Fifth

Folk Literature - Mirror of Kashmiri Society
In the backdrop of the latest researches carried in the field of social history, the statement of Braudel that ‘all the disciplines aim at capturing the society as whole’ in its totality looks more genuine, plausible, and result oriented when examined from the state point of history and literature. It has been found that the popular literature of the masses documents in an unpolished way the details and the various dimensions of a society in which it had been created. In the chapter under review an attempt shall be made to draw an illustration of Kashmir society (1819-1947) on the basis of its rich oral tradition.

1. **Family Life**

Family as the basic unit of human society has for times immemorial served as a dynamic agency to regulate the human relationship. It plays a significant role in fashioning the socio-economic and religio-cultural make up of a society. Since family forms the fundamental unit of a social structure as such there can be no study of a society complete unless there is reference to the family life of society under debate. A careful study of Kashmir folk literature brings forth the unique characteristics like patterns of co-operation, social rivalry, feudal arrogance, peasant submission, catholic hegemony, peasant-artisan migration, matrimonial tensions, psycho-social insecurity and domestic conflicts. Kashmiri folk songs are replete with
references to the institution of the family. Different forms of Kashmiri popular poetry, besides, projecting a spectacular picture of Kashmiri family life also offers penetrating insight into the distinctive social mentality, which had been shaped by the peculiar political environ prevalent during the period of our study. The family in context of Kashmir society not only served as a symbol of social existence but it worked as an authoritative agency to regulate the schemes rooted in Kashmiri psyche and in its ethos, Kashmiris love and unmatching fondness for a family can well be ascertained from this folk saying.

Gara Vandehai Gara Sāsa Baraneirehai ne Zanh
(I would like to sacrifice thousands of outdoor comforts against single family pleasure)

In the following folk song an average Kashmiri seeks to surrender every material happiness for his home and his family.

Vandehai Zuv Jān Gara Vandehai,
Vandehai bāla paan gara vandehai,
lol chum ragi ragi vele Begrav
Dhan chum sholan gara vandehai,
Ghara Myon Shubevan Arzath jān,
Thez cham kya shāan ghara vandahai,

(I ought to sacrifice all I have for you (family)
I intend to adore you with my flesh and soul.
The love which is ingrained in my veins,
I want to share it with all.
The mud stove (Dhaan) besides serving as a cooking agent acts as a cementing bond,
None excels my family in majesty and composition)

For the woman folk, the family holds more value than menfolk. Their activities largely remain confined within the four walls of the family. It is in no way
surprising, therefore, that the family and its allied concerns remained the prominent subject in Kashmiri folk literature.

There is an abundance of material available which tend us to suggest that there existed with equal magnitude, love and hatred, cordiality and rivalry, innocence and frailty in the body politic of Kashmiri social life. For example the uncle, which stands as a substitute for father in the latter's absence is often referred as Pitur (an enemy) in Kashmiri family life. But in spite of this negative notion, there existed an inherent strength and potential in the organisational setting of the Kashmiri family which sustained the social coherence and the familial unity of the members. That is why we find that there existed joint family system in Kashmir during the period of our study.

2. Joint Family

Kashmiri family life did not undergo a drastic change even after the mass conversion which started immediately after the disintegration of Hindu rule in Kashmir. The joint family system which had gained social currency and religious sanctity in the background of Hindu religious tradition continued to remain in operation in the valley.

A careful study of the different forms of Kashmiri popular literature reveals that during the period under reference there was a joint family system in vogue in the entire valley of Kashmir. The songs abound in description about relation of a bride with her mother-in-law, father-in-law, Zaam, (husband sister) Drei kakeny (wife of her husband's brother) Droi (husband's brother) Peterhikur (husband's uncle) Peter
Hash (husband aunt) In marriage songs particularly in Wanvun, all the relations referred to above are almost given in such an arrangement that suggest that their existed single source of their social sustenance. For example:

Bab Myon Thazras Kya Shūbeni
Mōl Myōn, dyad ho zāni ìo
Tōth myon thazras kya shūbani
Mēj Myeny petcheny ho zāni lo
Kāka lala thazras kya shubeni
Kāka dyad sorey zāni ìo
May tai mowath gatchi vansi poshani

(with what grandeour, my grandfather adores the elevated spot in my home,
My grandmother never fails to admire my merit-she is conscious of my qualification (merit).
How elegant the spot looks, where my uncle uses to sit,
None excels my aunt in passion and love.
Let unity and love continue to sweeten our souls).

In Kashmiri family life maas (maternal aunt) and Powaff (paternal aunt) are kept in high reverence. The two relations are always considered as great source of comfort. That is why we find Kashmiri girls calling impatiently for the presence of maas and powaff on every auspicious or inauspicious occasion. The same feeling is expressed in this folk song.

Powaf dyad mayi chas wadi pērēni,
Māsa dyad jāma sherni chas,
Khāne mēj kīyazi chak osh hārēnī
Sag dyi haqi subheniya

(How beautifully the aunt prepares her hair style,
The sister of her mother adorns her garments.
Don't shed tears, O, our beloved one,
We prey to Allah for your everlasting joy)
The prevalence of joint family system during the period of our survey though found as a common rule but there are evidences which prove that in rural and urban Kashmir there existed single family system as well. The peculiar features found predominantly in the striking equation in Kashmiri family life was and continue even today. For example, in the joint family system, the relations of the father's side receive extra care and respect from all members of the family and in the single family scheme, the relations of the wife's side outshine husband’s relations in prestige, position and rank. In a single family, \textit{maam} (brother of the mother) was regarded as an important source of love, compassion, care and sacrifice but to its sharp contrast, in the joint family system, it was \textit{powaf} (fathers sister) who assumed unprecedented power, respect and position. No social scheme could be executed without her approval and prior sanction. The assertion is substantiated by the following folk verses.

\begin{verbatim}
Powaf chas rechimis baba maliniye, 
Babi chas rechmis powaf maliniye. 
Mōj behai prārān māme senzi watye 
Su hai chum logmut bāzār kathēy. 
Yīna vely vely baras tha.
\end{verbatim}

(I have been brought up by powaf in my grand fathers house, 
She lulled and fed me with sweat milk. 
O, mother, I eagerly wait for my mamaji, 
I don't know who engaged him in dialogue on his way to his sisters home? 
I wish his early arrival here so that, 
I express my pain and sorrow to him.)

The same feeling is expressed in the following lines also

\begin{verbatim}
Beni zei chey kārān bartal ālau, walo mama lal kotchā kharum. 
(Your two sisters look so impatient, o, mamaji. 
They call you to provide me the comfort of your lap). 
\end{verbatim}
In spite of every effort made by the elder members of the family to keep emotional bond of the family undisturbed, there are good number of references in different genres of Kashmiri folk literature which tend to suggest that some disintegrating agencies were simultaneously found at work, which intended to see that the traditional unity of the family remain exposed to incoherent and capricious exercises. See for example this folk saying-

Pyitreny gei marche pipeny,
natchni beger patchine
Pitur go mitchery kond,
atchne beger patchi ne\textsuperscript{10A}

(Aunt always looks in search of an opportunity to taunt and tease, Uncle is just like a stingy shrub causing always trouble and torture)

According to the sources available, there existed generally three tier family system in Kashmir during the period of our study. The single family, joint family and extended family\textsuperscript{11}. The extended family was the dominant form in both rural and urban areas of Kashmir. There were number of reasons responsible for its continuance.

In Kashmir, we hardly find any evidence from folk sources which would negate the proposition that the joint family often injured the incentive to work. Infact, the joint family structure, illustrated by number of Kashmiri folktales helped its members to undertake the hardest possible risky ventures.

\textbf{2(a). Tension in the joint family}

Different genres of Kashmiri folk literature afford graphic descriptions of constrained relations in the Kashmiri joint family system. A close examination of
Wanvun songs reveal that a Kashmiri woman whose husband had died or driven away from his home as a carrier to distant places as begari expected to receive moral and emotional support at the hands of related family members, instead, we find, that she was often made subject to inhuman oppression and torture at frequent intervals, she was forcibly driven out from her husband's house. She was thus allowed to exhaust her feminine charms either in her parents home or in the home of mamaji. The magnitude of the pain, experienced by such forlorn Kashmiri women may be judged from the following folk verses.

Dur mālyon syir kas bavey,  
myani kavai lo nata lo.  
Hashi noshe kerey pam pam,  
soi khabar boz malineo.

OR

Gowada kar miyonei charō, ada neyṛ myn sardārō,  
Lāla vun rozium narō, goda kar myoner charō.  
Yavenas gōm lure paro, gowada kar myonei charō,  
Ade ner myani sardaro.

(Being distant away from my parents home,  
There is none, but the crow, whom I express my pain.  
The news of the recurring scuffle between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law has been conveyed to my parents- How painful it is.?!)

OR

Console me, my lord, before you leave for distant lands!  
I can not spend even a moment without you!  
The Hash and zaam are my enemies,  
They leave no stone unturned to tease me.  
My youth has faded out, the fire of my youth has extinguished,  
My enemies: saas, and zaam left no stone unturned to humiliate me.
It appears from the study of folk songs that the *hash* (mother in law) considered it her right to order about and scold the *nosh* (daughter in law). References to the conflict of *hash* and *nosh* abound in Kashmiri folk literature. Sometimes *nosh* after having won over her husband took the liberty to strike equally against the teasing behaviour of the *hash*. This scheme of domestic situation is very skillfully depicted by this Kashmiri folk saying

"Hash ti thez, nosh ti thez,
Deg dez te vali kus\(^{14}\)"

(Both mother in law and daughter in law equally acclaim the noble descent,
The cooking pot is about to get spoiled as no one bothers to remove it from the burning mud stove (Daan)

3. **Marriage**

Marriage is an institution which provides social approval or religious sanctity to the union of permissible males, admit men and women to family life\(^{15}\). Lunderberg defines marriage as "the rules and regulations which define the rights, duties and privileges of husband and wife with respect to each other\(^{16}\). According to Horton and Hunt, "marriage is the approved social pattern whereby two or more persons establish a family\(^{17}\). The definition of H.T. Muzamdar with regard to marriage looks more plausible keeping in view the Indian tradition of marriage system. HE defines marriage as a "socially sanctioned union of male and female, or as a secondary institution devised by society to sanction the union and mating of male and female, for purpose of establishing a household, entering into sex relations, procreating and providing care for the offspring"\(^{18}\).
Keeping in view the pluralistic character of Kashmiri society, the institution of marriage developed and worked in Kashmir in tune with the different religious beliefs, traditions and social customs. The Hindus performed their marriage in accordance with the rules laid in the sameskars, while Muslim marriage in Kashmir was equally governed by Sharia and the customary laws. But the distinctive feature of Kashmiri marriage as the folk literature suggest was and continues to be its sacredotal character and under-lying social committment. It is this identical feature of Kashmiri social life that had provided additional strength to it to bear the unimaginative shocks of social onslaughts. We see that at the time of the departure of barat from in-laws house, every parent of bride wishes for the joyous future of their daughter in her husbands house. The parents further guide their daughters to serve the husbands relations with utmost love and care. There is a folk saying in vogue in both Kashmiri Pandit’s and Kashmiri Muslims with little variations which run as under.

Dōlī Tehāyak te arthi kedīnēy (Hindu version)
Zēnpana tchāyak te sembi kedīnēy (Muslim version)

(You have entered in your husbands house in a decorated Doli, you should leave this house only in coffin)

Both these folk expressions reflect the inner urge of the parents to see their daughters settled comfortably and for ever in the husband house. The following verse of the folk song also reflect the same notion and feeling, wherein the father of the girl expresses ardent desire to see that her daughter spends the entire life in compassion and joy in her husbands house.
'Sedi buthi khermak dōli zenpanas,
gatchi wony pānas vetey nai and.
Osh matai travtam tchaliy tchaliy
kensi nai and vot malinlys22.

(With a smile on your face, I made you to sit in the Doli,
Let your destiny guide you to the everlasting good fortune.
Don't allow the tears to roll down from your eyes,
There is no option left but to say good bye to your parents home.)

Though there were no hard and fast rules with regard to the marriageable age
of the boys and the girls, but a close scrutiny of the different genres of Kashmiri folk
poetry leads us to maintain that girls in Kashmir were married at a very early age23.
This is substantiated by the text of Nilmet-Purana and the Rajtarangni as well.
Though there is no direct mention regarding the exact age of marriage in our source,
but one could infer from the taxonomy of Kashmiri language that the marriage of the
girls was generally conducted at the very early age. Words like Shury Paan, bala pan, mur, lowakchar, baber, posh tur are generally found in Rov and Wanvun in context of early marriage of Kashmiri girls. Kashmiri folk songs abound in references about the early marriage. For example.

Dur azlan īgis bala paney,
gosh thavum keley mōj rāvay24.
Khāne mōj āses babe sandi garey,
deka lōn tchōrhem lōkacharey25.
Hai vesiye lōkchar āsan kyoth,
maji seten māliyun bāsan kyoth26.

(At a very tender age I was married in a village distant away,
listen patiently, O, my mother, my youth, my beauty will soon fade out.
In my mothers house, I used to be the sole object of love and attention,
What changed their mind? they got me married even before I attained the maturity.
Oh, friend, tell me how cheerful it is to be young?
I was married before I could enjoy my youth!)
How beautiful it looks to enjoy the kiss of a mother!

Along the folk evidences, the other literary sources also express that during the period under review, the settlement of marriage was exclusively the concern of the elder members of the family. Seldom was the consent of the girl or boy sought in the matter of selecting the life partners. This scheme of organising marriages often resulted in divorces among the Kashmiri Muslims. This sort of egoistic behaviour exhibited by family elders has often been made a subject of ridicule by our folk bards. For example.

Ada khor ade lyok go mut chotye,
ami khota osweye mot ye jän.
Khaji muri yezar zan chai buhri
vehri thouwnam khulhas wath.
Handis tai hunis hankal kariva,
gowaden sery wo khuhas wath.

(The half bald, handicapped had almost turned gray),
the insane would have proved better than him.
The bells of his trousers are so wide to look like a sack,
Please keep the option of divorce open within a year.
(You tie together sheep and dog with one rope,
What a striking equation it is)

In the process of marriage settlement little importance was attached to physical charm, economic background and the feminine attractions, instead what was generally taken care of was the physical fitness of the boy and the girl. This is testified by this folk expression.

Orzū te dor koth

The fundamental consideration which generally governed the matrimonial contract in Kashmiri village and urban areas was that son-in-law or daughter in law
should be in possession of extra muscular strength so that he or she could share the hard agricultural and industrial labour in the extended family system. In Kashmiri village during the period of our survey, it was found that it was the father of the bride who bore all the expenses of marriage, but in a striking contrast in urban Kashmir, it was the father of the bridegroom, who had to bear extra expenses incurred on the marriage of their daughter. This is why we generally find daughter-in-laws moaning and wailing in rural Kashmir. The husbands family members by all purposes treated their daughter-in-laws more as a selling commodity rather than the respectable members of their family life. The detailed discussion on Kashmiri women would be separately dealt with in the next chapter under the title of “Kashmiri women as reflected in folk literature”.

4. **Institution of Khana damadi**

Closely related to the institution of marriage in Kashmir, there existed yet another institution known as *Khana damadi*. The institution, despite tremendous public indignation, remained in operation in rural Kashmir for variety of reasons. The institution is said to have assumed alarming proportion during the Sikh rule in Kashmir. Under this system of marriage, a daughter when married was not sent to her husbands home, instead, it was the husband who had to come and settle down in his wife’s home. In other words, it means a daughter whose marital curiosities are satisfied in her own parental home by her imported husband, traditionally called *khana damad*.

During the period under survey, it was found that the daughters in the rural social set up were generally denied the right of inheritance from fathers property.
However, under this scheme of Dukh-tarti-Khana nashin, daughters were entitled to get their share of the landed property if their husbands lived with their father-in-laws. The sources reveal that during the Sikh period, (1819-1846) this system had become popular and the unfortunate khana-damad was always sent for begar. A dukhtari Khana Nashin, for the purpose of inheritance, is treated as a son of her father and can claim position of her father's property in exactly the same manner as any other son or sons if the property was not divided. But under this scheme of social governance, the plight of khana damad was always sad and pathetic. He was treated as chattel or serf and was always subject to great injustice at the hands of his father-in-law and his own wife. Commenting upon the deplorable position of khana damad, Walter Lawrence writes, “If forced labour was wanted for transport the unfortunate khana damad was always sent. If he came back alive he won his bride. If he died it did not matter as the son of the house, at any rate, escaped”.

At present the custom of khana damad, is very popular. It has two advantages. In the first place, the father of the girl receives a drudge who works like a slave for seven years, and in the second place, the expenses on betrothal and marriage are very small.

A Khana damad in single family could not dare to dine even in presence of his father-in-law. He was treated as an outlaw in his own home. A Kashmiri proverb,

Gar pettuk zamatur gō bara pethuk hōn,
(a son-in-law lives with his father-in-law, is like a dog at the outer door) [stands witness to the degraded status of Khana damad.]

The institution of khana damad was mostly prevalent among Muslims, particularly in agricultural families. There is no evidence available in folklore which would suggest that the system was prevalent among the Kashmiri Pandits. However,
the magnitude of the hatred expressed by Kashmiri Pandits made some scholars believe that the system was in vogue among Kashmiri pandits as well. As already stated that marriage in the valley happened to be the sole concern of family elders. The consent of the boy or girl was seldom sought. However, parents of the boy and girl, before signing the marriage contract (nikah nama) did ask for the approval of the concerned. But it was more a formality than the intention of being governed by the religions canon. The silence of a girl was generally taken for her consent and approval. This is portrayed in this proverb

Sherif kori henz tschopay go ankar
(The silence of a gentle girl means her attestation to marriage bond)

To arrange marriage, parents generally sought the services of a go between known in local dialect as manzimyor. In peasant society of Kashmir, the role of go between was played mostly by village elders or relatives of noble nature. In urban areas, marriages were mostly arranged by lanches (eunuch) and aged widows. The maiden function in the series of the marriage ceremonies was known as nishen or nabad nishan (betrothal). On this day the elderly male members of the boys side formally visit the girls home with some presents, which generally include ropa kery (silver bracelets), nabad not (typical ball like sugar cake) and some cash. The parties involved would take an oath to remain sincere, friendly and co-operative to each other. The oath ceremony was followed by a sumptuous feast arranged by the parents of a girl. During the intervening period between the nishen and khandar (marriage) parents of the boy and girl would exchange gifts especially on lokut idd (Id-ul-fitr) Bed idd (Idul-zuha) Miraj sharif and Urs-nabi [Prophet Muhammads (P.B.O.H)] birthday. During the period of our study, marriage function was usually preceeded by
uninterrupted musical exercises and *Bacha nagmas*\(^{40}\) (dance by a beautiful boy). The
day before the marriage, the side of the bridegroom would send a quantity of *menz*
(mehandi) to the brides house, and she stained her hands and feet with the red colour.
This function was named as *menzi rat* (mehndi raat) On the marriage day, the
bridegroom after a bath would generally visit a local *astan* (Shrine) and would offer
prayers and *fateha* to the dead family members. With a small party of close friends
and relatives, the marriage procession accompanied by bhands and "mashalys"\(^{41}\)
would proceed towards the brides house. The entire sight of Kashmiri marriage is
depicted in delightful manner in variety of Kashmiri *wanvun* songs. Some of the
verses which give the vivid picture of Kashmiri marriage are given as under. These
verses give a pen picture of the different stages of Kashmiri marriage from betrothal to
the departure of a Kashmir bride towards her husband's home.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vardan onmy lohory wanai,} \\
\text{Gulnury wetch shahanai cha.}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vardan legeth gah chak trāvan,} \\
\text{Jaman nery elravan chak}^{42}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Zona dabi ketchkhai mas mutchravnei,} \\
\text{tarkh tām vana nav ney draey}^{43}
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vosta kar onemy shahri shērāzai,} \\
\text{Yīnō maharazō gam hekh kenh}^{44}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Menz lāgeyō athan tai pādan,} \\
\text{menzi sethy khoi ha chuy shahzādān}^{45}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Rāji ren tchayakhi gowasul khānas,} \\
\text{dowadh mej wēlzen pānas sēthy}^{46}.
\end{align*}
\]

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Vesaū kor gulimyoth hes dol pariyan,} \\
\text{ti rūdh veryyan tam mashhōr}^{47}.
\end{align*}
\]
I purchased your bride suit from the Lahore market
You see, it is unmatching regally.

You have selected a secluded spot on the balcony to set
your hair in style,

On this Jubilant occasion, stars of the sky have started
singing in praise of your beauty,

I have sought the services of a barber from sheeraz, be
relaxed, o, bridegroom.

We are ready to dye your hands and feet with mehndi,
dying hands and feet with mehandi had been the privilege
of crown princes in the past.

Our crown princess had entered into the bathroom to
have the brides bath, she is accompanied by lady go
between.

When friends started presenting the gifts to the bride,
people around got shocked, The story of the expensive
gifts remained in circulation for long time.
Before entering the main gate of the neighbouring shrine, you (bridegroom) are cautioned to pay salute to the saintly soul.

Nikah (marriage agreement) is being written with utmost care. The saffron blades are used as pen and the scent of the rose is used as an ink.

Saffron sellers were our guests how delicious and tasty our wazwan was?

The professional chef had combined oil and ghee. The entire Kulgam Tehsil has been invited on this auspicious occasion.

O, bride, handover the keys of your parental home to your mother. The time has come to say good bye to your fathers home.

5. Mangtawun (adoption)

Adoption under no circumstances is valid under Muslim Law. But in Kashmir, this custom is followed with same spirit and zeal as it was observed prior to the establishment of Muslim Sultanate. In Kashmir village system, community of property rather than community of religion was and continues to be the basis of association. In code, Sant Ram Dogra writes

"Adoption is of Hindu origin and has been maintained among the Muhammadans inspite of all the bigoted attacks against this institution for the last six hundred years. The zamindars of the valley still think an adopted son as an heir as a real son."

The object of adoption among the Hindus during the period concerned was generally two fold, to secure performance of ones funeral rites and to preserve the continuance of ones lineage. The objectives referred to above even today continue to govern the custom of adoption among Hindus. But among Muslim agricultural tribes of Kashmir on the other hand, customary appointment of an heir was and is in
no way governed by religious temper. It was and continues to be a purely socio-secular arrangement resorted to by a sonless owner of land in order to nominate a person to succeed him as his heir. The underlying intention of the exercise was not to obtain any religious benefit for the soul of the appointed, but to obtain a practical and temporal benefit. Under the scheme a sonless proprietor looked at the appointed heir as one who would live with him, give him company and help him in managing his land. In return of these commercial benefits, he offers the appointed heir the right of succession to his land. The right to make an appointment primarily vested in the husband. As per the folk reflections, this institution of adoption in Kashmir had a tremendous negative bearing on the social fabric of Kashmiri society. The unnatural appointment of heirs often deprived the legitimate right of natural heirs and it resulted in unimaginable crises in the Kashmiri family life. The disdain with which the society looked upon this un-Islamic exercise could best be understood from this satirical Kashmiri proverb

"Powatre bowachi hon kowachi"56

(An adopted son is just like a dog in the lap of a sonless mother).

During the period under review, a hant (barren) women was put to every kind of insult. She was ill treated and accepted as the bad omen in the family. The marriage with the barren woman often resulted in divorce in Muslim families. A barren lady was equated with an eagle as is evident from this folk saying.

Hānt geyi yānth57

(An issueless lady is just like an eagle)
6. **Dress and Ornaments**

Dress as elsewhere, in Kashmir too, was determined more by geographical necessities rather than the aesthetic urge. Contemporary folk and creative literature, accounts of foreign travellers enable one to form a general notion of the various modes of clothing and costumes popular with the masses, landed elite and the ruling classes. Luxury as elsewhere, here in Kashmir, had very little role to play in setting the tastes, habits and fashions of the people regarding the dress and ornaments. Kashmiri folk tales and songs give a graphic picture of the various kinds of dresses people wore during the period of our study. No doubt, in conventional historical sources, we find enough evidence regarding the dress worn by Muslim religious elite like *Sayyids, Shaiks, Pirzadas*. But the fashion in their dress was governed more by religious considerations rather than the distinctive socio-economic fabric of Kashmiri society. The evidences gathered tend us to suggest that the ulama generally followed the dress styles of upper strata of the society which include *choga, Kurta, Izar,* white mal-mal chaders on the shoulders and the white or green turban.

The aristocratic Hindus wore woolen shawls of different attractive colours. In a complete contrast to the dress worn by the ulemas, the dress used by Muslim Sufis and *Rishis* and the Hindu yogis used to be very plain, rough and simple.

**6(a). Dress of common people**

Due to the extreme poverty, the common people could not afford to have separate dress for upper and lower portion of the body. The villagers seldom wore *izar* (drawers). They used to cover their bodies with long rough, rustic and loose local gown known as *pheraṇ* during winter months people wore *pety pheraṇ* (woolen
pheron) and in summer months pheran made of rough cotton yarn was made use of.

According to Hassan the custom of wearing pheran with wider sleeves came in vogue during the Afghan rule but the practice of using spacious trousers was the legacy of Mirza Haider Daughlat's reign. As already mentioned common Kashmiris, due to poverty, used to wear same woolen tunic for three to four years as the economic resources could not permit the frequent change of their raiments.

During the auspicious occasions like marriage and other related socio-religious functions, Kashmiri women dressed themselves in coloured pherans with beautiful embroidery work. This is depicted in various marriage songs. For example:

Phernas Chēnis Dōv Chuy Misrī,
Jigri az hai chey mēnzirat.
Phernas chenis mowakhta dāmānas,
mai thav nafsi Qurānas sethy.

O, bride Your pheran is adorned with Egyptian embroidery,
Be happy and jubilant, today is your mehandirat.
(The border of your pheran is decorated with pearls,
Let your life be governed by the spirit of the Quran)

It is believed that this distinctive part of the dress known as pheran had become a symbol of national identity during the period of our study. This long loose gown type of wear was considered an indispensable article of dress among all classes of Kashmiris. Its use was and continues to be much common during the winter months when it provides people with effective means of combating the unbearable cold. In the words of Wakefield and Biscoe, "every country through out the globe possess its own unique national costume, and the valley of Kashmir does not stand behind others in this respect. The Kashmiris too have a national dress peculiar to themselves. This national dress of Kashmiri is called pheran."
Both male and female of all classes and communities used pheran with slight variations. Though, it is said, the people under pheran wore pyjama or shalwar but the fact is not borne out by folk literature. No doubt, people of high social status might have been in the habit of using under wear garments but the aged persons living in the distant corners of Kashmir bore witness to the fact that average Kashmiri until 1947, wore long pheran with no izar or pyjames. They used to wear the same, when on trip to distant town or Srinagar city. Non availability of under wear garments would often prove an impediment in their way of taking frequent tours to the near and distant places. This is evidenced by this piece of Kashmiri. Lari Shah

Phernas tele ches zanga nagai tai,
Khojaney venytav satar karnas. 64.

(The legs of the bridegroom look naked under the loose pheran,
Is there anybody to request well off people to loan him one (pyjama) to cover his legs)

The sources reveal that among Muslims, men and women of religious classes were found in the habit of wearing under wear garments and among Hindus, official class and landed elite used under wear garments like Izar and Pyjama. In rural Kashmir, both Hindus and Muslims generally preferred to remain without pyjamas and izars.

In urban Kashmir, particularly in proper Srinagar, with the establishment of Sikh rule (1819) people began using trousers. The well to do people in towns wore turbans as the headgear but the village folk and poor sections in towns wore a cap known as bely tupy which they did not change for years.
Dastar (turban) was considered as a symbol of status, dignity and respect. Hindus wore generally dastar of pink colour, while Muslims preferred to wear dastars of green and white colour. People with different professions wore dastars in different styles\(^{66(a)}\). The Brahmans, for instance, tied their turbans tightly like a head bondage, the skilled workers like carpenters and boatmen tied their dastars loosely. In villages, only Pandits, Pirs and Maliks wore dastar and the rest of the village folk used an ordinary Sochli beli topy. This is attested by this folk song

Dastār shubān sabz pirzādan,
Gristeny chi kadan topeny keth\(^{96-8}\)

(How beautiful green turbans look on the heads of religious elite,
But how paining it is to ridicule the peasantry for wearing an ordinary cap).

It has been found that unmarried girls in Kashmir during the period under reference wore Kurteny (lady cut shirt) in addition to traditional pheran and their head was covered with a peculiar type of skull cap known in Kashmiri as Takeny\(^{67}\).

After marriage, village women in Kashmir wore kurteny, coloured izar, long loose gown (pheran) and a special headgear popularly known as Qasaba\(^{68}\). A piece of cloth was thrown over the Qasaba which worked as a veil to cover the entire back.

The Muslim women of well to do families wore slightly different type of Qasaba, called Khowanda Qasaba (Taller Qasaba). The Pandit women’s head gear or head dress was called Tararga. For pandit women, it was an important article of dress for the wedding day. See for example this vig vatchun.

Taranga putch kya chay goda telyye,
Dhara henz kur chak deka lesynae\(^{69}\)
(the clubbed ribbon of cloth with taranga
fall graciously down your anklet,
You are the daughter of Dhar family, we
wish for the long life of the couple).

As stated earlier, Muslim ladies of affluent families generally wore *.Throwanda qasaba*, which according to European travellers served as a sign of their superior status. Ladies with *Throwanda qasaba* were seldom seen unveiled and the purdah known as *burqa* was strictly observed by the ladies belonging to religious class and other well to do families. This is reflected in this Kashmiri *Row* song also.

Throwanda qasabas rowape senze stichney,
Koney woney neran barney chaw⁷⁰.

(O, ladies of privileged families, your qasabas are tagged with silver pins,
The reason of your remaining indoors rests there).

In Kashmiri village life, the section of the local traders known as *weny* had generally been found of rich gestures. Keeping in tune with their wealthy prepositions, they wore the same dress as urban privileged. In summer, this class of commercial traders used spotless white trousers with narrow bells, long white *Kurteni* (cheemize) with sadri (vasket). In winter, they wore the sama dress but of woolen made. They also kept plain white chadar hanging over their shoulders⁷¹. In a complete contrast to the village community, this class wore a cap known as *Erqchin*⁷² (special spherical type cap with golden embroidery work).

The dress used by Kashmiri Pandits slightly differed from their Muslim brethren. Instead of *Izar*, which the Muslims in towns wore, Kashmiri Pandits wore *Kutna*. It was made of white cotton during summer and in winter, it was made of local Kashmiri *Patto* (woolen cloth). In addition to this outer garment, Pandits wore a
peculiar type of undergarments known as Shrane pate. There is a Kashmiri proverb in use which runs as under.

"Batas kya chu shrane pates tel",
(Every body knows what a Pandit carries under his down garment).

A careful examination of folk literature tend us to hold that in Kashmir valley during the period under review, Purdah was strictly used by the ladies of Muslim religious class, ladies of well off Muslim and Hindu families and the women of Muslim Shia community. Women of skilled workers in Srinagar city also wore ordinary type of burqa known as Keshur burqa. But the women belonging to Muslim boatman community (Hanjis) Kander (bakes) Dandar, (vegetable growers and sellers) Gury (milk sellers) hardly bothered about the efficacy of purdah. In peasant society of Kashmir, except the women folk of Muslim Pirs, Sayyids, Babazadas, Maliks and Sheikhs, purdah was not maintained regularly and strictly. Women moved freely and helped their male family members both on the land and on the domestic front. A Kashmiri poetic verse depicts the actual state of Kashmiri mind in response to the strict use of burqa.

Burqa mutchrith haw tai mahi taban
Chani jalwuk sowandari asi arman

(Can't you uncover your face even for a while,
we eagerly await to see your dazling face,
We have cultivated an intense desire to have
a sight of your moon lit face)

From the earliest times, Kashmiri women had been fond of long, healthy, and beautiful black hair. To ensure the health and the vitality of their hair, they used variety of folk medicines. Long and thick black hair was considered an invaluable
wealth of a woman kind. There is a popular Kashmiri proverb which attests this assertion.

For example:

"Mas go was"

(Hair of a lady is nothing less than that of precious ornament)

There are hundreds of poetic verses both in creative and folk poetry of Kashmir, sung in appreciation of women’s hair. The mode of hair style among Kashmiri women was also of unique fashion. It was drawn to the back of the head and dedicatedly braided, the braids were then gathered together in a single plait or plaits, which were terminated by the thick tussel (gandapan) which reached down to the ankles. This peculiar arrangement of hair was called wankapan. The plaits were kept separately during the pre-martial stage while these were gathered together in a single plait and fastened with a heavy cord or tassel in the post martial period. One of the romantic poets of nineteenth century Kashmir, Rasul Mir praises the unique hair style of Kashmiri women in the following Gazal.

Zely wāṅkan keli yeli lagi shumar,
Bely lagnas genzranas lutch tai hazar

(When tomorrow the plaits of your hair are put to counting, it will take enough time to count the plaits divided in thousands and lakhs).

During the months of extreme cold, Kashmiri villagers used to wear special leg cover made of Kashmiri wool. This woollen leg cover was known as petav. It was used by male villagers when they took outdoor exercises to a distant place. Even very recently, during one of my field trips to Kulgam area, I had a chance to see some
village elders wearing this sort of leg wear. It was used as a folk therapy to get rid of fatigue and to outweigh the chill of the winter.

6(b). Footwear

Due to availability of grass and wood in abundance coupled with scanty resources Kashmiris took recourse to simple, economic and durable type of footwear. In Srinagar and the adjacent areas, people (Hindu and Muslims) belonging to upper rung of social ladder used to wear a peculiar type of leather shoes locally known as pezar. Besides this type of shoe, there was another kind of foot wear also in use known as kunsh. The common footwear referred to in our folk sources was pulhor or straw sandal. Both male and female members of village community used this kind of footwear when intended to set out on foot to any distant village, town or city. But within village boundaries, men and women used to wear wooden sandals known as khraw (wooden clock). We find numerous references about khraw in our wanvun songs. Here we give only two verses:

Chāne sendi enymai khrāv hen melyye,
Thethy peth chelymai khower phelyye.

Yezman bheyi khrav tchen khowarnei,
malinik petchy hai poh heth aey.

[I managed to purchase a beautiful khraw from a skilled carpenter, I will wash your delicate feet, you better place them on khraw (wooden clock)]

(Oh, mother of the bridegroom, put the khraw in your feet, Your parental people have come with a poh (marriage money) and be ready to receive them with love and warmth).

The above folk verses indicate that khraw used to be an important article of footwear even on the auspicious occasion of marriage.
7. **Ornaments**

Kashmiri women through the ages, have exhibited a special weakness for wearing various types of ornaments and it continues even today. The women of higher strata especially pandit landed aristocracy, Rais Muslim families and ladies of religious classes like Sayyids, Mirs and Pirs distinguished themselves by using various designs of golden ornaments. The women of middle class satisfied their aesthetic urge by using silver ornaments. But those who could not afford them contended themselves with ornaments of less costly metals or other substances like sartal (brass). Kashmiri folk literature abounds in details with reference to variety of ornaments, Kashmiri women used to wear during the period under survey.

Inspite of being influenced by various cross-cultural currents through out the various phases of its history, Kashmiris, true to the distinctive tradition and geographical factors did not altogether forget to retain the local motifs present in the natural environ that surrounded the valley. These natural objects of beauty which fascinated the artistic imagination of skilled Kashmiri artisans found its expression in various designs of their ornaments. As on different Kashmiri artifacts, so in the designs of ornaments, we find, birds, fruits, leaves, flowers, occupying prominent position. Such art motifs were often engraved on Kashmiri ornaments in a manner in which the emphasis was laid not only on consummate craftsmanship but also on index of profound feelings for nature on the part of the maker. It is recorded in the contemporary accounts that Kashmiri workers excelled in the making of different ornaments, especially ear rings, necklaces, bracelets, anklets, amulets, rings, rosaries, head bends and crown jewellery.
Since the age under review was one of the ugliest periods of our history, people due to intense poverty could not afford to have costly ornaments. This remained the monopoly of privileged few. Women of common folk either used ornaments made of silver or ornaments made of brass or glass. A close examination of different genres of Kashmiri folk literature led us to suggest that there existed marked difference in the shape and the style of ornaments worn by the Hindu ladies and the Muslim women.

On the basis of folklore material, we have come to know that Kashmiri women used to wear following ornaments during the period under reference.

7(a). Ornaments of head and forehead

We find short of reference in our folk poetry and tales regarding any ornament that was used to adore the head. But the literary sources indicate that Pandit unmarried girls used four *chandras* or replicas of full moon, sewn on the skull cap. However, ornament used on forehead was worn alike by the Hindu ladies and the Muslim women. It was called *deka tika*. This ornament was also presented as gift to the new born babies. This is evidenced by these verses of Kashmiri *Manzely beth*.

i) Dekas peth sowana sund tika kya gormy,  
kowarmy dile ke goshe nau  
(what a beautiful tika, I managed to have for you,  
I selected your name with intense love and affection)

ii) Dekas tika buthis nūr  
Guru, Gür, Gürü, Gür  
(With tika on your forehead,  
I lull you to sound sleep)
The *tikka* was of three or four designs. This unique silver ornament which was tied round the head and was made of a number of cut out silver medallions fixed together like chain armour with fringes of Tiny darts falling on the forehead. The most delicate of these were shaped like fish, birds and flowers. It is because of its beauty and delicacy that a handsome girl is often equated with *deka tika* and there is a folk expression in circulation which runs as under:

"Zan chak deka tika hish"

(*In beauty and delicacy you look like deka tika*).

These verses indicate that wearing of ornaments in Kashmir did not start from the time one was married but these cradle songs (Manzely beth) suggest that parents often gifted ornaments to the new born and the same were used to add beauty and attraction for the new babies.

*Wanvun* songs are replete with references to the different kinds of hair pins used for attractive hair style. These cliff were generally of black colour. Women in rural Kashmir had a unique way of fastening their hair lock, which did not need any kind of cliff to get their hair tightened. It has often been the subject of poetic fancy. For example:

Zāly wāṅkan vely mutchrau,
bēly asi nmy tambalau \(^{85}\)

(*Don’t enslave my soul, O, my beloved,
Your untying of hair knots is bewitching*).

In addition to this, Kashmiri woman, used innumerable ornamental pins in their headgear *qasaba* to look it more beautiful and impressive.
Ornaments For The Neck

NAGA-HOW
Ornaments For The Ears
Hanging over the ear on either side of the head, connected by a chain running over the head.

Studded profusely with coloured stones and beads, with the metal arranged as a relief for the stones.

Gold or Silver studded with red or clear glass and stones.

TUKA.
Ornaments worn on the forehead.
This may be of gold or silver, studded with red and green stones fringed with hanging pearls and metal leaves.
7(b). **Ornaments and Ears**

Conscious of the nicety of ornamental balance, Kashmiri women during the age under review had developed an unmatched quest for variety of ear ornaments. These include among other article *kenvej*, (earrings) *Jhumka* (tumbler shaped ear sings) Bali or Dor, Tops, *Alkahor*, *Durehor*, etc. These ear ornaments were generally made of silver, aluminium and in some cases gold according to the status and capacity of the wearer. The Hindu and the Muslim women wore ear rings of different designs and taste.

*Keneveji*: The most popular ear ornament used here in Kashmir was *kenevej*. Grouped together or in some cases suspended from each other, some seven or eight ear rings constituted one *kenevej*. Sometimes under its heavy weight the ear-lobb would develop deep cuts. Now the use of this type of heavy ear rings have fallen in disuse and only the fisher and boatmen women of Kashmir have preserved this ornamental relic of our times. Its impressive look can be imagined from this folk verse.

*Kenevaji yam chak eleravan,
Asheqan dil chak tambalavan*.
(The moment you give jerk to your ear rings, scores of lovers wish to surrender their soul at your feet).

Another type of ornament for ear was known as *Jhumka*. It was worn on both sides of the ears. It was also termed as *kanedur* in Kashmiri languages. For its balanced aesthetic look, it was generally preferred by married and unmarried girls alike. Even at a very tender age, parents of the girls wished to adore their daughters with this kind of ornament known as *kanadur* or jhumka. This is evident from this verse of a Kashmiri *Manzely beth* (cradle song).
(I wish to buy a costly jhumka for you, but you exhibit a bit patience).

**Kana bali**

It was said to be a heavy fringed ear ring with decoration work. It was used on some festive occasions and during marriage ceremonies.

**Alkahor**

Another traditional ornament for ear was called *Alkahor*. It was connected with the help of chain round the outer portion of the ear. The ornament had a set of two balanced oval shaped images which remained hanging over the ear on either side of the head. It was fixed by means of a hook to the hole at the tip of the ear. In order to hold *alkahor* together, the ends of the *alkahor* were fastened with a cord which was fixed to headgear with the help of ornamental safety pins. Kashmiri pandit virgins used *Alkahor* in place of sacred ornament called *dejehor*.

**Durahor**

This ornament was fashioned in a regal way to suit the taste of the ladies belonging to well to do families. It was studded with red and green stone and pearls and had a silver or golden coat. The ladies of the aristocratic families used this ornament on special occasions like marriage.

**Dejihor**

It was one of the ornaments of prime importance among Kashmiri pandits. It symbolised the post marriage sacred alliance between the husband and the wife. It was
and still is worn by Kashmiri pandit lady on the eve of her marriage. It served as a *managal sutra* for Kashmiri pandit lady. It was (continues to be in tradition) made of gold and its size and weight depended on the status and position of wearers family.

**7(c). Ornaments For The Neck**

We find enough information in Kashmiri *wanvun* songs about the ornaments used by Kashmiri women to adore their neck in Kashmiri *Wanvun* songs. The most popular category of neck ornaments was known as *har*. It was used by both Muslim and the Hindu ladies only after marriage. Ladies of affluent families wore *chandan har* made of gold but the ladies of general category often wore chandan har made of silver. *Chandan har* with more strings was considered to be more invaluable and a mark of high social status. Besides, *chandan har* (which was composed of several strings) other ornament of the same size and shape was named as *halqa band* (necklace). These neck ornaments namely *har* or *halqaband* were studded with precious stones and were of different fashions which happened to be altogether different from one another. Before marriage, girls usually wore amulets round their necks which were known as *Dolan Mal*.

There was yet another ornament known as *nama* which was worn by newly married Kashmiri women. It was betal leaf shaped pendent usually made of gold or silver. Here is a verse from Kashmiri folk song *wanvun* which show the intense fondness of Kashmiri daughter for this particular ornaments.

Nāmā gormas rope sund hati travas,
Jan panenuy ayut vensi thavas³¹

(With intense love I managed to buy silver nama, for my sister,
I assure her to gift my life, if she ever demands it)
Chapkal

It was a unique ornament comprising of small inch long pieces with holes at two ends. Scores of such pieces were threaded together at both the ends. There were four or five such rows put together and right at the centre, there were fixed together by a central medallion type piece. The edges of various cords were fastened closely together. The ornament was worn close to neck with the medallion stilling right over the centre of the throat. The ends of the cords were fastened at the centre of the neck. This was so attractive an ornament that the mothers often refer to the ornament to lull their babies asleep. For them it looked as a beautiful toy. This is borne out by this line of Kashmiri cradle song.

Powafí hendi tatheu chapkal garyo,\(^{92}\)
karo mej lejyo ho tai hō.

(\(O\), the beloved one of your bua, I will gift you a beautiful chapkal, But have a sound sleep in your buas lap).

Another ornament which was used around neck by Kashmiri women was known as matarmal (peas shaped necklace). It was usually used by the ladies of rich families but women belonging to lower income group had managed its substitute to satisfy their aesthetic impulse. In the imitation of matermal the ladies of common origin used, ornaments like as the substitutes of maternal.

Ledramal, tarakh mal, dolnimal, khelymal, bowakwachi mal, etc etc. All these necklaces were designed in tune with the economic level of the common folk and the ladies belonging to this category took extreme pleasure in wearing the above referred to ornaments: Here is a folk verse to substantiate our argument.

Lolan tche dolan kemy geri,
mełi ha buz bhay rajan geri\(^{93}\).
(who made such beautiful dolan for you, 
o, bride, I have heard that these were 
got made by your lonely brother).

In addition to these ornaments, we find reference of two more variation of the necklace under the name of *Hateful* and *Wetchitroto*. This is further evidenced by the following lines of this Kashmiri folk song:-

Vata vata rayo kowali wuzi poni, 
nely trot garyo ardah dont\(^4\). 

Hati chus hanga trot, meti gatchi na sana, 
kya sana Angrez Feshun av.\(^5\)

(The moment water gushes down to the stream 
I promise you to give trot of eighteen grams)

(Your neck is adorned with trot, I also aspire to have one, look it is in imitation of English fashion)

7(d). **Ornaments of Fingers**

After studying almost all marriage songs, we have been led to this conclusion that there existed only two types of finger rings, one known as *Enevej* and *Beg-vej*. Enevej was designed after yemberzal (narcissus) flower with four or five small leaves of the same flower. It was adorned with some tiny glass pieces whose reflections dazzled the viewers eyes in the bright sunny day. The another kind of vej was named as *Beg vej* It had a large circular sphere and in the centre it was studded with a big precious red stone. It was further enclosed with four small jhumer type balls. This kind of vej was presented as a betrothal gift to the would be daughter-in-law. I quote a verse from folk song which contains reference about these two ornaments.

Enevej legith nowash kya toshan\(^6\), 
Begy vej wetch kya prazfân chas,
(With an enevej in her finger the bride does not lake notice of anyone around, And the reflection of begy vej dazzles the vision of the viewer). Finger rings constituted an essential part of the entire ornamental scheme.

7(e). **Ornaments for the feet**

As mentioned earlier, Kashmiri women valued ornaments more than their lives. They regarded it impolite to wear ornaments on their feet. That is why we hardly get any reference of feet ornament in our literary sources. The only ornament used for the area referred to was Gode kery, an ornamental chain with ball like bells tied round the anklet. It was generally made of silver and was used only on special occasions by a section of professional singers and the others of like taste. Our historians seem to be misled by the accounts of European travelers, who after witnessing Kashmiri professional dancers wearing the anklet like ornament formed the opinion that feet ornaments constituted as one of the commonest articles of ornament among Kashmiri women, Netha kaj (thumb ring) and Gode kery were generally used by the ladies of particular section of Muslim community known as Wattals. The ladies of these community acted as professional singers and dancers and their services were sought to entertain the state guests. That is why we find numerous references regarding gode kery in our Rov songs. For example:

Rowani godan beni lejyo,
Kati oseham qarar chuyo.

Hati hatiphol,
gowaden gowade keryye,
Shama sowanderiye vardan lāg.

(How you bore the pangs of separations, I still remember the jingling of your godakery (The bride is wearing necklace round her neck,
how beautiful her feet look with godakerey)
(Time has come to wear a bridal suit, be ready to leave your parental home).

The commonest ornament with sacred touch popularly known as *Taweza*[^1] was used equally by both the sexes among the Hindus and the Muslims. It was generally used to ward off the evil eye. It was commonly put under silver biscuit or copper case or put under green or black piece of cloth. It was worn either round the neck or tied round the arm. These amulets were designed after many objects and they were named after these objects. People wore these amulets on the advice of Pirs in case of Muslims and Brahman pandits in case of Hindus. It will not be out of place to mention here that domain of ornamental adornment was an exclusive field of fair sex. Men folk seldom used ornaments except finger rings.

8. **Dwellings**

As in archeology, the historian, in folklore also expects information about the material aspect of life, such as economic arrangements, construction of houses, implements and tools, skill and crafts, and the people’s control over national resources.

No doubt, the conventional historical sources like archeological remains, archival material, personal diaries, official records help the researcher in understanding the facets of human society and history in a systemic chronological order but the latest researches carried in the domain of historical literature have proved that without examining the source that springs from the core of society and rooted firmly in the ethos of that society, that is folklore, one can not draw an objective picture of the different dimensions of the social life of that society. Judged

[^1]: Some regional forms are Tewza, Taviza.
against this background, an average Kashmiri’s urge to have his own independent
dwelling from the times distant past suggest to maintain that the Ghar or ler (house)
for Kashmiri does not only mean a material structure to house him and his family in
but it symbolises his emotional relation with the environ around and the possession
of a house proposes his application to this kind of social responsibility. As a result of
this intense urge and desire for a separate home an average Kashmiri prefers natural
disaster over the homely discomforts. This is evident from this Kashmiri proverb.

"Sere wāv esin\textsuperscript{101}
dere wāv me esin"

(Let the natural calamity dispossess us from all,
but our dwelling must remain safe).

An indication to the same state of social urge is expressed in the following
Kashmiri proverbs also:

i) Ghare vandehai ghara sasa bere\textsuperscript{102}
nerhai ne zenh

ii) Tcheri chu beh theri peth

i) (I prefer my small rustic cottage to the
thousands of big majestic mansions)

ii) (A sparrow feels safe and comfortable in
her own delicate nest)

The inordinate urge of being in possession of a house is artistically portrayed
in the following folk verse.

Siras sarpōsh ghara chumni\textsuperscript{103}
Me kabas sheri bhar chumni
Ya pans vesy satar chumni
Siras sarpōsh ghara chumni

(My house provides covering to my secrets,
The front doore of my house faces the direction of kaba
0, friend my house is the garment of my body,
my house provides cover to my secrets).
References to the type of dwelling Kashmiris had during the period under survey tend us to suggest that it was the dream of every Kashmiri family to have its own home according to ones economic provisions and domestic needs.

In rural Kashmir houses were generally built of unbaked bricks, stone and wood. They were generally two to three storeys high with keni and Brer keni to house the necessary firewood and other related material for the use of winter months. The ground floor was almost kept for the cattle and the second storey to house the family members. The third storey was meant for storing food grains that was kept in rustic mud cylinders known as Lowapen. These lowapenys were kept fixed and were not moved frequently from one place to another. It is because of its immovable placement, that in Kashmiri language, a person who remains stagnant without any work is often addressed zan chuk lowapen or Tche kiyazi chuy lowapun hieu go muth.

(As if you are lowapen-a body without soul)

or

(Why you look soulless like lowapun)

Keeping in tune with the geo-climatical setting, houses both in Srinagar city and villages were provided with sloping roofs, resting on walls with gable ends. The wooden rafters of the roof were covered with a layer of birch bark over which clay was laid.

The houses of the poor had a roof with a thatched straw and also rough shingle. The roofs covered with clay would look colourful in sont (spring) with lilies grown on them. This is indicated from this verse of Kashmiri folksong:

Range range posh phely burzey pashney,
Konai chava hesheney lol begran.
A trap door was usually kept on the roof to provide access to the members of the family to ward off heavy snow from the roofs during the months of *chilay kalan* (months of extreme cold). Sometimes, these Trap doors (vowagas) provided easy access to thieves to break into the house, as is indicated by this song

Dārī kiny akho, ya akh woagey,
Tche kuso dakha kery thei drakh.

(May I know whether you (thief) entered from window or trap door,
You had slipped away unnoticed after causing much damage)

According to an European Traveler, the farm houses in the valley resembled the European houses of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and looked from a distance picturesque surrounded generally by the walnut, mulberry and the Chinar trees. The animals kept in the ground floor provided warmth during the chilly winter months. The inmates often liked to spend their night at *dengiguo* during the months of extreme cold. But spending nights at dengigs for quite a long time with little or no exposure to open fresh air often caused lung diseases like *asthama, sila* or other like disease. In order to get rid of bad effects of wasteful material, piled often in courtyards during winter months, people would eagerly wait for sont or spring. To the ailing and sick Kashmiris spring meant rebirth or new life. This state of Kashmiri mind is well depicted in this *Rov* song:

Sont āmey dēdy balnam sērī,
Wande tcholomy gam balnam sērī,
Guh angani wetchi mōji chekrith,
di pej tai pate techelnam sērī,

(My all ailments would vanish, spring has set in,
The winter has gone, with it, will fade all over miseries
The cowdung is spread all along the cottage lawn,
O, mother, give me willow basket, I along with my friends shall take it to the fields as a manure).

There is no denying the fact that little effort was made by the dwellers to keep their surrounding clean. We find scores of references in different travel accounts regarding the unclean surroundings of Kashmiris. But this might have been perhaps due to the abundance of snow fall and the slippery paths which could have hampered the dwellers to take the human and cattle waste away to the distant fields.

Both in villages and in the city, people used vageyu\textsuperscript{112} (mats) and slept on them. In the words of Lawrence, "A cotton spinning wheel (Yender)- a wooden pestle (mohul) and motor (kang) for husking the rice and few earthen pots for cooking and earthen Urus (lowapen) for storing grain were the only utensils found in every household of Kashmir."

There is an ample evidence available in our folktales which tend us to believe that in both rural and urban Kashmir, people who had some association and intimacy either with the ruling elite or official class were in possession of big and capacious houses decorated with delicate lattice work (Pinjra kari) Such houses were often used as rest houses by the touring revenue officials and other European travelers during the period of our study\textsuperscript{113}. In Srinagar city, the houses of wealthy karkhanadars, Muslim Rais families like Shahdad, Kheshery, Kawoosa Mattus, Naqshbhandhis Mirza's Dhars, Ganjoo\textsuperscript{114} and other collaborators of the raj usually stood in a majestic cue on both sides of the river Jehlum right down to the Habba Kadal bridge. These houses were generally referred in Kashmiri literature as mandori, (mansions) or Rangelari.
These houses projected the exemplary architectural uniqueness of Kashmiri skill and craft. The lattice work coupled with different shades of thin glass added to the beauty and attraction of these big mansions. Some of the structures which escaped the ravages of the time stood even today as the relics of the feudal taste and temperament. Our folk songs abound in references about these palace like mansions and there are number of expressions used in our creative literature which indirectly refer to these majestic buildings. Some of the expressions are

\begin{itemize}
  \item [Enadab, Range mandori, Gutchi Kuthi]
  \item [Zona dabe, Prange perau, Robakhane etc. etc.\textsuperscript{115}]
\end{itemize}

These folk expressions not only serve as a pointer to the architectural excellence of the time but it also serves as an indicator of the high aesthetic taste of the well off Kashmiri families. These houses, built on the either side of the river Jehlum or \textit{Vitasta} served as the objects of great attraction for European missionaries and travelers. Some times these people expressed intense desire to stay in these beautiful houses rather then to halt in the allotted official rest houses. The architectural niceties and the beauty of these houses is versified in these lines of Kashmiri Folk songs

\begin{itemize}
  \item [i) Zely panjrau menzy nazr trav bëli asi my tambalau,\textsuperscript{116}]
      Kama div hai angan tehav bëli asi my tambalau.
  \item [ii) Ena dabi hai rovum, dediya lô,\textsuperscript{117}]
      mely sund hai osum dediye lô.
\end{itemize}
iii) Gatchi kathi temy sund bronth Geyómy\textsuperscript{118},
   Teti vutchmas may Téháyan,
   Be hai pata laraś, veni nai amy,
   namai sőçces türų.

iv) Ranga kuthi karyo prange vethrōn,\textsuperscript{119}
   tathi vele sōn tathi vele sōn.

i. (Don't ignite my passion o, my beloved, you look
so bewitching from the tiny holes of lattice work
window)

ii. (I have lost somewhat invaluable in a glass
balcony.
Could you tell me the name of a missing article?
I believe, my beloved had entered into a colourful
decorated balcony.

iii. I, unconsciously started following her shadow,
    but I found none/ What a great loss was)

iv. (If you (beloved) ever pay visit to my house,
    I assure you to provide a private corner with all
    comforts and luxury).

From the above folk verses, it may be deduced that the rich trading families,
official elite and those families having close proximity with the Raj enjoyed every
comfort of life. These people used to live in big majestic houses with every kind of
domestic comfort which suited to the feuded tastes and liking. On the other hand
majority of people lived in dungeon type houses surrounded by filth and cattle waste.

9. \textit{Food and Drinks}

Food and drinks constitute as one of the most important dimension of any
human society. An attentive study of the sources led us to believe that food and
drinking habits of Kashmiris were generally governed by three factors, geo-climatic factor, religious factor and economic factor. Further, the literature, particularly Kashmiri folk literature present two divergent versions of the food habits of Kashmiris. In folk songs, we find abundant references about the sumptuous dishes, prepared generally on auspicious occasions like marriage and other related occasions. But in Kashmiri folktales, we come across detailed description of the dishes which constituted the major food culture of average Kashmiri. In Kashmiri wanvun songs (marriage songs) an intense desire is expressed by women folk to have an opportunity to enjoy sumptuous dishes of Kashmiri wazvaan like Qarma, Rista, Roganjosh, Kabab, Yekhni, and Gowashtaba.\textsuperscript{120} while in folktales, the characters involved demand for less expensive and self nurtured wild vegetables like hand (Dandeliow) kretch (Knapweed) Obej (Sorrel) nuner (Common purslane) Sowatchal (Common mellow) pamba hak (Indian rhubarb) tchoka ledder (Polygonum alpinum) Heder (mushrooms) etc and other vegetable of like nature.

A close examination of contemporary literature reveals that rice as in the past, continued to be the staple food of Kashmiris during the period under review. It was cooked in earthen and copper pots, known as deg or lej. A corresponding substitute for English saying “Face is the index of mind” runs as

"Bete leje chi wetchan pethe kani"
(The lifting of the lid of leji (pot) tells the actual state of cooking material)

The fondness of an average Kashmiri for rice may well be discerned from the scores of rice varieties we come across the different forms of folk songs. Similarly
there are dozen of Kashmiri sayings and proverbs which contain reference to bhata (cooked rice) and the repeated description of word bhata innumerable folk expressions speak of the magnitude of Kashmiris fondness for bhata. Here I quote some of the folk sayings and proverbs which contain the expression of bhata.

a) Bete Bete te pyade pate
b) Bete dag aseny,
c) Bete bete karun,
d) Bete kothi aseny,
e) Bete betchy asun,
f) Bete shropeye kath chropeyyine
g) Bete phelyn pyon.

a) (There is a strict vigil on very grain of rice)
b) (Scarcity of food (rice) leads to death and starvation)
c) (In a situation like drought or famine, people die for a grain of rice)
d) (Rice or bhate is the only source of sustenance)
e) (To cry repeatedly for rice (bhata) brings shame and ridicule)
f) (If you can digest a plate full of rice, (bhata) why can’t you maintain the secrecy of confidential matter).
g) (Taking excessive bhata is a curse rewarded with shame and insult)

The above cited folk expressions tend us to suggest that the rice though produced in abundance in the valley failed to feed its producer (tiller) as it was found to be an uncommon commodity due to the restrictions imposed by the Sikh and subsequently by the Dogra rulers. The elite oriented agrarian policy followed by the Sikhs and the Dogras crippled the very existence of the tillers. They were heavily taxed, ruthlessly fleeced and mercilessly beaten by inhuman revenue officials and their local agents like muqadamas, patwaris, kardars, sozawuls and shakdars. The following passages gives the graphic picture of the food scarcity during the period under observation. “It is a strange irony of the fate that the Sikh administration
exported large quantities of rice to Ladakh, Tibet, Iskardu and other parts of Central Asia, but the poor classes passed their worse days mostly on vegetables like cabbage, turnips, lettuces, pumpkins, spinach and carrots. The people who lived near lakes took *Singhara* (water nuts)\(^{124}\) as a substitute for *bhata* (rice). The entire situation is portrayed in a pathetic way in this Kashmiri folk boat song:

\[
\begin{align*}
&Gērī hai nerō Tcharnī Sarnei,\textsuperscript{125} \\
&Kēly hō sarinei che memui lō. \\
&Gareu setein yed chem bernei, \\
&Kely ho sarinei che mamei hō \\
&(Let us move friends towards lakes to search for water nuts, \\
&We know that we are destined to die one day. \\
&Let us fight the pangs of hunger by eating water nuts, \\
&We know that we are destined to die one day).
\end{align*}
\]

The fact or the message contained in the above referred folk boat song is substantiated by Sir William Moorcroft, who visited the valley in 1823. He observed that waternuts alone formed, “almost only food of at least thirty thousand persons for five months in the year”. Keeping in view its nutritious value, the Hindus of the valley usually took the bread made of singhara flour on special days when they observed fast to please their dieties\(^{126}\).

Victor Jacquemont attributes the Kashmiris fondness for low caste vegetables to his utter economic poverty. He observed that “the Afghans, last century, having deprived the Mughuls of that conquest, and the Seikhs (Sikh) haven driven the Afghans from it, a general plunder followed each new conquest; and the intervals of peace, anarchy and oppression, doing their best against labour and industry, the country is now so completely ruined that the poor cashmerians seem to be despair, and have become the most indolent of men. If one must starve, it is better to do at
ones ease, than bend under the weight of labour. In Cashmere there is scarcely more chance of getting a supper for him, who tills, spins, or sows all day, than for him who being rendered desperate, sleeps all day under the shade of a tree”\(^\text{127}\).

Even before the advent of Islam in Kashmir, the Kashmiri Pandits had developed a keen taste for meat preparations. But with the coming of the Muslims from different regions of Central Asia and Persia in the fourteenth and fifteenth century, Kashmiris food habits underwent a drastic change. The present \textit{wazwan}, a special variety of Kashmiri \textit{dastarkhan} is said to have been introduced in Kashmir during the sultanate period. The dishes served in Kashmiri \textit{wazvan} include among other things \textit{methi, tabaqmaz, Deny, Rista, Kabab, Roganjosh, Qowarma, Dupeaza} and \textit{Gowastaba}. The \textit{wazwan} was and is generally arranged on marriage occasion and other festival days. Four persons together share one \textit{bhata tram}\(^\text{128}\) (big copper rice plate). Special type of movable wash basin known as \textit{Tasht-nari} is used for washing the hands before the \textit{wazwan} is served to the invited guests. Such type of sumptuous dishes were and still are severed on other socio-religious occasions also.

In rural Kashmir, eggs constituted as major dish of hospitality. Guests especially family Pirs were often served with multiple of preparation. Fowl to an average villager was nothing less than a golden bird. This was served on special occasions to the respectable guests. The death of a fowl was mourned for days together by a Kashmiri villager. In extreme situation of economic poverty, fowl was used as an important gift item to appears corrupt officials of revenue and police administration. This is pointed by one of the scenes of Kashmiri folk play “\textit{Raza pether}”\(^\text{129}\). In addition to this there is an important Kashmiri folk song under the title
of *kawaker nama*, which describes the pain of an average Kashmiri villager caused by the sudden death of a fowl. For example:-

Hai koawkri lōi chon amy,  
Phah thūlan thowtamy khānmy,  
hai kowakri lōi chōn amy.  

(We mourn your (fowl) death very sadly,  
You remain ever alive in our memory,  
You left us at the time when eggs were half hatched)

Due to peculiar geo-climatic conditions, Kashmiris developed a unique food culture, according to which Kashmiri women folk dried fresh vegetables like tomato, brinjal, turnips and other vegetables at the out set of the autumn season, and the same were used during the months of *chiley kalan* (severe cold). This dried up brand of vegetables was known as *hokhe siyun*. People enjoyed these dry vegetables during the long winter days when passages altogether remained snow bounded and when due to severe cold vegetables ceased to grow in the valley.

In the like manner, Kashmiris showed intense fondness for various categories of dry fish. The two common categories of dry fish were known as *Raza howagard*, and peche *howagard*. In addition to this there was yet another kind of fish which was burnt in a grass and it was known as *Fer* in Kashmiri language. These categories of dry and burnt fish were generally taken during the months of severe cold.

Besides, these categories of dried fish, Kashmiris enjoyed various kinds of fresh fish also. The fresh fish was usually prepared with *Dal nadru* (Lotus roots of Dal lake). To make the dish more tasty and delicious, woman used to add a little piece of *Kashmiri veri* (chilly cake) to it. This is also reflected in one of Kashmiri proverbs. For Example:
"Feri ohe shūban Ver"¹³⁶
Cheri che shūban ther.

(A burnt type of fish (Fer) is tasteless without veri (chilly cake)
(A sparrow looks safe on the branch of a tree)

During summer months, fish was generally avoided as according to popular belief it is fatal to take fish in during hot days. The same impression is carried in this Kashmiri folk saying:-

"Harech gad te larech gunas gexi barabar cooked"¹³⁷
(To take cooked fish in summer is equally dangerous as poison).

Kashmiris seldom used pulses during the summer months but the same were taken in abundance during the long winter months. According to folk medicinal belief since pulses generate more heat and acidic reaction in hottest period, it therefore damages the digestive system. Therefore the terms like shuhul garm are given due weightage by average Kashmiri in the selection of their food articles.

During the months of chiley kalan (22nd December to 1st of March) to combat coldness people at intervals also cooked a nutritious dish known as kretcher (khichdi) and it was generally shared by all members of the family and some quantity of it was distributed among the neighbours as well.

Heresa¹³⁸ formed yet another winter dish of Kashmiris. There were special shops where heresa was sold. People exchanged this dish in the early morning hours. People exchanged this dish as an article of gift too among themselves and gifting of heresa as a present was taken with great love and care.

Another food item known as Shabdeg¹³⁹ was also in use during the period of our study. It was served on special occasions at the advice of family Pirs and the
priests. In addition to this special type of food item, there were other food items like Tehr, Dowadevegre, Tethely bhata, which were served particularly to small children with the intention of remaining safe from the affect of the evil spirits. These food items were generally prepared on some special occasions at the advice of family pirs or pandits. There was yet another type of community food known as Sasa ras which was prepared with collective effort. After distributing this special type of food, mass prayers were held either in the open air or in local mosques, where people invoke the help of Saints and God to lessen the effect of occurred natural calamity like flood, fire, earthquake, famine, drought and epidemics. There are number of children songs in Kashmiri folk literature which throw immense light on these community served foods. In the following children song, boys ridicule those who fail to offer oil, ghee, firewood, rice and cash money to them children for arranging and preparing the community meal. For example

Agar to agar yeth garas gagar,
Harket zi harket yeath garas barkath.

(Let the rats damage the household goods of these families, who refused to contribute for the community meal.)
Let God shower bounties of blessing on the inmates of the house, who generously contributed for the community meal.

There is another children' song which is sung by the children in praise of those who came forward with generous gifts for preparing the community meal for the purpose already referred to. A line of the song runs as under
Hupā hupā dhāni shupā.¹⁴²
Sēri venytau balai dafā
Hupa hupā dhāni shupā
Ya Shāikh sana ober fana

(Every family is requested to offer enough shalli (unhusked rice) to prepare the community food. With a humble heart, we prey Allah to relieve us from the ravages of calamity, people invoke the aid of Sheik sana (a notable Muslim mystic of Iran) for stopping the torrential rains that played havoc with the standing crops).

During the times of natural calamities, which often caused the destruction of standing crops, people resorted to wild vegetable and the staple food, rice was substituted by vath¹⁴³, or yaji¹⁴⁴ and other economical food items. There are famous Kashmiri proverbs "Zan chuk yaji chapan" or "Yaji chuk apravan", the first proverb is referred to a person who lacks mannerism and is devoid of behavioural decency and civility. The second proverb is used as a sarcastic remark against a person who tries to befoul others. Though this type of food has fallen in disuse now but it formed a popular dish of commoners during the periods of natural crises thanks are due to the folk literature which has the credit of having preserved the impression of this dietary item.

*Vath*, the half grinded corn was also used by common men when there occurred food scarcity due to failure or excessive rains. Though *vath* contained rich nutritious value, still it was considered to be the poorest dietary item in the food agenda of average Kashmiri. Even the bread made of wheat flour was unwillingly taken by common men as the substitute for rice. Taking of wheat floor bread (Kenka towachi) in place of rice was recognised as the symbol of extreme poverty and resourcelessness.
Kashmiris, as a general rule, preferred salt to sugar. *Nuna chai* (salty tea) formed the popular drink of Kashmiris during the period of our study. There are scores of folk songs sung in praise of *Nuna chai* (salty tea). According to the literary accounts, tea was imported from Sinkiang, Khoatan and other parts of Russo-Turkistan during the period of our study. It constituted chief export item during the period under reference. According to the text of *chainana*, there were forty two kinds of tea, used in Kashmir. It was served in big nicked copper *samavars* and was taken twice a day. It worked no less an intoxicant for the poor Kashmiris, who groaned under the clutches of oppressive rulers. An average Kashmiri’s fondness for *Nuna chai* can be gleaned from this folk song, sung by village women when they return home from distant forests with a heavy load of firewood and the feed for their domestic cattle.

Wene ayes peky peky thekith
Ghara vetith cheme nune chaï.
Kathe boren treves tehetith,
ghara vetith cheme nune chaï.
Kutchi peth wetch sëri semith
ghara vetith cheme nune chaï.

(I had gone to the distant jungle to bring feed for the cattle and the firewood, I fully exhausted,
I am sure to get relieved of all discomfort,
If I take few cups of salty tea.
All family members are sitting together on the upper floor of the grain store, enjoying the sips of salty tea,
I will feel relaxed, if I take few cups of salty tea).

Kashmiri villager preferred to be served with Kahwa (sugar tea) by his host when he visited to any near and distant relative, but in his own house, he would rarely like to have a drink of *kehwa*. It was mostly taken on festive occasions and on other
auspicious days by the common folk. The respectable families of Pirs, Khowajas (rais) and the Kashmiri Pandits preferred kehwa to an ordinary type of tea. These families often added saffron to kehwa to give it an additional flavour and colour. Kehwa constituted an important dietary item on marriage occasions and there are number of folk songs which are sung even today in praise of kounnga kehwa. It was generally made and served in small samovars.

Qanda Sharbat was another drink Kashmiris were very fond of. It was severed to children on some auspicious occasions. Further during the month of Ramadan, the Muslims frequently took this drink keeping its energy and medicinal value. This is also attested by this verse of Kashmiri folk song.

Powafe deydi qanda sharbat chawnowukh,  
mase deyedi kowachi lalenowukh tehei.

(The sister of your father fed you with a delicious sweaty drink, (qanda sharbat)
The sister of your mother brought you up with care and affection in her lap).

Different varieties of anchar also constituted a popular dietary item of Kashmiri food culture. Both the Hindus and Muslims were fond of using variety of pickles, relishes (chatnis) and flavour of different kinds. In villages anchar was taken as raw but in Srinagar, it was first fried in mustard oil and then taken. Jehangir also in his memoirs mentions the specialty of Kashmiri pickle. According to him, “the best pickle was that of garlic, because the garlic of Kashmir was very good.

10. Past times and recreation

The period under review, though, a witness to appalling heights of political oppression, the common folk true to their tradition and history adhered strictly to
certain popular devises which provided the sunk and sullen Kashmiris a source for recreation and entertainment.

A careful review of folk literature reveals that during the months of extreme cold, when all passages for outdoor entertainment got paralyzed due to heavy snowfall, the only source of recreation left for Kashmiri people was to listen the adventurous romantic tales of Arabian nights, Persian heroes and tales of legendary heroes of ancient Kashmir. There were professional story tellers whose services were sought to entertain the common folk, assembled together somewhere for the purpose. This process continued for nights together until the story or tale reached to its end. The professional story tellers were in great demand and they were paid both in cash and kind. This perhaps may be main reason that why during the period of our study good number of Persian epics like “Shahnama” of Firdousi and other romantic tales like Gulrez, Yousouf Zuleikha, Laila Majnun were translated into Kashmiri language. Stein, who compiled one of the prestigious collections of Kashmiri folk tales under the title of “Hatim’s tales” acknowledges the proficiency of one story teller Hatim Tilawani by name, from whom he heard these stories. Kashmiri village folk is said to forget their worries and agonies, caused by the corrupt revenue and police officials, and other exploiting agents, while being seated amid these recreational gatherings. In addition to the Persian oriented tales, local tales like Aka nandun, Hemal Negrey, Bomber Yemberzal, Zohra Khatun and Hayabund were also enjoyed by the local folk.

From the earliest times, Kashmiris had developed rich taste for theatrical performances. During the period under review, professional folk performers known as
Bhands or Bhagats entertained people during harvest days and on the occasion of anniversaries of Sufi saints. Their humorous dramatic performances on fairs and festivals provided ample source for common folk to entertain themselves. These bhands performed folk plays known in Kashmiri language as "Luke Pether" in their peculiar costumes. Sources reveal that people flocked in numbers from distant places to enjoy these pethers (folk plays). These Pethers generally served two purposes, delight and information. These plays contained seemingly source of public entertainment but inwardly these pethers acted as pointers towards the official bunglings, oppression of feudal lords and the exploiting nature of the raj collaborators. The in depth study of these "Luke pethers" tend us to suggest that in absence of the formal communicating agencies, these 'bhands' served as reliable informants for the "sarkar" by highlighting public grievances in a dramatic manner.

These bhands also exposed the exploiting devices of religious classes like Muslim Pirs and Pandit Brahmans. During the course of my M.Phil. programme, when I had a chance to see Mohd. Subhan Bhagat, he revealed to me that when the bhands expose the machinations of any member of corrupt officialdom or other exploiting agents, people sitting around shower abuses against the dramatic actors, taking them as the real characters. The louder laughter of village folk on comedian characters looks infact, a great satire against every exploiting section of the society, he revealed. Sir Walter Lawrence while conducting settlement work in the valley found that some of the plays enacted by the Bhands clearly depicted aggression of the ruling classes, over the masses, more particularly the agriculturists. "They", states Lawrence, "relieve the sadness of village life in Kashmir."
There was another source of recreation enjoyed equally by rural and city people. It was known as *Dambali*. It was a combination of dance and the demonstration of material art. The "Damabi" was performed by a group of eight to fifteen professional dambalis known in vernacular as *Dambaly Faqir* or *Dambaly Mety*. The team of dambali performers was also received with extreme warmth and welcome. People rushed to the spot from the neighbouring villages to enjoy their dance and sling skills. Unlike Bhands, people held them in high esteem. It was believed as the tradition goes, that the performers of *dambaly* had been blessed with the baraka of local mystic saint. There arrival in the courtyard was taken as a good omen by both men and women folk.

Another group of professional singers who were popularly known as *shairs* entertained village people particularly during harvest season. They often appeared with their rustic orchestra and began singing songs in praise of the respectable family or village elders. These *shair* are said to have been in the habit of composing their topical songs on spot. During my survey, I came across number of such *shairs* in Kulgam Tehsil but I was moved to see their sad plight. People now due to new means of recreation have lost all love and attraction for these movable human entertainers.

In the words of Walter Lawrence:

"The *shairs* must be distinguished from the Bhaggats for they never act. They are either minstrels who sing to the accompaniment of a guitar, or the village poets, who suddenly spring up in the midst of business and recite in a loud shrill tone the praises of the most influential person present. I knew many of these poets, and have spent many hours listening patiently to the rhymes which seemed to have no end, and which jumbled up in a very curious manner .... It is good to give these poets a few rupees, for they are often miserable poor".
Lari shah or laddi shah (minstrel poet) was yet another folk entertainer. According to Prof. Mohi-ud-din Hajini “it (lari shah) has proved to be a source of mental consolation for the enslaved folk during the centuries past. Lari shah dressed in a peculiar costume with dehra (small iron rod with copper rings around it) would appear in peoples courtyards both in cities and villages and started reciting his literary compositions in a peculiar impressive tune on variety of socio-political themes. He usually directed his poetic criticism against the aggressive revenue officials, religious exploiters and anti-social elements like hoarders, profiteers and black marketers. People particularly children and women folk enjoyed his artistic company. Among other things his areas of artistic focus include multiple of natural calamities like floods, fires, droughts, famines and earthquakes Kashmiri folk literature is fortunate enough to have a rich treasure of this popular genre. Some of the important pieces of lari shahas which had a long role to play in the process of public entertainment during the period under survey include among others: Buniyil Nama; Angrez Qanon, Bata Sowaqal, Mujwaza Nama, Aba drag, etc. etc.

The Urs days of venerated Sufi and Reshi saints round the year offered great opportunity for popular rejoice and pleasure. Apart from their spiritual relevance, these served as the great spots of public jubilation and recreation. In an environs conditioned by constant gloom and despair, the Urs days served as a recurring source of relief and consolation for other wise grief stricken people of Kashmir. Since there was a self imposed restriction on Kashmiri women to visit the Mughal gardens, the only way to enjoy the outdoor pleasure for Kashmiri women was to visit the shrines of Sufi saints on urs days. Besides being blessed by saints spiritual merit (as people
believed) the area around the shrines was crowded with jugglers, wrestlers, bhandes and other charm performers, who amused people by their professional skills, wit and common sense. The man with domesticated bear and monkey also provided enough opportunity for commoners to enjoy themselves at these social gatherings.

In Srinagar city and in major towns of the valley, *Becha nagma* formed as one of the major source of public jubilation. Becha nagma marked the chief feature of Kashmiri marriage during the period of order review. People hired the services of Kashmiri folk *chakri*. Singers, who amused people by their musical melodies and child dance. These special musical parties were arranged particularly during the night hours. Elders, muscle men and people with sufina temperament formed the major chunk of listeners and viewers.

During the period under survey, the *becha nagma* was also arranged on festive occasions in the *Dungas* on the waters of famous Dal Lake. The institution served as an alternative for Hafiza dance which was purely a domain of feudal elite and aristocracy. This is substantiated by the remarks of Florence Parbury who says that “the natives are very fond of a tamasha or fete, where they wear gorgeous clothes and sprinkle scent upon each other, and in Kashmir they often celebrate great occasions by a trip on the river. On one occasion we heard the beating of drums and strains of music skimming past our house boat, and on looking out saw a boat load of men in brilliant costumes”.

For aristocracy and feudal elite there happened to be professional musical clubs run by male sex brokers and prostitutes. There used to be two such main centres
dealing in sensual pleasure during the period under reference. One each at ‘Maisuma’ and *Tashvan* in Srinagar city. In Anantnag district of Kashmir, near famous Achabal mughal garden, there also existed such centre, where a small garden is still remembered after the name of the lady manager of that recreational centre.

Among less expensive popular pastimes, mention may be made of *Kowaker jang jang* (cock fighting) *Dande ledey* (Bull fighting) and *koter vedav* (pigeon flying). Amidst political vandalism and economic distress, commoners took active participation in these outdoor pastimes. The popularity of the *dande ledey* can be deduced from this Kashmiri proverb.

"Srandan henzi ledayi manz chi gekhan zand lete mowanji”
(In a fight between the two bulls the shrubs around get damaged).

*Dangal* (wrestling) was also one of the chief sources of public entertainment. The wrestlers often belonged to *Gury* (milk seller) families. Being in possession of well physical charm and strength, wrestlers belonging to Guri families often outshined their counterparts in the wrestling ring. In Srinagar city, according to contemporary sources, the wrestling bouts were usually arranged in the idgah ground. This wrestling bout in vernacular was known as *Pehlwan Dab Dab*. Another equally important muscle oriented game, which constituted a popular means of public recreation was *Lori Jang Jang* (sling fighting). This folk game was played in streets and lanes. Sources reveal that during these fatal fights, dozen of rival participants would receive minor or major injuries which usually resulted in community clashes. Keeping in sight the fatal nature of the play, this game has now ceased to be the part of Kashmiri sports agenda.
It is evident from the context of the Kashmiri folk tales that from the distant times small girls in Kashmir amused themselves with variety of children’s games. One such game or pastime, very popular among children was known by the name of Maharini Deji (toy bride). The toy marriage like amusing exercise is vividly depicted in this song.

Haï vesiye kot sanā llwakchar gõ!
Yi nasā phirith su mut lowakchar gō,
Yaad chuyi keni gindun meharen dejen?168.
Shube vun lowat lowat su kot lowakchar go.

(O, my friend, do you ever recall your childhood days?)
I eagerly crave for its return.
Do you remember the sweet moments when we used to play toy bride games?
How bewitching it was our childhood!
But it faded so silently and unnoticed)

Being aware of the significance of physical fitness and mental soundness, Kashmiris amid poverty and exploitation, developed more taste for cheap sports activities rather than the big and expensive sports exercises. Their liking for less time consuming folk games is suggestive of their busy working schedule. During the period under reference, rural people from their very childhood either worked as bonded agricultural labourers on the lands of their absentee feudal lords, or worked as born debt industrial labourers in the clumsy factories of wealthy karakhandars in Srinagar city. Under such inhuman conditions, how could Kashmiris have developed taste and liking for games of royal and elite nature. Our historians have altogether marginalised the significance and the relevance of these games and that is why there
is no mention of these games in any of the historical narrative. These games help in understanding the soci-economic make-up and the aesthetic pulse of Kashmiri soviet.

The list of the folk games Kashmiris played with though very lengthy and comprehensive but here the reference may be made of only few games played during our period of our study. These were Eny Katar, Kath Shahey Bam, Saza long, Garm, Okus Bokus, Yendre-mohul, Ate sewery Tsoori-Tchefi Lethy kij loth, Hiketh, Samandar Gir y Bacha etc etc. These games were played exclusively by small children belonging to both the sexes.

The only game referred to above which was accompanied by rustic choral singing was Okus Bokus. Muslim women in Kashmir observed Ramzan with redoubled social gaiety and the religious zeal. They used to come out of their dwellings after breaking the fast and assembled together to sing in melodious tunes the Rov songs in praise of gallant Muslim heroes and local religious saints. The bounties of Allah, the glorious deeds of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) and the spiritual merits of Sufis and Rishis constituted the major content of these Rov songs. Kashmiri women folk often used this occasion to amuse themselves in the company of neighbouring ladies. These folk melodies coupled with balanced body rhythms of Kashmiri virgins would create a romantic sight in the secredotal backdrop of the Ramzan month. The month offered an outdoor exercise of enjoyment for otherwise confined Kashmiri virgins. The occasion was also used by Kashmiri Women to give spontaneous their expression to inner emotional feelings. The month of Ramzan in Kashmir was not only observed in Kashmir as one of the fundamental duty enjoined...
by the Quran on believers, but it had a tremendous bearing on the fair sex. About Rov, Walter Lawrence remarks as under:

"On festive occasions, the young women danced in groups in the form of semi circle, they sang pretty songs and their dance was graceful".

Though the dawn of winter (Vande) signaled the innumerable worries for an average Kashmiri, Yet owing to innate impulse for joy and jubilation, they turned the very occasion of first snow fall into a recreational exercise. A fun attached to this occasion is known as shine sheret. People would eagerly await for nav shin to befool their dear ones with the intention of getting a prize in kind of Herisa. Vigne has referred to this amusement as the Kashmiri equivalent of making one as "April Fool".

As Becha nagma constituted a popular mode of public amusement, so was the musical cum dance feats performed by beautiful Kashmiri Ladies a great source of mental and sensual consolation for elite and aristocratic class. The institution of 'Natuch girls' was exclusively the state monopoly during the first phase of our period of study. It had been the practice of Sikh predecessors (Afghans) to spend nights in company of the natuch girls enjoying their music and dance. The Sikhs converted this aesthetic exercise to sensual heights. Commenting on the sad plight of natuch girls Hugel Writes:

"These poor creatures are doomed to a hard fate; they are not allowed either to sing or dance without permission, and if they get this, an officer of the government always accompanies them, who grasps, whatever they received."

According to Jacqumont

"The Sikh administrators off and on pleased and entertained their state guests by arranging dancing parties in decorated boats. About Kripa Ram, the Sikh governor there is a story in circulation among the Kashmiri folk that the peddlers of his official barge were always women. They dressed themselves in red uniforms, wore
gungroes on their ankles and these ornaments produced harmonized musical sound *shroney*.

It was because of this reason, says Lawrence that the Kashmiris who were expert in nickname had given him the sobriquet of 'Kripa Shroney'. Thus the folk expression “Kripa Shroney” presents the spectacular picture of the luxurious life style of the Sikh governing class.

Keeping in view the abundant water resources available in the valley in form of world renowned lakes, it was natural for Kashmiris to develop a taste for some kind of water games, but the only game we find reference to in our folk literature is the annual boating race held on Urs-i-Shahi-Hamdan at “Khanqa-hi-Maula”. People in great numbers flocked to the spot to enjoy the feats of professional Kashmiri boatmen known in vernacular as *henz* (hanji). During the course of my visit to the area around the shrine, I met an aged lady, “Rahti” who sung for me this folk song which contains reference to this boat race. Few lines of the song are given for reference:-

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Khanaqah chu mêle logmut,  
Henzen chu bôsh khotmut,  
Navan chi sheran nam,  
Tehe kemiya dieutnai bram.  
Khâñqah chu mêle logmut,  
Hanzen chu bôsh khotmut,  
Vethi bheti Tchelmnam gam,  
Tohe kemiya dieutnai bram.
```

(The fair or mela at khanaqah is in full bloom)  
The boatmen look intoxicated with pride and passion  
They are busy in repairing the decks of their boats,  
Don't fell slave to their bewitching skills  
The fair or mela at khanaqah is in full bloom,
(The boatwomen look intoxicated with pride and passion our all worries and anxieties would lesson while enjoying the boating feat on the banks of river vitāsta (Jehlum).

In addition to this, there were some other folk games in use during the period of our study as revealed by some elderly persons to me during the course of my survey. But I failed to find any reference regarding such games in any of the folk genre of Kashmiri. But the fact remains that these games constituted an important part of the children sports scheme during the period under review and served as a major source of child recreation and amusement. These games include among other activities Razi gindun (Rope play) Juf Taq (odd and even game) Tanchi etc.

An attentive examination of the oral sources reveal that Kashmiris possess an innate urge for creating situations which could provide enough chance even amid unfavourable circumstances for them to amuse and delight. This is evidenced by some of the folk expressions which dub Kashmiris as Sele mety and Eshe mety (amuse lover) The assertion is substantiated by the remarks made by George Forster, who visited the valley in the first half of the nineteenth century. TO quote him, “When a Kashmiri, even of the lowest order, finds himself in the possession of ten shillings, he looses no time in assembling his party and launching into the lake, solace himself till the lost farthing is spent”.

11. Fairs and Festivals

Celebrating fairs and festivals occupied a distinct place in the social life of Kashmiris. During the period under debate, it enabled the commoners at recurring intervals to find relaxation from the miseries and exacting toil of their sullen and struggling life. The collective behaviour pattern of Kashmiris of celebrating fairs and
festivals was generally governed by three important factors: Religio-cultural, social and political.

Governed by a set of traditional historical canons, our historians, chroniclers and other European travelers have applied the uniform scale for examining the underlying motive for holding different fairs and celebrating religious festivals by Kashmiris during the period under reference. But a careful examination of different genres of Kashmiri oral literature tend us to believe that Kashmiris intense urge to celebrate different fairs and festivals almost round the year was equally conditioned by the prevailing unfavourable political conditions. As is evident that the unique political system deprived an average Kashmiri of every means to protest against the ruthless behaviour of officialdom and the favourites of the rule. Finding themselves in an atmosphere of security and solace in the shrine environs, Kashmiris, without any fear of official secret agents, placed their heart felt grievances in the durbar of the dead Sufi saints for invoking their aid and help. This is evidenced from the contemporary literary works of eminent Kashmiri Sufi poets of the period. This perhaps could have been one of reasons for an average Kashmiris fondness for celebrating these fairs and festivals. The argument is further substantiated by the fact that Kashmiris had never shown jubilation on the festivals like Baisakhi or "Nauroz", instead Shivratri, and Idd Festivals and the periodical fairs held at different Sufi and Rishi Shrines (in case of Muslims) and fair at "Khir Bhawani" at Tulmul near Ganderbal by Kashmiri Pandit Community, were observed with more religious zeal and traditional social fervour and gaiety.
The period under survey was witness to the worst kind of ravages caused by recurring natural calamities like floods, famines, Earthquakes and fires, but the innate desire of the people to find the avenues to relieve them of their pains did not deter them from celebrating these fairs and festivals. According to Walter Lawrence, "Fairs held at the Shrines annually were red latter days in the dull lives of the Muslim. The major religious festivals of the Muslims in Kashmir were Id-ul-Fitr, (Lowakat Idd) ID-ul-Azha, (Bed Idd) Voarsi Nabi (Id-i-Milad) Shab-i-Barat, "Shab-i-Qadar", "Meraj-u-Nabi and Muharam.

Lowakat Idd and Bed Idd constituted two major occasions of mass jubilation in Kashmir. The melodious echo of Rov songs by Kashmiri women in the backdrop of panoramic sites made these occasions look more colourful, romantic and majestic. For example, see these Rov songs.

İdd ayi chumy shedyyane,
Ayı Parav esy Qurana
OR
Esy karav qurban bed idd ayi,
Shukr khowadai shukr khowadai

(The crescent of the Idd had been sighted)
Let us assemble friends- we will recite in melodious tunes the injections of the Quran)

(The idd-ul-zuha had come,
Let us celebrate it by slaughtering sacrificial lamb).

The sisters in their husbands houses used to wait eagerly their brothers for presenting the idd gift in cash or in kind. On these occasions invitations were extended to sisters and their husbands by their brothers to share sumptuous meals with them immediately after the idd.
The fourteenth night of "Shaban" (8th month of Hijri calendar) observed with religious fervour by the Muslims of the valley. While men folk engaged themselves in the recitation of the Quran and other religious exercises in the local mosques, women folk took recourse to the singing of Rov songs, highlighting the spiritual merits of great Islamic heroes and other mystic saints. In the dead of the night, men folk visited the graves of their dead ancestors to offer Fatiah for the consolation of their souls in the eternal world. People also illuminate their houses with "Tehengy zool" to mark this festival.

In true spirit of the Quranic revelations, the Muslims of the valley in the intervening might of 26th and 27th of "Ramzan" celebrate the festival of "Shab-i-Qadar" with great religious devotion and fervour. Muslim men folk spend their whole might in the local mosques in offering special 'Ramzan prayer known as taravij and reciting the Quran and other religious texts. During all along the sacred night, the devotees are served with variety of sweet and salty food items like, 'halwa' 'Phirni', 'Sharbat' and 'nuna chai' (salty tea). During the period under debate Muslim women all along the night would sing festive songs in praise of the "Ramzan" as revealed in the Quran. For example

Retan manz reth kusei jān,
Shubavun Māhi Ramzān
Yi hai ős Nabi sēb jān,
Shūbuvan Māhi Ramzān151.

(None of the month of Muslim calendar excels in merit to the month of Ramzan,
The truth stands that the last Nabi (Muhammad) P.B.U.H was an embodiment of unmatched decency and merit).
On *Idi-Milad-u-Nabi*, a prestigious religious congregation was held at the Dargah Hazratbal Shrine, which housed the sacred relic of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). The exhibition of the sacred relic before the devotees after five prayers a day marked the chief feature of the occasion. People both men and women flocked to ‘Hazratbal’ to be blessed with the sight of the sacred relic. They used to stay either in the *dungas* or in the houses of the local shrine attendants called “*Mujjavirs*”, against the payment. People assembled, also took liberty to enjoy the boat rowing on the water of the ‘Dal Lake’. In addition to these festivals, the Urs celebrations on the death or the birth of the foreign or local saints and rishis also constituted the major means of social get together. Some of the celebrated saints on whose birth days, fairs were held with great social fervour and religious devotion include among others: Sheikh Nur-ud-din at tchrar, Shaik Makhdoom Hamza at Srinagar, Khanqah-i-Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani and Khanqah-i-Dastageer Sahab Khanyar. Following verses of Kashmiri folk songs present a vivid picture of these socio-religious oriented fairs held at different Sufi or Rishi Shrines. For example.

i) *Nur din sebs tes alamdārs*,¹⁸²
   Jay yemy retnum manz tehraras.
   Su hai chum tety yey beti tury larars,
   Baras vomatas shana daras,
   Baras vomatas shana daras.

ii) *Makhdūm sebun khasi letyye*,¹⁸³
   su chu ēli shān.
   Teti ber haui chi vethy ye,
   Neri letiye rovy karān.

iii) *Dastagir sebeni janteky tham tai*,¹⁸⁴
   Num tai Rasuli khowadayes.
i) (Sheikh Nur-ud-din who is acknowledged by the folk as the torch beaver, selected his abode at Tchrar, There is no option left to us but to rush to his shrine at Tchrar.

ii) Oh, friend, have a visit to the hillock of Hari parbat The spot is blessed with the tomb of Mukhdoom Sahab The doors are open for devotees to receive saints baraka (Let us move collectively in a jubilant mood to visit the shrine).

iii) (The decorated wooden pillars in the shrine of Dastgir Sahab, look no less in grandeur than the pillars in heaven) The deeds of the believers ought to be in tune with the deeds of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H).

In the words of Arthur Neve

"The urs days of different saintly sites formed the happiest days for sick and sullen Kashmiris: People from all parts of the valley attended the fairs particularly those celebrated at Hazratbal.\textsuperscript{485}

At Hazratbal Shrine, during the course of the year, five or six fairs were held and on all these days, the sacred hair of the Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) was displayed before viewers who would come from far flung areas of Kashmir. Dr Arthur presents his impressions regarding Hazratbal fair in the following words.

"There are the great days to which the people, especially women and children look, keenly forward; for not only is there the display at the shrines, but the opportunity of showing of their best clothes and jewellery and of seeing the shops of the city and making their frugal purchases. A bundle on the man's back contains few days rice and ... the wife carried a fat cock as a present to the moulavi (religious pir). The same feeling is expressed in the following Rrao song of Kashmiri language."

\begin{verbatim}
Mele logmut chu Hazratbal lōlō\textsuperscript{186}
Dedy ladenei dōd teti bali lōlō,
Mele logmut chu Hazrat bala lolo
Lola prārān ashiq chi didaras,
Gah loluk peu bedi dala lōlō,
Mele logmut chu Hazratbal lōlō.
\end{verbatim}
(The fair at Hazratbal is in full bloom,  
The ailments of the sick would be cured there,  
The fair at Hazratbal had begun,  
The devotees eagerly want to have the glimpse  
of the sacred relic,  
The entire Dal Lake has been illuminated with  
the light of the sacred hair).

Muharam is the first month of Muslim calendar. The great sacrifice presented  
by Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H) on the historic  
dessert of ‘Karbala’ along with some of his family members and other companions is  
being celebrated with a sad note by the members of the Muslim Shia community all  
over the Muslim world. This day as else where, in Kashmir too, was observed with  
great commotion by the Shia Muslims of Kashmir.

Mourning processions and ‘marsiya khawani marked the chief features of this  
Muslim sensitive festival. Contrary to the mourning gestures of shia people, the  
Sunni Muslims would make it a point to see that their children are well fed on that  
day. They believed that the martyrdom of Hazrat Hussain at Karbala was a great  
service to the noble cause of Islam. The same state of mind is expressed in this verse  
of Kashmiri folk mersiya:

Rete sety sag yemy diut Islamas,\textsuperscript{187}  
Zu chepi tas shehzadas lō,  

[He (Hussain) who offered his blood for the glory of Islam, I offer my youth for this celebrated prince]

During this month of ‘Muhram’, Kashmiri Muslims suspended all their social  
engagements, marriage ceremonies and other auspicious functions. The mourning  
processions carried by the members of Shia community through the streets of  
Srinagar often resulted in the outbreak of Shia-sunni conflicts during the period of
our study. Though we don't find reference about these conflicts in our folk literature but the literary sources abound in such details. The sketches of the social composition of Kashmiri society reveal that these clashes and tensions were responsible for weakening the social ties between the two Muslim communities. There hardly lasted any love between the members of the two communities during our period of study.

Kashmiri Pandits who are known for their religious and ritualistic make up celebrated number of fairs and festivals of their own. These included among others, Shivratri, Ramanavmi, Navreh, Janam ashtami, etc. etc.

The most celebrated festival Kashmiri Pandits observed was Shivratri, popularly known as 'Herat'. Special religious audiences, recitation of mantras and the texts from the Gita marked the chief feature of this religious festival of Kashmiri Hindus. The next day following the Shivratri is termed as salam. On this day the Muslims would go to their Hindu friends for Herat salutation. The Hindu daughters received colourful gifts from their parents this day. The married daughters were presented with special type of decorated Kashmiri Kangri as a token of love by their parents. The following folk song gives the graphic picture of occasion.

\begin{verbatim}
Shiv naths pūza kerevey
Bēai berney beniney lōi,
Posh thalan shivas beruey,
Beni berney bhayan lōi,
Param shivas pūza kerenev.
Sone kangri rowani deshi keney,
Bei berney beniney lōi\footnote{188}
\end{verbatim}

(Let us prey to shiv with love and devotion,
Sisters crave to see their brothers with shivratri gifts,)
We will adore the image of lord shiva with floral offerings,
Lord Shiva blesses his devotees tonight.
Let us decorate our golden colour kangri
With the delicate jingling bells.
Sisters crave to see their brothers coming with shivratri gifts).

Fish formed the necessary dietary item on this occasion. The sumptuous special food prepared on the day was generally termed as Herat gada bata.

Another important festival observed by Kashmiri Pandits was known by the name of 'Ramanavmi' Kashmiri Pandits, wore colourful clothes and visited number of temples dedicated to Lord Rama.

Janam ashtami was also celebrated with religious fervour and devotion. The ceremonial procession, projecting the heroic deeds of Lord Krishna marked the special features of the festival.

Rakhi or Raksha Bhandan was another festival celebrated by Kashmiri pandits. On this day sisters tied rakhis on the wrists of their brothers against a cash gift.

With the outset of winter all out door recreational pursuits for Kashmiris would come to a sudden halt. The major section of agricultural class and urban industrial labour would leave dwellings and children and moved to distant places of undivided Punjab to seek livelihood for the sustenance of their family members. The long chilly winter nights with redoubled domestic needs and less economic resources prompted Kashmiri men and women folk to labour hard from dawn to dusk under the faded light of earthen lamps to earn the meek livelihood for their children.

Weaving of blankets, mats, doing embroidery work on shawls and spinning of wheels
formed the chief indoor occupations of Kashmiris during the days of chilei kalan (period of extreme cold). The snow frozen slippery lanes, passages and streets restricted the commoners movements within their rustic mud dwellings. With no suitable provision to let the fresh air in, Kashmiris often fell victims to variety of infectious dreaded diseases that caused great loss of life during the period under reference. Under these uncongenial climate conditions Kashmiris always craved for the arrival of ‘Sont, or ‘Bahar’ (spring season). Sont or Bahar for an average Kashmiri was nothing less than rebirth or new life. To give a majestic ceremonial welcome to this season, Kashmiris had developed a unique scheme of mass jubilation known in vernacular as “Badam vari mela.” The fair during the period under debate was first held at the foot of the Shankeracharya hillock on the Dal-rim and the latteron the venue was changed to the almond gardens situated on the southern bank of famous Nigen Lake. Kashmiri artisan class showed extra interest to celebrate this seasonal festival of Kashmir. People flocked in colourful dresses with samovars and mats and engaged themselves with the eating of burnt waternuts available there on the banks of the Nigen Lake”. There are scores of song in Kashmiri folk literature composed on the theme of Badam vari mela. For example:

Phulei legmetch chi Badâmvari,¹⁹⁰
Bihth bulbul chi daryen peth,
Daban nazan chikya ache dari,
Bihth bul bul chi daryen peth.

(Almond flower are in full bloom in badam vari,
Bulbuls are silently sitting on their window sides,
Kashmiri women look very beautiful seated on their balconies,
Bulbuls are sitting silently on their window sides.)
The most colourful national festival known as *vethi truveh* was celebrated with traditional zeal during the period under reference. According to the Hindu tradition it was this day on which the river vitasts (Jehlum) found its course from 'Anantnag' to 'Baramulla'. The festival was held on the thirteenth day of the moon which according to local legend was commemorated as the source of the vitasta (Jehlum) was supposed to have been created by Siva. According to the ancient custom, the Jehlum in its course through the city and the chief towns was illuminated with lamps on both its banks. This festival was equally celebrated by all sections of Kashmiri society irrespective of religion, caste and community. The panoramic view is portrayed in this folk songs, also.

*Vethi hund agur kya nundabonei, ¹ 9 1*
Sadav yi sir zoneye.
*Tchangyen hund gah chus shubeni,*
Zoone gashe ten chus shile podmeni.

(The source of the river vitasta presents a spectacular view,
The secret of its source has been comprehended by saints and seers only.
The dazzling reflection of illuminating candles present a romantic sight.
Its body in a moon lit night looks nothing less than a maiden's beauty).

Another seasonal festival observed by Kashmiri pandits was 'Naureh' (new years day). The tradition runs that the day is observed to commemorate the drain of flooded water. Pandits used to throw ceremonial offerings in the river vitasta to please the goddess of water. Special religious audiences were held in the Hindu families to commemorate this day.

12. **Customs, Rituals and Ceremonies Relating to Birth and Death**

Customs, rituals and sites related to birth, death and marriage ceremonies performed by multitude of individuals in a particular social organisation are
primarily the folk expressions of the established set of behavioural patterns of the people conditioned by socio-religious schemes. In other words, these basically refer to those folk ways that persist over relatively long periods of time so as to attain a degree of formal recognition and to be passed down from one generation to another. Borgardus define them as group accepted techniques of control that have become well established, taken for granted and are passed along from generation to generation. According to Anderson and Parker customs are those uniform approved ways of acting we follow and which are transmitted from generation to generation by tradition and usually made effective by social approval. From the above definitions, it seems plausible to dub these practices relating to multiple of socio-religious pursuits as the biggest repository of the social heritage. These variegated practices in tradition offer an objective insight into the behavioural patterns, distinctive collective mentality and the psycho-ethical make up of a particular society.

Kashmiri folk literature presents a colourful and dramatic picture of different customs, rituals and ceremonies observed by common Kashmiris on different socio-religious occasions. Here we give a brief description of some practices referred to in our folk literature.

12(a). Customs and ceremonies relating to birth among the Muslims.

Inspire of Kashmiri transition to Islam during the fourteenth and fifteenth century, the Kashmiri Muslims retained some of the age old impressions which constituted the ceremonial scheme and calendar of Kashmiri Pandits. For example, contrary to the Quranic revelations which do not permit any discrimination on the
basis of gender, in Kashmiri Muslim families, the birth of the female baby was not looked with so warmth, joy and rejoice as it was shown at the birth of a male child. This is evidenced from different Kashmiri *menzely beth* (cradle song) which generally made male children the object of special appreciation. I have found only an insignificant number of cradle songs, which admire the beauty of a female baby. The same feeling is expressed in these cradle songs,

Zū vendei pakh sā,
Shūsh vendei pakh sā.
Nika lalī pakh sa,
Khand to nābad Tekhsā.

(How beautiful it looked, when you started walking,
I offer to sacrifice my precious life to you)
(You gladly chew several and sugar cakes).

The same rejoice was shown by Kashmiri Pandits at the birth of the male babies. The state of pandit ladies happiness is depicted in this Kashmiri “*menzely beth*” sung by Kashmiri Pandit women.

Vala vala Rajō kowali vuzi poni,
Sebeni zene āv vethi vethi vōni.
Zatuk lekni ay suru gowāsēni.

(With your birth, there began to flow fresh water in brooks,
Your birth, my son, caused enough water to gush out from the source of river vitasta.
A seasoned priest has come to prepare your horoscope)

Both Muslims and the Hindus sought the help of an elderly skilled lady known as *dei* or wereny to conduct the safe delivery of a pregnant lady. Immediately after the birth of a baby in case of the Muslim, Azan was aired in the ear of a baby.

Kane tele bhāng kemiya ditchenai-?
Maman ditchenai Maman ditchenai.

(Who recited azan in your ear at your birth?)
It was your maternal uncle, it was your maternal uncle.

It was customary on the part of every Kashmiri Muslim lady to deliver the maiden baby in their parental home. On the seventh day after the delivery, the mother of the baby was bathed with a hot water, added to it, some herbal medicines. On this day a special meal was served to the near relatives and among the close neighbours. The function was known as ‘Sowander’.

The period of confinement varied among the Pandits and the Muslims. In case of Muslims, it was observed for eleven or twelve days, but in case of Muslim, the period of confinement lasted for forty day. On fortieth day the mother of the boy was given a hot bath and the relatives of her husband were given a sumptuous feast. Muslims regarded the women as an unfit for the performance of religious duties like the daily worship during these forty days. Before extending formal invitation to the daughter-in-law to come back to her husband’s house, piaw was sent to the mother of the baby, which include special Kashmiri bekir khawnies (bread) mew cloths for the baby and the mother and some cash amount as a delivery gift. The ceremony is portrayed in a picturesque way in this folk song.

Peau one nei hashi tai heran\(^{196}\),
Cowanei heran vasan chak.
Nike chuye kowatchi kowatchi pheran,
Lowati heran wason chak.

(O, daughter, your father-in-law and mother-in-law have come with the peau- the delivery gift,
You are stepping down cautiously to see your husband’s parents.
The new born is being carried from lap to lap,
You are stepping down cautiously to see your husband parents).
Another equally important rejoicing moment relating to birth ceremony was the first cutting of the hair known in vernacular as *zere kaseni*. It was generally conducted at the lawns of some Sufi shrine particularly at the shrine of Nur-ud-din at Chrar or in the picturesque lawns of Hazratal Shrine. This was an occasion of great rejoice particularly in case of a male baby.

\[ \text{Techrar khasav bedidoh nikaszara kesav,} \]
\[ \text{Nikas zara kasav.} \]
\[ \text{Muqam khasav bedidoh, nikaszara kasev} \]
\[ \text{Nikas zara kasav.} \]

(Let us march towards tchar (shrine of Sheikh Nur-ud-din)
The annual Urs days have begun,  
We will shave the head of the new born there.
Let us move towards ‘Muqam; (the shrine of Baba Zain-ud-din)  
the annual urs days have begun,
We will shave the head of the new born there).

In case of female children next to *zare kaseni* there was the ceremony of piercing the ear-lobs to enable them to wear ear rings. This was usually done between the age of four and five years. On this occasion relatives and friends were invited and entertained the dinner or tea depending mostly on the status and resources of the family.

The most significant ceremony observed in case of a Muslim male child was known and is still known as *khatanhal* or *khutna* (circumcision). It is an obligatory practice according to Islamic ‘Sharia’ and it is binding upon rich and poor parents to undertake the khatanhal of their male children. It was usually performed from three to eight years of child’s age. It formed an occasion of great rejoicing and get together. During the period of our study the circumcision (Khatanhal) was effected by professional barbers and hakeems. In the following Kashmiri folk song, the local
surgeon (barber) is being cautioned to undertake the job attentively and seriously.

For example.

Woastei kēro kar khabar dēri, Sani gari chei woamed veriye.

(0, surgeon you are cautioned to be serious to your job, Gifts await in abundance for you).

12(b). Customs and ceremonies relating to birth among Kashmiri Pandits.

In a set of Hindu customs and rituals relating to the birth of the child, the special ceremony observed at the post delivery stage occupied the prominent position. Few days after the delivery particularly on sowander day, the ladies of the neighbourhood would assemble around the confined lady with a special pot like jar, filled with birch bark and a glass full of water kept near by. While reciting certain mantras, the ladies gathered, put some pieces of birch bark in the fire pot (kangri) and then dip it into the water. During all this course, the elderly ladies would sing in a distinctive tune and style an oldest category of folk songs known in Kashmiri as Berze metchi Hendy Beth198, where in the aid of the Hindu ditties was sought for the safety and the security of the new born baby and the mother. The following song intends to seek the same aid of the muse deity.

Huri raza,
Bakeshy nam,199
Khema kerynam,
Sahayetas rozynam,
Khowash nimnam,
Shad nerynam.
Rezy esunam,
Shoq te ponson.

(I beg Hury Raja for pardon,
I am sure that he will support us at our back,
He should leave the house with a happy note.
Let his help bless us with abundance of love and money.

During our period of study in the third or the fourth day of the delivery, a ceremony locally known as “Trui” was observe. On this day a special type of food containing all nutritious ingredients like sesamum, kernels of walnuts, almonds and sugar was fried in oil and distributed among friends and relatives. The mother who till date slept on raw grass mating was allowed to use the usual bed. From sixth to eleventh day after delivery, the confined lady was to take semi purificatory bath (firth bath). On this day, a special ceremony known as sowander was also held. Confined lady wore new clothes and the new born was also dressed in new baby clothes.

On the eleventh day another purificatory ceremony called as kah nethar was held. Until this day the confined mother was treated as impure or untouchable. On this day she was put on special bath and the hot water used for the purpose was added with some folk medicines to give it a medicinal touch. Well off Hindu families also performed Havan on this day. According to a tradition, the mother of the infant was said to take five ingredients or products of the cow, cow milk, curd, butter, ghee and calf’s urine. These products were called Pancha-caria. once the ceremony was over, the astrologers would cast the child’s zatuk or horoscope.

A special get together was arranged in honour of the priest cum astrologer who was called to effect a zutuk for the child. This ceremony is conveyed in this baby folk song.

Zatuk lekhni av sure Gonasevi
Vala vala rayo kowali vuzi poni.
Zatukis chi thedy baio
Ho kareyo the kerø
A celebrated astrologer had been incited to prepare the zatuk (horoscope). Your birth had effected abundance of water in the river vitasta. Documenting the horoscope of a new born is not so simple a task; it needs specialty and skill. We hold you in high reverence O, Thakur-the beautiful worshipping image.

The first hair cut of the child was an occasion of rejoice and delight particularly in case of male issue. Like Muslims of the valley, the Hindus also prefer to hold this function outdoors in some temple associated to their particular family deities. A perusal of the Kashmiri folk songs as sung on the occasion indicate that the custom is very old and is said to have originated in the sutra age.

One of the most important ceremony relating to birth was and is the Yagnopavit (mekhal ceremony). According to the text of the tradition it is a ceremony invested with religious sanctity and is treated as the sign of the second or spiritual birth and initiation into Hinduism. Without this the ‘Brahman is not looked upon as a perfect in the caste. It constituted as one of the most important series of socio-religions ceremonies conducted in Kashmiri Pandit families. Fun, rejoice and music on the religious ceremonies marked the chief features of the occasion. Sumptuous vegetarian meal was arranged in the honour of the invited guests on this occasion. According to Samskara it is the prime duty of the head of the family to arrange the meekhla ceremony of their child or children at the appropriate age.

Another ceremony known by the name of Vidhya raja, ceremony was also held in a very learned manner. On this day, a boy or girl was guided for the first time
towards educational pursuit. Any learned man of the family or a family priest was invited to initiate this exercise. Since Kashmiri Pandits were conscious of the educational merit, they left no stone unturned to guide their children to achieve new heights in the academic domain. Kashmiri cradle songs song by Kashmiri Pandit women bear testimony to this fact. In a big chunk of Kashmiri cradle songs, the pandit mother usually asks blessings for child’s health and education. In other forms of Pandit wanvun also, the dire desire of the parents that their children be gifted with the merit of Gyan (education) is expressed so very frequently. For example:

Ved resti shiva ved vowamkaru,
Sukhdev, Te Vyas chī ved vakhnan

[Nothing excels knowledge in merit
I pray that sukhder and vyas (gods of learning)
unfold before you my child, the treasures of knowledge]

12(c). Death ceremonies performed by Kashmiri Muslims.

The death of any member in the Muslim family in Kashmir was mourned with wailing and loud weeping. The male members hardly expressed their sadness in words as the tragic event is attributed to the God’s proposal. Male members generally maintained gloomy but dignified silence. Unlike Kashmiri Pandit ladies, Muslim ladies resorted to beating of chests, tearing of cloths and weeping loudly on the death of the dear ones. Contrary to this Kashmiri pandit ladies recited a special category of folk song known in vernacular as wan on the death of any elderly relative. The entire gamut of Hindu rituals, customs and rites connected with death of a Hindu is expressed in a sequential manner in different Kashmiri Van songs.
Muslims of Kashmir performed ceremonies on the death of a family members in line with the Quranic spirit and the ‘sunnah’. The body is washed with a luke warm water and is wrapped in a white new cloth known as Kafan. It is then put in a wooden box known as Tabud and is carried either to the mosque or near by spot, usually Jinazagah, where the special prayer known as Jinaza is read in a nimaz pose under the leadership of a local imam or any member of the family well versed is the Quranic text. After the burial of the dead body, the mourners come back and a simple tea is served prepared by the close by neighbours. No meal is prepared in the bereaved family for three consecutive days. During all the three days relatives and neighbours manage their meals. On the fourth day known as Tchurium, special prayer meeting is conducted at the grave yard, where the Quranic verses are rendered for the benefit of the deceased soul. On this day in rural Kashmir, the bereaved family arranges a social get together and the people present are fed with variety of local dishes. In Srinagar and adjacent areas, instead of Turiyum, the Muslims, generally organised function of socio-religious nature on the Friday after Friday congregations. Muslims under the leadership of local “Molvi” offer special prayers known as Jumma Fateh. On their return to home of grieved family, people gathered are served with a cup of tea with special Kashmiri bread.

On the fortieth day, during the period under review a semi religious sitting under the supervision of local imam was held, which is known in Kashmiri language as khatm-i-sharief. People present, recited the Quranic verses and invoke the aid of Sufi saints for granting peace for the soul of the deceased.
12(d). Death ceremonies of Kasmiri Pandits.

The ceremonies performed at the time of death of a Hindu were and continues to be as follow:

The body of deceased person is washed with warm water and wrapped in a piece of new cloth. A little ceremony is performed outside the house. The body is then placed on a plank and carried to the cremating ground on the shoulders of four men. This task is considered to be of a great honour, and they therefore, change places frequently when the followers are many and the journey short on the way to the cremating ground.

The funeral pyre is usually lighted by the son of the dead. The cremation is performed by a Kashmiri Muslim called as kavejy against payment in cash as well as in kind. Those bones which are not consumed, by the fire are, two days latter, brought to the home and left in a hole in the wall until the day of ganga ashtami, when they are taken by the eldest son to the holy lake under the mountain Harmukh and cost in.

For ten days the house of the deceased is regarded as unclean and no one takes food from the kitchen of the bereaved. On the tenth day a special ceremony is performed on the river bank, water is sprinkled and balls of rice offered. On this day the eldest son have to shave his beard and head. At the end of the ten days of active mourning the son or the sons of the deceased receive new dresses from his or their father-in-laws which they put on. As they approach the house, the mourners cue themselves in two parallel opposite lines and the elder son of the deceased enter his house passing through the standing cue of the mourners. The mourners then take
their leave. Like birth or marriage in a Hindu family, death is also regulated by multiple of ceremonies. A special category of mourning Kashmiri songs *Vaan* (associated with Kashmiri Pandits only) documents the entire set of Hindu ceremonies celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits on the death of their dear ones. In the words of Pearce Gervis “death to the orthodox Hindu has no fears for he believes in reincarnation; there is but the sorrow at parting from his loved ones, and generally parents shower all their love on their children whom they seldom seem to scold when young, husband and wife in an arranged marriage being only bound by them”.

Among Muslims, *Pirs* or *Mullahs* who were called to conduct the different socio-religious ceremonies had adopted number of innovative devices to fleece the ignorant and superstitious Kashmiri Muslims. Their corrupt practices during the period under reference have been portrayed by nineteenth century famous Kashmiri poet Maqbool Shah Kralwari in his poem entitled “Pir Nama”. For example:

> Chi nāhaq yīra kerymety pīre nāvān,  
> Chi gumrah pāna woth kas vante hāvān.  
> Vechun kuni Jāyi yowad piumut bemāra,  
> Parān Hamdā zi lowag zālas Shikārā.  

(They (pirs) feel proud of their rich pedigree,  
How a misled person is expected to act as leader?  
If by chance they catch sight of a sick person,  
They feel pleased that a prey had been caught in net).

Even at present there are some folk sayings in circulation which are indicative of the corrupt practices of the two religious classes- *Pirs* or *gors*. For example.

"Pirs che ponsech zir"  
OR  
"Gor Chu pones lor".
Both these expressions contain the same meaning that "Pir" or "Gor" know how to grab money. Oral sources reveal that "Pirs and Gors" were given lavish gifts in cash and in kind for conducting variety of ceremonies referred to in the foregoing pages. This is also suggested from the folk song in which the machinations of the Pandit "Gors" are made subject of ridicule and indignation. For example:

Gors zangan legith nôr,
Nenun piyomut tas chui tor.²⁰⁶
Marnas zenes asan lôr,
Khei khei tchotnas vowadani, chôr.

(Dressed in a tight/trouser, the Gor (priest) is always found in search of an event or occasion that promises him sumptuous feast and cash reward. Death or birth provides him equal chance to earn money. Yes, it is the over diet that caused him an intestinal disorder.

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NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. Quoted by Peter Burke "History and Social Theory", p.16
4. This folk song was sung for me by Zoona of Pohu, Pulwama (unpublished)
6. During any field survey, this song was recited to me by Azi an aged lady at Palhalan Pattan.
10. Unpublished folk song gathered from a young lady named Amina from Chadura, Panzan.
13. Ibid., p.128.
16. Ibid., p.133.
20. This is a common folk expression addressed by parents to their daughters the time of their departure.
21. this folk saying carries the same meaning but the diction varies as the two are uttered by people belonging to two different communities Hindus and the Muslims respectively.


23. In almost all “Wanvun” songs (marriage songs) we find undertone protest against the family elders for getting the girls married at a tender age. Also see “Kashmir Under the Sikhs”, D.C.Sharma, p.62. Bazaz, Daughters of Vitasa, pp.212-215.

24. These songs I collected from a lady at Bandipora. But she refused to reveal her name for the reasons best known to her.

25. Ibid.

26. Ibid.

27. Gathered from oral recordings of different eminent personalities, preserved in the Radio archives of Radio Kashmir Srinagar.


29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. In a male dominating society, the daughter-in-law was required to perform multiple of domestic assignments from dawn to dusk. Hence, through investigations were made regarding the health of the supposed daughter-in-laws.

32. Khana damad or resident son-in-law is a man who marries the daughter of a proprietor and instead of taking the girl away to his own house, lives on with her in her father’s house, performing services for him (father-in-law) and helping to manage his property. His wife is called khana nashin daughter. For details see Ganjoo, N.K., “Customary Law of Kashmir”. Also refer A.A. Hussain “Customary Succession Among Muslims”, p.175.

33. Ibid., p.178.


38. In Kashmir, a go between known as "Manzimyor arranges marriage of the boy and the girl. This role is generally performed either by an aged lady or elderly person or by launches. Their role usually ends when the couple gets married. According to Lawrence, "the manzimyors most lucrative work consists in bringing off matches between wealthy parvenus and old decayed families", Valley, p.261.

39. It symbolises the every pleasing occasion. It is ball shaped sugar object which is regarded as a good omen for every plausible act. It is frequently exchanged through manzimyor between the two contracting parties.

40. "Bacha nagma" (dance performed by a beautiful boy) is said to have originated during the Afghan rule in Kashmir (1753-1819). It acted as one of the important recreational means during the period of our study. During the Sikh period the institution reached to its height (1819-1846).

41. It marked the part of the marriage procession. During the night the lighted mashaliys presented spectacular view and the marriage procession would look more impressive and majestic.

45. Koshur khander Gewun, Cultural Academy pp.

46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.

51. Jowhar, R.L. "Keshir Luka Beth", (Kashmiri Folk Songs) Vol.X. p.87.3
52. Shad, Ramzan "An Anthology of Kashmiri Folk Songs", p.107.

53. Even after mass conversion to Islam during fourteenth and fifteenth century, Kashmiri Muslims Continued to retain certain age old Hindu customs and the custom of adoption is one among such customs. According to Hindu
mythology, the spirit of a dead person remains restless for some days round his worldly belongings till it is liberated from this state by the offer of funeral cakes and libations of water. But this offer and libations must come from the hands of a son, son's son, son's son's son. If there is none of them, the spirit either goes to hell or becomes a ghost. Hence it is presumed that "there is no heavenly region for a sonless man and heaven awaits not one destitute of a son (vaisistha) Bhatnagar, 93.

54. Sant, Ram Dogra Code, 9.
55. Ganjoo, op.cit p.139.
57. A barren lady was always subject to ridicule.
60. The tunic or the gown locally known as 'Pheran' is said to be the contraction of Persian word 'Pirahan'. The long loose pheran with large and wider sleeves cover the whole body down to the ankles. Jehangir in his memoirs has not used the word 'Pheran' but the details he has given about the kind of dress refer a dress like 'Pheran' victor Jacquemont names it as kurta. According to him it is a clock type wear very common among Kashmiris. See for reference various Trades in Kashmir, Op.Cit. 1684. Victor Jacquemont letters, p.237, Moorcraft, *Travels*, part III pp.328-347. Dhar, S.N, "Folk Tales of Kashmir", p.6 Lawrence, Walter, Op.Cit. p.251.
62. It has been the subject of poetic fancy and in Kashmiri Wanvun Song, Kashmiris liking for Pheran has been repeatedly refereed to. this folk song was recited to me by Muneera’ of Tchoh village of Pulwama district (unpublished).
64. Lari Shah was presented by Farooq Ahmad of Bumai Village of Sopore. (unpublished)

66(b). Folk Song was revealed to me by one 'Rasul' of Nulai village, falling in Shupian Tehsil of Kashmir.

67. It has fallen in disuse now. For details see *Son Adab*, cultural Academy "Kasheer Number".

68. It was a woolen skull cap of crimson colour along with a red fillet on the forehead. The wider part of the cap was attached with a triangular piece of the winter stiff falling on the back and thereby concealing much of the hair. the *Qasaba* was generally made of Alvan cloth which was taken round in turns on 'Takani' attached with innumerable safety pins. The long putch which falls down to the lower back is also attached with back portion of *Qasaba* with the help of the pins. *Qasaba* was of two types "Bon Qasaba" and Thond or Thod Qasaba.

69. In place of *Qasaba*, the head dress worn by Kashmiri Pandit women was known as taranga. It was just like *Qasaba* but with certain modification.

70. Since the ladies of upper strata of Kashmiri society maintained strict purdah, they are told by the women folk to shun pardah and take part in the Rov (festival) songs.


72. A type of cap quite distinct from ordinary *Beli topi* worn by village folk. Unlike the cap worn by villagers which was pointed at the top, this cap was spherical in shape. It looked more beautiful as it contained delicate golden embroidery work.


74. In our creative literature also, we find references to *Burqa*.


76. It is a famous verse of nineteenth century Kashmir romantic poet Rasul Mir.


77. It was inferior to *Pezar*, it was generally worn by commoners -Refer "*Son Adab, Kashmir Number*, Cultural Academy.
78. It was a footwear used particularly during winter. It was made from dry paddy grass. Since it was less expensive and to avoid slip on frozen icy passages, villagers used it more commonly than the city people. But while coming to Srinagar it was removed even by the villagers at the entry point to Srinagar. There is a place in Nowgam area which is still known as Pulhery stop. During my survey I was told there that the villagers who were on their way to Srinagar city, would change their grass chapels (pulhory) here and that is why this particular spot is known as Pulhery stop. See also Lawrence, “Valley”, Op.Cit., p.251.

79. It was slipper type wooden footwear. There were two types of “Khraves”, ‘Khrav’ and ‘Khravehor’. It was used both by men and women. Also refer Dhar, S.N. “Tales of Kashmir”, p.85. Son Adab, Kashmir Number, Cultural Academy. ‘Khravas’ were generally prepared from the willow wood. Also See Moorcraft, William, “Travels, part III, p.328. “Various Trades in Kashmir”, Op.Cit., 1742.

80. This song was revealed to me by Mala ded of Bhagati Kanipora village of Chadora Tehsil also see Saqi, M.L. Luke Beth (Folk Songs) Vol.IV, p.196.

81. Sadhu, Pardesi, “Keshir Luka Beth” (Folk Songs) Vol.7, p.86.


83. It was popular forehead ornament worn by Kashmir married women. It was generally designed in the shape of almond. Saqi, M.L. Op.Cit., p.76. Also refer “History of Kashmir”, P.N.K. Bamzai, p.343


85. Poetic creation of a contemporary romantic poet.

86. See details in the thesis.

87. See details in the thesis at hand.

88. See detail in the thesis at hand.

89. This song was revealed to one me by an aged lady Fazy, of Chattabal Srinagar.


91. Unpublished Songs, Collected from Nishat Brain.

92. It is a cradle song (manzeli beth) we find reference of ornaments in different cradle songs. This indicates that besides having the ornamental value, these might have been used as an object of attraction and pleasure for infant babies.
94. Ibid., p.41.
95. Ibid., p.139.
96. Song was sung for me by Aisha of Natipora Srinagar. (unpublished).
100. It was used to ward off the evil eye. Sometimes, if made of silver, it worked as an ornamental piece also. These tawizas were known by different names such as Hanji Taweeza, Rowani, Bowakwachi Cheli Taweza and Chakor Taweza. For details see Bhan, J.L and Rufai Riyaz- Guide to the Exhibition of rare manuscripts. 1987. Gazetter of Kashmir and Ladakh, p.472.
103. The song was revealed to me by famous Kashmiri folk singer Gulam Muhammad Dar of Suthu Baghwanpora, Bar Bar Shah Srinagar (unpublished).
104. Cylinder type mud pot in which husked Shali was stored for daily use.
105. It was not moved frequently from one place to another. Therefore a statue type person is often referred to as ‘lowapen’.
107. During my field work I collected this song from Padderpora Shopian. A lady whom I had a chance to see on the road leading to Kulgam revealed this song to me on my insist.
108. The period of extreme cold in the Valley starting from 21st of December and it lasts till March 1st. During this period snow gets frozen and the people remain almost indoors.
110. On the ground floor the sheep and cattle are penned, and sometimes the sheep are crowded into a wooden locker known as the dangij, where the children sit.
in the winter and where the guest is made to sleep, for it is warmest place in the house. Lawrence, *Valley*, Op.Cit., p.249.

111. This song was sung for me by a group of village girls at Sheikhpura, Pulwama during my field trip in 1997. (unpublished)

112. It constitutes a cheap furnishing floor item and is made of 'Petch', grassy product of lakes.


114. Few structures even stood today but in a renovated form.

115. This is just like building the castles in the sand. The big palace type houses of Kashmiri elite always worked as tools of attraction. That is why, commoners express intense desire to enjoy the comforts of such decorated houses. The expressions refereed to above suggest the same feeling.

116. The delicate lattice work has been the unique feature of Kashmiri wooden architecture. Owing to its delicacy and grandeur, it has served as a source of poetic inspiration for many poets. For details See *Koshur Encyclopedia*, Cultural Academy, pp.163-170, Saqi, M.L. Op.Cit., 119.

117. Saqi, Op.Cit., p.64

118. Ibid., p.75.

119. Ibid., also see Biscoe, *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p.110.

120. Kashmiri Wazwan is said to be the Mughal addition to Kashmiri dietary calendar. Kashmiri marriage is considered incomplete without the multiple varieties of wazwan. It is served in a sequential way. Four people belonging to same sex share one big rice plate known as Trami (big nickeled copper plate) See "Kashmir Today" "Wazwan".

121. All these folk expressions show Kashmiris fondness for rice. See for details knowles "*A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings*. Also see Nazir. "Keshery Depety" (Kashmiri Folk Sayings).


123. Ibid., For details see Bazaz, P.N. "*Struggle for Freedom in Kashmiris*", p.144.

125. This song I gathered from a fisher women "rehti" from Hajin Sonawar, (unpublished).


128. It is a distinctive style of sharing the *wazwan*. Four persons of same sex sit around the copper plate to share the sumptuous wazwan.

129. It is one of the famous forms of Kashmiri folk theatre. For details see M. S. Bhagat, "*Folk Theatre of Kashmir*" (Koshur Luka theatre). Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University.


131. Kashmiris have developed a unique mechanism of conserving vegetables for winter use. At the outset of the autumn season, when different vegetables are available in abundance at cheaper rates they dry up these vegetables in an open sunlight. The dried vegetables are then consumed during the chilly winter days.

132. Not only green and fresh vegetables are dried for winter use but different varieties of fish are also dried to use them in the winter. One type of such dried fish is known as "*Howagard*".

133. It is another category of dried fish.

134. Lotus roots (nadru) is a pet dish of Kashmiri people. It is mostly available during winter months.

135. In order to add flavour to the winter dishes, people used to make the cakes of red chilly. Some spices and oil is added to the red chilies and is pounced with ginger in the kanz (mortar) then the mashed chilly is dried up in a circular shape. During winter days, women in order to add to the flavour of the dishes use this vari.

136. I have failed to find this folk expression in any of the folk saying collections but the same was told to me by one Syed Asgar Hussain of Hassanabad Rainawari.

137. People here in Kashmir generally take fish from September to April. Taking fish in the summer months would usually cause intestinal disorders. Hence people avoid taking fish in summer months.

138. Harisa is said to have been introduced here in Kashmir from Iran. It is a delicious winter dish and is being prepared by skilled person known a
"herssegergy"? It is also used as a gift item to please higher ups friends and relatives. Sensitive relations exchange herisa on some auspicious occasions during winter.

139. It was also a special dietary item which was cooked all through the night and it was prepared occasionally and was distributed among the friends and the neighbours and relatives.

140. These are all preparations and are used as the community meals in the hour of natural disaster to invoke the aid of the exalted souls for mitigating the distress.

141. This song was sung by the children to ridicule those who refused to contribute for community meals.

142. This is a children's song who sing it in admiration of those who would contribute generously for community meals.

143. A dish prepared out of half grinded corn, boiled in winter. It served as a substitute for rice during the scarcity period caused either by famine or floods.

144. It is a rough and rustic kind of bread, which is very hard to chew. It is very oldest form of food item. There is a reference in Sheikh Nur-ud-dins poetry regarding this kind of bread and in a state of abject poverty people resorted to take this kind of rough bread.

145. Instead of break fast, Kashmiris are in the habit of taking salt tea with the wheat or maize flour bread. Kashmiris fondness for salt tea is unmatching. It was imported during our period of study from Sinkiang, china and other parts.

146. Kashmir had very close and rich trade links with different countries of the Central Asian region. It served as a halting spot for trading caravans coming from Central Asia to the South of India. See for details Central Asia and Kashmir Bamzai.

147. It is said to be a replica of Russian tea pot: "Samavar". It is made of a copper with a white nickel coat. Salt tea is prepared in a big samavar and the sweet tea kehwa is prepared in a small smavar. For details see "Kashmir media" Merc-Kashmir University.

148. It is believed by the folk that few cups of salty tea reduces the fatigue and people enjoy this kind of tea particularly after hard labour. For details see Shah Abadi's "Chainama". Research library University of Kashmir.
This type of sweet tea known as kehwa is generally taken on festive days or other delightful occasions. People with rich taste add also Saffron to kehwa to make it more tasty and colourful.

Introduction, “Folk Tales”, Vol.7 M.Y. Teng. For detail see “Hamara Adab” Folklore Number Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University.

Introduction to “Hatims Tales” (Kash). M.Y. Teng.

During period under review, many Persian Epics and romantic tales were either translated or adopted into Kashmiri by eminent Kashmiri poets like, Mehmood Gami, Wali-ullah Mattoo, Maqbool Kralwari Wahab Parray Hajini and others. The entire period in the history of Kashmiri literature History is termed as the period of Mathnavis (see for details. Shouq, Shafi, “History of Kashmiri Literature” (Kash).

He was a professional story teller who revealed Aurel Stein couple of Kashmiri folk tales. Stein collections of Kashmiri folk tales is named after him.

An oldest extant Kashmiri folk tale. It has also been penned down by few Kashmiri poets during the period of our study.

It is one of the earliest oral piece of histro-fictional literature. It brings into focus rivalry between the Nagas and the Pischasas, the two oldest Tribes, who inhabited in the Valley after the desiccation of water.

Bhands Folk Minstrels who amused people by their folk performances. See Lawrence, Gazeteer of Kashmir, Valley, and Bhagat, M.S. “Bhande jishan” and “Luke theatre”.

See my paper published in “Anhar” “social protest as depicted in “Kashmiri Folk theatre”. Kashmiri Department, Kashmir University.

Dambali is one of the folk forms of Kashmiri dance. During the period of our study, it was a common agency of community recreation. The dambaliys of Khandru, Anantnag are famous for their skill, wit and proficiency. The dambali faqirs as they are known perform their art and skill on the urs days of different Sufi and Rishi saints particularly at the shrine of Baba Lal din at Zakura and Baba Nasib at Bijbihara.


Lari Shah has already been discussed and these are some major topics about whom we find references in our “Lari Shah”. These poems give us vivid
picture of the peoples sufferings amid natural calamities that Shocked people and the land repeatedly during the period under reference.

161. There are mainly two types of saints foreign and local. The local saints with distinct characteristics are known as *Rishis*. They have utter disregard for worldly pleasures and prefer solitude to society. See for detail Ishaq Khan's *Kashmir's Transition to Islam - the Role of Rishes*.

162(a) *Becha nagma* is said to have gained momentum during the Afghan Rule in Kashmir. It was a popular recreational, means for commoners and the people interested in Sufi exercises. During the period under reference and most particularly during the lost phase of Dogra rule, these *becha nagmas* often resulted in group clashes. The detail was revealed to me by Sonnah-ullah Dar of Bagwanpora Sathu who had himself participated in such exercises.

162(b) It is a popular folk music form of Kashmir. For further details see Aima, M.L *"Folk Music of Kashmir"* Qaiser Kaslanders *"Kashmiri Music"*. Some folk instruments used in chakri include, *Tombak nari, Notu, Sarang, Sazi Kashmiri* and few other folk apparatus. People amused themselves for nights together in the company of Chakri singers.

163. Hafiza denoted a charming woman who could remember songs ranging from hafiz of Sheeraz to Rasul Mir of Shahabad by heart. Although the quarters of Hafiza were the abode of dance and song, she basically symbolised good manner and aristocratic etiquette. The institution seems to have reached to its zenith during Mughal times. It was one of the most important source of recreation for landed elite and other categories of aristocracy. *Sheeraz* (English) pp.98-100. M.Y. Teng, See also Fida Hussanain, *Encyclopedia of Kashmir*.

164. Quoted by Shouq in *“European on Kashmir”*.

165. Tashvan and Misuma are two localities in Srinagar city where Hafiza pavilions were situated, but during Dogras the Institution degenerated and turned into brothel. In the light of fierce campaign launched by Subhan Naid of Misuma against the brothels Maharaja banned it in 1934. For details see, Khan, Ishaq. *History of Srinagar*, and *“Sheeraza”* Shaksiyat Number.


167. It was one of the folk recreational item, it has fallen in disuse now.

168. Though the song does not bear the name of its poet and was revealed to me by a lady *“Khezer”* of Sopore as a folk song. But its poetic treatment does not
suggest it to be a piece of folk poetry. However, the song refers to an important recreational item, popular among children until, very recently.

169. These are all folk games. We don’t find any reference of these games in historical narrative. The truth stands that these constituted an integral part of the Kashmiris folk sports Calendar. Refer “Son Adab” Kasheer Number, Cultural Academy. Also see “Keshiri Nasruk Tawarkh,” Khyal and Rehbar. An article written by late Dina Nath Nadim entitled Kashmiri Folk games has been reproduced in the anthology of Kashmiri prose.


171. Lawrence, “Valley of Kashmir”, p.266

172. It was a major recreational exercise for Sikh aristocracy. Generally these dancing girls would come from Wattal communities. According to Hugel these nautch girls were maintained at the state expenses and the Sikh governors were enslaved by these dancing girls. Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh also maintained the nautch girls for themselves and for the European guests. Commenting on the sad plight of the nautch girls, Hugel further states under.


173. Detailed as above.

174. Divan Kripa Ram was a Sikh Governor in Kashmir. He had an abundant taste for music and dance. He always managed to sit in the Shikara in the company of Kashmiri dancing girls wearing jingling feet ornaments. It was for his sensual attraction towards ‘Saaz and Awaz’ that he was nicknamed as ‘Kripa Shroney’.

175. These games were particularly popular among children especially in small girls.


177. A temple dedicated to local dietary Ragniya Great jubilation is seen there at the time of annual fair. Kashmir Pandits do not take meat during the festive days. It is situated at Tulmul Ganderbal some twenty kilometres away from Srinagar.


180. I collected this Rov song from archives library Radio Kashmir Srinagar. This song is a part of the programme known as 'Nagma Wuzan Neeryn Te Nayan'.

181. This 'Rov' song was generally sung during the month of Ramzan.


183. Ibid.

184. Ibid.

185. It is one of the celebrated sights in Srinagar. The shrine houses the sacred relic of Prophet Muhammad (P.B.U.H). For details see G. R. Bhat, MOI-MUQADAS- Turikh Ke Aine Mein (Urdu).

186. This song is often sung by young girls on the eve of Meraj-ul-Alam or Prophet Muhammads (P.B.U.H) birth anniversary.

187. This is a poem of elegiac nature and metre. The authorship is unknown. Hence I put it in the column of folk Maarsiya. I heard it from Mohammad Jawad of Bhagwanpora Lal Bazar few years ago.

188. Sung by Nirmala Raina, Kashmiri Pandit lady married at Jammu Premnagar New plots.


190. This song I collected from a shawl weaver Qadir Joo of Malarata Srinagar (unpublished).

191. Hindus hold vitasta as sacred river. The water of vitasta was used by Kashmiri Pandits for conducting various ceremonial exercises.


194. Anderson and Parker, "Society", p.34.


196. It is not published in any folk song collection.

197. Shad, "Anthology of Folk songs" (Wanvun portion)
198. It is a kind of folk song related to the ceremony of death among Kashmiri Pandits. It is recited in a peculiar tune by a lady well versed in the technique. The category of folk songs has fallen in disuse. For details see Saqi- Burze Metchi Hendy Beth.

199. Saqi, Published in cradle songs of Folk Song Collection Cultural Academy.


201. Collected by M.L Saqi.

202. Ibid.

203. Revealed to me by Satyabhama, Lecturer linguistics, University of Kashmir.

204. After offering the Friday Prayers, special congregation was held at the graveyard, where under the leadership of Local Imam a collective Fateh was conducted. After completing the Fateh, people gathered, were generally served with a cup of salt tea at the house of the bereaved. The Friday occasion was perhaps initiated to provide an opportunity to the greater number of people to participate in the occasion. Because Friday was generally a off day for the skilled and the artisan class in urban Srinagar. In rural Kashmir, the ceremony was generally held on the 4th day of the deceased person.

205. Kuliyati Maqbool Shah Kralwari verses quoted from famous poem "Grees Nama".

206. This Song was collected from an aged Kashmiri Pandit lady Shubavati of Sathu Bar Bar Sheh, who is presently living at Talab Tiloo, Jammu.