹ W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Gulshan, 1895 (reprint 2005), p. 162.

¹² Shaman Hwui Li, *The Life of Hieun Tsang*, p. 71-72.

¹³ S.C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, Delhi, Munshiram Manoharlal, 1969, p. 224.

¹⁴ D.R. Sahni, 'Pre-Muhammadan Monuments of Kashmir' *Annual Report 1915-191*, Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1918, p. 61.

¹⁵ R. C. Kak, *Ancient and Medieval Architecture of Kashmir*, RUPAM, 1925. V. 24. p. 86.

¹⁶ R.C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Gulshan Books. 1933, (reprint 2002), pp. 152-53.

and particularly of the type site of Jaulian.¹⁷ However, D.R. Sahni is of the opinion that 'the collections of terracotta figurines that were recovered from the site were of late Kushana period'.¹⁸ These charming sculptures represent excellent examples of modelling¹⁹ and as such were the earliest examples of the Kashmiri sculptural art.

Ushkar remained an important Buddhist site for several centuries and underwent at least two major renovations, one in the late fourth century and another in the eighth century CE.²⁰ The terracotta sculpture heads found from Ushkar has been dated by Huntington to 'late fifth or early sixth century' CE.²¹ At present, the remains of the stupa and the surrounding wall, which Lalitaditya built over an older structure in the middle of the eighth century CE, are in-situ. Only the lowest courses of the base are in position.

Zakura: Alexander Cunningham, as informed by Brahmins, identified Jushkapura with modern Zakura (34°9'35"N, 74°49'45"E), a large village to the north of Srinagar about three kilometres above the Hazratbal shrine. The town was founded by Jushka as is put in *Rajatarangini*. Cunningham visited the site in 1847 and found nothing except 'a considerable number of stone pillars and mouldings of the style of architecture peculiar to Kashmir, all of which had been trimmed and adapted to Mohammadan tombs and masjids'.²² These remains were confirmed by Stein when he visited Zakura.²³ Neither of their observations suggest anything remotely Kushana in terms of material remains. The site is at present devoid of any such remains worth the name as it has witnessed large scale urban expansions, which

¹⁷ B.L. Malla, *Sculptures of Kashmir (600-1200 AD)*, Delhi, Agam Kala Prakashan, 1990, p. 38; S. C. Ray, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 218.

¹⁸ Sahni, *Pre-Muhammadan Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 62, fn.

¹⁹ R. C. Kak, *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic in Kashmir*. Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 1932, (reprint. 2009), p. 11.

²⁰ S. L. Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*. Boston: Weatherhill. 2001 (Reprint 2006), p. 354.

²¹ Huntington, *The Art of Ancient India*, p. 355.

²² Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, p. 85.

²³ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 168.

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presumably have obliterated these remains. Pertinently, some scholars have doubted this identification of Jushkapura with Zakura. They believe that observing the way of referring these kings building towns in their names, and basing the argument on the geographical proximity of these towns, Zugiyar in Baramulla is proposed to be the Jushkapura of the *Rajatarangini*, as other two cities are located in the same area.²⁴

Kanispura: Kanispura (34° 13' 35" N, 74° 24' 30" to 74° 25' E), also known as Kanispor or Kanishpura, is an archaeological site located seven kilometres east of Baramulla on Baramulla-Srinagar national highway at a distance of 48 kilometres towards the west of Srinagar. The site has cultural remains pertaining to Neolithic and early historical period of Kashmir.

The name of this locality is variously associated with the historical township mentioned in Kalhana's chronicle, *Rajatarangini*, as Kanishkapura founded by a famous king of Kushana dynasty—Kanishka I.²⁵ M.A. Stein has sought this identification of modern Kanispor with Kanishkapura of the *Rajatarangini* on the basis of glossator Bhataharaka of the 17th century and the Persian chronicles of Kashmir.²⁶ During Stein's own time 'carved stones and ancient coins were occasionally extracted from a mound near Kanispor.'²⁷ Pertinently, Stein refutes the identification of Kanispor by Alexander Cunningham²⁸ with Kampur.²⁹

The archaeological ground reconnaissance at Kanispor by the Archaeological Survey of India in different seasons led to the discovery of a wide range of material remains,³⁰ from the

²⁴ B. R. Mani, 'Excavations at Kanispora: 1998-99', *Pragdhara*, 2000, V. 10, p. 1.

²⁵ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 168-70.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, i. 30.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 482.

²⁸ Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, p. 84.

²⁹ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 30.

³⁰ *Indian Archaeology 1971-71, A Review*. New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, p. 24; *Indian Archaeology 1976-77, A Review*. New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India. p. 19; *Indian Archaeology 1981-82, A Review*. New Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India. p. 16; B. R. Mani, 'Excavations at Kanispora: 1998-99', *Pragdhara*, 2000, V.10, p. 1.

Neolithic to the early historic, Kushana, and early medieval period of Kashmir.

The site was excavated in three different areas³¹ unearthing 39 quadrants of 17 squares.³² In Rajteng or KNP₁ area, a large structure of diaper pebble walls of the Kushana period as well as habitation deposits of the Neolithic period was unearthed. In KNP₂, south of KNP₁, a pavement marked by decorated terracotta tiles was unearthed which were arranged in a circular fashion. Neolithic finds were also found here. Only one quadrant of KNP₃ was excavated bearing a habitation deposit of around 2.50 metres of the Kushana period overlying the natural soil. This mound, according to the excavator, represents the main township of Kanishkapura founded by Kanishka.³³ From the excavation at these three areas of the site, the following cultural sequence was discerned:

- Period I: Aceramic Neolithic (c. 3rd to 2nd Millennium BCE)
- Period II: Ceramic Neolithic (c. 2nd to 1st Millennium BCE)
- Period III: Kushana (c. 1st to 4th century CE)
- Period IV: Post Kushana (c. 4th to 6th century CE)
- Period V: Kashmir dynasty (c. 7th to 10th century CE)

Harwan: The *Rajatarangini* is replete with repeated references about flourishing of the Buddhist faith in the Valley during the time of above-mentioned three Turushka kings i.e., *Hushka*, *Jushka* and *Kanishka*, who were Huvishka, Vasiska and Kanishka of the Kushana dynasty. In this connection the text refers to Nagarjuna, a Bodhisattva residing at Sadarhadvana during this period.³⁴ The place Sadarhadvana (grove of the six saints) mentioned by Kalhana is identified by glossator A₂ of the *Rajatarangini* as *Harvan grame*, the modern Harwan village, situated about one and a half mile to the north-west of the Mughal gardens of Shalimar near Srinagar. Stein's identification of Sadarhadvana with

³¹ *Indian Archaeology 1998-99, A Review*. New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India, p. 30.

³² B.R. Mani, 'Excavations at Kanispora: 1998-99', p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 12.

³⁴ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 171-173.

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modern Harwan is based upon the earlier interpretations (by other scholars) of Kalhana's work, which placed it near the Shalimar gardens, as well as Stein's own awareness of artefacts being found near Harwan village while the Srinagar waterworks were being constructed.³⁵ These earliest ruins at the site 'consist of a portion of a circular pavement composed of unglazed terracotta tiles of large size'.³⁶

However, the famous Chinese travellers, Yuan Chwang (7th century CE) and O'kong (8th century CE) do not mention this place, although both of them stayed in Kashmir for a considerable time and visited Buddhist sites besides studying Buddhist literature in the Valley. One may also mention that Kanishka, according to some scholars, held the fourth Buddhist council in Kashmir during second century CE.³⁷ However, there is a debate about the exact location of the place where the council was held, as Kond (Kulgam) and Buddhabal in Kralwan,³⁸ Anantnag, Kashmir also have been mentioned as possible locations. Till today, we lack the exact location of this place.

The excavations at the site exposed the ruins of a Buddhist structural complex which flourished around fourth to seventh century CE. There are no more than about ten ruins located upon several terraces cut into a steep hillside.³⁹ On a higher level of the middle terrace of the settlement, an isolated patch of a monastery in pure pebble style was exposed which appears to have had an opening on the northern side, as illustrated by R. C. Kak.⁴⁰ These structures, purely of pebble seem to be the earliest phase of constructional activity at the site.

³⁵ Robert E. Fisher, 'The Enigma of Harwan.' in Pratapaditya Pal (ed.), *Art and Architecture of Ancient Kashmir*, Bombay, Marg Publications, 1989, p. 1.

³⁶ H.G.M. Murray-Aynsley, 'Note on some remarkable ruins in Kashmir', *Proceedings of the Asiatic Society of Bengal*, Calcutta, Baptist Mission Press, 1895, p. 2-3.

³⁷ Romila Thapar, *Early India*, p. 273.

³⁸ F. M. Hassnain, *Buddhist Kashmir*, New Delhi, Light and Life Publishers, 1973, p. 22.

³⁹ Fisher, *The Enigma of Harwan*, p. 5.

⁴⁰ R. C. Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, Pl. LXXVII.

On the highest terrace is an apsidal structure probably a Buddhist chaitya with a courtyard surrounded by a wall. It is square at front and round at the back. The building accommodation consists of a spacious rectangular antechamber with a circular sanctum behind.⁴¹ The outer walls of this structure are made by pebble walls and reinforced with the insertion of irregular blocks of stone at intervals. This style was known as diaper pebble method of constructions which was later replaced by diaper rubble pattern of construction in which the walls were composed of large untrimmed stones with spaces intervening filled with smaller stones. The ruins of a stupa and a set of rooms on the lowest terrace at Harwan were made of this pattern. This stupa stands in an open quadrangle. It is square in plan and has a three tier base approached by a flight of steps on its western side.

Apart from constructing stupas, chaityas and viharas, special attention was given by the artists at Harwan for paving the courtyards of these structures with moulded terracotta tiles. An example here is the courtyard of the apsidal chaitya located on the topmost terrace at the site. These tiles, as a norm, are often laid in concentric circles. They are of various shapes and sizes and exhibit very unique art forms. These art forms are free from influence of any school of art of the contemporary times. No gods and goddesses or Buddha and Bodhisattvas are represented, as was the norm in Gandhara and Mathura schools of the subcontinent during those days. Special attention was given to day-to-day life of humans and the surrounding nature. The depictions on these tiles, apparently taken from daily life, represent the flora and fauna of the times.

Some of the prominent motifs include leaves of aquatic plants, lotus flowers, flying geese, cocks and rams in fighting posture, cows suckling the calves, elephants, deer, archers on horseback, dancing women, women carrying water pitchers, women beating drums and playing musical instruments, women carrying flower vase, couple conversing on a balcony,

⁴¹ Ibid., pp. 105-111.

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naked mendicants and abstract designs etc. — practically the subject matter of human life and nature around.

Thus, the excavations at Harwan yielded important evidence of constructional techniques, artistic remains and other cultural material which are of Buddhist attribution. It is pertinent to mention, that the presence of terracotta tiles and diaper pebble style of constructions at many archaeological settlements is an important cultural indicator of settlement archaeology of Kushana period in Kashmir.⁴² As Kushana rulers, especially Kanishka, were great patrons of Buddhism, the recovery of these materials at Harwan and many other settlements speaks volumes about the flourishing state of Buddhism in Kashmir under Kushanas.

Pandrethan: Pandrethan (34°2'54"N, 74°52'5"E) lies five kilometres to the south-east of Srinagar on Srinagar-Jammu national highway at the foot of Sankaracharya hill, and is at present within the municipal limits of Srinagar district.

The historical and archaeological records reveal that the present Pandrethan and adjoining areas were centres of activity for Buddhists and Hindus during early times. The city, according to Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, was found by Ashoka under the name of Srinagari.⁴³ Traditionally it is believed that about eight centuries later, the capital was shifted to modern Srinagar which was then known as Pravarasenapura. It appears that gradually the new capital deprived the old capital not only of its importance but also of its name, and the old city came to be named as Puranadhisthana, literally 'the old city'. The word Puranadhisthana is also mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* as a city that was consecrated with various holy shrines by King Sresthasena, who was also known as Pravarsena I and Tunjina II, son of Meghavahana.⁴⁴

The identification of Puranadhisthana with modern

⁴² Abdul Rashid Lone, *Semthan and the Historical Archaeology of Kashmir*, Unpublished Ph.D dissertation, Department of History, University of Delhi, 2016, pp. 329-330.

⁴³ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 104.

⁴⁴ Ibid., iii. 99.

Pandrethan was first proposed by Alexander Cunningham.⁴⁵ However, the perfect location of Srinagari is a debatable topic amongst scholars. But most of them including Stein⁴⁶ agree that it is the modern Pandrethan, located on the right bank of Jhelum River, some five kilometres above modern Srinagar.

Trebeck and Moorcroft, writing in 1840s, found some fragments of stone on the hill side 'on some of which figures were sculptured and on others ornamental carving was noticed.'⁴⁷ They also saw a large stone, which in appearance was a lingam, and 'an upper part and capital of a huge polygonal pillar, the shaft of which was seven yards in circumference. Traces of figures sculptured on its upper part were indistinctly perceptible'.⁴⁸ M.A. Stein saw considerable remains of ancient structures in the form of carved stones and architectural fragments along the side of foot hill for about two kilometres. He also found some broken lingas. However, Stein asserts that none of the individual structures could be distinguished at that time in the debris over ground.⁴⁹

The excavations at the site were conducted by D. R. Sahnî of the ASI in 1913.⁵⁰ The site was marked by secular buildings and some Buddhist and Brahmanical establishments.⁵¹ The sculptures include standing and seated Buddhist figures, a standing image of Avalokiteshvara and the sculpture representing the birth of Siddhartha and other seated or standing sculptures.⁵² These thickly dot the mountain slopes from the Pantha Chowk to the Shankaracharya hill—an extent of about three kilometres. The excavations also

⁴⁵ Alexander Cunningham, 'An essay on the Arian Order of Architecture, as exhibited in the temples of Kashmir.' *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1848, p. 283; Cunningham, *The Ancient Geography of India*, p. 79.

⁴⁶ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 104.

⁴⁷ W. Moorcroft & G. Trebeck, *Travels in Kashmir, from 1819- 1825*. Srinagar: Jay Kay Book Shop, 1841 (reprint 2008), p. 98.

⁴⁸ Moorcroft & Trebeck, *Travels in Kashmir, from 1819- 1825*, p. 98.

⁴⁹ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, iii. 99.

⁵⁰ Sahnî, *Pre-Muhammadan Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 61.

⁵¹ D. Mitra, *Pandrethan, Avantipur & Martand*, Delhi, Archaeological Survey of India, 1977 (reprint 1993), p. 13.

⁵² Kak, *Handbook of the Archaeological and Numismatic in Kashmir*, pp. 27-40.

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brought to light the remains of two dilapidated Buddhist stone stupas and the quadrangular rubble built enclosure possibly of a monastery, all assignable to the early medieval period.⁵³ However, R.C. Kak is of the opinion that these ruins 'may be assigned to about the seventh century A.D. or perhaps a little earlier.'⁵⁴ All these structures are situated close to each other. 'Stupa A' is the larger of the two and is surrounded by a dressed wall of stone, of which only the lowest course exists now. According to Sahni, this stupa was found in a mound of debris which rose about twenty feet high. The whole facing has been stripped off, but the few stones which have been found in position enable us to restore the plan of the structure with certainty. They show that the structure was built in the usual style on the top of a basement 72' square, with four recesses in each corner. The drum of the stupa was ornamented with sculptural carvings a few of which are still well preserved. One of these representing the Boddhisattva Padmapani (ht. 5' 4½"), while a large size standing Buddha (ht. 6' 7") and a fragment of the Lumbini scene are also worthy of mention.⁵⁵

He further says that the 'Stupa C' was badly destroyed and the only remains of it are the stairs on the west and the north. In these ruined stupas, he claims, small hemispherical objects of stone were also recovered, imitating small stone models of stupas. Presently, in addition to these ruins, there is a well preserved Brahmanical temple, which enshrines a Shivalingam, in the middle of a tank, belonging to the 10th century CE.⁵⁶

D. R. Sahni while reporting the archaeological finds of his excavations from Pandrethan is not clear whether the debris scattered on the hillside, which he noticed along with some other travellers, mentioned above, were either part of the stupas he excavated or were part of some different structure.

⁵³ Sahni, *Pre-Muhammadan Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 61; Mitra, *Pandrethan, Avantipur & Martand*, p. 16.

⁵⁴ Kak, *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 115.

⁵⁵ Sahni, *Pre-Muhammadan Monuments of Kashmir*, p. 61.

⁵⁶ Mitra, *Pandrethan, Avantipur & Martand*, p. 20; M.W. Meister, *Temples of the Indus: Studies in the Hindu Architecture of Ancient Pakistan*, Leiden: BRILL, 2010, p. 6.

From the information gleaned from these travelogues, it appears that the artefacts scattered on the hill side were probably of some structure which existed at this place before the stupas were erected, as these are found at some distance from these stupa remains and were collected before the excavations were conducted. The presence of these artefacts perhaps explains the early historic character of Pandrethan as mentioned in *Rajatarangini*.⁵⁷ One can not be sure, though, because of the lack of authentic sources.

Conclusion: There is an endless list of ancient sites, mentioned in the text, associated with the historical events that occurred in Kashmir. As seen above, an attempt has been made to revisit the archaeology of the ancient localities mentioned by Kalhana in certain contexts. Some of the earlier attempts in this direction were fruitful, however, there are few misinterpretations which the author has tried to re-interpret while proposing the three-tier identification and location of some of them; firstly, in what context each site is mentioned by Kalhana; secondly, how the antiquity of the site was revealed and its past constructed by Stein and others; and finally, author's own observations about the landscape archaeology of these settlements based on recent archaeological field survey. There are many other such sites, which deserve attention of the scholars. Thus, it is the need of the hour to have a keen interest in investigating the past of Kashmir. The present effort simply represents an idea and, therefore, be treated just a beginning, if one really wants to understand the Early Historic Kashmir. Much is yet to be done.

⁵⁷ Stein, *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, i. 104.

Myth or Reality: Revisiting the Naga Discourse(s) in Kashmir

Younus Rashid

Abstract: *The Naga or serpent worship in Kashmir has remained stuck in between a binary of ‘myth and reality’. The Naga discourse has been one of the most controversial aspects in the religious history of ancient Kashmir. With regard to their nature, the literary sources of ancient Kashmir provide two pictures. At some places they have been represented as snake deities living in springs, while at other places they are portrayed as human beings. With regard to their existence in Kashmir, there is a group of scholars who attempt to justify the presence of Nagas as one of the earliest belief systems prevalent among people. They base their argument on the literary evidences. The other group of scholars, who argue for no Naga presence in Kashmir, build their argument on the material (archaeological) evidences. It is in this context that the Naga discourse in Kashmir has given rise to the many discourse(s) which are often guided by particular ideological, social and political concerns. The present paper will try to understand the Naga discourse clearly within the framework of what we call “connected history”.*

Introduction: *Naga or serpent worship had acquired a prominent position in ancient Indian religious pantheons. The evidences of their worship can be traced with the help of various sources like the Harappan figurines, the Vedic texts, Puranas, Epics, and Buddhist literature. There is a possible indication of veneration of snakes by Indus Valley people. It is apparent from the women-snake figurine found at Mehargarh, an important Indus site.¹ Naga worship existed in the Rigveda and various passages of Atharvaveda² refer to the groups of serpents and one refers to six serpents as the wardens or protectors of six quarters, represented as a charm to win the*

¹ Ratnagar, Shereen. 2001, *Understanding Harappa Civilization in the Greater Indus Valley*, New Delhi Tulika, pp. 103-115.

² Herbert, Hartel. “Aspects of Early Nāga Cult in India”, *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts*, October 1976, Vol. 124, No. 524, p. 666.

favour of the serpents of all the regions under heaven. Moreover, *Epics* and *Puranas* testify to its gradually increasing popularity. *Mahabharata*³ too states the merit of visiting various *Naga Tirthas* like *Nagodbheda*, *Sarpadevi*, *Kurukshetra*, *Prayaga* etc. Various *Puranas* like *Matsya Purana*, *Padma Purana* etc. also glorify the cult.⁴ Even in *Buddhist* literature, *Nagas* were represented as animals or super natural beings and have been depicted in various *Jataka* stories as listening to the sermons of Lord *Buddha*. Towards achieving semblances of fraternity, *Buddhist* lore found *Buddha*, a good *Naga* in some previous birth.⁵

Geographical Extent of Naga Worship: Kashmir, in spite of its geographical isolation and limited territory, proved outstandingly creative in the domain of religion. Having been a part of the geographical and cultural complex of the border lands situated on its immediate north and north-west, the world view of Kashmiris was always shaped by the religious developments occurring in these lands. It is therefore understandable to see almost identical sequences of religious changes between Kashmir and its neighbourhood.⁶ In the neighboring territories of Kashmir, we find *Nāga* cult perhaps the earliest and the most popular belief. Similarly the *Naga* cult of Kashmir too has its presence in the literary heritage of Kashmir if not yet in archaeology. Despite its evidence from the literature the *Naga* or serpent worship is one of the most controversial aspects in the religious history of ancient Kashmir and this belief system has given rise to a debate among scholars interested in the cultural history of Kashmir. *Naga* belief system of Kashmir has got stuck in the binary of

³ Niyogi, Naval. 2002, *Nagas: The Ancient rulers of India their Origin and History*, Vol. 2, Delhi, Originals, p. 1.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Buddha himself claimed to have been a *Naga* in his previous birth R.N. Saleore, 1983, *Encyclopaedia of Indian Culture*, Sterling, New Delhi, p. 1007.

⁶ Wani, M.A., *Making of Religious Traditions: Accommodation, Reformation and Innovation in Kashmir Tradition (from early times upto 12th century A.D)*, (Unpublished paper presented at Three Day National Seminar on, Tradition and Dissent in India, with special to Kashmir, 2011, Department of History, University of Kashmir.

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myth and reality.⁷ Some scholars on the basis of *Naga* narratives found in various texts like *Nilamatapurana*, *Rajatarangini*, *Mahavamsa*, *Mulasarvastavada-vinaya*, *Ain-i-Akbari*, accept the presence of *Naga* belief system in Kashmir. While as the other group of scholars deny the *Naga* existence owing to the non availability of archaeological evidences.⁸ Before reaching to any conclusion, it is important to look at the arguments put forward by these scholars. Scholars like Ved Kumari Ghai, Shonaleeka Kaul, Sunil Chandra Ray, Naval Niyogi, M.L. Kapoor and others argue that *Naga* worship was the earliest belief system prevalent among the people of ancient Kashmir. Though the exact date of *Naga* presence is not known to them, however, on the basis of the *Naga* narrative found in Ceylon chronicle *Mahavamsa*, M.L. Kapoor argues that this belief system was well established in Kashmir during the 4th and 3rd century B.C. The literary sources like *Mahavamsa* state, that after the end of discussions at third *Buddhist* council, its President Mogaliputta Tisa deputed monks to various parts of the world for the propagation of *Buddhist* faith. One among these monks was Majjhantika who came to Kashmir. At the time of the arrival of Sramana Majjhantika, Kashmir was ruled by *Naga* king *Aravala*, and both of them had a confrontation but the spiritual powers of *Majjhantika* dominated the scene and *Aravala* along with other *Naga* submitted and embraced *Buddhism*.⁹

The earliest extant religious work of Kashmir written in 6th or 7th Century A.D. is significantly a *Puranic* text called *Nilamatapurana*. Needless to say the tradition of writing *Puranas* was a Pan-Indian practice for striking a balance between the *Vedic* and local sources of authority by local *Brahmanas* who were in a position to access the points of minimum compatibility between different traditions. This technique of absorbing local cults and associated practices for

⁷ Gulshan, Majeed. 2011, "No Naga Presence in Kashmir: The Past Never is", G.M. Khawja and Gulshan Majeed, 2011, edit., *Approaches to Kashmir Studies*, Srinagar: Gulsjan Books, pp. 27-40.

⁸ Bashir, Khalid. 2017, *Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind Narrative*, New Delhi, Sage, pp 6-9.

⁹ Ray, S.C. 1969, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, New Delhi: Munushiram Manoharlal, pp. 155-56.

widening the social base of *Brahminical* social order in different regions is known as *Puranic* process. The *Nilamatapurana* provides a typical example of this process which commensurates with Gramsci's concept of hegemony as the *Aryans*, showed sufficient flexibility to respond to new circumstances and to reach into the minds and lives of their subordinates.¹⁰ How the *Aryans* reformulated the *Vedic* religion to suit the local circumstances without compromising with its basic fundamentals is the pith and marrow of *Nilamatapurana*. According to the *Nilamata*, on the eve of the *Aryan* immigration there lived two powerful cultural groups in Kashmir pejoratively called *Nagas* and *Pisacas* by the *Vedic* people. Hence, there was no other alternative for the *Aryans* but to make vital compromises with their adversaries even to the extent of incorporating the *Naga* and *Pisaca* leaders in their Penthon. The *Nilamatapurana* ascribes the authorship of the *Purana* to Nila, the king of *Nagas* who is said to have related these instructions to the Brahmana Chander Deva with the instructions that for living in Kashmir the *Aryans* had to act up on his instructions contained in the *Nilamatapurana*. According to the *Purana*, it was obligatory for the *Aryans* to worship the king of *Nagas*, Nila, as Kashmir belonged to him. The *Purana* pronounces 23 hymns in the honour of Nila *Naga*. For brahmanising the practices contained in the *Purana*, it was asserted that Vishnu declared the Nila a part of his own self, and he who disobeys his order meets destruction at my hand. Also, the *Purana* claimed that the Nila received the instructions from *Kesava*. Besides worshipping Nila, it was obligatory for the *Brahmanas* to worship around 603 *Nagas* contained in the *Purana*. Considering the significance bestowed up on the *Naga* worship by the canonical work of Kashmiri *Brahmanism* it is not surprising that Abul Fazl found 700 places with graven images of snakes which the Kashmiris worshipped. *Nāga* cult was so strong or the influence of *Naga* belief was so pervasive that the *Buddhist* tradition mentions only *Naga* whom the *Buddhist* missionaries had to contest in Kashmir.¹¹

¹⁰ Wani, M.A., *Making of Religious Traditions*, pp. 50-100.

¹¹ Ibid.

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Naga Worship in Retrospect: One of the important things one should keep in mind while examining *Nilamatapurana*, is that the term 'Naga' has two representations-Serpent deities living in springs and people or tribe worshipping the serpent deities.¹² But both the representations of the term (*Naga*) refer's *Naga* or serpent worship with the only difference that former one refers directly while as latter indirectly to it. With regard to the latter representation (people or tribe) Ved Kumari Ghai argues that those who worship Shiva are called *Shaivas* and those worship *Vishnu* as *Vaishnavas*, similarly people who worship *Naga* deities are also called *Nagas*.¹³ *Nilamatapurana* gives us many references of *Naga* worship. Even the name of the text *Nilamatapurana* is on famous *Naga* deity called *Nila*. The text provides following information with regard to the *Naga* worship:

24-25: O Controller of the enemies, the holy region of Kashmira is possessed of all the sacred places. There are sacred lakes of the *Nagas* and the holy mountains; there are holy rivers and also the holy lakes; there are highly sacred temples and also the hermitages attached to them.

230: O *Nāga*, at that sacred place there shall always be the dwelling-place of *Vasuki*, the king of *Nāgas*. Worship him who lives there.

231: *Vishnu* says, the lord of the kings of the *Nagas* is a part of my own self. He who disobeys his order meets destruction at my hand

232: O chief of the *Nāgas*, that lord of the kings of the *Nagas* is part of my own self. He who disobeys his order meets destruction at my hand.

353: O *Nila* of dark blue complexion, O lord of the gods, king of the *Nagas*, you-chief of the hooded ones, sitting in the sky and called immortal-are seen, as it were, through meditation, by your own gods who are wise and who have subdued sins.

355: O lord of the *Nagas*, the chiefs of the gods recognize you as fire and as the sun in the sky. Shining

¹² Kumari, Ved. 1988, *Nilamatapurana*, Vol. 1 (A critical edition and English translation), Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, p. 46.

¹³ Ibid., p. 57.

like fire, O *Nila*, You accomplish the deeds of your devotees.

358: Clad in blue raiment and possessed of blue eyes, O *Nila*, O lord of *Nagas*, even a man of unrestrained senses who contemplates you-the lord of the gods and all pervading like ether-is saved by your grace.

359: O *Nila*, the *Vedas* have sung about you-the eternal one-as the essence of the *Vedas*, the object of worship in the fire, the fulfiller of desires of those who seek salvation and those who are ambitious(of material gain).

648-49: Having performed the worship of these, one should worship specially the planet, the *Nagas* and the month which presides over the year, and (should worship) also the planet of future years, and the (presiding) day of the month.

814-815: When the moon is united with sacra constellation, then the best elephants—*Kumuda*, *Eravana*, *Padma*, *Puspadanta*, *Vamana*, *supratika*, *Anjana* and *Nila* should be worshipped.

879-80: The fifth, the twelfth, and the fifteenth are honoured for pilgrimages to the abodes of all the *Nagas*.¹⁴

Similarly in the Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* one comes across various stories about *Nagas* mostly borrowed from *Nilamatapurana*, as he uses it as one of the sources in the compilation of his work. But at the same time, he added many new narratives to the Naga discourse of Kashmir. Let us underline the *Naga* worship Shlokas in *Rajatarangini*:

Rajatarangini Book One

28: That (land) is protected by *Nila*, the lord of all *Nāgas*, whose regal parasol is formed by the circular pond [of the *Nilakunda*] with the vitasta's newly rising stream as its stick.

30: that [country] is attended by the *Nāgas Śankha*, *Padma* and others resplendent with the jewels, just as the town of *Kubera* [is attended] by the [nine] guardians of treasures [among whom are [*Śankha* and *Padma*].

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 60-63.

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179: When the traditional customs were broken in the land, The *Nāgas*, who had lost their [accustomed] oblations, sent down excessive snow, and thus destroyed the people.

185: King *Gonanda* the third, who ascended the throne at that time, reintroduced the pilgrimage, sacrifices, and other [worship] in honour of the *Nāgas*, as they had been before.¹⁵

Similarly one of the narratives found in Chinese *Vinaya* of *Mula-Sarvasti-Vadin* sect, tells us about the confrontation of Madhyantika and *Nāgas* and how former rescued the valley of Kashmir from *Naga* and established the religion of *Buddha* with five hundred *arhats*.¹⁶ Abul Fazal, the famous chronicler of Mughal emperor Akbar and author of *Ain-i-Akbari*, in his account refers to seven hundred places of *Naga* worship in Kashmir, where inhabitants come and worship. Thus, on the basis of these evidences the scholars argue in support of the *Naga* presence in the Valley.

However, on the other side of the debate, there is a group of scholars like Gulshan Majeed, Abdul Rashid Lone, Khalid Bashir, and Shafi Shauq, who opine in favour of no *Naga* presence in Kashmir. This group of scholars have their consensus on the point that *Naga* as a belief system or as people have their well established historicity in the Indic mainland, which is well documented and finely represented in the literary and archaeological sources respectively.¹⁷ In the context of Indic mainland this group of scholars' highlight the presence of *Naga* as a cult and people in the literary genre like *Puranas*, *epics* (*Ramayana* and *Mahabharat*) etc., as well as from the material evidences. But to them the *Naga* discourse of Kashmir doesn't have such a strong evidential support. Though to them literary sources do provide references but do not seem to be authentic. They put the whole weight of their argument on material evidences and as such *Nagas* to them in Kashmir did not exist, as their existence is not supported by archaeological sources. Gulshan Majeed in one of his chapter

¹⁵ Stein, M.A. (reprint 2010), *Kalhana's Rajatarangini*, Delhi, Living Thoughts, pp. 5-33.

¹⁶ Ray, S.C., *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 156.

¹⁷ Gulshan, Majeed., *No Naga Presence in Kashmir*, pp. 27-40.

entitled *No Naga Presence in Kashmir: The Past Never Is*, argues that *Naga* discourse of Kashmir is nothing but an imaginary creation of the author/s of *Nilamatapurana*. Except *Nilamatapurana*, he says no other *Purana* or any *Mahatmaya* or any other *Brahmanical* compositions refer to *Naga* cult in Kashmir. Even to him no classical writers like Herodotus, Pliny, Strabo, etc., have mentioned about this belief system, who wrote about Kashmir in their accounts. Majeed argues that the excavated archaeological sites of Kashmir like Burzhom, Gulfkral, and Semthan have revealed much about the human life and other related aspects but not even a single evidence about *Naga* discourse had been obtained from these sites. He also mentions that Semthan, a rich archaeological site which represented Kashmir right from megalithic down to historical period have nothing to offer with regard to the *Naga* presence. He also negates the Kashmir's famous folk lore *Heemal-Nagrani* as proof to *Naga* existence, as he argues that it's difficult to assign a fixed date to this folk story and to him this story is basically a copied one from the similar story found in Chota Nagpur region of India. He further argues that the plot is borrowed from somewhere else and the only change made to it was the nomenclature of its actors.¹⁸

Similarly, Abdul Rashid Lone offers justification in favour of absence of *Naga* in Kashmir through archaeological perspective, to quote him:¹⁹

Nagas do have a historical base in the main land of India. Certain temple shrines and sculptures there are ascribed to them. But as far as Kashmir valley is concerned, except in the *Nilamatapurana* and the *Rajatarangini*, they do not exist. From the archaeological perspective, we do not have any concrete evidence of their presence in Kashmir. The sculptures ascribed to them in the central India are completely missing from the archaeological record in Kashmir. Neither the Burzahom rock art nor the tiles from Harwan suggest anything to support the presence of *Nagas* in Kashmir. Scholars have argued that certain

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ For more details see: Bashir, Khalid., *Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind Narrative*, p. 7.

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Naga tribes existed in Kashmir but that is only a projection of the Brahmanical point of view propagated through the *Nilamatapurana* and the subsequent literature influenced by it.

Shafi Shauq opines that *Naga* discourse in Kashmir has no real basis rather it is/was a product of Brahmanical fantasy, the way they did it at the Indian subcontinent level with the *Asuras*, *Danavas*, *Malechas* etc. In his opinion, this fantasy is seen in the imaginary folk tale of eighth or ninth century A.D in the form of a literary text called *Nilamatapurana*.²⁰

Khalid Bashir, in his work *Kashmir: Exposing the Myth Behind the Narrative*, has written about *Naga* discourse of Kashmir. In favour of *Naga* absence in Kashmir, he drew into his work the opinions of various scholars who had already made their attempt in this regard, and has also expressed his own ideas. He writes besides *Buddhism*, *Hinduism* (*Vaishnavism* and *Saivism* mainly) and *Islam*, had sway on the inhabitants of Kashmir over different times. The presence of these faiths is well proven. He further writes that there were faiths and cults in prehistoric Kashmir whose dominant focus was nature worship. But we have no material evidence to prove them. With regard to the *Naga* worship, he opines that it was just a creation of some people employed in a Brahmanical project of Indic mainland that after assimilating Kashmir's Buddhist population, shifted to mould the geography of Kashmir as per Brahmanical configurations. Hence water bodies, mountains, places and shrines were christened by assigning names to them as per the model present in Brahmanical literature of Indic mainland. Consequently, springs were given to serpent gods like *Vasukh Nag*, *Anantnag*, *Takshak Nag*, and *Sheshnag*. In order to draw the point home, Bashir argues that *Nilamatapurana* and *Brahmapurana* shares same nature and purpose with only difference that what *Barahmapurana* did at pan India level *Nilamata* did at local level.²¹

²⁰ Ibid., pp. 6-7.

²¹ Ibid., p. 12.

Discussion: The *Naga* belief as portrayed in *Nilamatapurana*, *Rajatarangini* and *Mahavamsa* at first should be understood in the context of a particular discourse that the *Brahmanical* and *Buddhist* traditions are representing, supporting, and justifying respectively. An analysis of the *Nilamata*'s nature and the way it provides information makes it clear that the text was a continuation of the *Puranic*-process of Indian subcontinent. So in order to understand *Nilamatapurana* and the information it provides in an appropriate context, one need to understand first the milieu and purpose in which *Puranas* were written down at subcontinent level as *Nilamata* is part and parcel of it. According to the tradition, the *Puranas* were composed by sage Ved Vyasa and comes under *simriti* category (literally written). There are hundreds of *Puranas*, but eighteen among them are most important and called *Mahapuranas*. The *Puranas* mainly discuss five topics called *Pancha-lakshanas*, these are *Sarga* (creation of world), *Pratisarga* (re-creation of world), *Manvantaras* (period of various Manus), *Vamsha* (genealogies of gods and rishis) and *Vamshanucharita* (accounts of royal dynasties).²² The Scholars differ in their opinions with regard to the Writings of *puranas*,²³ however, they share a consensus on the point that *Puranas* were written with an endeavour to manage the crisis emerged in *Brahmanism* owing to the constructive dissent expressed by *Buddhism*, *Jainism*, *Ajvaikism*, etc. To get a way from the quagmire, the *Brahmanical* class used *Puranas* as a tool in which they generated the theory of incarnations (*Avataras*) of *Vishnu* for the *Brahmanisation* of society. In this context Ved Kumari writes:

Puranas have enriched the conception of incarnations by adding various stories regarding the adventures of the incarnations. The theory in its full developed form has wonderfully enabled Hinduism to assimilate various cults originally foreign to it.²⁴

²² Singh, Upinder. 2005, *A History of Ancient and Early Medieval India: From the Stone Age to the 12th Century*, Delhi, Pearson, pp 21-22

²³ Ibid., p. 15.

²⁴ Kumari, Ved., *Nilamatapurana*, p. 142.

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Nilamatapurana, however, is not a mutation or creation ex-nihilo. In its essentials, it dwells upon the *Naglore* of India and the concepts involved there in. The two main concepts, providing foundation to the narrative concerned are: the *Nagas* being the forest dwellers and aboriginals of India and that *Nagas* were expelled by the *Vedic* people and they spread towards North West from the places mentioned in the epics. *Jatakas*, *Mahabhartha* and *Puranas* are the original sources of *Naga* narratives. The *Brahmanic* lore of India incorporates much of this material as per its requirements and once Brahmins settle down in Kashmir they provide the *Naga* tales with geographical locales in Kashmir. Pertinent to mention, the folktales travel faster, create their niches and subsequently fresh identities and become naturalised in the land of their immigration, as well. General tales about *Nagas* could have reached Kashmir earlier through the immigrants particularly from the lands of *Naga* influences and traditions, including the Brahmins invited and resettled in the parts of Kashmir by the Hindu rulers.

Nilamatapurana is also one of the *Puranas* written with an endeavour to *Brahmanise* the Kashmiri society and to connect the land of Kashmir with a broader *Brahmanical* discourse. The contents and the way it gives information leave no one in doubt that it was an extension of *Puranic* process of subcontinent levels. In tune with the methodological framework of the *Puranas*, *Nilmata* writes about three out of five. It mentions about *Pratisarga*, *Manvantara* and *Vamshanicharita* (in few verses).²⁵ It also describes various *Avataras* of Vishnu like that of *Matsya* and *Vayu Purana*. The text mentions *Narsimha* (Man-Lion), *Varaha* (boar), as the *avataras* of Vishnu. The *Puranas* reflect the interaction of *Brahmanical* and non *Brahmanical* traditions and the emergence and development of Hindu religious practices, so is true of *Nilamatapurana* in Kashmir context. Just like in *Puranas* different religions and religious cults were *Brahmanised*, in the same way the different religion and religious traditions were *Brahmanised* by *Nilamata*. *Nilamata* talked about various beliefs like *Nagas*, *Picasas*, *Aryans*,

²⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

Buddhist, Vishnavite, and Shivite. The image we get after studying the religious belief of Kashmir in *Nilamata* is that of a harmonious and peaceful existence of various cults and beliefs. *Nilamata* advocated the worship of all the prevalent beliefs without hesitation. However, these beliefs were subsequently *Brahmanised* with an over-all emphasis on *Vishnu* as a supreme lord.²⁶ Similarly, the picture of *Naga* belief system of Kashmir we get from *Nilamatapurana* is a *Brahmanical* one. *Nilamata* advocated the worship of *Naga* deities to the followers as highlighted already in the shlokas and subsequently *Nagas* were *Brahmanised* and were made subordinate to a supreme god *Vishnu*. The argument is substantiated by the shlokas of *Nilamata*, *Vishnu*; the lord of the kings of the *Naga*'s is a part of my own self. He who disobeys his order meets destruction at my hand.²⁷ This *shloka* makes it clear that Lord of kings of *Nagas* is none other than *Vishnu* himself. Thus, one can argue that *Nilamata* indirectly refers a lord of kings of *Nagas* as *avatar* of *Vishnu* which doesn't hold a place in the list of *Avatars* of *Vishnu* in other *Puranic* texts of the sub-continental level or in Kashmir's regional text over the same subject matter like *Dasavatarcarita* of *Kshemendra*.

Similarly, the accommodation of diverse religions and religious cults into the *Buddhist* faith was done by the *Buddhists* through their literature in Indian subcontinent. We have references that at subcontinent level *Buddhists* tried to accommodate *Nagas* into their fold. In *Buddhist* literature, *Nagas* were represented in various *Jataka* stories as listening to the sermons of Lord *Buddha*. Towards achieving semblances of fraternity *Buddhist* lore found *Buddha*, a good *Naga* in some previous birth.²⁸ Likewise whatever information we get about *Naga* in Kashmir from *Buddhist* sources is *Buddhist* one, where *Nagas* are depicted as part and parcel of *Buddhist* faith. *Mahavamsa* a Ceylon chronicle states that *Majjhantika* a *Buddhist* monk who came to Kashmir for the

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

²⁸ Rashid, Younus. 2014, *Tradition and Dissent in Ancient Kashmir (A.S. 6th to 12th)*, PhD. Thesis submitted to the Department of History, University of Kashmir, p 19.

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propagation of *Buddhism* had confrontation with a local *Naga* king *Aravala*, but the spiritual powers of *Majjhantika* dominated the scene and *Aravala* along with other *Naga* submitted and embraced *Buddhism*.

No doubt whatever information we get from *Brahmanical* and *Buddhist* texts is given from a particular lance which supports a particular discourse, and for a student of history it is very important to understand these discourses in their historical context, while doing so one should not deny the reality just on the basis of that reality is represented through a particular discourse or is missing in other category of sources (archaeological).

With regard to Gulshan Majeed and Abdul Rashid Lone's argument that there is no single archaeological evidence regarding the presence of *Naga* belief system in Kashmir, we do agree that archaeological data is missing in the context on *Nagas* in Kashmir. But in this regard we need to keep into consideration the point that whatever is not yet substantiated by archaeology doesn't mean that that hasn't existed. Archaeological evidence per se is not the only criteria of determining whether something existed in the past or not. One of the biggest civilization of south Asia known as Indus Valley Civilisation which existed in 3000 B.C was discovered by archaeologist only in 1921 A.D, and it doesn't mean that before this period the civilization didn't exist²⁹. Similarly no archaeological data is yet recovered by the archaeologists regarding *Naga* belief system, but one of the biggest things we need to take into consideration about Kashmir's archaeological data is the paucity of excavated sites. Except for a few sites, Kashmir did not witness the excavation of many historical sites. So may be in future the excavation of more sites will reveal something about *Nagas*. One more limitation with this group of scholars is that whenever they argue about *Naga* belief system they draw on their narratives found in *Nilamatapurana* and *Rajatarangini*, but unfortunately they have closed their eye on the *Naga* narratives found in *Buddhist* sources like *Mahavamsa* and

²⁹ For more details on Harappa see, Nayanjot Lahri, 2000, *The Decline and Fall of the Indus civilisation*, Permanent Black, Delhi.

Mulasarvastavadavinaya, and *Ain-i-Akbari*. In the same way Shafi Shauq and Gulshan Majeed didn't accept folk as an authentic source for reconstructing the history. But in the contemporary times non-conventional sources which include oral sources, folklore, place names, surnames, language and poetry are receiving a remarkable attention from the scholars especially the historians. Even to them non-conventional sources provide information about those aspects of human life which is missing in literary sources. The existence of Allan Navin's school Oral History is based on these non-conventional sources which doesn't exclude folk.

Conclusion: The past is always intriguing and a fascinating journey. Being fixed in a space-time continuum, yet it poses many a challenge that sometimes are elusive as well. The various expressions of the past whether material or non-material prove something novel for newer engagements which consequently lead to new interpretations and reinterpretations. Many antique issues can be looked at from fresh perspectives by taking recourse to the perusal of data at hand. In this case, the Naga question can be revisited and the complexity regarding this can be unravelled. However, care must be taken in such a pursuit. The researcher must possess equal expertise of the field of archaeology and literature. The contemporary scholars who have worked on the Naga question have not maintained a balance between archaeological and literary evidence. There is a need to look at this from such a perspective afresh.

From Exclusivity to Inclusivity: Situating Lala in Literary Culture of Kashmir

Sajad Ahmad Darzi

Abstract: *The literary culture of medieval Kashmir was dominated by elite Sanskrit that had achieved the status of “language of gods”. With the establishment of Sultanate, Persian became the preferred language of elite. The Vernacular lost both patronage as well as currency. The contempt of elite for vernacular was not restricted to their linguistic choice, but was coterminous with their abhorrence of culture of commoners. Lala’s choice of vernacular as the medium of her creative expression on one hand uplifted the common man’s language and on the other hand provided a respectable space to popular culture. Therefore, present paper is a humble attempt to explore contribution of Lala Ded to the literary traditions of Kashmir.*

The idea of literary culture seeks to investigate the historical pressure points that shape the literary tradition of a region in a given epoch. This approach seeks to find answers to questions like, what was the target audience or readership of the time and why some forms became popular while others could not.

Taking cue from this paradigm, a new idea and method of analysis strikes our mind which is very encouraging and promising for constructing the less known history of this part of the world. There has been an alluring tradition of literary productions in Kashmir since ages and literature has taken concrete shape are centuries. In the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir has a distinction as it has produced poets and writers who from times immemorial left literary compositions in verse and prose to enlighten us about their respective times.¹

Kashmir has inherited a rich cultural and literary legacy which reflects a remarkable union of different cultural and literary movements. For a long, time Kashmir along with Nalanda and Taxila shared fame of an important seat of

¹ P.N. Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, New Delhi, Pamposh Publications, 1959, p. 1.

learning and culture in the east. In the wake of commercial enterprise, the scholars and saints from different parts of Asia entered the Valley to meet and exchange ideas on fundamentals of religion. It led to the rise and growth of literary and social movements which gradually spread beyond Indian borders to Tibet, China and other adjacent countries.² The ancient period of Kashmir was dominated by the Sanskrit literary culture. During the earlier phase, Sanskrit knowledge seems to have reached to its zenith. The scholars developed their own alphabet called *Sharda* characters for the writing of Sanskrit books which is entirely different from *Devanagiri* script³ that served as a potent medium of dissemination of Sanskrit. The prolific production of Sanskrit writing made Kashmir the famous seat of learning (*Sharda Peeth*). The scholarship of Kashmir won acclaim all over Asia. Scholars of Sanskrit produced voluminous works on different aspects of literature. The particular contribution of Kashmiri scholars came in the form of *kavya* literature that baffled the highest learned section in India. Besides *Kavya* Kashmir produced scholars who explored other areas of literary culture.

The dissent from the orthodox Sanskrit writing and skepticism of dominant Sanskrit literary forms was the hallmark of Kashmiri Sanskrit scholarship. The dominant style and tradition was to a large extent challenged by the Kashmiri Sanskrit scholars. The shift in Sanskrit parameters became inevitable for the new poets to follow if ever they wished to be successful. This shift was sought to be manifested by the adoption of new trends in literary compositions as Kalhana puts it: "And yet, those who proceed in the traditional way with a certain type of composition do not closely confirm to the opinion of the audience by following them."⁴ This amply substantiates the assumption that the learned people had a taste for innovative composition which reflects the widespread acceptance of

² Kaimudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, Bombay, Asia Publishing House, 1952, p. 62.

³ K.L. Kalla, *Literary Heritage of Kashmir*, New Delhi, Mittal publications, 1978, p. 3.

⁴ Kalhana, *Rajatarangni: The Saga of Kings of Kashmira*, Translated by R. S. Pandit, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademy, 2006, Taranga III, Verse 95.

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Sanskrit. However, Sanskrit scholarship was the monopoly of the Brahmans and ruling class, therefore, it was called *Divya Vani* or language of gods and Brahmans were considered the gods on earth.⁵

Brahmans who were sole upholders of the ideal socio-political order and custodians of religion, besides being sole interpreters of *Dharmashastras* were unwilling to use any other dialect apart from *Divya Vani*. It is pertinent to mention that with the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir, the Buddhist literature and religious books were written in Sanskrit while in India the same was done in Pali.⁶ The prominent Buddhist teachers of Sanskrit, scholars like Ashvaghosha who presided over the fourth Buddhist council wrote in Sanskrit. His *Vajrasanchi* and *Buddhacharita* are held master pieces of Sanskrit wherein the author handles theme and diction with dexterity. Such instance leads to credence that Sanskrit became preferred language for reflecting on Buddhism.⁷ The philosopher Nagarjuna, possibly the most influential mind of his time choose to write in Sanskrit.⁸ Scholars like Kumarajiva and Gunavarman choose the same language. Thus, even the protest movement against Brahman hegemony could not neglect the metropolitan nature of Sanskrit. The common masses used Prakrit, Appabrahmsha and other vernacular languages. Kalhana makes caricature of people who spoke vernacular⁹ and curses Shankarverman for promotion of vernacular poet Lavata “who came from class of spirit distillers whose meanness was proved by his own self with his vernacular speech fit for drunkards, he to whom the language of gods (*Divya Vani*) was not available.”¹⁰ The command over Sanskrit language was always a matter of highest distinction for Brahmans who made a living of it. The proficiency in Sanskrit gave them exclusive access to *Dhramshastras* and the learned sections

⁵ Kalhana, *Rajatarangni*, III, 2238.

⁶ Kalla, *Literary Heritage of Kashmir*, p. 4.

⁷ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1996, p. 259.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Kalhana, *Rajatarangni*, IV, 397-8.

¹⁰ Ibid., V, 206.

were unwilling to compose literally works in any language other than Sanskrit, thus Sanskrit was held to be the intellectual property of learned men. The fertility of literati was highly appreciated as plagiarism amounted to intellectual piracy and was out rightly denounced.¹¹ The privileges that the elite enjoyed could not be written away even by the rulers who were unorthodox. No ruler of whatever predisposition could alienate this class that had always enjoyed *Agraharas* and *Brahmadiyas* and were kept out of the tax net of the state. Any deprivation of such privileges would result in severe protest.¹²

Another dominant group during this period was Kayasthas, the class of scribes that subsisted on state services and gave a fair degree of competition to Brahmanas.¹³ Besides Brahmanas and Kayasthas, the landed gentry also constituted a dominant class which was very influential and were known as Damaras, who almost determined political order and social customs of the day. Apart from the established Brahmin hegemony of Hindu order there were severe detractors and non-conformists who held a different set of beliefs and approaches to religion, society and politics. The non-conformists and heterodox sects were too many to make early medieval Kashmir a boiling pot of ideas and structural friction.¹⁴ The presence of varied interest groups in early medieval Kashmir naturally led to clash in ideological and cultural ideas thereby facilitating the formation of class based order. In such a complex situation, landed gentry and Kayasthas now made overtures to un-orthodox or precisely non- conformist ideologies.¹⁵ This resulted in the proliferation

¹¹ Kalhana, *Rajatarangni*, V. 159.

¹² Kalhana, *Rajatarangni*, VIII. 2733, 2799.

¹³ Kalhana recommends strong punishments for Kayasthas whom he clubs with low bred horses and men possessed by evil spirit Kalhana, VIII. 114.

¹⁴ *Tantricism Vajrayana Buddhism even atheism* was quit prevalent during this period. See: Wani, Mohammad Ashraf, *Islam in Kashmir* Srinagar, Oriental Publications, 2005, pp. 42-46.

¹⁵ These included *Trika shavism* and *Tantricism* that aggravated antagonism between the two see Wani, Mohammad Ashraf, *Islam in Kashmir*, pp. 116-117.

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of numerous ideologies, religious subscriptions and sectarian persuasions, all competing in the socio-political space.

With the onset of medieval period, the socio-political and cultural order became more complex. The main features of religious life were the presence of myriad cults, contest between tradition and dissent, religion in the process of transition and reformation, infiltration of Tantricism in all cults, moral depravity among priests and *Gurus*, cooperative relation between rulers and Brahmans and popular demand for the supernatural miracles and fantasy.¹⁶ The political order was marked by court conspiracies,¹⁷ Damara menace¹⁸ and frequent Mongol raids worst of which was the invasion of Dulacha, the chief of Kashgar, who came to Kashmir as “comes a lion into the cave of the deer”.¹⁹ The havoc wrought by Mongols plunged the country into the ocean of miseries and the people felt like “insects in fire.”²⁰ “When the violence caused by Rakshas Dulacha ceased the son found not his father nor did brothers meet their brothers, Kashmir became almost like a region before creation, a vast field with few men without food, fuel or grass.”²¹ In such a situation, every aspect was on the wane on account of political instability.

The country was weary of trouble and disorder and fugitive Ladakhi Prince Rinchana Suratana gave it rest under the shelter of his arm.²² However, his reign was short lived²³ and his death plunged country again in chaos and confusion in which Shamas din Shah Mir, a Turkish officer in service of Udyandeva assumed charge of country and laid foundation of Sultanate in Kashmir in 1339. The establishment of sultanate was not only change of rule but essentially result of the political chaos in which strong ruler could assume sovereignty and Shah Mir was surely one such, for the ardour

¹⁶ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, p. 87.

¹⁷ Kalhana, *Rajatarangni*, VIII. 1313-1314.

¹⁸ Ibid., VIII. 524-6.

¹⁹ Jonaraja, et.al. *Jaina Rajatarangni*, Translated by J. C Dutt, New Delhi, Gian publications, 1985 (Reprint) p. 16.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

²¹ Ibid., p. 17-18.

²² Ibid., p. 19.

²³ “He ruled for three years one month and nineteen days only”. Jona Raja, p. 23.

of (his) prowess was like the summer sun, whose velour was excited by the tears of his enemies wives.²⁴ Thus, the coup of Shah Mir was not subjugation of Kashmir by an alien ruler, but transfer of power from weak to strong ruler who became savior of people.²⁵ The language of the founder of Shahmiri dynasty was Persian and he took steps to promote this language,²⁶ but no substantial progress was made and no institution for promotion of Persian could be ensured. As the majority was non-Muslim and officialdom continued to be derived from the old stock, Sanskrit continued to hold its sway. At this time the number of Muslims in Kashmir was very small and majority of population being still Hindu and in dress manners and customs there was nothing to distinguish them from Hindus.²⁷ The imprint of old ideology was so strong that to avoid famine, Sultan Qutub Din (1378-89) once performed *Yajna* and distributed gifts to Brahmanas.²⁸ Sanskrit continued to be official language up to Sultan Sikander 1389 C E when it was replaced by Persian. This language got favorable dissemination by the myriad of Sufi missionaries from Iran and Central Asia, who thronged the Valley during the sultanate period. The most prominent was the arrival of well organized Islamic mission under the leadership of a prominent Sufi master, an erudite scholar, a prolific and versatile writer and a widely travelled missionary, Syed Ali Hamdani.²⁹ Accompanied by about seven hundred followers a majority of whom were great religious divines; the *Kubravi* saint launched a vigorous movement of Islamizing Kashmir.³⁰ As a *Kubravi*, he initiated the mission by bringing all his energies to bear upon the ruler as a symbolic of Islamic life.³¹ The result of such cultural reformulation surely told

²⁴ Jonaraja, *Jaina Rajatarangni*, p. 15.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 26.

²⁶ Sayeda Ruqaya, *Kashmir Mein Farsi Adab Ki Ibtida Our Irtiqā*, Srinagar, DRS Wing, Department of Persian, university of Kashmir, 2004, p. 102.

²⁷ Muhibul Hassan, *Kashmir Under Sultans*, Srinagar, Ali Mohammad and Sons, (Reprint), 2008, p. 56.

²⁸ Jonaraja, p. 53.

²⁹ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, p. 58.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 59.

³¹ Ibid.

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upon the literally culture of Kashmir and the ground was prepared for the final replacement of Sanskrit by Persian. The ruling and religious elite adopted Persian as medium of creative expression and within a hundred years Persian medium of poetic expression became the official language of Kashmir. Even Sultan Qutub din wrote Persian poetry. It is worthwhile to quote a few verses:³²

*Aee bi girya shama royad aalame parvana aeen
Waz labe sheeri tu shorist dar har khana Aee
Mann bachandien ashnai mei khorum khoone jiger
Aashna ra haal neist wai bar baigan aee.*

Translation:

Oh you candle faced beloved you make moths to flock!
The words of your sweet lips resound in every house.
I have borne severe predations for you.
None of my acquaintances know my plight how would I reveal it to strangers?

Sensing the fortunes that were in pipeline with Persian language the intelligentsia and bureaucracy readily adopted it. In the new emerging socio-political setup, the Persian literary art assumed the rank of sophistication and became reference literary culture. New genres like *Ghazal*, *Rubiyae*, *Qasida*, *Marsia*, *Naat* etc. became prominent³³ and soon displaced Sanskrit *Shlokas* and *Khandas*. The poetry of *Gul* and *Bulbul* saw a rapid progression with Muslim Sufis and secular poets writing in Persian even the non-Muslim literati preferred a shift. The first class to realize such potentiality was that of *Kayasthas*. Their chief vocation consisted of the record keeping and *Kayasthaas* were always dependent upon the state services and were archrivals of Brahmins. Unlike elsewhere in India, the Brahmins in Kashmir popularly called Pandits too became greatly involved with Persian. As compared to India, Brahmins in Kashmir had made a considerable progress in Persian scholarship.

³² Mohammad Yousuf Lone, *Kashmir Mein Farsi Masnavi Navisi Ka Irtiqa*, Srinagar, Department of Persian, 2009, p. 31.

³³ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *History of Srinagar*, New Delhi, Cosmos Publications, 1978, p. 213.

However, it would be erroneous to suggest that Sanskrit disappeared totally once Persian became dominant.³⁴ The association of ruling and religious elite of course made Persian literary culture elite one and it began to atrophy from the common masses who were mostly unlettered and had been using vernacular for a considerable period of time. Like Sanskrit Persian literary culture became refined medium for the culturally superior, urban and high standard minority. For the majority of the population, Persian remained the language of intellectual pursuit, didacticism and sophistication, hence in no way could have a mass appeal. For common people, it was almost incomprehensible.³⁵ The Persian continued to be such power oriented language and culture even up to the time of Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925). The religious elite who mostly consisted of the people of Central and West Asian origins came to dominate Persian literary culture. These people not only dominated literary culture but also the political space of Kashmir. The ascendancy of Syeds in Kashmiri political arena led to the development of a sense of superiority with high pedigree and exalted birth. The locals who converted to Islam for being liberated from the clutches of caste ridden socio-political structure of Brahmanism were soon disillusioned by the emergence of this new religious hegemony that much against the basic tenets of Islam created a caste like social texture in which lower ranks and converts were to be condemned to social castigation.³⁶ "They regarded the people of Kashmir (commoners) scarcely even as grass".³⁷ The emerging elite had now facilitated the recasting of Kashmiri society in which lower classes could see no chances of betterment.

At this crucial stage of linguistic turn and cultural transition, there emerged two celebrated personages on the cultural horizon of medieval Kashmir namely, Lal Ded and Sheikh Nur ud Din popularly called Nundreshi. Both of them

³⁴ Zainul Abi-din patronized Sanskrit bards who wrote history in verse starting from Jonaraja to Suka all the sources are written in Sanskrit.

³⁵ Even today expression *Farsi Kalam* is used for an incomprehensible statement in Kashmiri vernacular.

³⁶ Srivara, p. 252.

³⁷ Ibid.

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used Kashmiri vernacular as the vehicle of creative expression for the first time. This was a paradigm shift in the history of literature of Kashmir where local vernacular language was used in an unvarnished colour for the effective dissemination of truth based on simplicity and piety regardless of noble birth or worldly status. Lala Ded's date of birth is presumed to be some times between 1317 and 1320 CE, may be earlier but very likely not later than 1320 CE.³⁸ Lala saw the institution of religion in shambles, the corrupt religious elite used religion for their own benefits.³⁹ They sought an alliance between the ruling and religious class wherein commoners were crushed to pulp. The hegemonic and power oriented literary discourse of the elite had made masses to vanish in the pristine nothingness under the burden of superior cultural code. Thus, medieval Kashmir society was undergoing a crisis of what may be described human sociality versus Brahmanic superiority,⁴⁰ local Muslim aspiration versus ethnocentric high cultural monopoly. Elite Sanskrit or Persian versus vernacularization based on humanism. The conventional cultural system defined the discourses in terms of hollow observances quixotic practices elite language subscription loaded with metaphysical themes of *Shastras* or highest religious learning and didacticism. Lal Ded came out with a revolt. She had thrown conventional respectability to winds and roamed careless of dress or decorum. She did not observe the formalities, ceremonial piety. She was critical of orthodoxy, its dogma and rituals, its hypocrisy and exclusiveness and (what they would not certainly approve of). She spoke the secrets of the doctrine and its disciple to all and sundry disregarded the strict injection of *Adikara Bheda* (difference in meditative possibilities between the people varying mental and moral caliber). She spoke in vague tongue

³⁸ J.L. Koul, *Lal Ded*, Srinagar, J&K, Academy of Art Culture and Languages, 1971, p. 7.

³⁹ Even hunger strikes by Brahmins were used as pressure tactics for getting their demands fulfilled rather for protection of *Dharma*. See: Kalhana, VIII, 2733-2799.

⁴⁰ Mohammad Ishaq Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam; Role of Muslim Rishis*, New Delhi, Manohar Publications, 1994, p. 8.

of unlettered masses.⁴¹ Lala thus choose the path of renunciation of orthodox culture. Since renouncers in any society play a social role, it made Lala stalwart of an alternative culture and social code. Lala professed the faith in *Trika Shaivism* which is characterized by the basic principle of non dualism and non-conformism and it became a strong protest movement against Brahmanical religion and its one time important rituals and practices.⁴²

Much against the grain of sophistication where learning is celebrated and quixotic hollow rituals are much cherished, Lala becomes sceptical. She represents a strong non-conformist tradition which she servers, thanks to her poetic genius.⁴³ Lala made a conscious cultural choice when she took up vernacular as medium of her creative expression rather than Sanskrit which was *Divyavani* (Literally, the language of gods). In her simple versus she emphasis on internalization of God, realization of self and removing the haze of duality and shunning of the greed, lust and pride. She is skeptical of rituals as she says:⁴⁴

The thoughtless read the holy books
As parrots in there cage recite "Ram Ram"
Their reading is like churning water
Fruit less effort ridiculous conceit.

The basic genre of Lala's creative expression is her *Vakh* that made her not only popular but abiding saint of par excellence.⁴⁵ Despite such vehement opposition to traditionalism the *Vakh* of Lala appears to have certain pessimistic tone. Owing to the age old skepticism of worldly life, ascetic behavior and unsatisfactory political order of the day, *Lala Vakhiyani* reflects pessimism.⁴⁶ Lal Ded emerged as a champion of new socio-cultural order in offing which was characterized by anti-hegemony and anti-exclusivist

⁴¹ J.L. Koul, *Lal Ded*, p. 3.

⁴² Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir*, p. 90.

⁴³ Ibid., p. 93.

⁴⁴ J.L. Koul, *Lal Ded*, p. 104.

⁴⁵ Mohammad Ashraf Wani, *Islam in Kashmir* p. 93.

⁴⁶ Azad Abdul Ahad, *Kashmiri Zabaan Aur Shari*, Vol. 1, Srinagar, J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages, 1963, p. 154.

discourse of time that irked contemporary scholars who were mostly religious elite; hence they ignored her by maintaining a scandalous silence.⁴⁷ On contrast she was greatly hailed by the common masses who considered her their *avtar*. Lala won acclaim from both common Hindus and Muslims alike, as the renouncer is identified not necessarily with the religious sect, but with an order constituting an alternative life style in many ways contradictory to that of his/her original social group.⁴⁸ Prior to Lal Ded, we hardly have any such literary figure who choose vernacular. Although, history of Kashmiri literature is supposed to have begun with Shatikantha who wrote *Mahani Parkash*, a treatise on esoteric Tantric sect, but it is hardly possible to recognize him as the founder of Kashmiri literature, since his *Mahani Prakash* which was published by Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri in 1918 in *Sharda* script is indeed very difficult and we hardly make anything out of it.⁴⁹ Instead Lal Ded may be correctly regarded as the first ascertainable poet of Kashmiri as she is more significantly maker of modern Kashmiri language and literature.⁵⁰ *Lala Vakh* had unvarnished colour and appealed to the deep sensitivities of the common masses who held them as alternative teaching of ecclesiastical truth in local language. The celebration of *Lal Vakhiyani* makes beginning of vernacularization of the essentially complex philosophy of self and metaphysics of reality. It is pertinent to mention that Lala describes spirituality in a sundry manner. She used local signs, symbols and codes that facilitate the emergence of local culture and give it much legitimacy, at the same time vernacular literary culture got authenticity because of her. The choice of Lala to use vernacular was not only a linguistic one but a conscious effort to uplift a rich, yet, marginalized culture of common masses, who found her as the champion of their way of living.

⁴⁷ No contemporary sources refer to her but she is alive in folk memory.

⁴⁸ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, 1996, p. 57.

⁴⁹ Firaq Ghulam Nabi, *Sharae Zaban*, Soan Adab, Srinagar, J&K Academy of Art Culture and languages, 1980, p. 21.

⁵⁰ J.L. Koul, *Lal Ded*, p. 6.

Conclusion: The ancient and early medieval period of Kashmir was dominated by elite Sanskrit literary culture where the scholarship reached its pinnacles. With the establishment of Sultanate gradually Persian literary culture became dominant. These elite literary cultures were the monopoly of ruling and religious elite who had a contemptuous approach to vernacular which was the harbinger of the common culture. In opposition to this hegemony, Lala chose the vernacular language as the medium of her creative expression. She revealed the essence and sublimity of divine message and piety in an unvarnished colour and intelligible to ordinary people. Her choice of vernacular provided respectability to the language of common people and elevated the common culture to the pedestal of fame. With her begins the journey of Kashmiri language and literature. Lala's poetry and persona continues to live in the hearts and minds of common Kashmiris irrespective of creed, caste or colour.

Tasawuf in Kashmiri Poetry

Rattan Lal Hangloo

Abstract: *This paper explores how the overwhelming presence of Tasawuf has enriched the Kashmiri language and reinforced the capacity of Kashmiri society to facilitate the evaporation of crisis in various periods of her history. It also attempts to understand the underlying notes of Kashmiri poetry which do not betray the extensive compass to the spiritual activities on which the secular tradition of Kashmiriyat is based. The phenomenon of Tasawuf in Kashmiri language is driven by the quest for ultimate truth behind universal existence. The poetry reflects how the reality of life is open to irrational and uncontrollable emotions and the way mediation of Tasawuf through Kashmiri language helps to overcome these impulses. It also provides important insights into individual attitudes and encapsulates intrinsic facets of Kashmiri poetry for the realization of Tasawuf and construction and reconstruction of Kashmiri identity. Comprehending this aspect of Kashmiri culture enables us to appreciate better how the poetry through Tasawuf has a special power to offer an insight into the several contours of spirituality, humanism and mysteries of universe. Most of the Kashmiri poets have sought to attain an intimate loving relationship with the God with optimistic spirit, harmony and balance inherent in the philosophy of Tasawuf and orally mediated the same self satisfying universe to popular masses from generation to generation.*

Kashmir is one among the most beautiful regions of the world and the specificities of her beauty are not only rooted in the regions geo-physical characteristics but also in her cultural attributes among which the religious ethos and Kashmiri language are an important aspect. The spiritual ethos of *Tasawuf* and *Koshur* (Kashmiri language) are interwoven elements of Kashmiri identity and finds expression through Kashmiri Sufi poetry. Unfortunately, this aspect of Kashmir's culture has followed a serious neglect at the hands of scholars. Therefore, this paper seeks to explore the

overwhelming presence of the content of *Tasawuf* in Kashmiri literary landscape and the way it has enriched the Kashmiri language and repeatedly reinforced the capacity of Kashmiri society to facilitate the evaporation of crisis in various periods of her history. It also attempts to understand the underlying principles of this poetry which do not betray the extensive compass to the spiritual activities on which the secular tradition of *Kashmiriyat* is based.

Koshur or Kashmiri language is generally regarded as the oldest language in comparison to other languages of the Indian subcontinent. The researches reveal that prior to the 14th century A.D. the Sanskrit language and *Sharda* script were generally in practice both for written and oral communication purposes in Kashmir, and apart from these several other small dialects and languages were also in practice on its periphery.¹ It will not be historically intelligible to argue that there was no Kashmiri (*Koshur*) spoken or written language before 14th century A.D. because of the non existence of any written texts or inscriptions even though oral narrations were there before 14th century.²

¹ As for *Koshur* is concerned, some scholars believe that it does not belong to Dardic group of languages. That is why it is related to Sanskrit. The history of *Koshur* (Kashmiri Language) can also be traced after going through the *Wakh* (poetical sayings) of Lal Ded who was the first popular and authentic poetess of Kashmir. The *Shruke* (poetry) of Sheikh Noor Din are also memorable events of 14th and 15th centuries. The *Wakh* and *Shruke* both are Sanskrit words and are used in *Koshur* in their original form.

² Some scholars believe that the earliest known Kashmiri work is *Milind Panha* by a distinguished Kashmiri Buddhist philosopher and scholar, Nagsen, which is believed to have been written around 150 BC in the form of a dialogue in the standard Kashmiri of that period with the *Kishtawari* dialect. Though the original copy of this work has been lost but its Pali and Sinhalese accounts still survive. Many modern linguists believe that the earliest known Kashmiri work is *Brihat Katha* authored by the well known poet and scholar, Gunaditya in 6th century A.D. The language used in this work was *Pisachi*, which was the native Kashmiri of those days. It is a book of mixed stories of kings and warriors, of birds and beasts and the conflicts. Despite its brilliance Gunaditya was condemned and his book burned for writing in a *Pisachi* language. After Gunaditya many writers wrote in Sanskrit. Because Sanskrit was the court language and was also promoted by Shavite Acahryas who received political patronage.

However, no exact date can be fixed for the evolution of Kashmiri Language. The first known text that uses various Kashmiri words is *Mahanay Prakash* which is basically a Sanskrit text.³ This problem of characterization of the process of evolution of Kashmiri language at conceptual and empirical level has been studied by scholars and all of them have their own views. What interests me is the overwhelming presence of the content of *Tasawuf* in Kashmiri language which not only helped to carry forward the language from generation to generation but enriched its vocabulary and style at the hands of various generations of Sufi poets.⁴

The period from 4th to 12th century A.D. in Kashmir could be considered a period of literary and cultural revival when Kashmiri *Shaivism* with Trika Philosophy and other tantric aspects made great progress. During this period number of scholars contributed both to religious philosophy and Sanskrit language. They included Abhinavagupta, Kshemendra, Kilhana's and Jayaratha Trilokinath Raina, *A History of Kashmiri Literature.*, New Delhi, Sahitya Akademi, 2002, p. 10; Prem Nath Bazaz, *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, Kashmir Publishing Company, 1954, pp. 28-29. However, it was only from 14th century A.D. that Kashmiri language is noticed very prominently at popular level in Kashmir.

³ The Sanskrit text *Mahanay Prakash* is an important work rendered by Shitikanth in early thirteenth century that has the distinction of being the 'first' Kashmiri work produced before Laleshwari vakhs of 14th century because it is first time that many Kashmiri words began to appear in written form in this text. *Koshur* (Kashmiri Language) is constitutionally recognized and spoken by nearly 60 lakh Kashmiries. A famous grammarian Panini mentioned about *Koshur* in his work and so has eminent scholar Amir Khusroo. The *Sharda* script belonged to the *Brahmic* family of scripts and it developed in Kashmir around eighth century A.D. It was used to write Sanskrit and Kashmiri. Some Kashmiri Pandits still write Kashmiri in this script.

⁴ There are number of definitions of *Tasawuf*. Abu al-Hasan al-Shudhili (d. 656/1258) stated: "*Tasawuf* is training the self (*nafs*) through servant hood and subjecting it to the commands (*ahkam*) of Lordship." *Tasawuf* and shari'a are interwoven, similarly defined, or equated. Qushayri (d. 465/1074), for example, defined "shari'a" as "assiduous observance of servanthood. Supporting the close relationship between *Tasawuf* and shari'a, the Sufi Abu Yazid al-Bistami (d. 260/874) asserted that observing the shari'a was a touchstone for judging a person's spiritual degree: "Were you to see a man who performs miracles such that he ascends into the air, do not be deceived by him. Instead, observe how well he is following the Divine commands, abstaining from what is prohibited, keeping within the limits set by

Fourteenth century is a very important and transitional period in Kashmir's history. It was during this period when the Arab, Turkish, Persian, Caucasian and Central Asian ideas and institutions influenced Kashmir's life very significantly and stimulated new identities both by fear and admiration.⁵ It was amidst these developments that the concept of *Tasawuf* got institutionalized and sprouted through Kashmiri language. The interaction of local *Reshis* (saints), their old creeds, heretic traditions and restricted practices witnessed broad diffusion at popular level and the accessibility with the coming of Islam particularly at the hands of various multi cultural elements from outside.⁶

Before we precede further, let me illustrate as to how the notion or perception of *Tasawuf* was invoked and indigenized within the confines of medieval Kashmir which became the bedrock for the evolution of *Kashmiriyat*: the process of interaction between these external elements and the

God, and observing the shari'a." Similarly, Abu al-Husayn al-Warraq (d. before 320/932), asserted the futility of trying to reach God without conforming one's actions to Shari'a and the Sunna: "A servant will only reach Allah through Allah and by being in harmony with his loved one [the Prophet (pbuh)] through his laws (*shari'a*). And whoever believes that he can follow a path without emulating (*al-iqtida*) [the Prophet (pbuh)] will become lost, on account of imagining that he is being guided." Undoubtedly, for all but a minority of Sufis throughout history, carefully observing the shari'a has been a crucial and on-going component of their spiritual practice. One way of understanding the interrelationship of *Tasawuf* and shari'a was expressed by the Kubrawi Sufi, Najm al-Din Razi (d. 654/1256). Using the term *tariqa* (path) to denote *Tasawuf*, he clarified its relationship to shari'a: "The shari'at has an outer (*zahiri*) and an inner (*batini*) aspect. Its outer aspect consists of bodily deeds . . . The inner aspect of the shari'at consists of deeds of the heart (*qalbi*), of the inner mystery (*sirri*), and of the spirit (*ruhi*) and is called the *tariqat*." Hence, for Razi, the *tariqa* (or *Tasawuf*) is not separate from Shari'a, it is, rather, its inner dimension. In summary, it should be clear, then, that in spite of extremist views that see *Tasawuf* and shari'a as mutually exclusive, the author of "What is *Tasawuf* bridges the false dichotomy between *Tasawuf* and shari'a". A. A. Godlas, *Sufi Illuminations*, Vol. 1, August 1996, pp. 31-62.

⁵ For details see: M. I. Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2002.

⁶ R.L. Hangloo, *State in Medieval Kashmir*, New Delhi, Manohar Publishers, 2000, pp. 76-90.

indigenous Buddhists, *Shavites*, *Vashnavites*, *Shaktas* and their historically rooted mores, values, beliefs and all other aspects of human life in the region.⁷ This process involved the erosion, incorporation, reassertion, and synthesis in which both the external elements (Particularly from Persia and Central Asia) and the local population played a significant role. History shows how the host society participated in these processes both by cooperation and confrontation to shape their destiny that was not devoid of political violence and social complexities at various intervals.⁸

Despite these problems what is interesting to note is the increased receptiveness of external elements and the local society to peaceful, harmonious and non-materialistic culture of virtuous specificity of *Tasawuf* in Kashmir until most recent times. This process also did not disallow the Buddhists, *Shavites*, *Shaktas*, *Vashnavites*, worshippers of Mother goddess cults and Sunnis, Shias, even lately Ahmadya's to remain receptive to each other's value system at social, religious, and cultural plane.⁹ This was how the Kashmiri identity was constructed as a superior entity to which all the local ethnic groups such as Udambaras, Tantrins, Ekangas, Khasas, Nisadas, Persians, Afghans, Turks, Mongols, Mughals, Tajik, Kazakhs, Pakhtun's, Caucasians, Baloches and varieties of other tribal or ethnic groups subjected their social, cultural, ethnic or regional distinctions and proudly embraced the notion "we all Kashmirees" from time to time.¹⁰

The broad division of Pandit and Muslim remained at the institutionalized religious level but the constant mediation of the *Tasawuf* through common language (Kashur) Kashmiri remained at the heart as un-denounced item of faith/belief for realization of self within the universality of existence at popular level despite the presence of orthodox Islam and the

⁷ V.N. Drabu, *Saivaagamas*, Delhi, Indus Publishing Company, 1990, pp. 200-233.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ P.N.K. Bamzai, *Kashmir and Central Asia*, New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1980, pp.1-12.

variants of orthodox Hinduism.¹¹ Even after the current political crisis that scared the region so badly at various social and cultural levels and created lot of misunderstanding and suspicion between the two communities, the two constants—*Tasawuf* and *Kashur* (Kashmiri language) are again playing a very significant role as the indigenous instruments in upholding the bedrock of *Kashmiriyat*.¹²

In this process the two important saint poets Laleshwari and Sheikh Noor ud din, popularly known as Lalded and Nund Reosh respectively, played a very significant role. Though both of them came from different orthodox religious backgrounds of Hinduism and Islam, they did not preach orthodoxy; instead used *Kashur* (Kashmiri language) as their medium to spread the message from which ultimately the institution of Kashmiri *Tasawuf* stemmed.

Generally speaking there are innumerable definitions of *Tasawuf*. Some attribute this phenomenon to the birth of Islam while many scholars argue that it stemmed from the Sufi philosophy after the evolution of Islam.¹³ A very

¹¹ M.I. Khan, *Kashmir's Transition to Islam*, New Delhi, Manohar, p. 191.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ A *Hanafi* scholar of comparative *fiqh* and author of numerous works on Law and *Tasawuf*, one among them is *al-Tabaqat al-kubra* in which he writes, as cited in the *Reliance of the Traveler* that the path of the Sufis is built on the Koran and sunna, and is based upon living according to the morals of the prophets and purified ones. It may not be blamed unless it violates an explicit statement from the Koran, Sunna, or scholarly consensus, exclusively. If it does not contravene one of these, the very most that one may say of it is that it is an understanding a Muslim man has been given, so let whoever wishes act upon it, and whoever does not refrain, this being as true of works as of understanding. So no pretext remains for condemning it except one's own low opinion of others, or interpreting what they do as ostentation, which is unlawful. Whoever carefully examines the branches of knowledge of the Folk of Allah Most High will find that none of them are beyond the pale of the Sacred Law. How should they lie beyond the pale of the Sacred Law when it is the law that connects the Sufis to Allah at every moment? Rather, the reason for the doubts of someone unfamiliar with the way of the Sufis is that it is of the very essence of the Sacred Law and in fact such a person has not thoroughly mastered the knowledge of the law. This is why Junayd (Allah Most High have mercy on him) said, "This knowledge of ours is built of the Koran and Sunna," in reply to those of his time or any other who

prominent Islamic Scholar Abu al-Qasim al-Qushayri, states that they (sufis) acquired the name of *Tasawuf* in order to dissociate themselves from the people of innovation. He says that the most honorable of Muslims after the Prophet(PBH) did not give themselves, in their time, any other title than Companions, as there is no merit above that of being a Companion— then those who followed them were called the Successors. After that the people differed and the disparity of level among them became more apparent. The elite among whom prudence in belief was seen to be intense were then called *zuhhad* and *ubbad*. Subsequently all kinds of innovations made their appearance, and the elite of *Ahl al-Sunna* who observed their obligations with Allah, and preserved their hearts from heedlessness became unique in their kind under the name of *Tasawuf*.¹⁴ While characterizing

imagine that it is beyond the pale of the Koran and sunna. Qushayri says, “No era of the Islamic period has had a true sheikh of this group, save that the Imams of the scholars of that time deferred to him, showed humility towards him, and visited him for the benefit of his spiritual grace (*baraka*). If the Folk had no superiority or election, the matter would have been the other way around.” See *al-Tabaqat al-kubra al-musamma bi Lawaqih al-anwar fi Tabaqat al-akhyar* (1374/1954) (Reprint, Beirut: dar al-fikr, n.d.) 1:4. See also, Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani's, *The Repudiation of salafi Inovations*, Kazi, 1996, pp. 395-396. The most famous contemporary Islamic thinker of the Indian subcontinent and author of a Qur'anic commentary in Urdu and English, he wrote in his *Mabadi' al-Islam* (Principles of Islam): Fiqh addresses only external actions: did you perform them according to what is required? The condition of your heart is not taken under consideration. As for the science that investigates the states of the heart and its conditions: this is *Tasawuf*. Abu al-Ala' al-Mawdudi, *Mabadi' al-Islam*, pp. 114-117; Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani, *The Repudiation of Salafi Innovations*, Kazi, 1996, p. 400.

¹⁴ Al-Shatibi, *al-I'tisam min al-kutub*, quoted in *al-Muslim: majallat al-'ashira al-muhammadiyya* (Dhu al-qi'da 1373).see also *al-Shatibi, al-Muwafaqa fi usul al-shari'a* (Cairo:al-maktaba al-tijariyya al-kubra, 1975) 4:60 However, the Israr Ahmad says, “The term *Tasawuf* is a foreign term that has been introduced into the vocabulary of Islam from without. It is found neither in the Qur'an nor in the *Hadith* literature, the latter being a record of the sayings and deeds of the Holy Prophet (SAW) and his Companions (RAA). While this point may appear to be nothing more than pedantic nitpicking, its implications have been devastating and far reaching. Not only is the term *Tasawuf* not found in the primary sources of Islam, but its actual origin also

Tasawuf another reputed Islamic Scholar Hassan al-Turabi says, "All religions furnish people with a sense of identity and a direction in life".¹⁵

When we look at these stated and also various other definitions of *Tasawuf* we find that *Tasawuf* and Sufism. However, it is not true in case of Kashmir. For a long time in large and remote parts of Kashmir at popular level there were no *Khanqa's* or *Dargah's* of Sufis and their orders with elaborate institutional elements. Many shrines were and are revered by common people majority of whom were Pastoralists, peasants and artisans who were not so well ordained into the broader *Shavite*, *Vashnavites*, *Shakta*, Buddhist or Sufi philosophy or Islamic theology. Yet, they always upheld the notion of *Tasawuf* very close to their heart. This was only possible because the teachings of Lalded and Nund Reshi were brought down from generation to generation at popular level through the medium of Kashur (Kashmiri Language). In each era these preachings were further enriched and reproduced by a number of Kashmiri poets who practiced the path of *Tasawuf* as their faith and philosophy. The message of orthodox Hinduism and orthodox Islam which had Sanskrit and Arabic as its medium

remains a topic of debate. This word made its appearance in the language of Islam towards the end of the second century *Hijrah*. Meer Valiuddin has even identified the exact year when this word first appeared— 822 C.E.¹ The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) had passed away in 632 C.E. and the *Hijrah* took place in 622 C.E. Therefore this word appeared in the Islamic lexicon exactly 190 years (or 196 years according to the lunar calendar) after the demise of the Holy Prophet (SAW) These areas of Islamic scholarship locate their titles or labels in Qur'anic and/or Prophetic vocabulary. In stark contrast, however, the title or label of *Tasawuf* is nowhere to be found in these primary sources. Consequently, the assertion that *Tasawuf* is just like other areas of Islamic studies is totally baseless."Israr Ahmad *The Reality of Tasawuf*, Lahore; *Markazi Anjuman Khuddam-ul-Quran, Translated by Basit B. Koshul*. (Suhail Academy) Lahore 1981, pp. 3-12; see also Mir Valiuddin he has identified the year 822 C. E. on the authority of Imam Qushayri. Valiuddin, Mir, Valiuddin *Qur'anic Sufism*, Lahore, p. 3.

¹⁵ The Islamic Awakening's Second wave *New Perspectives Quarterly*, 9 (summer 1992), pp. 52-55.

though well acknowledged as belief systems remained as very limited in practice at popular level for a long time.

In Kashmir the notion of *Tasawuf* may seem straight forward to modern religious scholars at the conceptual level but at empirical level it is product of variety of intended and unintended consequences of religio-cultural, philosophical and folk cultural, spiritual traditions, nuances and practices in each area cutting across the boundaries of religion without tampering the faith. It envisions human consciousness in unrestricted non-institutional manner and its expression is imbued with ecstatic content that assumes various forms. Oral manifestation in the form of Kashmiri folk poetry is one such consequence that has become literary in course of time at the hands of succeeding generations. Therefore, the phenomenon of *Tasawuf* in Kashmir is a level beyond institutionalized religions driven by the quest for ultimate truth behind the universal existence.¹⁶

In Islamic mysticism these expressions are identified as subtle faith (*yaqin*) the affirmation of unity of living existence (*tawhid*), good character (*akhlaq*), awareness of God (*ihsan*), love (*ishqhaqiqi*), affection for all (*mahabba*), the heart attaining tranquility (*itminan-i-qalb*), concentrating one's mind (*jam'i khatir*), contemplation (*fikr*), the most exalted paradise (*khuld-i barin*) and ecstasy (*wajd*). Even though most of these elements are part of the philosophy of Sufis yet in many regions they have existed in the world independently in many parts of non-Muslim societies as well.¹⁷ There are numerous areas where I have seen the existence of such phenomenon.

Therefore, to me Sufism is an institution and *Tasawuf* is one aspect of that larger phenomenon. Evidently there are numerous dimensions of *Tasawuf*, including actions in the world, consciousness of God, spiritual state of mind and practices identified by each community in each region according to their own understanding of this phenomenon

16 R.L. Hangloo. 'Kashmiriyat, the Voice of Past Misconstrued' (in) Nyla Ali Khan, *The Parchment of Kashmir; History, Society, and Polity*, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2012, pp. 37-55.

17 *Al-Tabaqat al-kubra al-musamma bi Lawaqih al-anwar fi tabaqat al-akhyar* (1374/1954) (Reprint, Beirut: dar al-fikr, n.d.), 1:4.

within their own regional cultural moorings. This is well acknowledged by very famous Arab scholar and philosopher Ibn Khaldun. While characterizing this aspect in the life of Arab world, Ibn Khaldun very rightly remarks in his famous *Muqaddima* that *Tasawuf* is one of the latter-day sciences of the Law in the Islamic community. The foundation of *Tasawuf*, however, is (more ancient, as seen in the fact) that the folk and their way have always been present among the *Salaf* and among the most senior of the companions and the successors and their way is the way of truth and guidance.¹⁸

Shaykh al-Islam Zakariyya Ansari also states that *Tasawuf* is the abandonment of deliberation. It is the guarding of your senses and the mindfulness of your every breath; also it is complete earnestness in the progression towards the King of all kings. It is the devotion to works of good and the avoidance of defects and other explanations. The *sufiyya* or *Sufis* are called thus because the Truth — Allah — has made them pure (*safahum*) and has favored them unreservedly (*akhlasa lahum al-ni'am*) through what He has allowed them to look upon.¹⁹

In Kashmiri *Tasawuf* also there is a similar quest for higher explanations about human existence and purpose in the world. Until most recent times there was no written or printed Koshur literature in Kashmiri language and it traveled and manifested at popular level orally because of the popular poetry pregnant with the elements of *Tasawuf*. When we look at the Kashmiri poetry it does refer to the concept of *fana* (annihilation), *baqa* (continuity), the terms *Zakir* (remembrance of God), *akhlaq*, *tawakul* (contentment), *nafs* (being or self), the *fikir* (contemplation), *Zuhd* (science of

¹⁸ Shaykh al-Islam al-Suyuti, *Ta'yid al-haqiqah al-'aliyyah wa-tashyid al-tariqah al-shadhiliyyah* (The upholding of the lofty truth and the buttressing of the Shadhili path) ed. 'Abd Allah Ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Siddiq al-Ghumari al-Hasani, Cairo: al-matba'a al-islamiyyah, 1934, pp. 56-57.

¹⁹ He was a Hadith master, judge, exegete of Qur'an and teacher of Shaykh al-Islam Ibn Hajar al-Haytami. He authored many books on *Tasawuf*, including a commentary on Qushayri's *Risala Qusayri* Ansari Zakariyya al-Ansari, *Sharh al-risala al-qushayriyyah* (Cairo: dar al-kutub al-'arabiyyah al-kubra, A.H. 1330/A.D.), 1912, p. 126.

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austerity, the search for the truth and the deep process of contemplating the transient nature of human life.

In early fourteenth century the first woman saint poetess of fourteenth century Kashmir— Lal Ded (Laleshwari) articulated the *Kashur* (Kashmiri language) and expressed *Tasawuf* when she said:²⁰

*Shive chui thale thale rozan
mov zan heund ta musalman
Truk hai chuk ta pan parzanav
Sai chai sahibas seeth zani zan.*

(Translation)

Shiva abides in all that exists anywhere; don't discriminate between Hindus and Muslims
Self realization is true emancipation; recognize your true self that is how you will realize God.

At another occasion, She said:²¹

*Parun polum apuruy porum
Kesara vana volum rattith shaal
Paras prounum ta paanaspolum
Ada gom moluum ta zinim haal*

(Translation)

I practiced what I read, and learnt what was not taught. From its jungle abode I brought the Jackal down as I a jackal would; (From pleasures of the world I pulled my mind away). I practiced what I preached, and scored the goal.

Laleshwari can be easily compared with Rabia— perhaps the first woman mystic in Islamic world who said; love of god hath so absorbed me that neither love nor hate of any other thing remains in my heart:²²

Sat san'gay pavi'ter do'rum,

²⁰ Nil Kanth Kotru, *Lal Ded Her Life and Sayings*, Utpal Publications, Srinagar, 1989, p. 29; See also Gopinath Raina, *Lala vakh* (in Urdu), Srinagar, 1954; See also Gopi Nath Raina, *Laleshwari* (Urdu), Srinagar, 1954.

²¹ Gopinath Raina, *Lala Vakh*, pp. 20-24.

²² Balji Nath Pandit, *Lal Ded*, pp. 48 and 86.

*Navi sha re roozes trop rith bar
Das dash mid dwar parzenowum
Eka dadhitsand ramas karem lai
Dwa das mandlas desh shum ro vum
Triyo dash triveni navem kaay
Tsatur dash tsodah bha wanshume nae vem
Puran panch dash chand raman korum uday
Ok doh boo gith pan sandorum
Sat laigachith kal pun trov
Soruy somb'rith yahay ka rempot lain pooz.*

(Translation)

After getting awakened to the numerous secrets of nature, I enjoyed the company of many celestial beings with a renewed zeal I settled down to concentrate upon my Lord after closing my mind to all outer influences. On the tenth day of my penance I proceeded towards the gateway of my Lord's grace. On eleventh day the moon of my awakening dawned upon me. On twelfth day I experienced the full emancipation and on thirteenth I enjoyed a holy dip in the confluence of the celestial waters of Ganges, Jamuna and Saraswati inside me at the point between my eyebrows which is the ultimate spiritual bliss. On fourteenth day my whole self was decorated with the grace of my Lord and on 15th the moon of my full awakening arose on the sky of my conscience. At the end of the first day of next fortnight I had a complete reshuffle of my spirits and on the subsequent day I enjoyed the thoughtless state of my mind with no other thought than that of my Lord. With this high achievement of a clear state of mind I turned totally to my Lords grace and thought.

The inexhaustible variety and imaginative force with which Laleshwari represented all these qualities of the perception of God, determined to a great extent the vividness or importance of the portrayals of life and an attitude of the people to their own reality. She broke away from the fetters of Hindu orthodoxy and material world. She says:²³

Hyath karith raaj pheri-naa

²³ Balji Nath Pandit, *Lal Ded*, pp. 48, 86.

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*Dith karith trapti na man
Luub veyna Ziiv Marina
Zivanatay mari tay suy chuy jnaan*

(Translation)

You will not know peace of mind if you gain a kingdom, nor will you gain content if you give it away. Only the man, free from desire, will never die. Only he has true knowledge who though alive, is, dead to all desires.²⁴

*Ma'nas sae'tey ma'ney gun'dum,
Tsee'tas rae'tem tso'paer wagh;
Prak'rech sae'tey pu'rush no wo'lum,
Shreh mae ko'rum la'bem wa'th*

(Translation)

With serious efforts I controlled the vacillations of my mind. I remained on guard from all sides to avoid the incoming negative worldly influences affecting my conscience. I avoided successfully the influence of all human instincts entering my mind. I further nurtured intense love and devotion for my Lord which enveloped my whole person in a way that a clear path was defined for my spiritual development.

Even the most bruised heart gets comforted by reading or recitation of her mystic verses and all the worldly worries and sorrows cease to exist. There is also a perfect blending of thought and word in her verses, which touches the deepest

²⁴ Ibid. When Imam Ibn Taymiyya says: "*thumma at-Tasawuf 'indahu haqaiqun wa ahwaalun... [man saffa min al-qadari wa amtala'a min al-fikri wasstawa 'indahu adh-dhahab wal-hajjar. At-tasawaffu kitmaanul ma'ani wa tarku-da'awi, Tasawuf* has realities and states of experience which they talk about in their science. Some of it is that the Sufi is that one who purifies himself from anything which distracts him from the remembrance of Allah and who will be so filled up with knowledge of the heart and knowledge of the mind to the point that the value of gold and stones will be the same to him. And *Tasawuf* is safeguarding the precious meanings and leaving behind the call to fame and vanity in order to reach the state of Truthfulness. His ideas come very close to what Laleshwari preached in Kashmir. *Majmu'a Fatawa Shaikh ul-Islam Ibn Taymiyya*, Imam Ibn Taymiyya, published in Egypt by Dar ar-Rahma, 1984, 2 volumes, volume 11, p. 190, He articulates the same opinion as is preached by Laleshwari, Sheikh Noor ud din and many other Kashmiri poets.

chord of every heart. Her 'Vakhs' speak of inner quest, inward control, self-purification, self-surrender and a sincere pursuit of spiritual perfection without worshiping images or associating with the institutional religion.

Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din Noorani (1376-1438. A.D.), also known as Nund Reshi or Sahajanand or Alamdar of Kashmir was a close contemporary of the saint-poetess Lal-Ded. His poetic compositions known as 'Shruk' (derived from Sanskrit Shloka), preach love, equality, non-violence, tolerance and respect for all beliefs.²⁵ Nund Reshi was an illustrious exponent of the *Tasawuf* in Kashmiri poetry. He had a mystic rapport with the Shavite philosopher and saint poetess Lal-Ded. His shrukhs are full of proverbs, parables and wise sayings. His mystic verses speak of catholicity of vision, righteousness and purity of mind and heart. Like Laleshwari all his mystic verses are in common man's language. He says:²⁶

He, who was here, is also there;
He's in possession of house everywhere
He's the pedestrian, and He the Rath, (old type of
vehicle)
He's all in all; invincible and obscure.

Nund Rishi was a vociferous preacher of a simple living, a living free from desire and want. His sayings are preserved in the Nur-nama, commonly available in Kashmir.²⁷ All aspects of human behavior have been discussed in a way that one gets intoxicated with the flow of the Sheikh's Kalam. He boldly and freely strives to achieve happiness unfettered by fear of chastisement in the next world. Taking up Tasawuf which has sprung up from life itself he crystallizes its philosophy and upholds the view that it is exuberant joy of life. At the same time he add to it several features like

²⁵ A native of Kaimoh village near Kulgam in district Anantnag, Kashmir Mohammad Amin Kamili, *Noor Nama* (Urdu), Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art and Culture Srinagar, 1972.

²⁶ Mohammad Amin Kamil, *Noor Nama*, pp. 40-45.

²⁷ The *Noor-nama* also gives an account of the life of the saint. It was written by Baba Nasib-ud-din Ghazi in Persian about two centuries after the death of Shaikh Nur-ud-din

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wisdom, philosophical reflections and intrinsic harmony springing up from intuitive knowledge and contemplation. He says:²⁸

By bowing down, thou shall not become a Reshi;
The pounder in the rice- mill did not ever rise up its
head.
By entering a cave, God cannot be attained:
The mongoose and the rat seldom come out of their holes
By bathing, the mind will not be cleansed:
The fish and the otter never ascend the bank.
If God was just pleased by fasting,
The indigent rarely cook food in pots.

He seems to be trying to attain an intimate relationship with divine with curiosity and affection. His poetry is full of the feelings of (Wajid) rapture. He says:²⁹

He's beside me and
I'm beside him,
Blissful I feel with Him
In strange lands, for
My friend Himself graced me
In my own house!

In every situation every adversity except when overcome by despondency Sheikh Noor din has not lost the faculty of philosophical attitude to things and reflection and discourse

²⁸ Once, on his way to a garden, accompanied by a disciple, he stopped and would not move. On his disciple requesting him to proceed, he made the following reply: "Every minute that I spend there, will be deducted from my stay in heaven". On another occasion, when invited to a feast, Nur-ud-din went in ragged dress, earlier than the appointed time. The servants, not recognizing him, would not permit him to enter, and he had to go back to take his food at home. When all had sat for the sumptuous dinner, the Shaikh was specially sent for. He came, this time in a flowing chugha (a cloak type wear) and was given the seat of honour. But the Shaikh instead of partaking of the food stretched forth his sleeves and put them on to the plates. The people were astonished at the sight and asked him the reason. He replied: "The feast was not really for Nur-ud-Din but for the long sleeves!" Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

on the structure of universe and the fundamental problems faced by human life.

Lalded and Sheik Noor ud din were succeeded by a plenty of Kashmiri poets, almost in each generation, and all of them were imbued with *Tasawuf* as is evident from their Kalam (poetry) and some of these are now documented. They include Abdullah Bihaqi, Momin Sahib,³⁰ Swochha Kral, Shah Gufoor,³¹ Mahmood Gami: (1765-1855),³² Abdul Ahad

³⁰ Momin Sahib: is a poet with Sufi bent of mind. He belonged to Begom Pulwama. Nothing known about his date of birth or death, but it is believed that he died before Mahmood Gami. He has translated one part of Farid-u-din Attar's *Mantaq-ul-tayeer* in Kashmiri. It is not exact translation. He provides allegorical poem which brings forth steps of spiritual journey

³¹ He belonged to Chhivan Badgam. A few of his vatsan (traditional poetry) are available which are blending of *Tasawuf* & *Shashtra*. He says:

Yot yith zanmas kenh chhu na laarun
Daarnaayi daarun soo ham soo
Brahma vishin mahishvar gaarun
Shaf hyoo chhuy ti hundui zoo
Paan hai khatnai jaan hykh maarun
Daarnaayi daarun soo ham soo

³² Mahmood Gami (1765-1855) was a versatile poet. He wrote *Masnavi*, *Naat*, *Vatsan* (traditional Love lyrics & Sufi vatsun) and *Gazal*. Initially wrote in Persian. He was one of the great poets of the early 19th century and arguably the greatest narrative poet of Kashmir. Gami introduced in Kashmiri the Persian forms of the *Masnavi* and *Ghazals*. While his greatest contribution lies in his adaptation of famous tales of Islamic and Persian traditions like *Shirin-Farhad* and *Yusuf-Zulekha* into Kashmiri, he also penned lyrics of great excel. His masnav's include *Sheerin Khusrav*, *Sheikh Sanaan* (Original Persian poet Sheikh Ataar), most famous of his works *Yusuf Zulekha* (Original Persian poet Jami). *Laila majnoon*, *Qasa Haroobn Rashid* & short masnavis like *Yek Hiqaayat*, *Qasa Mahmood Ghaznavi* & *Pahali naama*. *Kalam-i- Mahmud Gami* Jammu and Kashmir Academy of art and culture. He says in one of his poems:

For just one glimpse of you,
 The rosebud of your street
 Has bloomed anew!
 No songbird there to greet
 Your rose, which blooms alone,
 But in that land
 Of poems, where have grown
 My roses, and I stand

Naazim,³³ Rasul Mir, Saifudin-Tarbali,³⁴ Nyama Saeb,³⁵ Maqbool Shah Kralwari (1802-1877),³⁶ Shah Qalandar (1880),³⁷ Rehman Dar,³⁸ Shamas Faqir (1849-1904),³⁹ Wahab Paray

Within the shrine
Of secret meanings, hail!
How every verse of mine
The nightingale
Will sing, and none destroy
The ecstasy we share,
His house of joy
On heights none others dare.

See also *Mahmud Gami, Diwan* (Persian) English translation by Nila Cram Cook hunter.com the world's poetry Archive, 2012.

- ³³ Abdul Ahad Naazim was from Bijbehara d.1851). He wrote Gazal Naat Vatsan and Masnavi. The story of Masnavi Zain-ul abidin is taken from Persian poet Sheikh Ataar's Illahi naama. His poems are popular e.g.:

Yaara yikhna chham kraav poshan
Zaahn ti goshan goyi na myon

- ³⁴ Saifudin-Tarbali was born in Tarbal Srinagar (d.1873) He wrote Masnavi Waamiq Ezra (Trans of Sheikh Yoqoob Sarfi's Masnavi) and Arzan Himaal or Heemal Naagiray (Trans. Sadar-u-din Wufaayi's Persian narrative.

- ³⁵ Nyama Saeb: was born in 6th or 7th decade of 19th century in Zaindar Mohalla, Srinagar He was a mystic poet who wrote about 40 vatsan and gazal.

Ami yaari kornas baambray
Hooray me nuyonam tsoori dil.

- ³⁶ Maqbool Shah Kralwari (1802-1877) wrote Gulraiz considered as the best Masnavi among our Masnavi poetry. Transcription of lesser known Persian poet Zia Nakshabi's Masnavi. Maqbool is also famous for Grees naama a long poem that is a telling satire on farmers of Kashmir. First poem which brings forth the social condition of common Kashmiri. Maqbool a peer himself shows how petty farmers maltreat their religious guru. When his farmer disciples were annoyed with his *Grees Nama* (the poetry devoted to peasant) he made amends by writing *Peer Nama* (the poetry devoted to priestly) in which he exposed the peers, their exploitation & their ignorance.

- ³⁷ Shah Qalandar: (d.1880, Srinagar) was a Poet of Ghazals and vatsan. He is addressing God in a romantic way by requesting God to lift the veil and show him the face or bestow him the realization of self. His famous is:

Tse tul az rooyi naqaab
me kun mokh haav sondri

- ³⁸ According to Professor Hajini his year of birth is 1900.

- ³⁹ There is no authentic biographical account of any of these therefore one has to depend on the details that travelled orally from generation to generation and were finally collected and published by Jammu and

(1846-1914),⁴⁰ Hajini, Hassan Driver, Waza Mahmud, Amir Shah Kreeri (1846-1905),⁴¹ Ahmad Batawaari (1842-1912),⁴² Wahaab Khar ((1842-1912),⁴³ Peer Ghulam Mohmmad Hanafi (1876-1937),⁴⁴ Ali Shah Haril (d. 1935),⁴⁵ Rajab Hafiz, Syed Habib and many others.

Almost all these Kashmiri poets speak of *tasawuf* stressing the realization that from beginning to end, life is impermanent like an illusion. Many of these poets indicate that there is an inverse relationship between the state of the *nafs* and the *ruh*. They define the human individual is a composite entity, made up of two mutually incompatible and antithetical elements, and the fulfillment of the individual's

Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages. Accordingly the academy collected ninety six poems of Shamas Faqir and brought out an anthology of Sufi poetry of Kashmir. See: *Koasher sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages Srinagar Kashmir.

⁴⁰ Wahab Paray was born in Hajin and lived between 1846-1914, He translated Firdausi's *Shah Naama* (23491 verses) from Persian. Crafty descriptions of mortal combats wars and expeditions of Rustum & other Persian heroes. Second work *Akbar Nama* is translation of Hamid-ullah Shahbadi's *Masnavi* dealing with Anglo Sikh wars that were fought by Sikh & British army's during 1833 to 1845.

⁴¹ Amir Shah Kreeri was born in kreer (1846-1905,) Translated *Saam Naama*. His *saam naama* is detailed and faithful translation of Khajo's work but lacks in poetic beauty & unity, is not as impressive as Bulbul's. His other *Masnavi* is *Jangi khavar* (Translation of Ibu Ahsam's *Khaavar Naama*.) He died before its completion. It was completed by his son Qubool Shah. He was friend of Bulbul and wahab Paray

⁴² Ahmad Batawaari was born in Batwara area of Srinagar (1842-1912) and has sung the melodious songs of Hajar and Vasal in craving for his metaphysical beloved. One of his famous poem is:

Yendraazni darbaara nagma karaan chhi paristaano

Sozi mansoor vazaan kan me ditsaam gos devaano

His famous sufi poem is *Nai* (Flute) which symbolically brings forth the creation and in process distancing of a spiritual aspirant from eternal reality

⁴³ Wahaab Khar belonged to Khrew village in Kashmir.

⁴⁴ His works include *Qamar-ulzamaan*, *Habakhatoon*, *Hazaardaastan*, *Alif Laila*, *Jangi Ameer*, *Hamza Khalaafat Naama*.

⁴⁵ Ali Shah Haril (d. 1935) *Razmiya Masnavi*, *Jangi Zaitoon*, *Jangi Taal*, *Jangi Khaiber* & *Jangi Zain-ul Arab*. Language dominated by Persian vocabulary.

potentialities requires that the spiritual element be nourished and strengthened to harmonize that incompatibility.

It will not be possible to pay attention to the contributions of all these poets here in this paper, therefore, let me present only a few specimens among them. I have only chosen poets because their contribution to both the *Tasawuf* and Kashmiri language is significant and the prose writings in Kashmiri language until most recent times—almost up to the end of 20th century—was almost nonexistent. The Kashmiri literature has been an expression of the turbulences of their ‘spiritual world’ caused by the upheavals of the material world’. It seems as if they are torn apart by their single minded devotion to search for the truth and hence such expressions of *wajid* or ecstasy. It reminds us what Ibn ‘Abidin (d. 1252) states that when the Imam of the two Groups (Sufis and fuqaha’) our master al-Junayd was asked: "A certain people indulge in wajd or ecstatic behavior, and sway with their bodies?" He replied: "Leave them to their happiness with Allah. They are the ones whose affections have been smashed by the path and whose breasts have been torn apart by effort, and who are unable to bear it. There is no blame on them if they breathe awhile as a remedy for their intense state. If you tasted what they taste, you would excuse their shouting".⁴⁶ The poets have a feeling of loneliness and they crave for the fulfillment of their spiritual dreams while denouncing the material world. One of the famous Sufi poet Waza Mahmud says:⁴⁷

*Vala ashko kya chukho deldar mae
Jalva chane gov bakhat bedar mae
Dai sunde pai aval yale bovetham
Khai chalem dele aiyeens zangar mae
Yuth na neham zou mae dar makh rozem
Yuth na karham za mae duniyadar mae.
Gachvunui Shakli habeeb havzem*

⁴⁶ Ibn ‘Abidin, Seventh Letter in *Shifa' al-'alil fi hukm al-wasiyya wa al-tahalil* pp. 172-173. Shaykh M. Hisham Kabbani's. *The Repudiation of "Salafi" Innovations* Kazi, 1996, p. 399.

⁴⁷ *Kalami-Vaza Mahmood* volumes Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages Srinagar Kashmir.

Cheta gachehem dozkunui nar mae
Name Nabi ruth mae lekhzem bar kafan
Lekhezem tuthui yuth yeyam darker mae

(Translation)

Come my beloved you are visible to me
Your appearance has bestowed luck on me
God's address has been revealed to me
That has removed all rust from the mirror of my heart
After having achieved you I do not want the pleasures of
material world
Lord Habeeb for me the flames of hell will be doused
Place the address of Nabi on my shroud
That alone will solve my problems

Waza Mahmud was aware of this fact because after mentioning he adds the caveat that one should not contravene the accepted norms. At a separate juncture he explains the rationale behind the world that was visible to him and invisible to others. He addresses God with *mashook* (beloved) and was not interested even in theological sensitivities or linguistic exigencies but wanted to place the phenomenon in perspective. The mystical poets of Kashmir, including Waza Mahmud were so much possessed by Wajid (rapture) that they expressed nonconformist out look like Mansur-al Hallaj. For example Waza Mahmud while acknowledging Mansur Al Hallaj says and this is:⁴⁸

Hale Mansur male gomut yeth tane
Tale peth cham sharahiche talwar mae
Marna vakhtai parze fateh aye aziz
Karzem dafan zare dare yar mae

(Translation)

Like Mansur my body and soul are possessed by
God
Although the sword of Sharah (Shariat) is hanging
on my head
Please read Fateha my beloved and bury me near
my friend.

⁴⁸ See: *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, Srinagar, Kashmir.

Interestingly the most appropriate similitude that some of the poets have offered to describe the relationship of the *ruh* to the God is that of the sunlight to the sun. The inner faculty of perception (vibrant *ruh*) is complemented by the sun light of guidance in the external environment and then the outcome is the enlightenment and immortality. But the worldly attractions are a constant source of deviation and one has to guard against these distractions by reinforcing contentment. This is very well expressed by Shamas Faqir to whom we have devoted a small portion in this paper.

*Want ta wasye payem na payas
Chumai neran nayas yar
Kana buzum vante khodayas
Andem nai nyai sende pan layas
Shen tarfan vane ma dechyas
Nane path vuchum seri asrar
Kane pat gom char kayas
Sane ta vogen van ma dechyas
Ganj a khazan maha denshayas
Ranjanavan chum madan war
Panja ashquk dith gom mayas
Vasalik nama maha sozayas
Asal tamsund fasile deedar
Khursheed chus nuran kayas
Shamas faqir arsh kis sayas
Farash kane chus khas gulzar⁴⁹*

(Translation)

Oh beloved please convince my by being because I am getting distracted. I will convey to God what I heard from my ears if my being continues to get distracted I will be suicidal for me. After searching in all six directions I have realized the secret of life. I got transformed. After thorough probe I saw the treasure of treasures but the God has shown me all these temptations. He has possessed my *ruh* (life's breath). I sent him many requests but I saw him shining like (Khurshid) sun. I Shamas Faqir am laid on this special rose garden with a shade of His (Gods) grace.

⁴⁹ Bayazi Shamas Faqir (Kashmiri) published by Jammu and Kashmir Cultural Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar Kashmir.

For some of these poets, God sheds his radiance on everything that exists through him and gives completeness to everything and in all these are fused the ideas of ontology and theology. One of the basic formulas applied to God is that of limitless the sun (Khurshid) is invisible image of God. In *Tasawuf* this light helps the individual to see the true nature of reality that is hidden within the human self. The relationship between God and the believer is characterized by mutual love that cannot be attained without a faith and without total surrender to God. That is why Rahman Dar says:

*Aadan yekhna cham ladan tai Sarho vandai padan
Vada asam chaneiladantai ath vatamdadadan*

(Translation)

I am waiting to place my head on your feet because you
alone can cure my ache.

The Sufi poets reflect human emotions where borders of religion, caste, region and class become irrelevant. Each of these poets is amplifying the fact that the purpose of *Tasawuf* is to purify the heart from all kinds of bad desires and inclinations that accumulate upon it due to our temptations in the material world and to remove these bad manners and sins for cleaning the self and decorating the heart with the good *akhlaq* to taste *Marfat* or *Irfan* (spiritual gnosis) is a necessity than ritualistic or other practices associated with organized religions. In this content, Janbaz says:⁵⁰

*Zamanai pok nu hamdam tote kya go
Tavai gai zuluf barham tote kya go
Mubarak zahida janat che asin
Ma yudvai shre jahanam tote kya go
Gachi nai saf dil dita laf sasa
Natav chata abizam zam tote kya gov
Zamanai pok nu hamdam tote kya go
Lekhat iblisase azlai cha lanat*

⁵⁰ *Kuliyat-i-Janbaz*, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, Srinagar Kashmir.

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Nebar yud drav adam tote kya go
Agar nai jazbai isar ase
Dohas parta isme azam tot kya gov
Be shartas pet gazal az boznavat
Che nai sazas me dik sang to te kya go
Nazar asrar senz chai janbazar
Che nai rozak me ham dam tote kya go

(Translation)

It does not matter how the time treats us
We have lost our life for futile things for zahid (pious poet) there will be heaven
You cannot purify your hear by thousand recitations
Or by taking pots full of holy water of zam zam
Even if Iblis goes round the world he will be always humiliated
Even if days are spent on recitation of God
I will recite the poem even if you do not accompany me with music
Because I have God's blessings to pursue this path.

This poem by Janbaz adduces an array of *marfat* (devotion) to illustrate the underlying conventions of *Tasawuf*.

The goal can be attained by pondering over the existence and comprehending the wisdom by experiencing the constant harmony with nature and cultivating these qualities for freedom of the *ruh* from the world's ordinary pleasures and this is absolutely essential ingredient that can be attained through *dhikr* or remembrance of God. The truth is they are striving in God's obedience and the expressing reinforcing *Tasawuf* through popular medium which helped the spread of language and science of the purifying the Self. Although Vatsun & *Masnavi* were two major forms of Kashmiri Poetry but the dominant theme in both of them was *Tasawuf*.⁵¹ Swochha Kral (1774-1854) says:

⁵¹ From Habba Khatoon up to Arni Maal prominent trend was lyricism, but with the influence of Persian language & literature began the period of narrative poetry. Tradition of lyric poetry also carried on. This Mir Abdullah Bihaqi: (d.1785) was from famous & literate Bihaqi clan. He wrote *Aqaayid* & *Vaqaaya* two long instructive poems elucidating some religious aspects, e.g.

Mir Abdullah kari bayaan Kaashri paaThin aqaayid zaan
Aqaayid vazifan hund sardar Ami khota abaadath chhe na darkaar.

*Kenh nai os kyahtaam os
Kehnas maani chhu kentsaa
Kehnas maani zaanaan gos
Paanai os bu bahaanai*⁵²

(Translation)

There was nothing but this nothingness is full of
potentiality and when I tried to comprehend that
something in nothingness I found God was already
in me I was an only an excuse.

Creation in *tasawuf* is creation out of nothing and this
nothingness is potential object and source to create
everything in world. Through the depth and beauty of these
verses Swochha Kral sketches out the whole panorama of life,
from human sorrow and devotion, to the universal breadth of
God's hidden plan. His poetry seems fathom less and endless.
These inner subtleties are, paradoxically, more important
than the apparent point he is making. For example, in one of
his poem he says:⁵³

*Vanan Socha Kral Alfas ma cha Bandi
Vuchan gach Khoda Saben Khodavandi*

(Translation)

Alif referring to Allah has no boundaries
You only have to realize His (God's) greatness.

In Kashmiri *tasawuf* one realizes that the soul of prayer is
not the outer form alone. Rather it is a complete absorption, a
state without room for these outward forms. God is a mighty
emperor. Its light is not like the light of the sun where some
form abides in its place. When God's light shines forth
unveiled, neither heaven nor earth remain. Neither sun nor
moon nothing remains but that great reality. On many
occasions it seems that some of these poets are coming very
close to Maulana Rumi's intent.

⁵² He was from Yendar village of Pulwama district in Kashmir and his
poetry reflects *Wahdat-ul-wajood* see *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri
language, 2 volumes, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and
languages, Srinagar.

⁵³ *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes, Jammu and
Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, Srinagar.

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Another poet, Rehman Dar, is known for his Sufi poem *Shesh rang*.⁵⁴ He also wrote *Vatsun* full of *Tasawuf*. Very little portion of his poetry has survived. *Sheshrang* and other poem *Maacnhh Tuler* [A dialogue between honey bee (Intelligence)], honey comb (soul) and fly (desire) expresses the concept of *Wahdat-ul Wajood*. He communicated something through his writing that has attracted spiritual seekers who understand Kashmiri Sufi poetry irrespective of their religious diversity. Sometimes one feels that such insights of Rehman Dar cannot be explained; rather we must catch them inwardly with only the subtle clues that penetrate so deeply and place relative truth above the absolute Truth. Until there is an ache within, a passion and a yearning for that thing arising within us, we will never strive to attain it. Without pain it remains beyond our reach, whether it is success in this world or salvation in the next. It is this pain for attaining the truth that Rahman Dar articulates:⁵⁵

Chandanai ha chadan daro lolachnaran hai zajnaes
Zajnaes aas nai arai lolachnaran hai zajnaes
Yem kithiv ishkeh tir laitham baivateer
Jigras korham parparhi lolachnaran hai zajnaes

Translation:

Oh chandan the healing coolant I am in flames for
the fire of my beloved I am unexcused because of
being a seeker and He (God) has attracted me with
arrows with out any protection or cover and my hear
is tormented.

Another Kashmiri Sufi poet Shamas Faqir (1849-1904) also wrote *Vatsan* and *gazals* which are fully imbued with *Tasawuf*.⁵⁶ Some of them represent best synthesis of *Tasawuf* and Hindu mysticism with allusions to Shastras. *Shunya gatshtuy os myon oluy* his representative poem in which a

⁵⁴ He was born in Chattabal Srinagar in 1880 but according to Hajini his year of birth is 1900.

⁵⁵ *Kalam-i-Rahman dar*, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages, Srinagar, Kashmir.

⁵⁶ He was born in Chinkral Mohlla of Srinagar. See *Koasher sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages Srinagar Kashmir.

fable of swan bat and crow are used to express great fall of man from heavens. In this he exemplifies the height of cultural synthesis in Kashmiri literature.⁵⁷

*Shonya gatshtuy os myon oluy
ami ashka naaran zoluye
Kuniras trovnam roni manzoluy
sjroni shroni bozaan aas*

(Translation)

I was in solitude when I was lit up with the flame of love (*Asq haqiqi*) for seeking him (God). This solitude offered me the lovely cradle and I am enjoying the sweet sound of swing.

The poems of Shams Faqir convey a lot about *Tasawuf* and the precision of his communicative skill. He employs interesting imageries to illustrate the hidden treasures of spiritual existence in human being.⁵⁸ According to A.N. Dhar, “A striking feature of Shams Faqir’s poems is the diction using largely the Kashmiri idiom current in his time; he also employs words from Persian, Arabic and Sanskrit. He can bend language to his needs, blending harmoniously words from diverse sources together a creative achievement of high degree. In some poems particularly we notice that he makes a consistent use of terms (and related concepts) derived from Hindu Shastras (including both Vedanta and Saiva texts) with remarkable ease and facility. As examples we may mention terms like zagrat (wakefulness) sopan (dream) sushapt (deep sleep) turaya (super-consciousness) terms relating to four elements including pavan (air) and akasa (ether), words like soham (he am I) sunya (void) rav (the sun) shiv (Shiva) anand (bliss) om, razahonz (king of swans). He handles the vocabulary and the related concepts so well that the poems acquire a distinctive Hindu tone. Of such poems the one that

⁵⁷ William James, *The Vanities of Religious Experiences*, New York, The Modern Library, 1929, p. 31.

⁵⁸ In other poems of Shamas Faqir it becomes clear that he was aware of the mystic path. In one of his poem we come across the Mansur Al Hallaj and the doctrine of Anul Haq (I am truth) A.N. Dhar. “Religious Mysticism: Some Observations on the Poetry of Shamas Faqir”, *Koshur Samachar*, New Delhi.

comes to my mind is Pad (the first of sequence). The interfusion of two cultures is indeed very conspicuous in the Sufi poet.”⁵⁹

Like many other poets the central theme of Shams Faqir’s poems is *Tasawuf*. Several lyrics of Shams Faqir centre round the theme of the mystic quest for primal cause of this universe. One of his poem, *agur Kami Manza Drav* is fully devoted to it wherein he repeatedly poses the question from where has the fountain head emanated which serves as its refrain.⁶⁰ The poem not only poses the thought provoking questions but instructs the seeker to pursue the spiritual journey inwardly to realize the self. This would naturally call for annihilation of self. The answer to the imponderable question regarding the source of cosmos is provided through the intertwined images of drop and the river. The Persian Sufi poets have often used the word *rinda* in their lyrics. It refers to the true lover, a liberated soul without ties to any school. With its rich associations it has been absorbed into Kashmiri language by poets only and has by now got into common usage among Kashmiris.

In his poem *Rinda Sar Ho Sapdi kunye*. He says, “Oh rinds in order to realize the self learn to die while still alive”. Emphasis is laid in poem on conquering self as being the stepping stone to advancement in spirituality. Whether we call the aspirant an *arif* or *yogi* his effort has to consist in cleaning of the doors of perception which involves a disciplining of mind and senses. He has to be discriminative

⁵⁹ A.N. Dhar, *Religious Mysticism: Some Observations on the Poetry of Shamas Faqir* by Koshur Samachar, New Delhi.

⁶⁰ Here is A.N. Dhar’s translation of some of the lines of the poem:
*Day and night does pavan flow through the four Bhavnas
 nonstop
 Whence did it come and whither did it go?
 It was even all of one hue whence did the stream come fourth.
 He who owns the sea is the Lord of the water
 The river issued from the drop to get to the meaning sacrifice
 yourself first.
 Oh Shamas to attain gnosis, throw open your hearts door
 sun like roam the sky through to fathom the secret
 what is the fountain head.*

A.N. Dhar, “Shamas Faqir”, *Journal of Kashmir Samiti*, New Delhi.

and mentally alert throughout. He is explicit about this quality required of the true aspirant:

Seemingly blind look keenly for you seek oh rind
Sifting the pure grain from the impure winnowing
the grains hundred times will reveal the precious one to
you.

Like Rehman Dar he also draws our attention to the strenuousness and pains involved in the spiritual effort in these lines when he says:

Break the stones at the dead of the night
to take away the gem guarded by the cobra;
Feed the burning lamp with your blood
eat up your own flesh thus will you oh rind realize the one.

Special stress is laid in the closing lines on belief and divine grace. Believe before you verify, that is Shamas Faqir's gospel. When you get the word as a God sent gift oh rind you will realize the one. In one of his poem *Valo Mashok Dedar hav*, the poet employs dark imagery from beginning to the end and mentions black light specifically in these lines:

The elixir of life is hidden in the dark.
The light divine is dark, too;
Light itself is grounded in darkness
Pray meet me beloved.

This poem reminds us of the images of darkness that are so recurrent in St. John of cross, especially in his poem titled dark night of the soul. There is a close parallel between Christian concept of divine dark and what Shamas Faqir conveys through his images. Similarly the names of Hindu divines, Krishna, kalratri, Shyama, Megha Shama suggest the night of great release into the oneness of self.

As a poet Shamas Faqir is deeply rooted in the tradition of *Tasawuf*. In several poems he introduces a lady as embodying beauty and truth but the images of lady he employs do not suggest the flesh. In one poem *rov* the feminine form is used as *ashka sundar* recalls the Greek goddess Aphrodite Her

physical graces are rendered in fine detail-red lips, charming teeth, incomparable mouth (dhan) seductive locks (resembling coiled snakes) and the like. All these images are loaded with mystical significance of *Tasawuf*. Another of his poem *Manareniye Pan Badlav* makes use of symbolism that we come across in Christian mystical writings depicting the soul as the spouse of God.

Both the Kashmiri Sufi poetry and the concept of *Tasawuf* have a special variety to offer through several contours of spirituality and humanism. One notices that most of these poets have sought to attain an intimate loving relationship with the God which appeared to them without beginning and end and all pervading. It was used to identify the way of cleansing the heart and the states narrated as if they are the direct result of their association with the God that allowed them to become purified. They have freely used the terms that they visualized like *Dedan*, *Darman*, *Be sapdus Ane musa*, or *noore Tajallah*, *Khursheed*, or *shamas* (sun). They tried to convey to people how the purification of the self leads to transformation of being and shreds of the bad desires of the ego, such as jealousy, cheating, ostentation, love of praise, pride, arrogance, anger, greediness, stinginess, respect for the rich and disregard of the poor, just as one must purify the external self.⁶¹

It should also be noted that most of these poets were prepared to countenance the rejection of heaven and hell and this is indicative from their tendencies or preference for the subtle existence of *fana filla* (to end oneself while seeking truth) phenomenon. There are many underlying principles of their poetry. When we look at the putative works that the Sufi poets composed, one finds they do not betray the extensive compass to the spiritual activities on which the secular tradition of *Kashmiriyat* is based. They speak of divine knowledge and spiritual realities, which only takes place upon hearing the description of Allah, exhortations to

⁶¹ See: *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language, 2 volumes, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages, Srinagar Kashmir.

wisdom, and praises of His (God) *noor* (divine light) to define genre of *Tasawuf*.⁶²

The remarkable thing about the *Tasawuf* in Kashmir is that through unwritten Kashmiri language it is constantly striking the message of divine love as creative sources for attaining spirituality in all adverse historical situations and despite diversity of faiths. These poets don't hear except from the divine presence and they don't love anything but Him. If they remember Him they cry, and if they thank Him they are happy; if they find Him they cry out, and if they witness Him they rest; if they walk in His divine presence, they melt; and many of them are drunk with His Blessings and lose sight of themselves.

The nature of variance among these poets does not range from differences and distinctions which occur at morphological levels in the Kashur (Kashmiri language) but the intensity of the *mukam* (stage) in *Tasawuf*. These poems have never been subjected to any critical analysis or scrutiny because they are accommodated and upheld by people of all religions with appreciation and reverence as the last gems derived out of the experience of these poets. They also provide insights into individual attitudes of these poets towards how they encapsulate intrinsic facets of their articulation of the realization of *Tasawuf*. Naturally they not only serve as an important source for linguists of Kashmir to deduce from this vocabulary the agreements and disagreements between the soul and self but also for larger masses who have to reconcile between the philosophies of material world and other world of supra spiritual on daily basis. There are instances of prototypes for transmitting the message gained from experience. It is important to bear in mind the nature of variance and the independent life contained in the verses for example Shamas Faqir says:⁶³

Wanayo seeri asrar yeno askh wubali
Ma vuch har shaye su yar

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ *Kalam-i-Shamas Faqir*. See also *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes. Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, Srinagar.

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*cha no kanh mai or shai te khali
Dma akh me gayam kal
ma buz dil ken paran tal
Chu sazo naz afzal
Cha zeras bam te chali
Che vas Sami saddras sum
Vahid kya zani oen
Sahal cha mani bozun
Te bozaan gatale
Fanah jamai chateth drav
Achet manz dedan raov
gache molum panun nave
Ba moi pymana khali
Me sapdum orai dav
Be sapdus ane musa
Vuchim noore tajallah
Dutum pai zul jalalli
Vanai kha ba amik sud
Marit ashaq zindai rud
Chue kar shamso yet kath bood
Chukai aamut savale*

(Translation)

Don't get excited if I reveal you the truth. He (God) is everywhere. I only concentrated for a while and saw He (God) is there within me. He is the sweetest music of soul and self. You immerse in this sea it is very difficult to know the revealed truth except for the wise. After tearing away all the fetters and He could be seen by realizing that without his presence in us it is all hollow from within. I saw Noor when I became one with him (God). I can't tell you after becoming one with him how even after death I remained alive. Shamas you tell it to others if you are their savior.

Most of these poets are quiet independent in their search for truth and they seek to build their own complete and self sufficing or satisfying universe. Many at popular level may not sometimes understand the language, particularly its typicality, but they do draw solace from its mood and emotional attitude and share optimistic spirit, harmony and balance inherent in the philosophy of *Tasawuf*. These poets have also given preference to philosophical thoughts ignoring the subtleties of material world and the accepted world

outlook which can best be explained by Rajab Hamid when he says:⁶⁴

Afsoos duniya kanse na log samsar seethi
Pato lakan vuch ta kam kam mazar vate.
Rajab Hamido sule yem drai manzlas vate
Ajab amla Kara teh aasakh arifan sethi

(Translation)

Material world is not satisfying anybody because
everybody has to proceed to graveyard
Only those who started their journey in search of truth
early could reach to their real destination.

Such views sometimes go beyond the perspectives presented by the institutionalized religion or scriptures and reflect a belief that the majority of people lived by these oral compositions and regarded it as their ethics in life. These perceptions provided preliminary frame work for them to start becoming *insane-i-kamil* (perfect man). If we look at speech conventions and the idiomatic expressions they appear to be remarkable. The language is replete with *lola nar* (the flames of passion). The influence of local heretic culture is particularly evident in the ethical refinement of their ideas that they devote to spiritual impulses. They do not lose sense of the majesty of God and in that process even the inconceivable and unattainable essence of the spirit is a source of intense emotion for them.

Such was their preoccupation with the *ziikr* or *Tasawuf* that some of them initially accepted the basis for introspection and established the spiritual frame work formulated for the extreme exigencies of grappling with the worldly temptations. Similarly there are number of instances in their verses which have led to contention that such approach impinged on the sacrosanct nature or principles of religion. Apart from their spiritual essence, the verses do reflect the powerful emblems of linguistic excellence. However, we have to bear in mind most of the poets confined their endeavours to monotheistic tradition. Unfortunately the

⁶⁴ See: *Koasher Sufi Shairi* in Kashmiri language 2 volumes, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, Srinagar.

scholarship in Kashmir or India has not taken note of the specificity of multiple transmissions that these verses articulate at successive levels of the existence of being. These verses did enjoy the prolific levels of recognition and reception among people at popular level in Kashmir.⁶⁵

Some of the scholars have designed this poetry as coinciding with advaita duvaita metaphysics of abstract Shavism but the willingness to accept them as the spiritual experiences of a cultivated behaviour is not convincingly low. Mention is made of this poetry with an elevated literary diction in which poetic perceptions were composed, however, identifying them with the Shavite etc remains as a speculative endeavour. The multifaceted nature of this poetry within the domain of *Tasawuf* has obvious ramifications for a debate but the preeminence is genuine. Nonetheless it is apparent that both Rehman Dar and Shamas Faqir are held in high esteem as they are a testimony to the refined variety of linguistic articulation of Kashmiri language.

Observation of similarity is a starting point in expression of *Tasawuf*. It has been amply demonstrated by most of these poets while denying the validity of logic they admitted analogical inferences based on *tawaju* (spiritual attention). The definitions illustrated or served by them for spiritual idioms seems to exhibit the same tendency. There can be no comparison between any two of them and that will be bad analogy because it would not permit as a loose concept. Because each one has provided a detailed typology and analysis of their realized or perceived and related phenomenon. In the elegant philosophical analysis of these verses we encounter a variety of issues but the central point is the constant preoccupation with reinforcement of *Tasawuf* though most of this literature still remains to be properly explored and analyzed.

Amidst the current crises also such poets embedded in Kashmir's popular culture raised their voice through their instructive narration and refreshing insights that are deeply rooted not in any organized religion but indigenous religio-

⁶⁵ See: *Koasher Sufi Shairi*, 2 volumes, Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and languages.

cultural tradition of *Tasawuf* that equally promises perfect order of heaven out of the current chaos of dark waters. That their audience is on the increase is the great proof of their sincerity of purpose. One such example is here from Sufi Zargar Habib whose poem reads:⁶⁶

*Vuch to pananis abad khanas
Ganj Chui manz vairanas ta lo lo
Pak ais chaline lag napak panas
Janat manz layen varanas ta lo lo
Vane deo pan nis jald insanas
Ganj Chui manz vairanas ta lo lo*

(Translation)

Look at your own habitat which has got devastated
The pure and sacred people are fed unsacred
Quickly realize the human soul otherwise your habitat is
ruined.

At other place he says:⁶⁷

*Sornay panne bai vais been
Chuma ashkan kanh mazhab ta Din
Gavah ath chui Nabi Nazneen
Chuma askan kanh mazhab ta Din*

(Translation)

Our shanai has been used by others. God's messenger is
witness to the fact that His (Gods) lovers have become
faithless and irreligious.

In most of these articulations the influence of local heretic traditions is particularly evident in the ethical refinement of the ideas that also determine to a great extent the vividness of the portrayals of life and their own attitude to the reality. Though the average Kashmiri feels that the soul of *Kashmiriyat* is afflicted by darkness at present but the soul of *Kashmir* will never die because of the *Tasawuf* and language for mediating that is constantly reinforcing itself. Again the paradoxes of *Kashmiriyat* are getting resolved by being taken

⁶⁶ Syed Zargar Habib. *Haft Kalid Ganj, Kashmiri Gazal*, Srinagar 2009, p. 30.

⁶⁷ Zargar Habib. *Haft Kalid Ganj Kashmiri Gazal*, Srinagar, 2009, p. 30.

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over through language of *Tasawuf* into vital consciousness of Kashmiris but it may take us little more time than expected to understand that. It is sufficiently being articulated by our present Sufi poets through their poetical compositions loaded with the content of *Tasawuf* and the Syed Zargar Habib is one interesting case in point when he says:⁶⁸

Aschev manz garas vane dene yaras
Zalvanis naras karun chu athvas
Ma Vuch zaharas napayadaras
Zalvanis naras karun chu athvas
Hazrat balche dade tal praras
Hazrat nabiyas deme Faryad
Gul Pholam naras chus intizaras
Zalvanis naras karun chu athvas

(Translation)

Let us enter the cave to search for our friend
Even though this amounts to embracing the flames
Don't bother about the poison that is not everlasting
Let us wait near the gate in Hazrat bal
And appeal to God and wait for
Kashmir transcending to flower garden.
Even though this amounts to embracing the flames.

Conclusion: The Kashmiri *tasawuf* diminishes the conflicting philosophical and emotional principles and does not give them free scope. The real life force lies or rests in the coexistence. Life may be in reality governed by irrational and uncontrollable emotions but *tasawuf* through the Kashmiri Sufi poetry helps to overcome these irrational impulses and helps to triumph over the battle against life's adversities. Thus, the true conflict in life is translated into the struggle in inner-world into the space of spiritual life that in the process emerges into the profound reflection of the development of art of refining Kashmiri language and ornamenting it with different idioms, phraseology and context.

Kashmiri poets have not forgotten to awaken the sense of beauty, create awareness of peace with their extraordinary zeal. They emphasize that a radical approach in life does not

⁶⁸ Zargar Habib, *Haft Kalid Ganj, Kashmiri Gazal*, Srinagar, 2009, p. 30.

mean that we change very fast; after all, animals also run very fast, unconsciously and without impressing anyone. Change has to be accompanied by purity, love, and a sense of what is right, and the conviction that truth and unity can exist. This aspect is amply stressed by all religions. *The Holy Quran* also states clearly “Everything in creation proclaims the glory of Allah. To man is given dominion over nature, that man may recognize Allah’s Unity and Allah’s truth. Man should never lose sight of his goal, which is the Good, or dispute with the great teachers, who are sent to all peoples, to bring about unity; all creatures serve Allah.”⁶⁹

⁶⁹ *The Holy Quran Introduction to Surat Al Nahl*, 16 xvi-1-25 and xvi, 26-50.

Botanical Culture in Kashmir (1586-1628)

Mehraj Ud Din

Abstract: *Kashmiri society has been very sensitive to the preservation and sustenance of the environment. Keeping this aspect in mind various environment friendly practices were either initiated afresh or were continued albeit with some modification by Kashmiris and enlightened rulers who had public welfare as their supreme motto. This trend of preserving environment and its surroundings was continued by the Mughal rulers with their significant contribution towards the initiation and propagation of botanical culture in Kashmir. The present paper focuses on initiatives taken by two renowned Mughal rulers Emperor Akbar and Jahangir towards the development of horticulture in Kashmir. The contemporary works about various botanical products and the scientific inventions made in this field have been explored and discussed in relation to the role which it played in the up keeping of the economy and general prosperity of the people.*

The historical analysis of the present paper is based on the primary and secondary sources. The primary sources consist of the chronicles, archeological remains, travel accounts and the secondary works pertaining to the social and economic history of medieval times are also utilized. The present study is an attempt to explore botanical culture as a key part of the socio-economic life of the people.

Introduction: Cultivating plants for food and pleasure is as old as the human civilization. Archeological findings indicate that making of gardens coincided with the development of human societies and culture and paralleled to the evolution of agriculture and horticulture. Notable among these are the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the gardens of Cyrus the Great at Pasargadae in Iran, the monumental gardens of the Aztecs in Mesoamerica, the gardens at Versailles near Paris and the Mughal gardens of India and Pakistan.¹ All these were

¹ S. Krishna and A. Nvoy, *The Role of Botanical Culture in Twenty-First Century*, in CAB Reviews, Vol. 11, No.23, 2016, p. 1.

examples of pleasure gardens demonstrating power, wealth and social control.² Botanical culture received major impetus in Europe during the Renaissance period and the physical gardens were established for the study of medicinal plants in European universities. Like Europe, botanical culture was deeply entrenched in South Asia particularly in India. But unlike Europe, botanical gardens in India were established for pleasure and worshiping purposes also. This is substantiated by various verses of Rig Veda wherein it is mentioned that trees were planted and worshiped by the people in large numbers.³ Similarly, Buddhist and Jain literature mention about the importance of establishing gardens and urged its followers to plant more and more trees.⁴ This tradition of establishing gardens was seriously taken up by the medieval rulers in India, especially Sultans and Mughals, who promoted this culture in large scale. Most of the scholars believe that the aesthetic taste of Muslim rulers encouraged them to establish gardens in different areas. But from the variety of plants which they planted, it seems that gardens were established not only for beautification of the capitals but also for the economic purposes. Keeping this in mind, the present paper highlights how the gardens laid by Akbar and Jahangir proved economically beneficial for Kashmir.

Kashmir, a valley surrounded by mountains, became an attractive site for garden construction. Garden cultivation was not new in Kashmir. Kashmiri society as well as state understood that the plantation of both fruit bearing and non-fruit bearing trees was an integral part of their socio-economic activities. Though agricultural production was the dominant source of the livelihood and the source of state's revenue, but right from the very beginning people used forest produce as an important source in fulfilling their day to day needs. Even before man developed agriculture, he lived mostly on fruits and flesh. Man sought shelter under trees against inclement weather, got fruits and nuts to eat and

² Ibid.

³ Irfan Habib and Vijay Kumar, *The Vedic Age*, New Delhi: Taluka Books, 2003, p. 37.

⁴ Romila Thapar, *Ancient Indian Social History: Some Interpretations*, New Delhi: Orient Blackswan, 2010, p. 137.

procured timber for manufacturing implements. It is from wood that he obtained fire which enabled him to cook his food and to warm his dwellings. And with the development of civilization the need for trees and tree products increased. Consequently, the culture of tree plantation and protection emerged in Kashmiri.

Fruit Bearing Plantation: The culture of tree plantation and protection of trees and forests may be traced from ancient times because it was understood as a pious work in Kashmir. The concept of pleasure garden was very much there but mainly in the form of orchards. In these gardens, plenty of flowers, herbaceous plants including aromatic were also grown, as is mentioned in historical treatises like *Nilmatpurana* (6th-7th centuries)⁵ and *Kshemendras Narmamla* (11th-12th centuries).⁶ Both the sources mention about the *Bagh-i-Tut* (Mulberry garden) which was developed by a Hindu saint.⁷ Similarly, we have mention of grape gardens in the *Rajtarangni*. About the taste of grapes Kalhana says “grapes, which were scarce even in heaven were common in Kashmir” during the time of Lalitaditya particularly at Martand, Anantnag.⁸ Bilhana when singing about the beauties of his homeland mentions grapes growing in abundance in the Valley.⁹ Heuin Tsang who visited Kashmir in the seventh century AD remarks that Kashmir ‘produced abundant of fruits and flowers’. Among the fruits grown were the pear (*li*), apple (*palevata*), the wild plum (*nai*), the peach (*t’au*), the apricot (*hang*) and the grape (*po-tau*).¹⁰ Kalhana says people took a great interest in the plantation and cultivation of fruits and vegetables. He also mentions that

⁵ Ved Kumari, tr. *Nilmatpurana*, Vol. II, Srinagar: J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, 2001, p. 132.

⁶ Suman Jamwal, *Economy of Early Kashmir*, Jammu: Bookbank, Publishers, 2007, p. 24.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Kalhana, *Rajtarangni*, V, Delhi: Motilal Banarasidas, 1899, p. 135.

⁹ Suman Jamwal, *Economy of Early Kashmir*, p. 24.

¹⁰ S. Luckvinder Singh Sodhi, *The History of Ancient Kashmir*, Srinagar, Gulshan Books, 2018, p. 147.

canals were constructed especially for the irrigation of gardens and manuring was regularly done.¹¹

Continuity of cultural tradition in Kashmir is proverbial. This continuity is found almost in all the aspects of life including horticulture. During Sultanate period, the Sultans took keen interest in the improvement of Kashmiri fruits and the system of gardening as a whole. We have references to plantation of pleasant grooves of trees in Kashmir by Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470). He built a palace in the middle of the Wullar Lake and planted grooves of trees.¹² The other notable gardens during this period were built by Hussain Shah Chak and Yousuf Shah Chak. Hussain Shah Chak developed a large garden in village Nauhata which was adjacent to the Shrine of Hazrat Khawaja Moinuddin Naqshbandi. A water canal by the name of— *Lachma-Kol* was brought into it and the arrangements of waterfalls and fountains were made. Similarly, Yousuf Shah Chak on the edges of river Jhelum developed a vast garden of different flowers and plants from Fateh Kadal (Bridge) to the ghat of Dal, *Hasanyar*.¹³ This garden consisted of thirteen compartments/stages, and its traces were found till Afghan rule in Kashmir. Besides the Sultans, the merchants and other well to do inhabitants also had a love for flowers and gardens, and their house gardens (lawns).¹⁴ Then, there were the Reshis (Kashmiri mystics), who were habitual to plant shade and fruit bearing trees wherever they stayed.¹⁵

Under the Mughals, botanical products became a major source of income for both the state and society.¹⁶ Mughals fully realized the importance of trees and forests in the general economy and prosperity of the region and followed a definite policy for their conservation and scientific

¹¹ Kalhana, *Rajtarangni*, IV, p. 58.

¹² Mohib-ul-Hassan, *Kashmir Under Sultans*, Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2005, p. 249.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD 1526-1707)*, Delhi: Partridge Publishing India, 2018, p. 56.

exploitation.¹⁷ A large number of changes took place in the products and practices of horticulture. Mughal emperors like Akbar and Jahangir shared a natural gift of the traditional Muslim interest in horticulture pursuits and were keenly desirous of promoting this activity. Mughal interest in the horticulture can be traced from the writings of Mirza Haider Dughlat (1543-44) who has given a detailed description of the fruits which were grown in Kashmir. He writes:

As for the fruits-pears, mulberries, cherries and sour cherries are met with, but the apples are particularly good. There are other fruits in plenty, sufficient to make one break one's resolution. Among the wonders of Kashmir are the quantities of mulberry trees (cultivated for their leaves), from which silk is obtained. The people make a practice of eating its fruit...in the season the fruit is plentiful that it is rarely bought and sold. The holder of a garden and the man that has no garden are alike; for the gardens have no walls and it is not usual to hinder anyone from taking the fruit. He further writes 'the fruits are especially good and wholesome. But, since the temperature inclines to cold and the snow falls in great abundance, those fruits which require much warmth, such as dates, oranges and lemons do not ripen there; these are imported from neighboring warm regions'.¹⁸

This tradition of planting trees was seriously taken up by Mughals after their conquest of Kashmir. Several steps were taken for the encouragement of tree plantation and for the improvement of horticulture by Emperor Akbar himself. It has been mentioned that Akbar showed a keen interest in planting the trees of all kinds. According to Abul Fazl, Akbar looked upon fruits as one of the greatest gifts of the creator, and paid much attention to them.¹⁹ His interest in

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Mirza Haider Dughlat, *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, New Delhi: Forgotten Books, 2005, p. 235.

¹⁹ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol III, Eng. Tr. Colonel H.S. Jarrett, Calcutta, Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal, 1949, p. 226.

horticulture can be seen from the writings of Abul Fazl who writes that 'His majesty (Akbar) invited the horticulturists from Turan and Iran and made them to settle down in India' and their services were utilized in Kashmir too.²⁰ He laid the foundation of the Nassembagh garden on the western bank of Dal Lake, besides many other small gardens which also include a garden at Nagar Nagar city.²¹ The orchards that were laid during this time contained many fruits like melons, apples, peaches, apricots, plums and mulberries.²² Apart from fruits and fruit trees other kind of plant species are also mentioned by Abul Fazl, prominent of which was birch tree. According to Abul Fazl, people of Kashmir used to write on the bark of birch tree.²³

Kashmiris used to cultivate vegetables in their kitchen gardens. The people living in Srinagar cultivated vegetables in the middle of the Dal Lake.²⁴ This tradition of raising artificial islands (floating gardens) in the middle of the waters was started by people during the times of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. The author of *Baharistan-i-Shahi* mentions the success of these gardens and states that food was available in such abundance as Kashmir had never seen before.²⁵ These gardens by their very nature are rich in nutrients. For the enrichment of the soil, manures like poudrette, commonly called as soor (ashes) was used.²⁶ Floating islands yield four crops annually in comparison to only two crops from vegetable fields of other areas.²⁷ Abul Fazl is perhaps the first writer who took note of the crops produced in the lakes of Kashmir. According to him, floating gardens produced a bulk

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Jahangir, *The Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Eng, Tr. Alexander Rogers, Delhi: Low Price Publishers, 2006, p. 150.

²² Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol II, p. 354.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid. p. 361.

²⁵ Anonymous, *Bahiristan-i-Shahi*, Eng. Tr. K.N. Pandit, Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2013, p. 44.

²⁶ H.L. Rivett, *Assessment Report on Mir-i-Bahri*, New Delhi: National Archives, New Delhi, 1898, p. 26.

²⁷ N.K. Zutshi, *Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin: An age of Enlightenment*, Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2012.p. 281

crop of cucumbers and melons and credit for all this is given by him to Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in whose time these were laid out.²⁸ The other vegetables which were common in the floating gardens included knol kohl (*monji*), karam sag, turnip, pumpkin, cucumber, egg plant, radish, chili, spinach and many other vegetables.²⁹ Mong and wheat were also cultivated there.³⁰ The revenue received by state during Akbar's period from the *Mir Bahri* was 3683 *Zarb-i-Akbari*.³¹ Many new techniques and seeds were introduced in Kashmir during Akbar's period. Abul Fazl writes that Akbar took special measures in improving the quality of fruits in India and Kashmir. For instance, he observed:³²

Skilled hands from Turkestan and Persia under his Majesty's patronage sowed melons and planted vine trees and traders began to introduce new fruits of fine quality from central Asian countries, which occasioned abundance here when they were not procurable in their own.

He further writes:³³

Through the encouragement given by his Majesty, the choicest production of Turkestan, Persia and Hindustan are to be found here, muskmelons are to be found here now for whole year. They come first in the season when the sun is in Taurus and Gemini (April, May, June), and later crop when he is in Cancer and Leo (June, July, August). When the season is over, they are imported from Kashmir.

About the muskmelons of Kashmir, Mohammad Saleh Kamboh writes:³⁴

²⁸ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol III, Eng. Tr. Colonel H.S. Jarrett, New Delhi: New Taj Office, repr. 1989, p. 361.

²⁹ Ibid. p. 277.

³⁰ P.N.K Bamzai, *A History of Kashmir Political-Social-Cultural From Earliest Times to Present*, Srinagar: Gulshan Books, 2008, p. 511.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. III, p. 302.

³³ Ibid.

Muskmelons of Kashmir if it survives the two calamities i.e. hailstones and worm-eating, and comes out as a whole, is extremely tasty.

During Akbar's reign, big orchards were laid almost in all the regions of India including Kashmir. In these orchards, Mohammad Qazvani mentions that almost all varieties of fruits were grown. About the fruits grown in Kashmir, Qazvani wrote:³⁵

From out of the fruits of the colder regions there is hardly any fruit that does not grow in Kashmir... shahalu of this place has no rival either in the beauty or color or in the delicacy of taste...apples are very large and very tasty. Nashpati grows in large quantities. It is very juicy and delicate. Pomegranates are average. Muskmelon is as good as the one of Khurasan. Watermelon...is large and very reddish inside. It is very sweet. Kashmir has large varieties of grapes. However due to humid air, even though large in size, it is not sweet, unnab, badam and gargan grow very well.

Akbar not only encouraged the indigenous methods of cultivation but he also introduced some new techniques. Besides encouraging indigenous varieties, he also introduced new varieties of trees and fruits that were earlier not grown in Kashmir. For instance, he is credited with the introduction of sweet cheery. Above all, the technique of grafting was introduced by him. In this regard, Jahangir writes:³⁶

Before his Majesty Arsha Ashyani's reign there were absolutely no cherries. Mohammad Quli Ashraf brought them from Kabul and grafted them. Now here are ten to fifteen fruit bearing trees. There were

³⁴ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

³⁵ Muhammad Amin bin Abul Qasim Qazvini, *Padshahnama/Shahjahan Nama*, transcript of Reza (Library Rampur available in Seminar Library, Centre of Advanced Study in History, Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, ff. 131.

³⁶ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 168.

also few trees of grafted apricots, the same person spread grafting throughout the land, and they are now abundant.

Akbar's son Jahangir (1605-1627) was even more devoted to gardens and intensely interested in botany. He used to observe fruits and flowers, he would see in his marches with meticulous care. M.A. Alvi and A.A. Rehman mention that the outstanding features of Jahangir's character were his love of nature and his power of observation.³⁷ It has been rightly said of him that had he been head of a natural history museum, he would have been a better and happier man.³⁸ In botany, his interests were primarily horticultural. He tells us of having made it possible to cultivate high altitude trees of Himalayan region like the cypress, juniper, pine and the jawanese sandal tree in the plains of India.³⁹ During his reign and under his patronage many gardens were laid out which include Shalimar garden,⁴⁰ *Jarokhabagh*,⁴¹ Verinag garden,⁴² Achabal garden,⁴³ *Bagh-i-Begumabad*,⁴⁴ *Bagh-i-Amrud*⁴⁵ etc.

³⁷ M.A. Alvi & A. Rehman, Jahangir, The Naturalist, in Meena Bhargava, ed. *Frontiers of Environment: Issues in Medieval and Early Modern India*, Hyderabad: Orient Blackswan 2017, p. 60.

³⁸ Salim A. Ali, "The Moghul Emperors of India As Naturalist and Sportsmen", in *Frontiers of Environment*, p. 53.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ This garden was built by Emperor Jahangir of the eastern shores of Dal Lake. Ibid.

⁴¹ Noorjahan laid the foundation of this garden on the northern shore of Mansbal Lake.

⁴² The foundation of Verinag garden was laid by Emperor Jahangir. The garden landscape was planned and executed by Mirza Haider an able engineer of the Mughal Court at the behest of Emperor Jahangir. It is said that, the garden landscape was further extended between 1626 and 1627 AD. C.M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of Great Mughals*, London, Oriental Publishers, 1913, p. 23.

⁴³ This garden served Jahangir for drinking and merry making spot.

⁴⁴ This garden is famous by the name of Sahib Abad. By the orders of Nur Jahan it was laid-out at Achabal spring in Pargana Kothar. The buildings of this garden are now in dilapidated condition. Raja Ranbir Singh ordered for ordinary repairs.

⁴⁵ From Tanki Pora Bridge to Nati Pora- this garden was laid out between the reign of Emperor Jahangir and Shahjahan. In this garden, different varieties of Gauva trees were present in abundance-even sun rays couldn't pass through them. During its flowering season,

Both fruit bearing and non fruit bearing trees were planted in these gardens which were carefully studied by the emperor himself.

Interestingly Emperor Jahangir had also been keenly observing and investigating the fruit trees of Kashmir. His scientific observation bears typical example of the fact that he recorded, measured, counted, and gave a logical comparison of the fruits. In Kashmir, maximum number of gardens was laid out during his reign. As already mentioned, experiments on grafting and plantation of new varieties of fruits were carried out in these gardens, with well known and beneficial effects for the variety and exuberance of fruit industry in the Valley.⁴⁶ Jahangir took a keen interest in knowing the fruits and fruit trees of Kashmir. It is evident from the fact that he wrote almost about all the fruits grown in Kashmir from spring to winter in a very accurate manner. His accuracy of observing plant morphology can be seen from the fact that he personally made detailed observation about the fruits from their blossoming to ripening. Jahangir mentions that the earliest fruit to mature in Kashmir is the *Ashkin*. About the description of the fruit, he says that it is smaller than a sour cherry. Jahangir mentions that it was much better in terms of flavor and delicacy. Because of its sweet taste, Jahangir renamed it *Khoshkin* (pleasing). He says besides here in plains, it also grows in the mountainous regions of Badakhshan and Khurasan, where the people call it *Najmad*. The largest ones weight is half a mithcal.⁴⁷ He took a keen and careful note of cherries grown in Kashmir and wrote:⁴⁸

The cherries in the Nurafza garden appeared about the size of a chickpea on the fourth of Urdibihisht (May 14). By the twenty-seventh (May 27), they changed colour, and on the fifteenth of Khurdad they were perfectly ripe and the first crop was taken in. The cherry to my taste is the most delicious of all

people of the city visit often this garden for fulfillment of enjoyment. It was in existence till the period of Amir Khan.

⁴⁶ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁴⁷ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 168.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

fruits. Four trees had borne fruits in *Nurafza Garden*. I named one of them *Shirinbar* (Of Sweet Fruit), the second *Khoshguvar* (Of Good Taste), the third which produced the most fruit of all, *Purbar* (Full of Fruit), and the fourth, which had the least fruit, *Kambar* (Of Little Fruit). One tree in Khurram's Garden had borne fruit, and I named it *Shahwar* (Kingly). There was a sapling in *Ishratafza Garden* I named *Nawbar* (Newly bearing). The cherries of Kashmir are not inferior to those of Kabul, in-fact, they are even larger. The biggest ones weighed a tank and five surkhs. From the four trees in the *Nurafza Garden* fifteen hundred cherries were picked, and from all others, five hundred. I ordered the officials of Kashmir to have cherry trees grafted in most of the gardens and let them propagate.

About the other fruits of Kashmir, Jahangir observed:⁴⁹

There are pears (nashpati) of the best kind, better than Kabul or Badakshan and nearly equal to those of Samarqand. The apples of Kashmir are celebrated for their goodness. The guavas (amrud) are middling. Grapes are plentiful but most of them harsh and inferior, and the pomegranates are not worth much, water melons of the best kind can be obtained . . . there are no shah-tut but there are (tut) mulberries everywhere. From the foot of every mulberry tree a vine creeper grow up.

Jahangir mentions that mulberry trees were also grafted in Kashmir gardens to bring the fine quality of mulberry. He further says that there were no black mulberries, but ordinary mulberries. Jahangir writes that at the base of mulberry there people used to plant vine trees.⁵⁰ Vine production was good in Kashmir and vine preparation was the profession of so many people in Kashmir.⁵¹

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid. p. 159.

⁵¹ W. Moorcroft, *Travels in Kashmir*, Vol. II, London: John Murry, 1937, p. 265.

With the efforts of Akbar and Jahangir there was an increase in the production of fruits throughout the region which resulted in an immense increase in their availability.⁵² Fruits green and dry of different varieties constituted an import item of diet consumed especially by the well to do classes.⁵³ Melons and grapes had become very plentiful and excellent and watermelons, peaches, almonds, pomegranates, etc. were found everywhere.⁵⁴ The importance of the fruits of Kashmir for the Mughals is reflected from the fact that it has been said that with the conquest of Kashmir, loads of fruits were imported throughout the whole year. The stores of dealers always remained full, and there was increased supply in the bazaars.⁵⁵

Due to the revenue accruing to the state from this source, fruit gardens were treated in a special manner. A flat rate of rupees 2-3/4 per bigha was charged, even if the trees did not bear fruit.⁵⁶ Exception was made in case the orchards planted with grapes and almonds, in which case the demand was realized only when plant bore fruit. Sometimes if it was found that the orchard was sufficiently productive, a 5th or a 6th of the net produce was claimed.⁵⁷ If the maintenance of the orchard lost more than the value of the yield no change was made. Akbar remitted cess on the fruit trees which was called *Sar-i-darakti*. Jahangir whose taste for fruits was notorious, states that fruit trees were and had always been free of any demand for revenue and that a garden planted on cultivated land was forth with exempted from assessment. In his memoirs Jahangir writes:⁵⁸

God to be praised that in this age-enduring state no tax has ever been levied on the fruit of trees, and levied now. In the whole of the dominion neither a dam nor a grain (Habba) on this account enters

⁵² Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ M. A. Kaw, *The Agrarian System of Kashmir (1586-1819 AD)*, Srinagar: Aiman Publications, 2001, p. 89.

⁵⁵ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 186.

the public treasury, or is collected by the state. Moreover, there is an order that whoever makes a garden on arable land, its produce is exempted.

Among various *karkhanas*, a special department for fruits existed which was called *Mewah Khana*, for the supervision of the supply, grade and the stuff of the fruity. During Akbar's reign, for the *Mewah Khana* delicious, tender and sweet smelling musk melons, different varieties of grapes and many other fruits such as pomegranates, apples, and peaches were supplied from Kashmir.⁵⁹ In the *Mewah Khana*, the fruits were marked according to their degree of excellence, melons of first quality were marked with the line drawn round the top; those of second; with two lines and so on. Whenever Akbar took wine or opium, the servants used to place before him stands of fruits, usually he ate little, and most of them was bestowed as *Alush* to others. In this department mansabdars, *Ahadis* (Emperors own troops) and other soldiers were employed.⁶⁰

In Jahangir's reign, the same supply flowed in the *Mewah khana*. Some new fruits were added to the list, such as *sahabi* and *hubshi* grapes which emperor used to distribute among ladies of *haram*.⁶¹ During this period, loads of fruits were being imported from Kabul and Kashmir. Although the distance from Kashmir to Agra was 600 kos,⁶² yet the fruits arrived 'very ripe and fresh'. Apples and cucumbers were sent by the *dak chowki* to the imperial tables by the officers.⁶³ They were of excellent flavor and arrived very fresh. Jahangir liked them immensely and was greatly pleased in eating them. These fruits were packed with so much care that they looked fresh when brought to Indian markets. The fruits were

⁵⁹ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁶⁰ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol III, p. 302.

⁶¹ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁶² Irfan Habib, *An Atlas of the Mughal Empire*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1982, p. 3.

⁶³ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

wrapped in cotton in the round wooden boxes and were supplied then to the markets.⁶⁴

Non-Fruit Bearing Trees: Not only fruit cultivation but plantation of different varieties of flowers and shady trees were also encouraged. In all Mughal gardens, there were beds of flowers known for their beauty and fragrance. The gardens laid out by the aristocracy such as Nassembagh, Shalimar bagh, Jarokhabagh and other local gardens adjoining their mansions used to be so planned as to consist of both fruit bearing trees and sweet scented attractive blossoms.⁶⁵ Abul Fazl has praised the flowers of Kashmir. He writes:⁶⁶

It is really too difficult for me ignorant as I am, to give a description of the flowers of this region, he further writes; gardens and flower beds are everywhere to be found.

He has divided the flowers grown in India and Kashmir in different categories. Those were 1. Fine smelling flowers, 2. Flowers notable for their beauty and 3. Various Irani and Turani flowers which were introduced during Akbar's period. Fine smelling flowers include the *Sweti*, *Bholsari*, *Chambeli*, *Ray-bel*, *Mongra*, *Gulal*, violet and *Gul-i-Zafran*. He has also mentioned the seasons in which these flowers were grown. Second category of flowers includes *Gul-i-Aftab*, *Gul-i-Kanwal*, *Jafari*, *Gul-i-Henna*, *Sonzard* and *Ratanmali*. Various Turani and Irani flowers which were introduced in India and Kashmir were *Gul-i-Surukh*, the *Nargis*, the Violet and *Yasman-i-Kabud*.⁶⁷ Abul Fazl is full of praise for the flowers of Kashmir:⁶⁸

The flowers are enchanting and fill the heart with delight. Violets, the red rose and wild narcissus

⁶⁴ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 106.

⁶⁵ C.M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of Great Mughals*, London, Oriental Publishers, 1913, p. 23.

⁶⁶ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 384.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

covers the plains . . . Tulips are grown on the roofs which presents a lovely sight in spring time.

More than Akbar, Jahangir took a keen interest in planting the flowers in the gardens of Kashmir. The plants which were planted on the sides of the Dal Lake in Kashmir were so beautiful that 'they were enough to wilder the gaze'.⁶⁹ Different varieties were planted there but the most notable was scarlet lotus, which according to Jahangir was called *Kanwal* in Hindustan.⁷⁰ About the flowers of Kashmir Jahangir wrote:⁷¹

Kashmir is a perennial garden . . . red roses, violets and narcissi grow wild; there are fields of all kinds of flower.

On his visit to Kashmir in 1620, he observed:⁷²

Sweet smelling plants of narcissus, violet and strange flowers that grow in the country came to view. Among these flowers I saw one extraordinary one. It had five or six orange flowers blooming with their heads downwards. From the middle of the flowers there come out some green leaves, as in case of the pine apple.

Flowers were grown with so much care that even at the end of season flowers like jasmine were available in the *Nurmanzil garden* of Kashmir.⁷³ Della Valle has mentioned that he saw various flowers in the Emperor Jahangir's garden which were unknown in Europe; he had made a special mention of *Champa* flower.⁷⁴ The cultivation of roses seems to have received strong impetus during Jahangir's time

⁶⁹ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 32.

⁷⁰ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 166.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

because of the increased demand of rose water and the newly invented rose essence (*itr-i-Jahangiri*).⁷⁵

Large tracts of land around Dal and Manasbal Lake's were brought under the plantation of flowers in Kashmir. The importance of the flowers was that they were used for manufacturing of perfumes which had a good market in India and abroad. We have references in contemporary sources where it is mentioned that different types of perfumes and scented oils were extracted from the scented flowers and scented woods.⁷⁶ Different types of *itar* (scents) and oils were in use, especially among upper class and aristocracy. Abul Fazl writes:

His Majesty is very fond of perfumes and encourages this department for the religious motives. The court hall is continually scented with ambergris, aloe wood, and compositions according to ancient recipes, or mixtures invented by his Majesty; and the incense in daily burnt in gold and silver censers of various shapes; whilst sweet-smelling flowers were used in large quantities. Oil are also extracted from flowers, and used for skin and hair.⁷⁷

We know from Abul Fazl that the imperial kitchen was elaborately equipped for all kinds of techniques that might be needed in the process of drying, extracting, fermenting, distilling and straining. The *Ain-i-Akbari* provides a list of perfumes manufactured in Kashmir like *Sugandh*, *Gulala*, *Zafaran*, *Gaura*, etc.⁷⁸

Abul Fazl has given a long list of the scented oils and incenses and the methods used for their preparations. *Santuk* was used for keeping the skin fresh and it was prepared by mixing civet, *chewa* and *chambeli* essence and rose water. *Argaja* was used in summer for keeping skin cool. It was made by mixing sandal wood, *chewa*, violet root, camphor and eleven bottles of rose water, for the preparation of

⁷⁵ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 190.

⁷⁶ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

⁷⁷ Abul Fazl, *Ain-i-Akbari*, Vol. II, p. 306.

⁷⁸ Ibid. pp. 284-286.

Gulkama were required ambergris, ladan, best mask, wood of aloes, all these were put into porcelain vessel and mixed with juice of a flower called *gul-i-surkh* and then it was exposed to sun till it dried up and in the evening it was wetted with rose water and with the extract of a flower called *bahar* and was pounded on *samaq* stone. Then it was allowed to stand for ten days, and mixed with the juice of a flower called *bahar-i-naranj* (orange flower bloom) and again it was kept to dry. During next twenty days was occasionally added the mixture of black *rayan* (sweet basil). *Ruh-afza* was made by mixing aloe-wood, sandal wood, ladan, rose water etc. It was burnt in censers, and smelled very fine.⁷⁹ Jahangir writes that from *ketki*, *keora* and *chambeli* sweet scented oils were extracted.⁸⁰ Manucci refers to the extraction of oil from sun flowers.⁸¹ Royal ladies took keen interest in inventing various kinds of *itar*. Pelsaert noted that women studied night and day how to make exciting perfumes and efficacious preserves, such as *mosseri* or *falroj* containing amber, pearls, gold, *amboa*, opium and other stimulants.⁸² One of the most famous perfumes which was discovered during the reign of Jahangir was *ittr-i-Jahangiri*.⁸³ There is a story in Jahangir's memoirs, which attributes the discovery of this *itar* of roses to Noorjahan's mother, Asmat Begum, when she was making rose water, once, Jahangir noted, "a scum formed on the surface of the dishes into which the hot rose water was poured from jugs. She collected this scum little by little and discovered that it was so strong that if one drop be rubbed on the palm of the hand it scents a whole assembly, and it appears as if many many red rose buds had bloomed at once. It was such a good perfume that Jahangir presented a string of pearls to the inventors, and Salima Sultan Begum gave the oil the name *ittr-i-Jahangiri*".⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Ibid.

⁸⁰ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 190.

⁸¹ N. Manucci, *Mogul India: 1653-1708*, Vol. II, p. 321.

⁸² F. Pelsaert, *Jahangir's India*, London: Royals, 1903, p. 213.

⁸³ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

⁸⁴ Ibid.

Such was the production of flowers in Kashmir that flower festivals were celebrated in Kashmir every year. Villiers Stuart mentions that three flower festivals were observed every year in Kashmir.⁸⁵ On such occasions people used to visit the lake side gardens where they tasted sweet color and scent of the flowers.⁸⁶ For the preservation, protection and maintenance of flower gardens a separate department was created during the time of Akbar which was called *Khusbhu Khana*.⁸⁷ *Khusbhu Khana* was given the charge to collect the special flowers for the manufacturing of perfumes which had a good demand in the market. Abul Fazl gives list of 34 varieties of perfumes along with the price which were available in the market. Some of which are shown below in the table. The prices given in the below list shows the demand of perfumes and the importance of the *Khusbhu Khanna* department:

Perfumes	Prices
<i>Amber-i-Ashhab</i>	1 to 3 muhurs, per tola
<i>Zabad</i>	½ to 1 muhur. per tola
<i>Musk</i>	1 to 4 muhur per tola
<i>Agar</i>	2 to 1 muhur per tola
<i>Chuwā</i>	1 muhur per tola
<i>Gaura</i>	3 muhur per tola
<i>Zafran</i>	12 muhur per tola
<i>Nafa-yi-musk</i>	3 muhur per tola
<i>Kafur-i-china</i>	1 muhur per tola
<i>Araq-i-Fitna</i>	3 muhur per tola
<i>Rose water</i>	1 muhur per tola
<i>Araq-i-bahar</i>	5 muhur per tola

Source: *Ain-i-Akbari*

Shady Trees: Apart from planting fruit trees in gardens, a large number of shady trees were planted on the both sides of the roads either directly by the state or else by some wealthy

⁸⁵ C.M. Villiers Stuart, *Gardens of Great Mughals*, p. 174.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

philanthropists. Such shady trees were known as *khyaban* or avenues.⁸⁸ These were planted to provide fruit and shelter to the tired way fares. Tradition of plantation of trees on the roadside was promoted by Sultans and Reshi saints (Kashmiri mystics). Akbar continued this policy and issued orders for the plantation of trees on both sides of the roads. Father Montserrat who visited Kashmir in the reign of Akbar writes that the roads were planted down to the middle with beautiful green trees casting grateful shades.⁸⁹ Jahangir issued *farmans* to zamindars and other officials to construct *sarraies* and plant shade trees on the road sides.⁹⁰ It is after the issue of this *farman* that a large number of trees were planted especially around Dal Lake. This is reflected from the fact that during the visit of Khurram, the workers of Jahangir planted *chinar* and *safiada* (poplar) trees at a distance of 3 *gaz* (2.73 meter) on the both sides of Shalimar road.⁹¹ Bernier mentions, that the lake was surrounded by the large leafed trees, planted at the interval of two feet. The largest of these trees might be clasped in man's arms, but they were as high as the mast of a ship.⁹²

Chinar was mostly preferred by Akbar and Jahangir who encouraged their aristocracy to plant such trees in the gardens and road sides.⁹³ One simple reason for it was that the Mughals knew that chinar trees have a long span surviving time. And they knew that it spreads wide and thus provides shadow in the warmth of sun temperature. Chinar was declared as 'royal tree' by them.⁹⁴ The facilities on the roads and shade trees used to lessen the discomfort of long journey, some of which lasted for months. About the plantation of trees on this road De Laet writes, the road is

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

⁹⁰ Jahangir, *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, p. 90.

⁹¹ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

⁹² F. Bernier, *Travels in Mogol Empire*, London: 1933, p. 210.

⁹³ M. A. Numani, *The Ecology and Environment of Kashmir (1586-1846)*, Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, Aligrah Muslim University, p. 56.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

boarded by trees either side which bear fruit something like mulberry and serve as shelter to the travelers.⁹⁵

Conclusion: The Mughals were the pioneers in the study of natural history. In spite of their onerous administrative and military duties, Akbar and Jahangir took a keen interest in planting and observing the variegated flora of the region. Not only that but they also commissioned artists and scientists to chronicle the same for the posterity. The botanical culture initiated by Akbar and Jahangir provided employment to the people on large scale. The fruit and flower preservation gave an impetus to the promotion of new industries. The common method of preserving fruits was that of pickles and *murabbas* (*Murabba* is an Arabic word means preserved sweet fruit). Many people in Kashmir took interest in manufacturing the pickles which were supplied to the other regions of India. Similarly, Kashmiris took keen interest in the perfume making. The scent manufacturing industry provided employment to the people which not only helped in improving the economy of the region but also widened the scope of floriculture in Kashmir. This way we can say that Mughals have left a rich legacy of botanical culture for succeeding generations.

⁹⁵ Versha Gupta, *Botanical Culture of Mughal India (AD. 1526-1707)*, p. 109.

Syncretic Cultural Heritage of Kashmir (1846-1947)

Zameerah Yusuf

Abstract: *The valley of Kashmir, known for its scenic beauty all over the world, remained in national and international news due to the armed struggle that broke out in 1990. This struggle was the offshoot of various political reasons, but it may have created some doubts about the centuries old composite culture of Kashmir. The present paper, therefore, aims at exploring the age old intercommunity relations with an emphasis on the traditions of togetherness and harmony in Kashmir. After having a detailed discussion about the unity and diversity in everyday life of Hindus as well as Muslims, it ultimately concludes that the foundations of this culture are so strong that in spite of various ups and downs, the composite culture has persisted and would continue in future as well.*

Introduction: It was on 16 March, 1846 that by virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar, the British government of India transferred the valley of Kashmir to Maharaja Gulab Singh, a vassal of Lahore Darbar and the Raja of Jammu *Jagir* for his loyal services against the Sikh empire.¹ Like other oriental despots, the Dogra rulers till 1885 were given a free hand in case of the internal matters of the State of Jammu and Kashmir which came into being due to the above mentioned treaty. Consequently, it was administered along feudal lines in which the Maharajas sought the collaborators of their rule mostly from their co-religionists.² Therefore, till late 1930s the Muslims of the Valley accordingly to Prem Nath Bazaz, a noted historian and veteran leader of the freedom struggle in Princely Kashmir, “were the hewers of wood and the drawers of water”.³ But, the nature and character of the Dogra State

¹ Ganai, M. Y. (et al.). *Kashmir Past and Present* (ed.), Srinagar, Jay Kay Books, 2020, pp. 126-131.

² Lawrence, Water Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, Srinagar, Chinara Publishing House (reprint), 1992, p. 401.

³ Bazaz, Prem Nath. *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, New Delhi, Kashmir Publishing Company, 1954, p. 144.

did not remain monolithic throughout the century of its rule. As a result of the British intervention especially since 1885 when a full-fledged Residency was imposed upon Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925),⁴ the Dogra State adopted numerous measures towards the modernization of the administration and the welfare of its subjects. One such obvious measure was the introduction of Western (English) education that paved way for the political awakening and the emergence of a vibrant freedom struggle (1931-1947) in Kashmir.⁵

One of the negative effects of the modern political consciousness, as we observe in case of the freedom movement in British India, was the rise and growth of Hindu and Muslim communalism.⁶ In case of Kashmir, both landed aristocracy as well as bureaucracy was overwhelmingly dominated by the Kashmiri Pandits who comprised not more than six percent of the total population of the Valley.⁷ Naturally, there were more chances of communal polarization. But, that did not happen, and the freedom

⁴ In order to have detailed information about the administrative reforms undertaken by Maharaja Pratap Singh under the guidance of Residency, see a panegyric written by Ghulam Ahmed Mahjoor in the praise of Maharaja vide *Kuliyat-i-Mahjoor* (Anthology), Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art Culture and Languages, pp. 404-414.

⁵ Writing in the context of Kashmiri Muslim young men who were studying in various Universities in British India towards the end of 1920s and the early 1930s and the Struggle for Freedom in British India Prem Nath Bazaz observed: "This glorious chapter in the history of the national movement in India could not but produce profound effect on the minds of the Kashmiri Muslim young men. . . . Fired with the spark of freedom and enthused with the emotion of pan Islamism a batch of young men returned to their home early in 1931 A. C. The echoes and the reverberations of the Civil Disobedience Movement had been heard in the mountains and the villages of Kashmir in advance of the return of these young men . . . The stage was set with all the paraphernalia; only the actors were needed to play their parts. Who but these educated and enthusiastic young men were best suited for the task?" For further details see Bazaz, Prem Nath. *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, pp. 146-147.

⁶ For details about the rise of communalism in India see Chandra, Bipan. *India's Struggle for Independence 1857-1947*, New Delhi, Penguin Books, 1988, pp. 400-402.

⁷ *Census of India, Vol. XIII, Kashmir*, 1891, pp. 18-15.

movement waged against the autocracy was through and through progressive.⁸ Moreover, when in 1947 freedom came with partition and there was communal frenzy all over northern India, Kashmir continued to uphold the age old traditions of composite culture. That is why Mahatma Gandhi could see 'a ray of hope in Kashmir'.⁹

Towards Cultural Synthesis: From times immemorial many conquerors and missionaries have entered and settled down in the Valley. Different regimes and races with divergent backgrounds (Hindus, Buddhists, Huns, Shahmiris, Mughals, Pathans, Sikhs and Dogras) arrived and laid their impact on Kashmir society. The valley of Kashmir, therefore, became a cradle of composite culture and this culture continued during the period under discussion.¹⁰ It is worthwhile to mention that Hinduism and Buddhism flourished in the Valley side by side and later on Islam established its influence. With the passage of time, the impact of Islam brought about many changes in the socio-religious and cultural ethos of the Valley. But, the Islam introduced in Kashmir was also influenced by Hinduism. The converts to the new faith no doubt retained some features of their earlier life style. All this resulted into a unique cultural synthesis.¹¹

⁸ Bazaz, Prem Nath. *The History of the Struggle for Freedom in Kashmir*, p. 157.

⁹ Abdullah, Shaikh Muhammad. *Atish-i-Chinar (Autobiography)*, Srinagar, Ali Muhammad and Sons, 1986, p. 443.

¹⁰ Kaumudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, New Delhi, Asia Publishing House, 1952, pp. 3-4, *Kashmir Scance*, Vol. I, No: 3, 1966, p.10; Bamzai, P. N. K. *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, New Delhi, Metropolitan Book Co, 1987, p. 311; Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, pp. 63-64, Tikku, Somnath, *Kashmir Speaking, Lahore (n.d)*, pp. 93-94. "Influences of various civilizations and cultures have happily mingled in Kashmir. Like an ocean, Kashmir recieved the tribute of a thousand rivers, and like an ocean again, though perturbed for a while on the surface, it absorbed and assimilated these varied currents into its own culture, weaving out new patterns of synthesis and harmony". Kaumudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, p. 4.

¹¹ Kaumudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, pp. 3-4; *Koshur Samachar*, 1978, (April-May), Vol. XVI, No. 45, pp.2-3; Kapur M. L. *A History of Medieval Kashmir (1320-1586)*, pp. 203-204; Kalla, K. L. *The Heritage of*

Both the oral tradition as well as written records attest to the fact that the Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) and Muslims lived amicably and peacefully. There are concrete evidences that the relations between the two communities continued to be cordial owing to their similarity of language, several customs and thoughts.¹² Munshi Ganesh Lal who visited the Kashmir Valley in 1846 A.D found very little distinction between the two communities.¹³ The similar opinion was expressed by Dr. Ernest Neve when he wrote: "In Kashmir, there is very little fanaticism. In some respects, the toleration is surprising. The friendly relations existing between Mohammadans and Hindus are remarkable, and partly to be explained by the fact that many Hindu customs have survived, even among Mohammadans."¹⁴ In fact, the close affinity of two communities in respect of customs and habits was responsible for the total absence of fanaticism.

The two religious communities in their interactions have supplied two streams of civilization and culture having their influence on each other.¹⁵ G.M.D. Sofi remarks that: "The two

Kashmir (ed.), New Delhi: Mittal Publications, Delhi, 1985, pp. 6-7. Islam flourished in the fourteenth century and influenced the Hindu society in various ways. Nevertheless, it could not escape the influence of Hinduism in the adoption and retention of several customs and practices which can be discerned as prevailing among the Kashmiri Muslims. The Kashmiri Muslims who are primarily converts from the indigenous population have retained their ancestral rituals and beliefs in one form or the other.

¹² Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, Delhi, Vikas Publishing House, 1971, pp. 63-64; Ernest, New. *A Crusader in Kashmir*, London, Seeley, Service & Co. Limited, 1928, p. 150, See also: Bamzai, P. N. K. *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p. 311.

¹³ Lal, Munshi Ganesh. *Siyahat-i-Kashmir*. It is an account of journey to Kashmir in 1846 which has been translated into English and annotated by Vidya Sagar Suri, Simla, Punjab Government Records office, 1955, p. 32.

¹⁴ Drew, Fedric. *Beyond the Pirpanjal*, London Church Missionary Society, 1915, p. 124; see also: Knight, E. F. *Where Three Empires Meet*, London, Longmans, Green, 1905, p. 76.

¹⁵ Kamudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, p. 4; Chand, Tara. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, Allahabad, The Indian Press, 1936, pp. 1-5. Sir John Marshall, has observed: "Seldom in the history of mankind has the spectacle been witnessed of two civilizations so vast and so strongly developed, yet so radically dissimilar, as the Hindus and

cultures interacted and modified one another without saying. For example, where Islam flourished, the caste system weakened, and under Hindu influence Islam lost something of its asperity . . .”¹⁶ The Islamic influence brought about a rapid change in the caste system. The Hindu society which had become lax in this respect under the Buddhist influence became still less rigid in the observance of caste restrictions. Here, the influence of Islam was directly discernible. As a result of the Islamic influence, the rigour of the caste system was further reduced.¹⁷ In this context, it is pertinent to refer to the following statement from the proceedings of the 47th session of Indian History Congress (1986): “The cultural predominance of Islam made silent but such serious erosions into the Hindu culture that Hindus voluntarily sloughed off their religious practices”.¹⁸ It shows that both religions evaporated their originality and instead paved the way for the synthesis of the Hindu and Muslim cultures.¹⁹ The Muslim influence has been mainly on the social side—each being mostly effective where its expression is most vigorous. The unity among people irrespective of any distinctions as also formation of moral character based on absolute trust in God has been the most important feature of Muslim faith. It has influenced the Hindus so that it has stimulated a series of reform movements which gained an impetus through comprehension of each other’s philosophy and religious

Muslims meeting and mingling together”, quotes from the *Literary Heritage of Kashmir* (ed.), pp. 6-7.

¹⁶ Cited by Sufi, G. M. D. *Kashir: Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to our Own*, Vol. I, New Delhi, Light & Life Publishers, 1974, p. 80.

¹⁷ Kapur, M. L. *A History of Medieval Kashmir*, pp. 203-204 and 207-208; Chand, Tara. *Influence of Islam on Indian Culture*, p. 108; Census Report 1891, Part I, p. 140; Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, pp. 54-55. The absence of rigid caste system was one of the main reasons contributing to the religious tolerance among the Hindus and Muslims of the Valley.

¹⁸ Proceedings of the 47th Session of Indian History Congress conducted at University of Kashmir, Hazratbal, Srinagar, October, 1986 vide article of Wani, M. Ashraf. *Hindu-Muslim Society: A Study in Religious Interaction* (A.D. 1339-1586), p. 3.

¹⁹ Ibid.; p. 1.

outlook.²⁰ The Islamic influence was also visible on the Advaita Shaivism preached by Lalleshwari or Lalla Ded.²¹ This is how Islam influenced the Hindu religious outlook.

In the same manner, the Muslims were also influenced by Hinduism. It seemed inevitable for the two systems to influence each other. True, their wide differences tended to reduce their influence and made it less perceptible than what might have been expected. The two processes of repulsion and attraction existed side by side though the former had been more obviously at work than the latter.²² So far as the Muslims were concerned, Hindu pantheistic philosophy with its neglect of forms and distrust of the material, its tendency to identify God and Nature, its disregard of moral distinctions had a great impact on the outlook of the Muslims. In the sphere of religious practice, a notable borrowing had been the habit of reverencing of saints in particular, and the dead in general. It had been a natural corollary of this new change. Lights were burnt, flowers were offered by the Muslims also at Hindu and Muslim shrines, and this tended to be done not only for recognized saints, but for kings or anyone else whose tombs happened to come handy to devotees.²³ Moreover, the two communities were also influenced by their old faith-Buddhism. Buddhism and Hinduism had much in common. Both used the rosary which was a mark of Buddhist and Hindu monks. Buddhists worshiped sacred relics and the worship of relics was a practice mostly borrowed from them.²⁴

²⁰ Spear, Percival. *India, Pakistan and the West*, London, Oxford University Press, 1958, pp. 88-89.

²¹ Kapur, M. L. *A History of Medieval Kashmir*, p. 204; Kaul, Somnath, *The Criterion*, 1967, 26, May (weekly), pp. 11-12. In fact, the order of the Reshis of Kashmir founded by Shaikh Noor-ud-din, the patron saint of Kashmir and the mysticism of Laleshwari showed the impact of Islam on Hinduism and vice-versa. Their mystical sayings are proverbial even now.

²² Spear, Percival. *India, Pakistan and the West*, pp. 88-89.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ganhar, J. L and P. N. Ganhar. *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, Delhi, Tribune Press, 1957, pp. 157-164; Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, p. 57. The most important shrine of this kind is the Dargah Hazratbal, where, the sacred relic of the holy Prophet of Islam has been enshrined. Relic worship was the phenomenon of medieval society and is still popular in different parts of the Valley.

The Muslims also preferred the offering of devotional prayers at the shrines or places where their relics were preserved. Here, they followed either Buddhist or Hindu practice. Besides, the use of amulets and *tasbhi* (rosary) by the Kashmiri Muslims has been traced from the Buddhists.²⁵ It is also attested by certain other facts. The tradition of *khanadamadi* (Adoption of son-in-law as heir) largely seems to be the result of the Hindu custom of adoption.²⁶

In this manner, one can argue that the Muslims of the Valley retained many Hindu customs. Besides, the Kashmiri Muslims followed certain practices which are unknown to the Muslims in other parts of India. For instance, the worshipers were and even today are summoned to mosques for prayers by sounding devotional songs over and above to the call of the *muezzin*.²⁷ Similarly, the anniversaries of several Muslim saints were observed according to the Hindu solar calendar and not on the Hijra lunar calendar. An interesting feature of the *Batamol* and *Reshimol* Sahib's anniversaries at Batamalloo, Srinagar, and Anantnag respectively was that the Muslims and Hindus (Pandits) residing at Batamalloo and Anantnag may not touch mutton or any other non-vegetarian food for at least a day in the case of the festival of *Batamol Sahib* and often for a week in case of the *Reshimol Sahib* at Anantnag. Such a practice is peculiar to Kashmir.²⁸ Walter Roper Lawrence, the prominent land settlement Commissioner of Kashmir (1889-94) mentions about two reasons for the religious tolerance in the Valley. One that the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Sharma, D.C. *Kashmir under the Sikhs*, Delhi, pp. 69-99; *Kashmir Times*, 1978, Vol. III, No: 3, p. 9; Ganhar, J. L. and P. N. Ganhar. *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 157-164; Bamzai, P. N. K. *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p. 311; Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, p. 61.

²⁷ *Kashmir Samachar*, 1978, Vol. XVI, No: 45, pp.2-3; *Kashmir Times*, 1978, Vol.III, No: 3, p. 9.

²⁸ Ibid.; Ganhar, J. L. and P. N. Ganhar. *Buddhism in Kashmir and Ladakh*, pp. 157-164. During the anniversaries of some holy men known as Reshis, Muslims as well as Hindus of such localities would not eat eggs, meat or fish. Thus, it is abundantly clear that the Reshi order had been profoundly influenced by Buddhism. The Reshis in fact abstained from taking flesh and did not marry like the Buddhist monks.

strict prohibition of cow-slaughter removed the principal cause of ill-feeling and second the strong rule under which the people lived for generations would not brook any quarrelling between the Hindus and the Muslims.²⁹ The Muslims paid obeisance to the saints and invoked their aid exactly as the Hindus did in their expression of devotion to their gurus (religious heads) at their places of worship. They also bedaubed themselves with dust of the sacred precincts and recited the *darood*³⁰ (Prophets Praise in verse after *Nimaz*) which generally is not a practice among the Muslims outside the Valley. The most predominant practice borrowed from Hinduism was the observance of caste rules. True, that the Muslims in general would repudiate any such intention and indeed the ideas behind the caste were absent in Islam. But, in case of Kashmir *watals* (a marginalized section of the Muslim community) are considered as a low caste.³¹ Moreover, the idea of caste in case of their matrimonial relations played an important role.³²

Similarity of Customs and Rituals: Some holy places and shrines are held in reverence by the Hindus and Muslims alike. These sacred shrines are mostly situated in close proximity. Obviously many shrines in the Valley are still visited by the members of both the communities. To this day, they are sacred to the Hindus and the Muslims of the Valley.³³ Thus, the similarity in their religious spheres may be observed in the homage paid at the mosque of Shah-i-Hamdan or the Khanqah-i-Mualla,³⁴ temple of Kali or Kalishwari goddess,

²⁹ Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 286.

³⁰ Bamzai, P. N. K. *Socio-Economic History of Kashmir*, p. 311.

³¹ Ganai, Muhammad Yusuf. "History From Below: A Study of Watal Community in Rural Kashmir", Srinagar, *The Journal of Kashmir Studies*, Vol. VII, Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir, pp. 37-38.

³² Spear, Percival. *India, Pakistan and the West*, p. 89.

³³ Kalla, K. L. *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir* (ed.), p. 263; Iqbal, S. M. and Nirash. *The Culture of Kashmir* (ed.), 1978, pp. 117-166, Sharma, B. L. *Kashmir Awakes*, p. 193; *Kashmir Times*, 1978, Vol. II, No: 3, p. 9; Kamudi. *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, p. 193.

³⁴ Mir Syed Ali Hamadani or *Amir-i-Kabir* (the great leader) was the famous Muslim saint from Persia. He had devoted his whole life to the

Ziarat-i-Makhdoom Sahib, Hari Parbat temple of goddess Sharika, Dastgeer sahib,³⁵ Khir Bhawani (Ragniya Devi) at Tulamulla, Ganderbal, Nund Reshi or Shaikh Noor-ud-Din³⁶ at Charar-i-Sharif, and at Amarnath Cave.³⁷ “The Muslims on their part exhibit the deepest feelings of respect for the shrines of the Hindu saints like Reshi Peer at Alikadal, Jewan Sahib at Rainawari, Khirbhawani adjoining Ganderbal and *Jayshatyar* near Chesmashahi etc”.³⁸ The valley of Kashmir in fact has been a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity.³⁹

Accordingly, we find a similarity between the social practices of the two communities. There are many instances of resemblance in their customs pertaining to birth, marriage

propagation of Islam. The mosque at Khanqah-i-Mualla is said to have been built by Sultan Qutub-ud-Din in 1373 A. D in the memory of Mir Syed Ali Hamadani. It is situated on the right bank of river Jhelum near the third bridge (Fateh Kada) in Srinagar. It is sacred and place of common worship for Hindus and Muslims alike. The two communities visit this shrine to this day. The Muslims offer their prayers in the mosque, while the Hindus worship the Kali Devi (goddess). Her image is painted on a stone on the outer wall from the river side.

³⁵ The relics of Dastagir Sahib are preserved by the Kashmiris which are at the Ziarat of Khanyar and Sarai-pain in the city. “The Kashmiri Pandits have great veneration for the Muslim Saints, particularly Dastagir Sahib (Sayed Abdul Qadir Jeelani of Baghdad). The name of this great saint is often invoked by the Pandits of the old generation. Among them he is popular as Kahno”. Khan, Muhammad Ishaq. *History of Srinagar*, Srinagar, Aamir Publications, 1978, p. 21.

³⁶ Shaikh Noor-ud-Din is popularly known as “Nund Reshi” among the members of the two religious communities of Kashmir. His shrine at Charar-i-Sharief is held sacred by the Hindus and Muslims alike. Even today devotees from the two communities visit the shrine. Also, he is known as Alamdar that is the standard bearer of Kashmir.

³⁷ It is interesting to note that the offerings at Amarnath cave are shared by Muslims and Hindus to this day. Thousands of pilgrims of either community go on annual pilgrimage to the holy cave. “Offerings at the famous shrine of Amarnath are shared by a Muslim dynasty of Maliks of Pahalgam with the Pandits attached to the shrine. In fact the holy cave itself is reported to have been discovered by a Muslim shepherd who had been to it in a dream”. *The Census of India*, 1971, General Report, Series 8, J and K, p. 6.

³⁸ Dhar, Somnath. *Jammu and Kashmir*, New Delhi, National Book Trust, 1977, pp. 22-23; *Census of India*, 1971, General Report. Series 8, J and K, pp. 6-7.

³⁹ Koul, Maharaj K. *A Socio-Linguistic Study of Kashmir*, Patiala, Madaan Book House, 1986, p. 15.

and death. Walter Roper Lawrence also records certain similarities between the Hindu and the Muslim social customs. *Menzrat* (the night when Mehendi-dye was applied to both bride and the bridegroom), *Gulimyuth* (the offering of money, dress and ornaments to the groom and the bride by their relatives and friends on the occasion of the wedding), *Phirsal* (the visit paid by the bridegroom to the bride's original home immediately after the marriage) and the titles of *Maharaz* and *Maharani* given to the bridegroom and bride respectively are only a few examples. The other points of similarity are: the customs of *Sundar*, *Zarkasai* or *Mundan* (the ceremony of shaving the head of the child) and the celebrations related to birth and death.⁴⁰ A custom common to the two communities related to the offering made to the dead on certain prescribed occasions. In this respect, the Hindus performed the *Shardha* ceremonies⁴¹ while "the Muslims organized *khatmat*".⁴² Moreover, the two communities shared the superstitions. Tyndale Biscoe, a popular education missionary (1890s) in Srinagar, writes that when cholera or small pox epidemic occurred in the city, it was attributed to a god or goddess.⁴³ On such occasions some ceremonies were performed by the people to ward off its malevolent influence—particularly by the Hindus when small pox attacked their family.⁴⁴ However, with the passage of time an appreciable change in the attitudes of the people set in and

⁴⁰ Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 257-271; *Census of India*, 1971, Series 8, J and K, General Report, Part I, p.7; *Kashmir Times*, 1978, Vol.III, No. 03, pp. 8-9; Iqbal, S. M and Nirash. *The Culture of Kashmir* (ed.), 1978, p.117; Kamudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, pp. 196-197.

⁴¹ Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 263.

⁴² Khan, Muhammad Ishaq. *History of Srinagar*, p. 106.

⁴³ Biscoe, Tyndale. *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, London, Seeley, Service & Co., 1922, p. 63. As regards common faith in superstitions the Kashmiris whether they adhere to Islam or Hinduism are almost on the same footing. But, speaking generally Kashmiri Hindu was more superstitious than a Kashmiri Muslim. Sharma, D. C; *Kashmir under the Sikhs*, New Delhi, Seema Publications, 1983, p. 85; Kaul, P. N. and Dhar, K. L. *Kashmir Speaks*, Delhi, S. Chand, 1950, p. 17.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*; The Hindus had the tradition of distributing Khir (rice boiled in milk and sugar) to the children while the Muslims distributed saltish Khir which was known as *Doodwagreh*.

among the modern educated sections of the society these superstitious customs disappeared to a great extent.⁴⁵ Muslims of the Valley still retain surnames of their ancestral Hindus viz Bhat, Pandit, Nehru, Dar, Reshi, Raina, Aitu and Kaul.⁴⁶ Also, the Muslims worked as butchers, potters, oil pressers, barbers and woodcutters of pandits. Besides, they acted as go between to conduct their matrimonial relations.⁴⁷ They also cremated the dead bodies of the pandits⁴⁸—a custom which is till today prevailing in Kashmir.

Similarity in Dress: Both the Hindus and Muslims wore more or less the same dress. The wearing of *Pheran* (a cloak type long dress covering the whole body from shoulders down to the ankles) was a popular tradition of Pandits as well as Muslims. They regarded it an indispensable article of custom. It was customary for the Hindu and Muslim brides to wear the skullcaps at the time of marriage. The *Taranga* or the head dress that a Hindu woman wore on this occasion was almost the same as the *kasaba* (headgear) worn by the Muslim woman, the variation being slight. In the sphere of the male attire, the Hindus and Muslims of the Valley used turban as a common feature of dress. Thus, the use of *Dastar* or *Pagri* (turban) has been current among both the communities of the Valley from early times.⁴⁹ Even during medieval times, Abul Fazel and Jahangir failed to distinguish a Hindu from a Muslim.⁵⁰ *Pulhor* (straw made foot-wear) and *Kherav* (wooden sandal) were generally used by the Muslims and the Hindus alike. *Kheravs* were used during the muddy and rainy season whereas the *pulhors* were worn in dry

⁴⁵ Sharma, D. C. *Kashmir under the Sikhs*, p. 85; Kaul, P. N and Dhar, K. L. *Kashmir Speaks*, p. 17.

⁴⁶ Kalla, K. L. *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir* (ed.), p. 263.

⁴⁷ Madan, T. N. *Family and Kinship*, Bombay, Asian Publishing House, 1965, p. 35.

⁴⁸ Kalla, K. L. *The Literary Heritage of Kashmir* (ed.), p. 263; Iqbal, S. M and Nirash (ed.), *The Culture of Kashmir*, New Delhi: Marwah Publications, 1978, p. 117.

⁴⁹ Kamudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, p. 196.

⁵⁰ Parimu, R. K. *A History of Muslim Rule in Kashmir*, New Delhi, People's Publishing House, 1969, p. 448.

climate and while travelling on snow-clad surface. Broadly speaking there was not much difference between the dresses used by the two communities.

Similarity in Food Habits: By and large the food habits of the two communities were same. *Hak* (a green leafy vegetable) and *Bhatta* (boiled rice) was then as now a favourite food of both the communities.⁵¹ The tradition of distributing *Tehar* (rice cooked in turmeric, salt and oil) as alms was and is still common among both the communities. The Hindus offered it on their birth days and on several other occasions. The Muslims distributed *Tehar* among the travellers on the way and the needy and children in order to allay the fears of some imaginary trouble or in fulfilment of any vow.

Both the communities were fond of tea—both *Sherchai* or *Noonchai* (prepared by using milk and adding salt) and *kehva* (sweet tea without adding milk). These were taken either with the traditional *Satu* (powder made of maiz or rice) or bread by all irrespective of caste and class. It is pertinent to mention that the Hindus have been and still continue to be regular meat-eaters like their Muslim brethren. Both enjoyed mutton, fish and fowl.⁵² The Kashmiri Pandits had no hesitation in taking water at the hands of the Muslims. In fact, they were not very particular about the matters of pollution by the touch of their Muslim brethren. They were generally free from the idea of untouchability.⁵³

Common Language: For centuries, Kashmiri has been the common language of both Hindus and Muslims. The two communities have contributed greatly towards the development of this language. Kashmiri language which was

⁵¹ *Kashmir Times*, 1954, Vol. IV, No. 6, pp. 138-139. The expression *Hak-batta* has the same connotation in Kashmiri as *Dal-roti* in Hindustani. "For a Kashmiri this food has such a sentimental association that it would be unfair to expect him to change it". Ibid.

⁵² Sufi, G. M. D. *Kashir—Being a History of Kashmir from the Earliest Times to our Own*, Vol. I, Lahore, 1948-1949, Vol. I, pp. 78-79.

⁵³ Ernest F. Neve. *Beyond the Pir Panjal: Life Among the Mountains and Valleys of Kashmir*, p. 82; Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 300; Lal, Ganesh. *Siyahat-i-Kashmir*, p. 32.

the product of Kashmiri society on the whole had played a decisive role in stimulating the instinct of national fusion and unity.⁵⁴ “This bond of language still exercises a strong pull on the sentiments of all Kashmir”.⁵⁵ Thus, the common language has been the distinguishing trait of their common cultural heritage.

Elements of Diversity: In spite of their common cultural heritage, there were certain points of difference in their customs, food habits, language and dress. In certain respects, many beliefs and customs of the Hindus and Muslims were poles apart. For instance the Pandits worshiped the cow as a sacred animal and the Muslims were not bound by any such considerations. Similarly for the Muslims, the pig was *haram* (prohibited) while the Pandits had no such inhibition.⁵⁶ The Muslims buried their dead while Hindus cremated them. The custom of circumcision was essential for Muslims whereas the sacred thread ceremony was a must for the Pandits. The Pandits worshiped in temples or in their homes before gods using a statue or a picture for concentration. The Hindu women commonly went to the temple like their menfolk while the Muslim women were usually conspicuous by their absence in mosques. The Muslims very often worshiped enmass in the mosque, even though they were not forbidden to worship at home. Both believed in God. The Muslims prayed directly to Him, but the Hindus had faith in small gods as well. The Pandits believed in reincarnation while the Muslims believed in resurrection.⁵⁷

The Hindus decorated their temples with pictures, statues and carvings of gods and other figures while the Muslims adorn their mosques with scrolls and texts from the Quran and there is nowhere picture of Prophet.⁵⁸ Among the Hindus, there was no practice of divorce and no Hindu lady could

⁵⁴ Iqbal, S. M and Nirash. *The Culture of Kashmir*, pp. 117; *Kashmir Times*, 1978, No.: pp. 8-9. The basis of national solidarity is reinforced by uniformity in dress and language among the people of all shades. Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Gervis, Pearce. *India, Pakistan and the West*, pp. 259-260.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

remarry but the Muslim widows and divorced women were allowed to marry again. Polygamy was common among the Muslim elite. This practice did not find favour with the Hindus.⁵⁹ There was the usual practice among the Kashmiri Hindus to write the name of God just inside the front gate of the house during the occasion of marriages while the Kashmiri Muslims did not have any such thing written on their doors. The Pandits abstained from initiating a journey on the days which they regarded inauspicious. Besides, they did not shift to a newly constructed house on a day that was not considered as auspicious in their calendar. Such practices and beliefs were not common among the Kashmiri Muslims.⁶⁰ Moreover, the Kashmiri Pandits had much faith in good and bad omens⁶¹ and the Muslims generally did not believe in it. Another distinguishing feature between the two communities was the holy mark (*tilak*) which the Pandits put on their foreheads.

Difference in Dress: There were certain points of difference between the dress patterns of the Pandits and the Muslims. It is but natural for co-religionists to possess some easily identifiable signs. In spite of apparent identity in the Muslim and Pandit dresses and getup, there were certain clear marks of difference in their dress. In case of the Muslim male and female, there was difference in their use of *Pheran*,⁶² headgear, trouser and even footwear from the similar articles of wear used by the Hindus. The *Pheran* of the Muslim woman was extended only upto the knees. It was generally embroidered in front and along the edges. On the other hand, a Hindu woman's *pheran* was long, loose, sleeved and plain. The Pandit male used long and tight sleeved *Pherans* and they tied their *Pherans* on the left while the Muslims did on the

⁵⁹ Sharma, D. C. *Kashmir under the Sikhs*, p. 99.

⁶⁰ Ibid, p. 321; Ahmad, Al-Haj Khawaja Nazir. *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, Lahore, Civil and Military Gazette, pp. 311-312, 322.

⁶¹ *Census of India*, 1961, J&K, A Village Survey Monograph, Mattan, Anantnag, Vol.VI, Part VI, No; 02, p. 25.

⁶² Ahmad, Imtiaz. *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India*, New Delhi, Manohar, 1981, p. 24.

right side.⁶³ The Kashmiri Hindus used tight trousers (*churidar pajama*) and turbans of narrow white cloth pieces. It is also interesting to observe that there was also difference in the style of wearing their turbans (headgears). The Hindu fastened it on the right temple and the Muslim on the left.⁶⁴ The Kashmiri Pandit women tied a band round their waists, while the Muslim women wore no girdle. This article of dress was less prevalent among a small section of Muslim women. Besides, there was difference in their head dress too.

Difference in Food Habits: There were certain noticeable points of difference in the food habits of the two communities. In case of the preparation of dishes on the occasions of wedding the Muslims would prepare the famous *wazwan* (a special method of preparing various dishes of meat borrowed from Central Asia during the 14th century A.D.) which was an absolutely new thing for Hindus. Similarly, meat dishes like *Kalva*, *Machh*, *Tsuk* *Tsarwan* were peculiar to the Kashmiri Hindus and these recipes were not very common among the Muslims.

The method of preparing *Hak* was also different between the Kashmiri Pandits and the Muslims. The Hindus would not use *Mawal* and chilli powder but only turmeric, oil and salt in its preparation. *Sochal* (a variety of green leafy vegetable) was taken mostly by the Hindus and the Muslims seldom used it. In case of Pandits fish and pickles were prepared in a most tasty manner by the rich use of oil and spices. The Muslims did not use much of oil and spices in the preparation of these dishes.⁶⁵ Formally, the Pandits abhorred certain fruits and

⁶³ Vigne, G. T. *Travels in Kashmir, Ladakh, Iskardo, Countries Adjoining the Mountain Courses of the Indus and the Himalaya, north of Punjab*, Vol. II, London, Henry Colburn, 1842, pp. 140-318; Moorcraft, William and George Trebeck. *Travels in the Himalayan provinces of Hindustan and the Punjab, in Ladakh and Kashmir*, Vol. II, London, John Marry, 1837, p. 131; Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 258.

⁶⁴ Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 258; Vigne, G. T; *Travels in Kashmir*, Vol. II, p. 140.

⁶⁵ Based on an interview with Shri Motilal Saqi (Cultural Academy), by Farhat Jabeen, June, 1989.

vegetables⁶⁶ and the same was not true in case of Muslims. Above all, the Kashmiri Pandits were very fond of *kehva* (sweet tea), while *Sherchai* or *Noonchai* was more common in case of Muslims.

Difference in Spoken Language: Kashmiri spoken by Muslims slightly differed from that spoken by the Pandits. Not only was the vocabulary of the former more overlaid with the words borrowed from Persian, but there was a slight difference in their pronunciation too.⁶⁷ Most of the words used by the Pandits were derived from Sanskrit. In fact some distinction has been maintained in the speech of Hindus and Muslims of the Valley.⁶⁸ For instance, the Hindus used such words as *pap* (sin), *narukh* (hell), *dharma* (religion), etc, while Muslims on the other hand used *gunah* (sin), *jahnam* (hell) and *din*⁶⁹ (religion) for these terms respectively. Thus, even though both the communities speak the same language, there are differences in their lexical usage.⁷⁰

The present narrative, therefore, provides us firsthand information about the inter-community relations in the valley of Kashmir. It makes abundantly clear that the two communities shared various traditions and as such their attitudes towards each other were rooted in inclusiveness and togetherness. No doubt that the two communities retained their identity markers in order to maintain their religious personality, but on the whole they had an unshakable faith in the ideal of live and let live. It is also substantiated by the fact that both in the villages and urban centres the two communities formed *biradaris* (brotherhoods) that were taking every care about the well being of the localities and the resolution of the feuds and various other types of issues that

⁶⁶ Lawrence, Walter Roper. *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 300; Ahmad, Nazir, *Jesus in Heaven on Earth*, pp. 314-320. Impact of modernization made the Kashmiri Pandits less rigid in the use of certain articles of food which they looked upon as forbidden in the past.

⁶⁷ Iqbal, S. M and Nirash. *The Culture of Kashmir*, pp. 131-35.

⁶⁸ Kachru, B. B. *A Reference Grammar of Kashmiri*, Urbana, University Illinois, 1969, p. 21.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ahmad, Imtiaz. *Ritual and Religion among Muslims in India*, p. 24.

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at times came up within and between the communities. The senior citizens of the two communities enjoyed mutual trust and commanded equal respect in the localities. Therefore, the migration of pandits (1990-91 A.D.) is looked upon by the majority community as an unfortunate event in the history of Kashmir and their absence is more disturbing for the elders who have lived the most part of their lives in an atmosphere of togetherness. However, a very small minority that did not opt for migration is living amicably with their Muslim brethren.

Conclusion: The above discussion leads us to the conclusion that the Kashmiris are the legatees of a composite culture which is neither exclusively Hindu nor exclusively Muslim but a syncretic compound of two cultures and the result of an evolutionary process originating from the mutual interaction and the combination of the two streams of influence and tradition.⁷¹ In this context, it is worthwhile to quote Kaumudi: “The process of interaction did not stop there: It went for deeper and changed the very outlook of sections of the people. It united both the Hindus and the Muslims on a higher metaphysical plane”.⁷²

⁷¹ Kamudi, *Kashmir: Its Cultural Heritage*, p. 143.

⁷² Ibid., p. 61.

Rebels for the Cause: The Mappila Rebellion (1921-1922)

Shiraz Ahmad Dar

Abstract: *The Mappila rebellion was an important uprising that occurred in the middle of the non-cooperation movement. Mappilas had a long history of resentment against their landlords for their exploitative exactions. The present paper is an attempt to understand the rebellion staged in 1921-23 by Mappila peasants of the Malabar District of the Madras presidency.*

One of the most important uprisings in the early twenties of the twentieth century was the Mappila revolt in the Malabar district of Madras presidency in August 1921. Extending over two thousand square miles, two-fifths area of the district, the rebellion, the culmination of a long series of Moppillah “outrages”, was carried on for six months by peasant bands in what was described by British authorities as an open war against the king.¹ Mappila is the name generally given to the Muslims of the Malabar coast, which became a district of the Madras Presidency in 1800 during British rule,² but at present is a part of the state of Kerala in Independent India. Covering an area of 5,795 square miles, Malabar consisted of 9 taluks, namely, Chirakkal, Kottayam, Kurumbranad, Calicut, Wynad, Eranad, Valluvanad, Ponnani, and Palghat.³

The Mappilas are the Muslims who were originally the offspring of Arab immigrants that had settled in their beautiful land and contracted marital alliances locally.⁴ The Mappilas traditionally trace their origins to the ninth century, when Arab traders brought Islam to the west coast of India.

¹ R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, New Delhi: Usha Publications, 1983, p. 1.

² K. Gopalankutty, “Movements for Tenancy Reform in Malabar: A Comparative Study of Two Movements, 1920-39” in D.N. Panigrahi (ed.), *Economy, Society and Politics in Modern India*, New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1985, p. 142.

³ C.A. Innes in F.B. Evan (ed.), *Malabar and Anjingo*, Madras: Madras Government Press, 1933, p. 2.

⁴ B.P. Sitaramayya, *History of Indian National Congress (1885-1935)*, Vol. I, New Delhi: S. Chand & Co., p. 220.

By 1921, the Mappilas constituted the largest— and fastest growing— community in Malabar. With a population of one million, 32 percent of that of Malabar as a whole, the Mappilas were concentrated in South Malabar. In Ernad Taluk, the center of the rebellion, they formed nearly 60 percent of the population.⁵ Later their ranks inflated through the conversion of lower caste Hindus like the Cherumars, a slave caste whose emancipation under the Slavery Abolition Act of 1843 had put them in greater social problems.⁶

Mappilas were mostly agricultural workers and hired labourers, belonging to the lower strata of the Muslim population. They laboured, chiefly, for the *jenmies* (landlords), who owned most of the land, and on the British plantations.⁷ Gradually, the Mappilas become dependent on agriculture and turned into a community of cultivating tenants, landless labourers, petty traders, and fishermen.⁸ They took land on lease and did pioneering work in the jungles, making new clearances and leveling plots of land for the purpose of growing paddy. The majority of them were very poor and almost entirely without any substantial property in land or goods. They were extremely backward and to a great extent under the influence of their *qazis* and *moulvies* known as *Thanglas*.⁹ The Mappilas generally attended *madrasas* attached to the mosques where education was primarily religious in nature.¹⁰

The traditional structure of the agrarian society of Malabar was based on a hierarchy of landlords, tenant protectors, and peasants among whom the produce was divided based on mutual dependence and traditionally

⁵ R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 1.

⁶ D.N. Dhangare, *Peasant Movements in India (1920-50)*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991, pp. 56-57.

⁷ Sukhbir Choudhary, *Mappila Uprising (1921-23)*, New Delhi: Agam Prakashan, 1977, p. 12.

⁸ Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plessey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004, p. 163.

⁹ Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India in India*, vol. III, New Delhi: Government of India, 1972, p. 163.

¹⁰ K.N. Panikkar, "Peasant Revolt in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries" in A.R. Desai, (ed.), *Peasant Struggles in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 603.

evolved customs.¹¹ It was Sultan Hyder Ali, who dealt a blow to this system by introducing for the first time a land tax after his conquest of Malabar in 1766.¹² The tax was based on the actual produce and accounts were settled in favour of the tenants.¹³ This strategy was revised by the British soon after Malabar came into their possession in 1792 after defeating Tipu Sultan in the third Anglo-Mysore war.¹⁴ The East India Company farmed out the lands to local chieftains for revenue collection. This resulted in tyrannical exactions and corruption. Subsequently, the collection of revenue was taken over by the East India Company.¹⁵ When Thomas Warden became the Collector of Malabar in 1804, a scheme was introduced by which if the crop was tenfold of the seed used in wetlands, 20 percent would be set aside as cultivation expenditure and the remaining net produce would be shared by the cultivator, the *Jenmi* (landlord) and the state at the rate of 32.7 percent, 27.7 percent, and 40 percent respectively.¹⁶ The Britishers recognized the *Jenmis* as absolute owners of the whole landed properties in Malabar,¹⁷ with a right to evict tenants, which did not exist earlier, and reduced other two categories, the *Kanamdar* (holder of Kanma tenure) and the cultivator, to the status of tenants and leaseholders.¹⁸ Apart from that, over-assessment, a huge burden of illegal taxes, and a pro-landlord attitude of the judiciary and the police meant that the “peasantry in Malabar”, writes, K.N. Panikkar, “lived and worked in conditions of extreme penury entailed by the twin exactions of the lord and the state”.¹⁹ F. Fawcett,

¹¹ William Logan, *The Malabar Manual*, 1987, reprinted as *Malabar*, Vol. I, Part III, Madras: Government Press, 1951, p. 475.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ K. Gopalankutty, *Movements for Tenancy Reform in Malabar*, p. 143.

¹⁴ K.N. Panikkar, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 603.

¹⁵ K. Gopalankutty, *Movements for Tenancy Reform in Malabar*, p. 143.

¹⁶ T.C. Verghee, *Agrarian Changes and Economic Consequences: Land Tenures in Kerala, 1850-1960*, Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1970, p. 25.

¹⁷ K. Gopalankutty, *Movements for Tenancy Reform in Malabar*, p. 143.

¹⁸ Sekhar Bandyopadhyay, *From Plessey to Partition*, New Delhi: Orient Longman, 2004, p. 163.

¹⁹ K.N. Panikkar, *Against Lord and State: Religion and Peasant Uprisings in Malabar, 1836-1921*, Delhi: Oxford University Press, p. 48.

writing in 1897, described the land tenure system of Malabar as “such as if arranged specially for the purpose of making people discontented.”²⁰

A series of incidents, therefore, occurred in Malabar throughout the nineteenth century, which registered the protest and resistance of the rural poor to acts of subjugation and exploitation. Since the Malabar was taken by the British, there had been thirty-one Mappila outbreaks and the 1921-22 outbreak was thirty-second in number.²¹ The prominent peasant revolt of 1921 came as the culmination of these numerous sporadic peasant uprisings in Malabar which had burst out again and again over half a century. No rising in the past had been organised on such a vast scale as that of August 1921 which was, according to official sources, clearly “nothing less than organised rebellion”.²²

In October 1920, a tenancy movement began in Calicut and the surrounding districts of the region. An increase in rent and ejectments of peasants were the main grievances that gave rise to it. This movement arose quite independently of the Congress movement and created an immense stir in South Malabar.²³ For the first time, the thrust for resistance came from the Malabar District Congress Conference held at Manjeri in April 1920.²⁴ A resolution demanding legislation to protect the interest of the tenants of Malabar was passed.²⁵ It was a year after Manjeri in April 1921 that a provincial Conference was held at Ottapalam in which from all over the Malabar region thousands of peasants took part.²⁶ Peasant unions were organised at several places in Malabar. Moreover, for the interest of peasants, a Tenant Relief Association was formed in the feudal estate of the Raja of

²⁰ Cited in R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 5.

²¹ Shive Kumar, *Peasantry and the Indian National Movement*, Meerut: Anu Prakash, 1979, p. 104.

²² Sukhbir Choudhary, *Mappila Uprising*, p. 2.

²³ Shive Kumar, *Peasantry and the Indian National Movement*, p. 105.

²⁴ P.K.K. Menon, *The History of the Freedom Movement in Kerala*, Vol. II, Trivandrum, Government of Kerala Press, 1970, p. 79.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 80.

²⁶ E.M.S. Namboodrepad, *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, Calcutta: National Book Agency Pvt. Ltd., 1967, pp. 137-38.

Calicut which organised a general strike against the eviction of a tenant.²⁷

In 1920, the character of the Congress was transformed fundamentally in Gandhi's rise to power and in the link forged between Non-cooperation and the Khalifat movement. Non-cooperation was formally begun on August 1, 1920²⁸ and on the 18th of that month, Gandhi and Showkat Ali visited Calicut to communicate the message of Non-cooperation and the Khalifat to the people of Malabar.²⁹ Simultaneously, a series of meetings were organised in Eranad and Walluvanad taluks and also at Calicut, Tirurangadi, Malapuram, and other places. On 5th February 1921, these meetings were banned by District Magistrate under section 144.³⁰

The immediate cause of the revolt was the severe blunder committed by the District Magistrate of Eranad talauq, E. F. Thomas, on 20 August 1921. Thomas proceeded to Tirurangadi with a contingent of army and police to arrest the Mappila leaders, including Ali Musaliar, a highly well-regarded and popular priest of Mambrath mosque.³¹ Only three of 24 wanted men were apprehended³² in Kizhakkepalli mosque. News of the action at Tirurangadi quickly spread into the countryside, and it was nourished by the rumour that the Mambrath Mosque— headquarters of the Mambrath Tungal and a focal point of religious fervour during earlier outrages— had been attacked and razed to the ground.³³ A large crowd of Moppilas thus assembled at Tirurangadi. They were all unarmed, except for sticks in their hands.³⁴ Their representatives met the British officers for the release of the

²⁷ Saumyendranath Tagore, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar, 1921*, Bombay: p. 11.

²⁸ Tara Chand, *History of the Freedom Movement in India*, Vol. III, New Delhi: Government of India, 1974, p. 494.

²⁹ R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 7.

³⁰ Shive Kumar, *Peasantry and the Indian National Movement*, p. 105.

³¹ K.N. Panikkar, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 618.

³² R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 7.

³³ Gopal Nair, *The Mappila Rebellion, 1921*, Calicut: Norman Printing Bureau, 1921, pp. 19-22.

³⁴ K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapum (Malabar Rebellion)*, Manjeri: K. Kalyani Amma, 1971, pp. 110-26.

arrested volunteers. The crowd also followed them.³⁵ But the moment they sat down, the army opened fire and a good number of unarmed Moppilas were killed.³⁶ A clash ensued, government offices were destroyed, records burnt and the treasury looted. The rebellion soon spread into the Eranad, Walluvand, and Ponnani taluqs.

Malayali newspapers described E. F. Thomas as "the dyer of Malabar" and demanded the resignation of all officials for the provocation action at Tirurangadi.³⁷ The Mappilas declared the establishment of a *Khalifat Kingdom* under the leadership of seventy-year-old Ali Musaliar of Tirurangadi. He assumed the title of "Ali Raji" in a ceremony at the Jammatt mosque in Ponnani, the central mosque of the Mappila religious organization.³⁸ In the first stage of rebellion, the targets were the popular *Jenmies* (landlords), mostly Hindus, the symbols of government authority such as Kutcheries (courts), police stations, treasuries and offices, and the British planters. To control the situation, on August 22, the Government of Madras called for martial law in the areas affected by the rebellion. On August 25, the Governor-General of India issued an ordinance imposing a modified form of martial law in the *taluks* of Calicut, Eranad, Walluvand, and Ponnani.³⁹ On 1st September, Ali Musaliar was arrested along with his 42 followers, after fierce fighting which resulted in a loss of twenty-four lives on the rebels' side and three on the government. Ali Musaliar was tried by the Special Tribunal at Calicut on the charge of waging war against His Majesty, the King-Emperor, and on November 2, he was hanged and sentenced to death.⁴⁰ After Ali Musaliar's capture, another important leader of the movement, Variakunnath Kunjahammed Haji was proclaimed as the ruler of the Moppillah kingdom on August 22. During the revolt, he

³⁵ K.N. Panikkar, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, p. 619.

³⁶ K. Madhavan Nair, *Malabar Kalapum (Malabar Rebellion)*, p. 110-26.

³⁷ R.L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 15.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 16; R.L. Hardgrave, "The Mappilla Rebellion, 1921: Peasant Revolt in Malabar", *Modern Asian Studies*, II, 1, (1977), p. 82.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

⁴⁰ Gopal Nair, *The Mappila Rebellion*, pp. 36-37.

proclaimed himself the “Raja of the Hindus, Emir of the Muslims and Colonel of the Khilafat army”.⁴¹ As Khilafat King, he quickly established an ascendancy over Ernad and Walluvanad taluks and even issued passports to those who ventured beyond the borders of his kingdom.⁴² It is pertinent to mention here that the landlords and moneylenders against whom the Mappilas were fighting were most Hindus. This fact was often used by the British Government to spread rumours that the root of the revolt was the wild fanaticism of the Mappilas and their hatred of the Hindus, and not the cruel exploitation of the peasant.⁴³

The execution of Variakunnath Kunjahammed Haji on January 20, 1922, “marked the collapse of the rebellion”.⁴⁴ By February 25, the situation was sufficiently well in hand that martial law after 6 months in force, was allowed to lapse.⁴⁵ In the course of the rebellion, official figures recorded that 2339 rebels had been killed, 1652 wounded and 5955 captured. An additional 39,348 rebels surrendered voluntarily during the later stages of the rebellion. Government losses were minimal: 43 killed (including 5 British officers), 126 wounded.⁴⁶ The Muslim leaders put the number of Mappila Muslim “martyrs” as 10,000, and they also referred to the desecration of mosques and other outrages perpetrated by British troops while suppressing the revolt.⁴⁷ From then onwards, the militant Moppilas were so completely crushed and demoralized that till independence their participation in any form of politics was almost nil. They neither joined the national movement nor the peasant movement that was to grow in Kerala in later years under the Left leadership.⁴⁸

⁴¹ George Woodcock, *Kerala: A Portriat of the Malabar Coast*, London: Faber and Faber, 2967, p. 242.

⁴² R.L. Hardgrave, “The Mappilla Rebellion, 1921: Peasant Revolt in Malabar”, *Modern Asian Studies*, II, 1, (1977), p. 82.

⁴³ Shive Kumar, *Peasantry and the Indian National Movement*, p. 108.

⁴⁴ Gopal Nair, *The Mappila Rebellion*, pp. 36-37.

⁴⁵ R. L. Hardgrave, *Peasant Revolt in Malabar*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁷ R. C. Mujambdar, *Struggle for Independence*, Bombay: Bharatiya Vidya Bhawan, 1969, p. 361.

⁴⁸ Bipan Chandra, *India's Struggle for Independence*, New Delhi: Penguin, 1988, p. 203.

Although the Mappila peasants were crushed under the iron heels of British imperialism, the organisation for militant action was so thorough that the army of this mighty British Empire had to fight tooth and nail for nearly one-half of a year to quell the revolt. Although the Mappilas lost the battle their ashes subsequently paved the way for the movement for reform in Kerala. "It is true that it did acquire", writes A. K. Gopalan, "a communal colour later, but the anti-imperialist and anti-feudal character of the rebellion was no less clear. The Mappila peasants wanted to end British rule in India and make their country free. Their hatred of alien oppressors was deep-seated".⁴⁹ E.M.S. Nambooderepad also pays homage to the Mappila: "It is to the illiterate backward Mappila of the Eranad and Walluvanad *Taluks* that the honour goes of having raised the initial voice of protest against the oppression of the *Jenmi*."⁵⁰

Conclusion: The Mappila upsurge was a link in the chain of anti-colonial agitation of the masses during the post-war years. It was of key significance, not only for the peasants but also for the national liberation movement as a whole. Notwithstanding its drawbacks, the uprising magnificently "demonstrated the will of the peasantry to struggle for its rights".⁵¹

⁴⁹ A.K. Gopalan, *Kerala: Past and Present*, London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1959, p. 28; E.M.S. Namboadrepad, *Kerala: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow*, pp. 134-36.

⁵⁰ E.M.S. Nambooderepad, *A Short History of the Peasant Movement in Kerala*, Bombay: Peoples Publication House, 1943, p. 1.

⁵¹ Sukhbair Chaudhary, "Post-war Awakening (1919-21)" in A.R. Desai (edt.), *Peasant Struggles in India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1979, pp. 259-60.

Collective Wisdom as Reflected in Kashmiri Folk Sayings

Mohsin Yousuf

Abstract: *Geography plays an important role in determining the climate, food habits, housing, economy and various other aspects of the life of the people in a particular region. So, in order to have a holistic understanding of the history and culture of a large country like India, it is worthwhile to explore and understand the history of its various regions. This is the main reason that legitimizes the writing of regional history. In addition to above mentioned aspects that play a key role in the formation of a society, language is the most important. It is certainly the basis of any culture that evolves over the period as it plays a key role in uniting and cementing the bonds of the people. The evolution of any language has not been an overnight development, but its rise and growth is a long drawn historical process. Similarly, the emergence of folk sayings or proverbs in a particular language takes centuries. The environmental, social, economic and political changes over the period have played a formidable role in the making of these folk sayings. Kashmiri language as is true of other languages embodies a rich treasure of folk sayings that helps us to understand the lifestyle and collective wisdom of Kashmiris. The present paper, therefore, attempts at analyzing various folk sayings with an avowed object of recording and preserving these sayings. Otherwise, the coming generations in an era of cyber age and globalisation may forget them and at some stage would fail to recall that who they are and where from they have come. In the same vein, it would endeavour to discuss the wisdom and historicity as reflected in these sayings.*

From remote past, the urban centres have been catering to the needs of the human beings all over the world. The rural areas produced various crops and livestock which were essential for the survival of mankind. But, as far as various commodities and tools needed for day to day use are concerned, these remained available mostly in towns and

cities. Even the choice of agricultural implements was comparatively better in urban areas. It was most probably in this context that the folk saying *gam chu kham* (villages is imperfect) is frequently used in day to day conversation.¹

It is by shaking the curd that one can obtain butter. Earlier in Kashmir there was a popular practice of storing milk and after a fortnight it was shaken with a tool called *daentul* and the practice was known as *gurus mandun* (to shake curd). It was through this practice that the *lassi* (buttermilk) was prepared and the butter obtained. A prolonged dispute and the ineffectiveness of dialogue for reconciliation has been defined as *aab mandun* (to shake water). It conveys that any attempt of mediation in such chronic cases tantamounts to *aab mandun* or shaking water instead of curd, from which nothing can be achieved.²

Whenever any ruler in ancient or medieval times continued to extend his empire, but took no interest in its consolidation, it ultimately led to the wastage of resources that culminated into the downfall of his empire. Similarly, if someone extended the plans of his day to day life without having an eye on his resources, it caused the failure of his goals. It is probably in this backdrop that the saying *zuit gau buit* (more extension means no dividend). Even in present day Kashmir if anyone would make his plans beyond his resources, be it the construction of house, starting of some business or inviting people on marriage or other occasions, and the wise men if asked to opine on such a state of affair would say *zuit gau buit*.³

In case some people with little calibre and consistency would attempt to launch some organization for common good that has been termed as *shaleh jamadari* (association of

¹ This saying is particularly used in the context of tiny villages where there is either little or no facility of market and various other amenities. The author has learned about the use of this saying from his native village Audsoo, Anantnag, which is located 65 kilometres away from Srinagar in South Kashmir.

² The author has learned this saying from his grandfather late Abdul Ghani Ganai when he was conversating with one of his neighbours in the village.

³ Ibid.

jackals). The myth goes like that some jackals once formed an association and accordingly made one of them as their leader who in local parlance is called *jamadar* i.e. the leader of a social group especially those of the labourers. During the night hours, they went and brought a winnowing tray from a nearby village and fixed it upon the back of the identified leader, and suggested him to address the group. Meanwhile, the village dogs became conscious about the assembly of jackals and they immediately raided them. All the jackals in the group entered a nearby burrow but the *jamadar* could not enter it due to the paucity of space at its entry. The winnowing tray that acted as a symbol of leadership became a stumbling block in his entry, and thus made him the prey of the dogs. Therefore, any casual approach or non-commitment to the cause of solidarity has been termed as *shaleh jamadari*. In case one is not satisfied with the formation of any social group or association by the ordinary people, he would generally reject it by calling it as *shaleh jamadari*.⁴

If a person or various persons fail to react to a situation at appropriate time and later on try to overact, such a situation has been portrayed in a saying like *shal chalet bathen chub* (to beat embankments after the jackals flee). It conveys that it is immaterial to react once the opportunity is missed.⁵

A situation where there is perpetual threat of harm by some elements has been defined in the saying *yeti pahlis khuel tati sehas guf* (where there is shepherds herd, the den of leopard also lies there). The saying implies that in case of such conditions, one has to deal with the matter very carefully keeping into consideration the apprehension of constant trouble.⁶ Some body's difficulties or a setback in any way is at times cashed by the opportunist elements in a given society. Such a situation has been mentioned in a saying *akis dazan daed teh biak weshnavan atthe* (some ones beard is

⁴ This metaphor was revealed to me by Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who had heard it in his adulthood from late Ghulam Hassan, village headman, and his uncle in early 1980's.

⁵ It is used in rural Kashmir till today and is very popular.

⁶ The author has come to know about this saying from Muhammad Yusuf in December, 2019 at Srinagar while he was conversating telephonically with one of his old friends in his native village.

burning and the other one is trying to warm his hands out of it). Even today, if any person would attempt to exploit the difficult times of another person, such a situation is explained by using this saying.⁷ In case a particular plan or strategy fails due to a counter strategy or plan, it is expressed in the saying *hanzu hach zal teh gadu voteh* (fishermen learned about the usage of nets and the fish responded by learning jumps to bypass). The saying basically brings home that almost every strategy could be faced with a counter strategy. Therefore, nothing should be taken as for granted.⁸

The valley of Kashmir was known for its handicrafts all over the world. Some of the arts were indigenous and evolved from ancient times. But the transfer of various arts and crafts from Persia and Central Asia during the fourteenth and fifteenth century A.D. enriched the skill of Kashmiri craftsmen. Consequently, the Kashmiri artisans became most professional and industrious by using the imported technology. The professionalism of Kashmiri artisans is depicted in the saying *grakh raven magar athe ma ravin* (Let us lose the customer but not the artistic skill). It conveys that even if an artisan would lose the customer while seeking the perfection of his skill, let him not worry for that.⁹

Similar, to the English saying that ‘it is only the wearer who knows where the shoe pinches’, is the Kashmiri saying *lukhund dood lukas pane khoteh shohul* (One’s pain for others is soothing more than water). It basically conveys that it is the victim of a tragedy alone who feels the real pain and for others it is practically immaterial.¹⁰ Similarly, the English idiom ‘grapes are sour’ has been popular among Kashmiris as *pili na teh tauchi* (If one can’t access some fruit, he declares it sour). The saying has a wide connotation and it is not used in case of fruit alone. It is believed that if someone occasionally

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ The author has learned about it from Muhammad Sultan Najar (a mason) alias Sulehvestah from Chak-i-Kanganhal, Achabal, Anantnag, when he was constructing his house at Batpora, Hazratbal, Srinagar, Kashmir in 2007.

¹⁰ Heard about this saying from my grandmother Saja Begum (age 70 years) in April, 2021.

cannot bear the effort or the cost to have something, he for the sake of maintaining his false prestige declares it unsuitable and unworthy.¹¹

In some circumstances, a crafty person conceals his evil designs by giving an impression that he is a thorough gentleman. But, in the heart of hearts he harbours his malafide will. Such a person has been described in a saying like *gabeh buthe ram hoon* (a wolf in a sheep's face). Even today, especially in rural Kashmir, if someone would like to condemn another person for his gentle look and harsh action or his double standards of theory and practice, he would contemptuously call him as *gabe buthe ramhoon*.¹² To aspire for something that is often impossible to achieve has been defined as *huchan kulan phatun* (to drown in dried rivulets). Sometimes an overambitious person makes impossible plans. This saying, therefore, has been used to describe the worst type of opportunist who does not apply rationale while fixing his goals. Such planning has been denounced as *huchan kulan phatun*.¹³

If one critical problem was supplemented by another problem immediately that has been expressed as *gadres pait gadur khasun* (goitre upon goitre). For instance, if one complicated situation is met with another complicated situation at a short interval, it is described by the saying *gadres pait gadur khasun*.¹⁴ In case there is no effort and subsequently no gain in some venture, it has been summed up as *na manchi teh na tofi* (no honey and no bites). There was a tradition of bee-keeping in Kashmir. While collecting honey, a person was at times bitten by bees. Thus, in a situation in which a person makes no effort, naturally there is no gain. Sometimes, we also say that no pains and no gains. It has been expressed aptly as *na manchi teh na tofi*.¹⁵

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² The author has learned about this saying from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ It was revealed to me by Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who had learned it from Muhammad Rajab Ganai S/o. Muhmammad Ibrahim Ganai R/o. Audsoo, Anantnag.

¹⁵ Ibid.

Human beings with their birth generally imbibe the genetic makeup of their parents or the next kin and as such their behaviour and attitudes often resemble their ancestors. It is spoken of as *budris nai budur aaseh tuek aases* (if the grey colour cattle won't give birth to identical colour cattle, still he would be carrying some similar spot). So while analysing the attitudes of some person who normally looks unlike his ancestors such a type of saying is used.¹⁶ In some debate or dialogue, there are always arguments and counter arguments. At times, an intelligent person with a sharp wit and power of oration dominates the scene and prevails upon others. Such a phenomenon had been depicted in a saying like *shister behanavon* (to settle the iron). In case of some conversation when somebody prevails absolutely and it is said that *Aem behnau shishter* (means that he has prevailed).¹⁷

Every life, be it in the form of birds, cattle or humans have immense attachment with their siblings and are often ready to pay any sacrifice for their well being. Their pain or suffering is always unbearable for everyone. It is in this context that the saying *baché dood gau lache dood* (the ailment of children is just like the ailment of the tail). It is so because the ailment of tail or for that matter in case of human's rear organs, where they themselves cannot monitor, is the most severe and painful.¹⁸ To demand something that cannot be available or to hope against the hope has been expressed in the saying like *veden tang mangel* (to expect pears from willows). Willow is a popular domestic tree of the Valley but it does not bear any fruit. Pear is a renowned fruit of Kashmir and it is obtained from the pear trees. Thus, to expect pears from willows explains an irrational ambition. So when somebody would aspire too selfishly or hope against the hope, it has been defined as *veden tang mangel*.¹⁹

In rural parlance, if somebody would be caught in some difficult situation where he struggles to come out, such a

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Heard about it from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who had learned it from his teacher, Prof. Muhammad Ashraf Wani.

¹⁹ Have heard it from my late grandfather, Abdul Ghani Ganai in January, 2013.

situation has been proverbial as *mulas lagen* (to get fasten with some root). It is so that while ploughing fields, some time the plough comes under some root that brings the ploughing operation to standstill. It is only after removing the hurdle that the ploughing could resume. It is in this context that the folk saying has emerged. Therefore, in case a person is caught in some difficulty and is seeking its redressal, the saying *mulas lagen* becomes apt.²⁰ In a situation where the genuine efforts do not bear any fruit, the saying, *kaet kaet aachur gachun* (turning raw even after spinning) is used especially in rural society. It simply means that even after putting in the serious effort the dividends did not follow. It was also used even when the master would not recognize the hard labour of his servant. He would complain that it was just like *kaet kaet aachur gachun*.²¹

In every society, either rural or urban, there are various types of people with varying attitudes and the way of life. Some people are sincere, some innocent, some wise, some compassionate, some cruel and some extremely selfish and cunning. A selfish person often tries to exploit situation in his favour. The society consequent to people's interaction develops impressions about the positive or negative traits of its individuals. In case of extremely selfish people a saying that has emerged is *khudgarez chu dandas chur heith gomut* (a selfish person has tried to milch an ox). It is obvious that one can procure milk from a milch cow alone and such a saying has been used sarcastically in order to highlight the illogical ambitions of an extremely selfish person.²²

In case of rural Kashmir *doombs* were a small segment of population. They either served as village watchmen or as ordinary assistants to *Patwaries* (village accountants). It was a so called low caste segment of the population who were considered as ill-mannered. Naturally, their children also used to be rude, devoid of etiquette. It is in this context that the saying *doombeh shuren khak briar* (means try to contain

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Learned about it from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who had heard it from Ghulam Muhammd Rather S/o. Abdul Gaffar Rather R/o. Badamibagh, Issus, Anantnag.

the children of *doombs* through the fear related to *Khakas* and cats). It is to be noted that *Khakas* were a tribal race inhabiting the hilly areas of the Valley who at times raided the Valley in order to loot and plunder. That is why in case a mother in the Valley desired to silence her child while weeping or doing some unusual activity, she would remind her about the arrival of *Khakas* or some cat so that he kept calm. The essence of the saying is that this formula could not be applied to the children of *doombs* and they are too rude to be silenced by it.²³

Whenever there is some plan on behalf of a person or a social group or an organization to launch some welfare activity, it starts with all enthusiasm and vigour. After some time, the passion for harnessing the agenda fades and in some cases, it ultimately comes to an end. Therefore, the clever people try to benefit themselves at the earliest. It is perhaps in this context that the saying *vantas che tatsi basteh vasan* (the internal cover of the gizzard of a chicken after his slaughter could be removed easily immediately till it is warm). The saying denotes that a person should try to avail the benefit of some plan or scheme as early as possible because *vantas che tatsi basteh vasan*.²⁴ It is believed that one should not take any risk while deciding about various types of campaigns and adventures. The wisdom demands that he should take every care about his strategy. It is probably in this background that the saying *vave vechet nau traven* (to row the boat after observing the winds) has come to fore. The fast winds often drown the boat that is why the observation of the movement of winds is of paramount importance before sailing.²⁵

At times, an illogical greedy person comes in touch with a habitual liar. The liar promises him heavens but the greedy person achieves nothing that ultimately causes a conflict between the two. The combination of such two characters has been explained in the saying *kham tamhas teh apzairs gaed gachen* (an alliance of a greedy and a habitual liar).

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Ibid.

Wherever the people come across such a relation, they satirically call that *kham tamhas teh apzairs che gaed gamech* means that there has been an illegitimate alliance of a greedy and a habitual liar.²⁶ In case some person or a group of people enjoy something furtively but later on attribute it to some other person or persons, such an action has been portrayed in the saying like *aalieu khau manch teh kalen thavuk galen matheth* (the honey was taken by clever people who later on rubbed some amount of it on the cheeks of the dumb). They did so in order to pretend that it were the dumb ones who had taken the honey. Thus, in a situation where some people take the benefit of something but later on deny it by saying that its benefit went to some other people the saying *aalieu khau manch teh kalen thovuk galen matheth* become applicable.²⁷

If somebody has power or wealth but he does not help the needy such a situation was reflected in the saying *shalas chu lut zuit balas chu neh tamuek shufeh* (If a jackal has a long tail that does not benefit the mountain). It means that the tail of the jackal is covering the thighs of jackal alone and not the mountain that remains exposed to rain and the cold winds. Thus, if someone would speak high about some powerful and wealthy person who does not take care of the needy, he may receive the reply *shalas chu lut zuit teh balas chu neh tamuek shufeh*.²⁸ Too much of intimacy at times leads to acrimony between the two persons or the two families. It is so because both the sides often keep their expectations from each other very high. In case their expectations do not come to fruition, due to one reason or the other, it often creates a bad blood that culminates into the end of the relation itself. It is perhaps in this context that the saying *dureh dureh chu marech teh maithan nazdeek nazdeek chu nabad teh tethan*

²⁶ It was revealed to me by Muhammad Yusuf Ganai and he had learned about it from Muhammad Akram Ganai S/o. Ghuam Ahmed Ganai, R/o. Audsoo, Anantnag.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Muhammad Yusuf Ganai during his adulthood had heard this saying from Muhammad Rajab Ganai S/o. Muhammad Ibrahim Ganai, R/o. Audsoo, Anantnag, Kashmir.

(At distance black pepper turns sweet and in case of close intimacy sugar becomes bitter).²⁹

The state of tumult and commotion has been explained by the saying *maet aab vathun* (flow of the waters that after consuming cause commotion). In case people feel that in a particular situation things are not going as expected, and there is huge intolerance and irrationality, they would use the saying *yeti chu maet aab vathmut* (There is a flow of water that turns people insane or agitated).³⁰ If somebody becomes arrogant owing to his power or wealth and then tries to dominate or intimidate others for personal ends, the saying *zoon khaneh khasun* (try to devour the moon) becomes apt for him. For instance, if somebody would adopt such a behaviour or attitude, the people would say that *yeh chu zoon khaneh khutmut* means that he is trying to devour the moon. The saying basically conveys that such a person is aiming at something which is unbecoming.³¹

When someone devises a plan to accomplish any adventurous task he should not go in haste. This is what the wise men often suggest. One should not jump to the gun and thus spoil the process of accomplishment. It is in this context that the saying *mazarbal tam che hazar balayeh* (till the burial spot thousands of problems could set in). The saying conveys that till the accomplishment of the task, things should not be taken for granted because while executing the plan many difficulties could come in and thus stop the process.³² Some people use flattery and lies in order to win favours for their plans. But lies are after all lies and they do not materialize. In this context there is a saying *tarau seet cha hamam tatan* (*hamam* cannot gain warmth from the lies). It is pertinent to mention that Kashmir has borrowed the Central Asian tradition to construct *hamams* in order to avoid extreme chill of winters. For obtaining heat, it requires firewood that helps in retaining the warmth of the *hamam* room for around twenty four hours. It is in this context that the saying has

²⁹ Learned about it from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who in his childhood had heard it from his father.

³⁰ Ibid.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

been used and if someone would like to say that the lies do not prevail, he at times would prefer to say that *tarau seet cha hamam tatatan* means that *hamam* do not warm through lies.³³

The activities of the foolish and insane people generally cause a sort of pain to the wise. But, being helpless they could not help the situation. It is in this backdrop that the saying *baiakal kurun dana senz vanig zalneh khatreh padeh* (God has created the insane in order to hurt the wise). For instance, if somebody would complain about the unwarranted actions of an insane person the other one would console him by arguing that *baiakal kurun dana senz vaning zalneh khatreh padeh*.³⁴ In case someone rises to power or becomes wealthy within a short span of time, he at times becomes crazy. It is in such a case that the saying like *kuker mares na achen* (reluctance of his hen to enter the coop) has been used. For instance, if anybody would like to comment about the change of his lifestyle overnight and his becoming crazy, he would say *aem senz kuker cha neh maris achnui manan* means that his hen do not agree to enter the coop.³⁵

If someone is carefull about a person but that person is himself more careful about another third person and does not care for his concern, such a situation has been explained in the saying like *mooj karan kuri kuri kur karan rune h rune h* (mother is concerned about the daughter whereas the daughter is careful about her husband).³⁶ Sometimes, the actions of some persons cause an irritation to another person for right or wrong reasons, especially when he is not concerned with the matter; such a situation has been defined in a saying like *lache dood vothun* (causing a pain in tail). For instance, if any person would like to say that his actions or

³³ The author has learned about it from Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who according to him had learned it from his one time friend Abdul Gaffar Sofi, Ex-Health Minister of J&K in Mufti Muhammad Sayeds Cabinet in 2003.

³⁴ It was revealed to me by Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who in his childhood days had heard it from Gul Mohammed Rather S/o. Ghulam Nabi Rather (Policeman), R/o. Audsoo, Anantnag.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ The author has learned this saying from his paternal grandmother Saja Begum (age 70 years) in April, 2021.

words were not tolerated by some other person, he at times would say that *amis voth lache dood* means that it caused a pain in his tail.³⁷

The poor sections of the society continue to face difficulties and often suffer for want of the basic necessities. Either in good or in bad times they generally do not avail their due. It is in this context that the saying *aaya socall teh maya kangal, aaya kokal teh maya kangal* (at good as well as bad times, the poor continues to be disadvantaged).³⁸ In case any person takes the remarks of another person badly and feels the language used by him was unbecoming or sarcastic, he naturally reacts to it bluntly. It is probably in such a context that the saying *langeh gureh tazun* (applying whip to a lame mare) has been used. Therefore, if someone would like to communicate that his remarks were taken very badly by another one, he would say that *amis gau langeh gureh tazun* means that it was just like striking a whip on some lame mare for him.³⁹

Human nature is diverse and as such the temperaments of people generally vary from each other. Some people indulge in woolgathering fantasies and in Kashmiri terminology such people are called as *app* (illogically ambitious). It is in this context that a folk saying like *appeh hund geau* (the ghee of an illogical woman). The myth reveals that once a woman with such nature had been able to collect a full cauldron of ghee (clarified butter) at her home. She was a virgin lady. Having a full cauldron of ghee at earlier times was a sign of one's prosperity. Therefore, sitting beside the cauldron she began to plan about her marriage. While in thoughts she visualized about her adult children that would be born after the marriage. Meanwhile, an idea struck her mind that in case any of her children would not comply with her advice she would beat him. Overwhelmed by emotion, she picked up a nearby rod and struck on the earthen cauldron and as if she was beating her naughty child. The

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ It was revealed to me by Muhammad Yusuf Ganai who had learned it from the senior citizens of his native village during his very childhood days.

³⁹ Ibid.

earthen cauldron broke down and all the ghee that it contained was lost on the floor. Thus, the plans of the lady were cast to winds. Such an example has been defined by the folk saying *appeh hund geau* (the ghee of an illogically overambitious woman). So if anybody resorts to woolgathering that is described precisely as *appeh hund geau*.⁴⁰

Some times a cunning person bullies a simple styled person by convincing him through fictitious logic. Such deception and cheating has been explained in a proverbial manner like *lureh pait saruf tarun* (to shift the snake through a walking stick). The walking stick is always a means of hope for a traveller and if somebody would offer it to someone it is deemed as a noble gesture. But, if any one while offering it would also shift a serpent to him that is dangerous and tantamount to the worst type of cheating as instead of help it can threaten one's life. It is in this backdrop that the saying like *lureh pait saraf tarun* has come up.⁴¹

At times, a person or a social group entertains unfounded doubts and fears. Such a condition has been described in a saying like *khud munden sipah vanun* (to see or call stumps as sepoy). In case of Valley the literary sources reveal that during the nineteenth century *Nizamat Paltan* (troops meant to assist the revenue authorities in enforcing the claim of the State in harvest season) was operating in rural Kashmir. It caused havoc in the rural populace. So the sight of a sepoy for common man was not less than a nightmare. It is probably in this context that a reference to a sepoy had been made. In case any person, especially in the countryside is more fearful or doubtful, the next one would remark that he is looking at stumps as sepoy. Sepoy is itself a term that was in fashion during colonial era.⁴² Happiness and grief are the two situations that a human being is supposed to come across in his day to day life. However, it is only in a state of pleasure that he enjoys the bounties of nature. It is in this context that the saying *Dalech phulai che dilch khushi* (the blossoming

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

look of the fields is suitable to a happy heart). In rural Kashmir, especially during the month of April, the mustard plants present a blooming look and every one is tempted to relish it. In rural Kashmir, the agricultural fields are generally called as *dal*. Thus, the saying *dalch phulai che dilch khushi* has been placed in a proper context.⁴³

Some times the people devoid of any sense of business in search of livelihood initiate to buy and sell various commodities. But, owing to their poor sense of business and management of accounts they are often put to loss. It is perhaps in this context that a saying which is popular in South Kashmir like *Mumeh jooven thool* (eggs of Muhmeh Joo) has emerged. The oral tradition reveals that Mumeh, a short form of the name Ghulam Muhammad, was an innocent and simple styled person who decided to buy eggs from the villages and to sell it to an intermediary or an agent who supplied the commodities to urban areas. It is said that Mumeh Joo purchased a dozen at the rate of Rs. 11. But, being innocent and simple styled he sold a dozen at the rate of Rs. 10 causing the loss of one rupee per dozen. It is in this backdrop that the saying *Mumeh jooven thool* has come into being and is used sarcastically to the present day.⁴⁴

Sheep in nineteenth and early twentieth century was considered a precious source in village economy. That is why the saying *tuer gau suneh sund suir* (sheep is just like a golden brick) has emerged. However, owing to extreme poverty causing shortage of fodder espiciallly in winters when the fields were covered with snow, most of the households in a village could not afford to rear sheep. Therefore, the peasants with sizeable land holdings possessed dozens of sheep and those with very small holdings a few only. Jackals in the countryside often attacked the sheep while in fields. That is why the shepherds kept a vigil while grazing them. In case of any negligence jackals attacked and killed the sheep and thus caused damage. Sometimes it happened that the only one sheep of some poor household was killed. Such a condition has been explained in a saying like *kuneh gabeh shaal*

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

(murder of one's lone sheep by a jackal). This saying is used in various contexts and especially when somebody loses his lone asset or relation.⁴⁵

The cloud burst at times in the valley of Kashmir is followed with lightning. Lightning some times cause the damage of structures, livestock and above all death of human beings. In Kashmiri language, it is called *trath* and it falls in a cloudy atmosphere. So when there is sunny, naturally there is no chance for such a development. Therefore, if someone faces any accident or any other tragic experience in the form of the abrupt death of his dear one, the saying *tapeh manz trath* (fall of lightning in a sunny day) is used for explaining his irony.⁴⁶

In absence of road connectivity till recent past horse was used for riding especially by the rural and urban elite. Therefore, riding a horse was an honour. But, nobody would use a donkey for riding purposes and it was meant only for carrying loads. So, riding a donkey tantamounted to satire and sarcasm and could be considered as an act of foolishness. It is in this context that the proverb *Kharas khasun* (to ride a donkey) has come up. For instance, if somebody would do some shameful activity the other one may call it as *kharas khasun*.⁴⁷

Kashmiris being a peaceful race generally did not like the culture of filing litigations against one another. It was deemed abhorrent. That is why the saying *kahchhari khasun* (to move to the court of law) has come into being. Moreover, if somebody would prefer to publicise himself unnecessarily and as such would poke his nose in every feud in a locality, it is also termed a *kahchhari khasun*.⁴⁸ Peas are an important

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Such a type of saying is used in case of some tragic incident that takes people unawares and causes a gloom. The author has heard it several times.

⁴⁷ It is used especially in the context of the violation of moral code by someone in a locality and it undermines the dignity of such people in the society.

⁴⁸ People with gentle background and decency who do not want that their issues should reach to the court of law and who also do not want that their domestic problems be discussed in the locality, are using this saying in order to impress upon the good behaviour in day today life.

vegetable of Kashmir produced especially at *karewa* lands. In addition to its fresh use, it is also harvested, dried and stored for the use in harsh winters. Fully ripened and dried peas were easy to chew in comparison to half ripened. Half ripened dried peas were known as *Tchumreh kadeh* (half ripened dried peas) that used to be too hard and as such very difficult to chew. It is in this context that the saying *Tchumreh kadeh chapneh* (to chew the partially ripened dried peas) has been used. So, if someone would like to say to another one that it would be very difficult to accomplish any task, he would say that it amounts to *Tchumreh kadeh Chapneh* means that it is just like the chewing of half ripened dried peas.⁴⁹

The Valley especially in late summers remains flood prone and in Kashmiri language that has borrowed maximum from Sanskrit vocabulary, flood is called as *yeup*. Floods in the Valley at times cause great devastation and the recent 2014 floods is a case in point. During the floods, common people as well as the state try to save the habitations by raising embankments. Sometimes it works and sometimes it does not. It is in this context that the saying *yeupes shup thavon* (try to turn the course of river by placing a winnowing tray against its current) has come into existence. So in a situation where a person or a social group is trying to combat any aggressive and forceful occurrence with ordinary avenues the phrase *yeupes shup thavon* become apt.⁵⁰

There is no denying the fact that the mankind has advanced through a long drawn process of borrowing from each other science, technology and culture. For instance, Europe owing to the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century stole a march, and Asia and Africa remained as backwaters. It were the British who built the railways and invented the trains first and later on introduced railway system in India as well. It is in this context that the phrase 'to miss the train' had come up in English literature. In case of Kashmir which is a remote Himalayan state, river Jhelum had

⁴⁹ The author has learned this saying from his paternal grandpa Abdul Ghani alias Ghanimukhdam.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

acted as the highway of transportation for centuries together. The rural-urban trade and various other types of interaction were conducted by using the boats and the boat in Kashmiri is known as *Nave*. It is in this background that if someone would miss some opportunity that the proverb *nave nirith gachen* (to miss the boat) becomes applicable. Also, if someone would like to communicate to another one that in case of the accomplishment of some job, the time has not lapsed as yet, he would say that *vaen kam naveh gayeh nirith* means that yet you have not missed the boat.⁵¹

Hen which in Kashmiri language is called *kuker* is considered a humble creature in local parlance. If a Kashmiri would like to undermine the importance of any one, he would prefer to call him *kuker*. In the same vein, if someone would like to convey that a good advice for fools does not bear any results, he would say that *yeh gau kukren mukhteh chakun* (it amounts to showering diamonds upon hens).⁵²

Moreover, there are various sayings associated with various localities that also speak about the socio-economic status of rural society during the nineteenth and early twentieth century. For instance, the largest village of Shangas area of Anantnang is the village Shangas itself. Locally, this habitation was at times sarcastically referred as *Ganeh Shangas* (Shangas of prostitutes). Though such a satire has continued through oral tradition, history also attests to its reality. Till recent past even today one of its *mohallas* (localities) is named as *Ganeh Mohallah* (the locality of prostitutes). Charles William Bates and G.T. Vigne in their travel accounts have written in detail about the presence of prostitution at Shangas. Therefore, such folk sayings often have some background and they do not emerge in vacuum.⁵³

In 1846 A.D., the Dogra state by virtue of the Treaty of Amritsar declared the valley of Kashmir as its purchased property and accordingly followed an exorbitant taxation policy in which, according to Walter Roper Lawrence, every

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Ibid.

⁵³ For details see: Bates, Charles William, *Gazetteer of Kashmir*, p. 337; Vigne, G. T; *Travels in Kashmir*, vol. I, p. 349.

commodity except drinking water and air was heavily taxed. Such a policy denuded the peasantry leading to its chronic poverty. In extreme food crisis, the rural populace for want of survival at times relied on substandard diet like rice gruel, oilcake, wild vegetables and fruits etc. Besides, they at times used to hunt sparrows and various other birds in order to douse the fire of their bellies. It was in such a scenario that the people of Thagiwara, a village about five kilometers away in the east of Anantnag town had inadvertently hunted down a vulture instead of female crane which in local parlance is called as *mangau*. It is pertinent to mention that Muslims consider vulture as *haram* (abhorrent to eating). Thus, the villages around ridiculed the people of Thagiwara for eating the flesh of vulture instead of female crane called *mangau*. Even satirical folk poetry was composed on this episode and one of its couplets reads as:⁵⁴

Khau Thegwarikau magavi ras
Hashe aus takseer noshi pai thas
Khau Tagwarikau mangau ras

(Translation)

The people of Thagiwara have taken the soup of crane
 Mother-in-law had committed wrong and the daughter-in-law received a beating
 The people of Thagiwara have taken the soup of crane.

It is an established fact that in addition to exorbitant legal taxes, the Dogra bureaucracy exacted illegal taxes in the form of *rasum*. Under it, the officials of Revenue, Fisheries, Sericulture and Forest Departments would exact butter, fowl, blankets, honey and at times sheep in the form of perquisites from the famished peasantry. These officials acted as ferocious wolves harassing the rural populace, and at times punishing the peasant's corporeally on the spot. It is in this context that the local saying *Yesseh thanekhar* (an ass load of

⁵⁴ Information collected from Muhammad Yusf Ganai who has lived most of his life in Audsoo, Anantnag, which is seven kilometres away from the village Thegwara.

butter from Yesus) should be understood. The oral tradition reveals that once a mulberry watcher (employee) witnessed a peasant of Yesus, a village located at a distance of six kilometres from Achabal health resort, plucking the leaves of a mulberry tree which was a declared state property. He caught hold of him and started to beat him with tinny branches of the same tree. It is said that while receiving the thrashing the poor peasant initially promised one seer (around a kilogram) of butter as bribe in order to seek his release. But, the watcher continued to beat him while demanding more quantity of butter as bribe. The process of beating and bargaining continued unabated till the peasant, out of sheer pressure, made a commitment of eighty seers in order to free himself. Eighty seers amount to a *khar* (about 80 kgs which is a normal load for an ass) in local parlance. Since then the *yeseh thanekhar* emerged as a local folk saying and the inhabitants of this village on the whole at times are humorously termed as *thanekhar*.⁵⁵

Conclusion: The above discussion leads us to the conclusion that all the Indo-Aryan languages, including Kashmiri, embody a treasure trove of folk sayings that provide us valuable information about the collective wisdom and the socio-economic conditions of the people. It is perhaps in this backdrop that oral history and vernacular literature is by now recognised as a potent source of historiography at national and international level. It is also obvious from the fact that the National Education Policy (2020) of India has laid an emphasis on “promoting multilingualism and the power of language in teaching and learning”. The folk sayings are just like a mirror that reflect the wisdom of a society and provide us first hand information about the behaviour, attitudes and the overall lifestyle of the people.

⁵⁵ Ibid. Dr. Ganai who revealed this story to me has learned about it from his father Late Abdul Ghani alias Ghani Mukhdam, R/o. Audsoo, a village close to village Yesus now called Issu. Abdul Ghani passed away in January, 2014, at the age of 85.

Inter-community Relations in Ladakh Region

Farrukh Faheem

Abstract: *This paper describes how over the years the identity discourse rooted in religion penetrated into the social fabric of Ladakh region. The rupture in inter-community relations in Ladakh is a result of declining religious, economic and cultural links with Central Asia and Tibet. Region's incorporation into the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir and its subsequent inclusion into the Union of India exposed the region to a new set of modernity and development. Over the years, this exposure contributed immensely to the sense of marginalization and discrimination against the region by the state government. In this paper, I try to highlight how in multiple representations of the region, the larger Ladakhi identity capturing the diversity of Ladakh gave way to a narrow Buddhist identity of Ladakh. I argue that the political relationship of Ladakh with Kashmir region has been marked by differently structured identities signifying multiple notions of community identity. The articulation of community identity as a larger regional identity, once as Ladakhi and at other times as Buddhists depended on which aspect of identity helped political leaders mobilize people in bargaining for power against state government and the Centre. In this competition, Ladakh region was at times projected essentially as a Buddhist region suffering from a Muslim dominated state government.*

Introduction: The Treaty of Amritsar signed between Gulab Singh and the British colonial powers in 1846 had given Gulab Singh full control over Kashmir. By virtue of this treaty Ladakh also became a part of Dogra state. This treaty gave birth to what was popularly called the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. In 1947, the signing of the instrument of accession with India brought the regions of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. With the emergence of the dominion of India, Ladakh became a frontier region of the new dominion. The partition of India had severe impact on the inter-community relations in the subcontinent. During the partition of the subcontinent

and subsequent war on Kashmir some parts of Ladakh were also partitioned. The partition of the subcontinent influenced the inter-community relations in the region as well. In Ladakh region as in other parts of India, the loyalty of Muslims citizens towards the India State was openly suspected on the basis of their religious identity.¹ As a part of the Indian State, after 1947 Ladakh as a region emerged as a peripheral space. Although, historically Ladakh has been at the center of trading routes, connecting Eastern Turkheistan (now Xinxiang), Tibet, and Kashmir, Ladakh now became a borderland dependent on the mainland India and connected to it through valley of Kashmir. This route was now a lifeline for the Ladakh region and its only connection to the outside world.

In the backdrop of the emerging political relations between the erstwhile Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir and India, the Constitution of India provided a special status for Jammu and Kashmir. In 1953, when the first Budget was announced by the State Government, the then Ladakh representative Bakula Rinpoche accused the State Government of neglecting Ladakh region. Bakula attracted the attention of the Government of India regarding the perceived discrimination of Ladakh at the hands of the Jammu and Kashmir Government.²

As Government of India unilaterally began modifying its constitutional relationship with the erstwhile Princely State, some of the leaders from the Ladakh region demanded administration on the pattern of the North Eastern Frontier Administration (NEFA) for the region, so that the region could be directly controlled by the Government of India and not by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.

In 1965, as India and Pakistan fought another war, the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA), one of the representative organizations of the Buddhist community of Ladakh once again raised the demand for direct control of the Government

¹ John Bray, *Ladakhi History and Indian Nationhood*, South Asia Research 11 (2), 1991: 115-133.

² Van Beek, *True Patriots: Justifying Autonomy for Ladakh*. Himalaya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies, 1998: 18 (9).

of India over their region. Over the years, this demand was explicitly expressed in communal overtones.³

After twenty two years of political turmoil and his incarceration, the most popular Kashmiri leader Shiekh Abdullah returned to head the state of Jammu and Kashmir. During this time both nature of politics within the Ladakh region and its relationship with Jammu and Kashmir had undergone significant changes. Shiekh Abdullah attempted to consolidate his position in Ladakh by dividing the region into two districts namely Kargil and Leh. This division clearly separated the Buddhist Majority Leh from the Muslim majority Kargil. Over the years, the region has witnessed intense friction in the intercommunity relationships. The former demand for North Eastern Frontier Administration NEFA was now replaced with a new demand for the Union Territory status. The communal Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) also demanded the inclusion of Bhodi language as the medium of instruction in the schools and colleges across the region and a Schedule Tribe status for the people of Ladakh. The overtly communal stance of the association was in tune with right wing nationalist Party, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) growth and politics in the mainland India around this time. In 1989, series of intercommunity clashes were reported from the region with Ladakh Buddhist Association announcing a social boycott of the Kashmiri Muslims working or living in Ladakh. In response to the agitation, the government of Jammu and Kashmir announced setting up of a committee to look into establishing an Autonomous Hill Council for the region.

The roots of communalism can be traced to 1930s with the formation of Kashmir Raj Maha Bodhi Sabha (KRMBS), which later changed to Ladakh Buddhist Educational Society (LBES) and finally the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA).⁴

³ Van Beek, 'The Importance of Being Tribal or the Impossibility of Being Ladakhi', in Recent Research on Ladakh 7, 1997: *Proceedings of Seventh Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies*, Ulm: Universitat Ulm.

⁴ Beek Martijn Van, "Beyond Identity Fetishism: Communal Conflict In Ladakh and the Limits of Autonomy". *Cultural Anthropology*, 15 (4), 2001: 525-569. doi:10.1525/can.2000.15.4.525. 78.

The whole mobilization for the demand of Union Territory status and separation from Kashmir were based on the twin slogans of “Being Buddhist” and “Distinct Culture”. The Ladakh Buddhist Association and its predecessors continuously used these terms in their memorandums and in their demands for Schedule Tribe status, Union Territory and the inclusion of Bodhi script in educational institutes.⁵

The continuous portrayal of “Being Buddhist” and “Distinct Culture” created a dominant perception both inside and outside Jammu and Kashmir. In these perceptions, the entire Ladakh region was imagined as essentially “Buddhist”, and that the Kargil as a “part and parcel of Kashmir”. Like the memorandum presented to Nehru in 1949, because of the religious affinities between Kargil and Kashmir, the Ladakh Buddhist Association in their memorandums deliberately propagated the perception of Kargil being a part of Kashmir.⁶ This memorandum read: “we are a separate nation by all the tests-race, language, religion and culture, determining nationality. The only link connecting us with the other people of the State being the Bond of common ruler.”⁷ The Ladakh Buddhist Association, thus, used the idea of “Buddhistness” for the entire Ladakh region. In many ways, the call for minority rights within the political entity of Jammu and Kashmir by sections of the community in Ladakh was “anything but counter hegemonic”. The mobilization was essentially based on radical and at times forced silencing of the other: the Muslim community of Ladakh. The *Othering* of the Muslims in Ladakh region is visible in the popular writings of Ladakh where their presence is either ignored or

⁵ Van Beek, *Dangerous Liaison: Hindu Nationalism and Buddhist Radicalism in Ladakh*. In Limaye S et.al (eds): *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, 1st ed., 2001:193-218. Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

⁶ Van Beek, *Identity Fetishism and the Art of Representation: The Long Struggle for Regional Autonomy in Ladakh*. Part of Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Aarhus University.

⁷ Beek Martijn Van, True Patriots: Justifying Autonomy for Ladakh, *Himaliya, the Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, 18 (9), 1998: 35-46.

http://www.claudearpi.net/maintenance/uploaded_pics/MemorandumCheewangRigzin.pdf

described as a recent, essentially foreign development. In this discourse, Muslims are often portrayed as “Others” and are continuously linked to Muslims in Kashmir and the political tensions in the region. This discourse has been conveniently used by Ladakh Buddhist Association to gain attention from the central Government. In subsequent years, social boycott against Muslims of Ladakh has been used as a political tool to mobilize communities on the basis of religious polarization. Through social boycott in words of Sarah Smith “political narratives and religious identities were more widely fused and explicitly territorialized”. The enforced control and restriction on inter-community interactions marked all Ladakhis as members of one community or the other, giving birth to antagonist political entities.⁸

The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Council: After long struggle and resistance for autonomy, Ladakh was given the Hill Council, based on the Darjeeling and Assam model. The Muslim majority district of Kargil initially refused to accept the Hill Council as they feared loss of ties with Kashmir, but Leh accepted the Hill Council in 1995. The Demand for autonomy as already mentioned was justified on the basis of Ladakh being a ‘distinct’ region, a Buddhist space. The issues of national security, patriotism, lack of economic progress because of its existence as a part of Jammu And Kashmir State and the ‘Othering’ of the Muslim community fuelled the series of agitations demanding Autonomous Hill Councils. This created an image of a homogenized community which neglected the diversity and division within the Buddhist community. The Hill Council had 30 seats in which 26 are elected by the people and rest 4 is to be nominated and reserved for minority and women. The power of Hill Council includes transferring of Government employees except those of higher ranks, collecting tax developing plans for development in the region etc. Despite tremendous powers granted to the Hill Council, the performance of both Leh and

⁸ Sara Smith, *Intimate Geopolitics: Religion, Marriage, and Reproductive Bodies in Leh, Ladakh*. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 102 (6), 2012 : 1511-1528.

Kargil Council was criticized by the sections of Ladakhi society. In the Kargil region, the criticism is more than that of Leh because of the slow pace of development in the region. The Kargil Hill Council is largely affected by the Imam Khomani Memorial Trust (IKMT) and Islamia School Kargil (ISK) division in the region.⁹ Over the years people from Leh renewed demand for a Union Territory, as a section of Ladakhi society believed that Hill Council has not been able to function effectively. The perceived control of the State government was considered to be the reason behind Council ineffective functioning. After few years of the formation of Hill Council in Leh, an MLA from Leh, Chewering Dorje, blamed the State Government for creating hurdles in the functioning of Hill Council and dubbed the government as anti-Ladakh. The State Government became a readily available scapegoat in the Leh region where the leaders always blamed them for every failure. As the 'imagined' idea of a homogenized community began to be challenged by smaller regions, the functioning of the Hill Council and its popularity among the people declined rapidly. This was evident in the 2015 election, when the BJP won the Council election. The BJP in its manifesto for the Hill Council election mentioned, "Grant of UT status for Ladakh and inclusion of Ladakh in 6th Schedule". Ladakh politics especially that of Leh has always been influenced by the larger politics at the central level, the claim for NEFA type administration in 1960s was made keeping in consideration the concession being given to the North East regions, the demand for Hill Council was taken up keeping in consideration the Darjeeling and Assam concessions. The rise of BJP in power at the central level played a crucial role in the election. The BJP won the Hill Council election from a great majority and came in power. In 2014, Nitin Gadkari, announced that Article 370, is the biggest hurdle for the Ladakh region to gain UT status. For Ladakh to have UT status, the abrogation of Article 370 is necessary. The Hill Council become a site where demand for

⁹ Van Beek, *Hill Councils, Development, and Democracy: Assumptions and Experiences from Ladakh, Alternatives*, Global, Local and Political, Sage, Volume: 24 issue: 4, 1999: 435-460.

UT status was posed in one or the other form. The seats reserved for minorities in the Hill Council gave birth to the contention issue of who should be called the 'minority' in the Kargil region. The Buddhists in the region claim themselves to be a minority, but the Brokpas also claim minority status in the Hill Council. The Brokpas justify their minority status in the region on the basis of their "distinct culture". By demanding a minority status for themselves, Brokpas have attempted to establish their cultural exclusivity vis-à-vis other Buddhists in Kargil district and are strong contenders for this status alongside the Buddhists of district Kargil. The articulation of rights along religious identities fractured the Ladakhi society. The introduction of Hill Council and the demand for a Union Territory further essentialized identities and completely polarized the region.

Communal Politics and the Inter-community Relations:

The region of Ladakh is diverse in terms of its ethnicity. Although some people may claim a common Ladakhi ancestry for all inhabitants of Ladakh. The word Ladakhi does not refer to every inhabitant of the region. The traditional Ladakhi society is broadly stratified on the basis of occupation into Ladakhi, Gara, Mon, Beda, Balti and Aragon ethnic groups. The Ladakhis are also called Bot, Bhot, Bod, Bodh, Botpa or Bota. They are followers of Buddhism and are predominantly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry. The Ladakhi's occupy the highest rung of social hierarchy followed by Dolba which includes Garas, Mons and Bedas. The Garas have been working as blacksmiths and occupy a position immediately lower to Ladakhis. They are followed by Mon and Beda respectively. Both Mons and Bedas are musicians, Mons play drums and Bedas play flute. In the social order of a Buddhist village the superior Ladakhis described the position of Garas, Mons and Bedas through an analogy of arrow. In this analogy Gara's position is that of the arrow head; a Mons' position is that of the thread work in-between the arrow head and the shaft; Bedas is that of the

lower portion of the arrow.¹⁰ Argons occupy a relatively high social status and some scholars believe that Argons are children of Muslim traders from Kashmir or Central Asia who came to Ladakh and married local Buddhist women.¹¹ Although communities in Ladakh strongly adhered to their respective religious beliefs and norms the inter-religious marriages between communities was not uncommon. Inter-religious marriages occurred both among 'ordinary' people and the royalty. As one of our respondents observes, "The rulers of Ladakh were very tolerant . . . inter-faith marriages were not confined to common people but the kings too married within Muslim families of Baltistan and Purig. The queens were allowed to practice their own religion. They built mosques within their palaces and offered prayers regularly. In the post-Independence Ladakh, this harmonious relationship got spoiled not because of one reason, but many".¹²

Ladakh region has been a meeting point of Islamic and Buddhist traditions. Ladakhi culture reflects a blend of Tibetan and Kashmiri traditions. For generations, Ladakhi families have peacefully practised Buddhist religion alongside Muslim religious practices, as inter-religious marriage remained a norm in the region. Buddhists and Muslims of Ladakh have co-existed peacefully for generations. As one of our respondents observes:¹³

We have co-existed in peace for centuries and many inter-faith marriages have taken place in the past. But now there are some people who are creating this mess and making it a huge issue which it is not. But today people feel everything is right and justified when it comes to religion.

Participation of both communities in marriage ceremonies, in death and mourning rituals were a part of the composite culture in Ladakh. Many of our respondents

¹⁰ Rann Singh Mann, *Aspects of Indian Social Anthropology*. New Delhi: Concept Publishing Co, 1996: 112.

¹¹ Jacqueline H Fewkes, *Trade and Contemporary Society along the Silk Road*. Hoboken: Taylor & Francis, 2009: 35.

¹² Suhail Ali, Kargil, 10-05-2015.

¹³ Rizwan Ahmed, Kargil, 13-06-2015.

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lamented how Ladakhi past is filled with the memories of shared culture. As one of our respondents observed:

During the early period in Ladakh, people from both religions used to live in complete harmony. In the event of any death in a Buddhist family, the Muslims would prepare food and make all the arrangements. Even the Buddhists used to bury the dead bodies just like the Muslims do. The same kind of arrangement was practiced in marriage ceremonies. Festivals like Eid and Losar were celebrated together by both Buddhists and Muslims. With the course of time, these relations were spoiled because of various reasons.¹⁴

A network of ties linked different villages and ethnic groups for agricultural, ritual and social tasks giving birth to a criss-cross of alliances. Thus, strong community bonds and extensive community support were a part of socio-cultural milieu in the region. As one of the respondents observed:

The absence of road connectivity and lack of modern transport and lodging facilities resulted in mutual interdependence in the past. Ladakh's isolation from rest of the world and challenges of long distance travel brought people together in a web of relationships. Thus, in places like Khaltse which is in between Leh and Kargil, many people from the Buddhist families would stay at Muslim houses even though they were not related . . . There was sort of a mutual understanding in those days and people were very great hosts . . . It was a time when people had clean heart and their conscience was alive.¹⁵

Most of our respondents expressed pride over the cordial relations enjoyed by the two communities and the tolerant past of their society. As one of respondents observed:

The relation between the two communities was very cordial. Both the communities had been living harmoniously for centuries. The rulers were very

¹⁴ Asgar Ali, Kargil, Dated, 01-06-2015.

¹⁵ Sajad Hussain, Kargil, Dated, 05-06-2015.

tolerant towards each other. Inter-faith marriages were not confined to common people but the kings too married within Muslim families of Baltistan and Purig. The queens were allowed to practice their own religion. They built mosques within palace and outside and offered prayers regularly. In the post-Independence Ladakh, this harmonious relationship was spoiled not because of one reason, but many.¹⁶

The rupture in inter-community relations in Ladakh can be traced back to Ladakh's declining religious, economic and cultural links with Central Asia and Tibet. Region's incorporation into the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir and its subsequent inclusion into the Union of India exposed the region to a new set of modernity and development. Over the years, this exposure contributed immensely to the sense of marginalization and discrimination against the region by the state government.¹⁷

Several of our respondents echoed the pride in what they described as the golden past and their concern about changing values, as one of them observes:

When I was younger and even until recently, my house used to be full of guests, I mean Buddhist guests. Not a day will pass without a guest, a Buddhist guest from some faraway place staying over in our house. In my house we had one permanent guest room meant for our Buddhist relatives. As some of our relatives lived in far off villages, their children would often come to main town for education. As it was difficult for them to travel everyday day from their village to the schools in the town, they would often stay at our home for longer periods. I remember how they would shoulder the farm work during the agricultural season when we needed an extra hand for help.¹⁸

¹⁶ Sharif Hussain, Kargil, Dated, 15-06-2015.

¹⁷ Beek Van, *Beyond Identity Fetishism: "Communal" Conflict In Ladakh and the Limits of Autonomy*. Cultural Anthropology 15 (4), 2001: 525-569.

¹⁸ Gulzar Ali, Kargil, Dated, 20-05-2015

The society in Ladakh enjoyed a dominant ethic of conformity with social norms and restraint from indulging in violence. Each and every individual was considered primarily as a member of the community and was under obligation to participate and cooperate with other members of the community. Many of our respondents shared their thoughts about the mutual respect and cooperation that existed in the society in the past:

In places like Khaltse many people from the Buddhist families used to stay at Muslim houses even though they were not related, they had this mutual understanding. In Buddhist philosophy, it is very important to have clean heart and during that time, Buddhists have that understanding of their religion. There was a great sense of Mutual understanding and respect between the two communities. Elders used to give good advice to their children and youth. . . .¹⁹

Identity Politics and Changing Inter-community landscape: Identity politics has significantly communalized inter-community relations in the region. A social boycott enforced against Muslims by Zaskar Buddhists Association in Zaskar Tehsil started in 2012 after a minor communal clash. As mentioned earlier, the articulation of identities along communal lines was essentially a product of colonial institutionalization of identities. The establishment of post 1947 cartographic boundaries further triggered mobilization of communities along religious identity. In 1949, on eve of the first Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Lal Nehru's visit to Ladakh the representatives of Ladakh Buddhist Association (henceforth LBA) gave a representation to the Prime Minister. The memorandum given to the Prime Minister of India stated: "We are a separate nation by all the tests-race, language, religion and culture determining nationality. The only link connecting us with the other people of the State being the bond of common ruler. If the Indian National Congress could persuade itself to recognize: the Muslims of India as a separate nation although they had so much in

¹⁹ Zubair Ahmad, Kargil, 5-05-2015.

common with the other elements of the Indian population, the Government of India should have no hesitation in recognition what is patent and scout revertible fact in our case” (Memorandum submitted by LBA 1949). In complete disregard of the ethno-religious diversity of Ladakh LBA portrayed the whole region as a distinct Buddhist space having no connection with the ‘dominant’ ‘Muslim’ region of Kashmir. It was in 1953 that for the first time the region of Ladakh was granted a representation in the Jammu and Kashmir assembly. Prime Minister Nehru and head of Jammu and Kashmir government, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah appointed the popular Buddhist monk Kushok Bakula Rinpoche as the first representative of Ladakh in the Assembly. After his appointment, Bakula raised the demand for Autonomy during the Budget session of the assembly. Bakula demanded autonomy for the region along the lines of North Eastern Frontier Administration (NEFA). The demand for autonomy received wide media attention in mainland India. By 1969, clashes erupted over a family property feud that involved Buddhist and Muslim members of a mixed family in Leh. Ladakh witnessed violent clashes between the two communities. Thus, the new generation of the LBA became conscious that communalization can bring attention of the Government. In the following years, demand for the Schedule Tribe status, inclusion of Bhodi language in school curriculum and the Union Territory status for the region dominated the politics in Ladakh. In 1979, on 1st April, in complete disregard to the intra-regional diversity of Ladakh, Kargil was carved out as separate district along with Leh from erstwhile district of Leh. Ladakh was divided into twin districts of Leh and Kargil along communal lines into- a Muslim Majority Kargil and a Buddhist majority Leh. In subsequent years, the rupture between the two communities was wide open. The Muslims of Ladakh for the first time came together and attempted to challenge the discourse of the LBA. Their attempt to challenge the discourse, however, came too late, by then LBA had successfully portrayed Ladakh as the Buddhist Ladakh and Muslims as Others in the popular imagination. A booklet published by the Kargil District Action Committee in 1989 amply highlighted the widening

gap between the two communities while questioning the portrayal of Ladakh as a Buddhist space. 'When one talks of Ladakh, one is talking of about 1, 50,000 people of mixed Indo-Aryan (Dard, Kashmiri and other Indian origin) and Mongoloid descent living along the course of the high Indus and its tributaries; of a people who profess Islam and Buddhism in equal numerical strength and yet speak the same language in different phonetic forms, share the same cultural roots and life style despite the difference in faith'. The booklet also reminded LBA that: "That in this extensive mountainous region of India more than 75,000 Muslims (estimated) live as widely spread as do the Buddhists is a fact made less known to the world for a variety of partisan political reasons. Up till now close inter-caste family associations, especially in Leh, had bound the people of the region as a homogenous group. Alas! The current Buddhist agitation has severely damaged these cohesive traditions. Thus challenging the discourse set by LBA, the Muslims of Ladakh asserted their identity and demanded their inclusion in following words, 'The people outside Ladakh have been given to understand through press briefings by the Ladakh Buddhist Association that the Muslims of Ladakh, particularly the Sunni-Muslims of Leh, are 'outsiders' and 'recent settlers'. In particular, some extremist Buddhist ideologues are playing up the Dogra connection of the Leh Muslims in the belief that the Dogra General Zorawar Singh had patronized their settlement in Leh during his Ladakh conquest. But scores of history books wrote by famous European scholars, indeed the very indigenous 'Ladakh Chronicles' refute this wild and recent theory. These documents bear testimony to the fact that while the earliest 'Balti' (Shia Muslim) settlement had come into being when King Jamyang Namgyal of Ladakh (16th Century) had invited 7 Muslim traders from Kashmir to become his 'Khar-Chogpa' or palace traders. And in consequence of the Tibeto-Mongol invasion of Ladakh during 1681, the Ladakhi King built the famous Leh Mosque and he himself had briefly converted to Islam.²⁰

²⁰ Van Beek, *True Patriots: Justifying Autonomy for Ladakh*. Himalaya,

Competing Identities: By 1980s, Autonomous Hill Councils were introduced by Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in Darjeeling and Assam to put off the protests for the demand for separate state hood. In subsequent years, the Autonomous Hill Council model found its champions among the Buddhist activists of Ladakh. In the absence of a 'popular' government in Jammu and Kashmir and in order to pacify the strategically sensitive region of Ladakh, the Central government finally granted autonomous Hill Councils to the twin districts of Leh and Kargil in 1995. The campaign for Hill council had strong religious overtones. In many ways, the communalization of the demand for the council and the subsequent demand for Union Territory status for Ladakh was essentially a strategic choice by the Buddhist leaders of the region to attract the attention of the dominant right wing discourse of Indian national politics. By 2002, right wing political organizations like Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliated with Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) passed a resolution in Delhi calling for the trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir State. The resolution sought separate statehood for Jammu, Kashmir and Union Territory status for Ladakh region. Since 1997, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) has taken an active interest in Ladakh region. In October 1997, Bharti Janta Party's (BJP) national president Lal Krishan Advani and Sangh's Tarun Vijay during an election campaign visit to Leh discovered the sacred 'mother river' Sindhu considered to be origin of the word Hindustan-India. The idea of a yatra was jointly developed by the leaders. In next three years, with BJP coming back to the power in Delhi, an annual Sindhu Darshan festival was started as a 'celebration of national unity' and 'commemoration of Indian soldiers'. All these years, Sindu Darshan festival has now become an international festival attracting thousands of tourists across the globe. In subsequent years, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) actively engaged itself in the region by establishing a

non-governmental organization called Ladakh Kalyan Sangh or Ladags Pandey Tshogspa in Ladakhi. The organization focusses on education and social work among poor families of the region. The organization has established around thirteen centers including two Sanskar Centers or Coaching Centers in Shergol block of Kargil district, the 'frontline' between Buddhists and Muslim majority regions. In these coaching centers besides academic learning children are provided instructions on 'moral education', daily prayers, cultural activities and physical education²¹. In Leh, Buddhist leaders sought development and autonomy for their district by portraying it as a minority Buddhist area neglected and discriminated against by a Muslim dominated state government. In this process of othering, each community describes itself in respect to the other. In case of Leh, this process of othering is further reinforced through hegemonic homogenizing of Buddhist Ladakh where Kargil essentially emerges as Muslim district supporting Muslim dominated state government. As one of our respondents observed, "Kargilis were sceptical about the Hill Council (Autonomy demand) demand and especially the term Autonomous. They feared that by accepting the Hill Council they will lose ties with Kashmir and economically they were dependent on Kashmir". In several of my discussions, Kargil was linked to Kashmir as a Muslim space. As one respondent observes:

We are demanding UT for our own benefit. If we get UT status for Ladakh, then we don't have to suffer the discrimination of the State Government. Currently, if we look at the State Budget, our share is almost negligible, why? Don't we need development? If we get UT status then we would be dealing directly with the central Government . . . It is the Kargil leaders who are not supporting us and they have always done this. They have always opposed us . . . When we demanded ST for Ladakh, they again opposed our call and finally after struggling and after losing some men for the cause, we eventually got ST status. After that, when they saw that

²¹ S Limaye et.al (eds), *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, 1st ed., 2004: 193-218. Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies.

we got ST status, they also demanded the same. They have always done this, be it the ST cause or the HILL council demand and now the UT demand. They don't understand the cause. These kinds of things which they do actually create a division between us. If we are one, then why they always oppose us and then do the same when we get our demands fulfilled. It shows that they have no problem with our demands, they have big problem with us, with the people of Leh region. In fact, I think they are jealous of our development and they don't want us to develop more. Other-wise, what would inference can one draw from their behaviour? ²²

Over the years, the fissures between the Muslims and Buddhists of Ladakh have widened further. These fissures are more visible in the everyday relations of these communities. In an interview with a female school teacher of Leh, she narrated on such incident:

I teach the kindergarten kids and once when I took them to a monastery for visit. So a Muslim kid there was touching something at the monastery and a Buddhist kid comes to him and says that, you are a Muslim and you are not supposed to touch these things. Even though he doesn't know, what he was talking about, he don't have any understanding about those things, but that division between the two communities is the reason, when elders talk such thing in their family, the kids take that very fast and they unknowingly learn bad things. ²³

Both Buddhists and Muslims are increasingly involved in bodily boundary making. There has been a blanket ban on inter-faith marriages in the region since 1990s. As one of my respondents observed:

Inter-faith marriages were so common and in-fact if you look back, the diversity in Ladakh is because of the inter-faith marriage itself. We have Muslim Queens and Buddhist Kings who have married and it was not

²² Shariq Ali, Kargil, 30-06-2015

²³ Amir Ahmad, Kargil, 25-06-2015.

confined to them, common people also marry out of their religion. But with time, that also become problematic. The Buddhist association is now doing their best to prevent inter-faith marriage. But that won't stop the inter-faith marriages to happen. The problem with inter-faith marriage for them is mostly conversion rate, which they claim is unbalanced, but did we do it on purpose? No! We are not doing it on purpose. What can we do if a boy and a girl wants to get married out of their religion. They are free to do this as we are a democratic country and even the law allows doing. But when it comes to a girl be it any religion, they won't allow to get her married to a Muslim boy. Islam is nowadays often connected to terrorism and we are always linked with terrorists. There are other group of people who are terrorist but they never get reported. The people from Leh want us to be labelled terrorists because they want the tourism only in their place and they want to defame Kargil so that those tourists will never visit Kargil. And even the Central Government agrees to them. They always discriminate between Leh and Kargil. Had it not been the Kargilis' during the 1999 war, would the Indian Government won? It was never possible. How many lives we lost, did they even count or mentioned? No. Even after showing our patriotism they blame us that it was us who brought that Pakistani army to Kargil.²⁴

Although granting of autonomy is claimed to be a means for diffusion of powers by the state to preserve its unity and an expression of respect towards the diversity.²⁵ However, as is evident from the foregoing discussion, in the case of Ladakh, in several ways the autonomy solution reflected a streak of essentialism and primordialism. Introduction of tourism industry in 1974 brought new ideas in the Ladakhi society and radically transformed the social relationships. These changes were also witnessed in breaking down of inter-community and inter-district relationships. Ladakh was also introduced to a new kind of politics and political values with

²⁴ Shahnawaz Hussain, Kargil, 20-05-2015

²⁵ Ruth Lapidoth, *Autonomy: flexible solutions to ethnic conflicts*. Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace Press.1997:150.

a strong dose of ethno-religious identity. Some scholars believe that this period marks another phase of late modernity in the region²⁶. This period was also marked by increasing competition between different ethnic identities in the region. Highlighting this point one of our respondents observed:

Religious politics has played negative role in Ladakh. Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) will use religion for their own use and then will instigate communal riots in Ladakh and the same thing will happen in Kargil District and they will start the blame game. Our ancestor used to tell us about the shared past of Ladakh and we remember that and felt we can pass it on to the new generation. But the next generation is not concerned. . . . They are ignorant . . . we need to restore our old customs and traditions. In Leh, people will start various rumours about the people in Kargil so that the tourists don't visit Kargil and they have succeeded in doing so. As the majority of the people in Kargil are Muslims, they use the religion and spread various rumours about us.²⁷

Conclusion: Identity discourses are rooted in and (re) produced through identity fetishism. In this discourse thus the extreme fascination for the identity and the identification of 'right' social group/culture/ community for empowerment are considered as the only guarantee for a sustainable peace and harmony for all. Thus, identity is presumed to be given- a natural thing—to be asserted and worth fighting for. Such obsession with identity completely obscures the fundamental social origins of identity. This notion of identity as it is used, displayed, invoked, contested and claimed is essentially a product of modernity and is intractably linked to rise of capitalism and the deepening of international state systems. Identity discourse rooted in religion has deeply penetrated the social fabric of Ladakh. In recent years, several scholars

²⁶ Wahid, Siddiq: "The Changthang Borderlands of Ladakh: A Preliminary Inquiry". Discussion Paper. Delhi. Research and Information System for Developing Countries. 2014: 15-25.

²⁷ Akhter Ali, Kargil, 29 -05-2015.

have argued that as the fortunes of the disadvantaged and marginalized improve they tend to compete with groups above them, increasing the possibilities of ethnic conflict and violence.²⁸ The political relationship of Ladakh with Kashmir region has been marked by differently structured identities signifying multiple notions of community identity. The articulation of community identity as a larger regional identity, once as Ladakhi and at other times as Buddhists depended on which aspect of identity helped political leaders mobilize people in bargaining for power against state government and the Centre. In this competition Ladakh region was at times projected essentially as a Buddhist region suffering from a Muslim dominated state government. The homogenous image of the region cutting across religious diversity and based on an ethnic Ladakhi identity was also presented to challenge the dominance from what was presumed to be Kashmiri dominated state government. In these multiple presentations of the region the larger Ladakhi identity capturing the diversity of Ladakh gave way to the narrow Buddhist identity of Ladakh. In this discourse, the Muslims of Ladakh were increasingly associated with pro-Azaadi/pro-Pakistan mobilizations inside Kashmir. Over a period of time Muslims of Ladakh emerged as a separate community antithetical to the very idea of autonomous or separate Buddhist Ladakh.

²⁸ Olzak, Susan: *The Dynamics of Ethnic Competition and Conflict*. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1992, p. 77.

Tribal Health and Hygiene: A Study of Dard Tribe in Ladakh

Manzoor Hussain

Abstract: *The health of any community is influenced by the interplay of health facilities and health consciousness of the people as well as the socio-cultural, demographic, economic, and educational factors. Health can be regarded as a state of mental, social, and economic well-being and not the mere absence of disease. Based on a sample of 600 respondents selected from the thrust areas of Dard tribes from Ladakh (India), the study uses a descriptive research design and multi-stage sampling technique. The main objective of the present study is to assess Dard tribal health and it makes a critical review of the development measures taken by the government and non-government organizations to improve their health status.*

1. Introduction: For centuries, tribal communities have remained at the lowest level of the socio-economic system; gradually pushed to the status of excluded, deprived, and marginalized. The historical neglect of the tribal groups is considered as the major cause of marginalization of many tribal groups including Dards of Ladakh. First, within the colonial regime and even after independence, the backwardness, and poor quality of their life is attributed to their relative isolated inhabitation and the political economy of *laissez faire* in vogue. The social scientists, administrators, philanthropist, administrators and academia have mostly been infatuated by this argument. Post-independent thought processes about tribal development was dominated by Verrier Elwin's thesis which argued against the modernization of tribes. Often referred to as 'they' as if an ideal type, who is suffering from the onslaught of modernization and development? The orientation thereof blurred our vision and understanding resulting in a tainted perspective. It took decades to change this perspective. Instead, post-Nehruism took the development of tribes as a march characterized by a

break with past and a forward march moment to the desired goal.¹

Proliferation and pauperization of tribes are commonly attributed to their relatively isolated habitat and post-independence political economy, besides historical neglect. But, unfortunately, post-independence academia, political elite, social workers, and philanthropists have mostly been infatuated by this argument. Notwithstanding the validity of such argument and the significant role of isolated habitation, historical neglect, and post-independence socialist and now *laissez faire* political economy, there is something more to their marginality and exclusion. That despite poverty alleviation drives, and amelioration efforts of public action, the Dard tribe is to be treated as a transitory category instead of a cultural relic and brought into a more advanced, modern globalizing Kashmir society. For Dard, quality of life is least encouraging, and top down development model has proved less successful if not a complete failure.

The present research problem is formulated on the premise that constitutional guarantees and positive discriminatory public action have failed to bring Dards of Ladakh region out from the stereotyped mindset and that outputs of the public action have not been proportionate to the investment made for the marginalized segment as compared to other groups of society. Second, Dards as a community hardly fit in a single basket. In addition to being sparsely populated, the community is divided into several segments.² They are quite demarcated on general stratification patterns. It includes groups, who succeed in taking advantage of the public action and those segments to which such benefits and protection have failed to reach. Furthermore, there are urban and rural segments of the same tribe, besides the segments settled at inaccessible high altitude forests and relatively remote hinterlands. The

¹ Atal Yogesh, foreword in Y. S. Sisodia, and Tapas Kumar Dalpati, (eds.), *Development and Discontent in Tribal India*, New Delhi, Rawat Publications, 2015, pp. IX-XI.

² Ibid., p. 9.

uniform public action proves a failure in diverse geographical and socio-cultural settings. The tribals of Ladakh need special treatment as they live in trying life situations, bracing harsh environmental adversaries, a six months winter blockade from November to May, but still maintaining a fragile man-nature balance.

The developmental indicators such as education, health and hygiene, communication, income and consumption and other items valuable about the good standard of living show a dismal picture. They are far behind when compared to other tribes and non-tribals of Jammu Kashmir state. Despite many affirmative action and poverty alleviation drives, there is little sign of transformation. The present study is a humble effort envisaging a systematic study of the poor living conditions of Dards; their issues and problems. It is a critical analysis of nature and different dimensions of poor living conditions to identify the factors for their being economically backward and socio-culturally marginalized.

Marginalization in such a situation is absolute; in income generation as well as in consumer aspects. The satisfaction of basic needs of good shelter, food, education, healthcare and hygiene, and *laissez* are under continuous pressure. Besieged with social and economic insecurity and access failure to the resources as well as lack of freedom to utilize the assets in the hand, life is confined to the coping mechanisms and survival strategies. Improvement in living conditions and standard of living takes a back seat. Development and well-being at par with other communities contesting in the same space takes a back seat; not only physical aspects of development but also, other dimensions of well-being, good life, happiness, and health.³ Therefore, only physical dimensions of development and well-being were given prominence in the study focusing upon income, food security, education, shelter, and health care.

Health is an important determinant of the well-being of any community. Health is considered one of the essential

³ J. Dreze and Amartya Sen, 1989, 1995 and Robert Waldinger, 'What Makes a Good Life? Lessons from the Longest Study on Happiness'.

elements of human development and progress.⁴ The tribal health status is lower compared to that of the general population. Malnutrition is a common health issue in tribal areas and has greatly affected the general physique of the population.⁵ Malnutrition lowers the ability to resist infection, leading to chronic illness and in the post-weaning period leads to permanent brain impairment. Good nutrition is required throughout life and is particularly vital for women to continue to remain in good health and to do everyday household work. Nutritional anemia is a major problem for women in India and more so in the rural and tribal belt. Maternal malnutrition is predominantly a serious health problem among tribal women especially for those who have closely spaced multiple pregnancies. Such health condition also reflects the complex socio-economic factors that have a serious bearing on their health.⁶

The health problems of the tribal community in Jammu and Kashmir are influenced by the interplay of various factors including social, economic, and political ones. The common beliefs, customs, practices related to health and disease, in turn, influence the health-seeking behavior of the community. Moreover, there is a consensus agreement that the health status of the tribal population is very poor and worst among the primitive tribes because of their isolation, remoteness and being largely unaffected by the developmental process going on in the country.⁷ However, the attention on tribal health has not been adequate. This is because of the three reasons; namely, (i) there was a general

⁴ Dandub Palzor Negi & Monica Munjal Singh, "Tribal Health in India: A Need for a Comprehensive Health Policy", *International Journal of Health Sciences & Research*, 2019, 9(3); 299-305. Retrieved from: www.ijhsr.org (accessed May 16 2021).

⁵ M. Hussain, & A. Hussain, 'An Analysis of Health Status in Dard Tribe with Special Focus on Health Feeling, Medical Facilities Available and Use of Modern Family Planning Practices', *Periodic Research*, 2019, 7(3), p. 69.

⁶ K. Das, 'Health as an economic indicator', *Kurukshetra*, 2019, 60 (10), p. 6.

⁷ A. K. Kapoor, & M. Dhall, 'Poverty, Malnutrition and Biological Dynamics among Tribes of India', *Health Science Journal*, 2019, 10 (3), 1-5.

belief that living close to nature they enjoyed an environment which is conducive to good health, (ii) the tribals have been regarded as not very amenable to the western system of medicine as they still depend very much on supernatural causes and (iii) the difficult terrain where it is difficult to reach health service adequately. Tribes are relatively isolated and autonomous groups.⁸

Research Methodology

2.1 Universe and Sampling Design of the Study

The comparative nature of the study demands sample selection from two research universes, scarcely scattered across a vast area of Ladakh with the lowest population density (8 persons per square kilometer as against 59 at the state level). Given the cold desert terrain and topography of the research universe where distances between settlements are the most discouraging for fieldwork, Multi-Stage Cluster Sampling Method was deemed to be the most appropriate sampling procedure. At the first stage, a list of Dard villages from two districts: Kargil and Leh were drawn. Kargil universe (major cluster-A) of Dards consists of well-demarcated village settlements in Drass valley on the left bank of the Suru river. The Leh district universe (major cluster-B) of Dards consists of half a dozen hamlets grouped in five revenue village settlements, on lower gorges of the Indus River. The main consideration for the selection of clusters is that these clusters are exclusively inhabited by Dard tribes.

The sample subjects were drawn based on the district, block, village, and household clusters. It was the most appropriate to select two blocks-Kargil-Drass, Khaltsi-Leh, and three village clusters from each district with due consideration to the demography and representative traits of the sample. For cluster A, the following three villages were selected: 1) Kharbu, 2) Shimsha and 3) Thasgan. For Cluster B,

⁸ R. S Balgir, 'Genetic diversity and epidemiology of the major scheduled tribes of Orissa' in P. M. Hema, and P. Reddy (eds.), *Health and Environment*, Hyderabad: Institute of Genetics, 2004, p. 163.

the villages selected for study were: 1) Dah, 2) Hanu and 3) Hanu Gongma.

Given the terrain and settlement patterns of Dard villages, the Multi-stage Purposive-Cluster-Sampling method was deemed to be the most appropriate. The total sample chosen for the study was 600 respondents.

2.2: Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the present study is to assess Dard tribal health. The study is a critical review of the development measures taken by the government and non-government organizations to improve their health status. It is an attempt to identify the determinants responsible for the poor quality of health and its implications at individual, family, and community levels.

2.3: Research Question and Hypotheses

The research question to be answered was “why Dard tribals have poor health conditions and what are the reasons for their poor health infrastructure”? The major hypotheses of the present study are:-

- 1) Dards have low health status as compared to other tribal groups of the region;
- 2) Lack of basic health infrastructure is significantly co-related to poor quality of life in the Dard tribe.

3: Analysis and Discussion

The health status of constituent members determines the development of a collective (society) mostly measured in terms of fertility, mortality quality of drinking water, the prevalence of ailments, and the healthcare facilities. By these parameters, Dards of both clusters present a dismal picture. Dards of Dah and Hanu are besieged with a typical health problem as childbirth and related problems are considered as polluting and are seen through the customary lens. The accepting pregnant mothers are forbidden to consult any modern healthcare facility. Even at the time of childbirth, the whole household is considered as polluting thus, ostracized for three days. It results in poor registration of such mothers

in family care centers. As regards health services, the poor Dards stand at a disadvantageous plank. The nearest primary health centre is almost at a 52 km distance at Khaltsi and the allopathic dispensary is 9 km from Dah Hanu Yokma where the medical sub-centre is also located. Dah also has an Military Engineering Service (MES) medical shop to procure medicine situated at Khaltsi Block Headquarters which is 52 km and 70 km from Dah and Hanu, respectively, and the general hospital with specialized experts at Leh: 152 km from Dah and more than 170 km from Hanu. Ill health depends more on access to health services, safe drinking water, and a constant supply of fresh foods. Not only the marginal agriculturists but also the salaried class too suffers from this incapacity and lack of freedom.

In the Anganwadi centers which are supposed to provide supplementary nutrition to pregnant and nurturing mothers, and pre-schooling children of below 5 years age group, a very marginal registration is observed in two Anganwadi centers. Only twentyfive percent of beneficiaries were registered and these two were observed to be not punctual in taking advantage of the provision. While supervisory staff complained about irregular and untimely supplies, the beneficiaries appeared to be fed up with the same menu. Eighty percent of patients show inconsistency in receiving treatment from a single expert and shifting to an average to three experts in case of serious ailment is a reflection of the uncertainty the respondent patients face concerning the availability and effectiveness of healthcare in these Remote Tribal Areas (RTA).

Generally, tribals in RTA suffer on account of factors such as scarcity of medico and paramedical personnel, inadequate number of primary health centers (PHC's). Besides, respondents often complain about the dearth of medical supplies, and the poor quality of drugs, wherever these are available. They also complain about the insensitive behavior of medical staff. The absenteeism of experts and qualified medical staff at PHC's and hospitals at urban centres of Leh and Kargil is chronic. In such a situation, Dard tribals are left with no option but to fall back on semi-trained, quack practitioners, traditional amchie practitioners.

Although for some years community pressure has forced the medical staff to be regular and resulted in improvement of medical supplies with the centers but people-centered management of healthcare is still a distant dream. Ironically with a few exceptions, the benefits of reformed health schemes at the state and central level were availed by district hospitals benefitting the urban population of Kargil and Leh. However, the availability of these services invites more and more referral cases to these centers which otherwise should have been taken care of at PHC. Decentralization of health services at the grass-root level is still a political slogan in this part of the country.

As regards health services, the respondents of cluster B1.2.3 stand at a disadvantageous plank. The nearest primary health centre is almost at a 52 km distance at Khaltsi and the allopathic dispensary is 9 km from Dah Hanu Yokma where the medical sub-centre is also located. Dah also has an MES medical shop to procure medicine situated at Khaltsi Block Headquarters which is 52 km and 70 km from Dah and Hanu, respectively, and the general hospital with specialized experts at Leh: 152 km from Dah and more than 170 km from Hanu. There is no potable water facility and the water from springs and rivulets is used for drinking, washing, and cooking.

Healthcare is also closely associated with the social and religious beliefs of a given community. The same values determine personal and community hygiene. Notwithstanding what the immediate environs offer, it is the values and precepts appended to eating and drinking which determine what a tribe as a person and as a community can/can't take as food or drink. Rightly medical beliefs and perceptions have their roots in cultural, social institutions, and the medical practices of a community. The Practices are governed by prevailing beliefs to the cause of the ailment. It is a dynamic process and continues to change with new experiments as new treatments and practices interact with host socio-cultural medical practices. Meanwhile creating new sets of beliefs and perceptions about the cause and treatment of ailment as communities are exposed to new medical practices; as a result, traditional practices wither away and become less practiced by large masses. In cluster B1.2.3

perceptions about the cause of ailment and remedies are mostly governed by traditional health-seeking behavior. Though the majority opts for allopathic modern treatment yet consider ill-health as caused by evil spirits; therefore, seek help from fortune tellers, lamas, and other traditional medical practitioners. Most often amchie is the only option in absence of modern trained medical practitioners as is evident from the shortage of health workers in RTA.

As regards cluster B₁ respondents, the most frequent phenomenon which has fascinated and has been recorded by all researchers, travelers, and activists for centuries is the dread of washing and bathing, taboos appended to cow's milk, fowl and eggs in cluster B. Till recently, it was only ceremonial purification by burning pencil cedar sticks instead of taking bath and washing clothes. Under the shadow of the taboo and precept, "if you wash, you wash off prosperity and if you shake up clothes, you shake up good fortune". The Dards of cluster B_{1.2.3} are dreadfully dirty as compared to the Dards of cluster A_{1.2.3} despite having constraints of harsh six months weather, and scarcity of water as all sources of water get frozen and it is only ice being melted to get water for cooking and washing purpose. Surprisingly, the religio-cultural constraints force Dard respondents to poor personnel hygiene while as Dards of cluster A_{1.2.3} under different religious precepts (Islam) are subjected to ceremonial washing (wadu) ablution before every prayer and compulsory bath after mating (Ghusul). Personal hygiene and cleanliness are appended as the highest value. These religious values are now deeply imbibed and internalized in the personal and common behavior of Dards of cluster A, and whatever constraints about personal hygiene are by way of harsh weather. No sane person is expected to have a bath on daily basis.

As regards personal hygiene, Cluster A responses are encouraging and mostly reveal a positive attitude. However, the frequency varies between the summer and winter seasons.

Table 1: Cluster A1.2.3 respondents (Bathing and changing clothes habits)

Bathing/ Washing	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Daily	76	25.33
Once a week	79	26.33
Twice a week	80	26.67
Twice a month	56	18.67
Once a month	9	3.00
Once a year	0	0.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2018 carried in Ladakh Division of J&K

Table 2: Cluster B.1.2.3 respondents
(Bathing and washing habits)

Bathing / Washing	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Daily	16	5.33
Once a week	26	8.67
Twice a month	88	29.33
Once a month	101	33.67
Once a year	48	16.00
Never	21	7.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2018 carried in Ladakh Division of J&K

As the table reveals based on arbitrary scores only 16 and 26 respondents exhibit a modern positive attitude and practice vis-a-vis personal hygiene while as 88 and 101 scores moderately positive, 48 respondents fall in the conservative category. Twentyone respondents are orthodox and reveal to have avoided bathing and washing to date. As regards

changing of clothes, new apparels are worn over old worn-out clothes without changing them. The same applies to their uncut hair, beards, and mustaches.

Table 3: Cluster B. 1.2.3 (Treatment and Medicine)

Type of Treatment	No.	Percentage
Amchie/Ayurvedic	90	30.00
Modern Allopathic	36	12.00
Allopathic-Amchie	174	58.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2018 carried in Ladakh Division of J&K

The variation is quite manifest in the area of the selection of medicines and treatment, which is significantly determined by the availability of experts as well as the perceptions about the efficacy of the treatment and medicine, besides the cost of the treatment. No home treatment was reported by the respondents. There is a variation in perception and practices between cluster A and cluster B sample subjects. From cluster B, 90 out of 300 respondents (30%) opt for amchie tradition for a seasonal and non-serious ailment; 36 (12%) prefer allopathic medicines only; however, they believe ill health is the handiwork of evil spirits. Therefore, besides, medicines, rituals are a must to ward off the evil spirits; 174 (58%) reported exploring both traditional as well as modern allopathic medicines. It was noted that out of 300 respondents, 30% of childbearing females delivered in home with the help of local 'daya', 36% in hospital, 44% delivered periodically in-home and hospital or health centre at Khaltsi. The percentages owe to the non-availability of medical facilities in the respective clusters of Dah, Hanu, and Hanu Yokma since the nearest health centre equipped with facilities and expertise is 52 km and 70 km from Dah village and Hanu hamlet respectively. The traditional amchie dispensary is located within the cluster and easily accessible and for serious complications, the patient is to be taken to Leh hospital almost 152 km from Dah and more than 170 km from Hanu. Hanu Yokma and Hanu Thang hamlets have no

mettled road; the patients have to walk on foot to reach Dah to board a carrier for Tehsil headquarter Khaltsi or district hospital, Leh. It can be concluded that in such an absence of connectivity and poor infrastructure the freedom of even those respondents, who carry a positive attitude towards progress and development, is hampered and thus forced to fall back to traditional medical practices. It also owes to the relative remoteness of the area where healthcare institution is plagued by absenteeism and suffers from irregular untimely supplies of medicine and equipment. Eighty percent of respondents reported having never heard of health care schemes showcased by state and central government. There is a complete blackout of awareness about family welfare schemes and health care programmes.

Table 4: Cluster A1.2.3 (Treatment and Medicine)

Type of Treatment	No.	Percentage
Traditional Amchie only	25	8.33
Allopathic Modern	189	63.00
Traditional-Modern	86	28.67
Home Treatment	0	0.00
Total	300	100.00

Source: Fieldwork, 2018 carried in Ladakh Division of J&K

As the table reveals that comparatively, the healthcare scenario is encouraging so far as cluster A1.2.3 is concerned. Out of 300, 189 (63%) prefer allopathic medicine and reveal a positive attitude towards the cause of diseases and its treatment; 86 (28.27%) opt for both allopathic and traditional (amchie) practices. For the initial stage of ailment and the minor seasonal flu, people use traditional medicines, take certain time-tested foods as well as refrain from certain foods, and 25 (8.33%) of respondents opt exclusively for traditional medicines. This category belongs to the high age group sample subjects. However, almost all respondents have faith in the efficacy of prayers along with proper treatment in the cure of ailment and serious diseases. The majority of

respondents in cluster A consider ill health as a physiological phenomenon rather than a curse of God or evil spirits. However, the majority believes in the efficacy of prayers along with medicines to cure a disease. Although most of the respondents complain about ill-equipped health centers and hospitals but only 60 (20%) from cluster A and 27 (9%) cluster B subjects seek treatment from private practitioners at respective urban centers of Khamti, Leh, Drass, and Kargil. The category is composed of a mostly salaried class of the sample. Almost 88% of childbearing mothers delivered under proper medical care at PHC's and District hospital Kargil; 66% of expecting mothers sought regular guidance from family welfare personnel who are registered with healthcare agencies.

Surprisingly, despite lack of healthcare mechanism, poor personnel and community hygiene, food insecurity, fruit intake, simple lifestyle, regular physical exercise on rugged terrain, ill-ventilated dwellings together with a carefree contented attitude towards life have made Dards hardy and healthy. Among all Ladakhi ethnic groups, Dards rightly claim to be the healthiest one. Out of 600 respondents, 78 (13%) reported that they had no serious illness except seasonal flu, breathlessness, cough, and influenza and even their parents had not experienced any serious ailment; rest 22% report to be afflicted by hypertension, heart ailment, diabetes, and chronic asthma mostly related to modern lifestyle. To date, despite food insecurity and poor healthcare mechanism, Dards are seldom exposed to starvation or malnutrition.

The crude birth rate is influenced by several social, cultural, economic, and geographical factors. In sample villages of cluster A and cluster B, there is a variation, however, the CDR in both clusters is lower than the state and national averages. The sex ratio of 958 in (cluster A)-and 938 in (cluster B) indicate that women are not subjected to discrimination. Women are highly valued in terms of economies, however, present sex disparity owes more to male birth, malnutrition, frequency in childbearing, high female mortality associated with traditional, unskilled midwifery, etc. In Ladakhi socio-cultural setting, male children seldom

prove to be an asset as the female folk is equally if not more economically active. In cluster B, they are more economically vibrant than men-folk who by any standards of the workforce is a parasite lot. As these are an important measure to assess medical and public health facilities, besides, it impacts age distribution population and ratio of a segment of the population which in the long run influences composition of the workforce. The low infant mortality rates are significantly correlated to better socio-economic status, health and hygiene awareness, access to health care facilities, and education status (about infant childcare) of a segment of the population.

Undernourishment of children and women in the sample villages of both clusters is not only due to lower intake of food by way of food insecurity but also of its non-availability despite having money to buy it. Besides, health depends more on access to health services, safe drinking water, and a constant supply of fresh foods. Not only the marginal agriculturists but also the salaried class too suffers from this incapacity and lack of freedom.

In cluster A, Dah Sub-District Hospital and Community Health Centre are at 52 km at Khaltsi while the same health facility is at 70 km for Hanu sample subjects. Even primary health centre is at a distance of 25 km from Dah and 44 km from Hanu hamlets, respectively. In case of Dah, a medical sub-centre is within the village which caters to other hamlets of Hanu and Thang as well falling at a minimum distance of 10 km. As regards the family welfare centre, it is 20 km and 40 km away from the selected villages. However, Dah, Hanu, and Hanu Yokma host two Anganwadi centers. The two settlements also avail the facility of sheep/goat veterinary. However, it is located at a distance of 40 km as the area has an abhorrence for cattle specifically cow and poultry which is considered as polluting.

4. Conclusion: The health of any community is mostly measured in terms of fertility, mortality, quality of drinking water, the prevalence of ailments, and the healthcare facilities. By these parameters, Dards of both clusters of the Ladakh region present a marginal picture. Dards of Dah and

Hanu are besieged with a typical health problem as childbirth and related problems are considered as polluting and are seen through the customary lens. The pregnant women are forbidden to consult any modern healthcare facility. Even at the time of childbirth, the whole household is considered as polluting thus, ostracized for three days. It results in poor registration of such mothers in family care centers. As regards health services, the poor Dards stand at a disadvantageous plank. The nearest primary health centre is almost at a 52 km distance at Khaltsi and the allopathic dispensary is 9 km from Dah, Hanu and Yokma where the medical sub-centre is also located. Dah also has an MES medical shop to procure medicine situated at Khaltsi Block Headquarters which is 52 km and 70 kms from Dah and Hanu, respectively, and the general hospital with specialized experts at Leh: 152 km from Dah and more than 170 km from Hanu. Moreover, health depends more on access to health services, potable drinking water, and a constant supply of fresh foods. The Dard tribal health and hygiene is lower compared to that of the general population in Jammu and Kashmir and India. Malnutrition is a common health issue in Dard tribal areas and has greatly affected the general physique of the population.

Humane Governance in South Asia: A Framework for Tackling Non-Traditional Security Threats

Aijaz Ashraf Wani

Abstract: *South Asia faces enormous non-traditional security threats (NTST) in the form of poor health and educational infrastructure, gender-gap, environmental degradation, corruption, human rights violations, deficit of democracy, mass poverty, widening gap between rich and poor, non-performance and even perversion of institutions. The unprecedented crises resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic has once again exposed the weaknesses of South Asian states in their governance efficiency and people-oriented policies. The present paper aims at highlighting the crucial need for Humane Governance in South Asian context. It argues that a people-oriented governance approach that fosters human development is requisite for real progress of South Asia; and a cohesive and robust platform that fosters cooperation among the member states can prevent the region from any non-traditional security threats in future.*

Introduction: The modern nation state, with emphasis on individualism and freedom, has altered the primary unit of analysis which now generates its motivations from the respective social structures and interests. And the shift from government to governance reflects this particular narrative of aiming towards a holistic growth of societies. Governance as a concept has gained immense importance in development discourse and is considered a crucial element in formulating any development strategy. Despite its universal acceptance, the theory of governance is evolving and the global pandemic of Covid-19 has created new challenges and opportunities to reflect on its diverse interpretations. Having shaken up the world, the pandemic has put serious question marks on the working of governments globally and has also directed the changing expectations of citizens and world leaders across the globe towards a qualitative aspect of state-functioning. Indeed, the demand and necessity of people-oriented

governance is not new, the pandemic has, however, generated a renewed focus on the nature of governance.

The unimagined crisis created by the pandemic adversely affected the countries throughout globe. While even the developed countries could not escape from the crisis, the catastrophic effect of Covid-19 is very much visible in the countries in global south. India, for instance, has the highest number of cases and third largest deaths (as of ending May 2021). India is the largest country in South Asia, and owing to its high population density, compromised levels of sanitisation, lack of optimum level of medical support, high migratory populations, immense poverty, and terrible malnutrition levels, the region has become particularly vulnerable to the new virus. The grim situation of India in terms of basic infrastructure may be generalized for South Asia in terms of the region's performance in meeting the United Nations Social Development Goals (SDGs).¹ In the backdrop of this, the debate over governance has reinvigorated with sole policy-focus on improving mechanisms of governance to avert such a huge catastrophe in the times to come. There is an urgent need to focus on Humane Governance in order to ensure human development and to build robust and efficient institutions of governance that can cater to the fundamental human needs.

Concept of Humane Governance: Different institutions and sub-fields have approached governance differently. The World Bank, for example, explains it as 'the manner in which power is exercised in managing a country's social and economic resources to provide public goods and services...'.² The World Bank has identified three distinct aspects of governance: (i) the form of political regime; (ii) the process by which authority is exercised in the management of a country's economic and social resources for development; and (iii) the

¹ Swagata Saha and Sukalpa Chakrabarti, "The Non-traditional Security Threat of COVID-19 in South Asia: An Analysis of the Indian and Chinese Leverage in Health Diplomacy," *South Asian Survey* 28(1) 111–132, 2021.

² For details see, World Bank, *Managing Development—The Governance Dimension*, The World Bank, Washington DC, 1994.

capacity of governments to design, formulate, and implement policies and discharge functions.³ The key dimensions of governance that the World Bank explores are: public sector management, accountability, legal framework for development, and information and transparency. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) relates its concept of governance with sustainable human development and defines governance as “a framework of public management based on the rule of law, a fair and efficient system of justice, and broad popular involvement in the process of governing and being governed. This requires establishing mechanism to sustain the system, to empower people and give them real ownership of the process”.⁴ Governance is conceived as a neutral concept encompassing the mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their rights and obligations, and mediate their differences. Similarly, scholars have approached this concept from the perspective of comparative politics, public policy, public administration, international relations and networks, and the like.

In his book, *On Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics*, Richard Falk, for the first time tried to look into the question as to how governance can be made “more humane, more people-oriented, more focused on human rights and global demilitarization”.⁵ He makes an analytical division and distinction between two forms of governance, which he names ‘Inhumane Governance’ and ‘Humane Governance’. Inhumane Governance is characterised by violation of basic human rights, unequal distribution of wealth, failure of democracy, environmental exploitation etc.;⁶ and the Humane Governance emphasises on ‘people-centered criteria of success, as measured by decline in poverty, violence and pollution and by increasing adherence

³ World Bank *Governance: The World Bank's Experience*, Washington DC: The World Bank, 1994, p. xiv.

⁴ See, UNDP, *Public Sector Management, Governance, and Sustainable Human Development*, New York, UNDP, 1995.

⁵ Richard Falk, *On Humane Governance: Towards a New Global Politics*, Pennsylvania University Press, University Park PA, 1995, p. ix.

⁶ Ibid, pp. 1-2.

to human rights’⁷ While Falk was talking of Humane Governance at global level, the report entitled *Human Development in South Asia 1999: Crisis of Governance*, by The Mahbub-ul-Haq Development Centre, for the first time emphasised upon the need for Humane Governance in South Asian context.⁸ To be sure, Humane Governance, which has been defined as ‘good governance aimed at securing human development,’⁹ now forms the core of studying the concept of governance. The concept is related to the quality of the relationship between government and the citizens for whom it exists to serve and protect. Humane Governance is not only about the study of the institutions, organs and actors involved; it is about the assessment of quality and performance expressed through accountability, transparency, efficiency, empowerment, participation, sustainability, equity and justice. It is less about economic numbers—GDP or per capita income—and more about what Amartya Sen calls ‘Capability Approach’.

It requires ‘effective participation of people not only in state affairs but also in civil society and private sectors activities that are in line with the human development’.¹⁰ It further enjoins these actors to help build capacities of the people in a sustainable manner that meets the needs of people, especially the marginalized and underprivileged sections. In other words, governance has not only ‘to be people-centric but also it should be owned by the people’.¹¹ The 1999 report on *Human Governance in South Asia*, conceptualized Humane Governance in three interlocking dimensions—good political governance, good economic governance, and good civic governance in order to measure it.¹² The economic governance is a combination of those

⁷ Ibid., p. 14.

⁸ Mahbub ul Haq Development Centre, *Human Development in South Asia 1999: The Crisis of Governance*, (published by UNDP for the Mahbub ul Haq Development centre), Oxford University Press, Clarendon, Oxford, 1999, p. 8.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

factors that are needed to sustain economic development while the political governance refers to the ability of the government to use institutions to govern, and civil governance refers to the right and responsibility of the governed to participate.¹³ Humane governance entails both a broad reform strategy in all institutional structures as well as increasing the interaction between civil society, market, and government, with the aim of making them more accountable, more open and transparent, and more democratic.

Humane Governance in South Asian Context: Governance is both a cause and effect. While it impacts every structure of the society, it is itself the product of its own specific context or, to be more accurate, contexts. Contexts matter to regional governance as the explanatory factors that are causally related to governance as regional in origin.¹⁴ Since governance is the complex and the interconnected nature of a very multifaceted combination of factors, and are 'contextual diversity rules at the heart of South Asian region with each region and sub-region having its own history, legacies, institutional arrangements, diversity and aspirations of the stake holders, and so on, it is not difficult to see different regions/states experiencing the problem of governance in different ways'.¹⁵

South Asia holds a prominent position with respect to its population, regional location and political aura. With a population of around 1.89 billion, the region is home to over one-fourth of the world's population and 7 per cent income. In almost all the countries, democratic regimes have consolidated themselves over time. 'The region, however, also records the largest number of people in absolute poverty and the lowest human development indicators'.¹⁶ There is a huge

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Aijaz Ashraf Wani, *What Happened to Governance in Kashmir?* Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2019, p. 16.

¹⁵ Aijaz Ashraf Wani, 'Humane Governance in South Asia: Issues and Concerns', *Greater Kashmir*, December 13, 2015, See, <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/opinion/human-governance-in-south-asia-issues-and-concerns>

¹⁶ Khadija Haq, 'Human Development Challenges in South Asia', *Journal of Human Development* (2000) 1:1, pp. 71-82, DOI: 10.1080/14649880050008773.

gap between what is promised and what delivered on the ground. South Asia faces growing concerns in the form of increasing poverty, illiteracy, governance predicament, and several serious non-traditional threats to human security. While there is no denying the fact that considerable progress has been made on several fronts, however, 'South Asia risks the consequences of widespread social and political breakdown if other major development needs and governance imperatives continue to go unmet'.¹⁷

Amidst the pandemic, there is a growing threat that the democratic progression witnessed in the region and its social, political, cultural and economic welfare may come to a halt. The region is rated not only as one of the least economically-connected regions, but also most poorly-governed region in the world. As per the 2020 Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) report, 530 million people in South Asian region fall under 'multi-dimensional poverty'.¹⁸ Though the region accommodates a large share of global income but fails to address the basic essentials to live a dignified life. Aspects of health, education, infrastructure and living standards are relatively in poor conditions as compared to other parts of the world. It has the highest levels of malnutrition in the world, while its total GDP spending on health is a mere 0.9 per cent (with Sri Lanka having highest spending of 1.6% of GDP).¹⁹

According to the 2020 Global Hunger Index (GHI), the performance of the region is abysmal. Of all the countries, the seriousness of the situation in India and Afghanistan is alarming. Out of 107 countries, India stands at 94th place and Afghanistan at 99th. Interestingly, Pakistan is at 88th, Bangladesh 75th, Nepal 73rd and Sri Lanka at 64th place respectively, which essentially means that the GDP or Per Capita income of a country does not automatically translate into 'entitlements' for its population. It is noteworthy that the 2019 covid pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns in almost

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Retrieved from, <http://hdr.undp.org/en/2020-MPI>, retrieved on May 26, 2021.

¹⁹ Retrieved from, <https://www.unicef.org/srilanka/media/1706/file/BUDGET%20BRIEF:%20HEALTH%20SECTOR.pdf>, p. 2. Retrieved on May 27, 2021.

all countries of the region has had a huge impact on both the national GDP's and the overall human growth. India however witnessed this contraction more sharply with the International Monetary Fund in 2020 projecting Bangladesh surpassing India's per capita GDP in its World Economic Outlook data. In 2021, the projection was realized and widely reported in both the countries.²⁰ Due to pandemic millions of people have lost jobs and a large percentage of people have plunged into poverty. This is further going to complicate problems for South Asian countries and will need a more robust and long-term people-oriented governance policies.

The wealth created in a nation does not automatically trickle down to lower layers of society, unless there is a serious and continuous effort towards enhancing the capabilities and entitlement of the people, especially the lowest segments. Therefore, the humane approach to governance becomes requisite for real development. South Asia is faced with the problem of largest gender disparity where female Human Development Index (HDI) value is around 20 per cent lower than male value. According to World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Gender Gap Report 2021, among total of 156 countries evaluated, Indian ranked 140, Pakistan 153, Bangladesh 65, Nepal 106, Afghanistan 156, Bhutan 130 and Sri Lanka 116.²¹ On the whole South Asia was the second worst performer on the Index. WEF ranking is based on evaluation of gender gaps in four areas—economic

²⁰ For instance, Indian national daily *Indian Express* reported, 'India has technically slipped below Bangladesh in terms of per capita income as the neighbouring country reported its per capita income at \$2,227 in the financial year 2020-21— over 9 per cent jump from \$2,064 in 2019-20. Latest official data show that India's per capita income reached \$1,947.417, thanks to the sharp contraction in the economic growth due to Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent nationwide lockdown.' *Indian Express*, 20 May 2021. Retrieved from, <https://www.newindianexpress.com/business/2021/may/20/bangladesh-beats-india-in-per-capita-income-2304942.html>, Retrieved on 30 May 2021.

²¹ Sushmita Panda, 'India fares poorly in South Asia in global gender gap report' *Sunday Guardian*, April 3, 2021. Retrieved from, <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/india-fares-poorly-south-asia-global-gender-gap-report>, Retrieved on May 10, 2021.

participation and opportunity, health and survival, educational progress and political empowerment.²² In education, South Asia has shown promise with literacy rate of 72.95% for 2019, and increase of 0.71% from 2018.²³ However, the pace is slower compared to other developing countries including some countries of Sub-Saharan Africa. United Nations estimates that globally around 24 million school children are at the risk of dropping out of school due to covid-19 pandemic.²⁴ With its poverty rate South Asia will also see children dropping out in significant numbers. Similarly, meeting the needs of sanitation, safe drinking water, housing and other basic amenities still remains a challenge in all South Asian countries.

The perception of governance can be conceptualized through the ingredients of governance or instead can be the measure of the access people have to the determinants of governance.²⁵ In the backdrop of this, it is essential to explore the performance of South Asian region on various democratic indicators. Human Development Index (HDI)²⁶ thus emerges as a significant tool in this direction which provides composite figures of a country's growth in different sectors. The Table (1) shows that the HDI ranks of all the South Asian countries in different years.

Apart from Sri Lanka, which ranks in the top 80 and hasn't witnessed a major reshuffle, all the South Asian states have demonstrated a dismal performance and ranked poor between these years. Although Maldives improved its ranking occasionally, there has not been a sign of improvement from other countries. Arguably, although there are democratic

²² Ibid.

²³ Retrieved from, <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/SAS/south-asia/literacy-rate>, Retrieved on May, 20, 2021.

²⁴ Retrieved from, <https://special.ndtv.com/rang-de-india-67/news-detail/help-children-from-dropping-out-of-school-here-s-how-you-can-make-a-difference-2410091/7>, Retrieved on May 25, 2021.

²⁵ Muhammad Saleem Mazhar & Naheed S. Goraya, 'Issues of Good Governance in South Asia', *South Asian Studies*, Vol. 30, No.2, July – December 2015, pp. 125-160.

²⁶ An Index is a statistic tool developed by United Nations that provides a single index measure averages of schooling, life expectancy and the income per capita.

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polities established throughout the South Asian region, the lack of a robust system with perennial focus on human development and the over-emphasis on defence and security aspects has abated their national growth. Part of the problem lies in the deficit of radical departures from colonial governance to meet the newer challenges.

Table 1:
HDI ranks of South Asian States from 2014-2020

Name of the Country	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Afghanistan	169	171	169	170	169	170	169
Bangladesh	142	142	139	136	134	135	133
Bhutan	136	132	132	134	131	134	129
India	135	130	131	129	130	129	131
Nepal	145	145	144	148	143	147	142
Maldives	103	104	105	105	98	104	95
Pakistan	146	147	147	151	154	152	154
Sri Lanka	74	73	73	72	73	71	72

Source: *UNDP's Human Development Reports*
(2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020)

Barring few exceptions, the modern system of administration and governance in South Asia had, by and large, evolved under British colonial system and it continues to exhibit the legacy of colonial administrative system characterized by centralization, formalism, secrecy, elitism, rigidity, and social exclusion. With all these similarities, along with differences, South Asian countries fall among the group of countries lowest in terms of human development and quality of governance. The 1999 report by the Mahbub ul Haq Development Centre emphasized that in the context of South

Asia, the concept of good governance has to be broadened and refined; it has to go beyond good politics or even good economic management. Humane governance, as defined, must lead to broad-based economic growth and social development as a means to greater human development.²⁷

True, South Asian countries face a host of problems, the major one being the wide gap between legal-institutional frameworks and their implementation. The lacuna is less related to capacity and more to political will at the institutional and organizational levels. Deep social divisions within societies, militarism, weak institutions, and personality-based politics have resulted in further deteriorating the condition of governance in these countries. The pandemic has further constricted the chances of progress with the closing of borders and limited economic diversification of these developing economies, thus putting a tremendous pressure on the already-existing uncertain conditions arising from poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, political unrest, inflation, and food insecurity. The inefficient and overly-burdened bureaucratic mannerism, uncertainties surrounding the vaccine policies, the collapse of health infrastructure has led to an added pressure to an already-challenging scenario.

The lack of a robust regional mechanism, where the region-specific issues could be debated and addressed, has further crippled the overall growth of the region. The inefficient and apathetic responses of these states towards the existing SAARC have relegated it to the background, which has failed even to emerge as a deliberative platform at the regional level. This becomes amply clear when we compare South Asia with the East-Asian nations, or the SAARC with ASEAN. The problems in South Asia are so huge that they present a defining challenge not only to the region itself but also to the international community. For establishing a robust and effective mechanism to address these issues, focus should be channelized to foster regional cooperation.

²⁷ Mahbub ul Haq Development Centre, *Human Development in South Asia 1999: The Crisis of Governance*, Oxford University Press, Clarendon, Oxford, 1999, p. 26.

Regional Political Initiative: The need for a regional political initiative to collectively address the issues of common concern and interest faced by South Asian countries gave birth to a regional organization, called South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), in 1985 with the objectives of accelerating economic growth and welfare of people by raising their standard of living and fostering mutual trust among the member states.

In 2007, the South Asian countries designed their own 22 SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) in conformity with United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). These broadly covered four categories: livelihood, health, education, and environment. The main focus was to reduce poverty and hunger in the region. These were to be achieved by 2012.²⁸ Each SAARC country was supposed to mainstream the SDGs in their respective planning process with a sense of priority and urgency.

In 2013, the SAARC Human Development Centre published a report on how far these goals were realized. The report stated:²⁹

The study outcomes have revealed that poverty remains the foremost challenge for all the SAARC Member States, inspite of the fact that these countries have put a lot of energy to cope up with this issue; therefore, more efforts are needed to alleviate poverty and raise the living standard of the poor masses. Most of the SAARC countries are also lagging behind in the sectors of education, health and environment, though all the countries are making significant efforts in the field of education.

The report also urged these countries to continue SDGs even beyond the 2012 deadline. In January 2016, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) became operative in the world. There are 17 goals and 169 targets agreed upon by 193 countries to stimulate global action over next 15 years on the

²⁸ See: *SAARC Development Goals: Achievements Gaps and Way forward*, SAARC Human Resource Development Centre, 2013.

²⁹ Ibid.

issues critical to humanity and the planet. These goals were to be carried under the leadership of the United Nations to carry forward the success achieved in the MDGs. Being signatory to SDGs, the SAARC nations are bound to frame and implement their policies in accordance with these goals in order to transform the region for good.

However, given the past record of SAARC it is naive to expect miracles. SAARC has been unable to achieve its objectives due to several reasons. It has not been able to increase trade between the member states despite the promulgation of SAFTA (South Asian Free Trade Agreement). Most of the SAARC members' largest trade partner is not any other South Asian nation but the People's Republic of China. SAARC has been unable to implement its plans for regional welfare leaving much of the population in adverse socio-economic conditions explicitly visible from the HDI rankings of member states.

The most important stumbling block for effective working of SAARC has been, and continues to be, the hostility between two nuclear powers, India and Pakistan. The 19th SAARC summit scheduled in Islamabad in 2016 was cancelled following tensions between the two neighbours. This severely limits potential of SAARC to touch the lives of people and move beyond mere declarations. South Asian countries need to realize that as neighbours, whose ethnicity, religion, culture, language, etc. transcend state borders, their destinies are inextricably linked and they will have to work together to lift people out of underdevelopment and conflict towards peace and prosperity. A strong and vibrant SAARC can play decisive role in this. The region is blessed with abundance of natural resources and has a rich demographic dividend in the form of youth. However, the need of the hour is to make this young population a skilled asset. Further, in view of the enormous challenges confronted by the region there is a need to promote pro-poor economic growth and invest in education and health to enhance basic human capabilities. This will be a right step towards ensuring Humane Governance.

Covid-19 Management in South Asia: Based on official data South Asian region accounted for 18% of global cases and around 10% of total deaths due to Covid-19 (by ending May, 2021),³⁰ with India being the worst hit by the second wave. However, there are questions being raised on the authenticity of official data. In comparative terms, as a sub-region, South Asia now has the second highest covid-19 cases among sub-regions of the world. As per Global Health Security Index South Asia in general falls in 'inadequate pandemic preparedness' category.³¹ With highest possible score of 100, none of the South Asian countries cross even the score of 50 (with India obtaining highest score of 46.5). Besides lack of robust national plans and shortage of health workers, most of the South Asian countries have very poor resource allocation to health security/sector= (around 4.4% of the GDP).³² That is why we saw health infrastructure crumbling even in country like India that is aspiring to be global power. Similarly, till now (ending May, 2021) India has been able to fully vaccinate just about 3% of its population—lowest among the ten worst Covid-19 hit countries.³³ It is ironic that countries with nuclear weapons and best state-of-the-art modern weaponry were caught gasping for oxygen cylinders to save their people.

The pandemic has exposed the population and the governments in the South Asian region to a multi-dimensional threat to life and livelihoods. For the population already facing multi-dimensional poverty, the pandemic proved yet another disaster worsening their already deprived conditioning. There is a rapid urgency to expand the scale of

³⁰ Lasya M., Anurag Maan, 'South Asia crosses 30 million Covid-19 cases as India battles second wave', *Reuters*, May 28, 2021. Retrieved from, <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/south-asia-crosses-30-million-covid-19-cases-india-battles-second-wave-2021-05-28>, Retrieved on May, 29, 2021.

³¹ See, <https://www.ghsindex.org>

³² Megan Counahan, S. Khetrapal, J. Parry, G. Servais & S. Roth, 'Investing in health security for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific: managing health threats through regional and intersectoral cooperation', Asian Development Bank, Working Paper Series No. 56, 2018, pp. 5-6.

³³ Lasya M., Anurag Maan, 'South Asia crosses 30 million Covid-19 cases as India battles second wave', *Reuters*, May 28, 2021.

relief work and the targets cannot be met without the iota of regional cooperation among the nations. There is a need to identify the poor, stimulate resources, identify vulnerable groups, reach to these groups and prepare for new phases of the pandemic. The establishment of a rapid action force targeting the concerned groups on the basis of census data, existing survey data, and rapid remote surveys is crucial. The pandemic has brought to fore the lack of basic infrastructure that the region suffers from. It is the most densely populated region in the world and its population suffers from lack of proper hygiene, clean water, food security and cooking fuel and malnutrition. These domestic concerns can very well be solved at the regional level with correct intention of collective response and action. Hence, the implication of governance remains an essential objective as the crisis that the South Asian countries are facing is deep, wide-spread and cross-cutting.

The catastrophic consequences of pandemic have now been realized by us all. It has necessitated that India in particular and South Asian region in general join to establish a regional mechanism to deal with eliminating diseases, reducing poverty, and enhancing human growth. The pandemic has exposed the cracks in the wall and it is in this context that it has been observed that ‘economic resilience of South Asia has been stretched beyond limits due to the outbreak of the pandemic. South Asia’s growth is projected to plummet by 7.7% in 2020 (World Bank, 2020). According to the Asian Development Bank’s Asian Development Outlook Update, 2020, South Asia is going to be the worst hit in the record sluggish economic growth of Asia in the past 60 years’.³⁴

What is the way forward? Good governance as an agenda was launched by the World Bank in 1989 to address the wide gap between what was referred to as the developed and the developing world. It aimed at understanding and alleviating

³⁴ Swagata Saha and Sukalpa Chakrabarti, “The Non-traditional Security Threat of COVID-19 in South Asia: An Analysis of the Indian and Chinese Leverage in Health Diplomacy,” *South Asian Survey* 28(1) 111–132, 2021.

the issues that prevented some countries to progress on the socio-economic front, despite the fact that structural adjustment policies were in vogue throughout. While addressing these, good governance emerged as a political tool to bring the issues of political participation and transparency, accountability and rule of law within its ambit. Overall human growth thus necessitated that there are redressal mechanisms in place and modes of governance revamped. Towards the end of twentieth century, the focus on good governance grew which later achieved more comprehensiveness. For instance, the Human Development Report 1999 concluded by suggesting that a 'high priority on policies friendly to human development and good governance help a country take advantage of globalization's opportunities'.³⁵

In order to promote Humane Governance in South Asia, the focus should primarily be on institutional and administrative reforms that include: judicial reforms, constitutional reforms, administrative decentralization at the grass-roots level, development of a free and independent media, and measures to prevent fraud, corruption and favouritism and strengthening civil society. The political process must be inclusive in which people are able to raise their concerns and participate in the overall decision-making process. Every state must identify the areas of weaknesses and then work out the strategies accordingly. The pandemic has put to the fore the failure of state institutions and its structures, however, it has also provided a chance to rethink on its developmental project.

The quality of governance can improve if governance is brought closer to the governed. Decentralization, if it is implemented in a true sense, can serve as one of the chief instruments of people's participation for advancing good governance. Governments of South Asia need to pay more

³⁵ The report further highlighted that in order to 'generate growth the main policy components are ensuring sound macroeconomic management and macroeconomic stability, boosting domestic demand by appropriately adjusting real interest rates, adopting fiscal discipline, accelerating industrial production, reforming financial sector institutions and promoting good governance'. See, HDI report, 1999.

attention towards the function and purpose of the local government system rather than its structure and administrative control. The local government system must be capable enough to address the ever-changing immediate needs and demands at the grassroots level. In order to eradicate poverty, which is not only a cost of mis-governance but also a constraint in Humane Governance, a multidimensional holistic approach is needed. South Asian countries should take the responsibility of ensuring social safety net for the poor.

South Asia cannot have good governance purely on the basis of borrowed models and ideas without adapting them to their own social and institutional contexts while looking into their short- and long-term national interests. One good thing that is happening in South Asia in this regard is what has come to be known as 'Fourth Wave of Democracy'.³⁶ Rather than copying the democratic practices of the Western countries without any concern for local context, the South Asian countries are doing well by remodelling democracy in accordance with the national demands and sensitivities of individual countries—Culturally Guided Democracy in Bhutan, balancing between international pressures and local sensitivities by Afghanistan, accommodating of separatist guerrilla groups in democratic process in Nepal, etc.³⁷ More the inclusive democracy takes roots in South Asia more the chances of promoting human development. Apart from these, in the South Asian context, Good governance 'must go beyond 'good' politics or even the development of a 'decent' society. It should facilitate the 'government, civil society as well as the private sectors to improve their social developments and economic growth to make them the means of greater human progression and improved levels of human

³⁶ See, Madhavi Bhasin, 'South Asia and the Fourth Wave of Democracy' (nd.). Accessed from <http://www.globalindiafoundation.org/SA%204th%20Wave.pdf> Accessed on, May, 12 2018.

³⁷ Ibid.

well being'.³⁸

Conclusion: Writing in a different context, Samir Amin argues that “The historical drama of our epoch is situated...in the failure of social consciousness on the part of leaders who refuse to imagine positive and progressive alternatives”³⁹. We need to respond to new challenges and adapt to changing circumstances, which demands creative responses. Humane Governance with focus on human development has emerged as a significant framework bestowing technology with a moral face. The increased focus on human development as bedrock of Humane Governance has resonated throughout, especially in the backdrop of rising economic disparity and democratic backslidings. While reflecting upon the potential of human development to improve the levels of democratic functioning and the overall human growth, Desmond McNeill brilliantly captures the essence and need of focusing on human development, arguing that ‘the term human development has proved most valuable . . . it has provided technical, political, and even moral guidance’.⁴⁰ What needs to be underlined is the fact that human development is not possible without establishing Humane Governance.

The threat of Covid-19 Pandemic renewed and reinvigorated the debate on collective responsibility and refreshed the public debate over governance. In this regard, it has been argued that if we focus on providing Humane Governance and improving the standards of life in all aspects, a robust system can be established which would eventually foster the regional growth and progress. Working collective for a strong and vibrant regional platform would not only help to address the issues like climate change, human trafficking, poverty etc. but also pave a way for greater economic growth and prosperity. Dr. Mahbub ul Haq wrote,

³⁸ Muhammad Ramzan Mughal, ‘Good Governance in Pakistan: Problems and Proposed Solutions’, *International Journal of Modern Business Issues of Global Market* (IJMBIGM). Vol. 2 (1), February 2014, p. 40.

³⁹ Samir Amin, *Empire of Chaos* (tr. by W.H. Locke Anderson), Monthly Review Press, New York, 1992, p. 14.

⁴⁰ Desmond McNeill, ‘Human Development’: The Power of the Idea’, *Journal of Human Development*, Vol. 8, No. 1, March 2007, p. 19.

“people are the real wealth of a nation. The basic objective of development is to create an enabling environment for people to enjoy long, healthy and creative lives. This may appear to be a simple truth. But it is often forgotten in the immediate concern with the accumulation of commodities and financial wealth”.⁴¹ Haq argued, and rightly so, that we could completely change the economic and political destiny of South Asia if we show the imagination to invest in these people and develop a capable human resource. However, realising this objective is possible only when our education, health, and infrastructure budget exceed the defence budget of these countries, when investment in social capital is given priority over arms industry, and when South Asian nations realize the importance of functional integration. The emergence and strengthening of cohesive regional mechanism and focus on Humane Governance is key to regional peace and security as well as the overall human growth.

⁴¹ UNDP, *Human Development Report*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 9.

Educational and Occupational Mobility of Peasants: The Process of Depeasantization in Kashmir

Mohd Anzar Warr

Abstract: *Depeasantization refers to erosion of an agrarian way of life that combines subsistence and commodity agricultural production with an internal social organization based on family labour and village community settlement. Over the past decades in Kashmir, depeasantization is increasing at alarming rate as a result of educational and occupational mobility of peasants; most of the peasants have left farming and joined other professions. It has brought lot of transformations in the agrarian sector of Kashmir. The universe of the present study is rural areas of Pulwama district of Kashmir based on a sample of 250. The paper attempts to know educational and occupational status of peasants and the study also intends to examine the impact of depeasantization on occupation, migration and jobs.*

1. Introduction: The world of today faces a new agrarian question. This metaphor refers of course to the Agrafrage of Karl Kautsky, in which the process of the decline of the peasantry and of power concentration within agriculture is seen as a necessary stage in the collectivization of the rural sector. Nowadays, the agrarian question, manifested in global struggles for land, sovereignty and security, is not only much larger and more encompassing, but it also needs new answers. This broader 'agrarian question' focuses attention on the relentless assault on small farming by forces including financial relations incorporating agriculture into global industrial retailing circuits, intellectual property and rights protocols.¹ Philip McMichael concludes: "In other words, the contemporary global agrarian question is pivotal to all other social arrangements." Samir Amin approves: The "agrarian question, far from being solved, is now more than ever at the heart of the major challenges which humanity will face during

¹ P. McMichael, "Peasant Prospects in the Neoliberal Age", *New Political Economy*. Vol. 11 (3), 2006, p. 18.

the twenty first century.² Understanding the new agrarian questions need new historical knowledge of the role of peasantries within capitalist transformations. The existing knowledge is all too often still deformed by a twofold myopia. First, the much praised British road to capitalist agriculture, including rapid depeasantization, seems not to be the standard road to development. On the contrary, it is the survival and eventual slow decay of peasantries and small-scale agriculture within the expansion of the modern world economy. I call it the Flemish road, which is much more the normal journey of peasants throughout the world. Secondly, the inevitability of the European experience, the dissolution of the peasantries within the industrial and postindustrial economies, is not and cannot be the example for most of the non-Western world.

Being at the top of the global pyramid, Europe could easily and cheaply transform, by importing the basic products it needed and by exporting its surplus labor to its former colonies. Laying down the old macropremises of Westernized development, and at the same time going back to the micro histories of our own rural past reveals a different picture, one of family-based agriculture that has always been and still is a highly productive system, which combines diversified production chains, strategies of risk minimalization, stimuli for local and regional income and exchange systems, and a high sense of ecological protection. All this under precondition of regional market systems that guarantee both transparency and protection of secured access to land and guaranteed rights to use common goods, such as water and natural resources.³ The historical experience has to be complemented by contemporary analysis, such as of the success of the East Asian way, which protects land rights, credit systems, and market access. Between 1981 and 2001, poverty in rural China dropped from 75 percent to 12 percent. This shows that the peasant approach, which engages and

² S. Amin, World Poverty, Pauperization and Capital Accumulation. *Monthly Review*, Vol. 5 (6), 2003, p. 3.

³ M. Altieri, & C. Nicholls, *Agroecology and the Search for a Truly Sustainable Agriculture*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005, p. 10.

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does not marginalize peasantries in the process of economic modernization, can produce results that could be more socially just and more ecologically sustainable than the much propagated British and European paths. Philip McMichael calls this the peasant way, strategies to reconstitute “peasant spaces” which can challenge the current dominant corporate food regime.⁴ These spaces combine local forms of social reproduction with local strategies of income and food security and local forms of knowledge. Most important is the peasant knowledge of internalizing costs of production and reproduction, contrary to the dominant and ultimately dead-end tendency within historical capitalism to externalize social and ecological costs. This logic of subsistence has roots in a peasant past and contradicts the lessons of European capitalist modernity.

Recently, William H. McNeill made a plea to the field of global history for more attention to what he calls the peasant and ex-peasant majority of humankind.⁵ This was one of his “afterthoughts” in an edited book on interconnections between the universal and the local: “But it seems to me also worth knowing that across most of the world another universal has been at work, disrupting age-old local self-sufficiency and village autonomy by folding the rural population into an urban-based, urban managed, high-tech, flow-through society, whose potentialities for the multiplication of wealth are matched only by its potentialities for unprecedented disaster.”⁶ He marks the middle of the twentieth century as a turning point: “But until about 1950 the majority of human beings still lived in villages and raised most or all of the food they consumed. That elementary fact created a safety net for times of trouble whenever the flow of goods and services that sustained cities experienced temporary breakdown. The post-World War II transformation of urban-rural relationships affected far larger numbers

⁴ P. McMichael, *Peasant Prospects in the Neoliberal Age*, p. 2.

⁵ W. McNeill, Afterword: World History and Globalization, in A. G. Hopkins. Ed. *Global History: Interactions between the Universal and the Local*. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave MacMillan Publication, 2006, pp. 285-90.

⁶ Ibid. p. 6.

around the globe, with long-term consequences yet to be seen.⁷ The consequences of this new “great transformation” cannot be properly assessed, but it is clear, according to McNeill, that the biological and cultural continuity of humankind is at stake. Thus, it is a prime task facing global history to get a better understanding of this “intensely local yet also universal (or close to it) transformation of human society.”⁸

1.1. Process of Depeasantization: The transformation of work force from farming to non-farming sector is either growth-led transformation or distress-induced one. The growth-led transformation is related with the developmental factors like mechanization of agriculture, increasing employment and income, high education level, urbanization development of secondary and tertiary sectors and even state intervention for generating employment opportunities. These factors are known as ‘pull factors’, which contribute to ‘pull’ the workforce from farming to more lucrative non-farm activities.

On the other hand, distress-induced transformation is based on the hardship or crisis driven factors like falling productivity, increasing costs, decreasing returns and crop failure; unemployment and underemployment; increasing indebtedness and even suicides. These factors are known as ‘push factors’, which push the agriculture workforce towards non-farm activities to eke out their livelihood.⁹ This study examines the dynamics of shift of peasants towards non-farming activities and how far it is due to ‘growth-led’ pull factors or a ‘distress-induced’ one.

3. Review of Literature: Kingra, H.S. Singh, Sukhpal & Singh, Karam. (2009)¹⁰ in the study reveals that agriculture in Punjab

⁷ Ibid., p. 287.

⁸ Ibid., p. 290.

⁹ Kingra, H.S. Singh, Sukhpal & Singh, Karam. Agrarian Crisis and Depeasantization in Punjab: Status of Small/Marginal Farmers Who Left Agriculture, *Indian Journal of Agricultural Economy*. Vol. 64 (4). 2009, p.3.

¹⁰ Ibid.

had high growth for a long time up to early 1990s; it slowed down thereafter due to the available potential of resources and technology getting exploited closer to the possible limits, which led to increasing costs, shrinking resource base, declining productivity, profitability and incomes. The Punjab peasantry especially the small/marginal farmers also had little alternative but to go for capital-intensive farming. The overexploitation of natural resources, especially groundwater, further dragged the farm incomes towards digging deeper for submersible pumps installation. During the era of high growth, the farmers attained high living standards, which also led to their social and cultural obligations being more expensive. Little wonder, the indebtedness of the farmers, more so to the non-institutional agencies and particularly of the small / marginal farmers, whose economic base is poorer, increased faster than their repaying capacity. As a result, their distress continued to mount. The indebtedness of the peasantry had been a serious issue since long. It was the Punjab province where Malcolm Darling brought out the classic work on rural economy in the early 1920s and reported that about four-fifth of the Punjab peasantry was under the debt to the tune of 5-6 times of their annual income. His overarching conclusion was that Punjab peasant is born in debt, lives in debt and dies in debt. Bryceson, F.D. (2018)¹¹ in the study reveals that de-agrarinization is essentially a multi-dimensional process of change involving: (i) livelihood reorientation, (ii) occupational work adjustment, (iii) spatial realignment of residential settlement, and (iv) social re-identification, all entailing movement away from agrarian patterns in local, regional and economic. The author points out that de-agrarinization is ongoing in Africa resulting in a process of sectoral transformation, evidenced by a declining

¹¹ F.D. Bryceson, *Deagrarinization and Depeasantization in Africa: Tracing Setoral Transformation and Rural Income Diversification*, 2018, retrieved from: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/326131607>. Accessed on 26-11-2019.

proportion of the national population and total labour time engaged in agriculture.

Over the last several decades, statistical indicators of agricultural labour time expenditure, volume and value of product output as well as survey data and qualitative interviews have increasingly documented this trend. The net outcome of this process is the declining value of agricultural output relative to other sectors of national production. Similarly, she admitted that de-agrarianization has been coterminous with urbanization and industrialization trends for more than two centuries, but Africa experienced a delayed onset relative to other continents. Europe and North America's de-agrarianization largely took place during the early 19th to mid-20th century as a large number of the population migrated from rural to urban settlements and from agrarian to the industrial sector. Latin America and Japan followed suit during the Post-World War II period from the mid-1940s to the 1970s, South and Southeast Asia's transition commenced in the 1960s and escalated until the 1980s, whereas China's de-agrarianization has been very rapid and concentrated during the 1990s to the present. Isalm, R. MD¹² in his study reveals that Rajshahi District has been passing through a hasty process of urbanization and population growth since the last few decades. Rapid growth of population, unplanned urbanization, industrialization and agricultural modernization in the outer periphery area of this district city has created pressure on the agricultural land and as well as environment. The area has been experiencing hasty changes in land use pattern especially the agricultural land decreasing rapidly and various environmental problems occurred. Remarkable changes have occurred in agricultural land use type in the study area. In 1977, the total area of agricultural was 45950.17 acre and in 2010 it becomes 394986.32 acre. The agricultural land has loosed 4.57 percent from 1977 to 1990 at the rate of 0.36 per year. From 1990 to 2010 it has decreased 11.03 percent that's 0.55 percent per year.

¹² R. MD. Isalm, Causes and Consequences of Agricultural Land Losses of Rajshahi District, Bangladesh. *Journal of Environmental Science, Toxicology and Food Technology*. Vol. 5 (6), 2013.

The agricultural land has decreased 14.05 percent which 0.43 percent per year. Bhat, M.M.¹³ in his study entitled “Agricultural Land-Use Pattern in Pulwama District of Kashmir” reveals that in his study an attempt has been made to analyze the agricultural land use pattern at micro level in Pulwama district of Kashmir Valley. The study is based on the primary as well as secondary data. Agricultural land use pattern and production is influenced by physical, socio-economic, technological and organizational factors. An effort has been made here to study the changing land use pattern, cropping pattern, pattern of crop diversification, crop combination and ranking of the crops in Pulwama district for the year 2010-2011, which is considered to be a normal year from agricultural point of view. The crop data has been computed with the help of Jasbir Singh’s method of crop diversification and weaver’s method of crop combination. He points out that seven major crops have been considered for crop diversification and ten major crops have been considered for the crop combination and ranking. This includes various crops like rice, wheat, maize, pulses, mustard, fodder and vegetables etc.

4. Research Methodology

4.1. Universe of the Study: The universe of the present study constitutes *Pulwama* district of *Kashmir*. The thrust areas were *Lethpora, Pampore, Lasipora, Lasjan, Kakpora, Ratnipora, Rajpora, Koil, Malangpora and Awantipora* (10 in total). As per census 2011, the total literacy rate of the district Pulwama was 65 percent; 75.41 percent of males and 53.81 percent of females, respectively. The district consisted 328 villages, 5 towns and total population was 5,60,440 people out of which urban population was 80,462 while as rural 4,79,978 and it had a total of 40,658 rural households.

4.2. Sampling Plan and Design of the Study: The sampling plan of the present study is based on a sample of 250

¹³ M.M. Bhat, Agricultural Land-Use Pattern in Pulwama District of Kashmir Valley, *International Journal of Economics, Business and Finance*. Vol. 1 (5), 2013.

respondents selected through cluster and purposive sampling method from rural areas of Pulwama district of Kashmir. Descriptive research design was used to get information from the respondents within the study area and the information was collected through interview schedule. One village from each thrust area was taken for study and out of each village 25 households were chosen for study ($25 \times 10 = 250$) which formed the sample of the study.

4.3. Objectives of the Study

- 1) To know the educational status of peasants in Kashmir.
- 2) To examine the impact of depeasantization on occupation, migration and satisfaction of new occupation.

5. Results and Discussions:

The findings of the study are as follows:

5.1. Educational Status of the Peasants: Education in the modern era has become a priority. It cannot be separated from human's life. Both males and females pursue it. They have the same right to get education as much as they want because there is no limitation for education. No matter how old a person is, he/she can still take education during the rest of their life. There is no such thing as too late to get education because education is the only bridge that leads people to their better futures. Education plays an important role in the development of a country. If a country does not have proper education, it may be left behind by other countries which support education. The development of a country can be determined by whether its citizens have good education or not. The better the quality of education that a country has, the faster it is likely to develop. No matter what global problems that a country is facing, whether it's the elimination of poverty, the restoration of peace, or environmental energy problems, the solutions will always include education. It is never done without the adequate knowledge that is obtained through the medium of education. There are still many things that need to be improved in order to get a good system of education system. Therefore, all of the people need to be

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involved in improving it, so that the education system gets best and better every passing year. In this context, the respondents are asked to express their ideas which are shown below:

Table 1: Educational Status of Peasants

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Education status	Literate	100	40.00
	Illiterate	150	60.00
Total		250	100.00
If Literate	Number	Percentage	
Primary Pass	10	10.00	
Below Matric	30	30.00	
Matric	10	10.00	
Graduate	30	30.00	
Post-graduate	10	10.00	
Any other	10	10.00	
Sub-Total	100	40.00	

Source: Field Work

The above table depicted that out 250 respondents, i.e. 100 respondents (40 percent) were literate and 150 respondents (60 percent) were illiterate. Out of 100 respondents, 10 respondents (10 percent) were primary pass 30 respondents (30 percent) were below Matric, 10 respondents (10 percent) were matric pass 30 respondents (30 percent) were graduate and 10 respondents (10 percent) were post-graduate and remaining 10 respondents (10 percent) had technical education. This indicates that literacy rate in the respondents is comparatively lower than the national average and it has

been found from the survey that majority of the respondents are illiterate.

5.3. Impact of Depeasantization on Occupation: The process of depeasantization has tremendous impact on occupation of peasants. It is fact, that over the past several decades in Kashmir most of the peasants have joined other profession due to awareness of modernization, materialistic approach, lack of profit in the agricultural sector and so on. In this context, the respondents were asked to express their ideas regarding the impact of depeasantization on their occupation which is showed in the below table:

Table 2: Impact of Depeasantization on Occupation

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Change from peasantry to new occupation	Government employees	12	12.24
	Business	11	11.25
	Labrouer	25	25.51
	Milk vending	12	12.24
	Brick kiln owner	20	20.40
	Transport business	18	18.36
Total		98	100.00
Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Satisfaction with new occupation	Yes	32	32.65
	No	66	67.35
Total		98	100.00
Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Reasons for non-satisfaction	Economically become weak	10	14.87
	Breakdown of joint family	20	29.69
	Feeling extreme poverty	10	14.87
	Feeling social stigma	10	14.87
	Feeling land alienation	16	23.75

Source: Field Work

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The above table depicts that out of 98 respondents 12 respondents (12.24 percent) were government employees, 11 respondents (11.22 percent) were associated with the business and 25 respondents (25.51 percent) were labourers, 12 respondents (12.24 percent) were vending milk in the villages whereas, 20 respondents (20.40 percent) were brick kiln owners, 18 respondents (18.36 percent) had transport business. It was noted that most of the peasants left agricultural work and joined new profession. However, in these landless peasants there are two categories one who have sold their entire land and are left with nothing even the money which they get after selling land have got exhausted and the second are those who were not having their land but are dependent on the village land as an agricultural labourers for their livelihood. The study further depicts that out of 98 respondents, 32 respondents (32.65 percent) told that they were satisfied with their new occupation whereas, 66 respondents (67.34 percent) were not satisfied with their new occupation. Out of 66 respondents, 10 respondents (14.87 percent) had turned economically weak, 20 respondents (29.69 percent) had admitted disintegration of joint family, 10 respondents (14.87 percent) were facing extreme poverty, 10 respondents (14.87 percent) were facing social stigma and remaining 16 respondents (23.75 percent) admitted that they were facing land alienation. It has been observed in the study that most of the peasants who had found job in other sector or joined other better paid activities were satisfied with their new profession. However, some were less satisfied with new occupations, even though they were earning better in the agricultural field.

5.4. Depeasantization and Migration

Migration refers to the movement of people from one place to other place it may be permanent or temporary in a new location. In the present day changing society people migrate from underdeveloped to developed areas in search of employment. In this context, the respondents were asked to express their views about migration which is showed as in the below:

Table 3: Depeasantization and Rural to Urban Migration

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Migration of rural youth to urban areas	Yes	30	12.00
	No	220	88.00
	Total	250	100.00
Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
If yes, how	For the purpose of jobs	12	40.00
	Desire to settle in urban areas	10	33.33
	For the purpose of business	8	26.67
Sub-total		30	100.00

Sources: Field Work

The above table depicts that out of 250 respondents, 30 respondents (12 percent) admitted that depeasantization led to migration of youth from rural to urban areas whereas, 220 respondents (88 percent) responded negatively. Out of 30 respondents, 12 respondents (40 percent) migrated from rural to urban areas for the purpose of job, 10 respondents (33.33 percent) having desire to settle in urban areas, 8 respondents (26.67 percent) admitted that for the purpose of business. It has been observed in the study that presently Kashmir is losing its prime agriculture land migration in young generation is taking place rapidly the labour force of the family is decreasing, however, work load of women has also increased in the agrarian sector. New generation is disinterested to work in the agricultural sector which is also one of the prominent factor for depeasantization. Many factors have been contributing to this poor performance of agricultural sector, but one of the major factor is rural to urban migration (especially by youths) which involves the shifting of labour force from rural areas to urban centers in search of better employment and better living standard. Since, the youths who constitute the labour force in the rural areas are actively involved in rural to urban migration. With

the incessant migration of youth to the urban areas a greater gap in the rural labour force has been created.

5.5. Job Opportunities and Depeasantization:

In an agrarian society, rural people are dependent on agriculture and cultivating the land is the primary source of wealth. But nowadays rural people don't have so many dependencies on agriculture land in Kashmir. They even do jobs in government and non-government sectors, simanitounesly they do agricultural work. In this context, the respondents were asked to express their ideas which are shown as in the below:

Table 4: Job Opportunities is Responsible for Depeasantization

Theme	Response	Number	Percentage
Job opportunities in other sectors is responsible for depeasantization	Agree	107	42.8
	Strongly agree	86	34.4
	Undecided	18	7.2
	Disagree	15	6.00
	Strongly disagree	24	9.6
Total		250	100.00

Sources: Field Work

The above table depicts that out of 250 respondents, 107 respondents (42.8 percent) were agreed that job opportunities in other sectors led to depeasantization, 86 respondents (34.4 percent) were strongly disagreed, 18 respondents (7.2 percent) were undecided whereas, 15 respondents (6 percent) felt disagreed and remaining 24 respondents (9.6 percent) felt strongly disagreed. The study reveals that majority of the respondents admitted that job opportunities in other sectors are responsible for depeasantization. It has been noted that due to busy schedule they get less time to work in the agricultural land they try to sell it or convert it into orchards. Sometimes they achieve higher position in the society which

compels them to leave farming and job makes a difference in their standard of living and makes a rapid change in their socio-economic setup and enables them to have a better standard and position for them and their family settings this led to the depeasantization.

Conclusion: In the light of above findings it can be argued that depeasantization has shown an increasing trend in Kashmir over the past several decades due to occupational and educational mobility. Most of the peasants left their farming work and joined other professions. The operational land holdings of peasants are decreasing; landless peasants are living in stress and strain. It has been observed in the study that the small and marginal peasants after leaving farming are living in distress and they join mostly the labour class due to unskilled or low earning jobs or self-employment ventures for which their technical training is almost nil or rather very inadequate.

Prevalence and Implications of Skill Training and Education: An Empirical Study of District Srinagar

Rabiya Yaseen Bazaz

Abstract: *The formal education system, as developed in modern industrial societies addresses the challenges of complex division of labour by furthering the various skill based vocational, technical and professional educational courses as well as by incorporating several skill training mechanisms. The informal education and training also plays important role in imparting various skills and thereby fulfilling the complex occupational needs of both industrial and traditional societies by preserving as well as devising traditional and informal training mechanisms, often in the form of informal vocational training (IVT). Both formal and informal skill training and education (STE) mechanisms attract the attention of academicians and policy makers in contemporary societies but the latter, often, lacks nuanced theoretical understanding because of their limited presence in industrial societies. This paper attempts to observe the presence of IVT and other skill based education and tries to analyse implications of these trainings in terms of employment and income.*

Introduction: Skill training and education (STE) imparted at formal and informal levels are often considered as important means for promoting economic growth and fostering social inclusion. It is claimed that individuals with any vocational, technical and professional education have brighter employment opportunities than individuals with general academic qualifications. Professional, technical and vocational educations have different objectives and operate within different social contexts. Max Weber saw, “professionals as occupational groups controlling access to scarce, highly marketable skills and situated in the middle and upper levels in stratified societies— a major characteristic of professionals being relative superiority over

and distance from the working classes”.¹ It is argued that vocational educational and training (VET) also develops specific skills among individuals which prepare them for future occupations in highly industrialized societies² and enhance their productivity and chance of gaining better employment and wages as compared to untrained workers.³ However, it is also argued that VET reproduces class position in a society by ensuring that children inherit their parents’ social position where lower-class students are typically placed in lower tracks that in turn reduce their chances of attending university and of subsequently entering the professional and other courses leading to prestigious occupation.⁴ Amid all these debates, the role of VET remains quite visible in most of the recommendations of international organisations like the World Bank⁵ (1990) and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1990).⁶ It is argued that VET plays a crucial role in ensuring the transition from school to work. The case of VET receives further support after the experience of East Asian countries, where prudent vocational and technical educational reforms enable them to combat many challenges of development, especially unemployment.

When seen in international context, very small proportion of people in India has any vocational education

¹ Tomlinson, S. *A Sociology of Special and Inclusive Education: Exploring the Manufacture of Inability*. New York: Routledge, 2017, p. 107.

² Durkheim, E. ‘On Education and Society,’ in Sadovnik, R and Coughlan, W (Eds), *Sociology of Education: A Critical Reader*, New York: Routledge 2016, pp. 45-60.

³ Schultz, T. “Investment in Human Capital”. *The American Economic Review*. 51 (1): 1-17, 1961

⁴ Tilak, B. Vocational education in South Asia: Problems and Prospects, *Springer: International Review of Education*, 34 (2), pp. 244-257, 1988.

⁵ Recent researches and an extensive review of World Bank suggest that investment in vocational education and training and especially in those skills relevant to rapidly growing industries and, more generally, in industrially dynamic economies, have a higher payoff than to academic education (World Bank, *Education and Development: Evidence for New Priority*, Washington, D.C, 1990, p. 49).

⁶ UNESCO, *Trends and Development of Technical and Vocational Education*, United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) France, 1990, pp. 13-30.

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and training.⁷ “It is estimated that only 4.69% of the total workforce in India has undergone formal skill training as compared to 68% in UK, 75% in Germany, 52% in USA, 80% in Japan and 96% in South Korea”.⁸ The poor skill levels among India’s workforce are attributed to dearth of formal vocational education among people. Along with this, poor representation of vocational and other forms of technical education in policy documents is also responsible for this. Most of the government bodies and reports dealing with education provide murky ideas on professional education, technical education and VET. All Indian Council of Technical Education (AICTE)⁹ uses the term ‘vocational education’ almost synonymously with ‘technical education’ while National Sample Survey Office (2014)¹⁰ combines vocational education with technical/professional education.

⁷ World Bank, *Skill Development in India: The Vocational Education and Training System*. Human Development Unit, South Asia Region, 2007, p. 15.

⁸ Government of India, *National Policy for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship*, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, Government of India, 2015, p. 6.

⁹ According to AICTE, vocational education or Vocational Education and Training (VET), also called Career and Technical Education (CTE), prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation, hence the term, in which the learner participates. It is sometimes referred to as technical education, as the learner directly develops expertise in a particular group of techniques or technology (<https://www.aicte-india.org/education/vocational-education>).

¹⁰ ‘Technical/Professional courses involve the hands on training in addition to theoretical classes. Education in engineering, medicine, agriculture, management, chartered accountancy, art, music, driving, pilot training etc are example of technical/professional courses’ (NSSO, *Report on Education in India*, Government of India, New Delhi 2014, p. 14). Further, for the purpose of this survey, vocational courses were not defined separately from the technical/ professional courses. Any technical/professional courses with the level of current attendance as secondary or below or diploma/certificate courses (up-to secondary) were considered as vocational courses. Moreover courses offered by Industrials Training Institute (ITI), National Vocational Training Institute, Regional Vocational Training Institutes etc were also considered as vocational courses. NSSO, *Report on Education*, Government of India, New Delhi 2014, p. 14.

International organisation like the World Bank¹¹ also recognises conceptual loophole in NSSO's terminology. Government of India (2011)¹² talks about formal and informal skill training but does not provide any definition on vocational, technical and professional education. Thus, much has been talked about vocational, technical and professional education but at conceptual level very less has been delivered and further, least attention has been given to informal vocational training (IVT). Many dimensions of IVT existing at ground level in India are not properly represented at conceptual and theoretical level and these trainings, although very important in providing job opportunities to huge number of people, are not well connected with formal education systems. This empirical study conducted in district Srinagar attempts to address these terminological confusions by providing comprehensive definition of professional education, technical education, VET and IVT and explores their prevalence at ground level and also studies the implications of these different types of skill education and training mechanisms.

Conceptual Framework: Professional practice is based on specialised knowledge and acquiring it requires time, effort, and formal instruction especially university based training. The work of a professional is deemed to be of great value, both to society as a whole and to the individual who makes use of professional services. The distinctive roles and

¹¹ 'The NSS rounds do not allow for a clear distinction between vocational education and general secondary education, and between vocational training and tertiary education. Hence, it is very difficult to do any detailed analysis of vocational education or vocational training on the basis of NSS data.' The World Bank, *Skill Development In India: The Vocational Education and Training System*, 2007, p. iv.

¹² Informal training is defined as the process of acquiring the expertise in a vocation through ancestors over generations. The formal vocational training is a training which is acquired through institutions under structural training programme and let to recognised certificate or diploma. Government of India, *Report on Education, Skill Development and Labour Force (2013-14)*, Government of India (GOI), Minister of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, Vol III. Chandigarh, 2011, pp. 9-10.

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specialised skills of professional confer them considerable power.¹³ Technical education on the other hand is distinct from professional education. It mainly aims at preparing pupils for occupations that are classed above the skilled crafts but below the scientific or engineering professionals. “It is a type of formal education designed to provide knowledge and skills underlying production processes with a wider connotation than vocational education at secondary or higher level”.¹⁴ It emphasises the understanding and practical application of basic principles of science and mathematics, rather than the attainment of proficiency in manual skills that is properly the concern of vocational education. Technical education is typically offered in post-high-school curricula that are two years in length, are not designed to lead to a bachelor’s degree, and are offered in a wide variety of institutions, such as technical institutes, junior colleges, vocational schools, and regular colleges and universities.¹⁵

Vocational education or vocational education and training (VET) prepares learners for jobs that are based in manual or practical activities, traditionally non-academic and totally related to a specific trade, occupation or vocation. VET can be offered at junior, secondary and senior secondary levels¹⁶. It may be offered either formally or informally. Informal vocational training (IVT) refer to vocational training provided at informal level and experienced at household level or through personal networking within the community/ neighbourhood etc; this is informal and the incumbent does not get any academic degree for such vocational learning from any institution. Such beneficiaries may have some educational degrees but these degrees are not related to the specific vocational training. Formal vocational training, on the other hand, is imparted at educational institutions under structured training programme and lead to recognised

¹³ Volti, R, *An Introduction to the Sociology of Work and Occupations* USA: Sage, 2012, p. 143.

¹⁴ UNESCO, *Trends and Development of Technical and Vocational Education*, United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) France, 1990, p. 09.

¹⁵ <https://www.britannica.com/topic/technical-education>.

¹⁶ <https://www.aicte-india.org/education/vocational-education>.

certificate or diploma. The VET in general and IVT in particular find their social relevance in the situation of dominance of elites in professional and technical education. IVTs are generally performed at traditional institutions like family, neighbourhood, caste and occupational groups etc and the beneficiaries generally come from lower social strata.

Objectives and Methodology: The objectives of the paper are: (i) to study the prevalence of vocational, technical and professional education and training as practised at ground level; (ii) to study the implications of these skill training and education programmes in terms of employment and other benefits. This study was conducted in district Srinagar of Jammu & Kashmir. Purposive sampling was used for selecting a heterogeneous population and census method was used for identifying the respondents. This study covered 245 households consisting of 704 respondents. Interview schedule was used for collecting data from all 704 eligible respondents available in the research area and some typical cases were also selected for case study.

Area of the Study: This study is conducted in Srinagar district of Jammu and Kashmir. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (2017), Jammu and Kashmir had the highest unemployment rate (12.13%) in India; the other states with high unemployment rates are Kerala (9.60 percent), Assam (8.60), and Haryana (7.16).¹⁷ The national unemployment average is 4.7 percent. Several studies have identified that lack of skill base among the youth of Kashmir is one of the important reasons behind their unemployment and underemployment.¹⁸ In Jammu and Kashmir formal

¹⁷ <http://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/kashmir/j-k-has-highest-unemployment-rate-at-12-13-in-india-report/269805.html>.

¹⁸ J&K has a large talent pool of youth who are well educated but are unable to find employment due to lack of soft skills or lack of practical/hands on training. To engage the youth, one initiative could be to identify 10-20 companies across industry sectors to partner with an educational institution and run special training programs to enhance employability of 8000 youth per annum in J&K over a five year period (Government of India, *Report of the Expert Group on Employment in J&K* Government of India (GOI), New Delhi, 2011, p. 41.

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vocational education and training are offered only after completing senior secondary and most of the vocational education can be opted after completing junior secondary (10th) or senior secondary (12th). These courses are offered through the specialized training institutions. School education hardly provides knowledge of any vocational education. People are not much aware about the various vocational courses taking place in Srinagar city. This can be attributed to the fact that in the district Srinagar there are only two ITI's with the intake capacity of only 2004 (NSDC, 2013). In Jammu and Kashmir, only 4.2% of the total population has received any VET out of which 1.5% has formal VET and 2.7% have informal VET. The status of VET in Jammu and Kashmir is much lower when compared with all Indian figures i.e. 6.8%.¹⁹

Findings:

Prevalence of Skill Training and Education (STE): Informal Vocational Training (IVT), Professional Education and Technical Education: Skill training and education (STE) here includes all those courses whose immediate purpose is to develop specific skills among people. In this study, STE includes vocational educational and training (VET), informal vocational training (IVT) professional education and technical education. We observed that VET in our research area is largely taking place informally. IVT as imparted in Srinagar at informal level includes skills related to the activities like; (i) Handicraft and Handloom; (ii) Papier Mache; (iii) Tailoring, Electrician, Computer and Mobile repairing, Mechanic; (iv) Carpenter, Copper smith, Plumber, Painter, Driver, Barber and Parlour artist etc. Professional education as identified in the research area includes following courses: (i) Engineering; (ii) Medical; (iii) Law; (iv) Management/Social Work; (v) Journalism; (vi) B.ED/M.ED. Similarly, technical courses as prevailing in the

¹⁹ Government of India, *Report on Education, Skill Development and Labour Force (2013-14)*, Government of India (GOI), Minister of Labour & Employment Labour Bureau, Vol III. Chandigarh, 2011, p. 12.

field include training related to: (i) engineering and computers; (ii) agriculture and allied activity; (ii) nursing and health; (iv) hotels and hospitality. It is observed from Table-1 that 36.7% of the total respondents (N=704), in the urban area of Srinagar have any STE and it includes 20.5% IVT, 14.5 % professional education and only 1.7% technical education (Table-1). In terms of gender, the share of women for STE is slightly higher than men. The prevalence of professional education is higher among women as compared to men. On the other hand, the proportion of men is slightly higher in IVT.

Table-1 also gives the distribution of respondents in terms of age. The proportion of STE in each of these age groups, i.e. '60 and above years', '45-60 years', '30-45 years' and '15-30 years' is 35.0%, 34.9%, 37.3% and 38.2% respectively and we can notice that the share of STE in the 15-30 years is highest. This implies that prevalence of skill training and education in terms of age structure is highest among the youth. Over the generations there is modest increase in STE. This expansion in STE has primarily occurred in formal skill education and training especially among the women in the field of professional education. Further, there is sharp decline in prevalence of IVT over the generations and it can be noticed from Table-1. The proportion of IVT is lowest among the respondents categorised into the age group of '15-30'.

We observed that nearly half of the male and female respondents are having skills associated with 'handicraft and handloom'. Over the period of time, it is observed that most of the female are opting skills associated with 'tailoring' and males are opting skills associated with activities like carpenter, copper smith, plumber, painter, driver, barber and parlour artist. It is observed that skills associated with activities like 'handicraft and handloom' and 'papiermache' is decreasing over the generation. Further we observe that within professional education, 45.3% of women have acquired their professional education through courses like 'B.Ed / M.Ed' that constitute 96% of the total respondents who have done 'B.Ed / M.Ed'. The proportion of women in the professional courses like engineering and medical is much lower. There is underachievement of females in technical and

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scientific subjects. This gendered biased subject choice is important, because courses like engineering and medical are considered very prestigious.

Implications of Skill Training and Education on Occupation and Income Status: In this study, we have divided occupation into five categories namely: (i) Government Service; (ii) Private Service; (iii) Self-employed; (iv) Daily wage worker, and; (v) Unemployed. Government service is further divided into following services: (i) Officer / Professor / Lecturer / Doctor / Engineer; (ii) Clerical / Supervisor; (iii) Contractual; (iv) Government Teachers/Senior Teacher. Private sector includes following positions: (i) Officer / Professor / Lecturer / Doctor / Engineer; (ii) Clerical / Supervisor; (iii) Fourth Grade; (iv) Sales men; (v) Teacher. Self-employed includes following categories: (i) Owner of Factory / Manufacturing Unit / Property Dealer; (ii) Owner of Agriculture Land / Farm / House / Garden / Agro Product; (iii) Owner of Dairy Farm/Product; (iv) Owner of Manufacturing Unit; (v) Owner of Shop / Hotel / Restaurant. Daily wage worker includes: (i) Skilled Worker; (ii) Semi Skilled Worker; (iii) Unskilled Worker. Unemployed is divided into following categories: (i) Illiterate; (ii) educated up-to senior secondary; (iii) Diploma; (iv) Professional (v) Graduate and above.

Occupation and income profile of respondents having IVT: It is observed that among the respondents who have IVT, about 36 % are working as 'daily wage worker', further 35.4% are 'self-employed' and about 15% are working in 'service sectors'(government and private services) (Table-2). When explored further, it is observed that respondents who have IVT and are working as 'daily wage worker' (N=52), all are either working as skilled artist and none works as semi or unskilled labourers. Those who are have IVT and are 'self-employed' (N=51), majority of them (77%) are owners of small manufacturing units and they largely possess skills associated with activities like 'handicraft and handloom', 'papiermache' and 'tailoring'. Respondents who have IVT and are in 'government sector' (N=12), 42% are working as teachers in

handicraft and handloom departments and 33% work as 'clerk / supervisor' in various government departments and these respondents largely possess skills related to 'handicraft and handloom' and 'electrician, computers and mobile repairing / mechanic'. Similarly, those who have IVT and are in private sector (N=10), half of them are working as 'clerk / supervisor'. Unemployment rate among the respondents who have IVT is lowest, it is around 13%. Among respondents who have any IVT, almost 60% respondents fall within middle income group bracket i.e. Rs '48,000 - 1,20,000 & 1,20,000 - 3,00,000', 12% fall within high income group bracket i.e. Rs '3,00,000 - 6,00,000 & 6,00,000 - above' and 29.6% fall in lower income group bracket i.e. 'up-to Rs 24,000 & Rs 24,000 - 48,000' per annum.

Occupation and income profile of respondents who have professional and technical Education: Among respondents who have any professional and technical education, four-fifth are in 'service sector'. The share of professional education in government and private services is above 38% and 40%, respectively (Table-2). Respondents who have professional education and are working in government sector (N=39), majority (67%) are the occupants of 'class-I' jobs (officer / professor / lecturer / doctor / engineer). These respondents have largely completed their professional courses via engineering and medical. Again 22% works as 'government teachers / senior teacher' and these respondents have acquired their professional training primarily through 'B.Ed/M.Ed'. Similarly, among respondents who have professional training and are in private sector (N=41), about 41% are working as 'clerk/supervisor' and 39% are working 'officer / professor / lecturer / doctor / engineer' and these respondents have largely acquired their professional courses through management / social work, medical and engineering.

The share of technical education in government and private services is 41.7% and 50.0%, respectively. Among respondents who have any technical education and are in 'government sector' (N= 05), majority are working as 'officer / professor / lecturer / doctor / engineer'. These respondents have completed their technical education from courses

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‘related to engineering’. Similarly, among respondents who have any technical education and are working in private sector (N=06), majority (67%) work as ‘clerk / supervisor’. Among respondents who have any professional training, 62.2% fall within high income group bracket, i.e. Rs ‘3,00,000-6,00,000 & 6,00,000 above’ and about 36% fall within middle income group bracket, i.e. Rs. 48,000-1,20,000 & 1,20,000-3,00,000’ and only above 2% fall within lower income group bracket, i.e. ‘up-to Rs 24,000 & Rs 24,000-48,000’ per annum.

Occupation and income profile of respondents who do not have any skill training and education: We observed that among the respondents who do not have any STE, 21.5% are in ‘government sector’, 23.8% are in ‘private sector’, 24.9 are ‘self-employed’ and 2.7% are ‘daily wage worker’. Among the respondents who are in ‘government sector’ and do not have any STE (N=96), 57% are working as ‘clerk/supervisor’, similar trend was observed in ‘private sector’ (N=106) where 30% are working as ‘clerk/supervisor’ and again 30% as ‘private teachers’. Further, among the respondents who are ‘self-employed’ (N=111), half of the respondents are ‘owner of shop/hotels/restaurants’. Among those who are working as ‘daily wage worker’ (N=12), all are working either as semi-skilled or unskilled workers. Unemployment, especially ‘educational unemployment’, is higher among the respondents who do not have any STE; of the total respondents who do not have STE and are unemployed (N=121), 55% are having educational qualification varying between ‘primary to senior secondary’ and 45% are ‘graduate and above’. We observed that respondents who do not have skill training and education, 58% fall within middle income group bracket i.e. Rs ‘48,000-1,20,000 & 1,20,000-3,00,000’, 36% fall within high income group bracket i.e. Rs ‘3,00,000-6,00,000 & 6,00,000 above’ and 5.5% fall within lower income group bracket i.e. ‘up-to 24,000 & Rs 24,000 - 48,000’ per annum.

Discussion and Suggestions: Skill Training and Education (STE) is increasing people’s productivity and their access to

labour market. Its role is quite visible in the employment, occupation and income structure of the respondents. Unemployment rate is higher among those who do not have any STE. At present, STE particularly vocational education and training (VET) has very limited reach in Kashmir which can result in skill shortages and unemployment. In order to increase skill base among youth, it is important that STE should be widespread in Kashmir. Vocational training associated with handicraft and handloom, papier-mache, tailoring, electrician, computer and mobile repairing, mechanic carpenter, copper smith, plumber, painter, beautician is responsible for creating immense employment avenues in Kashmir. Respondents who are having these skills can be seen in almost all the sectors. They can be seen running their own small/big manufacturing units as entrepreneurs. They are working as artist, teachers and as clerk/supervisor in various government and private sector. Good number of respondents, who are having these skills, are working as daily wage workers but all of them are working as skilled labourers. Thus, vocational training reduces the chances of workers to enter into labour market as unskilled labour. Besides imparting knowledge and skills of traditional and local sector, it offer a second educational chance for the out-of-school people and ensure there social inclusion. It also provides opportunities for further professional and personal development to those who already have a minimum level of general academic degree.

However, in the absence of any large scale formal vocational training programme, most of the vocational training in Kashmir is taking place at informal level identified as IVT in this study. IVT is impacted by agencies like caste, sect, family etc. and these skills are relevant to local economy. However, lack of academic recognition to specific skill puts negative impact on the wage of the employee. Over the generations, there is decline in IVT as its proportion is quite low among youths. This implies that the youth are not much interested in getting vocational training through informal means. This decline is more visible in the skills associated with handicraft and handloom. Handicraft and handloom in Kashmir is playing immense role in creating employment

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opportunities, its decline can have a serious repercussion on the economy of Kashmir as ‘handicraft and handloom’ industry is considered the backbone of business sector in Kashmir. This can also have serious implication on the skill base of people. Further, IVT often remains underreported and thus overall contribution of STE to employment generation, economic growth and social inclusion remains systematically underestimated.

For the country to progress, we need people for all kinds of jobs and not just white collar employee. In a society like India in general, and Kashmir in particular, which are characterised by absolute poverty and rampant unemployment, vocational education is a valuable safety net that reduces the risks of unemployment and of employment as unskilled labour. In order to come over inequality and negativity against IVT, it should be institutionalised in formal education system structure. VET can enhance students’ choices and help them in their proper integration in society and especially for students who do not possess any accumulated capital. Vocational training programmes that combine classroom education with a substantial amount of workplace training have the highest education and employment linkage. Further, these courses should be responsive to labour market i.e. these should be in line with the demand of local and national economies.

Table-1: Gender and Age wise Skill Training and Education (STE)

Category		Skill Training and Education					
Age (in years)	Sex	IVT	Professional Education	Technical Education	STE ** Total	Not having any STE	Total Number
15 to 30	Male	14.0 %	19.8%	2.3%	36.4%	64.0%	N=86 (100%)
	Female	14.0 %	24.0%	2.0%	40.0%	60.0%	N=100 (100%)

	Total	14.0 %	22.0%	2.2%	38.2%	61.8%	N=186 (100%)
30 to 45	Male	16. 5%	15.0%	3.9%	35.4 %	64. 6%	N=127 (100%)
	Female	19. 2%	19.2%	0.8%	39.2 %	60. 8%	N=130 (100%)
	Total	17. 9 %	17.1%	2.3%	37.3 %	62. 6%	N=257 (100%)
45 to 60	Male	28. 1%	6.2%	1.6%	35.9 %	64. 1%	N=128 (100%)
	Female	27. 4 %	5.5%	0.0%	32.9 %	67.1 %	N=73 (100%)
	Total	27. 9 %	6.0%	1.0%	34. 9%	65.2 %	N=201 (100%)
60 abo ve	Male	23. 5%	9.8%	-	33.3 %	66. 7%	N=51 (100%)
	Female	44. 4 %	0.0%	-	44. 4%	55.6 %	N=09 (100%)
	Total	26. 7%	8.3%	-	35.0 %	65. 0%	N=60 (100%)
Tot al	Male	20. 7%	12.5%	2.3%	35.5 %	64.5 %	N=392 (100%)
	Female	20. 2%	17.0%	1.0%	38.2 %	61.9 %	N=312 (100%)
	Total	20. 5%	14.5%	1.7%	36.7 %	63.4 %	N=704 (100%)

- IVT (Informal Vocational Training)
- STE (Skill Training and Education)

Table-2 Occupation and categories of skill training and education

S . N o	Skill training and education	Occupational Category					
		Gover nment Servic e	Pri vat e ser vice	Self empl oyed	Dail y wag e wor ker	Une mpl oyed	Total
I	Informal Vocational Training (IVT)	8.3%	6.9 %	35.4 %	36.1 %	13.2 %	100% (N=144)
1	Formal Skill Training and Education (Professional+ Technical)	38.5%	41.2 %	1.7%	0.0 %	18.4 %	100% (N=114)
2 a	Professional Education	38.2%	40.2%	2.0%	0.0 %	19.6 %	100% (N=102)
2 b	Technical Education	41.7%	50.0%	0.0%	0.0 %	8.3%	100% (N=12)
1 + 2	Skill education and Training	21.7%	22.1 %	20.5 %	20.2 %	15.5 %	100% (N=258)
3	Not having skill training and education	21.5%	23.8%	24.9 %	2.7 %	27.1 %	100% (N=446)
	Total	21.6%	23.2 %	23.3 %	9.1 %	22.9 %	100% (N=704)

Towards Political Empowerment of Women

Roshan Ara

Abstract: *This paper outlines the state of the political empowerment of women across the countries in general and in India in particular, and suggests ways and means of empowering women politically in real sense.*

Introduction: While the origin of the concept of empowerment goes back to the civil rights movement in USA in early 1960s, empowerment became popular in the development field in 1980s. The 1990s however, brought international attention to the issues of sexual and reproductive rights, violence against women, and gender inequality. At the Social Summit in Copenhagen in 1993 and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, governments committed themselves to the empowerment of women which was operationalized and formulated into a clear action plan at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 where governments again committed themselves to the “empowerment and advancement of women, including the right to freedom of thought, conscience, religion and belief, thus contributing to the moral, ethical, spiritual and intellectual needs of women and men, individually or in community with others and thereby guaranteeing them the possibility of realizing their full potential in society and shaping their lives in accordance with their own aspirations.”¹ As a concept, women empowerment was introduced at the International Women Conference in 1985 at Nairobi, which described it as redistribution of social power and control of resources in favour of women.²

¹ *International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)* in Cairo, 5-13 September 1994, <https://www.unfpa.org/events/international-conference-population-and-development-icpd>

Also See: Roshan Ara (2018a), *Dynamics of Women Empowerment and Development*, Consortium Books, New Delhi, p. 2.

² Suman Panucha and Ankita Khatik (2005), “Empowerment of Rural Woman”, *Social Action*, Vol. 55, p. 40.

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The empowerment of women is located within the discourse and agenda of gender equality and is increasingly being taken in the agendas of international development organizations, perhaps more as a means to achieve gender equality than as an end in itself. Women empowerment is considered as a means of developing women as more aware individuals, who are politically active, economically productive and independent and are able to make intelligent discussion in matters that affect them. Empowerment touches on women's sense of self-worth and social identity; their willingness and ability to question their subordinate status and identity; their capacity to exercise strategic control over their own lives and to renegotiate their relationships with others who matter to them; and their ability to participate on equal terms with men in reshaping the societies in which they live in ways that contribute to a more just and democratic distribution of power and possibilities.³

Women empowerment is seen as the process and the result of the process of challenging the ideology of male domination and women's subordinations; and enabling women to gain equal access to and control over the material, human and intellectual resources.⁴ This means control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology and involves power to, power with and power within. The process of empowerment has five dimensions: cognitive, psychological, economic, political and physical. It is a socio-political concept that goes beyond "formal political participation" and "consciousness raising". The political element entails that women have the capability to analyze, organize and mobilize for social change. Women's active participation in decision-making facilitates the allocation of public resources to investments in human development priorities, including education, health, nutrition, employment and social protection.

³ Kabeer, Naila. (2008) 'Paid Work, Women's Empowerment and Gender Justice: Critical Pathways of Social Change', Pathways Working Paper No. 3, Brighton: IDS.

⁴ Kabeer, Naila (1994), *Reversed Realities: Gender Hierarchies in Development Thought*. London: Verso.

The remainder of this paper conceptualizes political empowerment of women, highlights the relevance and need for empowering women politically, describes the state of the political empowerment of women in India and abroad, identifies the hindrances in the way of women's political empowerment, and suggests workable measures for empowering women politically.

Conceptualizing Political Empowerment

World over, there is a paradigm shift in the roles women play in all kinds of organizations, from the domestic activists to the feminists and even they are actively involved in the armed movements, implying thereby a serious makeover in the political culture and gender relationships. Political empowerment of women stresses upon the equitable representation of women in decision making structures both formal and informal and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their lives. Even those women who do not actively participate in politics and are traditionally regarded as passive women, share the awareness of problems regarding the need to change, to democratize and to transform gender relations. For attaining true equality and development, the sharing of power on equal terms with men must be a major strategy. At various national and international forums, it has been well recognized and realized that participation of women in national politics and governance will effectively promote the interests of half of the population. While in the last century women heads of the state could be counted in Asia as compared to Europe and the struggle for women suffrage in India was physically less violent, this is not reflective of greater acceptance of women in decision-making in public spaces. World over the patriarchal structure of the society and male psyche has not allowed women to become the active participants in public life. History is witness to the fact that women have generally remained only a ruled class and not the ruling one. Women in many countries still lack independent rights to own land, manage property, conduct business, or even travel without their husband's consent. From the patriarchal point of view, women are the 'subject class' and men are the 'ruling class' and enjoying monopoly

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over political power since long. The corridors of power have always been the domain of men as they have shaped the destiny of female folk according to their likes and dislikes. Many rulers even kept women in subjugation so that they do not raise their voice and men do not lose their authority and dominance over women.⁵

Women's political participation is one of the main sources of overall empowerment of women because political empowerment infuses blood into other components of empowerment and makes them functional. It is very vital for the female folk, the economy and the society at large because women leaders become the decision makers of the welfare policies related to their own gender. Political participation is a very important indicator of women's status in the society because it reflects women's access to the corridors of power at the apex level that determines the decisions regarding one's life in society and economy. Female governance is the key for uplifting the down trodden and under privileged class of the society. Women's participation in politics means 'a participative democracy' in real sense because women consist of almost half of the world population. Political empowerment of women refers to their equitable representation in decision-making structures and their voice in the formulation of policies affecting their societies. While in a narrow sense it includes activities related to electoral politics like voting, campaigning, holding party offices and contesting election, in a broader sense it encompasses all voluntary actions intended to influence the making of public policies, the administration of public affairs and the choice of political leaders at all levels of governance. Women's empowerment must be seen as a process wherein we must consider women's awareness, consciousness, choices, voice, resources, agency and participation very vital. These are all related to the enhancement of women's capabilities and decisions they take individually or collectively for themselves. Empowerment as a political process requires not only a change in power relations at the family and community

⁵ Bindra Anju (2009), *Women Global Political Movements*, Kartar Publications, Delhi, p. 61.

levels, but also at societal level in terms of the recognition of the needs and rights of women on an equal footing to men. It also requires a change in gender equality policies of the state, posing a structural challenge to the existing power relations.⁶

As one of the most visible active steps to encourage or visibly increase women's political participation after the right to vote, quotas for women have been introduced in parliaments and local governments around the world. Several questions are raised on the motivations behind increasing women's political participation which would inherently feed back into the effectiveness and quality of their participation, for example whether they are given a platform and can take the opportunity to actively contribute and can make a difference to women's rights and gender equality.⁷ It is essential to understand whether quotas can and should be used as proxies for understanding governments' commitments to gender equality. The issue of family support for women's participation in politics also becomes essential, especially as a lack of recognition of and support for their unpaid care work can inhibit women's participation.

Why Political Empowerment

Women's participation contributes to more inclusive, balanced and representative societies provided women have a voice at all levels of society and are able to effectively participate in decisions that affect their lives. In many countries women have little say over decisions that affect them, be it in their households, communities and societies as a whole. Centuries long suffocation in male dominated society has put women in a marginalized and backward lot as their voice has remained unheard and they have been made

⁶ Htun, M. And Weldon, S.L. (2010) 'When And Why Do Governments Promote Sex Equality? Violence against Women, Reproductive Rights, and Parental Leave in Cross-National Perspective', In *Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association*, Chicago, April, 2010.

⁷ Tadros Mariz (2010), *Introduction: Quotas-Add Women and Stir? September*, (IDSB41.5), Institute of Development Studies, Brighton, UK.

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to listen and follow the dictates of the rulers from their opposite gender. Women participate less in formal politics than men and are underrepresented at most levels of decision-making; particularly in the upper echelons of government. Women living in poverty and those who face additional discrimination on the grounds of ethnicity, sexuality, disability, caste, or age amongst others, have even less say or control over decisions that affect them and over resources at all levels. There is evidence that women's increased political participation in real sense has yielded positive results. Women have critical information about community resources, are adept at managing funds, result in more inclusive governance and learn quickly about how to lead effective community centered development. The success of women's participation in governance is attributed to women representatives exemplifying new possibilities for change and women leaders taking up issues having a positive impact on the community as a whole. A woman possesses an excellent capacity of a leader. She is the embodiment of peace, love and affection because of her motherly instincts. Today we have a good number of well educated and professionally trained women leaders who can take the responsibility, bring about the positive change and govern successfully and efficiently. The studies conducted on many famous national as well as international organizations like Yahoo, Pepsi etc headed by women reveal the growth and prosperity of these organizations. Women's participation at all levels of society is essential for achieving fair and inclusive societies. Until women and girls are liberated from poverty and injustice, all the goals-peace, security, sustainable developments are in jeopardy.⁸ Hillary Clinton once said: "...if we believe that human rights are women's rights and women's rights are human rights, then we cannot accept the ongoing marginalization of half the world's population;

⁸ United Nations, Speech by Ban-ki Moon, Secretary-General, on International Women's Day 2010, "Equal Rights, Equal Opportunities: Progress for All", <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/sgsm12766.doc.htm>

morally, politically, socially or economically.⁹ Women play an important role in determining the destiny of a nation. Noble Laureate and welfare economist, Prof. Amritya Sen feels that, “the parameter of the success of development in any society could be measured with the fact that it has provided due space for gender empowerment”. By keeping womenfolk away from the national mainstreaming, our policies and programmes related to development will lead to waste of our resources and efforts. The best thermometer to the progress of a nation, according to Swami Vivekanand, is its treatment of women. When more women are elected to public office, policy-making increasingly reflects the priorities of families, women, and excluded groups. Their participation can lessen corruption and provide for a different mix of policies and public goods. Research reveals a strong correlation between the presence of women in representative bodies and the gender sensitivity of the resulting legislation. The absence of women from structures of governance inevitably means that national, regional and local priorities are typically defined without meaningful input from women, whose life experience gives them a different awareness of the community’s needs, concerns and interests from that of men.

Strong women’s movements are associated with more comprehensive policies on violence against women. Lack of women’s participation often means crimes against women go unaddressed and peace agreements do not ultimately reflect popular needs. Evidence has shown that women’s political participation has positive impacts on child outcomes, the quality of governance and that generally women invest more in development priorities of women.¹⁰ Women’s participation in leadership positions exerts role model effects on younger generations that change aspirations and thus have in turn the power to (slowly) change gender roles over time.¹¹ In addition

⁹ U. S. Department of State, *Speech by Hillary Rodham Clinton, U.S. Secretary of State*, at the Council on Foreign Relations, 8 January 2010.

¹⁰ Duflo, E. (2012), “Women Empowerment and Economic Development,” *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. 50, No. 4: pp. 1051-1079.

¹¹ Beaman, L., Raghabendra C., Esther, D., Rohini, P. and Petia, T. (2012), “Female Leadership Raises Aspirations and Educational

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to supporting women's active participation in governance, and to challenging social norms, increasing women's status within society often comes with enhancing women's engagement in other areas. For example, property ownership and control over financial resources can enhance women's influence by amplifying their voice and increasing their bargaining power within the household.

The State of Political Participation

The journey of women towards liberation and empowerment truly began during the present century only. Women got the right to vote in 1920 in the USA and in 1944 in France; and it was only in 1971 that the women in an advanced country like Switzerland got the right to vote and stood for election. Even in developed Countries like UK, women have won this suffrage as late as 1948. Women in political offices constitute 33.1% in the USA, only 6.9% in the UK, 10.8% in France, 7.2% in Singapore and India with 5.8% compares favorably with the advanced countries.¹² History reminds us about the transformational politicians and one amongst them was England's female Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher who demolished the two conservative pillars of British society and opened the way for a politically powerful British middle class and thus succeeded in creating a modern Britain. Ellen Johnson, the African iron lady, is the first elected female President who got voted to power to put an end to Liberia's history of corrupt rule. She marked a new beginning for her country and for African women.

Within a year of its being founded, United Nations in 1945 took the landmark step of advocating that women be given full political freedom worldwide. The UN has since then been instrumental in a number of foregrounding women's issues. In 1946, it set up a commission known as 'Commission on Status of Women' (CSW) to assess the status of women throughout the world. The creation of this Commission was

Attainment for Girls: A Policy Experiment in India", *Science*, 335, pp. 582-586.

¹² Inter-Parliamentary Union. "Women in National Parliaments". Online at <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/world.htm>

the first step towards voicing women's question at a global level and examining the development process being followed. The Commission on Status of Women has played a key role in collecting data and documenting the situation of women across the world. It helped in drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNDHR) in 1948. Later the General Assembly requested the Commission to start working on this draft of a convention for eliminating all forms of discrimination against women. These joint efforts succeeded in framing a convention known as CEDAW convention for eliminating all forms of discrimination against women in 1979 which helped secure a legal foundation for women's political equality. Women have after a long struggle achieved their right to vote that was an achievement in itself.

United Nations had set a target of 30% parliamentary seats for women to be achieved by 1995. But till date the global average is only half of it and India is far behind. The gender gaps remain the widest in politics with only 22% closed to date, having further widened since the 2020 by 2.4 percentage points.

Across the 156 countries covered by the index, women represent only 26.1% of some 35,500 parliament seats and just 22.6% of over 3400 Ministers worldwide.¹³ In 81 countries, there has never been a woman head of state till date including countries considered relatively progressive with respect to gender parity such as Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands and the United States. At the current rate of progress, it will take 145.5 years to attain gender parity in politics in the world. Widening gender gaps in political participation have been driven by negative trends in some large countries which have counterbalanced progress in another 98 smaller countries. Among the countries where the share of women ministers declined the most are India (from 23.1% to 9.1%), Indonesia (from 23.5% to 17.1%), Colombia (from 52.9% to 38.8%) and Poland (from 27.3% to 4.8%). Countries where the share of women ministers increased the most by January 2021 from January 2019 include Lithuania

¹³ World Economic Forum (2021), *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, Geneva, Switzerland, (www.weforum.org)

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(from 0 to 42.9%), Belgium (from 35% to 57.1%), the United States (from 21.7% to 46.2%), Serbia (from 19% to 43.5%), Mozambique (from 28.6% to 45.5%) and Lebanon (from 3.4% to 31.6%).¹⁴ Women in these countries clearly have access to a wider spectrum of educational, political and work opportunities and enjoy a higher standard of living than women in other parts of the world. Most of European nations rank low overall, a clear reflection of the shortcomings of these so-called “advanced” nations in implementing gender equality.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union data (table 1) shows that during the past 25 years, the overall percentage of women in parliaments has more than doubled, reaching 24.9 per cent in 2020, up from 11.3 per cent in 1995. Although a majority of countries still have less than 20 per cent of seats held by women, some 28.3 per cent of single or lower houses have at least 30 per cent. In four countries (Rwanda, Cuba, Bolivia and the United Arab Emirates) women now account for 50 per cent or more MPs in their compared with 1995 when no parliament had reached gender parity.¹⁵

Table 1: Top 10 Countries for Women’s Participation in Parliament, 1995–2020

1995		2020	
Country	% Women	Country	% women
Sweden	40.4	Rwanda	61.3
Norway	39.4	Cuba	53.2
Denmark	33.5	Bolivia	53.1
Finland	33.5	UAE	50.0
Netherlands	32.7	Mexico	48.2
Seychelles	27.3	Nicaragua	47.3
Austria	26.8	Sweden	47.0
Germany	26.3	Grenada	46.7
Iceland	25.4	Andorra	46.4
Argentina	25.3	South Africa	46.4

Source: Women in parliament: 1995–2020, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), Geneva, p. 4.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Inter-Parliamentary Union and UN Women, Women in Politics, 2015–2020, Geneva, p. 4 (<http://www.ipu.org>).

Moreover, while high income countries, such as those in the OECD, have made great progress over the past half century in removing some fundamental gender biases, they continue to display significant disparities in the opportunities presented to men and women in the political realm. While women are poorly represented in the lower levels of government, they are rarer still in the upper echelons of decision-making. As per Asian Development Bank (2015) report the share of seats held by women increased from 14.6% in 1990 to 19.3% in 2013 in developing countries. Women's political participation has been highest in East Asia with the parliamentary seats held by women showing an upward trend from 19.9 in 200 to 22.8 in 2013. Nearly two out of every five parliamentarians (38.5%) in Timor-Leste are women. In 13 other economies of the Asia and Pacific region, the percentage of parliamentary seats held by women was in the range of 20% to 31% and was below 10% in 16 other developing Asian economies.¹⁶

While there has been considerable progress in reducing gender gaps in the political field, gender disparities persist in many countries. Women have been involved in political setup of many nations through right to vote and have been allowed to choose their representatives, but are being counted as voters only and not leaders and contestants, yet world over they form a major section of the disadvantaged group of the society. The most important challenges to women's political empowerment continue to be neoliberal policies in a globalized economy that have shifted the role of the state away from social policies of redistribution and justice and, most importantly, have eroded the value of collective approaches for social well-being.¹⁷ This has severely curtailed the state's funding and implementation of gender equality commitments. Patriarchal structures and values that shape

¹⁶ Asian Development Bank (2015), *Balancing the Burden? Desk Review of Women's Time Poverty and Infrastructure in Asia and the Pacific*, Mandaluyong City, Manila, Philippines.

¹⁷ Beneria, Lourdes (2007), *Paid/Unpaid Work and the Globalization of Reproduction*. Working Paper Series, International Group on Gender, Macroeconomics & International Economics.
www.Genderandmacro.Org

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both the “public” world of work and politics as well as the “private” world of intimate relationships, families, households, and communities are also deeply entrenched and resistant to change.

Political Empowerment in India

The status of Indian women has historically been influenced by their past. The women in the Vedic age got most honored positions in the society¹⁸ as they had the right to education and were free to remain unmarried and devote their whole life to the pursuit of knowledge and self realization. The urge for equality on the part of Indian women started getting momentum during the colonial times. Noted social reformers and national leaders like Raja Ram Mohan Roy, Annie Besant, Sarojini Naidu and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar made selfless efforts to create awareness among women about their status and were quite helpful in removing various social evils such as sati, child marriage, and polygamy. The reformers were successful in creating a base for the development of women through their struggle for equality. Consequently, women became more liberal and aware of various ways of life. In India, feminist movement, though started late, showed a positive sign in enhancing the provisions to make women analyze their status and space in the post independent era. During the independence movement, women were visible and active as nationalists. Gandhiji, in particular, was instrumental in creating space for women through his non-violence (some would argue feminized) mode of protest. Gandhi’s legendary salt march initially excluded women, but due to demands from women nationalists, he later realized the power of women organizers at the local level. The period after World War I, witnessed the rise of two eminent women in Indian politics. Annie Besant, the president of the Theosophical society and a founder of the Home Rule League, was elected the president of the Congress in 1917. The same year, Sarojini Naidu moved a resolution at the Congress session demanding equal eligibility for voting rights for both

¹⁸ Seth, Mira, (2001), *Women and Development- The Indian Experience*, Sage Publication, New Delhi.

men and women. But despite being 'inspirational figures', these two leaders could not evolve an ideology for women's emancipation, nor could they carve out for them a niche in national politics.¹⁹ The nationalist women's movement in India was confronted by the rebuilding of a patriarchal nationalist state. The Non-co-operation Movement of 1920, the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930, the Quit India Movement of 1942, all inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, helped women to establish their position of equality with men in the social and political spheres. In fact these movements have emancipated women by enabling them to participate in political activities. Women's movements have been constantly demanding decentralization in the Working process of governance by the involvement of women. From this movement onwards, there was a push in women's activism as women got courage and confidence in themselves which in turn helped them to form separate women's groups in order to plead for their own cause. Gradually many women's organizations were formed amongst which some renowned organizations include All India Women's Organization (AIWC), Indian Women's Association (IWA), National Council of Women (NCW) and All Bengal Women's Association (ABWA).²⁰ Of all these organizations, the most important organization, All India Women's Conference, started advocating for the rights of women, women's education, empowerment and emancipation and the right to suffrage. Many other social and communist movements along with political ones have advocated for equal rights of women. It was for the first time that a woman 'Sarojini Naidu' became the first female Governor of united provinces and set a trend for other women to lead and govern. While the period between the early 1940's and late 1970's saw an emergence of the Indian women's movement, it was not until the 1980s that the women's movement gained real momentum.

The principle of gender equality is enshrined in the Indian Constitution in its Preamble, Fundamental Rights,

¹⁹ Bandyopadhyay Sekher (2004), *Plassey to Partition*, New Delhi, Orient Longman, p. 389.

²⁰ Ibid., p. 395.

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Fundamental Duties and Directive Principles. The Constitution not only grants equality to women (Article 14, 15, 16), but also empowers the state to adopt measures of positive discrimination in favour of women. Within the framework of a democratic polity, our laws, development policies, plans and programmes have aimed at women's advancement in different spheres. From the Fifth Five Year Plan (1974- 78) onwards there has been a marked shift in the approach to women's issues from welfare to development and then from Eighth Five Year Plan emphasis was shifted from development to empowerment. India has ratified various international conventions and human rights instruments committing to secure equal rights of women. Key among them is the ratification of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1993, the Mexico Plan of Action (1975), the Nairobi Forward Looking Strategies (1985), the Beijing Declaration as well as the Platform for Action (1995) and the Outcome Document adopted by the UNGA Session on Gender Equality and Development & Peace for the 21st century.

In India, women got voting right much before their counterparts in USA and some other European countries. Inclusion of women in the political sphere is thus seen as a powerful instrument for much-needed social change. In 1993, India enacted constitutional reforms (the 73rd and 74th Amendments) making Local Self-Governing Institutions (LSGIs) mandatory, stipulating 33% of seats in Panchayat Raj Institutions (PRI) to be reserved for women. Indian states such as Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Rajasthan, Tripura, and Uttrakhand have increased reservations for women from 33 to 50%. India is one of the few countries in the world credited to have a woman President, a woman Prime Minister, a woman Speaker and a woman leader of opposition, who in all their capacities have proved their mettle. Today, Indian women are not only represented in almost every field of national activity, but they are also making themselves felt in international affairs, occupying distinguished positions in the Government, as Ministers, Governors of States and Ambassadors. But political participation of women in Legislative Assemblies and

Parliament is still quite low in India. As per the Election Commission of India, the first post-independence Lok Sabha had just 4.41 percent and Rajya Sabha 7.31 percent women. The percentage of women members to the total members in Lok Sabha has varied from 3.49 percent in 1977 to 11.20 percent in 2014. While in Rajya Sabha it has varied from 6.12 percent in 1998 to 15.51 percent in 1991.²¹ While the data reflects a very poor participation of women in political field in the country so far, the increasing trend in the number of women legislatures, ministers and administrators at the state and central levels enhances the expectations of India's female population to break the glass ceiling in many other bastions so far dominated by men.

The World Economic Forum (2021) ranked India high in political empowerment index for women, thanks to the record number of lady parliamentarians thrown up by the last general election and sizeable representation in village councils. India has closed 62.5% of its gender gap by 2021, ranking the country 140th globally, compared to being ranked 98 out of the 115 countries on the Gender Gap Index in 2006. India ranked 25th in the world on political empowerment index in 2008 and 51st in 2021 which reflects a low level of women's political empowerment in the world. India has not recorded any significant improvement in the ranks of Political Empowerment sub-index of women in ministerial positions (132), women in parliament (128) and years with female head of state (07) out of 156 countries.²²

The Government, through notable constitutional reforms like the 73rd and 74th amendments and the continued administrative decentralization through programs like NRHM, has increased the political participation of women. Political interventions by women of India today range from movement for peace and good governance to protest against dowry, rape, domestic violence, food adulteration, price rise etc.²³ In the last two decades since the reservation for women

²¹ Election Commission of India, (website: www.eci.nic.in)

²² World Economic Forum (2021), *The Global Gender Gap Report 2021*, Geneva, Switzerland.

²³ Desai, N. & Thakkar, U. (2007), *Women & Political Participation in India*, Women in Indian Society, NBT, Delhi.

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in elected Panchayats was passed, many studies have been conducted to look at the impact of this policy. A survey conducted in 2008 yielded that women made up close to 50% of all the village councils across India.²⁴ The number of women representatives has certainly increased at the grassroots level; however, questions still remain regarding their decision-making power within the councils. A study in West Bengal and Rajasthan found that where women Panchayat members were active, there were more robust programs on water, irrigation, and infrastructure. In Panchayats where women were present policies were more beneficial to the community than in Panchayats where women were absent. A study by the Accountability Initiative also states that in Panchayats with female presidents, the participation of women in the larger council rose close to 3% in one year.²⁵

In spite of so many efforts undertaken by government and NGOs the picture at present is not very satisfactory. Still the women of India are relatively disempowered and they enjoy somewhat lower status than that of men. There has been persistent opposition to the Women's Reservation Bill that proposes to amend the Constitution to reserve 33% of seats for women in the Lower House of the Indian Parliament, the Lok Sabha, and all state legislative assemblies. However, the key question with regard to reservations for women is whether this actually contributes to women's real political participation. Many analysts complain that men continue to act as key decision-makers, while women play a more passive role. Moreover, the work of female politicians is typically dismissed, underrated or unrecognized by their male counterparts. As a result the Indian women continue to be socially, psychologically, politically and economically exploited.

Jammu and Kashmir Perspective

In Jammu and Kashmir women have always enjoyed a great degree of respect and freedom and the State has always

²⁴ <http://www.accountabilityindia.org/pdf/PanchayatBrief1.pdf>

²⁵ Ibid.

displayed a unique gender balance. While politics, power and statecraft have been the exclusive domain of men, women have enjoyed a great degree of respect and freedom. In fact, Kashmir is credited with having the first ever influential *Mahorani*, *Yashomati*. Later a chain of strong queens ruled Kashmir with wisdom, determination and at times, even ruthlessness. These exceptional women played significant role in the evolution of Kashmir. In fact they all displayed vitality, courage and independence of conviction.²⁶

The position of women in Kashmir was further elevated by Islam, as it acted as an emancipator of the fair sex in other parts of the world. But the dawn of Afghan rule in Kashmir signaled an unending period of gloom, aversion, and degeneration. Under the rule of Sikhs and Dogras whole of Kashmir suffered a lot and the Kashmiri women had to bear the maximum burden of these sufferings. Later, women participated on a large scale in the fight against feudalism and imperialist control in Kashmir during the nationalist struggle. The women fought shoulder to shoulder with their counterparts against the autocratic rule. The protesting women were abused, molested and at times put behind the bars. With its multifaceted and radical activities, Women's Self Defence Corps (WSDC) was harbinger of social change. Kashmiri women, many of them great scholars and administrators, came forward and openly joined the fight against the Dogra rule in 1931 and played a commendable role in the Quit Kashmir Movement in 1846.²⁷ The brave women like Begum Akbar Jehan, Zainab Begum and Ms. Mehmooda Ali Shah served as inspiration for Kashmiri women, urging them to carry forward the struggle for freedom and justice and for the spirit of Kashmiriyat rooted in the traditions of composite culture. The Women's Charter of the New Kashmir Manifesto embodied the revolutionary and emancipatory vision of the movement aimed at helping women in the attainment of their just, equal and rightful place in the

²⁶ Akbar M.J. (1991), *Kashmir Beyond the Vale*, New Delhi, Penguin Books.

²⁷ Roshan Ara (2018), *Women, Work and Family*, New Delhi, Consortium Books.

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society. It granted women the right to vote and contest elections. It provided for complete equality women with men, in all fields of life, including political, economic and social and educational through measures of affirmative action and equal pay for equal work, anti-natal and maternity facilities, legal policies of rights and status, abolition of dowry and cultural development of women.

In spite of a glorious past, women have, however, not figured very prominently in the formal competitive politics of Jammu & Kashmir. Female participation in political and gainful employment has not only been numerically insignificant but restricted to known political families only. In fact, a few women who rose to the stature in the post-independence period had strong political family backgrounds and connection. Moreover, women's agenda and gender oriented politics could never get encouraged mostly due to the lack of autonomous political space, an aspect intricately linked to the patriarchal nature of Kashmiri society. Their political activism and assertion are rooted in their cultural and designated roles. Despite a liberal ethos and respectable status of women in Jammu and Kashmir, there has been a lack of women's organizations in order to work for gender justice and women empowerment.

Since the early decades of the 20th century, women in Jammu and Kashmir have undergone a significant transformation and various initiatives aimed at women empowerment and development have helped in improving the status of women in various spheres but the imbalance still exists which needs to be addressed. At the endogenous level, emerging political consciousness, expanding modern education, spreading of cultural awareness and large scale social awakening, created a situation in which women felt concerned about their position, especially their role and status in and out of the family. At the exogenous level there was a strong impact of other political, economic and social developments in the Indian subcontinent on the situation of Jammu & Kashmir. After 1947, all the successive governments in J&K attempted to improve the condition of women by safeguarding their political, economic and social rights which

had a qualitative impact on the role and political status of women in the State.

What Ails Women Participation in Politics?

Female participation in politics, on the whole, has not only been numerically insignificant but restricted to known political families only. A few women who rose to the stature in the post-independence period had strong political family backgrounds and connection. Moreover, women's agenda and gender oriented politics could never get encouraged due to several limitations, the most obvious being the lack of autonomous political space. While a number of other factors continue to hinder the parliamentary representation of women, the type of electoral system present in a country, the role and discipline of the political parties, the lack of previous political experiences of women, the widespread perception that women are not competent leaders is probably the strongest barrier to greater participation of women in policy making. The leadership role is typically considered a male role and the women leaders are evaluated more negatively than male leaders.²⁸ There is a significant cultural barrier in recognizing women as competent policy makers. In some cases, legislation itself discriminates against them, for instance when women and girls cannot own property or inherit capital.

Evidence provides support for the idea of "reservations" or quotas for women in policymaking positions. As in most of the 17 countries where the target of 30 percent of women in parliament has been achieved, some kind of affirmative action measure has been in place. To achieve balanced gender representation rapidly, quick affirmative action will be needed. At the grassroots level 50 percent reservation given to women in local self-government institutions has improved political participation of women in India. Even where quotas might facilitate women's participation, social norms prevent them from accessing their rights and lock them into unequal

²⁸ Swim, J., Borgida, E., Maruyama, G., and D.G. Myers (1989), "Joan Mckay Versus John Mckay: Do Gender Stereotypes Bias Evaluations?" *Psychological Bulletin*, 105(3): 409-429.

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power relationships with little voice, including within their own families and regardless of the legal environment. Panchayat raj institutions, which hold the key to the election of three million peoples' representatives every five years of which one million are women representatives, are expected to act as important agents for local governance. But most of these women Panchayat members are illiterate and ignorant and not aware of their role and responsibility. They are not in a position to challenge patriarchy and dominance. The major decisions of their localities are taken by the male members of their families. During a study on the functioning of Panchayati Raj functioning in Jammu & Kashmir, participants expressed their helplessness, powerlessness and dissatisfaction inspite of their political backing.²⁹ They complained about the lack of financial support, lack of funds for the developmental purposes, risk to life due to non availability of security cover, double workload of home and panchayats. There is a serious concern about the way women are handled at various levels and the way doubts are being raised about their competence. The widespread and systematic discrimination faced by women in the areas of education, healthcare, employment and property rights is evident.

Patriarchy still rules the roost from ticket distribution to mandates and assigning leadership roles to women. Women's Reservation Bill has been hanging in the Parliament since 1995 and has not been passed yet. Our parliamentarians, since more than two decades, have been debating and delaying the passage of the Bill and blocking an equitable space in state Legislatures and Parliament for women. Although the representation of women members of the lower castes in Indian politics is rapidly changing but the complexities of caste politics continue to govern representation. Most of the local governments remain largely patriarchal and caste-based institutions, hindering inclusive governance. Further, social

²⁹ Ara, Roshan. (2013), "Empowerment of Women through Panchayat Raj, Conference Proceedings of National Conference on Empowerment of Women in Panchayats: The Road Ahead", *Institute of Social Science*, New Delhi, Sept., 28-29, 2013.

mobility remains a privilege of members of higher classes and caste. Although the situation is changing as a result of reservations in politics and education, yet women remain largely excluded from the local governance structures. Proxy politics, power brokering and gender discrimination continue, and many women representatives have had to face extreme violence for challenging existing societal power centres. In other cases, women are within the power structure for only for name sake and practically it is male members who hold the power. In spite of the affirmative action in favour of marginalized communities, exclusion of caste, poverty, tribal status, gender and caste sharply demarcate those who have political power from those who do not.

Conclusion and Suggestions

On the whole women's participation in politics has not shown a healthy trend in India and the participation rate of women in politics is dismal. The country is still reeling under the banner of gender inequality in all walks of life like education, employment and politics is no exception. Social and political positions, division of domestic work, ownership and control of assets and properties, and opportunities in the labour market are a few areas where there are stark differences between men and women. Fundamental causes of these gaps need to be addressed. For making the democracy meaningful, it has to be made participatory which can be done only with the intervention and involvement of women. As women are an integral part of a society, due recognition to them in the society and their greater involvement in socio-economic and political affairs becomes more important. Unless the attitude towards the acceptance of unequal gender role by the society and even the women themselves changes women cannot have the opportunity provided to them through legislation.

The World Bank calls for policies to address gender imbalance in "rights, resources, and voice," and recommends that institutional structures be overhauled to promote equality and that specific measures, such as quotas for women in parliament, be adopted not only because they

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promote equity, but also because they are necessary to accelerate development.³⁰ The government, enforcement machinery and the policy makers have to adopt ways and means to reduce gender inequality. Laws need to be gender sensitive and broader focus needs to be on proper implementation of laws. Strict implementation and support of legislature and judiciary will be beneficial to sort out the women related problems, to stop women exploitation, rape, sexual harassment, acid throwing, domestic violence, child marriages and female foeticide with effective methodology and control on these problems. For women to be able to speak out within the family and community, social factors have to be taken into account and conditions to be created for enabling the environment. Better political representation of women is a pre-requisite for social advancement and change. Since growing feminism represents the voice of millions of women throughout the world, it becomes imperative to give women the chance to govern the nations. Even the most powerful world body supporting women's cause and debating for gender equality i.e. United Nations, needs providing a chance to a female 'Secretary General' that can have a different impact upon world leaders to change the trend and set an example for implementing the same in their own nations.

Female participation at all levels of governance is the need of the hour for providing women an opportunity to decide their own world, resolve their unmet and unattended demands, frame women centric policies and programmes, execute their leadership skills and give a new shape to their aspirations. Political participation will definitely help women in decision making in social, political and economic life of the nation. It will invite direct intervention in allocation of budgets and management of resources of the economy and lead to the mainstreaming of gender. Being managers and leaders at the domestic front only does not suffice for 'gender equality' unless women are kept at parallel side of economic, social as well as political front. The very core issue of

³⁰ The World Bank (2011), "World Development Report, Gender Equality and Development", *The World Bank, Washington, DC*.

women's political empowerment is to come forward and take active part in politics. Women need to raise the issues of their common concern and highlight problems they face while performing their roles.

Involvement of women in national decision making and national reconstruction needs a political boost. Women should have equal visibility, equal access to resources and equal share in power and authority. Time has come to change the reigns and bring women at the front seat to deliver and drive. Women need to be sensitized about framing the policies and plans at the Panchayat level for creating social infrastructure like providing access to clean drinking water, proper sanitation, smokeless *cholas*, availability of doctors and paramedical staff, increasing enrolment of girls in schools, stopping early marriage of girls, increasing sex ratio, curbing maternal mortality and violence against women in different aspects of their lives. Panchayats can play a vital role in implementing various government schemes like MGNREGA, PMGSY, IAY etc, for which women self-help groups need to be created and proactive intervention of Village Development Councils in the budgetary, and local planning need to be facilitated. The role of gender budgeting and local planning in generating employment at the local level is widely recognized. The role of education, training and skill formation initiatives and the role of panchayats need to be highlighted.

Women, the home makers, care givers and nurturers of whole human race are capable enough to lead a society in most efficient way as has been proved by the constructive role of so many women leaders. Women should also understand the essence and objectives of political participation. They should come forward and not hesitate to join politics. Their entry in politics will make a difference in identifying the separate needs of men as well as women and make women equal beneficiaries of development. Being educated, intelligent and farsighted, women should make a proper utilization of their talent by contributing towards social awakening and national reconstruction. They should develop *atmashakti* or self confidence. The perception of women as being weaker should be changed. It is imperative to go

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beyond political maneuvers and legal battles and to revisit basic tenets underpinning women's reservation. The only sign of optimism lies in the political empowerment of women. There is a dire need for feminist governance if women are to be involved as active agents of development. There has been some improvement in women's participation in politics but still a lot needs to be done. We need to ensure that women are no longer seen as a constituency for votes only but also the contestants at par with men. They need to embrace politics as a carrier. Women's participation in policy formulation and decision making at national as well as regional level will help planners to chalk out new strategies for addressing women's issues and priorities. It is only through political participation that women can be able to share power and gain control over resources.

Intellectual Research Output on a Networked Platform: A Case Study of Science Disciplines in the University of Kashmir

Sumeer Gul

Abstract: *Benchmarking an institution's research output has always been of importance in the academic world so that the actual research landscape can be drawn for decision making. The present study attempts to showcase the research output of the University of Kashmir using the data from Clarivate Analytic's Web of Science. The research output in the form of publication counts and the impact they make in citations is also studied in order to have a comprehensive insight into the institution's research output.*

Introduction: Measuring the research output has always remained an important area that helps to benchmark an academic entity's research productivity. Research institutions and the researchers associated with them get academic recognition when the research output is measured. The research output is always considered vital for the advancement of science,¹ and so is the measurement of research productivity. It has remained a crucial field with changing terminologies from Bibliometrics to Informetrics to Scientometrics. The importance of research output assessment has increased sharply, and the triumvirate field has contributed significantly to have an actual picture of the research performance. Low, moderate, and high producers of research are managed accordingly when studies of scientometric nature are conducted. Scientometric studies help draw a line of demarcation between mediocre researchers and those who perform extraordinarily². Several scientometric indicators are used to evaluate and showcase the research output, which helps visualize the progress or

¹ Yakar, D., & Kwee, T. C. Research Output by Medical Doctors After PhD Graduation in Radiology: 17-Year Experience from the Netherlands. *Academic Radiology*, 28 (6), 2020, pp. 827-833. doi: 10.1016/j.acra.2020.03.043

² Nederhof, A. J. Evaluating research output through life work citation counts, *Scientometrics*, 7 (1-2), 1985, pp. 23-28. doi: 10.1007/BF02020138

failure of a research institution. Evaluation of scientific research output with the aid of various indicators has changed dramatically as the measurement has now moved far behind citations and impact factors.

With the rapid growth in the scientific literature, a tracking mechanism, i.e., scientometrics, has helped to see the actual impact research has on society³. Research institutions all across the globe use bibliometric or scientometric information to support their decisions, and the same “is increasingly used in the assessment of research, both for impact evaluation and for awarding research funding”⁴. Not only in policy-making, but the bibliometric/scientometric indicators are also becoming increasingly popular among policymakers for academic hiring and career promotions⁵. “Since Vassily V. Nalimov coined the term ‘scientometrics’ in the 1960s, this term has grown in popularity and is used to describe the study of science: growth, structure, interrelationships and productivity”⁶. Using various statistical methods in measuring scientific output is what an ordinary person can understand about scientometrics or bibliometrics. Pritchard⁷ defines bibliometrics as “the application of mathematical and statistical methods to books and other media of communication.” However, Fairthorne⁸ widens its

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- ³ Sen, B.K., & Shailendra, K. Evaluation of recent scientific research output by a bibliometric method. *Scientometrics*, 23 (1), 1992, pp. 31–46. doi: 10.1007/BF02020912
 - ⁴ Gunashekar, S., Wooding, S. & Guthrie, S. How do NIHR peer review panels use bibliometric information to support their decisions?. *Scientometrics*, 112 (3), 2017, pp. 1813–1835. doi: 10.1007/s11192-017-2417-8
 - ⁵ Demetrescu, C., Finocchi, I., Ribichini, A., & Schaerf, M. On bibliometrics in academic promotions: a case study in computer science and engineering in Italy. *Scientometrics*, 124 (3), 2020, pp. 2207–2228. doi: 10.1007/s11192-020-03548-9
 - ⁶ Hood, W.W., Wilson, C.S. The Literature of Bibliometrics, Scientometrics, and Informetrics. *Scientometrics*, 52 (2), 2001, pp. 291–314. doi: 10.1023/A:1017919924342
 - ⁷ Broadus, R. N. Towards a definition of “Bibliometrics”. *Scientometrics*, 12 (5-6), 1987, pp. 373–379. doi: 10.1007/BF02016680
 - ⁸ Fairthorne, R.A. Empirical Hyperbolic Distributions (Bradford-Zipf-Mandelbrot) for Bibliometric Description and Prediction”. *Journal of Documentation*, 25 (4), 1969, pp. 319–343. doi: 10.1108/ebo26481

realm claim even further to the “quantitative treatment of the properties of recorded discourse and behavior appertaining to it.” Whether one recalls them as bibliometrics, scientometrics, or informetrics, they have established themselves as an essential field in the scientific community.

Purpose of the Study: Keeping in view the importance of scientometrics, the present study is an endeavor to measure the research output of the science disciplines in the University of Kashmir, one of the premier institutions of Kashmir.

Review of Previous Literature: Evaluation of research output has been a focus of many studies. Zachos studied the research output of two university departments in Greece using bibliometric indicators⁹. Jeevan and Gupta have conducted a scientometric analysis of research output from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. They researched the quantitative profile of a research university to get an idea about the performance and impact of research produced in each department and compared its impact in various departments¹⁰. Pastor, Serrano and Zaera analyzed the difficulties related to measuring the research output of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and proposed a simple overall indicator that incorporates quantitative and qualitative aspects to permit the decomposition of the influence of the two factors¹¹. Payumo *et al.* analyzed the input-output trends of international research collaboration at five U.S. public universities using quantitative research metrics¹². Aissaoui and Geringer, in their study, measure and

⁹ Zachos, G. Research output evaluation of two University Departments in Greece with the use of bibliometric indicators. *Scientometrics*, 21 (2), 1991, pp. 195–221. doi: 10.1007/BF02017569

¹⁰ Jeevan, V.K.J., & Gupta, B. A. Scientometric analysis of research output from Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur. *Scientometrics*, 53 (1), 2002, pp. 165–168. doi:10.1023/A:1014896206968

¹¹ Pastor, J.M., Serrano, L., & Zaera, I. The research output of European higher education institutions. *Scientometrics*, 102 (3), 2015, pp. 1867–1893. doi: 10.1007/s11192-014-1509-y

¹² Payumo, J., Sutton, T., Brown, D. Nordquist, D., Evans, M., Moore, D., & Arasu, P. Input-output analysis of international research

rank the performance of countries and academic institutions based on a 40-year analysis of publications appearing in 14 leading business and management journals¹³. Mahala and Singh trace the research output of top Indian universities from 2015 to 2019, as reflected in the Web of Science (WOS) database. They observe a consistent scientific research output.¹⁴

Methodology: A simple query “AD=UNIV Kashmir” AND “PY=2001-2020” was executed in the Clarivate Analytic’s Web of Science (WoS) Database in May 2021 to retrieve the intellectual output (articles) contributed by the science disciplines in the University of Kashmir. The search was restricted to the WoS Core Collection and sorted by Times Cited—highest to lowest. The data were recorded in Microsoft Excel and subsequently downloaded for further analysis by *Vosviewer*, a bibliometric visualization tool.

Analysis and Discussion

Research Productivity and Impact: The University of Kashmir contributes 2506 articles with average annual productivity of about 125 papers. The research productivity continuously shows an upward trend with the highest contributions in the year 2020 (358), followed by 2019 (305) (Figure 1). The citation count of the articles is in line with the annual growth rate of publications with quite impressive figures for the year 2020 (5076), succeeded by 2019 (3797) (Figure 2). An overall average citation rate of 9.03 per paper is also observed (Table 1).

collaborations: a case study of five U.S. universities. *Scientometrics* 111 (3), 2017, pp. 1657–1671. doi: 10.1007/s11192-017-2313-2

¹³ Aïssaoui, R., & Geringer, M.J. International business research output and rankings of Asia-Pacific universities: A 40-year time-series analysis. *Asia Pacific Journal of Management*, 35 (4), 2018, pp. 993–1023. doi: 10.1007/s10490-017-9536-x

¹⁴ Mahala, A., & Singh, R. Research output of Indian universities in sciences (2015–2019): a scientometric analysis. *Library Hi Tech*, Vol. ahead-of-print No. ahead-of-print, 2021, doi: 10.1108/LHT-09-2020-0224

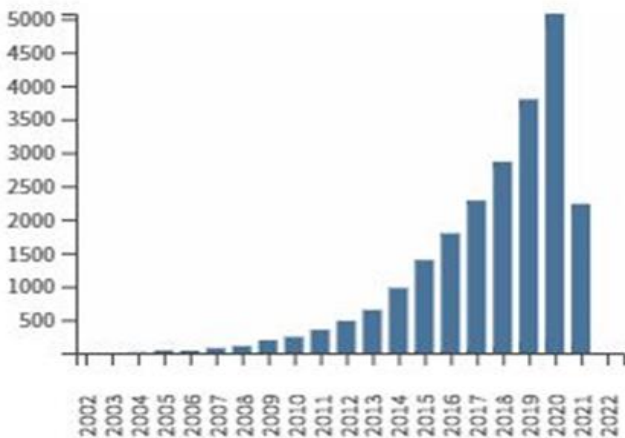
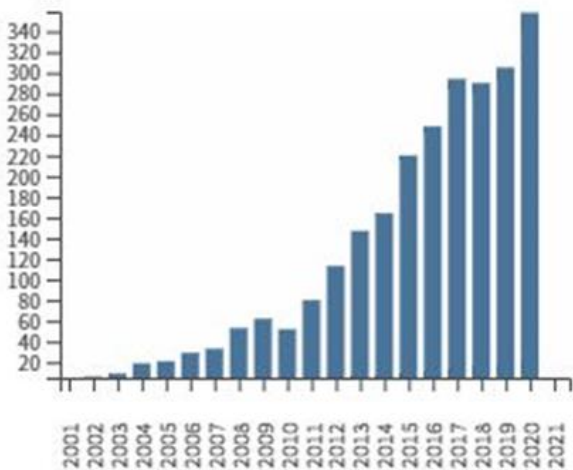


Fig. 1: Published items in each year (last 20 years)

Fig. 2: Citations in each year (last 20 years shown)

TP	TC	ACPP	h-index
2506	22626	9.03	52

TP= Total Publications; TC= Total Citations;
ACPP= Average Citations Per Paper

Table 1: Research Productivity and Impact

Analysis of Top-cited Articles: The top 10 articles with the highest citation count and their source titles and primary contributing authors are shown in Table 2. The top article is cited 166 times, authored by Ahmad, Parvaiz from the Department of Botany, followed by an article from Baba, Shoib from the same department with a citation count of 165. The articles in ranks 4 & 6 are contributed by the primary authors affiliated to Jamia Hamdard (Botany), India, and Aligarh Muslim University (Chemistry), India. It is pertinent to mention that the top 10 highly cited articles are contributed mainly by the Department of Botany and Chemistry of the University.

R a n k	Article Title	T C	Source Title	1st Author (Public ation year)
1	Cadmium-induced oxidative damage in mustard [Brassica juncea (L.) Czern. & Coss.] plants can be alleviated by salicylic acid	166	South African Journal of Botany	Ahmad, P. (2011)
2	Determination of total phenolic and flavonoid content, antimicrobial and antioxidant activity of a root extract of Arisaema jacquemontii Blume	165	Journal of Taibah University for Science	Baba, Shoib A. (2015)
3	Mixed micelle formation and solubilization behavior toward polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons of binary and ternary cationic-nonionic	142	Journal of Physical Chemistry B	Dar, Aijaz Ahmad. (2007)

	surfactant mixtures			
4	Changes in growth, lipid peroxidation and some key antioxidant enzymes in chickpea genotypes under salt stress	140	Acta Physiologiae Plantarum	Rasool, Saiema. (2013)
5	Role of Trichoderma harzianum in mitigating NaCl stress in Indian mustard (Brassica juncea L) through antioxidative defense system	107	Frontiers In Plant Science	Ahmad, Parvaiz. (2015)
6	H-1 NMR and viscometric studies on cationic gemini surfactants in presence of aromatic acids and salts	106	Journal of Physical Chemistry B	Kabir-ud-Din. (2007)
7	Production of resistant starch from rice by dual autoclaving-retrogradation treatment: Invitro digestibility, thermal and structural characterization	104	Food Hydrocolloids	Ashwar, Bilal Ahmad. (2016)
8	Robust and blind watermarking technique in DCT domain using inter-block coefficient differencing	101	Digital Signal Processing	Parah, Shabir A. (2016)
9	Anthelmintic activity of extracts of Artemisia absinthium against ovine nematodes	94	Veterinary Parasitology	Tariq, K. A. (2009)
10	Pathogenesis-related proteins and peptides as promising tools for engineering plants with multiple stress tolerance	90	Microbiological Research	Ali, Sajad. (2018)
10	Immunomodulatory effect of bergenin and norbergenin against adjuvant-induced arthritis - A flow cytometric study	90	Journal of Ethnopharmacology	Nazir, Nighat. (2007)

TC= Total Citations

Table 2: Top 10 cited Articles with Source

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Analysis of Highly Productive Journals: The leading journals to which authors from the University of Kashmir contribute are shown in Table 3. The *Indian Journal of Pure Applied Physics*, published by the NISCAIR, India, is in the lead, followed by the *International Journal of Biological Macromolecules* and *Physical Review C* with an article count of above 1 percent each. The articles are primarily published in the journals with Impact Factor (IF) in the range of 0.462 and 5.162 from highly reputed publishers in the respective fields.

Journal	TP % age	% age	IF (2019)	Publisher	Count ry of public ation
Indian Journal of Pure Applied Physics	28	1.117	0.653	National Institute of Science Communication and Information Resources- NISCAIR	India
International Journal of Biological Macromolecules	27	1.077	5.162	Elsevier	Nether lands
Physical Review C	26	1.038	2.988	American Physical Society	USA
Journal of Food Science and Technology, Mysore	21	0.838	1.946	Springer India	India
Microbial Pathogenesis	21	0.838	2.914	Academic Press Ltd-Elsevier	Englan d
LWT Food Science and Technology	17	0.678	4.006	Elsevier	Nether lands
Tropical Ecology	17	0.678	0.462	Scientific Publishers	India

TP=Total Publications

Table 3: Top Productive Journals

Authorship and Citation Profile: Table 4 shows the top productive authors with at least 70 publications. Masoodi, Farooq Ahmad from the Department of Food Science & Technology is the most productive and highly cited author with a remarkable contribution of 101 papers and 1851 citations. Sheikh, Javaid Ahmad from the Department of Physics holds the second position with 93 articles and 1347 citations, succeeded by the Dar, Aijaz Ahmad from the Department of Chemistry and Gani, Adil from the Department of Food Science & Technology with 91 & 83 publications, and 1785 & 1658 citations respectively.

Author	TP	TC
Masoodi, F. A	101	1851
Sheikh, J. A	93	1,347
Dar, A. A	91	1,785
Gani, A	83	1,658
Pirzada, S	75	423
Ganai, B. A	71	529

Table 4: Most Productive Authors with their Citation Counts

Author Keywords Network: A total of 7022 author keywords are assigned to the 2506 publications. However, the terms with a minimum occurrence (5 times) (n=203) were selected for the analysis. Of the 203 terms, the terms with the highest number of links with other keywords are visualized in **Figure 3**. In the author keyword network, the node size represents the number of occurrences of a term with links depicting a co-occurrence relationship (only 1000 links are shown). The keywords make up different clusters, indicated by the colour of the circles, with items in a cluster showing a close relationship between them. The keywords are grouped into 14 clusters and the top 10 highest frequent keywords include *Kashmir* (74, 1.05%), *India* (51, 0.73%), *Kashmir Himalaya* (46, 0.65%), *antioxidant* (32, 0.45%), *polynomials* (28, 0.40%), *polymorphism* (27, 0.38%), *Kashmir Valley* (25, 0.36%), *Himalaya* (24, 0.34%), *remote sensing* (24, 0.34%), *zeros* (22,

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0.31%) and *fourier transform* (20, 0.28%), indicating the themes that have remained the focus of researchers in the University of Kashmir.

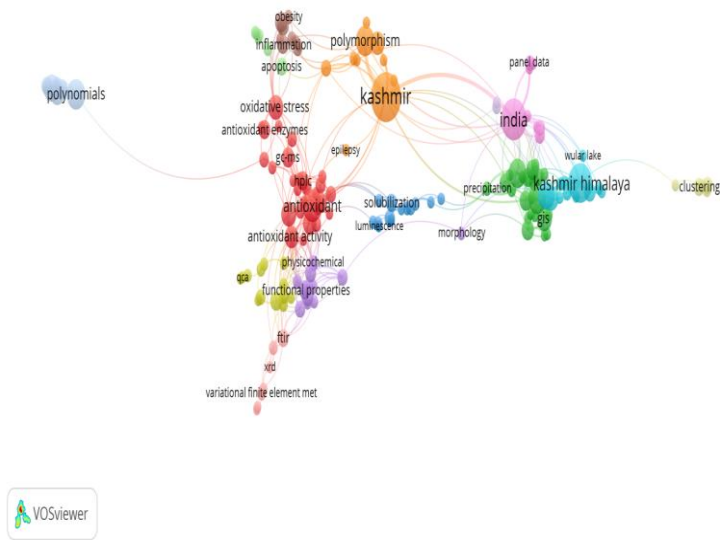


Figure 3: Author Keywords Network

Co-occurrence Network

Co-organization Network: There are authors from 1346 organizations that collaborate with the University of Kashmir to produce 2506 publications. The countries with at least five documents (n=129) were visualized and mapped.

Figure 4 reveals that the Central University of Kashmir (CUK), Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), and Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) play an essential role in producing research in cooperation with the University of Kashmir. The institutions with the highest collaborations include CUK with 87 publications, followed by AMU (84),

SKIMS (57), National Institute of Technology (54), University of Jammu (52), Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (47), Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (46), University of Delhi (37), Islamia College of Science and Commerce (35), and Islamic University of Science and Technology (33).

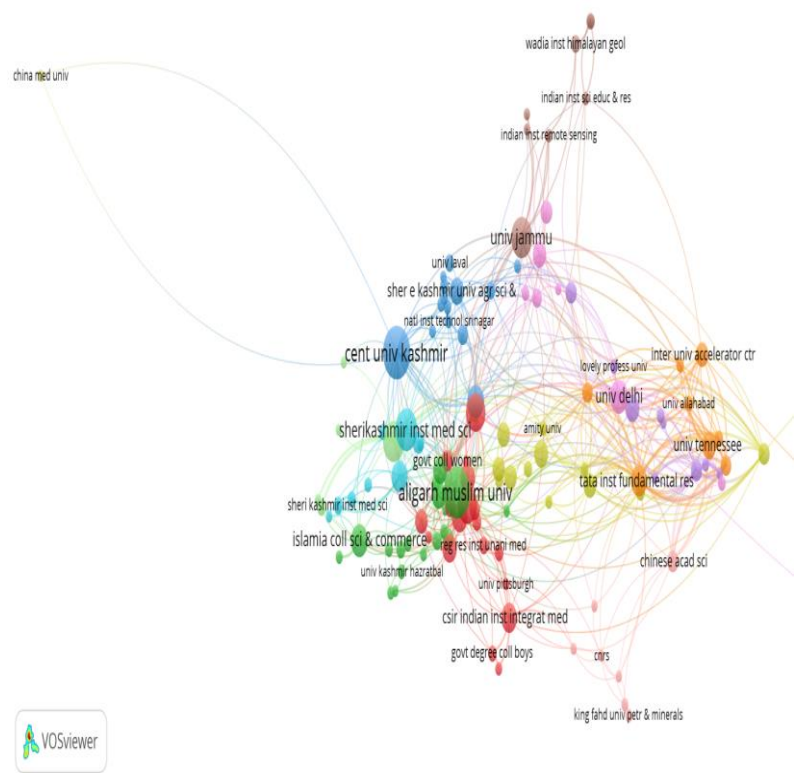


Figure 4: Co-organization map of University of Kashmir

Country Collaboration Network: Eighty-seven countries collaborate with the authors of the University of Kashmir to produce 2506 publications. The countries with at least five documents (n=38) were visualized and mapped.

Figure 5 shows that the USA, Saudi Arabia, and China play an essential role in producing research in cooperation with the University of Kashmir. The country with the highest collaborations includes the USA with 158 publications,

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followed by Saudi Arabia (93), China (48), Canada (43), Germany (41), England (38), Iran (30), Pakistan (27), France (26), and Greece (19) respectively.

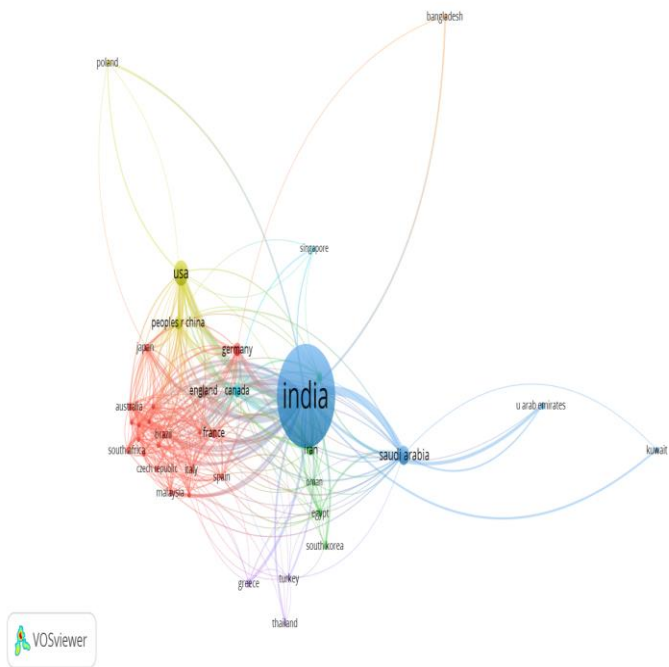


Figure 5: Country Collaboration Network

Conclusion: In this study, we have provided an insight into the characteristics of research of the science disciplines in University of Kashmir by employing a bibliometric visualization tool. The study analyzed the research output by considering the research growth, highly cited articles, productive authors and journals, author keywords, institutional and country collaboration.

The results indicate that the overall annual contributions increase with the highest contributions and impact over the last decade. The top-cited article has managed the citation count of 166 and is contributed by Ahmad, Parvaiz from the Department of Botany. Masoodi, Farooq Ahmad is the most productive and highly cited author with a remarkable contribution of 101 papers and 1851 citations. All the top 10

cited articles are from Biological Science faculty. Though Biological Sciences are in lead, the Social Sciences domain has also made a significant contribution which is evident from the works of leading authors from the University of Kashmir like Professor Mohammad Ishaq Khan and many more. The use of Web of Science and the “time span” filtering is one of the important factors for the low output from Social Sciences. Furthermore, the contributions made by the faculty from Social Science disciplines may not be indexed by the Web of Science, therefore not reflective in the study. The visualization technique has made it clear that the areas of research revolve around Kashmir and the Himalayas. The maximum collaborations are with authors of national repute, followed by the USA, Saudi Arabia, and China. It is worthwhile to mention that maps are only the representation and not the real things; however, they affect how we think about the institution. Therefore, more institutional research patterns need to be explored for the complete research picture of the University of Kashmir.

Elderly Healthcare and Quality of Life in Jammu and Kashmir: An Overview of Key Concerns

Saima Farhad and M. Ibrahim Wani

Abstract: *India is experiencing rapid demographic changes due to population ageing. From 8.6% of the total population in 2011, the proportion of the elderly is projected to increase to 19% in 2050. In Jammu and Kashmir, the population of the elderly is projected to increase from 7.4% in 2011 to 13.2% in 2031. This increase in population introduces challenges for healthcare, as biological ageing is associated with loss of body functions and increased risk of disease. Various social and economic factors, like family support, income security, caregiving, etc, also have a bearing on the ageing process. The life of the elderly population is affected by a combination of these physiological and social factors. Various studies have pointed out that there is significant variation of elderly quality of life in Jammu and Kashmir compared to the national average(s) on various parameters like dependency, access to healthcare, etc. The aim of this paper is to provide an overview of elderly health and quality of life measures in Jammu and Kashmir, and to identify key factors which may have an effect on the variance.*

Introduction: Ageing may be considered both a success and a challenge at the same time. On one hand, increase in life expectancy is a victory of development, made possible through improved sanitation, nutrition, medical advances, education, and overall well-being. On the other hand, the elderly population faces increased risk of ailments and disease, compounded by problems of access to healthcare, particularly in developing countries. Majority of affluent countries have had decades to adjust to their changing demographics; France's population of aged increased from 7% to 14% in about 100 years. However, developing countries are seeing fast increases in the percentage of elderly people,

within shorter periods, of a few decades only.¹ In a developing country like India, as per Census 2011, there were nearly 104 million persons aged 60 or above in India in which 53 million were females and 51 million were males. The proportion of the elderly population in India is expected to rise from 8% in 2015 to 19% in 2050; and it is projected that the elderly will account for nearly 34 percent of the total population in the country by the end of the century.² There are several driving forces for this projected increase; decrease in fertility rates as a result of greater contraception access, an increase in the age at which people marry, particularly among women, and a decrease in infant mortality, breakthroughs in medicine, public health, nutrition, and sanitation, as well as vast cohorts of people living longer which ultimately contribute to such demographic transitions.³

The phenomenon of ageing has been defined in several ways mostly either as age-related decline in biological functioning or age-specific increase in mortality. In terms of decrease in physiological functioning, it may be considered as a progressive function loss,⁴ or a decline in the age-specific fitness components linked to internal physiological deterioration.⁵ However, it is important to mention here that senescence, which refers to the steady decline of physical systems that increases the risk of sickness and mortality after maturation, is not the only biological mechanism that causes human ageing. Rather, human ageing is shaped by varied social variables which are deeply ingrained in social contexts, as people age in “a social network of partners, family

¹ United Nations and Help Age International, *Ageing in the Twenty-First Century: A Celebration and A Challenge* New York, 2012.

² UNFPA, *Caring for Our Elders: Early Responses - India Ageing Report - 2017*, New Delhi, 2017.

³ Arunika Agarwal and others, *Population Aging in India: Facts, Issues, and Options*, 2016, p. 4.

⁴ Thomas B. L. Kirkwood and Steven N. Austad, ‘Why Do We Age?’, *Nature*, Vol 408 (6809), pp 233–38.

⁵ M. R. Rose, *Evolutionary Biology of Aging*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1991.

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members, and friends”.⁶ These social factors are also connected to notions of ageing as being negative or ageism. Palmore argues that normal ageing is viewed as a loss of function and capacities, and as a result, it has a bad meaning, thereby, words like "old" and "elderly" carry negative connotations and should be avoided.⁷ Older people may also internalize stereotypical perceptions of themselves, their agency, and their expected roles.⁸

Key Themes in Elderly Research

The increasing proportion of the elderly in the population is accompanied by increased disease prevalence, reduced functional capacities and disabilities, and stresses on quality of life related to health and healthcare, and social and economic contexts. For developing countries like India, this demographic transition has taken place at a relatively faster pace, leading to problems identified as structural lag, where health policies and infrastructure have failed to keep pace.⁹ Research on ageing and senescence is a complex and multi-disciplinary field¹⁰, and so is the study of elderly care.¹¹ It has become a key subject of enquiry in a wide range of disciplines including medicine, sociology, demography, anthropology, social work, as well as specialized fields like geriatrics and

⁶ Liat Ayalon and Clemens Tesch-Römer, 'Introduction to the Section: Ageism—Concept and Origins', in *Contemporary Perspectives on Ageism*, ed. by Liat Ayalon and Clemens Tesch-Römer, Springer International Publishing, 2018, pp. 1–10 (p. 1).

⁷ E Palmore, 'Guest Editorial: Ageism in Gerontological Language', *The Gerontologist*, Vol 40, (6), 2000, p. 645.

⁸ B. R. Levy and M. R. Banaji, 'Implicit Ageism', in *Ageism: Stereotyping and Prejudice Against Older Persons*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002.

⁹ MW Riley and JW Riley, 'Generational Relations: A Future Perspective', in *Aging and Generational Relations over the Life Course: A Historical and Cross-Cultural Perspective*, ed. by T K Hareven, Berlin: De Gruyter, 1994; United Nations and HelpAge International.

¹⁰ Rose; Ayalon and Tesch-Römer.

¹¹ Kijong Kim and Rania Antonopoulos, *Unpaid and Paid Care: The Effects of Child Care and Elder Care on the Standard of Living*, 2011; Saurabh Ram Bihar Lal Shrivastava, Prateek Saurabh Shrivastava, and Jegadeesh Ramasamy, 'Health-Care of Elderly: Determinants, Needs and Services.', *International Journal of Preventive Medicine*, Vol 4 (10), 2013, 1224–25.

gerontology, with a variety of journals dedicated to study of ageing and health. Key themes in this research concern the attempts to chart disease prevalence, and to mark barriers to access.¹² There are various studies at the national level which map chronic disease spread,¹³ or focus on the impacts of a particular disease/risk factor, like diabetes, asthma, bone and joint problems, etc.¹⁴ Various studies have also explored the impacts of ageing on mental health, and associated subjective indicators like loneliness, satisfaction, changes in roles/agency, etc.¹⁵ Themes of ageism, elderly abuse and

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- ¹² Subhojit Dey and others, 'Health of the Elderly in India: Challenges of Access and Affordability', in *Aging in Asia: Findings From New and Emerging Data Initiatives*, Washington: National Academies Press, 2012; Alex Joseph, Dhasarathi Kumar, and M Bagavandas, 'A Review of Epidemiology of Fall among Elderly in India', *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, Vol 44 (2), 2019, p 166; GoI, *Elderly in India 2021*, New Delhi, 2021.
- ¹³ IIPS and others, *Longitudinal Ageing Study in India (LASI) Wave-1, 2017-18, India Report*, 2020; GoI; R Thakur, A Banerjee, and V Nikumb, 'Health Problems among the Elderly: A Cross-Sectional Study', *Annals of Medical and Health Sciences Research*, Vol 3 (1), 2013, pp 19-25; B Shah and A K Prabhakar, 'Chronic Morbidity Profile among Elderly.', *The Indian Journal of Medical Research*, Vol 106, 1997, pp 265-72; Shobhit Srivastava and Anayat Gill, 'Untreated Morbidity and Treatment-Seeking Behaviour among the Elderly in India: Analysis Based on National Sample Survey 2004 and 2014', *SSM - Population Health*, Vol 10, 2020; Alok Ranjan and V. R. Muraleedharan, 'Equity and Elderly Health in India: Reflections from 75th Round National Sample Survey, 2017-18, amidst the COVID-19 Pandemic', *Globalization and Health*, Vol 16 (1), 2020, pp 1-16; Bradley Chen and Ajay Mahal, 'Measuring the Health of the Indian Elderly: Evidence from National Sample Survey Data', *Population Health Metrics*, Vol 8 (1), 2010, pp 1-13.
- ¹⁴ Rajiv Raman and others, 'Prevalence and Risk Factors for Diabetic Retinopathy in Rural India. Sankara Nethralaya Diabetic Retinopathy Epidemiology and Molecular Genetic Study III (SN-DREAMS III), Report No 2', *BMJ Open Diabetes Research & Care*, Vol 2 (1), 2014; S Irudaya Rajan, U S Mishra, and P S Sarma, 'Health Concerns among India's Elderly', *The International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, Vol 53 (3), 2001, pp 181-94; R Pandya and others, 'Under-Diagnosis of Asthma in Elderly', *Indian Journal of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, Vol 30 (1), 2016, pp 27-31.
- ¹⁵ L Kourkouta, Ch Iliadis, and A Monois, 'Psychological Issues in Elderly', *Prog Health Science*, Vol 5(1), 2015, pp 232-37; WHO, *Mental Health of Older Adults*, 2017; Neena Kohli and others, 'Ageing in Developing

neglect also appear prominently in literature.¹⁶ Similarly, themes related to role of family in caregiving, the undergoing changes in family, dependency and income insecurities, are also prominent research areas.¹⁷ Alongside income insecurity, various barriers to healthcare access which have been detailed in literature include lack of physical infrastructure, shortage of manpower, overcrowding at health facilities, low awareness of geriatric care in health workers.¹⁸ Composite measures of perception and notions of quality of life, and subjective wellbeing of the elderly, are more holistic when it comes to understanding effects of various factors underlying ageing.¹⁹

At the national level, various large-scale studies commissioned by Government of India (GoI) have been conducted in India to chart various dimensions of elderly

Societies: Issues and Challenges', *Psychology and Developing Societies*, Vol 32 (2), 2020, pp 153–75; *An Aging India: Perspectives, Prospects, and Policies.*, ed. by Phoebe S. Liebig and Irudaya S. Rajan, Taylor and Francis, 2013.

¹⁶ Daliya Sebastian, *Ageing and Elder Abuse: A Study in Kerala*, Jaipur: Rawat Publications, 2013; Mala Kapur Shankardass and S. Irudaya Rajan, 'Introduction', in *Abuse and Neglect of the Elderly in India*, Singapore: Springer Singapore, 2018, pp. 1–18.

¹⁷ D Jamuna, 'Ageing in India: Some Key Issues', *Ageing International*, Vol 25 (4), 2000, pp. 16–31; D Narang and others, 'Interpersonal Relationships of Elderly Within Family', *International Journal of Social Science & Interdisciplinary Research*, Vol 2 (3), 2013, pp 132–38; Mala Kapur Shankardass, 'Societal Responses', *Seminar*, 2000

¹⁸ Gopal K Ingle and Anita Nath, 'Geriatric Health in India: Concerns and Solutions.', *Indian Journal of Community Medicine*, Vol 33 (4), 2008, pp. 214–18; Dey and others; Abhay B Mane, 'Ageing in India: Some Social Challenges to Elderly Care', *Journal of Gerontology & Geriatric Research*, Vol 5 (2), 2016.

¹⁹ Jordan Boeder and Dwight C.K. Tse, 'Measuring Self-Perceptions of Aging: Differences Between Measures When Predicting Health Outcomes', *The Journals of Gerontology: Series B*, Vol 76 (5), 2021, pp. 825–35; Jutta Lindert and others, 'Well-Being Measurement and the WHO Health Policy Health 2010: Systematic Review of Measurement Scales', *European Journal of Public Health*, Vol 25 (4), 2015, pp. 731–40; J Footit and D Anderson, 'Associations between Perception of Wellness and Health-related Quality of Life, Comorbidities, Modifiable Lifestyle Factors and Demographics in Older Australians', *Australasian Journal on Ageing*, Vol 31(1), 2012, pp.22–7.

research including social, medical, mental health/satisfaction dimensions. In many of these studies, Jammu and Kashmir has figured in the medium level or lower levels on many parameters. The current paper is an attempt to provide an overview of key parameters on elderly population from three reports; Elderly in India Report²⁰ and LASI Report²¹, and the Quality of Life for Elderly Index.²²

Elderly in Jammu and Kashmir: Key Parameters

1. Perception of Health

Across various studies, it emerges that the averages for population which responded as ailing is either close to the national average, or higher as is case of females (See Table 2). Similarly, the self-perception of health remains poor, especially in the rural population, particularly among women (See Table 1). This perception is not only poorer in the aged population with illness, but also in the aged population without illness as compared to the national average. The LASI datasets also point out weaker self-reported health in Jammu and Kashmir (higher incidence than the national averages); 51 % of the elderly reported that they were diagnosed with Cardiovascular Disease (CVDs), more than 5% reported neurological/psychiatric health conditions, and around 8.2% or the elderly population reported urogenital conditions and high prevalence of UTIs. Jammu and Kashmir had highest prevalence of arthritis (22% of the elderly population) in particular, and high incidence of bone and joint problems (27%) as compared to the national averages.²³ For cataract and visual problems, the percentage for Jammu and Kashmir was 17.7% (lower than the national average of 23.2%) and for hearing problems it was 13.3% (higher than the national average of 9.6%). Also, around 35% of the population in the

²⁰ GoI.

²¹ IIPS and others.

²² Amit Kapoor and others, *Index on Quality of Life for Elderly: A Report Submitted to Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)*, New Delhi, 2021.

²³ IIPS and others, p. 179.

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LASI study in Jammu and Kashmir had multiple morbidities, as compared to the national average of 23.3%. Also, the elderly population in Jammu and Kashmir had a higher prevalence of health problems due to natural and man-made disasters, as compared to the national LASI average, particularly mental health problems.²⁴

2. Quality of Life and Wellbeing

In the Quality of Life for Elderly Index developed by Institute for Competitiveness for Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, the Quality of Life (QoL) score for Jammu and Kashmir is 46.16, which placed the region among the lower scores states and UTS; for reference the score of Himachal Pradesh was 61.04²⁵. The QoL index has been measured across four pillars; financial Well-being, Social Well-being, Health system, and Income Security, and Jammu and Kashmir has been marked in the underperforming category in most parameters and sub-parameters (see Table 3 for a comparison with Himachal Pradesh, which has similarities in topography and climate to Jammu and Kashmir).

Jammu and Kashmir had very weak scores in financial well-being and income security, particularly in sub-parameters like education and employment. The region had very low scores on the proportion of elderly with graduate and post-graduate level of education, and very low figures for work-force participation. Its scores were among the lowest for currently working elderly population (the score was only 10.02 out of 100). This is also substantiated by other datasets; 85% of the elderly female population is dependent, and in rural areas in Jammu and Kashmir, 40% of the elderly females are fully dependent on spouse.²⁶

However, the region had high score on Physical safety, and had negligible scores on crime against elderly. Similarly, in Jammu and Kashmir, elderly mostly experience good

²⁴ IIPS and others, p. 248.

²⁵ Kapoor and others.

²⁶ GoI, pp. 34–35.

treatment and experienced good living arrangements (mostly live with the family).

The elderly population in Jammu and Kashmir scored higher scores for life-expectancy, but reported lower scores for self-rated health, chronic illness, and physical mobility. Also, as per the Index, the region underperformed on parameters linked to psychological well-being of elderly; i.e, elderly experience depression, psychiatric problems, neurological problems, etc.

Conclusion: Based on the above discussion, it emerges that the key factors which affect the elderly population in Jammu and Kashmir related to lower access to healthcare and higher levels of dependency. While as regions like Jammu and Kashmir, these factors are also exacerbated by contextual conditions like geographical remoteness and topography, weather extremes, long periods of restricted mobility due to climate or other factors, as well as developmental deficits due to periods of political instability or governance challenges. Higher levels of dependency in elderly female population, also hints at social realities, where women experience greater dependence on family. Such contexts are also undergoing change due to changing economic realities where greater number of women is entering the workforce. Sensitive government programs like the extension of Universal Health Coverage to the entire population of the region²⁷ and government pension programs for women and informal sector workforce are affecting a change, which will be visible in the near future. Jammu and Kashmir has also earmarked substantial resources for upgradation of the health sector infrastructure. However, there is a need to develop specialized elderly care in medical and non-medical settings; this include building infrastructure and developing human

²⁷ Mukeet Akmal, 'PMJAY Health Scheme: 47.9 Lakh Health Cards Issued in J&K, Rs 186 Crore Spent on Free Treatment of Beneficiaries', *Greater Kashmir Newspaper* (Srinagar, 26 July 2021) <<https://www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/pmjay-health-scheme479-lakh-health-cards-issued-in-jk>>.

resource in geriatric health specializations in hospitals and geriatric social work capacities in social welfare programs.

Table 1. Perception about Current State of Health in Jammu and Kashmir, 2017-18

[Source: Based on NSS 75th Round (July 2017-June 2018) as quoted in GoI 2021²⁸]

		Aged person with illness			Aged person without illness		
	% aged people reporting illness	Own perception about current state of health			Own perception about current state of health		
		Very Good	Fair	Poor	Very Good	Fair	Poor
Rural (J&K) Men	26	2	69	29	14	71	16
All India	24	2	62	36	11	74	15
Rural (J&K) Women	30	0	25	75	9	70	21
All India	25	2	56	43	7	73	19
Urban (J&K) Men	18	9	76	16	19	65	15
All India	34	7	67	26	15	75	9
Urban (J&K) Women	33	0	42	68	4	72	25
All India	34	4	67	29	11	76	13

²⁸ GoI, 2021.

Table 2: Proportion of Population that Responded as Ailing in Elderly Age Group

[**Source:** Based on NSS 75th Round (July 2017-June 2018) as quoted in GoI 2021²⁹]

	Male	Female	Total
Jammu and Kashmir	23.4	31.0	26.9
All India	27.5	27.9	27.7

Table 3: Comparison of Quality of Life Scores between Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh (Based on the QoL Index³⁰)

Pillar/Parameter	Quality of Life Score for Jammu and Kashmir	Quality of Life Score for the Himachal Pradesh
Overall Well-Being	46.16	61.04
Financial Well Being	36.45	52.61
Social Well Being	60.68	75.92
Health System	56.80	59.90
Income Security	30.69	55.73

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²⁹ GoI, 2021.

³⁰ Kapoor and others.

Book Review

M Y Ganai, Shiraz Ahmad Dar and M Ibrahim Wani (edt.): *Kashmir Past and Present*, Srinagar, JK Publishers, 2020, pp., x + 338, Price: Rs 1485.

Book Review by:

Professor Rattan Lal Hangloo

(Originally from Hangalgund, Kokernag, Kashmir)

Honorary Chancellor, Nobel International University,
Toronto, Canada

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As the title suggests, this interesting book entitled “Kashmir Past and Present” puts forward the novel idea how a few budding intellectuals pooled their ideas, intelligence and hard work under the guidance and academic leadership of their senior colleague Prof. Mohammad Yusuf Ganai (assisted by Shiraz Ahmad Dar and Muhammad Ibrahim Wani) and became a catalyst for moulding the nature of conducting research in Kashmir’s history. It deserves keen sense of appreciation, how Prof. Ganai created a team, directly around the institution, with the high sense of academic prominence and intellectual vigour. They have examined many aspects and in the process, diligently explored extensive caches of the diverse early and contemporary sources. The result is this cohesively articulated volume. Through various sections and subsections, these scholars have studied social, economic, political, technological, environmental, literary and folk aspects and very prominent issues pertaining to religious life, literature, popular culture, religion and village life in Kashmir.

In this path breaking work, the emphasis is on eighteen aspects which include: “Regional Manifestation of Kushan Rule in Kashmir”, by Abdul Rashid Lone, “Natural History of Kashmir: Mughal Tryst with the Region’s Fauna” by Mehraj-ud-Din, “Masnavi Tradition in Kashmir” by Sajad Ahmad Darzi, “Beyond the Fine Texture of Silk: The Development of an Industry and its Labour (1586-1925)” by Shiraz Ahamad

Dar, "Rice Cultivation in Kashmir" by Abdul Waheed Bhat, "Colonialism and Political Restructuring in India: Punjab Crises and the Making of Jammu and Kashmir State" by Sadaf Sanaullah and Javeed Ul Aziz, "Villages in Kashmir History: A Case Study of Audsoo (1846-2018)" by M Y Ganai, "Agenda of Reform in Muslim Community: Secular and Sacred Education in Kashmir" by Younus Rashid and Javid Ahmad Dar, "Kashmiri Progressive Poetry and the Freedom Struggle in Kashmir (1931-1947)" by Zameerah, "Exploring the Role of Hamdard: A Study of its Agenda and Working (1935-1947)" by Muhammad Ibrahim Wani, "History, Memory and Protest: Debating Nationalism in Kashmir" by Farrukh Faheem, "Mapping Mahjoor's Desire for New" by Aamir Sadiq, "Changing Colours of Kashmiri Culture", by Majrooh Rashid, "Historicism and Wisdom in Kashmiri Folk Sayings" by Mohsin and "Marriage Payments Among *Shia* Muslims in Kashmir: Continuity and Change" by Humaira Showkat.

The tone of this book is grasped by the very introduction which demonstrates its quality by articulating varied perspectives which are conceptually global. At a time when present Kashmir has been so badly trampled by political ramifications that are no less than an ongoing war, where individuals freedom has been overrun by variety of brutalities, in such circumstances, the expression of this volume has been not only significant extension of our horizons beyond the questions of personality, of conflict, and of religious division—which loom so large on the region and beyond, but also more importantly eye opener for our regions intellectual community, policy makers and intelligentsia. Professor Ganai's work is subtle in bringing a more convincing relief for regions academics, public purpose and for the sense of regions culture. He says, "Being linked with the neighbouring regions, it is distinct from them, with at least a segment of its resident's conscious of belonging to the region and articulating this consciousness." Avoiding setting the discussion into any particular political mould, Professor Ganai has marshalled an impressive array of examples, with classified evidence and allowed it to speak for itself in all its complexity. According to Prof. Ganai, "A rounded study of region required an interdisciplinary approach, taking note of

the peculiarities of its historical experience, complexities of life in various sub regions and plurality of the regional culture.” Professor Ganai is content to endorse that when people are powerless legally or peaceably to remove their hurdles in restoring regions identity, they can also try to improve their lot by strengthening their intellectual moorings till other alternatives open up.

“Regional Manifestation of Kushan Rule in Kashmir: An Appraisal”, by Abdul Rashid Lone in less than eighteen pages in the text, is of course fairly an ambitious attempt. The central question that Lone poses regarding the necessity of exploring Kushan history is an important one that needs to be grappled by scholars in future too. “Within the corpus of literature available on socio-cultural and political history of the empire, some regions are over emphasized while others (such as Kashmir) are sparsely represented.” It would be useful to know, about the exact contribution of Kushans, in facilitating the relationships between various communities, their social, cultural, religious and political life. From his essay it should be deduced that this is immensely stimulating, founded in extensive bedrock of documentary and archaeological sources. Historians concerned with ancient past of India and Kashmir owe a considerable debt to Lone for this substantial and scholarly contribution.

Elegantly written and presented in typically modest fashion, is the essay on “Natural History of Kashmir: Looking into Mughal Tryst with Region’s Fauna” by Mehraj-ud-Din. It deserves to be widely read. “What is more creditable about these royal naturalists is that they do not rely on mere hearsay, but make a clear distinction in their writings between personal observations and what has been reported to them by others.” It would be mistake to regard this essay simply as Mughal History. Mehraj-ud-Din has thoroughly examined the subject and his work is more solid than inspired and is bound to be descriptive rather than analytical. This is a novel contribution to study of natural history.

“Masnavi Tradition in Kashmir” by Sajad Ahmad Darzi, will certainly encourage number of further studies. This concisely written and well produced essay will always be regarded as pioneering and indispensable research into this

field of literature. "However, it is erroneous to think that Kashmiri poets totally subscribed to literary tradition that was followed by the collaborative poets of tyrannous rule." This description is admirable and engaging. Certainly those pursuing research into this aspect will find this essay of considerable value.

"Beyond the Fine Texture of Silk: The Development of an Industry and its Labour (1586-1925 AD)" by Shiraz Ahmad Dar, presents a detailed essay and in doing so throws light on predicament of Kashmir's silk industries linkages with the region's economy. The study is obviously helpful to economic historians too. It would be unfair and unrealistic to expect the author to have answered every question; inquiries underway will doubtlessly elucidate several of them including the essential aspect of the deplorable conditions of workers. "The Srinagar silk factory also remained closed for two to three months in a year for which no wages were given to workers." His distinguished presentation in this essay is evidence of author's mastery of the subject.

Abdul Waheed Bhat's essay on "Rice Cultivation in Kashmir" presents many useful insights. The technical detail is of high density but it does not obstruct the flow of text which is skilfully constructed to combine narrative description interlinked in variety of ways. "Rice related agricultural activities are so connected and contemporaneous that one feels handicapped to draw a clear cut line between one activity and the other." The analysis of all aspects is supported by well designed arguments. Bhat's enthusiasm for history of technology seems to be considerable. To be fair this study does represent a serious attempt to explain the pattern of cultivation. It is a brilliantly structured study with rare originality and often interesting, informative and occasionally stimulating analysis. It is a combination of scholarship and imaginative interpretation from wholly a new perspective.

The essay on "Colonialism and Political Restructuring in India: Punjab Crises and the Making of Jammu and Kashmir State" written by Sadaf Sanaullah and Javeed Ul Aziz is of special value because of two reasons. First, it provides much needed dossier on the history of evolution of modern Jammu and Kashmir State. Second, the scholars have successfully

blended a fascinating variety of opinions, causes and analyzed them in relation to their basic theme, demonstrating along the way both substantial research and imaginative use of disparate materials. "It was also expected that the state of Jammu and Kashmir, along with what remained of Sikh kingdom, would act as a bulwark against the Afghans preventing them to extend their influence beyond Indus." At a time of increased public interest and apathy of government to address it only through disproportionate coercion, the essay offers invaluable material on the subject and does succeed in varying measure in providing illumination. Both the scholars have intelligent grasp of this period and have build their narrative critically with a new source base.

"Villages in Kashmir History: A Case Study of Audsoo (1846-2018)" by M Y Ganai is a clear and well documented essay on a bewilderingly, complex and profound social issue. There is much in the study of history of this village including their plight as represented here to appeal to professional historians. "It was owing to extreme poverty in villages that the villagers used to have seasonal migrations to the plains of Punjab in search of livelihood." It is an important exercise in new cultural and social history of Kashmir, rendered first time in regions history by intellectual. Concise, fresh and lucid, Ganai's essay adds weight to the aspirations of scholars who have great appetite for new emerging ideas in Kashmir and outside. His brilliant pattern and organization of this village study has implications that go far beyond the history of Kashmir.

The presentation of "Agenda of Reform in Muslim Community: Secular and Sacred Education in Kashmir" by Younus Rashid and Javid Ahmad Dar is based on meticulous and difficult research. It is both rich in detail and comprehensive in scope. It provides answers to several highly important questions being debated in Muslim society today. "They attempt to evaluate the present by negotiating with past through their ideological moorings." Without strikingly contradicting the opinions of scholars who worked in this field, such as Mohammad Yusuf Abbas, Abdul Fida Felahi, Syed Abu Ala Maududi and others, the essay establishes its fundamental importance and is a subtle contribution. The

analysis provides much clear view than some of the previous works on the subject.

It is gratifying to know that in Kashmir's history writing the genre of poetry is given its space by Zameerah in her chapter on "Kashmiri Progressive Poetry and Freedom Struggle in Kashmir (1931-1947)". Zameerah's contribution is unique because it pertains to most important aspect that has followed a serious neglect in Kashmir's history writing. In spite of the introductory nature of this theme there is much to recommend that this essay is a great scholarly achievement. It demonstrates that Zameerah's learning is immense and her knowledge of literature on freedom struggle is huge which is commensurate with the herculean efforts she has made to relate both the aspects of poetry and freedom struggle. "For the better appreciation and re-enactment of past, the symphony of history and poetry must go together. However, the poetic assertions must be corroborated by privileged sources of history." It makes a significant contribution to history of freedom struggle and is a real asset that will be as a useful supplement to other works in the field.

"Exploring the Role of Hamdard: A Study of its Agenda and Working (1935-1947)" by Muhammad Ibrahim Wani, has extended our general understanding and highlighted the need for research in such areas. Ibrahim has drawn much evidence by monitoring the real contents of this paper rather than depending on the bland and less immediate views expressed by writers about the paper. "It not only dealt with the local, national and international politics but it also focussed on issues connected to public welfare, economic emancipation and cultural progress." This in itself is a substantial contribution and provides a wealth of detail after cautious scrutiny. This interesting study deserves serious attention.

"History, Memory and Protest: Debating Nationalism in Kashmir" by Farukh Faheem is a fascinating essay with wealth of detail. His arguments are convincing which many may find difficult to refute. "We want to join India without any kind of mental reservations, but how can we do it as long as we are not convinced about the complete elimination of

communalism in India.” Despite the limitations of his sources he has, indeed accomplished a considerable task. What is remarkable in this essay, is the way the author has tried to introduce the concept of nationalism in historical context of Kashmir by helping to set the framework within which discussions will take place in future too. It is also a methodological tool provided with the basic, reliable arguments that cannot be underrated in history or historiography.

The chapter on “Mapping Mahjoor’s Desire for New” by Aamir Sadiq reassures us to find that significant contribution of the great poet has everlasting fragrance of history very much. It is a welcome addition to history and literature written with cool lucidity and contains much that will repay the study of attentive scholars. Therefore, this conjunctional factor-disillusionment with the long time dominant mode of mysticism and metaphysics and disillusionment with the decades old hegemony and colonial suppression of Kashmir-saw new literary spaces and movements emerging, and Mahjoor was undoubtedly a leading light of this new literary site.” Aamir Sadiq has done extensive research and well utilized the sources for reconstructing his major points. It is a brilliant essay about ideas and a history of people’s lives in early 20th century and how these were laudably influenced by the new social and economic developments. “It was only under the influence of progressive thought that many leading writers, including Mahjoor switched over from Urdu to Kashmiri for forceful articulation of feelings and expression.” The major strength of this essay is its exhaustive and detailed research that gives the reader a comprehensive understanding without interrupting flow of his discussion.

Majrooh Rashid’s ‘Changing colours of Kashmiri Culture.’ gives a highly readable account of Kashmiri culture. The author seems to opt for a view that tends to see the Kashmiri culture as a primary force in the regions multicultural life. “Our concept of charity and oblation are almost the same as they have been in our recent and ancient past. The impact of the indigenous ways of thinking, with regard to God and his worship is quite visible in our religious practices. The religious psyche of Kashmiri Hindus and Kashmiri Muslims

are in tune with each other....” Effective organization, coherent treatment of sources and elegant formulation of analysis are the attractive qualities of this essay. The essay has successfully achieved its purpose for generating wider interest of scholars. It is originally researched and nicely shaped and in doing so Rashid, a senior academic, has effectively created an agenda for further research. Vigorously written with an artful melding of historical touch with much new data and an excellent source to inspire scholars for raising new questions. It is an essay of considerable merit.

The interesting essay on “Historicism and Wisdom in Kashmiri Folk Sayings” by Mohsin, emerges to grow in stature both in history of folk culture and history of events. The reading of this essay will be rewarding for all those historians who want to feel themselves knowledgeable about the critical conditions in which this aspect of Kashmir’s folk culture grew. “In such a situation, it was the spirit of live and let live that made the rural society survive.” By any standard, this is an exciting essay which would claim an appropriate place in historical literature, when pursued further. All the sources are very elaborately examined with authentic detail, and are more faithful to the text in lending credence to the arguments.

Humairah Showkat, has studied “Marriage Payments Among *Shia* Muslims in Kashmir: Continuity and Change” which has good deal to say about this sect of Muslim society. “Marriage customs among Muslims in general and *Shias* in particular are directly or indirectly linked with traits of old culture, which has become a part of cultural heritage, an important dimension of social structure and an inseparable aspect of social life.” It makes illuminating connections between the events described and the society in which they take place. Though differing slightly in historical approach, it is certainly a valuable presentation because the entire description is vivid, authoritative and insightful. “In *mehr* or dower, the marriage payment is made by the groom to the bride as opposed to the dowry in which marriage payment is paid to the groom.” This well crafted and informative essay has succeeded in whetting one’s appetite for doing something for larger society. The description is successful on its own

terms and the author has succeeded admirably in meeting the objectives of useful surveys of scholarship in socio- religious history.

It is difficult to assess this volume as a whole and to deal fairly and adequately with a work of this kind in brief review or to list all authors of seventeen contributions including introduction elaborately. The aim of this volume is to provide information and to provoke discussion. The essays presented are balanced in length, presentation and coverage. The structure of the study reveals that the treatment is not symmetrical but some major themes emerge and recur. A couple of papers are little more relevant in substance than methodology. The volume would have been strengthened by an extensive bibliography for usefulness of readers, although this lacuna does not tend to obscure the variety of its merits but it may lower the curiosity of the scholarly audience. However, these points should not be seen to detract from excellent work. Perhaps the most important question that arises relates to the nature of results achieved. The volume clearly illustrates that there is enough good work of high quality being done on topics which happen geographically to fall within the territorial limits of Kashmir and sustain the new effort sufficiently long for it to generate its own historical justification. What has emerged from this meeting of minds is that there are many areas in Kashmir's history that need our attention even if we have to revise our views.

By and large, this monumental study is rich in sources, deep in detail, and exhaustive in scope. It is a regional history built on layer upon layer of micro and macro study observations of scores of brewing ideas that can take Kashmir's thirst for new academics forward. It is a sound monograph and a painstaking investigation. The most striking feature of this work is how persistent its historical pattern has been in addressing the issues that take place in serious history writing.

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