INTRODUCTION:
Islam was established in Arabia by Prophet (p.b.u.h.) himself. The Caliphs took pains to spread it wherever they could reach with the message of Holy Quran and Prophet (p.b.u.h.)
The Turks did a Yeoman's job in spreading the faith in Asia, South East Asia, China, Central Asia, Africa and as far as Spanish Granada. Islam remained pristine to the believers and the faithful but the neo-converts who embraced Islam carried over with them certain institutions and practices which were un-Islamic in the content of the Quran and the Hadith. In Kashmir the transformation was comparatively peaceful. In this process, even after the conversion of people to Islam, they accepted the tradition of Islam as they received it with its institutions which had been formed in its march across Persia and Central Asia.
One of the institutions that Islam had come to have in these parts was the shrines and its concomitants. These shrines were established for enshrining a relic or as tombs or hospices.

People of Kashmir, irrespective of their caste and creed have been known for their spirit of tolerance and amity. The establishment of Muslim rule and spread of Islam brought about a major change in Kashmir during 14th and 15th centuries. There was a period of strain and stress but on the whole the tradition of mutual understanding, and respect for one another in
the direction of integration in the face of forces of disintegration. The Sufis and Rishis played no ordinary role in building up the atmosphere of cordiality and amity between the two communities of Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir.

The founding of Jammu and Kashmir State by Maharaja Guleb Singh in 1846 A.D. introduced a new phenomenon into the social milieu of Kashmir. The Kashmir now came into contact with the Dogra, belonging to a different socio-cultural stream. Even so the Jammu people were not unacquainted with the tradition of the Muslim shrines and the role played by these. A couple of centres were established by Muslim saints in Jammu city itself where the people still observe the ritual of Peer Muridi. The matter did not end with that. The Dogras extended their political hold over frontier territories of Ladakh, Kargil and Gilgit and the problem of socio-cultural and religious intercourse assumed a new dimension. However, there were areas in the frontier where Islam had already established itself and a few Muslim shrines had come up in that area as well. In this entire process, the shrines of Kashmir played a very important role and had a great impact on social, cultural, economic and religious conditions of Kashmir. The project covers the period from 1857 A.D. to 1947 A.D. This is precisely the time when Kashmir was on the anvil of modern age. The close of 19th century marked the beginning of new trends in education which gave rise to new thinking. The acceptance of the 'new' which was in agreement with traditions of Islam
kindled the spirit of freedom and led to the rise of political awakening among the people. The shrines and some of the mutwals played an inspiring role in promoting a moment against the oppressive rule of Dogras. It would be an interesting feature of the study to determine the extent to which these centres spread knowledge and generated spirit of tolerance and superstition and in course of time these shrines became institutions of exploitation also.

This aspect would have to be examined in the context of the sources available. Thus it is hoped that the results of the proposed project would come to embody an interesting study shedding light on various aspects of life which received the unmistakable and ineffacable impact of the shrine culture that hitherto unknown to people.

The chapterisation of the project has been given the following order:

1. Shrines and their history;
2. Socio-cultural impact of the shrine;
3. Emergence of socio-religious classes;
4. Impact of shrines on education;
5. Political impact of the shrines;

A chapter-wise summary of the contents of the project is appended below:
Chapter -- 1st

The chapter gives the clear picture of the history of the shrines in Kashmir. It exclusively deals with the history and origin of some important Muslim shrines in Kashmir. It makes an interesting study to follow the history of these shrines and to explain the importance and influence of the relics housed in these shrines. Besides the history a study of architecture of these shrines has been made here.

Chapter -- 2nd

The chapter deals with their (shrines) impact on the social and cultural aspects of the lives of Kashmiris. Their socio-cultural impact has been so profound that a true and real picture of the society cannot emerge, unless it is viewed in the background of shrines and their contribution. The unbounded faith in shrines and relics housed in them has given birth to many customs and traditions which are at length dealt with in this chapter. The fairs and festivals (Urs) are an important feature of the shrines. It is the nature of celebrating the festivals motivated by the local influence which have given birth to amusements and recreations in the dull lives of Kashmiris makes an interesting study and, therefore, a portion of this chapter has been devoted to the study of these ceremonial functions. To the critical study of these celebrations has been added the practice of reciting the various psalms and hymns (Daruds, Naths, Wazief and Aurds). The main contribution of the shrines and the
celebration of festivals has given rise to amity and brotherhood among various communities of Kashmir. The teachings of Sufis have left a deep imprint on the minds of people of Kashmir and has taught them to live in tolerance of one another.

Even after the demise of the saints the shrines continued to promote the spirit of cordiality and friendship among various communities. This aspect too has been touched in this chapter.

However, the shrines and the *mujavirs* have played a negative role too. The negative aspects of their role has revolved round their efforts at promoting blind belief for their ulterior motive, which has unfortunately led to the growth of superstition.

**Chapter -- 3rd**

The chapter deals with two emerging classes one as vested interest class and the second as a reactionary class. The worst part played by the vested interest class at the shrines particular among people in general has been highlighted here. The exploitation of ignorant masses and gullible pilgrims to the shrines by *mujavirs* is a sad commentary on the working of the shrines and its custodians who were charged with preaching Islam and preserving the healthy traditions of sainthood. This fact of the *mujavirs* has been critically examined here. An attempt has been made to study the rise of reactionary movement. The reactionary trend manifested itself in the birth of revivalism. This development has been brought within the focus in this chapter.
Chapter — 4th

The chapter deals with the role of shrines in spreading education. The Khanqah system has proved as an effective means of spreading education particularly non-formal type of preaching Islam. The Khanqah's and the Maqtabs imparting education contributed, to some extent, towards the eradication of ignorance and superstitions.

Chapter — 5th

The chapter deals with the role of shrines in bringing about political consciousness among the people of Kashmir. A handful of educated mutwalis made positive contribution in arousing the dumb and oppressed spirit of the masses and kindled in them the passion to fight for their emancipation from exploitation and oppression.

Chapter — 6th

In this, the concluding chapter of the thesis, an effort has been made to bring out the impact of the shrines on the economic life of the people. Moreover, the contribution of the shrines towards the process of urbanization has also been examined. Last but not least shrines have been spotlighted as the main source of income to a section of business community. In this study the beggars have not been neglected. It was customary in Kashmir to exchange gifts and presents between the parties bound to matrimonial alliances. These various festivals and fairs (Urs) were the choicest occasions for such transactions to take place.
A review on some prominent works of our period:

1. **Tarikh-i-Hasan:**

Among the histories of Kashmir written in Persian, Pir Hasan Shah's four volume work is by far most important and relevant source used in extensively in the complexion of this present project. Hasan seems to have taken great pains in writing the history which throughout maintains a high standard of historical sense and impartiality. He narrates the events rationally and methodically. His remarkable composition giving, as far as possible accurate details in respect of topography, other physical features and history in general. The first volume of his Tarikh deals with the geography and refers to the location of several places of worship. The second volume deals with political history. However, in the present study political history has been left out, therefore, not much use of this volume has been made. His third volume is extensively on Sufis, Saints, Rishis, Saiyids, Sadats, Mujzubs and Ulama. He has also mentioned about the relics and their history. Obviously, this particular volume of Hasan's work being most relevant to the present subject has been used extensively.

2. **Tarikh-i-Kabir:**

Heji Mohi-ud-Din, its author, was a Kashmiri who lived in Mohalla Saraibal, in Srinagar. He was younger contemporary of Pir Hasan. He wrote the history in 1310 A.H. (1892 A.D.). This
work is a running summary in one handy volume of political, religious and literary history of Kashmir. It also deals with the faith of Kashmiries towards the saints and sufis and their relics. This work has been found useful.

3. The Valley of Kashmir:

This work is of tremendous importance as it has covered many aspects of the life of Kashmiris of the period under review. He has discussed the superstitions, social customs and the faith of people in relics and shrines. He made a thorough study of the people in villages and collected the information on very rational and objective basis. This excellent work can truly be called the *encyclopedia* of Kashmir.

4. Basharat-ul-Mumineen:

This work was compiled by Moulvi Anwar Shah in 1309 A.H. but was published in 1360 A.H. This book deals in the social customs like the worship of the saints and their graves and other superstitious practices. This is the only work in Kashmiri language which refers to the activities of the founder of the Ahl-i-Hadith movement in Kashmir.

5. Tarikh-i-Aqwam-i-Kashmir:

Mahammad-ud-Din Fauq, the author of this work, was a Kashmiri settled in Lahore. He wrote extensively in Urdu on the geography, history and the institution of Pir-Muridi. His works give detailed information and history of various communities and well known families of Kashmir. He also gives some information about the *mujawirs* of the shrines.
6. **Kashir**

G. M. D. Sufi, began composing his work *Kashir* in 1925 A.D. and completed it in 1949 A.D. It is a voluminous record in two parts giving achievements of Kashmiris since early times till of 1940. He has dealt in detail with the superstitions and social evils. The work also touches upon the architecture of Kashmir in general and of religious structure in particular.

A part from using the above works as the main source, the material gathered through interviews during the field work has also been resorted to in the preparation of this thesis.