Chapter 3

Literature Review
Since Kashmiri culture is a handi-work of time. On evolutionary scale, it has taken it thousands of years to reach to the present position. Through these years, Kashmiri culture has changed and simultaneously retained certain of its aspects; from simplicity to complexity, the whole odyssey has witnessed certain difficult terrains accompanied with certain smooth experiences. These experiences have taken the form of historically embedded facts particularly in the form of books. In order to get the vivid picture of the present study, it appears a must to go by some of these written records especially the books carrying sizeable information of Kashmiri culture.

It is in the backdrop of this need that the present chapter is devoted to make a modest attempt for getting a clear picture of Kashmiri culture through by these written records. While reviewing the literature, special emphasis is given to understand the Kashmiri culture in terms of change and continuity perspective and to utilize and relate the information in the analysis of the present study. The review is followed by the critical assessment of the books, so as to bring forth more objective picture of Kashmiri culture.


The book under review is one of the interesting books written on Kashmir. Author is spell bounded by the beauty of picturesque lakes, mountains and trees of the Kashmir. The book is a brief account of flora, fauna, social and economical aspects of then Kashmiri society. Although, book fails to give a detailed account of the cultural life of Kashmir, still book is a niece read to get a vivid picture of life in Kashmir during 19th century.
Author shares his experience about the life style of Kashmiris and believes that Kashmiris are simple in their out look. They are quite good looking and could easily pass for Europeans; however, despite that, they lack cleanliness. Kashmiris as author believes are cowards, rogues and much else of an unpleasant nature. To quote author, "I do not believe in writing lies. I must say that ordinary Kashmiri such as I have known for 30 years is a coward, a man with no self-respect and deceitful to a degree". However, author feels that such conditions have aroused due to the fact that Kashmiris were enslaved for years, and faced the social and cultural aggression by foreign rulers.

Author has also experienced the fact that Kashmiris are not religious despite being simple in outlook. As author writes, "in Kashmir anyway religion and life have nothing to do with one another...." In addition, he feels that Hindus and Muslims share similar rituals and it is hard to discriminate between the two communities. However, only thing that according to author distinguishes the Hindus and Muslims is their dressing pattern. For instance, Kashmiri men wear turban — which is liked by the most of the Kashmiris because it keeps the head warm during winters and cool during summer — differs according to caste and class, while, Brahmans tie it tightly, butchers (usually Muslims) prefer to tie it loosely. In addition, the butcher’s turban has broader strips than the Brahman’s turban. Similarly, the shape and the size of headgear and pheran also differ in shape and size according to the caste or class of a person. Author writes that pheran is the national dress of Kashmiris and is used extensively. However, author comments that "pheran is an ugly garment at its best," because people of Kashmir have become lazy due to wearing this garment and are paying heavy prices for this.

Author has also written about his experience in the modernization of Kashmiri society, he has mentioned about the beginning of missionary schools and hospitals in Kashmir and how
they slowly have helped to change the mentality of the people from obsolete cultural orthodoxy to the new roots of enlightenment.


This book is written in the 19th century. Author in this book has discussed the genealogy, flora, fauna, archaeology, and politics of Kashmir. However, author's major focus has remained on the architecture, literary heritage, religious outlook and the character of Kashmiris.

While discussing the architecture of Kashmir, author contends that the architectural monuments of Kashmir are the most remarkable of existing monuments of India. Author believes that Kashmiri architecture is the reflection of Grecian art. However, lofty pyramidal roofs, trifled doorways, covered by pyramidal pediments, with great width of its intercolumniations are remarkably the distinctive feature of Kashmiri architecture.

Similarly, while writing about the literary heritage of Kashmir, author believes that one of the fascinating characteristics of Kashmir is its being the abode of learning during past for which it was popularly known as *shrada peeth*. This feature of being the seat of learning has given it the privilege for being the only region in India which possesses a un-interrupted series of written records of history.

Narrating about the influence of Islam on Kashmiris and their religious outlook, author comments that Islam failed to change the hearts and the minds of the people who converted from Hinduism to Islam because, people still have a mixed faith and still follow the rituals of their discarded faiths i.e. Hinduism. To quote author, "Kashmiri Sunnis are only Musalmans [Muslims] in name. In their hearts they are Hindus, and the religion of Islam is too abstract to satisfy their superstitious cravings and they turn from the [main] priest and the [main] mosque to the pretty shrines of carved wood and roof bright with the iris flowers where the saints of the past times lie buried." Author believes that Kashmiri Muslims are
enrooted in their age-old faiths, to quote him, “Kashmiri Muslims have never given up the old traditions and customs,” And, “every Kashmiri believes that dead saint is more efficacious than a living priest.” Lawrence also criticizes people for not taking care of their religious places, like mosques, shrines and temples. To quote author, “in times of earthquake and cholera the Kashmiri falls to his prayers and displays a wonderful activity in repairing shrines and mosques, but in fair and easy times he allows the mosque and the shrines to fall into ruins and pays very little attention to the mullah.”

Likewise, commenting upon the character of Kashmiris, author feels that Kashmiri are sullen, desperate and suspicious personalities. They are *zulam parast* (worshippers of the oppression) and would not reiterate for excesses done against them because they have coward nature. He feels that “superstition has made the Kashmiri timid. Tyranny has made him a liar, while physical disasters have made him selfish and incredulous of the existence of god.” However, author is sanguine about Kashmiris, as author comments that “the Kashmiri is what his rulers have made him, but I believe and hope that the two generations of just and strong rule will transform him into a useful, intelligent and fairly honest man. Author also believes that Kashmiris are a resilient race and possess individuality and national character. They want to live, work and die in their own country.


Throughout history, it has been an accepted fact that cities are praised as a source of civilization and progress. They have always remained as the epicenter of innovations, science, education, arts and commerce which thrive and proliferate to the rural hinterland. This book revolves round the same theme. It has portrayed socio-cultural history of Srinagar, which not only is confined to its vicinity but traversed to peripheral as well as to the backwater zones of
Kashmir. The author has thoroughly narrated about the socio-economic, cultural and political life of Srinagar throughout its past. Throughout the book, it appears that author has maintained an ambivalent tone. On the one side, author is marooned at the loss of many indigenous cultural traits mainly due to the diffusion of foreign cultures, on the other side; author exhilarates the role of modernization in replacing the age-old dogmas and obsolete practices. In a bird’s eye view, author has sketched the various simple cultural practices which were in vogue during past and which have now attained a complex character. Author mentions that the food habits of Kashmiris was simple, confined to only hokhpal, (dried fruits and vegetables), baqir Khani, Kulcha (bakeries). However, the nature of food experienced a steady change with the modernization process and today people consume many eatables whose roots lie outside Kashmiri society. Similarly, dress pattern of Kashmiris was as simple as their food. Usually, people (both males and females) wore a long wrapper (pheran); females would prefer to wear a headgear (qasaba) studded with invariable pins and over it a spare of country cloth (pooch). However, as the process of modernization began; these dresses have begun to disappear and instead people prefer to wear western cloths and dresses.

Author contends that cultural change is not only accompanied with the change in food and dress pattern, but author believes that with modernization of Kashmiri culture many aspects of life have assumed a change. For instance, games for leisure time and recreational activities like tip-cat, hop-scotch, kabadi, kanch marven (stone striking) are only now a past leisure and recreational activities. Likewise, on festive occasions like Holy Ramzan, and Eid-ul-Zulta, young women after dusk would flock together in their neighbor’s house and would sing the traditional songs called Rouf. However, author contends that now such events of rumbling noises are only but dream events. People would also organize the Sufiayana musical programs not only for entertainment but to feel spiritual bliss also. Such events as
author mentions are now by gone events.

However, author's optimism amidst the drastic change is appreciable. As mentioned earlier, author contends, with the modern education and growing contacts with other cultures; the superstitious outlook of Kashmiri society to a greater extent has melted down. For instance, today, people prefer to choose doctors to treat the diseases like *cholera, typhoid, jaundice*, than to chew the sacred texts given by *pir's, fakirs* etc. People openly have started to appreciate girl's education and the menace like child marriage and other social mal-practices are also slowly dying down.


Since, Kashmiri society has always been a tolerant and receptive of many cultural elements that it experienced through constant interaction with other societies and the cultures of the world. Here author of this book is more interested in highlighting the influence of other cultures, especially *Persian* culture which started after Islam in the 14th century entered the valley and whose (Persian) indelible influence is still reflected in present culture of Kashmir. The main protagonist of bringing the Persian orientation of Kashmiri culture was king Zain-ul-Abdin. He invited craftsmen from Iran and Turkistan, and also sent some Kashmiri's to these countries to learn the arts like, book-binding, wood-carving, papier-machie and shawl making. Author also contends that when Mughals reached the Kashmir, they introduced their own life style, their own dressing and eating habits. They erected many buildings which were a reflection of Mughal art and even to this day are symbolic in Kashmiri art and architecture. Author even extols the broadmindedness and even handedness of Mughals and claim that they never tempered with syncretic and secular outlook of Kashmir. To quote author, "it goes to the credit of the Mughals that they treated Shias and Sunnis and Hindus and Muslims on an equal footing".

However author believes that many noted Sufi Saints like *Bulbul*
Shah, Sayyid Ali Hamdani, Shamasudin Iraqi, played an important role in bringing about an Iranian orientation of Kashmiri culture. The Iranian influence as author claims could be seen on many fronts. It began with the Kashmiri language and literature. Many Sanskrit words were translated into Persian and thus broadened the scope of Persia in Kashmir. Major epics and books like Mahabharta, Dasavatarr and RajTarangini were translated in Persian. Similarly, Zaina-Tarang by Bhattavartaras was composed on the model of Firdousi’s Shahnama; Jam’s Yusuf-u-Zulaikha was translated in Sanskrit and named as Karihakautuka. Such endeavors helped to the enrichment and diversification of literary heritage of Kashmir.

In addition, author claims that the educational orientation of common Kashmiri was even done on Persian lines. Sheikh Sadi’s Gulistan and Bustaan were taught and read with high interest. Dogmatic theology like (Ilm Ul Kalam), Ilmul Tawhid, Interpretation of Quran (Tafsir), Tradition (Hadith) Jurisprudence (Fiqh) was also taught. Similarly, boys were trained in archery, swordsmanship, and horsemanship. Alongside, the new skills about Persian, and Arabic medicine were also taught to them.

Author maintains that like in other aspects of Kashmiri culture, food habits were also equally influenced by the Iranian culture. Kashmiris under Persian cultural influence learned the various cuisines and varied preparations of rice (pilavs) like, Zard Pilav, Tursh Pilav, and Shull-a-Pilav etc. Traditional cuisine of Kashmir famously known as Kashmiri wazwaan was even imported from Iran. People also developed a habit of eating in copper utensils tinned with metals. Not only this, author contends that even in contemporary times, Kashmiri dress pattern, architecture, eating-habits and even music is quintessence of Persian culture.


This book by the author has been compiled out of the experience that he gained during his visit to the Kashmir. It is a reflection of
author’s observation of various dimensions of Kashmir’s social and cultural life. Author has briefly mentioned about the important architectural sites of Kashmir especially the shrines of medieval period and some stone temples like Martand and Tapar. Author has also commented about the artistic genius of Kashmiris and their dexterity of hands in arts like carpet weaving, Gabba weaving, and paper machie.

However, author comments that Kashmiris with time developed in deceitful nature. Since tyrant rulers made their life so self-centric and insecure that they could not think of anything than their own petty interests. Nevertheless, author feels that deep inside people are as beautiful as picturesque and beautiful their valley is.


The book under review is an attempt on the part of author to have a panoramic view of cultural history of Kashmir. Since, author claims that this book has been compiled with an aim of preserving and immortalizing the splendor and excellence of Kashmir and its glorious culture, and as guide to all who wish to know Kashmir. Still, the book is not as promising as its claim goes. Nevertheless, the book has been beautifully written and author has often than wrangling over the topics like persecution, exodus of pundits, forced conversions by Muslims, focused on the syncretic relations of Kashmiris. It could be said that K.L. Kalla has written this volume with all technical wizardry.

The book is divided into several chapters. Abiding to the title, author, feels an obligation to discuss different facets of culture viz. art, literature, and architecture etc. Author has given a brief architectural account of places like Panderethan, Awantipora, Parihaspora, stupas of Uskar and other monuments of Kashmir. In addition, author has also briefly written about the culturally symbolic art forms of Kashmir viz. Shawls, Gabhas, and Paper machie.

Author holds a view that Kashmiri folk lore is unparallel whose
living example resides in Somdeva's *Panchtantra*. Author contends that Kashmir is proud of its celebrated writers like Kalhana for his *Rajatarangini*, Shiti Kanta's *Mahanney-Prakash* and poets like *Lal Ded*, *Sheikh Noor-u-Din Wali*, and *Yaqoob Sarfi*. Author is of the view that although Islam brought conversion of religions, nevertheless, Muslims live with certain Hindu customs. He believes that Kashmir has an ingredient of Hindu, Muslim and Buddhist elements.

Besides, author believes that Kashmir is known for its highly meritorious and scholarly character. This can be known, as author contends from the fact that Kashmir had its own script called *sharda script* which is different from the *Devangiri script*. It was once known as *Sharda Peeth* (the highest seat of learning). From early times scholars and students from India tracked all along to Kashmir to complete their Sanskrit Studies. Author asserts that Kashmir has also played an important role in the development of Indian literature. It is the homeland of *Alankara Shastra* (Rhetoric). It has been the land of scholars like *Vamana*, who was the founder of *Riti School*, *Udbhata* (774-813 A.D) considered to be the prolific teacher of three *Vittis* and *Rudhratta* (800-900 A.D) who expounded the theory of school of figures. Author maintains that it is equally amazing to know that before the introduction of paper in Kashmir, people used the birch bark for literary writing and for governmental correspondence.

Author then shifts to the social life of the vale prior to 1947. He believes that it was an age of faith; simple living and high thinking was a watchword. Despite living in destitution, people were contended. *Jagirdari* system was in practice. Manual labour, cottage industries were the source of livelihood for the people. In terms of eating habits, they were simple. Dried vegetables and other simple local recepies were mostly taken in winters as supplies were short. Shifting to the religion and religious feelings of Kashmiri's, author claims that although Islam met the local religions, but it did not change the real character of Kashmiri society. The admixture of both *Sufism* and native *Kashmiri philosophy* (Trika Philosophy) resulted in Shaive-cum-Sufi doctrine, which resulted in a rich heritage of
humanism and universal brotherhood, whose living examples were Lal-Ded, Sheikhul-Alam, and Roopa-Bhawani.

Since, author believes that Kashmiris have been of secular orientation, so despite belonging to different faiths they share many rituals and customs of each other and it is one of the characteristic features of Kashmiriyat. However, authors ingenuity to glorify the secular outlook of Kashmiri’s needs to be taken with a pinch of salt as the two communities according to some scholars have always been conscious of maintaining their micro-identities. This statement can be corroborated by the recent works of Chitrelekha Zutshi in (Languages of Belonging: Islam regional identity and the making of Kashmir) and Mohd. Ashraf Wani’s book (Islam in Kashmir: Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century).

Author has also made mention of the rich repository of Kashmiri folklores which he accepts as rich heritage of socio-cultural realms of Kashmiri society. However, author seems to be deeply wounded by the recent turmoil and tries to be empathetic to both the Muslim and Hindu communities. Author is of the view that turmoil hit hard the socio cultural relations of Kashmiris and it brought chasm in the social structure of Kashmir which earlier for years was known for her tolerance and brotherhood.


The volume under review claims to present the struggle of survival on the part of the people of Kashmir. It projects Kashmiri’s as those who sustained their deft fingers clinch on their traditional arts, crafts, music, poetry and folklore despite the trials, travails and tribulations through which Kashmir and its inhabitants have had to pass through, during past few centuries under foreign occupations. Author contends that despite odd winds and adverse conditions; Kashmiris maintained their cultural identity. In such a gloomy heart-rending atmosphere, gallant people of Kashmir have resisted all offensives and kept aloft the torch of their cultural
heritage. Author believes that from Lalatadatiya (699-736 A.D.) to Zain-ul-Abdin (1420-1470 A.D.) Kashmiris maintained the value of communality, secularism, humanism, tolerance and accommodation as major value themes in their culture. Kashmiri culture according to author, absorbed and assimilated a chain of healthy thought currents flowing from the Persia, China, Greek and Central Asia.

Since time immemorial, as author claims, Kashmir has remained a rich repository of intellectual and cultural heritage and coming of Islam further enriched its roots. Sufi saints and mystics like Lal Ded, Sheikh-ul-Alam, BulBul Sahib tied and strengthened the human brotherhood among all sections of society.

The sole aim of the book is to highlight the fact that Kashmir is the abode of syncreticism. As author claims that in Kashmir, "whether it was Kashmir Shaivism or Kashmir Sufism, the temple or the mosque, Vihara or the Ziarat the outlook throughout has been syncretic." This synthetic relationship is reflected in all the dimensions of Kashmiri culture even in historical and architectural places of Kashmir. For instance, splendid mosque of Shah Hamdan, has an appearance of Buddhist edifice, likewise, Jama Masjid erected by Sultan Sikander in 1388 A.D. whose spires and domes are Islamic in origin, but its minarets and pillars are copies from Indian buildings of Kushan period. Author asserts that in the same way Gardens of Nishat, Chasma-Shahi, Verinag, Achable Gardens of Kashmir, all represent a blend of both Iranian and Turkish style, Bostan on the one hand and Gulistan on the other were mingled and combined to give birth to a new kind of beauty. Author claims that whether it is paper machie, copperwork, shawl work gabha sazi, wood carving all reflect and corroborate the fact that Kashmiri culture has always been a tolerant and flexible in nature. In addition, author claims that Kashmiri music, like other aspects of Kashmiri culture reflect a blend of both Persian and Indian music. Similarly, Kashmiri language has also not remained untouched from this. It is a mix up of Sanskrit and Persian words. Finally, author contends that the philosophy of Kashmir, especially Sufi philosophy, is itself a
reflection of this syncreticism, which has a mosaic of both Kashmiri Sufi and Shaive influence in it.


The book under review is the compilation of different scholarly papers presented in a seminar held under the auspices of Dean Students Welfare University of Kashmir. The aim behind presenting the book is to highlight different aspects of Kashmiri culture. The book reflects information on different dimensions of Kashmiri culture from language, civilization, to various art forms like, calligraphy, and music.

The introductory address is given by Prof. A.Q. Rafiqi. The author is highly critical of the present trend of Westernization, and so called cultural nationalism. He calls to exercise choices and options of Kashmiri people, instead of borrowing blindly from other cultures. Rafique also laments over the unfettered behaviour of Western Scholars towards African and Asian cultures. Author pleads not to get swayed by the dismal propaganda of the West that “West is the best.” He also vehemently criticizes those in India who are trying to underplay the contribution of Muslims to the India in general by chanting the slogan of cultural nationalism (Hindutva) which according to author is a lopsided viewpoint. He feels concerned about the growing disenchantment among Muslims mainly due to melancholic incidents like demolition of Babri Masjid, which author feels equivalent to denigrate entire medieval Indian History.

After Prof. Rafique, it’s G.R. Malik in his article (The Cultural Value of Ghani and Poetry) in which he describes how this Kashmiri poet advocated a decent and morally unimpeachable life and tried to evoke through his poetry among Kashmiris a sense of respect and resilience against any retrogressive cultural aggression. Independence and self-reliance are the moral traits that according to author Ghani has advocated and considered as sine qua non for every Kashmiri. Malik advocates the sagacious articulation of
thoughts that Ghani's poetry depict and how it reflect the undercurrent value-themes of Kashmiri culture.

Then, it is Isaq Khan's paper (Kashmiri Culture vis-a-vis Islam) in which he has described the two denizens of Kashmir valley i.e. Lala Arifa and Sheikh Noorudin who emerged as immortal souls, and as land markers in Kashmir history. Author believes that Brahmanic Philosophy failed on many accounts to deliver judiciously both latent and manifest societal needs of the people. However, when Islam entered this valley people readily embraced it, not because it was a coup d'etat, but a vehicle of social protest against Brahmanic culture. Author contends that both Lala and Sheikh Noorudin, have been the protagonists who synthesized the Islam and local traditions of Kashmir in most amicable manner and hence people did not find it difficult to accept Islam as a their religion and a code of conduct. Author asserts that although Lala's Sanskritised Kashmiri poetry shows little influence of Islam in linguistic terms, but despite the fact that she was a saivite yogini, she was eulogized by latter-day hagiographers as a Muslim mystic and even her own spiritual offspring of Noorudin described her as Avatara. As author comments that "by declaring Lal Ded as an avatar of Kashmiris, Noorudin immortalized her name as a rebel against the ethnocentric Brahmanic culture." Lalla not only established the dharma; but also emerged on the social scene for teaching the mortals the wisdom of the ages. She tarnished the delusions of grandeur and that is the reason that Sheikh Noorudin used the word Avatara for her.

Another article is by Prof. Zaman Azuridha's (language and Civilization), in which he claims that language has a high resonance for any culture. It not only shows the behaviour of a person but gives a vivid picture of several characteristics of a culture. In fact, writing about any society may appear an easy task; however, without immersing oneself into that society's culture can never provide the valuable and true details of that society. For instance author believes that an alien person can never understand the warmth of Kangri (fire-pot) or frost (Shishur) or icicle on the eves during winter and
similarly its cultural importance in Kashmiri society and civilization. However, the main contention of the author seems that unless one does not understand the language and other subtle elements of a particular culture, one cannot justify in analyzing its cultural values and ethos.

Then, it is Prof. Shafi Shauq in (Calligraphy in Kashmir), who comments that the tradition of calligraphy in Kashmir is age-old. Author writes that it was wizard king Zainulabdin who manufactured paper from the Samarqand and helped this art to prosper in Kashmir. Author feels that, “Large scale conversion of Kashmiris to Islam popularized the Persio-Arabic Script in the valley and the persons engaged in penmanship, or Khushnavisi excelled in all styles of Arabic and Persian Calligraphy.” Many court calligraphist of Akbar were honored as “Zarin Qalam” or “Shirin Qalam.” It is the Arabic or Persian Style of Calligraphy which is popular in Kashmir. Author feels that this exquisite art which involves individual ingenuity and dexterity cannot be replaced by any mechanical device.

Then, the book moves to the Mohd. Ashraf Wani’s article (Islam in the Kashmir Environment: 14th-16th century) in which author holds a clear tone that Islam in Kashmir has not reached here with its pristine glory but remains in sync with Persian and central Asian influence. The people as author claims, could not divorce themselves from the age old practices that were present in Kashmir before the coming of Islam

Then follows the article of Noor Mohd. Bhat (Kashmir Music), and sheds light on Kashmir’s classical Sufiyan music. The author informs that Kashmiri music has various Maqams (modes) and taalas (rhythmic patterns) of Persian sufiyan music. Author also differentiates between the Indian music from Persian Sufiyan music in a sense that former keeps the spoken words subservient to the technical excellence of the music, and later holds poetry supreme and music occupies second place.

Majrooh Rashid in his article (The Element of Introspection in Kashmir Personality as Reflected in Kashmir Poetry) mentions that elf-
introspection or self-realization has been a premier goal of Kashmiri poetry. Author believes, it is mainly due to the natural calamities that people struck, and political exploitation which led to the discontent among Kashmir’s toward the materialistic possessions and instead, generated their bent of mind towards spirituality. Spirituality, as author claims has been the paramount asset that Kashmiris have churned in them throughout history. He further writes that although poets like Rasool Mir, Mehjoor, Kamil Portrayed their beloveds of flesh and blood, but it never led to the loss of spiritual essence in their poetry. The influence of Kashmir Shaivism, Reshut and Islamic mysticism led Kashmiri poets to inculcate the ingredient of self-recognition which leads one to perceive and comprehend the ultimate reality.

Then, Mohammed Shafi Simbli in his article (Neegray a Representative of Kashmiri Character) claims that Neegray (a famous mythical character of Kashmiri folklore) is a living character representative of all Kashmiris. He contends, although a mythical character; its essence is not lost in present day world. Neegraay is a synoptic representation of Kashmir’s unblemished character. He believes out of innocence Kashmiri people like Neegray cannot differentiate between a friend and a foe; neither can they sever relations on the basis of any creed, or color. Kashmiris according to author are far off from any perversion. Author claims that Kashmiris need to revive the traditional and mythical stories of their culture and then only can they reaffirm their identity as a real Kashmiris.

The book also includes the article of M.H.Zaffar (Sheikh-ul-Alam and Our Cultural Heritage) the main assertion of author has been that Sheikh-ul-Alam is a prime instructor of Kashmiris who used his poetry not as an art, but to impart lessons on the art of living which was thoroughly egalitarian in character. Author contends that some of the missionaries who visited Kashmir with Sayid Hamadni were not the true paragons of Islam, instead, had their own nefarious desires. They sowed the seeds of many malpractices and it was the true son of the soil i.e. Sheikh-ul-Alam who had to face a dual fight
one those whose roots were inside (particularly, the Brahmans and other upper caste people who exploited the common masses), and another those who came from outside (missionaries who entertained themselves as God’s chosen people and there by exploited the common Kashmiris).

Then, it is Nishat Ansari in his article (The Traditional Architecture of Kashmir) who puts forward the notion that the architecture of Kashmir is based on evolutionary module which changed from simple to complex. He contends that architecture is an expression of people’s changing social patterns. It earns new life by imbibing new things from other cultures. He calls traditional architecture of Kashmir as mosaic of other cultural vibrations, a tapestry of Doric, Corinthine, Egyptian, Chinese, Sassanide, Eastern Java, Gandhara and of Mughals.

Then, it is Ghulam Nabi Gowher extolling the Sheikh Noorudin in his article (Sheikh Noorudin as a Founder of Kashmiri Culture). He claims that Sheikh Noorudin’s hallmark has been his drive against the most Sayids who visited the vale only to be either courtiers, landlords or to attain other pivotal positions. After being humiliated by Taimur; they turned to the Kashmir and here they mingled with local Hindus and intensified caste based ideology. Sheikh-ul-Alam contested against such evil practice that they intended to bring in Kashmir. Although, Hindus in order to retain their identity retained Sanskrit based Kashmiri and Muslim in order to follow the same held Persian based Kashmiri; however, Sheikh-ul-Alam again came to the rescue of Kashmiri society which was on the harbinger of cleavage and used both Persian and Sanskrit metaphors to unite these broken communities. Author believes that it is the “real identity which Sheikh accorded to the culture of Kashmir ... and built the structure of our way of life.”

Then follows the article of Khurshid ul Islam (Does Marriage Continue to be a Component of Cultural Heritage of Kashmir: a Study of Urban Muslim Marriage). Author has focused on various obsolete customs involved in the marriage ceremony of Kashmir. Marriage
which as author believes is simple and a sacred relation has turned into a host of many obsolete elements that past has never witnessed. Author has also focused on shift from joint family structure to nuclear family which according to author has really placed many aspects of traditional society of Kashmir at cross roads.


The editors of the book by including the articles of different scholars have attempted to give a panoramic view of the various aspects of the Kashmir and its people viz., economic, cultural and social aspects. The book begins its article by James Milne (The Gowned Kashmiri); he contends that Kashmiris famous gown "Phiran" the long cloak has always been vulnerable to many attacks to turn Kashmiri people down. It is associated to various biased tags e.g., as Akbar has called Kashmiris as "faint-hearts" due to wearing of this phiran and thought it was good for them to wear such cloths as it would further emphasize the sissy and effeminate character of the Kashmiris. Author contends that the frequent attacks on Kashmiris and years of tyranny turned them weak-kneed people, which author feels has remained unseen to the rulers like Akbar. Author feels surprised at the potentialities of Kashmiris to recollect their lost might and utilize that in every way. More or less, same ideas are expressed by S.N.Dhar (The Kashmiris ), who believes that kashmiris quiescent, unquerulous attitude and non-aggressive behavior is mainly due to the long captivity under foreigners, which had finally lead to the absence of instincts of valour and war in them.

Similarly, Tyndalle Biscoe in (Character of Kashmiris) puts readers through the same story. Although, he feels exacerbated while narrating about Kashmiris as people of diminutive character, but feels uncompromising to write something contrary to his experiences. While narrating about the life of common Kashmiris, he mentions that the Muslims who form a predominate community,
is mostly the community of converts and these Muslims are mostly involved in menial jobs. whereas, Pundits on the other hand, who is an intelligent race prefers to indulge in priestly, literary and clerical occupations, though, some pushed by fate to apply their brawns also. Author also writes that Kashmiris are physically excellent; however, they are a stock of filthiness. They are intelligent, but due to lack of courage cannot express themselves freely.

Editors of this book have then placed the Prem Nath Bazaz’s article (Kashmir and Its Peoples). The author briefly comments upon the chequered history of Kashmir. Author feels that despite rulers in Kashmir expressed brute force; the Kashmiris pushed all their mental and physical faculties to face the ordeals brought by tyrants and showed the resistance against all tyranny to safeguard their cultural identity.

The book also includes Ernest F. Neve’s article (The People). Neve who was a visitor to the valley in 19th century, expressed mixed feelings about the Kashmiris. He feels an ordinary villager of Kashmir is very dirty, wearing greasy, old grey, orange or red skull cap. Author also feels that despite great physical strength and powers of endurance, the Kashmiris are highly neurotic and would weep on slight provocation. Although, author admires the beauty of Kashmiris, but feel that they are spoilt because of their filthy body and mind. However, author contends that one of the remarkable things in Kashmiris is that they are endowed with a gift of bearing responsibility and even of taking initiatives in most crucial times. Neve also writes about the patriotic feelings of Kashmiri and writes that “Kashmiris are highly attached to their own country and would hardly prefer to move outside their country. In fact, they often use famous proverb — Tsari Chu kand Thari Peth Karar” (a sparrow is content on its own branch).


The book worth to its title is dealing with the influence of Islam
in bringing change in Kashmiri society. As author contends, *Islamisation* of Kashmir — which took place in 8th century and secured a stronghold in almost 14th century — was not only a change in faith; but was an ideology much shaped and influenced by other cultures. The Sufis who visited the valley were mostly from Persia and Central Asia and transmitted much of their culture’s influence in valley too.

Author writes that Muslim missionaries, who came with the main ambition of proselytization of faith, simultaneously carried forward the mission of *persinization* in Kashmir. The persinization had a deeper influence on the indigenous languages. Not only those who embraced Islam as a faith whole heartedly learnt the Persian language; but those people who did not convert to the new religion showed their interest in learning the Persian language. They used to be popularly known as *Bashya bhattas*. Needless to say, persinization ultimately shattered the use of Sanskrit language in obscurity.

He also contends that from the *cultural viewpoint*, it must be admitted that ‘Islamisation,’ not only led to the adaptation of Persian language but Persian influence could also be seen in terms of art, architecture, and poetry. Author contends that smooth acceptance of Persian influence became possible only due to the royal patronage that Sufis were enjoying. In author’s words, “their [Kings] courts were rendezvous of celebrated scholars, painters, musicians, dancers, calligraphists and artisans.”

Author contends that the interplay between the Persian and indigenous cultures led to an admixture of both the cultures and led to a new cultural tapestry in Kashmir. For instance, the foreign arts especially imported from Persia, like Shawl weaving; carpet weaving; art of paper machie; art of wood carving; art of Sufiayana music; the use of wooden architecture in replacement to the stone architecture, became the inextricable element of Kashmiri culture and brought a complete change in Kashmiri society. However, author contends that it was never a unilateral process; Kashmiri culture
which already had a rich heritage also influenced the process of Islamisation. People changed the greater traditions of Islam to the local traditions of Islam. The localization of Islam was more acceptable to the people according to their social and cultural needs and finally led to the happy accommodation of all the respective religions of the valley and enriched the cultural identity and heritage of Kashmir and kashmiriyat.


The author in this book has made an attempt to discuss the historical developments, parallel to the cultural developments in Kashmir. Author claims that historically speaking cultural heritage of Kashmir is as old as 5000 years. Kashmiri culture during these 5000 years has remarkably enriched itself through interaction with several other cultures. Author claims that Greek classics of Ptolmey, Dionysis, Herodotus, and Arabic works of al-masudi, al-qazwini, al-beruni, al-idrisi authenticate this fact that the Naga culture is at the root of present day culture of Kashmir and it is later that Pisacas, Aryans, introduced their respective traditions in Kashmir. However, author fails to mention the nature of changes brought by their respective traditions.

Author feels that the richness in Kashmiri culture emerged when Buddhism as a faith was introduced. It was in direct contradiction, although to many tenants of Hinduism, which was already a practicing faith of common masses, however, the game of thesis and anti-thesis, led to the synthesis in the form of Kashmir shivism, which emerged not only as a new faith; but also a code of conduct and a way of living. Author feels that Kashmir shivism influenced the Kashmiri culture in many respects. It helped in emerging a new mode of thinking about world and even influenced basic personality of the people.

Author believes that the interface of Islam with Buddhism and Hinduism was as peaceful as the interaction of Buddhism
and Hinduism was in Kashmir. Interplay between Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam never intercepted the element of tolerance and harmony in Kashmir. Author writes that Kashmiris not only accepted readily Islam as their faith, but were magnimous enough to accept new cultural traits, like new art forms, architecture, food habits, and new patterns of dressing. Author writes that illustrious Kings like Zain-ul-Abdin, upheld the integrity of the Kashmiri society and helped to maintain the peaceful environment across all the religious communities. It is out of these efforts that he was called Budshah (great king) by Muslims and Narayan Avtara (reincarnation of God) by Hindus and is known even by these names in Kashmir today.

Author also writes briefly about the various forms of arts and crafts that were imported from Persia. Chief among them were carpet weaving, paper-machie, and the art of calligraphy — which was mainly used to decorate Khanqahas (shrines), with both Arabic and Persian verses of 'nastallic' and 'riqa' style.


From vantage point book emerges as a small world where author has tried to club various articles of scholars of 19th century like Tyandale Biscoe, Sachidananda Sinha, Francis Younghusband, G.L. Koul, S.N. Dhar, G. Bruce, and H.H. Wilson. The themes are varied but are giving panoramic view of the whole Kashmir.

Fazili has tried to figure out how these foreign visitors have woven the characteristic elements of Kashmiri people and their culture in their writings. Biscoe for instance, believes that Kashmiri people are unscrupulous, misdemeanor and far off from descent living, however, he feels that long years of occupation by tyrants and exploiters have turned them somewhat down from an ethical way of living. Biscoe believes that the people in valley are inherently secular and give far little care to their religious identities. He also believes that most of the rituals associated to Hindus and Muslims
resemble to each other and other aspects of their life-style are also not too different from each other, so it becomes very difficult to make any distinction between the two communities.

Fazili has also included Sachidananda’s article who writes about the beginning of 19th centaury which augmented modernization of Kashmiri culture and society. Sachidananda believes that modern education and technology is proving healthy in dismantling of many of the obsolete values in Kashmiri society. However, his contention is that Kashmiri culture would fail to absorb the positive essence unless, Muslims who are reluctant to modern education, would not tread on to the road of modernization in its full sweep.

The book also includes G.L. Koul’s article in which he contends that the character of the Kashmiris has been extolled to sky heights by every visitor, being that Dr. Reve, M.Hick, or Sir Lawrence. Koul believes that the Kashmiri Pandits have always mesmerized others by their punctilious and industrious character but equally grieves about the apathy of Pandits especially from 13th-19th century. He feels that Pandits have been pulverized and much of their skills and talent was and is draining off and in this way Kashmiri culture is experiencing an internal chasm. However, author has failed to see that most of his claims seem to be unwarranted and far too away from the reality. In addition, he has also failed to corroborate his claim with proper evidences. Koul after narrating the hard luck story of Kashmiri pundits feels that Kashmir is a hub of various languages from Dogri to Pahari and from Ladakhi to Dardi to Kashmiri. He contends that indigenous writings of Kashmir like Himal and Nagrai, Gulrez, Shahnama, Sudhma Charita, and eruditions like Mehjoor, Azad, Nadim, Noor Mohammad Roshan all have enriched the literary heritage of Kashmiri culture.

S.N.Dhar in his article, writes that Kashmiri culture is inherently a resilient culture. Despite, being under the rule of foreigners it has maintained its traditional values of brotherhood, tolerance, and non-aggressiveness.

Another article is of the Earnest F. Neve, who holds very low
opinion about Kashmiris. While commenting over the basic cultural personality of Kashmiris, he has often described them as deceitful in nature. He contends that despite having the great physical strength and the powers of endurance; the Kashmiri is highly strung and neurotic and will be moved on slight provocation. Neve believes that out of ignorance Kashmiris cannot distinguish between right and wrong. Neve after sharing his ethnocentric views about kashmiri culture, comments that shrine worshiping is an essential element of Kashmiri culture and people show more respect to dead saints than manifesting belief in an abstract god and except for times of special stress from disease or disaster, Kashmiris show very little religious zeal or earnestness. In addition, author comments that one of the unique attributes in Kashmiri culture is that there is no rigid caste system even among the Hindus of Kashmir, quite reverse to their co-religionists in India.

Then Fazili has also included the Francis Younghusband readings about Kashmiri society. Francis floats high words for the Hindus whose ingenuity, subtlety of mind, intelligence and acuteness is known throughout India. However, he like his counterpart holds same detesting words for Kashmiri people such as Kashmiris are untidy, dirty and slipshod.

C.G.Bruce’s article reflect more or less the same ethnocentric tone and contends that Kashmiri people are dislocated from endurance and patience and thrive on threadbare character far off from any scrupulous behavior. He feels that Kashmiri people are lacking endurance and patience; they can hardly be called truthful. He believes that Kashmiris are great gossips and love handing on tit-bits of news. He has also commented upon the various customs of both Kashmiri pundits and Muslims. Especially those associated with their birth, marriage and death where author finds a lot of uniformity between the two communities.

S.N. Dhar in his another article comments upon the exquisiteness of 19th centaury Kashmiri lady and in addition also writes about their dress pattern. He writes that although with sun
burn complexion, her fine white teeth, graceful form and delicate features more than makeup the loss in her complexion. Hindu women, he claims have refined faces and gentle manners. They are fearer than Mohammedan (Muslim) women due to the fact that they spent most of their lives in closed doors. Purdah, as author comments, which was used by the women of the both communities earlier, is only worn now by Muslim ladies. Married girls wear skull caps, large silver and metal earrings and necklaces, with silver bracelets and glass bangles. Pundit women also wear Pheran and headdress, but that varies from worn by Muslim women. Author feels that proliferation of modern education is disentangling women from the traditional orthodox normative structure, which is a sign of her enlightenment and social progress.


The literature on traditional architectural places and heritage is indeed scant. In absence of the detailed and systematic account of the historically important and culturally rich places, one generally flounders in bewilderment. However, this volume under review is written in an intelligent and systematic manner. The author claims that no structural monuments of pre-Christian era have yet been discovered and even first six centuries are very meagerly represented, except for the monuments assigned to the Kushan period i.e. Buddhist structures at Harwan and Ushkar.

Author claims that “long connection with the north-west of India has left indelible mark upon the character of the Buddhist and Hindu architecture of the valley.” Author narrates that the medieval architecture began from (600-1300 A.D.). Buddhist buildings as author claims began in almost 6th or 7th century and ended with the transfer of the kingdom from Hindu to Muslim rulers in A.D. 1337. Author writes that as far material, ornament and technique is concerned, there is practically no difference between the Hindus and Buddhist buildings, however, as religious needs of both were
different so there plan and elevation differed widely. Buddhists mainly used the old material, though better material and bit elaborated decoration was employed. They mostly used beautiful grey lime stones, plinth in big buildings consisted of double terrace. Externally as well as internally, walls were plain, roofs were gabled and sloped.

Similarly as far Hindu architecture is concerned, author believes that their mode of construction was simple and as time passed it too attained newness and sophistication. The best example of earlier Hindu architecture is reflected in the Martand temple. Author puts his thesis and claims that when two religions are indigenous and live in amity and share good books, then there is every likely-hood that the sacred buildings of new religion should follow the style and architecture of those of older one. This according to author happened twice in Kashmir, one when Buddhism gave way to Hinduism and when Islam replaced the earlier religions. Author contends that during Lalitadatya’s reign large resources were utilized to construct Hindu and Buddhist architects. However, to Buddhists, bounty brought no change they only used better and massive materials, but Hindus used both their hands and brains to make the temples like Martand. Author asserts that similarly, medieval architecture of Kashmir depended for its effect upon:

1. The simplicity and unity of its design.
2. The massiveness of the blocks of lime-stone, granite that were used.
3. The finish of dressing.
4. Natural beauty of the sight chosen for erection of the temple.

Author has also made mention about the Muslim architecture (14th century A.D. and onwards) and claims that the transfer of the scepter from Hindus to Muslims was a purely domestic matter and had nothing to do with the great pan-Islamic conquests of the 12th and 13th centuries. He writes, “It was, moreover an entirely secular affair.” They (Muslims) were far too few to initiate architecture of
their own. They used the disutilised material of Hindu temples for construction of Mosques. So far, Mughal style is concerned it is same as seen in Agra, Delhi and Lahore e.g. mosques of Akhunn Mullaha in Makhdoom sahib Pather Masjid, baradhari in Shalimar-Bagh resemble to Delhi and Agra too.

Author has given then some details about the various architectural sites in Kashmir. For instance, Shankaracharya, Khanqah of Shah -I- Hamdan, Pather Masjid, Jamia Masjid of Srinagar, Hari-Parbat, however, a complete mention of the sites and their architectural details is missing.


Author contends that at face value we may get an impression that a lot of structural and cultural changes occurred when Sufis entered this land of Kashmir. However, reality is something quite reverse. The Sufis could not dismantle the age-old traditions in Kashmir. Author believes that although Sufis introduced the Persian culture and was all too readily accepted by the locals especially in terms of cuisines, dress pattern, arts and crafts etc, nevertheless, what Sufis propounded in Kashmir was never a naive experience to the common masses of Kashmir.

Author holds that what sufis versified in their couplets was no way different from shavi-philosophy. Author writes that Sufi poets like Sheikh Noorudin propounded the philosophy which was an admixture of Hindu and Buddhistic philosophy. Following the same tradition poets like Swachikral propounded the doctrine of Maya is also propounded in the Adi-Shankaracharya. Similarly poets like Neama Sahib, Rehmaan Dar, and Samad Mir’s poetry is based on the concept of wahdat-ul-wajud, which is no way different from the Vedanta.

Moreover, author believes that despite the introduction of shariya oriented Islam, people of the land localized the Islam in their own format. Most of the people accepted the Islam propounded by
Chapter 3

Literature Review

The rishis, who propounded the faith which was an admixture of Hindu, Buddhist and Islamic values.


This book appears to be very important in understanding Sufi tradition and their modus operandi to Islamize as well as Persinaize the Kashmiri society. The author has juxtaposed both Rishi and Sufi philosophy. Author opines that Rishis of the valley had specific practices and methodologies which differed in many ways from the Sufi saints. Self-denial and purity of life, non-attachment or renunciation form the key elements of Rishi philosophy. Unlike Sufi saints, who attempted hard to convert ruling elite to Islamic fold, rishis never formally believed in proselytization.

The author feels that most of the local people were attracted to the rishi fold instead to Sufi philosophy because former in many ways resembled to the local indigenous culture and thought. Rihis hold that carnal desires were the root cause of all evil and sorrow and controlling of nafs would extol one's spirituality to immense heights. Therefore, consuming meat, green vegetables, and entering into marriage remained a taboo for rishis, this way of thinking was more closely connected to Hindu and Buddhist philosophy than Islam. Such thinking, on the other hand, remained in direct contradiction to Sufi philosophy whose orientation was based in pristine form of Islam and led to polarization between the two philosophies.

Author comments that sufis constructed madrasas, where the lessons of Islamic teachings were delivered. In addition, madras's like madras-ul-islam, madras-ul-shifa, madras-ul-urwntul-wusqa, madras-ul-tafsir, madras-ul-hadith, madras-ul-fiqh etc. were established; which besides imparting Islamic teachings also brought the Persian orientation of Kashmiri culture. They brought with them Persian language, art, dress, artifacts, food habits and even influenced the indigenous music and brought the Persian influenced music known
as Sufiayana music. These elements of Persian culture are still vibrant and alive in the Kashmiri culture.


The volume under review is written by Sunita Dhar. This compilation is a wonderful outcome of the author's prowess and resonance that she has shown for the varieties of Kashmiri music. The book aims to join link between Kashmiri and Indian Classical music. However, author feels that despite proximity with Indian music; Kashmir has its particular music and rhythm that has led to its own identity formation. Author feels that scarcity of writings about Kashmiri music makes us know very little about its nature. But excavations at Harwan are highly indicative of the fact that Kashmiri music has been held in high tandem with the royal persona. Although, it experienced fallout in Sultan Sikander's time, but again Zainul Abdin ruminated on its ramshakling condition and solemnly bestowed it its lost position. He invited artists and musicians from Iran, Turan, Turkistan and Hindustan. In fact, author contends that the main schools of music in the valley were founded by the "Irani and Turani musicians during his rule. Author's main claim stands that the traditional music of Kashmir during the Hindu period was more or less a shadow of Indian music. Author, however, maintains that Kashmiri music is unique in many respects and its uniqueness is reflected in its diverse forms viz. Wantwun, Rouf, Hikat, Vaan, Lalawavun, Bhand-Pather, Ladishah, Bachinagma, Rishi Macchar and Dhamaly.

Author believes that music is a reflection of one's emotions. At different occasions of life people express through music their joy, sorrows, deep rooted melancholies and grudges of life. Kashmiri music is also a tapestry of all these emotional expression, whether that is chakkari, vaan, ladishah, bandpather all are but the instruments of expressing different emotional states of human creature.

Since, the coming of Islam has been considered a turning point in the history of Kashmir, especially, in terms of culture change. Author himself writes that the “period of the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries constitute one of the most formative phases in the history of Kashmir, in that the period witnessed mass conversion to Islam and the formation of a culture that continues to be normative up to the present.”

Author has elaborated about the theme that how the Sufi missionaries compelled the rulers to Islamize the Kashmir on the tenants of pristine form of Islam. However, amidst such stringent forces to levy real Islamic tenants; indigenous Sufi movement known as Rishi movement branched out under the auspices of Sheikh Noorudin (1379-1442). Author’s main contention is against the theory of forced conversion and syncretic cultural relationship among the Muslims and the Hindus of Kashmir. Author believes that as far forced conversion is concerned; it is pundit intelligentsia which floats this theory to wean away pundits from majority community to retain its peculiar identity. As far syncretic relation between the two communities is concerned, both the communities have been far different from each other. Kashmiriyat which is a full fledged reflection of syncretic relation between the two communities according to author is nothing but a hollow slogan. Author writes that, “Both the communities were so particular to draw the line between themselves that they not only stuck to their faith-oriented views, rituals and ceremonies, but they also maintained the marks of distinction in minute details of everyday life.” The two as author mentions were running quite parallel to each other, one setting its parameters through the ideology of Islam and another through Hinduism.

As author believes that Brahmins were rallying round the apprehension of total annihilation due to the Islamic influence; they devised various ideological modules to sufficiently shield Islamic
cultural and ideological traits. In order to expunge themselves from Islamic influence, they (Pundits) would spread hatred against Muslims, created such myths that remained on guard against any absorption of Islamic trait by Hindu Brahmans. Such was the extent that they easily deferred themselves to the Islamic architecture, the Muslim dress pattern and their eating habits. For instance local dress Phiran and Qasaba, would easily remark the identity of Hindu from Muslim. Similarly, cuisines especially, Kashmiri wazwan which was imported from Persia during Muslim period, could not find any respectable place in Hindu cuisines. Even the languages of the two communities differ from each other the Hindus speaking Sanskrit influenced Kashur and Muslims Persian influenced. Author comments that Brahmans have always pictured Muslims as spoiled creatures. So, author concludes by saying that it would be supreme misnomer to deny any identity consciousness based on the religion. Rather close inspection of internal dynamics of Kashmiri Society would explicitly show the fact that there is no syncretic relation between the two communities. The two communities are religiously as well as culturally different from each other.


The present volume as author claims is an attempt to damage limitation against the wrath brought by turmoil to the Kashmiri culture. Author has touched only positive chords of Kashmiri culture. Throughout, author has maintained a rhythm which focuses upon the brighter aspects of Kashmiri culture so as to make it a reminiscent of bygone days. Author maintains that the Kashmir is the best paradigm of a “melting pot” culture, a tapestry of various thoughts and philosophies. Kashmiris according to author have always shown a good appreciation to other cultural configurations.

Kashmir as author claims is the “Abode of Kashyapa” as is reflected in its name and Hindus have ruled for over 4000 years as almost as back in 2180 B.C. The Hinduism was followed then by
Buddhism and later in 14th century by Islam. Author comments that each of these religious doctrines cemented the Kashmiri culture and brought unity despite professing diverse faiths and ideologies. Author comments that the combination of different faiths and opinions also diversified the Kashmiri culture. Kashmir Shavism remains a towering example of such a combination. Author maintains that despite being exposed to exogenous cultures like Persian culture; Kashmiris made a happy mingling between its traditional repository and new culture traits. Rishi movement is yet another example of such a happy mingling. Author narrates that despite Kashmiris have seen a chequered history, they have also been the owners of a great tradition and legacy.

During early times, Kashmiris were called as “Shastra Shilpina” i.e., architects. It was further refined by a happy mingling of Islamic, Hindu and Buddhist influence. He believes that the history of Kashmir is witness to the fact that Kashmir has had a tradition of exchange of cultural values, sharing of peace and harmony. The Author has then praised the grandeur and the beauty of Kashmir, describing Kashmir as A Dream of Loveliness, The Eden of the East and Perennial Garden. Not only has he praised the artistic endeavors; but he figures Kashmiris as the giants in terms of literary fields. From Kalhana, Ratnakara, Helraja, Kshemendra, Jonaraja, Bhattaavtara to Habba Khatoon, Roopa bhawani, Arnimal, Lal Ded, Aasi and Mehjoor, Kashmir has been an academy of intellectuals throughout ages, with an extraordinarily rich repository of folk literature like Himal Nageraya, Bombar and Lolare, Zohra Khatoon, Haya Bandh, and Gulal Shah.


The book under review is a collection of different articles and all articles focus on varied theme viz., social, economical, political as well as cultural. However, only those articles are included which share some relevance to the present study. B.K. Koul’s (Deambbi’s) article (Some Glimpse of Kashmiri Society 9th -11th centuries A.D.) focu
on the socio-cultural milieu as is reflected in the works of traditional writers like, Damodargupta; the Kuttanimata, Kalavilasa, Deshopadesha, Naramala. Kshemendra's Samayamtrika and also from Nilamatapuran, and the Rajtarangini of Kalhana. Author contends that these works show that in ancient Kashmir caste stratification was rigid and Brahmans were at the top rung; they would usually exploit lower classes especially downtrodden castes. They would levy stringent rules of behavior, but would hardly follow themselves. The position of woman was better she was allowed to have education especially in the sciences like, Ayurveda, Natay Shastra, Kama-Shastra. However, certain malpractices like sati pratha in vogue which had dehumanized her condition were in vogue.

As far bureaucracy was concerned these works reflect that corruption was rampant and offices like paripalaka (chief secretary) Lekhahopadyaya (Pari Palaka's super-intendent) Niyogi (Tehsildar) Divira (Patvari) Astha Divira (court clerks) were to execute the services.

The book also includes the article written by Dost Mohammad and A.S.Bhat (The Family in Kashmir). The article reflects the author's contention that family still enjoys the primary importance and recognition. They believe that joint family system is still where the most of people in Kashmir prefer to live, and it is the desire, "for greater independence, privacy and opportunity to devote time and resources to the care and development of children," that motivates people to live in nuclear families and not the forces of Urbanization and Industrialization. However, as far people's preference to live in joint family structure is concerned, authors fail to provide any evidence. In addition, the reasons cited by authors for having a nuclear family are natural corollary of the processes of Urbanization and Industrialization.

The book also introduces us to B.A. Khan's article (Ahli-Hadith Attitude vis-à-vis. Shrine Worship in Kashmir). Author has tried to attempt to reflect that how Ahli Hadith movement proved to be pivotal in the socio-cultural history of Kashmir. Author mentions
that basic motive behind this movement was to bog down the local traditions of Islam in Kashmir and to restore the tenants of the greater traditions of Islam. Author mentions that many of the local practices like dash gandun, visiting shrines, many invocatory prayers and display of relics, which are the part of local traditions of Islam, have remained under scathing attack of Ahli-Hadith. However, author claims despite gaining immense success, people of the soil have to great extent shown resilience and are adamant to leave many of the age-old practices of their folk religion.

Critical Summary

(1) C. E. Tyandale Biscoe’s Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade, is surely shedding light on Kashmiri culture, but has not escaped from the ethnocentrism, same problem appears with the work of Walter Lawrence, The Valley of Kashmir, Biscoe’s view of Kashmiri as coward and Lawrence’s sobriquets for Kashmiris as Zulam Parast are but unwarranted and offensive. However, the optimism they carry for the future of Kashmiris is appreciable.

(2) M. Isaq Khan’s book History of Srinagar (1846-1947) a Study in Socio-Cultural is a scholarly attempt to spotlight the cultural change in Kashmir. The book further develops in an interesting read with the author’s effort to present this volume in a nice textual form with a clear theme. However, book is not elaborating the cultural changes in Kashmir in its full extent. Besides, being historical in nature, no information is given about the current cultural trends. The juxtaposition between present and past cultural trends would have further streamlined the author’s point view regarding culture change in Kashmir.

(3) Mohd. Isaq Khan’s another book Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions, is a fruitful read to know the genesis of
change or the Persinaization of Kashmiri culture during medieval times, however, it too like others lack proper assessment of nature of change in different aspects of Kashmiri culture. Although, author has focused on some dimensions, but, they are more historical than sociological in nature.

(4) Allan Stacey's book *Visiting Kashmir* is a short book. The book does not carry anything new to discuss. However, the book appears helpful because it carries author's own perception (who happens to be a foreigner and a visitor to Kashmir) about the nature and the characteristics of Kashmiri, which surely helps to gain some insight.

(5) K.L.Kalla's book, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, has discussed about the poetic and literary heritage of Kashmir, along with syncretic values of Kashmiri culture. However, book has failed to mention about other aspects of Kashmiri culture particularly, the causes and the factors of change is altogether absent. However, the book is definitely serving its purpose, because Kalla has lucidly presented the theme and the content in a much scholarly manner.

(6) M.Amin Pandit in his book *Festivals in Kashmir* has attempted to sketch out various aspects of Kashmiri culture. However, author has failed to show the changing aspects of Kashmiri culture. Author's main focus through out book has remained on the element of syncretic aspect of the Kashmiri culture.

(7) Suresh K. Sharma, Usha Sharma (ed.) *Society, Economy and Culture of Kashmir* is carrying the articles of various scholars (mostly foreigners); however, more or less, indirectly points to the cultural patterns of Kashmir. Although, the book has succeeded in giving the snapshots about the past Kashmiri past society, still, it has failed to give a direct and explicit understanding of
different variables of Kashmiri culture.

(8) N.K. Singh's book *Islamic Heritage in Kashmir* carries the perception which is more historical in nature and less emphasis is given to the cultural aspects and developments. The book has remained focused on the conversion process. Despite lucid presentation, book fails to assess the socio-cultural aspects in change and continuity perspective.

(9) Fida Mohd.'s book *Historic Kashmir* has tried to attempt to discuss the socio-historical and cultural change in Kashmir, but, has failed to justify its point. The book has not revealed the nature of change and its major determinants. In addition, loose chapterisation has to certain extent affected the credibility of the book.

(10) Manzoor Fazili's work *Cultural Glimpses of Kashmir* is surely an informative read, the articles of Biscoe, C.G. Bruce, E.F. Neve are helpful in understanding the foreigners view point about Kashmiris, however, the lack of organization in the theme is defeating its purpose and credibility.

(11) R.C. Kak's *Ancient Monuments of Kashmir*,s critical study reveals some minor inaccuracies, which need to be explained which have been in fact pinpointed by the editor of this book also. For example, R.C. Kak while describing the Khanqah of Shah-i-Hamdan states that "the North-West corner contains the tomb of the saint" while as, Mir Ali Hamadani is not buried in the Khanqah but at Kolab, in Tajikistan adjacent to the borders of Iran. He has also not included many important sites and monuments of importance. For instance, no mention of Mazar-i-Shora of Drugjan in Srinagar has been made, there is no inclusion of Aali Masjid in Iddgah, and he has not made any mention of any graveyard at Zaina Kadal, no mention of
Imambara at Hasanabad nor khanqah of Mir Shams-ul-din Iraqi has been made. Author has missed to mention the ziarat at Aishi muqam; also he has not included the Abhinav Gupta cave in Beru or the zirat of Baba rishi Tangmarg.

(12) Shafi Ahmad Qadri’s book, *Kashmir Sufism*, is discussing the role played by Sufi’s in changing Kashmiri society, and the element of syncreticism which emerged out due to admixture of Sufi and Shaivi tradition. However, major flaw of this work is its restrictive approach. The book could have discussed its claim in more elaborate form, which the book unfortunately has failed to do.

(13) A.Q.Rafiqi’s book, *Sufism in Kashmir: fourteenth to seventeenth century* is instrumental in understanding the role of Sufis in introducing the Persian culture in Kashmir, in addition, author’s thorough analyses, which sometimes appear an exaggeration of facts, has also helped to understand the role of Sufis in bringing up the Persian orientation of Kas’ miri culture.

(14) Dr. Sunita Dhar’s book *Traditional Music of Kashmir; in relation to Indian Classical music*, is indeed a scholarly attempt to discuss the various forms of Kashmiri music. However, to write about as vast as Kashmiri music always seems a minuscule, and this book could prove a more success if it would further streamline various aspects of Kashmiri music.

(15) Mohd.Ashraf Wani’s *Islam in Kashmir (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Centuary)*, is really appreciable. The content and the compilation of thought is genius, however, author has remained a bit stiff in his approach in accepting any syncretic relation existing among the two communities of Kashmir, viz. Hindus and Muslims. It appears that author has neglected the subtitles of
syncetic relations that the two communities share, at least at the micro level.

(16) Kaumudi’s *Kashmir its cultural Heritage*, deserves to be applauded for its brief and exquisite presentation of information about Kashmiri culture, however, to readers dismay, the book is more or less historical in nature. The nature of change has been neglected and author has discussed few cultural variables rather than whole.

(17) Gulshan Majid’s edited volume *look n Kashmir from ancient to modern* has included several articles, often focusing on different themes, however, the book has failed to explicitly discuss the cultural developments in change and continuity perspective.