Chapter 4

Findings
Culture is an embodiment of thoughts, behaviours, languages, customs and the things that we produce and the methods we use to produce. Culture is the life of people as typified in contacts, institutions and equipments. It includes characteristics, concepts, behaviour, customs and traditions. Bose writes that “the stuff of which culture is composed is capable of analysis into the following categories: Speech — Material traits — Art — Mythology — Knowledge — Religion — Family and Social Systems — Property — Government and War. Any of these components of culture does not exist by itself, however form an independent unit, but is closely bound up with the rest through many ties of association.”

Similarly, Murdock believes that the elements of which culture is composed, though all alike are traditional, habitual, and socially shared, may be conveniently divided into techniques — that relate members of a society to the external world; Relationships — include the interpersonal habitual responses of the members of society; and Ideas — consists of patterned verbal habits, often sub-vocal but capable of expression in speech. “These include technological and scientific knowledge, beliefs of all kinds, and a conceptual formulation of normal behaviour in both techniques and relationships and the sanctions for deviation there from.”

Precisely, culture is then the totality of products of social men and a tremendous force affecting all human beings, social and individual, and in this scheme of definition of culture it means that culture is universal for men.

The essential feature of culture is that it is learned and transmitted in the form of cultural continuities from one generation to the next, rests upon the human capacity to think symbolically, and language is the most

2. Ibid. p.185.
important symbolic form of communication. Without language, cultural transmission is impossible, and would therefore, halt the cultural continuities. Likewise, culture has another feature, it not only remains static; it also changes. The reasons for change could be myriad, and in the present scenario where all over due to 'cultural globalization,' cultures have become fluid, and mix up rapidly with each other, assuming and adapting new shapes and forms, quite contrary to the earlier ones. It is in this context that an assessment of various dimensions of Kashmiri culture is made, so as to develop an understanding of Kashmiri culture in change and continuity perspective.

4.1. Food Habits:

Like other societies, food habits in Kashmir have experienced a visible change since past few decades. However, rice as is present, has always been a staple food of Kashmiri people. So deep are moorings of rice attached to Kashmiri food habits that it has been indicated even in Atharveda, where it is called as one of the two immortal sons of heaven.³ It is generally believed that people of earlier time would use rice to cook a plenty of recipes, for instance, the people would relish taking boiled rice, cakes of rice, or barley mixed with ghee, flattened rice, and milk porridge of rice mixed with purified butter.⁴ Despite, simple dietary habits of Kashmiris than present, the people of ancient Kashmir would consume a number of delicacies like woogra — a combination of rice, oil and turmeric,⁵ Apupas, brought by Vedic Aryans in Kashmir and said to be the earliest known sweet preparation,⁶ Kicharri made up of different pulses like Kullattha, Cana, and Masura,⁷ consumed especially on the religious occasions, besides, barley and kudur were taken by the poor people of Kashmir. Popular vegetables like, utpalasaka, kacchaguccha, Kacdan and Sanda were consumed. Such varieties are no doubt extinct today. It is also believed that people consumed the non-vegetarian foods

⁴. Ibid., p.381
⁶. M.L.Kapur, op.cit., p.381
like the ram (*kikkuta* and *mesa*) various types of birds, fish and fish juice (known as *matsayusa* and even the flesh of pigs were consumed, except for certain days, such as, *Ekdashi*, *Purnamashi*, *Amavasiya* and *Sangrand*, on which eating of the non-vegetarian food was abstained.  

During medieval period, when Sufi missionaries reached Kashmir for spreading the message of Islam; they also brought with them many Persian and Central Asian cultural traits. One of the chief among them was different recipes and delicacies of Persia and Central Asia. For instance, many kinds of Pulavs — Tursh Pulav, Zarad Pulav, and Shulla Pulav etc. were introduced by them. In addition, during the reign of Mughals, who were epicurean by temperament and were given to the pleasures of the table introduced many new recipes like Goshtaba, Kabab, and Roganjosh, which later became the part of Kashmiri wazwaan. However, many varieties and dishes of earlier period were lost. Some were even relinquished out of religious compulsion, like, the pork and its different recipes, wine and its different other forms.

Interestingly, in the medieval times, the group of religious ascetics known as *Rishis* abhorred themselves from eating any non-vegetarian food or a recipe made up of fresh vegetables. They despite being Muslims were more or less influenced by *Buddhistic* and *Saivi* philosophy. In fact, at present, there is a group of people in Kashmir who follow the Rishi legacy and their attitude towards the food and are still refraining from eating non-vegetarian food, despite its consent in Islam.

Turning to the contemporary era, Kashmiris still consume 'Rice' as a staple food and it is consumed by all sections of the society alike. Kashmiri people love to take vegetables (mostly cooked with meat), but *Haakh* (Knol) is the most common vegetable eaten by the Kashmiris. It has turned to be symbolic and is even reflected in many metaphors like, *Panun Hakh Bate Gachie Poshun* (one should be content with what one has, 

and should not depend on others) or Panun Hakh Bate Che Khewaan, (means one is content with what ever destiny has given him).

During morning and evening times, people usually take Salt-tea (locally known as Noun-Chai) with Tsot and Tsochvoru, these are small round breads, topped with poppy and sesame seeds, or with lavas. It is cream coloured unleavened bread; some people even prefer to take baqerkhani which is a kind of rough puff pastry or kulcha a variety of short bread sweet or savoury, topped with poppy seeds. People living in back water zones have special liking for hand made breads which are of different varieties usually called makai chot, Tamul chot and Ghayer Tsot etc.

Kashmir which is surrounded by mountains falls in the hands of severe colds during winter and its food stuff does not remain aloof from its vulnerabilities. With the winter season, life comes to a stand still due to disruption of road link by snow or rains and valleyites prepare themselves by stocking food stuff ahead of the harsh season. The Kashmiris have devised a novel way to stuff vegetables popularly known as Hokhseun, for winter season by drying them out in summer or autumn. This process was part of essentials of each household, but now this seems to be confined to only rural and semi-urban settings to sustain the wound ups of winter.

Nevertheless, Hokhseun, finds a place of pre-eminence in the Kashmiri menu Seun. Either it is dried in the houses or hanged on the house walls or one can readily buy them in the market. Many people believe that Hokhseun holds great importance in their lives, and has turned to be an inextricable part of Kashmiri culture. Some trace its roots to Rishi era about 5000 years back, and consider it as a diet of Rishis who dwelled in caves, while others consider Hokhseun as a sign of sovereignty in Kashmir during past, as Kashmir was not dependent on food supplies from other places during winters. Kashmiri people hold such a resonance to Hokhseun that Kashmiri Pandits would feed stone idols of Lord Shiva with Hokhseun. The most common among the dry vegetables that Kashmiris consume are Alae Hache (dried bottle guards) Ruvangan Hache (dry tomatoes) Vangan Hache (dry brinjals), Hoch meet (dry fenugreek),
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*Hoch Pulak* (dry Spinach), *Gogji Arai* (dry Turnip), *Gogji Mus* (Small dry turnip with leaves), *Bumb* (a wild herb), and *Hand* (a wild herb).

The people of Kashmir prefer *Hokhseun* because they believe it has a warm impact as compared to the fresh vegetables, and it acts as a natural buffer against winter and winter related diseases. These vegetables are mostly dried in mid August as temperature remains moderate and less humid. These vegetables are sunned up on tin roofs on till they become crisp. Although it appears that it is very much liked by older generation, but new generation too savour it. It appears as it was never caught between tradition and modernity. Although, some of the people abstain from eating *Hokhseun* because usually doctors do not prescribe its eating, as they believe that the way it is being dried up is unhygienic and vulnerable to numerous diseases, still, *houkseun* is consumed in most of the Kashmiri house-holds.

Another important feast that Kashmiris love to take is *Smoke-fish* called *Fer* (Schizothorax). The influence of *Fer* is found even in the age-old metaphor used by Kashmiris, *Fare Chunk Wanan* (used as ridicule when somebody lies or fabricates). The *Fer* is not a new culinary trend, rather deep rooted in the Kashmiri culture. As the fish comprises an important item of Kashmiri diet, and in former times the water was frozen during winter resulting in the non-availability of the fish, the people would use *Fer*, instead of consuming fresh fish. During former times, smoking fish and meat was a necessity, since there were no gadgets like refrigerators and no modern means to send food items to valley as is now, but, with the passage of time, it became the part of Kashmiri food habits. Today, *Fer* is not smoked for preservation but for imparting a smoky flavour.

Another culinary like *Fer* is *Hogad* (dry fish). It is considered by Kashmiris as lip-smacking, and they feel pleasure to consume it. *Hogad* has a number of types like, *Pache-e-Hogad*, *Raz-e-Hogad*, *Baed-Goran*, *Laket Goran*, and *Chai*. It is usually made all along the banks of *Wular*, and is desiccated in *August* and *September*, as weather is not scorching. Small fishes like *Gorat* and *Chai* are dried without removing the innards, while big fishes like *Pach-e-Hogad*, and *Raz-e-Hogad* are dried after slitting the
bellies and discarding the entrails. The favourite recipes evoked from Hogad are Hogad Muje (dried fish raddish), Hogad and Ruvangun (dried fish and Tomato), Hogad Ver (dried fish and local garam masala). However, some people revealed to the author that though Hogad has now found a place in culinary books but it is vanishing from the dietary habits of Kashmiris. People also believe that Samosas and Pakoras have become a common name in Kashmiri food preferences, but hardly come across the customary foods like Hogad, especially, the youth who are little savoured and have little affiliation with traditional foods like Hogad.

4.1.1. Wazwan:

The scenic beauty of Kashmiri is only rivalled by its cuisine, which offers an infinite and sumptuous variety of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian delicacies perhaps nowhere else in India can one find food as unique and elaborate, which pampers the taste buds of the most fastidious of gourmets. It is born of the marriage of the rich cultural heritage of the land and diverse influences Hindu, Buddhist, Afghan, Mughul, Sikh and British.

It is believed that when Timur in the 15th century invaded India, in his wake came 1700 skilled wood carvers, weavers, calligraphers, architects and cooks from Samarkand, who settled in the valley of Kashmir. The descendants of these cooks are the present day Wazas. Since then, these varieties of recipes have attained a peculiarity in Kashmiri culture and are running through centuries with a legacy. These recipes are secret and locked away in the heads of Wazas, passed on from generation to generation.

Waza in Kashmiri means cook and waan means shop. A Wazwaan is literally, therefore, a cook shop or restaurant. In practice, however, the Wazwaan is an elaborate and sumptuous ritual; a feast served to honoured guests, this lavish hospitality must in turn be fully appreciated by the guest, for it is not just a meal but a ceremony. Hours of cooking and days of planning go into the preparation and serving of a Wazwaan. Normally restricted to special occasions and celebrations at home, the Wazwaan experience begins with table
setting laid out for groups of four, who are seated on the floor and share the meal served on a large metal plate called *tramis*. First there is the ritual of washing of hands in a basin called *tash-naari* which is taken around by attendants, and the diners wash their hands with warm water, then the *tramis* arrive, each heaped with rice, then several dishes are served one by one. The Waza personally supervises the preparation of each dish that emerges from his Kitchen — every ingredient for the meal is handpicked, and much toil and effort ensures that dish is a culinary masterpiece, looked all night by the vasta waza (master chef) and his retinue of Wazas. Seven dishes must be a part of the meal on these occasions — *Tabakh-Maaz, Rista, Roganjosh, Dhanival Korma, Aabgosh, Marchwagam-Korma, and Gushtaba*. A variety of Kababs and vegetables are also served. This veritable feast is rounded off with Gushtaba, a delicious Wazwaan specially made of pounded mutton balls in yoghurt based gravy. *Firin* (Saffron flavoured semolina garnished with dry fruits) is the dessert and the wazwaan is over.

4.1.2. Food Practices in Contemporary Times:

As the world economy becomes more integrated; communication is faster than ever, change in dietary habits is inevitable. Food consumption pattern is experiencing a rapid transformation in Kashmiri households. Today, along with some traditional food recepies (like, rice, commonly found vegetables, wazwaan etc.) Kashmiris, especially those living in cities and urban localities are accommodating these traditional food recepies with the food products which are prevalent in other parts of the country, and few belong to the western and other foreign countries of the world. For instance, recepies like *fried rice, vegetable fried rice, chicken fried rice, American chapsi, hakka noodle, chicken chowmin, vegetable manchurian, mutton kanti, chicken kanti, chicken tandoori, grill chicken, mutton biryani, Irani naan, fish Amritsari, Mughal- chicken, Afghan korma*, host of sandw itches like, *chicken and mutton sandwich, egg-sandwich*, and snacks like *vegetable and mutton patties, chicken cutlets*. 

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cheese pakoras etc. all of whom could be savoured either in home or could be tasted in the different outlets, restaurants and hotels. These food stuffs have no indigenous roots, but are direct outcome of increased homogenization of food habits and recipes within and outside the country.

The younger generations especially of urban areas of Kashmir are more influenced by ‘new foods,’ particularly, when they are introduced through an advertising campaign that targets the youth specifically. Today, it could be seen that all the food-outlets are thronged by youth whose preferences lie in consuming the drinks like, Pepsi, Coke, Thumsup, Dew, and Canada dry, and almost, people of all ages could be seen enjoying the milkshakes and ice-creams like, Vanilla, Straw-berry, Chocolate, Mango shakes etc. Again these food products and drinks belong to the world’s big companies and these are intensely assisted by the media. The proliferation of global entertainment through popular television programmes or blockbuster movies permits the wide-scale advertising of global products. Today, it could be observed that world’s largest food and soft drink companies have been able to broaden their appeal by linking their products either to specific films etc. or personalities. In addition, sports events that have a global coverage are often sponsored by these big name food brands too. This has a huge appeal particularly for the young market, and its reflection could also be seen among the younger generation of Kashmir.

In Kashmir, there is also a growing trend of eating the junk food, especially among the youth, who get fascinated the way it is presented to them through advertisements. Since, the life in Kashmir has become more faster than ever, so it directly influences their dietary habits. Because of time constraints, most of the people feel little connectivity with the traditional way of eating food. The junk food is gaining appeal especially among urban youth, who prefer it as it is available and it can be enjoyed with friends and peer groups too. However, the food preferences of the older people in Kashmir remains almost static, and they usually prefer the traditional diets.
and their food preferences still tend to confine to an identifiable traditional boundary.

In addition, in Kashmir, people are also consuming now highly-calorific and more energy dense food than in the past, especially, increased amount of red-meat, milk and other animal proteins, whose consumption was limited earlier. According to many experts, such changing food habits is leading to many diseases like, diabetes, coronary heart diseases and also certain types of cancer. As experts remark, "there is clear evidence of a demographic, epidemiological and nutrition transition in India that is fuelling the epidemic of chronic diseases and obesity, particularly in the urban areas."12

Rapid urbanization in Kashmir from past few decades has also altered the structures of labour force characterised by increased female participation. In addition, her involvement in getting higher education, all these variables have influenced the role of house-wife, and also the traditional ways of cooking and preparation of the food. Today, the consumption of ready made meals or the foods that cut the long preparation time of traditional dishes are preferred. In addition, the gadgets involved in the cooking of food are also designed to tackle the time constraints. Few decades back in Kashmir, people used to have 'chulas' or 'Daan,' in their kitchen, which is fast disappearing from the urban settlements of Kashmir. However, in rural areas people still use them, because of their domestic needs and easy availability of fire-wood. The older generation hold a grim opinion about the lost of the traditional kitchen, which would perform multifarious tasks. It would help to heat water during bone chilling winters, and would provide coal and fire for Kangris (fire-pot). Similarly, women would spent whole day in grinding all the material for spices and other things in niyami (a dish of stone) which today is accomplished by using a mixer grinder in few seconds. Most of the housewives today believe that to cook in a traditional way is very cumbersome and time consuming affair, instead, they believe

that new kitchen-ware, for instance, different electronic appliances like micro-wave ovens, grills, toasters and entire cooking range which have replaced the traditional kitchen and kitchen accessories, are easy to use and save a plenty of time.

The intensity of change from traditional food habits to modern ways of eating is rapid and one of the important ‘social’ aspects of replacement of the traditional food consumption patterns is that the change becomes largely irreversible. The processed food is both easier to prepare and less time consuming than the traditional food. The skills required to prepare the traditional food that have been developed over centuries and had been passed on from one generation to the next, can easily be lost. Due to homogenization of foods across the regions of the country and the globe, virtually makes it impossible for the dietary habits to revert back to the traditional ones. Most of the western countries are experiencing this threat, where the availability of convenience food is leading to a rapid loss in the ability of households to prepare the traditional recipes. So, premonition is that similar critical implications might arise in near future for the whole food culture of the Kashmir.

4.2. Religion:

Because of its geographical position as a central place surrounded by lands of different races and nationalities, the valley of Kashmir has been from times immemorial a meeting ground of various peoples and diverse culture. And throughout the history of Kashmir religion has been predominant in the life-world of common masses. The earlier settlers used to worship Nagas or serpents and their were many celebrations connected to these deities and people celebrated them with great fervour. During ancient times on many occasions the Nila-nag (a predominant deity) was worshiped and propitiated, particularly at ‘Irmanjara Puja’ (in the month of ‘Caitra’ or April) or ‘Varunapancami’ which was

celebrated on the fifth day of 'Bhadra' (July).\textsuperscript{15} However, the most important of the achievements of ancient Kashmir for which it is still known is the system of thought called Shaivism, but better known locally as "Trika Shastra" (the three fold science) or simple Trika (the triple).\textsuperscript{16}

It is believed that Shiva was prevalent in Kashmir before the Aryans settled in Kashmir. The various names by which Shiva was worshiped in Kashmir, as Kalhana mentions, were Jyestharuda, Nandirinda, Nandisa, Hara, NarendraVara, MahaKala, Bhairva and Ardhanarrisval.\textsuperscript{17} As is customary with Saivas, the most popular emblem of their deity is the 'Phallus' or the 'Linga' and these Lingas were very common in Kashmir and were called after the persons who set them up.\textsuperscript{18}

The Saivism in its earlier character belonged to the Pasupata- Sect. It was associated in the early stages with the Lord of cattle, but as the times passed it degenerated and came to be based on the number of Tantras, and later it assumed a new character in Kashmir and was based on pure Advaita Tatva. It began now to preach a sort of idealistic monism which was quite contrary to its preaching of dualistic doctrine.\textsuperscript{19}

The Trika philosophy, or the three fold science, comprises of three energies of Lord Siva, called 'Para', 'Para-Para' and 'Apara'.\textsuperscript{20} The first one means supreme, the second intermediate and the third one as inferior. A human being is said to reside in the inferior energy and it is 'Trika-Sastra' that teaches him how to attain the highest stage of blessing, whereupon, one is liberated from every kind of sorrow and sadness. In other words, Trika Shastra deals with the three objects namely (a) Man (b) Universe (c) and the Principal. "Trika believes in one reality — the unity that pervades the whole universe of animate and inanimate objects. It is defined as Parma-Shiva, the universal consciousness which is self-luminous and illuminates all that exists in the universe whether in the living or the non living form. Everything emanates from this effulgence

\textsuperscript{15} Loc.cit
\textsuperscript{16} P.N.Bazaz, 'Trika Shastra — Indigenous Philosophy of Kashmir', Usha Sharma, (ed.), op.cit. p.95
\textsuperscript{17} M.L.Kapur, op.cit., p.429
\textsuperscript{18} Loc.cit
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid., pp. 430-431
\textsuperscript{20} Ibid. p.31.
and ultimately merges into it. This reality has two aspects, ‘Prakash’ (light) and ‘Vimarsh’ (thinking), one is the being and the other awareness of the being. ‘Prakash’ is what exists and ‘Vimarsh’ the awareness of the existence of what exists.”

4.2.1. Causes of Saivism:

Kshemaraja, a scholar and a historian of repute believes that during the 8th century there prevailed two mutually conflicting systems of thought, one led by Buddhist teacher ‘Naga-Bodhi’ and his well-disciplined band who preached ‘Nihilist’ doctrines and earned the names like Nastiknam Pursara (front rank leaders of Nihilists) and Atmешvara Nirosaka (repellers of Atman and Ishvara). Opposed to them were the adherents of dualistic system holding ‘Man’ and ‘God’ eternally different, and it led to the frequent clashes between two groups. Then, ‘Vasugupta’ (another great scholar) came forward arraigning both the schools as incomplete and misguided. He propounded Shiv-Sutras, a compendium in which the tenets of monistic idealism were succinctly aggregated in a scholarly fashion. “The sweet and charming natural environment of Kashmir inspired the great thinkers of this land to originate and to evolve such a philosophy which is easily and interestingly practicable and which is capable to yield both worldly and spiritual aim of life, side by side. That philosophy is the monistic Saiva philosophy of Kashmir.”

As far as Kashmir Saivism is concerned, it accepts no restrictions based on any form of creed, caste, or sex. Rather, every curious and devote aspirant can have access to it, both theoretically and practically. The emphasis is being devoted to practice than to bookish knowledge and logical discussions. Both the paths ‘Bhukti’ (enjoyment) and ‘Mukti’ (Liberalism) are advocated in this Shastra. This philosophy is, “against vulgarisation of the inner sentiment; it

22. Ibid., p.97
24. Ibid. pp. 36-37.
has no use of self-mortification as a way of self-realisation, so common among most Hindu Sects.”

Along with the Siva, the Vishnu was also worshiped. Under the Karkotas, Vishnu came to occupy a prominent position among Kashmir pantheon. The temples of Vishnu were built by Durlabhavbardhana, Candrapida, Lalitadatiya, Jayapida and Ajitapida, as well as host of their relatives and Ministers. Besides, other Gods of Hindus like Ganesha, Skanda, Surya and Durga were worshiped.

4.2.2. Buddhism in Kashmir:

During early phase of Kashmir history, Buddhism gained much fame in Kashmir. In the 3rd century B.C. Ashoka conquered the valley and included it to his vast empire. He introduced Buddhism among the people who were subjugated by Brahman regimes with the support of Naga intellectuals, and succeeded in undermining Brahmanism. The new faith made a quantum leap and became highly popular among masses. “Buddhist Philosophy dominated the entire political and social life of the people of Kashmir.” It is said that, “Buddhists established a network of Sangramas (monasteries), Viharas and Bhavanas not only in the capital city but also in the nooks and corners of Kashmir [they] can be traced to the present day in the designation of villages and city quarters as they left their names to the sites at which they were erected. Thus there are many villages in Kashmir known as Sangram. And all those villages and muhallas which have the suffix Viharas or Bhavana formed the centres of Buddhism.”

However, it was altogether impossible to preclude all the cardinal principles of Hindu philosophy, which was deeply

27. Ibid., p.435
29. Loc.cit.
embedded in the mind set up of the people even when Buddhism was reigning supreme. Brahm란ism again after a period of downfall, started to gain its lost stature and came back to redefine its lost moorings. "Buddhism had to face strong opposition from the hands of Saivists; this resulted in bringing much hindrance to its progress. Due to these factors Buddhists and the Saivists intermingled and Buddha was termed as an *avatara* of Vishnu, with the result that separate entity of Buddhism vanished from the valley."^31^ Buddhism assumed its decline in valley as early as the 6th century A.D. when its monks, who were known for their frugality, began to lead the life of worldly comforts. "By the 8th and 9th centuries Buddhism became so corrupt that it no longer attracted the people. [And finally] in the 10th and 11th centuries the monks and nuns lost their high ideals and image of morality."^32^ However, there are some scholars who claim that the decaying process of Buddhism; the second largest religion of Kashmir goes back to the 3rd century A.D. and the trend accelerated further from the 5th century A.D. onwards owing its complete immersion by tantrism and saivism.\(^33\) The Harwan tiles of 3rd century provide ample example of the fact that how nudity, eroticism, dancing and music were looming large instead of great sayings of Lord Buddha.\(^34\) As a result, when in 14th century Islam entered in Kashmir; it was highly appreciated and accepted without much resilience.

4.2.3. Islam in Kashmir:

When Islam entered the valley it was a new beginning in the history of Kashmir. It was a watershed in social, economical, political history of Kashmir. The Islam reached this land in the 14th century and the main instruments for the proliferation of this faith were the Saint missionaries who came in the wake of traders and adventures.\(^35\)

34. *Loc.cit.*
As mentioned earlier, when Islam entered the valley it had not to tread a difficult path in Kashmir, "the tendency of faithfulness probably emanated from disbelief in flabby polytheisms and arid pedantry and mystic cobwebs of the contemporary dominant discourses. By vehemently attacking polytheism and idolatry and by presenting Islam as a down to earth credo, the Muslims preachers channalised the inquisitiveness of the sensitive souls and won them to their side." 36

Sociologically speaking, the main features of the socio-religious life in Kashmir before the coming of Islam was that there were myriad cults, and tantricism was infiltrating in all the cults, mass innocence, super-imposition of Brahmans, co-operative relations between the rulers and Brahmans were in existence, which later utilised for their own interests. 37 "The tantric gurus had not only reduced religion to sorcery, magic and exorcism but they had done worse than that. Hinduism was converted into a revel of sensual orgies." 38 Besides, Hinduism was suffering from internal sabotage. Saivism, which was once a predominant creed had degenerated into a mass of superstitions and rituals and was unable to quench the spiritual thirst of the people. And same was true about the Buddhism, which too had turned into the heap of malpractices. 39 Caste system in the valley was flexible so could not act as a strong cohesive force, and could not resist strongly the infiltration of foreign ideas. Its laxity had been mainly due to Buddhist influence, as scholars believe that, "under the Buddhist influence there had been a relaxation of caste rules, and as a result, the power of resistance of the Hindu society had been undermined. Islam, therefore, did not have to face the same degree of opposition as it did in other parts of India, where the caste continued to be rigid, and the society was able to set up barriers against external influences." 40 Scholars, believe

37. Ibid. p. 57.
38. Ibid. p. 142.
40. Ibid. pp. 237-238.
that conversion to Islam was more a peaceful process, than a forced one\textsuperscript{41} and thereby, more often a gradual and continuous process of adopting cultural traits of people from central Asia and Persia, while breaking ties from the ancestral religion.\textsuperscript{42}

4.2.4. Emergence of Rishi Cult:

With the coming of Islam in Kashmir, in the beginning of 15\textsuperscript{th} century, there arose in the valley an indigenous Sufi order known as the Rishi Order. It developed amidst the Buddhist renunciations and Hindu asceticism. The term Rishi is Sanskrit in origin, while some medieval Muslim scholars of Kashmir have indeed tried to Islamize it and have preferred to see its derivation in the Persian word raish or rish, which means the feathers of a bird, or Plumage; or beard.\textsuperscript{43}

Rishisim in Kashmir emerged as a powerful movement under the patronage of Nund reshi, whose poetic compositions were replete with the motifs based on the every day life of the toiling people, his denunciation of meaningless ritualism and his scathing attack of social elites attracted a large number of Kashmiris mainly among from the lower caste Muslims. For these converts, Islam did not; however appear as a radically new or alien religion, and this in fact,

\textsuperscript{41} For instance, L.M.Koul believes that "the Sufis in general and Bulbul Shah in particular operated through state power to convert people to Islam, [he further writes], at the behest of Bul-Bul Shah, Rinchen, then a convert to Islam, built the first mosque in Kashmir and was responsible for the demolition of a number of the Hindu and Buddhist temples and the places of worship," for further details, see his article, 'Islamisation of Hindu Kashmir', The Story of Kashmir Yesterday and Today, Virender Grover, (ed.), N. Delhi, Deep and Deep publications, 1995, p.125; see also R.K. Parmu. History of Muslim Rulers in Kashmir, New Delhi, Peoples Publishing House, 1969. However, Prof. Khan, believes that it is a conscious attempt on part of Hindu scholars, "to show that the Muslim rulers of Kashmir destroyed temples forcibly converted the pundits to Islam and built mosques and shrines on the debris of Hindu temples." See his work, Mohammed Isaq Khan, Perspectives on Kashmir: Historical Dimensions, Srinagar, Gulshan Publishers, 1983, p.10. This view is also supported by M.Ashraf Wani, for further details; see his book, Islam in Kashmir (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century).op.cit.


facilitated the conversion process. Thus, rishis, unlike Brahmins, who despised Kashmiri language and preached in Sanskrit, and to Iranian and Central Asian, ullama’s who attached to the royal court, who spoke and wrote in Arabic and Persian, the Rishis preached the language of the people, employing the genre of poetry to readily appeal to the court masses.

Indeed, Nund Rishi’s own poetic compositions were granted as the status of Koshur Quran (Kashmiri commentary of Quran). As far Rishi’s are concerned, “They added the elements such as the mortification of the individual soul and hard ascetic exercises borrowed from the Yogis, coupled with hatred of worldly life. They did not claim any Sufi ancestry and did not hesitate to borrow the ideas and practices of the Hindu ascetics, especially those of the Saivites of Kashmir with their emphasis on individual salvation.”

Most of them spent long periods in forests and caves; practicing stern austerities, remained strict vegetarians, going so far as to avoid green vegetables for fear of taking the life of any sentient being. Most of them remained unmarried. For these and other seeming transgressions of the Islamic law, the Rishis were sharply rebuked by the many Ullema, who could not appreciate that it was only through such accommodation to the local context that Islam could make any headway among the Kashmiris. Infact, their influence has been so strong that in the local dialect of Kashmir, Kashmir came to be known as the Rishi-var, which means the Garden of Sages and Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus still retain their surname Rishi.

4.2.5. Contemporary Religious Trends and Practices:

The dominant religion in Kashmir is Islam. Since past, there has been a massive shift in the social structure and religious outlook
of Kashmiri people. But, still the authority of religion is intact and
has not been mutilated. The people of Kashmir along with the
following the tenets of Greater traditions of Islam (i.e. Islam devoid
of local influence or pristine form of Islam), also follow the practices
of localised or local traditions of Islam. Among the chief practices of
localised form of Islam is Saint Worship. Hardly there is any place in
Kashmir where one cannot find a shrine, and chief among these
shrines are Hazratbal Shrine, Shrine of Pir Dastgir Sahib, Shrine of Mir
Syed Ali Hamadani, Shrine of Sheikh Noor-ud-din, and Shrine of Baba-
Zain-ud-Din.

While narrating the deep rooted attachment of an average
Muslim with the shrines, Lawrence remarks, “It was customary for
almost all to visit a particular shrine on different occasions of
historical importance for the fulfilment of wishes and cherished
goals. The bride-groom would not rise above the age old custom of
going to pay respects to some neighbouring shrine before leaving
for bride’s house.”47 This practice is still very common among the
people. It can be seen that bride-grooms offering Fatiha on the graves
of deceased saints before leaving for bride’s house. Young girls pray
before the grave of dead saint usually beseech the aid of shrines for
a handsome partner and married women who could not conceive
would supplicate for a beautiful son. They usually tie a knot around
the precincts of shrine to get their desire filled, it is called Dash
Gandun. Most of the people still believe that visiting shrines would
relieve them from maroons of mundane life. A visit to shrine as
believed helps one to secure his or her objects, whether it is regaining
health from sickness, winning a case, getting children a job or
marriage, or to help a person who is possessed by evil-spirits. It
also helps them in relieving from the burdens of heart.

From the sociological point of view, mostly people visit shrines
to get away from the wiriness, insecurities, anxieties and crisis of
society and domestic life. Shrines act as a buffer against these

47. Bashur Ahmad Khan, ‘Ahl-I-Hadith Attitude Vis-à-vis Shrine Worship in Kashmir’,
mundane outbursts. Devotees usually donate money, carry live stock, rice, maize, breads and even cooked recipes to shrines. In these shrines, usually relics are preserved for veneration and it forms an essential element of shrines. These relics are chiefly in the form of “Khirqa (cloth), dastar ( turban), Asa-Shariif (Cane), Pae-mubarak (foot print), Aalam (tent pole), Moe-mubarak (holy hair).” People usually associate great reverence to these shrines and “a mere sight of relics at congregations especially on the eve of U尔斯 [Excite] devotees to recite litanies and munajat in chorus.” However, it is to be noted that these Ziarats and Khanqahs are the chief centres of superstition and charlatanism as has been in the past. Kashmiri Muslims, while approaching to the shrine show a great discipline, most people walk bare feet and daub themselves with the wholly dust of sacred precincts of the shrine. This opportunity is duly cashed by the crafty and materialist Pirs (usually Sayyids, Pirzadas, Babzadas and Rishis), who in the name of religion and salvation extract fatty amounts from the ignorant and the gullible masses. Some experts believe that These Sayyids have also, “monopolized the modern education and its benefits in all sectors of economy and consciously resisted the mobility and change among non-Syed groups.”

Another localised form of religion is recitation of Awraad-e-Fathiya complied by Syed Ali Hamadani. It is usually recited loudly after morning prayers. In addition, people also recite darood, naat sherief (in which apostle Prophet Mohammad is praised) loudly after every Sallah (five prayers that Muslims must officer). People also visit the ‘Pirs’ (usually higher caste sayids etc.,) to seek redress for their troubles usually called Pir-Muridi. These murids (disciples) come up with gift (nazrana) comprising of cash or a fowl or livestock in lieu of services extended by ‘Pir’ usually for amulet (tawiz). Not only they come to seek the help of ‘Piris’ to ward off the ailments,

49. Ibid. p. 147.
social and economic problems, but also to seek vengeance (black magic). The murids also call these pirs to recite Khatam-i-Shariff or Darood-id-Najat, usually to avoid some trouble and ominous event.

Famous shrines of valley and their day of celebration.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Shrine</th>
<th>Date (Islamic)</th>
<th>Place</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom</td>
<td>24 Safar</td>
<td>Srinagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mela Narwara</td>
<td>29 Safar</td>
<td>Srinagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazrat Khwaja Naqashband</td>
<td>03 Rabiyal Awal</td>
<td>Khawaja Bazar, Sgr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khwaja Mir Ali Sahib</td>
<td>06 Rabiyal Awal</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Syed Abdul Rehman Sahib</td>
<td>07 Rajab</td>
<td>Aali Kadal, Sgr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reshmaal Sahib</td>
<td>01 Zieqaad</td>
<td>Islamabad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazrat Amir Kabir</td>
<td>06 Zilhaj</td>
<td>Srinagar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Khwaja Habibullah Nowshehri</td>
<td>19 Zilhaj</td>
<td>Nowshehra, Sgr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazrat Usmaan (PBUH)</td>
<td>18 Zilhaj</td>
<td>Hazratbal, Sgr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hazrat Umar (PBUH)</td>
<td>27 Zilhaj</td>
<td>Hazratbal, Sgr.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2.6. Ahl-i-Hadith and Jamat-e-Islami Movements:

In order to revive back the pristine form of Islam Ahl-i-Hadith movement emerged in the valley of Kashmir. The Zaldagar mosque (first Ahl-i-Hadith mosque in Srinagar) became a strong-hold of Ahl-I Hadith. They refused to chant the Aurad-i-fathiya, and, in addition, they performed their prayers in a distinctive fashion which they claimed was the true prophetic practice, lifting their hands to their ears before each genuflection and reciting *Amen* aloud, all of which set them clearly apart from the local Muslims of Kashmir (mostly Hanafis). These external markers along with open criticism of Sufis of Kashmir, kept them away from the local Muslims. They claimed themselves as *Muwahidin* (monotheists), upholders of *tauhid* (monotheism) and the prophetic sunnat, in contrast to other kashmiri Muslims, who were labelled as *Ahl-i-batil* (the people of falsehood.

practitioners of shirk and bida) and polytheists.\(^{53}\)

They bitterly castigated and opposed the popular customs and beliefs, widely shared among Kashmiri Muslims, such as recitations of Aurad-i-fathiya, prostrating before graves, display of relics, praying without uttering the word Amen aloud or with the hands folded on belly instead of on the chest.\(^{54}\) They considered the celebrations of Urs and Maila only but a form of Shirk.\(^{55}\) They question the participations of people, especially the women during the 'Urs' and on other religious occasions.\(^{56}\) They believe that demonstrations of love to saints and sages not based on Shariat brings only disgrace from Almighty.\(^{57}\)

Another movement which spawned in Kashmir was Jamat-i-Islami movement founded actually in 1941 by the Islamist ideologue Sayyid Abul-ala-Maududi. The prominent advocates of the Jamat-e-Islami in Kashmir were Adud-din-Tarabali, Maulana Ghulam Ahrar, and Hakim Ghulam Nabi. The one important thing of these protagonists of Jamat was that they all had Sufi-ancestral links. The Jamat-e-Islami, like Ahli-i-Hadith, insisted that Muslims should closely abide by the Quran and the Sunnat of the prophet, but unlike Ahli-i-Hadith, they did not condemn the schools of jurisprudence. To them, establishment of Islamic state, ruled in accordance with the shariah, was seen as central to the Islamic mission.\(^{58}\)

Jamat-e-Islami's approach to the Kashmiri Sufism was far less virulent and much more accommodative than that of Ahl-i-Hadith movement.\(^{59}\) They attempted to present a form of Sufism that they

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56. Ibid. 149.
57. Ibid. p. 148.
59. For details see, Yoginder Sikand, 'The Role of Kashmir Rishis in Promoting Communal Harmony and Social Reform,' Centre for the Study of Secularism and Society, Mumbai, 2002.
saw in accordance with the shariah and above all, as a way of Islamic revolution, to bring state and society under the laws of Islam and it is believed that it was a sort of tactical compromise.

The religious movements like Ahl-i-Hadith and Jamat-e Islami in Kashmir aimed at establishing the pristine form of Islamic teachings and replacing the what they called 'diluted form' (localised form) of Islam. Sociologically speaking, such formulations were an attempt to debase the little traditions of Islam, which had the underpinnings of local cultural values and themes attached, than to the greater traditions of Islam. These movements aroused in antithesis to many traditional customs and local values of Kashmir. Although, these movements managed to win a considerable amount of support and helped to liberate the common masses against many superstitious values and hegemonic authorities of Pirs, Babzadas, Mujjawirs, and are still in the process of growth; they never proved a complete success in Kashmir. Still a major chunk of population in Kashmir has an intense predisposition and firm belief attached to these shrines and the saints buried in them, to the relics, and to the authorities of these shrines viz, pirs, Babzadas and the Mujjawirs etc.

Due to globalization process, as people come closer, the cultural differences become fluid and willingly and unwillingly, there is an exchange of cultural values and themes. In this globalized world, religious values and themes cannot remain inimical. Today with the exposure to the modern education, rapid communication and technology and an exposure to array of satellite television channels, Kashmiri people, especially youth is more predisposed to the secular outlook, and is certainly influencing their religious sentiments. There is visible decline in offering five time prayers (sallah), keeping beard and other markers of Muslim identity etc. As mentioned earlier, although, the global cultural trappings are marginalizing the role of religion and making it more a private enterprise (especially in the urban areas), however, paradoxically, their first hand experience (through satellite television, internet etc.) of western cultural hegemony in Muslim nations like, Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia.
Palestine and Pakistan etc. is activating consciousness of Muslim identity among them. In addition, channels like Islamic TV, Q.TV, Peace TV etc. are polishing their vision of identifying themselves to the Islamic civilization, which out-crosses the boarders of regional and national sentiments, this distinctive identity has further broadened with the floating of Kashmir issue on religious lines as Indian (Hindu) domination of Kashmiri (Muslims).

4.3. Dress Pattern:

Clothing is not only a big factor in the material life of human beings, but also the important symbol of social civilization. However, their pattern change from one culture to another and is often taken as an element that distinguishes one culture from another. From the specimens of Graco-Gandharan sculpture excavated at Ushkur and Akhnur, provides us an idea of the dress pattern worn by the people during and after the Kushan rule. It was, “a fine silk or cotton garment hemmed in at the middle and falling loose to the ankles was the common dress of men and women.”60 The figure on the terra-cota tiles of 4th century A.D. found at Harwan, further corroborate it. Since, the climate of the valley is cold; the people of ancient Kashmir would wear woollen garments with thick blankets, usually by the poor, and fine warm blankets by urban rich classes. Usually, men would wear leather shoes, while rich women wear peacock shoes.61

Since, in ancient times as in present, Kashmiri women would love to be gaily attired. The sculptures as well as literature support its evidence in which they are often depicted wearing jackets and bodices.62 The women would adorn themselves with special armlets (Valaya kalapi), earrings (kanaka-nadi) and pendants on the forehead (tilaka). They also embellished their body with the gold, silver and other precious stones. Among the ornaments, pride of place was given to Deji-hor, an egg-shaped, solid but intricately engraved two piece set hanging from both ears with the support of a strong thread (Atahar) which was fastened to the head.

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61. Ibid. p.232.
62. Ibid. p.6.
gear with a pin and was covered with smaller differently designed hollow ornaments, and was widely used by Hindu and Muslim women. It was considered an important symbol of married life; however, because of the religious significance attached to it by Hindu women, Muslim women later abandoned it.63

They also used various beauty-aids to look attractive and pretty. Collyrium, Vermilion, rubbed saffron and sandal-wood were used for adorning the face. Describing the appearance of women in ancient times, Kalhana writes, “set off with golden leaf Ketaka, the coiffure was decked with long flower garlands; the tremendous blossoms of the Tilaka embraced the lovely forehead patch; the line of collyrium joined the corners of the eyes to the ears; bows of string woven with gold were tied at the end of tresses which were worn in plaits; the long tail-end of lower garments kissed the surface of the floor; the brassiere which traced the curves of the breasts concealed the upper half of the arms; when they wore men’s dresses they bore the charm of the god of love in disguise.”64

Some decades ago, women of Kashmir would wear Kasaab (a cap decorated with beds and jewellery worn under scarf). The Kasaab was decorated with a lot of jewellery including, Halque bandhi (a broad necklace) Kanne waje (big-earrings), Dek-tik and many more ornaments. The fillet tied round the heads of Muslim women which was called Kasaba, was in case of Hindu women called, Taranga.65 Kasaab was worn by a woman before few days of marriage amidst great jubilations. The kasaab would reflect the social and economic status of a woman. For instance, the Thoud-Kasaab, (elevated one) was worn by the Shaurfa or Aseel (higher caste/ class) and Boun- Kasaab (stumpy one) worn by Kameen (working class group). It is believed that Thoud- Kasaab which was decked with a lot of jewellery, was introduced by the wives of court-men in the reign of king Zain-ul-abdin, whereas, Boun Kasaab was introduced during the reign of Akbar, when he ordered to construct the wall in Srinagar called Fasild-e-Akbari today known as Kalai-Ander (interior of the wall). The women

63. Ibid. pp.7-8.
64. Ibid. pp.8-9.
employed as labourers devised Aer (a cloth whirled to make a stumpy circle and put that over there heads to ward off the pain of the heavy weight of bricks. This way Boun Kasaab came in vogue. Today, wearing of both thoud and boun Kasaab has become extinct, except among fisher and Gujjar women who wear the Boun Kasaab.

Among the traditional dresses in Kashmir is Pheran. The Pheran has been symbolic in social and cultural life of the Kashmiris. Kalhana mentions that before the time of Harsha (1089-1101) people of the land wore a long cloak and Wakefield writes that “in ancient days [Kashmiris] possessed a distinct and more appropriate costume, which was forbidden by the emperor Akbar after his conquest of the valley, about the end of the sixteenth century, and replaced by his order by the present dress, which from that time has undergone no material change or alteration.”

Although, Pheran was criticized as, “effeminate and conducive to lazy habits,” by some, and “an ugly garment at its best,” by others, but still, the tradition of wearing Pheran has been alive among all the sections of society. The Pheran made of wool is worn during winters under which a fire-pot (Kangri) full of burning coals is kept to deal with the piercing cold. However, the old women prefer to wear cotton Pheran even in summers.

Pheran is a garment somewhere between a coat and a cloak and has derived its name from Persian word, Perahan. Men’s Pheran are always made of tweed or coarse wool, however, women’s pheran are somewhat more stylized and are commonly made of raffle with splashed art of ari or hook embroidery at the throat, cuffs and edges. Like Kasaaba, Pheran could differentiate between high and low caste women. The high caste (Sharfi or Aseel) women in Kashmir wear Quraab pheran. The arms of the Quraab Pheran are cut in the middle and are attached with the Pheran, whereas, low caste (taefdar/Kameen) is restricted from its use. Not only Pheran differs among high caste and low caste women in Kashmir, but even among

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Hindus and the Muslims of Kashmir. The Hindu women on their Pheran wear in addition a white rolled cloth round their waist. The Pheran of women in comparison to their male counterparts is more diverse in terms of colour; for it may be red, blue, green, orange, pink etc. On the marriage occasions, the bride is still gifted the pheran with the Tila-work, and it mainly includes, the Makhmal (velvet), Zarbaq (weaved with golden thread) and others like, Kenkhaab, Atlaas, jibal Dirayea, and Shaneel etc.

Like the headgear (Kasaba) of women, Kashmiri men in recent past wore Turban which in vernacular language is known as Dastaar or Malmil. Dastaar was once an essential head-dress of Kashmiri Muslims (especially among Sayids) and Kashmiri pundits. Kashmiri Muslims would wear the white or green colour turban, and Kashmiri pundits would usually wear yellow or saffron coloured turban. Biscoe while mentioning about the various ways of wearing turban writes, “the Brahman, for instance, ties his [turban] tight like a head bandage; the butcher also binds his turban tight, but the cloth is a much broader strip, and more of it, therefore it is a much bigger pagri than that of the Brahman. Thus many tie their pagris loosely, such as the carpenter or boatman, but there, again, they are not of the same shape. There are some who put the ends of pagris sticking upwards at the back of their heads like a cockade, whilst others like to have a long tail down their backs.”69 The Dastaar was a protection to head during scorching heat of summer and would warm head in the coldest days. It is believed to be brought here by Persinan Sayids in the 14th century.70

The Dastaar is a long piece of soft cloth manufactured of pure khaderi, available in miniature that is from one yard to a large size of seven yards length. It is folded so as to remain 4 inches in width, and then, tied over the head in several tiers, worn over a local Tupi, which is formed of Khajoor (dates) tree.71 Biscoe writes that “even an ugly face looks quite presentable when the head is adorned with a Pagri.”72 Nowadays, it is very rare to see people in Kashmir wearing the dastaar. In fact, only few old people could be seen wearing it. And in addition, it is only worn by Kashmiri

71. Ibid.p.162.
grooms at the time of their marriage.

Similarly, one of the traditional attires of the Kashmir which is now fading away is *Ka’shur Burqa* (Kashmiri veil), which had a Kashmiri culture tinge. It is believed to be introduced in Kashmir during Afghan rule (1753-1819). Some scholars believe that it was actually in the Middle-Ages, at least, in North India that the seclusion of women had become the rule among the higher classes and thus this attire was used in. However, it could be said that with the *Islamisation* process in India, the *purdha* system came in. Under Islamic jurisprudence, it is highly demanded for women to remain in clad. In Kashmir, it was in the reign of Sultan *Sikander* (1389-1413 A.D.) who patronised the Islamic philosophers and under their influence wearing of *Burqa* came in vogue. It was the upper-class Kashmiri women who first adopted the wearing of *Burqae*, and was later adopted by lower class women also. In fact, in past, under the influence of Muslim women, Hindu ladies (especially higher caste) women started wearing it.\(^73\)

Kashmiri *Burqa* was a one-piece *Burqa*, somewhat like an apron with veil so as to cover the face. It had net near eyes so as to sight properly. It was usually made of *Lathe* (cotton like fabric), but slowly, *crape peach*, and *silk* came into fashion. Usually, white and black colour *Burqa* were used, of which former was preferred. *Koshur Burqa* contains a specific design called *Laize* in Kashmiri (a sort of wrinkled design) which adds to its charm.

As the women has come out of four walls of her confinement, and her advancement in various fields outside her home, and with the decline in traditional thinking, the Burqa is more often seen a burden, and *Kashur Burqa* is seen more as an out of fashion dress. It is only in the few areas of Srinagar and in few villages that old women can be seen wearing this traditional attire. Instead, those women who like to remain in clad, prefer to wear its modern variants like *abaya* — a cloak with full sleeves, mostly used in Saudi Arabia, with multiple colours and designs like, pen-shaped, gown-type, one-side cut, A-shaped etc. With *abaya*, stole, and scarf are used to cover the head. In addition, Punjabi *Burqa*, worn actually

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by Punjabi Muslim women, is used by some middle aged women. It is a two piece with an apron like koath (shirt) and keef (scarf). In fact, in some areas of Kashmir like Anantnag, young girls prefer to wear only keef, whenever, they move out to the market.

4.3.1. Contemporary Dress Pattern:
In the contemporary era, traditional dress pattern in Kashmir is replaced by modern cloths, generally of western origins. Today, wearing western dress in Kashmir is highly trendy and has generated a big market.

(a) Dress pattern among males:
The urban youth are overwhelmingly predisposed towards wearing T-shirts with different neck styles via. V-shaped, round necks, turtle-necks, and shirts having zodiac signs and symbols are most acclaimed. Throughout the valley, jeans as casual wear stand as the perennial preference of boys as well as adults in Kashmir. The wearing of formal dress comprises of coat, pants, shirts, and neck-ties that are commonly worn by almost all office goers.

In addition, wearing jackets especially leather jackets with jeans during winters is also very trendy among Kashmiri men. Kashmiri men also prefer to wear the Khandress especially on Friday's and on Id-prayers or simply during at home. Khandress is almost a choice of middle aged men and especially those who do not attend any office. Khandress is cosy to wear, as it is usually loose, and one could easily move one’s limbs and is often comfortable during prayers, therefore, it is considered a typical Muslim dress in valley.

In Kashmir, it can be observed that people are attaching a sense of pride in the wearing of western dress pattern or global clothing, and the same is seen as a sign of progress, as in many parts of the world. It could be observed in addition to the

western dress pattern; Kashmiri youth also show their likeness to the dresses of other Indian states. For instance, Sherwani — a coat like garment buttoned in the front, which reaches down the knees, or lower, with embroidery or some other type of work — is usually worn on the weddings and other formal parties. Similarly, Kashmiri young men also prefer to wear Kurta — a long shirt, usually worn knee length with jeans etc. All these dresses have an origin in different regions of India, and amply signifies the fact that due to globalization, there is not only homogenization of global dresses, but homogenization of dresses is also taking place across states and regions of a single country.

(b) Dress pattern among females:

In Kashmir, young girls out of social pressure, taboos, defiance or political entanglements, do not wear western dresses; especially, jeans and T-shirts, as could be seen in the other regions and states of India. However, dresses that do not evoke too much of controversies or the dresses which could be easily accommodated with the local cultural and social settings are easily worn. In Kashmir, it could be observed that young women and girls (especially from urban areas) prefer to wear Salwar Kameez or Churidar Kurta — traditional dress of Punjab; Lehnga — a common attire in Rajasthan and Gujarat, and also various other types of Shararas. However, in many rural areas, the modern dress pattern is well accommodated with the traditional wear. For instance, still in many rural areas young and old women while at home, wear the traditional Pheran and scarf, and only when they have to move out they prefer to wear the modern dresses and that too slightly modest than their urban counterparts.

In addition, it could be observed that exposure to satellite channels, block-buster movies, and television serials are directly influencing the sense of dressing among both young men and women. The younger generation is giving special
attention to the adornment of their physical appearance. Applying foreign gels, shampoos, soaps, cosmetics and foreign perfumes, dying hair, visiting beauty parlours for facials and face massage, wearing different ornaments of gold and silver, is common among Kashmiri young men and women alike, and especially those living in urban areas.

Although, it could be said that the response of Kashmiris towards modern dress-pattern (especially western dresses) has not been of resistance, but more or less, of acceptance, however, due to militancy, which signalled resistance towards the wearing a western style dress among Kashmiri women; and due to prevalence of traditional bonds, has certainly influenced its use among them. Nevertheless, its trend is increasing and people are adopting modern dresses while as traditional dresses are loosing their space.

4.4. ARCHITECTURE:

"Ancient India," says a writer, "has nothing more worthy of its early civilisation than the grand ruins in Kashmir"75 and "of all the arts“, observes Percy Brown, "practised by the people of the valley in the pre-Islamic period, the building art was one in which they were notably proficient, as the remains of their large monuments in stone are a standing proof [and] the style which culminated in such masterpieces of architecture as Martand and Avantipora, must have had a long history of development, goes without saying."76 The Kashmiri architecture was so superior that it earned them the epithet of Shastra-Shipina or architects.77 Kashmiris were great architects and spawned the exquisite and captivating style distinct from the Buddhist and Hindu architecture of other parts of India.78

It is believed that in Kashmir there is no structural monument which

77. Loc. Cit.
with all certainty can be said to belong to the pre-Christian era, which has been discovered by archaeologists. “Even the first six centuries are very meagrely represented; the only monuments which can with certainty be assigned to the Kushan period being the Buddhist structures at Harwan and Ushkar.” 79 It is believed that long back in Kashmir i.e. in last two centuries B.C. Kashmir had some commercial dealings with Greek, Parithan, Kabul, and Peshawar, and even in second century A.D. Kashmir was also the part of Kanishka’s empire, and thus, traced indelible mark upon the character of the Buddhist and Hindu architecture of the valley. 80

It is observed that the plan and the elevation of earlier Buddhist religious edifices of Kashmir share much resemblance with the contemporary Buddhist buildings of Gandhara, the only difference lies is in the use of material and the mode of decoration.

In Kashmir, 6th and 7th centuries A.D. to 13th century could be fairly taken as the period of medieval architecture of Kashmir and it ended with the transfer of the kingdom from Hindu to Muslim hands in 1337 A.D. The buildings which represent the medieval architectural style may conveniently be divided into two classes — namely, the Buddhist and the Brahmanical. These two classes fairly differed in plan and elevation, as the religious needs of the two communities were different, however, in point of materials, ornament, and technique, there was practically no difference between the two. The Buddhists, who had bequeathed a legacy of a long artistic tradition, adhered to their old models, though they utilised better material and equally improved the decoration. The material which was used was a beautiful grey limestone, which presented a smooth surface when properly dressed and was also easy to carve. 81

The special features of the Buddhist architecture were, the plinth which earlier was a simple rectangular structure with a single flight of steps, was now elaborated into a, “square with one or more offsets on each side projecting far into the courtyard, and flanked on either hand by side walls adorned with sculptural reliefs. The plinth in the larger

80. Ibid. p. 50.
81. Ibid.
buildings consisted of double terrace, each comprising five courses of finely chiselled stone blocks of great size. The two lowest courses and the fourth course were plain, the third was fashioned into a filleted torus or cyma recta.\textsuperscript{82}

The second group of the medieval architecture comprises of the Hindu temples. The earliest example of these temples is Martand temple. The Hindus used both their brains and hands in the construction of temples. The principal feature of the medieval Hindu architecture of Kashmir was the "absence of the structural trefoil arch and the colonnade."\textsuperscript{83} While summing up, the principal features of medieval architecture in Kashmir were:

(1) The simplicity and unity of its design.
(2) All the temples of Kashmir are built of lime-stone, except those of Wangath and Buniyar temple. The blocks are massive, often 10ft. and more in length.
(3) The third was the finish of dressing, the blocks which were erected were covered with gypsum plaster, which was probably painted, and in which more delicate details of sculpture and other decoration were finished off.
(4) Last but not least, before erecting a temple, the natural beauty was chosen. Since, the nature was often viewed one of the manifestations of the almighty, it also added magnificence and charm to their religious buildings, and temples, like in, Amaranth, and Takht-e-Sulaiman which exemplify such an architecture.\textsuperscript{84}

After 14\textsuperscript{th} century onwards, another phase in the construction of buildings and architecture began; it was Muslim architecture. Initially, they did not introduce the architecture of their own, instead, they utilised, "the materials of disused Hindu temples for construction of their mosques."\textsuperscript{85} Most of the Muslim shrines of the valley resemble Buddhist Pagodas in outline, though their details are 'saracenic' and one of the

\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{83} Ibid. p.62.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid. pp.62-64.
\textsuperscript{85} Ibid. pp.70
reasons for this 'marked resemblance' stand that most of the shrines were erected on the Buddhist sacred buildings and in some cases the same material of these buildings was used.\(^{86}\)

However, chief feature of Muslim architecture in Kashmir was the introduction of wooden architecture as a substitution for stone. Since, wood was abundant and there was also a massive need for erecting buildings for public worship, the use of wood remained a cheap and quick option. The buildings made up of wooden architecture were less vulnerable to the quakes,\(^{87}\) however; due to the use of wood "the buildings in Kashmir lacked stability and not surprisingly collapsed frequently. Fire also consumed them very often. On account of these unstable elements in the Kashmir [several buildings of wooden architecture] for the early sultanate period have undergone frequent replacement, [in addition], abundance of wood also prevented the development of a fine and artistic architecture."\(^{88}\)

As far Muslim architecture is concerned some scholars believe that there is much similarity between the wooden architecture of Kashmir and that of some European countries and Afghanistan. They believe that the shrines of Kashmir bear a stark resemblance to the medieval wooden churches of Norway, which had 'sloping roofs', 'rising in tiers' to give it a Pyramidal shape,\(^{89}\) with gables and over changing eaves, each surface waterproofed with layers of birch-bark, and the chalets of the Austrian Tyrol with their projecting upper storeys, balconies with carved railings and casement windows, are also said to be not much different from old houses of Srinagar.\(^{90}\)

4.4.1. Some Historical and Monumental Architectures of Kashmir:

There are many structures and monuments around the valley which are considered of historical interest because of their age, and

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86. Sarla Khosla, *op.cit.* pp. 103-104.
the fact that they have survived more or less intact conditions and thus have turned culturally symbolic. The most prominent of local historical landmarks are:

(i) Martand Temple (Mattan):

This sun temple lies 6 miles north of Islamabad, 39 miles (or 64 Kms) from Sringar. It was consecrated in the middle of the 8th century by King Lalitadatiya Muktapida of Karkota Dynasty and is commonly known as the ‘House of the pandus’. Its image was worshipped till the end of 14th century A.D. Martand consists of a courtyard with the principal shrine in the middle. The main temple contains 3 district chambers, of which the outermost is named ‘Ardkamandapa’ or (half temple), the middle one is called ‘Antarala’ (mid-temple) and the innermost is named Garbhgriha (womb of the edifice).

(ii) Awantiswami Temple (Awantipora):

Situated on the Srinagar-Jammu Highway, on the bank of River Jehlum at a distance of 29 Kilometres in the South-east of Srinagar; it is located at the foot of mountains Bastarwan. This monument was erected by Raja Awantiverman of Utpala Dynasty, between 852-54 A.D. The entrance of the temple is divided by a cross wall into two chambers and is approached by a flight of steps bounded on either side by a plain rail and a side-wall. The front pilasters of the side-walls bear figures of Vishnu and of his consorts carved in relief. On either side of it was a portico supported on tall massive advanced columns, one of which can be seen even today, though, its condition is precarious. The wall surface of the entrance is both internally and externally ornamented profusely with sculptured reliefs. It is believed that this temple was finally destroyed by Sultan Sikandar.

(iii) Payer Temple (Payer Pulwama):

It lies about 3 Kms. towards the South of Pulwama district headquarters in the Payer village. This village is situated 18
Kms. from Pampore and 18 Kms. North-east of Shopian. It is about 6.30 m high and the best preserved medieval Kashmiri temple. It is 8ft. Square internally and 21 ft high, including the base, the chief mouldings of which are a plain torus in middle and a filleted torus on the top. The sanctum is open on all side, but is reached only by a single flight of steps on the east side. The doorways are rectangular, and are surmounted by a trefoil arch, which in turn is enclosed by a pediment. The pilasters on which the pediments rest are surmounted by capitals bearing pairs of geese with long foliate tails, and pilasters from which the trefoiled arch springs are crowned by recumbent bull capitals. The roof is pyramidal, and is divided into two sections by an ornamental band, consisting of square spaces alternatively projecting and receding. The blank sides of the upper pyramid are relieved by gabled niches which are replicas of the doorways, the only difference being that the trefoil of the latter is replaced by a semi-circular top, and the tympanum is filled by a flower-ornament. The four pediments as well as the apex of the roof were crowned by ribbed melon-like ornaments, two of which are still in existence.

(iv) Awantisara temple (Awantipur):

It is located at the foot of mountains Bastarwan, 1 Km. to the north-west of Awantiswami temple, half a mile below Awantiopora. The village of Awantipur is situated at a distance of 18 miles from Srinagar and represents the town of Awantipora, founded by King Avantiverman (855 to 883 A.D.) of Utpala Dynasty and is dedicated to Lord Shiva. The base on which the shrine of the courtyard stands is 57ft.4 inches square and 10ft. High. It has a stair on each of its four sides. The stairs have a width of 28 ½ ft. and are supported on either side by flank walls which are 17 ½ ft. in length. The sole exterior decoration of the temple base, the only part of the building that exists, is a series of projecting facets, the larger of which were originally surmounted by plain rectangular capitals.
platforms of the temple seem to have originally been attached to the plinth at one point of the time, but afterwards, they were completely joined with it by means of a connecting wall built of architectural fragments which have fallen from the temple.

**(v)** **Loduv Temple (loduv Pulwama):**

It is situated at a distance of **16 miles** from Srinagar, on the Srinagar-Jammu highway between Pompore and Awantipora in the Loduv village. It is situated near Panderethan and stands in the middle of shallow tank of water, which is fed by a spring to its north-east. It was built in 6th or 7th century. The temple is a very simple structure 24' square externally. Externally, the walls of the temple are without decoration, their bareness being only partially relieved by a cornice which consists of three courses of stone adorned with projecting fillets. The corner pilasters are quite plain, and project only very slightly from the walls. The entrance, which is in south-west side, is headed by a semi-circular, almost horse shoe-shaped arch surmounted by a single-storied pediment of very slight projection. Internally, the temple is circular with a diameter of 17' 6."

**(vi)** **Budash-un-Dumat (ZainaKadal, Sringar):**

This 15th century monument is situated on the banks of River Jehlum near Zaina Kadal in Srinagar. It is the tomb of Sultan Zain-ul-Abiddin's mother Miradevi; king Zain-ul-Abiddin constructed it in 1465. The design of the buildings with its central circular dome is a marked departure from the traditional wooden architecture of the regions and shows the close affinity with the Persian-Central Asian tomb models. The design of the tomb is said to be modelled on Timur's mausoleum, Gur-I-Amir in Samarkand. The building is the earliest existing brick masonry structure in the regions. To its north, the tomb has a burial ground called Mazar-e-Salateen. The plan of the tomb is square, with angles cut off and replaced by rectangular projections. The super-structure follows the same plan, and
consists of a single chamber in the middle with projections recessed internally at the angles, roofed over five domes, the largest being at centre. Its principal features are the glazed and moulded blue bricks, which are studded at intervals in the exterior walls, the semi-circular brick projections, on the drum of the main dome, and the moulded string-courses and sunk panels on the drums of the cupolas. The outer-wall, as well as its two entrances, one on the river side and the other opening on the road.

(vi) Hari Parbat Fort (Nowhatta Srinagar):

It lies at a distance of 5 kms. from Srinagar city, situated on the Sarika Hill (or Hari Parbat or Koh-e-Maran), in the north-eastern part of Srinagar. This is an 18th century Pathan fort, constructed by Afghan ruler, Atta Muhammad Khan and is visible from every part of city. However, some believe it was built by Akbar in 1592-98 A.D. Apart from its monumental value; it is a symbol of secularism. Shrines of all religions are located around it. A temple of Goddess Sharika, Gurdwara and Mazaar (graveyard) of Muslim Saint Sheikh Hamza Makhdoom adorn the hill.

(vii) Jamia Masjid (Nowhatta Srinagar)

This mosque was built by Sultan Sikander, its foundation being laid in 1398 A.D. and was later expanded by his son Budshah (Zain ul Abdin). This mosque got damaged by fire many times and finally it was revamped by Emperor Aurangzeb. The mosque is a quadrangle and roughly square in plan, its northern and southern sides being 334 ft. in length. Its special features are the 4 minars, covered by pyramidal roofs, which terminate in an open turret crowned by a high pinnacle. The minarets are connected by spacious halls, the principal feature of which is the vast array of 378 wooden columns which support the roof.

(viii) Pather Masjid (Zaina Kadal Srinagar):

This mosque is said to have been built in 1623 A.D. by the Empress Noor Jahan. The mosque got its name because in
contradiction of the indigenous wooden mosques of the valley. However, this mosque has become the victim of official neglect, and the chemical wash given to the exteriors of mosque by Archaeological Survey of India was abandoned some fifteen years back. The facade of the Pather Masjid consists of nine arches, including the large arched portico in the centre. The arched openings are enclosed in rectangular frames. The half attached bed post columns in the two outer angles of the jambs of the entrance are noteworthy. The plinth, which is now mostly under ground, is surmounted by a lotus-leaf coping. The frieze between the projecting cornice and the eaves is decorated with a series of large lotus leaves, carved in relief, some of which have been pierced, and thus made to serve the purpose of ventilation apertures flight of steps in each jamb of the entrance gives access to the room. The room consists of twenty-seven domes, the central one of which is largest. The roof is supported internally on eighteen extraordinarily massive square columns having projections on two sides. The lower portion of the columns is built of stone and the upper of brick covered by a thick coat of buff-colored lime plaster. The lime plaster, adorned by a range of shallow arched niches.

(ix) Khanqah of Shah Hamdan (Zainakadal Srinagar):

This mosque is situated on the bank of River Jhelum in Zainakadal Srinagar (earlier known as Aluddinpora). It is commonly known as Khanqah-e-Moula, erected by Sultan Sikander (1389-1413A.C.) in memory of the preacher Hazrat Mir Syed Ali Madani. The original building of this shrine is a square structure. Its chief structural peculiarity is that it is for the most part built of wooden balks. The spaces between the balks are filled by very small and carefully dressed bricks. Some of the doors and windows are beautiful examples of wood carving and the wood cornice of the plinth is an exquisite piece of workmanship.

The interior consists of a single hall 63' by 43' with beautiful panelled wood-work on the walls. The dado consists of a number of larger panels in the wall bear carved on them the names of God, which have been painted in gold.

The ceiling is supported in the centre on four wooden columns, covered with pieces of wood arranged in fish-bone patterns which originally bore painted inscriptions with their bases carved with lotus leaves.

(xii) Madani Mosque (Botakada, Srinagar):

It is the tomb of Syed Mohammad Madani, who was a foreign envoy and a scholar of high repute, visited valley during Sultan Sikander’s reign, and died during Budshah’s rule, who built this tomb in his memory. The base of the tomb is square and is built entirely of materials belonging to a plinth of a medieval temple. Even the arrangement of courses is identical with that of the ordinary temple base. The superstructure consists of four walls, adorned externally with trefoiled brick niches. The upper foil is pointed, but in the case of the doorway it is ogee shaped. The corner pilasters of the walls as well as pilasters of the niches stand upon bases, and are surmounted by capitals which are purely Hindu in style. The spandrels of the arches of the niches are decorated with beautiful tracery work; the cornice over the walls is composed of half a dozen courses of wood, the most prominent feature of which is the double series of dentils and metopes, the latter bearing delicate open-work carving. Above these are the eaves, which are adorned with a row of wooden tongues projecting down-wards. The chamber is covered by a pyramidal earth and birch-bark roof over-grown with a jungle of white and blue irises. The wooden door-way and entrance to the mosque is elaborately carved, and flanked by two fluted stone columns. The interior is plain. The ceiling of Khatamband is supported on four multi-sided wooden columns.

With the new phase of urbanization in Kashmir, mostly after 1950’s, left most of the heritage sites with each passing
day. No regulations or legislations have been yet passed in valley for the preservation of the endangered heritage. The seven wooden bridges constructed on river Jehlum for which Srinagar was praised by heritage groups, most of them today are demolished. However, Today, Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), one of the premier NGO's dedicated to conservation since 1984, in which it formed the state of Jammu and Kashmir as one of its chapters, has identified 838 heritage structures in the city waiting for regulations for their preservation. The 'INTACH' has emerged with a primary objective to create and stimulate awareness among the public for the preservation of culture and heritage.

4.4.2. Traditional Architecture and Changing Housing Patterns:

With the rapid modernisation and urbanisation, there is a paradigm shift in the vernacular architecture of Kashmir. The introduction of new technologies and building materials has also come up with new ways of planning and designing. The only few houses in downtown city are now reminiscent of traditional housing architecture.

The projecting wooden bay window locally called 'Dub' and intricate lattice work (the Pinjarkari) window screens and 'birch-bark' roof presented a peculiar image of the old city till early 20th century when the growth of Srinagar was concentrated around the banks of river Jehlum. Today, the terms like 'Dub kaine', 'Braiekani', 'Ganjeen', 'Kuther' are hardly known to younger generation and are hardly now associated with the modern day residential houses in the valley, especially in Srinagar city. Many of the smaller traditional buildings of this vernacular architecture are based on a square plan with the main entrance opening into a centrally located staircase lobby flanked by one or two rooms on either side, in ground and the first floor.

In these traditional houses, a part of the lobby on the first floor is usually converted into a small room called 'Kuther' over the main
entrance on ground floor. This is in some cases enclosed by ‘Dub,’ the wooden staircase comprises a series of winders and reducing the space occupied by it as compared to the overall building size. The stair case underneath carry the space, usually used as storage space called (Ganjeen). The second floor (Kani) comprises of a single large hall which could be subdivided into several rooms by using partition screens called ‘Varusis’. Besides, a series of rectangular, square or octagonal wooden bay windows called ‘dubs’ is projected out on main façade. In most of the traditional houses, the second floor is surrounded by a cruciform shaped attic space called ‘brair-kani’ or cats crawl used as an storage area and in some cases, the roof itself is surmounted by an open square pavilion covered with a pyramidal roof known locally as ‘Zoon dub’.

The ‘Havelies’ (larger and more aristocratic houses) comprises a linear, two or in certain cases three storey buildings, these havelies usually have two or more buildings one used as living quarters (dewan khans) another as sleeping quarter (mahal-Khana) aligned around an open courtyard. Many of the Havelies have Turkish baths (Hamams) attached on the ground floor, and the courtyards sometimes are paved with indigenous available varmul stone (Paetri). The decorations of these Havelies is done by lattice work screens and window shutters, profusely carved wooden brackets (Pinjrakari), eaves board (Morakh Patt), pendants (dour) and internally the walls are covered with moulded or incised mud plaster (bore) or with intricately done naqashi, ceilings are covered with variety of Khatamband patterns and motifs and sometimes different designs of papier-machie are used to crop up the delicacy and somberness in the appearance of buildings.

Few decades ago the houses in Srinagar city had roofs called ‘Burza pash’ or ‘Birch bark’, and it was almost vital element of Kashmiri architecture, and it was covered with colourful mustard flowers, tulips and green plants on the roof tops which no other part of globe endow. It simultaneously witnessed to the fact that people had a special proclivity towards nature and was well suited
to climatic needs of the people. Today, 'Burza pash' is almost extinct but one can still entice oneself with a look on the shrine of Syed Madni Sahib which still has a roof of brich bark. While birch bark roofs were peculiarity of urban areas, rural areas had thatched roofs, which like Burza Pash have vanished now. Another peculiarity of traditional houses was that a 'framework of horizontal and vertical plank of sawed wood was raised and then bricks and mortar was used to fill up the spaces, this type of housing was cheap and durable, the ceilings of raw and unsawed timber were covered from below with an additional ceiling, called 'Vastalav', the wood used in this type of ceiling was called 'Shivul' and the whole process was known as Zal-Traavun.

However, the exterior articulation of present day houses in Kashmir reflects the influence of modern ways of designing, planning and constructing of houses. As said earlier, the traditional architecture survives only in few places of old settlements in both urban and rural areas and giving way to modern architecture which are characterised by the massive use of cement, steel and iron. The traditional wooden architecture has given way to slabs (a combination of cement and iron), walls are finished with cement plaster, over which beautiful colours and paints are used to make them more stylish. These paints are usually from branded companies of which people have acquaintance through media, and other modern technologies. Use of sinks, pour-flush latrine, with ceramic tiles and other conveniences has completely changed the shape of modern day houses especially the houses built in cities and towns of Kashmir valley. For instance, earlier the floor and the walls used to be made of clay, which were later decorated by small chips of tiles and are now replaced by marbles, which needs no paint; rather applying dry cloth would render the job.

Sociologically speaking, today people prefer to spend more and more money on the aesthetics or to the decorative aspects that would

93. Loc.cit.
groom up their status or reflect their wealthy image or they would
cherish a certain style or way of construction which projects the
notion of progress and modernity. Most of the people during an
interview with the author of the present study accepted the fact that
houses of modern type architecture are more socially acceptable,
because they project modernity, progress, status and even person's
social prestige in society. In addition, the notion of comfort is also
prevalent, that people make between the older and newer dwellings.
This amply proves the changing social perceptions of Kashmiri
people who are now more materialistic and this perception is
increasing with the shrinking of social, cultural and spatial spaces
in this era of globalization.

In addition, the construction of new shopping complexes, malls,
hotels and restaurants in and around the Srinagar and in other towns
of valley, are an imitation of the kind of commercial architecture
found in the metropolis like Delhi, Mumbai and the digital cities
like Bangalore, to provide modern facilities to tourists and local
customers are indicative of inter-regional homogenisation. The
architect of luxury shopping moles, complexes, hotels with mc.lern
finishing and furnishing materials, is no longer a preserve of the
metropolises but have relatively become the part of Kashmiri society
too.

Nevertheless, some people identify themselves as distinct
cultural group, but appear helpless before the changing forms of
architecture and housing layouts at least the advantages in the
adoption of new forms of architecture override all other concerns,
however a consideration is needed of what old forms of architecture
have to offer, not only in terms of cultural identity but in actual
comfort and use as well.

4.5. Language:

Language is a system of arbitrary symbols and the rules used to
manipulate them. Language can also refer to the use of such systems as
general phenomena, though commonly used as a means of communication
among the people. "The use of language is one of the most conspicuous and diagnostic traits that distinguish Homo-Sapiens from the animals." As far Kashmiri language is concerned, it is called as Ka: shur or Ka: shur zaban (Kosher a Hebrew word means something, especially food, approved of or allowed by the laws of Judaism). Kashmiri as a language in Kashmir has been spoken since time immemorial. Some experts believe that kashmiri language has emerged due to inter-mixture of Shina, Pisaca and Askaz languages in the past. It is also believed that as the valley became available for habitation: new races like Dravidans, Aryans, Israelites immigrated into the valley and Kashmiri language went on assimilating new words and thus emerged as a language rich in vocabulary.

However, it remains a fact that Kashmiri language never enjoyed a position of prominence. It was always used as a secondary language. While looking at historical facts, it is believed that Sanskrit had been the court language under the Hindu kings and under the rule of early Shahmirs, but during the reign of Shih-abu-din it began to be replaced by Persian which became the language of the "educated class and even proliferated to other classes." However, "It was only with the foundation of Sultanate that more profound and endurable links were established with centres of Persian culture, and, as a result, the Indian influence was gradually replaced by the Perso-Islamic element. Simultaneously, it led to decline in Sanskrit learning and compelled many Brahmans to study the Persian.

The king Zain-ul-Abdin contributed great to the Sanskrit language, he encouraged the translation of historical and scientific works from Sanskrit into Persian. Mulla Ahmad the court poet during Budshah’s reign

translated the 'Mahabharata', 'Dasavatara' and 'Rajatarangini' of Kalhana into Persian, likewise, Jami's 'Yousuf-u-Zulaikha' was translated into the Sanskrit work namely Karihakautuka. The patronage set up by the Sultans was further extended and allowed by the nobles, who were surrounded by Persian eruditions and thus established many institutions for Persian learning. The Persian language exercised a tremendous influence on Kashmiri language. One of the influences can be seen in terms of creolization of many Persian words into Kashmir. "It goes without saying that on account of the influence of Persian, the Kashmiri language came to be a language and repository of a literature in its own right." Many Kashmiri Savants like Sheikh Nur-ud-din and Habba-Khatoon, for instance have made extensive use of Persian words like Aqal, Fukir, Teer Kaman, Ashakh, Lamakan, Pyala, Shisha, Gul, Bulbul, Dil, Sumbul, Didar etc. in their writings and thus added to the vocabulary of Kashmiri language.

4.5.1. Dialects of Kashmiri:

In order to discuss the dialect situation in Kashmiri, we shall divide the dialects into two broad groups, i.e.

(i) Those dialects which may be defined in terms of areas, and

(ii) The dialects which are non-area based.

Area-defined dialects: as per this, Kashmiri speaking speech community has been divided into three paths:

(a) mara:z (the southern and south-eastern region),
(b) kamra:z (the northern and north-western region)
(c) yamra:z (Srinagar and some of its surrounding areas).

These areas show some variations in the phonological, morphological and other lexical items. "The dialect spoken in

103. Mohibul Hassan, op.cit. p.255.
105. Loc.Cit.
Srinagar and its environs enjoys the prestige of being the standard form used in literature and mass-media. The major peculiarities of the *maraːz* and the *kamraːz* Kashmiri are that /r/ of the *kamraːz* and the Srinagar Kashmiri is replaced by /d/ in the *maraːz* Kashmiri, while the *kamraːz* Kashmiri shows peculiarities of intonation and stress which are absent in the *maraːz* and the Srinagar Kashmiri. The *kamraːz* Kashmiri shows differences in the vocabulary as well. The /-aː/ of present participle suffix -aːn / -vaːn is shortened in *maraːz* Kashmiri.\(^{107}\)

**Non-area defined dialects:** they are of two types:

(a) Sanskrit based Kashmiri, usually spoken by the Pundits of the Kashmir and

(b) Persian based Kashmiri, usually spoken by the Muslims of the Kashmir.

To exemplify it below are some of the common words which differ between Hindus and Muslims of the Kashmir, (however, it is to be mentioned that the use of two sets of lexical items is not mutually exclusive, a speaker may switch from one set to another, or may use only one set of items depending on the situation and other factors). These are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Words spoken by Pundits</th>
<th>Words spoken by Muslims</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Athi chalun</td>
<td>to wash hands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krːud</td>
<td>anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gandun</td>
<td>bethrothal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neːthir</td>
<td>marriage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thaːl</td>
<td>dish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kolay</td>
<td>wife</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N'eni</td>
<td>meat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namaskar</td>
<td>greeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prabaːth</td>
<td>early morning (dawn)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sraːn</td>
<td>bath</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athi pithrun</td>
<td>Gosi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nisaːn</td>
<td>Khaːndar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traːm</td>
<td>Zanaːn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Naːti</td>
<td>Salaːm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sahaːr</td>
<td>Gosul</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By the end of the 19th century Persian had almost exclusively occupied the field, but by the beginning of 20th century it observed a fall, and Urdu became the official language of the State which continues to be so till present. However, it is great pardon that Kashmiri has never been given a place of pre-eminence despite the fact that Kashmir was listed as one of the major Indian languages in the VIII schedule of the Indian constitution. The Kashmiri language has remained backward on account of various grounds. Experts opine, “Since, this language has no productivity, no security, no economical gains associated with it so people are pulling themselves away from it. If we are going to make a comparative analysis with other States, it is amply evident that they use their vernacular language both at domestic as well as at official level, so find

108. See, Braj B. Kachru, op.cit. pp.25-27; see also, M.Ashraf Wani, op.cit.p.68.
considerable gains associated with it, which is not case with the Kashmiri language."\textsuperscript{109} They also believe, "the Kashmiri language has never been patronised by those who are at the helm of affairs, [it is really a sorry state of affairs that] our native language is informal where as foreign languages are formal to us, which is quite unnatural. We have been facing the inferiority complex, we are behaving like a crowded and not as a race, we have never been linguistically conscious."\textsuperscript{110}

Another dilemma faced by Kashmiri language is that Kashmiri has a limited role in education in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. After 1947, it was introduced as a subject of study in primary schools in the valley but was soon discontinued in 1965. Again in 2005, the study of Kashmiri as a subject has been made compulsory in Kashmir, but it is yet a far cry to get full-fledged official patronage. "The big gap between 1955 to 2005, created a massive destruction to this language as a large number of educated younger generation who is well versed in reading and writing the languages like English, Urdu and Hindi cannot read and write in Kashmiri."\textsuperscript{111}

In fact, Prof. B.A. Dabla, in a research has established few facts about Kashmiri language, he believes that:

(a) The entire post 1947 period experienced no systematic, purposeful and continuous promotions of and support to the Kashmiris language. The Kashmiri nationalists, who were committed to the promotion and development of this language, could not make this language as the State/Official language or as one of the State/Official language due to political compulsions at that time. The decision of making Urdu as the official language [as it was the sole link language between three different regions in the State, i.e., Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh] had negative effect on

\textsuperscript{109} Prof. Shaad Ramzan, P.G.Deptt. of Kashmiri. University of Kashmir. 10 April, 2007, in an interview with author expressed his views.

\textsuperscript{110} Lecture delivered by Prof. Majrooh Rashid of P.G.Deptt. of Kashmiri, University of Kashmir, during a seminar on 'International Mother Language Day', on 21 Feb. 2007, hosted by International Resource Cell of Allama Iqbal Library. University of Kashmir.

\textsuperscript{111} Interview with Prof. Shaad Ramzaan, 10 April 2007.
the growth of Kashmiri and other such languages in the state. Thus Kashmiri language remained underdeveloped in the areas of spoken language and rich literature.

(b) The Kashmiri language could not be introduced in the state as the medium of instruction in the government and non-government schools, especially in private and missionary schools where children of influential sections of society study. Even the Kashmiri language as an independent subject could not be introduced at all levels.

(c) On the other hand, people in general too did not contribute significantly to the overall development of the Kashmiri language. They could neither uphold the cause of Kashmiri language in Jammu and Kashmir nor could they transmit the linguistic heritage to the next generation/s. Their children spoke Urdu at home and English and Urdu in their schools. In this way they kept their future generation/s away from the Kashmiri language and the related cultural ethos.

(d) Those who pursued the cause of Kashmiri language faced paradoxical situations. On the one hand, they pleaded meaningful development of the Kashmiri language (with other regional languages). On the other hand, they could not follow this agenda at their homes as their children speak several languages except the Kashmiri one. They consciously encouraged this trend among their children for their bright future.

(e) All Kashmir's who migrated to out of Kashmir for education, employment, and for other reasons betrayed the Kashmiri language irrespective of their different religious affiliations. It was mainly because they felt that the Kashmiri language had any market value for their children who, in all possibilities, had the least interest in going back to Kashmir.

(f) Even during militancy, the Kashmiri language suffered.
It was mainly because majority of the militants belonged to outside-Kashmir places and they spoke languages other than Kashmiri, especially Urdu, English and Arabic. They propagated their ideology and printed their literature in English, Urdu and Arabic. Very less of their literature was printed and distributed in the Kashmiri language. [In addition, slogans like, *we want freedom*, *Hum kya chahtey Azaadi* were included. Indeed, it is ironical that there are no freedom slogans in Kashmiri. Besides, many foreign words have since the advent of militancy become associated with the Kashmiri language and are used in routine discourse, e.g. the words like, *Kalashnikov, mine, blast, Grenade* (often pronounced as garnade), *crackdown, militant, burst* (often pronounced as breast), *cordon, fire, interrogation, torture* etc.]

(g) More important though the Kashmir’s in general uphold the cause of the Kashmiri language, they perform just opposite of it in practice sometimes, they feel compelled to identify themselves with the Urdu language (at the cost of the Kashmiri language) as it is portrayed as the language of a particular community region, which is not a fact.”

4.5.2. Institutions for Promoting Kashmiri Language:

Most of the institutions which are involved in the advancement and promoting of Kashmiri language are deficient on various grounds. For instance, as far print media is concerned, it is observed basically in the form of Urdu and English dailies and weeklies. In valley, during 1994, only one English paper was published, since then, it has increased eight-fold. The number of Urdu weeklies and dailies during this span was 37 and in 2005, the number of Urdu dailies was 48 and weeklies was 38, while as, the predicament is,

112. See, Prof. Bashir Ahmad Dabla, ‘Evaluation Study; Cultural Renewal of Kashmiri student Youth [CROKSY], *op.cit.*

there is only one Kashmiri weekly newspaper, namely, Sangarmal.

Same holds true for the electronic media. The intent behind the establishment of radio and television stations in the state was to play an important role in the promotion of Kashmiri language, besides entertainment. And they have to an extent been used as a medium of broadcasting and telecasting news and other indigenous programmes in Kashmiri, and have equally well encouraged the creative writers and scholars in Kashmiri to write in Kashmiri language. However, still most of their programmes are in Urdu language. In addition, they have to experience a stiff competition amidst burgeoning radio channels and programmes telecasted on different satellite television channels.

In addition, government also established Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in fifties, and was charged with responsibility of promoting all the languages which are listed in the constitution of J&K state including Kashmiri language, however, it has played a limited role in the promotion of Kashmiri language. Although, academy has published the books of great poets, and Urdu-Kashmiri dictionaries, Kashmiri encyclopaedia, and the journals like; Shiraaza, Anhaar and Son- Adab, still, it has a long way to tread in the promotion of Kashmiri language.

There are also some limited number of journals like Kashmir Samchar — a Socio Cultural Journal of Kashmiri Sahayak Simiti and Kashyap Samachar — a Journal of Kashmir Pandit Association that are published from Delhi and Jammu carrying some Kashmiri sections.

In addition, Kashmir University's Deptt. of Kashmiri offers M.Phil. and PhD degrees in Kashmiri, and provides text materials for teaching kashmiri as a first language, besides, Kashmir University has also other recently established institutions, like, Institute of Kashmir studies, Sheikh-ul-Alam chair which are playing the role in promoting the Kashmiri language, but, like other institutions, are not meeting the expectations in the advancement and enhancement of Kashmiri language in a well organised manner.
4.5.3. Englishization and Kashmiri Language:

Language and society are closely related to each other. Language reflects the social realities. At the same time, any social change that takes place in the society leaves its imprints on the language. With the beginning of modern era, Kashmiri language today is more vulnerable to negligence than ever especially with the exposure to modern education and Western ways of thinking. English language in Kashmir appeared on the scene in the late 19th century, with the influx of Christian missionaries in Kashmir. They began to teach in English in these missionary schools. People during that period showed a negative approach towards English language and assumptions like, “English being the devils language and learning English was equivalent to becoming a Christian were prevalent.”\(^{114}\) In addition, low literary rate of Kashmiri, greater inclination towards education in religious schools (like Darsgahs/Pathshalas/Dar-ul-Ulooms) all kept the growth of English language in valley slow. Inspite of the earlier delay, the trend of modern education and with increased globalization has accelerated the growth of English language in Kashmir. Today, English has acquired a casteless, creedless and a secular character and has further strengthened after it has become the language of Internet.

People of valley, especially younger generation, are now more inclined to learn English language. Most of the children impart today education in English medium and most of the official and unofficial work is done in English. Today English has become a gatekeeper to education, employment, business opportunity and has to great extent lead to marginalization of Kashmiri language. Experts opine that English language is attaining a hegemonic character and a sort of linguistic imperialism prevails. Today, with the exposure to modern tele-communication, mass-media and with rapid intra-regional movement the lingua franca of the people of Kashmir is English, Urdu and Hindi. An average young Kashmiri is today showing great choice in the learning of English, and educated Kashmiris are sure

\(^{114}\) Ibid. p.66.
to be under the influence of English language. Today, Kashmiri vocabulary items are being fast replaced by English, and its influence could be seen even in the speech of unlettered people of Kashmir. The words like Bathroom, Kitchen, Trousers, Bulb, Paper and pet names like, Daddy, Mummy, Baby, Aunty, Uncle, etc. have become the permanent part of Kashmiri language.

Today throughout in Kashmir, one can see that most of the sign boards are written in English or sometimes in Urdu than in native language. In addition, there is a growing craze among educated youth to learn and to speak English, keeping the growing competition and market demands in view. With the decline of national boundaries and the emergence of non-geographical economic affiliations English is attaining immense dominance and influencing the growth of native Kashmiri language.

Though, the elasticity of the language and its aptitude to imbibe the spirit and words from other languages is a commendable feature of any language, and same can be said to be true for Kashmiri language. Since from past, Kashmiri language has shown its tolerance and elasticity. It has imbibed different words from Sanskrit, Persia, Urdu, and now from English, nevertheless, assimilation and hybridization of words should not be to such an extent that it might lost its own identity.

4.6. Music and Dance:

One of the unique aspects of Kashmiri culture is its unique music. As the Kashmir is beautiful for its environs; so is it famous for its enchanting music. As Sufi writes that, "music is something which is natural as well as acquired. Countries which abound in natural luxuriance and lavish abundance of birds, animals, fruits, flowers and verdure, are richly endowed with a wealth of sounds, which with the slightest vibration, burst into exquisite melody. The people of such a country are born musicians. They evolve melodic forms to suit their own environs, and these forms are full, and intensely rich with pathos and feeling. Such a country is Kashmir, which has folk-music, bards and minstrels, singing,
humming, chanting, on all occasions, to intermingle with the work in hand, to sweeten their labour.” The historical evidences bear enough evidence that music and dance even in old times was popular and one such fact was disclosed during the excavations at Harwan. “These tiles and sculptures bear the pictures of dancing and singing persons and also of ladies playing on the rhythmic instrument.” Since, people in ancient times spoke Sanskrit and were the worshippers of Shiva, so the hymns, lyrics etc were also sung in Sanskrit. The music was not only popular, but also chief mode of recreation during festivals and other occasions. 

“The treatises on poetics, aesthetics and literary criticism of great masters like Ksmendra, Mammata, Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta shows that dance and music were not isolated phenomenon of cultural life but formed the essential ingredients of it.” It is interesting that a Kashmiri genius namely Carangadeva, wrote a genius work in Sanskrit, namely Sangitaratnakara which deals with the treats of rags, instruments and other technical details of the Indian music. It amply shows that Kashmiris had always an interest in the music. It is believed that medieval period saw a great development of music in Kashmir and Sultans extended great support to the encouragement of musical concerts. Musicians from Central Asia, Persia and other parts of India would throng their courts.

Although, music is not allowed in Islam, but still, Islamization process could not restrain people from playing music and presenting their genius through it. In fact, due to Islamization process, many ragas of Persian and Central Asian music found an accommodative place in the musical repository of Kashmir. Sultan Zain-ul-Abdin (Budshah) and Sultan Hassan Shah were in particular the luminaries for patronizing the music.

117. Loc.cit.
119. Loc.cit.
121. Mohibul Hassan, op.cit. P.271.
123. Loc.cit.
124. Dr. Sunita Dhar, op.cit., p.8
Srivara in his chronicle mentions that Zain-ul-abdin's court was filled with several accomplished dancers and musicians who, "were learned and dignified and displayed their taste and intelligence on the stage.... The dancers, who described the forty-nine different emotions, seemed even like ascending and descending notes of music. As they danced and sang, the eye and the ear of the audience seemed to contend for the keenest enjoyment." 125

Abul Fazl, mentions that the schools of music were founded in Kashmir by Irani and Turani musicians under Budshah's reign.126 It led to absorption of diverse elements and gave a new shape to Kashmiri music.127 For instance, "Muqams, musical modes equivalent to 'ragas' and rhythmic patterns like 'Neemdoor' and 'Turki Zarb' were introduced into Kashmiri music at this time."128 However, the greatest connoisseur and patron of Kashmiri music is considered to be Yousuf Shah (a Chak ruler) and his queen Habba Khatoon who introduced the melody of 'Rast Kashmiri' and the experts believe that the steady downfall of Kashmiri music is attributed to the downfall of Chak rulers.129

With the coming of Mughals a form of dance called 'Hafiza' dance became very popular among all the sections of the people of Kashmir and continued up to the beginning of 20th century. They had to go through years of practice to master this art. "The orchestra accompanying them was invariably of the Sufiana Kalam type [viz.,] 'Santur', 'Saz-i-Kashmir', 'Sitar' and 'Tabla'. They sang Kashmiri and Persian couplets and 'Ghazals', explaining the meaning with appropriate gesture and the movement of hands, feet and eyes, swaying the body at each step halfway around to left or right."130 The dress worn by them was in much resemblance with those worn by the "Kathak dancers" of northern India. Usually, "a tight fitting short blouse and a skirt of enormous width which was worn gathered tightly about the waist. [Hafizas also] wore [an]

embroidered cap, draped over by a dopatta of filmy gauze like silk."131 The 'Hafizas' were in great demand at weddings, melas, and outdoor parties. But after 1920, 'Hafiza' art rapidly declined. The advent of Cinema, theatre and laxing morality among the 'nautch' girls brought this dance on the edge of precipice.132

Kashmiri music and dance can be divided into various forms, for instance, Bhand Pathar, Sofiyaana music, Ladishah, Ruf dance, Vanvun, Bachi Nagma, and Chakkri. In the contemporary era, both Kashmiri music and dance is loosing its sheen. For instance, Bhand Pathar which owes its roots earlier than 10th century and which has been mentioned even in Nilmat Purana as 'Mandavanam'133 has lost its appeal. The word 'Bhand' comes from 'bhaana' a satirical and realistic drama. The Bhand Pathar is not a "monologue but a social drama, incorporating mythological legends and contemporary social satire."134 After 10th century, when the whole valley was reeling under crisis due to foreign invaders it is these 'Bhands' who highlighted the atrocities being committed to the people of Kashmir. Walter Lawrence writes about the Bhands, "their acting is excellent and their songs are often very pretty. They are clever at improvisations and are fearless as to its results. One of their favourite themes is the caricature of village life which is often very amusing and exact."135 The head of troupe is called the 'magon' taken from the word mahagun (meaning a man of varying talents). The bhands dance to the tune of a specified 'mukam' (modes) and the orchestra includes, Swarnai, Nagara, Thalii and Dhol. "The composition played is called mukam. The music follows a set pattern the salaam, thurav, duitch, navpatti and the salgah."136 However, today folk theatre of Kashmir is dying out and now there is any folk theatre worth name present in the valley. The condition is so dilapidated, that hardly anyone interests to be the part of this profession.137 Today the

133. Dr. Sunita Dhar, op.cit. p.31.
134. Loc.cit.
135. Lawrence. op.cit. p.312.
136. Dr. Sunita Dhar, op.cit. p.32.
137. Interview of a young bhand artist, Ghulam Mohiuddin Aajiz, President of National Bhand Theater Wathora, 21 Dec. 2006, with the Author.
condition of this art is so worst that only in far flung areas, people of older generations follow this art. It is partly due to the influence of modern media and also due to government apathy and the problem is compounded by the pitiable conditions of Bhands (artists) involved in this art, who feel worse than tramps and illiterates.  

The classical music of Kashmir is 'Sufiana music'. The word Sootiana has been derived from *Tasawuf*, meaning mysticism. It is said that this music is associated with mystics and a food for those who want to tread the path of spiritualism. The Sufiana music has about fifty-four *maqamat* (modes), out of which some bear Indian and some Persian names like, Lalit, Asawari, Porebi, Baha-Khamach, Kalyan, Jaijaiwantun, Araq, Hussani, Nawa, Bayat, Navroz-e-Saba, Koohi, Udasi, Rehavi, Rast, Rast-e-Kashmir. The instruments used in Sufiana are stringed instruments and the group of musicians who render it are both vocalists and instrumentalists. Earlier, on every big event people would enjoy the enchanting rhythms of Sufiana Kalaam, however, today it has a very limited audience with little support from the government. "The youth on one hand is completely cut off from their traditional music like Sufiyaana, and on the other hand, government also lacks commitment for the proliferation and preservation of this music." Although many agencies are trying to revive this music by creating musical concerts in valley, but lack of patronage, absence of enthusiasm and growing proclivity of people to western and Indian film music has brought halt to the growth of this music.

Another folk music of Kashmir is 'ladishah'. It is usually a satirical song, reflecting the society's condition. Superficially, 'ladishah' appears comic, but undercurrent it carries the overtones of satire about existing system. The singers of 'ladishah' carry an instrument called 'dhukar' which is made of iron (1-1.5 mtrs long), with metal rings hanging around

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140. Ibid. p.45.
141. Ibid. pp. 46-47.
142. Mohd. Yaqoob Sheikh, a renowned Sufiyaana artist in an Interview revealed to the author on 23 March 2007. He also feels that sufiyaana music is highly appreciated in foreign as well as in different parts of India, but in valley only few appreciate it now.
it. Earlier, singers wander from one area to another but in contemporary times one can find 'ladishah' once in a while on Television programmes.

Another folk form of music cum dance of Kashmir is 'Ruf'. In 'Ruf' ladies form two or four groups, consisting of three or four girls, facing each other. Each girl puts her arms on the arms of the other girl and jointly bring their feet forward and then backward. Earlier women would sing 'Ruf' on every occasion especially during the holy Ramzaan, on Id-ul-Fitr, Id-ud-Zuha, and on Urs-i-Nabi (Prophets Birthday) but now one can only find them on some marriage ceremonies.

Bachhi Nagma is another folk-dance of Kashmir and it means the adolescent melodious voice. The dancing boys are usually professional singers and are booked in advance for marriages and other ceremonies. The dancing boy usually wears dress which is long, loose and round, up to the feet. Up to the waist, it is tight. Ghanghoos are tied over the lower side of the legs. The troupe consists of six to seven members — one a leading singer and others play the various musical instruments. It is still popular among Kashmiris and is called on marriage and other ceremonies.

Chakkari is another popular form of Kashmiri folk music. It is sung collectively in a group, and is only sung by men. The singers in the Chakkari, play themselves different musical instruments like rabab, sarangi, nout and tumbaknari. It is very popular among masses and usually Chakkari singers are called on marriages. Even government has now taken a step to associate them with the amusement parks and recent among them is 'Zabarwan Park' of Srinagar which has become very popular among the people and is highly appreciated for the government's endeavour to activate the cultural awareness among people. In addition, the demands for different chakkri programmes for broadcasting and telecasting on Radio and television is an indicative that its popularity has not diminished, nevertheless, it has been influenced by Ghazals, and film music.

Like Chakkari, people of Kashmir also enjoy 'Wanvun' which is an important part of marriage and another form of folk music sung by women.

144 People during an interview with the Author divulged their appreciation for governments attempt to amuse people while keeping traditional cultural moorings intact and to transmit it to the younger generation.
during marriage and other festive occasions, and is sung with great joy in both rural and urban areas.

In the contemporary era of globalization, in which Kashmiri society is exposed to burgeoning music numbers from both Indian film industry and to western music, the Kashmiri traditional music is loosing its shine. Although, local Radio and T.V. stations are giving a try to retain the buoyancy of Kashmiri music, however, appear emasculated before the myriad Satellite channels and round the clock programmes broadcasted on the radio stations like Big 92.7 F.M, which have become the by word of youth. In addition, government's apathy with lack of proper plans and policies for retaining traditional music and dance and failure to provide economic security to the artists involved has flared up its failure to identify itself in modern times. Although J&K Cultural Academy occasionally organise musical programmes on birth as well as death anniversaries of poets to retain the rich legacy of Kashmiri music, but that appears too little a try to deal the myriad problems faced by Kashmiri music.

4.7. Arts of Kashmir:

The arts and crafts of Kashmir have been justly renowned, for centuries, all over the world. They consist mainly of handicrafts like woollen textiles of fleecy soft texture and infinite fineness in weaving, delicate embroidery work in silk and wool, hand woven carpets of finest warp and wood, lovely painting in wonderful designs on paper mache goods or on wood, fine traceries in wood-carving, deft weaving in willow-wicker, and superb metal-work, also wood carving which is famous throughout globe and symbolise the essential element of Kashmiri culture.

4.7.1. Paper Mache:

"In the past, wars and manoeuvres of aspiring monarchs have often led to unexpected developments in the arts and crafts, and this is the ironical background to the introduction of paper-mach work to Kashmir, brought by illustrious king Zain-ul-Abdin after his captivity from Samarkand, it was during his confinement that he
observed, the art of using paper pulp as a base to manufacture fine painted and lacquered ware." It is a French word meaning paper pulp or mashed paper. In art it has come to mean a style of decoration rather than a name signifying the compositions of the surface on which we see a unique combination of line and colour and design.

Kalmadans or pen-boxes were the first papier-mâché products made in Kashmir, and won the appellation of Kari-i-Kalamdani. Overtime, the repertoire of articles grew and during the reign of Mughals, bedsteads, doors, window frames and panels for walls and ceilings were included. These products were remarkable for the variety, fineness, elegance of the patterns and designs, mostly consisting of flowers and styles of executions, and also having the exquisite combination of colours of paintings and the beauty of varnish, the Mughals appeared to be spell-bound by the beauty of this paper machie work. They would often commission entire communities of craftsmen to make gifts as well as decorative units of the papier-mâché. The paper used in papier-mâché products mostly includes the paper which has been written upon and sometimes light wood of non-oily variety as of pine-wood 'Kayur' (Pinus excelsa) is used.

The Europeans who first landed in Kashmir were much enticed by the ravishing beauty of art of paper-machie and thus, they spread its knowledge in their home countries and thus the demand for the paper machie products grew even in European countries. The art of paper-machie is almost a family monopoly and is mostly pursued by the Shia Muslims of Kashmir.

(a) Process:

The techniques involved in papier mache production are divided into two distinct categories. The first is Shakti-sazi making the object; the second is naqashi painting the surface.

146. Ibid, pp. 122-123.
The Shakra-saz grinds a paper pulp or layers of paper glued together to form a surface, which is then given shape by means of mould. This is then given a plaster coat and then painted, mostly with water colours in miniature style. Then coats of varnish to create luster are applied. The designs used in papier-mache painting are highly fine and intricate and their application or execution requires a dab hand for drawing and painting. The painter is known as the naqash and his work is called naqashi. The naqashi draws from the reservoir of patterns and motifs in his memory. Nowadays painting is done with chemical colours, earlier organic, mineral and vegetable colours made from local or impaired material were used.

The intricate designs used to decorate papier-mache objects are mainly derived from nature flowers, birds and animals. While the patterns are floral and arabesque, calligraphy is also sometimes done and copies of paintings in various traditional schools are also made. The most popular designs include the ‘Hazara Gul’ (a thousand flowers) Gul ander-Gul (flower within flower) and the birds in foliage.

This art has started waning now. Now it is mainly used for the souvenirs, and more easily produced items like picture frames, screens, tables, tea caddies, trays and candle sticks which are less expensive examples of this craft. Most of the artists today are vulnerable to the weak policies of the government. Today there is no dearth of skilled craftsmen who are not only experts in the technique but are also aware of its aesthetic requirements and may create any product applying all their talent and dexterity, but find it highly difficult to continue with this trade as it does not provide sufficient to meet their daily requirements. So, this trade is waning away. Although, rapid globalization has set up new vistas and the products are in high demand but, possibly fail to benefit the local artisans. Now, this art is almost loosing its shine, because it is now confined to older generation as new generation is
highly reluctant to follow the paper-machie art for earning their livelihood as it fails to provide them a descent living.

4.7.2. Woodwork and Wood Carving:

One of the important arts of Kashmir is wooden and carved wooden objects. Kashmir is known for its forests and magnificent trees. "Walnut trees grow in plenty in the valley and partly because of the durability of the wood and partly owing to its rich natural-venied surface [from which] beautiful articles of varied designs can be made there from." 148 G.M.D Sufi in his book Kashir holds that Lawrence was although believing that Kashmiri wood work lacks a little finish, but he believed that "the Kashmiri carvers is perhaps second to none in his skill as a designer. He works with hammer and chisel, and a great deal of the roughness and inequality of his pieces is due to the difficulty of obtaining seasoned walnut wood." 149

Earlier it was believed that wood worker would perform multifaceted roles, he would not only make household goods but also chariots. 150 Traditionally wood has been used in the construction of the houses in valley. In addition, it has been used to decorate ceilings, walls, doors, cornices, facades and roof eaves and intricate and fabulous wood work in balconies. At present, there are still many household articles made of wood which are in vogue. Like other arts of Kashmir, wood carving is supposed to have gained impetus during the reign of king Zainul-Abdin. 151

As mentioned earlier, walnut and deodar are mostly used in wood-carving. Rose wood is also used for making household utensils, toys, furniture and also decorative articles, daily use articles, like prayer boards, stands (for Quran). However, for furnitures and architectural purposes the Himalayan cedar is considered as apt for its strength, resilience and of course, its pleasant aroma. Walnut wood is carved for tourists mainly to make elegant furniture and

149. G.M.D. Sufi, op.cit. p.585.
articles. It is also used to embellish the luxuriant houseboats.

(a) Modern Products:

Wood carving shows the prowess of Kashmiris towards art and aesthetic zeal. This is rather reflected in the myriad and diverse range of products made of wood. From the carved walnut boxes, bowls, bridal sandals, cradles, trays, tables, doors, windows, decorative panels and picture frames, from elaborately carved houseboats and Shikaras to houses, mosques, and shrines with decorations in carving, raised work, under cut, inlay pinjara-work and Khatamband all amply disclose the amount of products made from wood carves of Kashmir.

(b) Wood Carving:

The carving on the surface of the wood is grooved with knives or notched with chisels or knives, cut through with the chisel, dotted with a drill or striated with a moulding plane of chisel. Although tools appear to be slow, but technique of execution and decorative style is indeed most intricate. The four main types of carving practiced in Kashmir are raised, engraved, undercut and plain. As mentioned earlier the best wood for it is walnut. The carving process is elaborate, not only walnut, but rose wood is also carved for making smaller objects like combs, forks, spoons etc. The most common motifs for decorating the Kashmiri style of wood work include designs depicting the flowers of the valley via, Sunflower, iris, rose, tulip, lotus, and narcissus. Birds and images of animals are also popular. Various carved designs are based on Persian roots for example Barg-e-Sosan, Chanar, Barg-e-Sarv, Barg-e-Badam and Mazarposh. Delicate lacquered furniture, flower vases, candle stands and bowls of various shapes and sizes are in high demand.

However, this art is loosing its ground. As the market returns are very poor. The new generation is also less interested and government also seems to be less responsive in the promotion of the

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wood-carving art.\textsuperscript{153}

4.7.3. Khatumband:

*Khatumband* is a technique of wood craft, which is unique to Kashmir.\textsuperscript{154} Khatumband means to design the ceiling with small decorative pieces of wood joined together in a specific manner giving a beautiful look. In it thin sheets of wood, usually from a kind of spruce (*Picea-webbina*), are held together by double grooved battens to create with the combination of excellent joinery and precise designing patterned ceiling panels. This art is said to have been introduced in Kashmir by *Mirza Haider Dughlat*.\textsuperscript{155} Its links are supposed to root in Iran. A template or a pattern usually in the form of a thin metal, wooden or paper plate for cutting or forming an accurate copy of geometric shape and size of the wooden sheets is used so as to ensure that the pieces can be interchanged. These wooden strips, sheets or modules are fitted into the grooves of battens, which are in the form of short, flexible sawed strips of wood. This process is repetitive with geometric precision to build up geometric repeat pattern.

Various types of Khatumband designs are *Moje, Moje Lehur, Teen Bakshish, Chaar Bakshish, Chaar Gul, Panch Murraba, Sheesh Gul, Dus Buraan and Dehwaz Deh Girid*, and different tools applied are *Saw, Toor, Zawambe, Isteg, Kur, Rande, Tari Rande, Khoor, Rikini, Krap het* etc. There are numerous buildings where one can see the *Khatumband* ceilings and most typical of them is at the holy shrine of *Khankahi Moulla* of Srinagar. However, this art of khatambund is moving in oblivion, as in today's modern architecture it has very little place, in addition its getting difficult to get raw material especially *deodar* used in *Khatumband* ceilings. In addition, no government planning goes to provide sustainability to this art.

\textsuperscript{153} Ghulam Rasool Ahanger, famous wood-carver of the valley, on 10 Aug, 2007, revealed to the author during an interview that due to poor market returns, government's lack of proper policies, and due to lack of interest of younger generation, this art too like others is dying away.

\textsuperscript{154} Kaumudi, *op.cit.* p.244.

\textsuperscript{155} G.M.D. Sufi, *op.cit.* p.586.
Although it is reflecting special feature of Kashmiri culture, but it is also loosing its existence due to lack of proper planning and policy on the part of government.156

4.7.4. Embroidered Floor Coverings:

The close link between nature, history and the crafts of Jammu and Kashmir is reflected in the characteristics and development of embroidery, particularly in the Kashmir valley. “In Kashmir, the origin of embroidery is closely linked to court patronage and subsequent market demand, once it achieved a certain excellence in design, weaving technique, stitch work and aesthetic appeal.”157 Embroidery work in Kashmir has always been prerogative of men. It is believed that Sayids, Sufis always desired women to seclude themselves from men and as a result this remained a male dominated area.158 The major embroidered floor coverings include, Numdah, and Gabbas. These are so famous that no house in Kashmir would be without Gabbas and numdahs.

4.7.4.1. Numdahs:

Numdah is a piece of pressed felt made either out of wool or cotton or entirely of wool. Originally, they have come from Yarkand and are supposed to be here for 175 years.159 The embroidered patterns and motifs are coloured and of floral designs. The most dominant motif in Kashmir embroidery is the botch flower, which has persisted all along in different forms, evolving from a simple freely spaced floral arrangements to a sweeping and complex scroll, they are of various colours like green, red, pink, blue, brown and fawn etc.

The ‘numdah’ rug makes a warm, colourful and impressive floor covering and is also used as mattress where climate remains

156. Interview with the famous Khatamband designer, Ghulam Qadir Najar (Id-gah, Sgr.), 27 July 2007.
158. Ibid. p.61.
159. Ibid. p.66.
colder.\textsuperscript{160} They are creative and imaginative not only in their making but also in their use for warmth and to create elegance.

(a) Raw material:

The raw material comprises (unspun) wool and cotton and woollen yarn for embroidery. The quality of numdah in fact depends on the purity of raw material. And the style of embroidery for quality as well as aesthetic sense matter also. And anybody who is having any know-how of embroidery, would know that the finesse of the embroidered design is not only dependent on the dexterity of the hand and the artistic quality of the decorative pattern or design but also on the quality of the yarn used for embroidery as for its strength, fast colour and its smoothness and uniformity in the diameter of the thread is concerned. Of all the raw materials, which are combined to form a ‘numdah’ the colour is the most important; all aspects like content, form, position and value are influenced by the colour.

(b) Making of Numdah:

The unspun wool or a combination of wool and cotton is evenly spread on a mat, which is then lightly folded and pressed with feet for felting. The felted piece is thus milled, washed and dried. In the places where the ‘numdahs’ is made, one can see plain and embroidered ‘numdahs’ being dried by the side of the ‘nallah’ or the stream or river in which they are washed,\textsuperscript{161} and after all the process the ‘numdah’ rug is done to make it ready for embroidery with fast colour woollen yarn.

(c) Shapes, Tools, Techniques, Designs for Decorating Numdahs:

‘Numdahs’ are made in rectangular, circular and oval shape and the decoration of the ‘numdahs’ is done by embroidery executed by means of tambour, needle or hook. The embroidery is in chain stitch and the designs are either floral or geometric or animal. While looking at the designs on the

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid. p.73.
\textsuperscript{161} Loc. cit.
‘numdahs’, one feels that as if a painter has by some wizardry conjured up living forces of colour and form by driving them into the work to make it float out of the rug and force into the mind and soul and take possession of it by a magic spell.

The numdahs are mostly produced in villages as an additional income generating source by farmers and in artisan’s workshops in Kashmir and are transported all across the country to be displayed in various art emporiums in city centres.

4.7.4.2. Gabbas:

Gabbas are called as poor man’s carpet. Traditionally, Gabbas are made and used in villages and thus, Gabbas made in the old or the conventional way have a folk or village character, which makes them quaintly attractive and adds to the charm and beauty of these Gabbas. The Gabbas are exclusive to Kashmir and the work is more particularly exclusive to or is localised at Islamabad (Anantnag) town, its outskirts and nearby villages, and those who visit Martand and to Amarnath cave are usually its purchasers.162

Gabbas use lois or blankets as base, embroidered in wool or cotton yarn or appliquéd. These old blankets are washed, milled and dried and then dyed in various colours. Embroidery is done by means of a hook and the appliqué technique consists of joining together various coloured blanket pieces, interspaced with embroidery, thus creating a vivid design against a sombre background. To improve its lasting quality, lining is also provided.

(a) Types:

Generally the types of Gabbas include the embroidered and the appliquéd and now increasingly barrack blankets are being used instead of old-blankets which the craftsmen find too difficult to work with. The types of Gabbas being applique and a combination of applique and delicate embroidery or dal-e-
Although its origin is not known but a series of anecdotes are associated to it. One of them is that, “Abdul Rehman, a refugee from Kabul, prepared an appliquéd saddle piece for his host, Kamal Dutt of Tetson village near Tral, this saddle piece was greatly appreciated by him and latter the idea caught on with the Gabba making in Anantnag.”

The making of the common man’s carpet or Gabba making is a household craft, involving washing, milling and dying of used lois or blankets in various vibrant colours, connecting and linking the family members especially when girls and women help the male embroiders in stitching together pieces of used lois.

(b) Uses of Gabbas:

‘Gabbas’ are generally used as floor coverings and their other uses include making them into mattresses and cushion covers. They are decorative and fine with a brilliant display of colours in delicate designs celebrating the natural beauty in a unique way against sombre and dreary background and hence stressing the enhancing, stimulating qualities of the Gabbas. It is at home in a humble Kashmiri as well as a person living in posh ambience.

(c) Social Status of Workers:

Those involved in this job are now living in a marginalised condition, and thus, this art is loosing its sheen and shine. But despite that, still a large chunk of Kashmiris are in this profession, perhaps it could be said that “deft fingers holding a needle still signify the artistry of the embroiders from this region and reiterate the notions that a man or woman with imagination and skill needs only the simplest of implements to create patterns of infinite beauty.”

4.7.4.3. Zari Work:

Among the embroidery works one of the important works is

163. Jaitley, op.cit. p. 79.
164. Loc. cit.
tila or zari work where a special kind of golden coloured silver coated thread called tila or kalabout is used in embroidering various kinds of costumes and attire.

With the arrival of Sufis in Kashmir, this art like others made its debut in Kashmir. It is believed that this art was introduced by one of the Sufi saints of Amir-i-Kabir Mir Syed Ali Hamdani. Since, the term Kalabouout as Persian word for tila work and still popular even after six centuries confirms the origins of this art to Persia. Again, the popular ruler of Kashmir, Budshah gave impetus to this art. He promoted this craft and transferred it to the common people. The major center of this art was Khankah area of Srinagar, which still continues with its legacy; those crafts men involved in the tila work are known as tildooz. 165

(a) Uses of Tila Work:

Among the articles that are mostly embroidered with Zari work are female Pherans (tunics). It is usually done on the collar, around pockets, cuffs or Korabs and the hemline. Besides suits, shirts, and saris are also stitched by tila. Vardan which is an old custom of giving cloths to the bride by her parents, of which Pheran is an important part, remains incomplete unless tila is not put on it.

(b) Designs used in Zari Work:

The designs and patterns used for tila works are quite many, however important among them stand the badam dar, the chinar leave (Boni-Panvather) and Chakuru tila. The payment on tila work is made in terms of Rupees per tola (equal to 10 gms.), and is used as the unit of weight that may cost Rs 500/ - per tola. However, the coming of machine tila which is more synonyms with the Tibetans and known as Botae tila has badly ruined this business, mainly because it is much cheaper than the hand stitched tila.

(c) Execution of Tila Work:

The tila stitching is done on various sorts of clothes and with different procedures. On velvet cloths the zari tila work is done on the patch of clothes, which is later, fixed on it. On normal clothes, it is directly done on the clothes while on the silken shawls, saris and suits which are normally light in weight the soft cloth in order to get the support is put beneath the surface of the clothes.

(d) Social Status of the Zari Workers:

Most of the craftsmen are disappointing and feeling bleak about the future of this craft. They believe that thirty years back this trade was thriving at a very high speed, but now it is declining. Besides, hardly any body among youth is turning to learn this craft, because it has very poor returns. In addition, after attaining higher education nobody thinks to follow the craft of their forefathers, and government also is showing very poor concern towards them and no policy is being formulated, no bank loans are available to its artisans; as a result this craft is loosing ground.

4.7.5. Kashmiri Shawl and Embroidery

(a) Origin of Kashmiri Shawl:

Throughout ages the word Kashmir has become synonymous with the beauty of people, landscape, and its exquisite arts particularly shawls. These shawls have mesmerised both commoners as well as elites all alike by its Infinite beauty. Of all the types of Kashmiri shawls, the most sought after and prized was the Kani shawl, which has been shattered now in oblivion. It is believed that Mir Sayid Ali Hamadani, Sultan Zain-ul-Adin, Sultan Qutub-u-din have been the main catalytic agents in the proliferation of this art in Kashmir. It is their patronage, which nourished and stimulated this art. However, this art has touched its highest potential under the rule of Mughals.
(b) Types of Decorative Designs, Motifs and Composition of Kashmir Shawls:

The main categories of natural wool used in Kashmir are Rafle, Pashm and Shahtosh. Among these, Rafle is machine spun with sixty four counts of woollen yarn and is mainly derived from merino-sheep (breed of fine wool sheep particularly well adapted to semi arid climates and to nomadic pasturing). Pashm is considered to be in good quality and is also costly, but the most delicate, luminiriously, soft, warm natural fibre known to man is Shahtosh, derived from the antelope of the Himalayan mountains, grazing extremely at high altitudes, being the proverbial unicorn of idealism, as the ideal delicacy of the material, traditionally thought to be so warm as to hatch a pigeon’s egg. However, these days it has become rare and also it has been banned by the government to kill the Himalayan antelope for gaining Shahtosh.

As far weaving of these shawls is concerned, it could be seen that today specialists have disappeared in the realm of legend. The Naqqash who painted the beautiful floral design of colour and vibrancy, the rafugar and the master weavers whose dexterity of fingers created such wonders as to baffle the onlooker and to hold his eyes in wondrous rapture, have all but gone, and have passed into the mist of past time and space.

(c) Social Status of the Kashmiri Shawl Weavers:

The Kashmiri Shawl weaver is so unfortunate that he cannot enjoy the fruits of his own labour, who so eloquently displays nature, do not reach him. As famous poet Ghani points out that, as the fragrance of musk, which is the most celebrated of fragrances, does not reach the musk deer that carries it in a pouch under its belly, likewise, it holds true about Kashmiri Shawl weaver. Nowadays, rural areas are mostly the hub centres of Kashmiri shawl weaving and embroidery, with some workshops in cities, while the produced places are usually
transported to cities to be marketed, which are displayed in display centres in the cities of Kashmir and in the cities outside Kashmir which offer a large varieties, ranging from simple to the most elaborate and expensive shawls like shahtosh, while kani shawls can be bought only in antique shops, especially in large hotels.

4.7.6. Metal Work:

The use of metals in Kashmir dates back to the Neolithic period. In Burzahom, a number of metal objects like beads, and arrow-heads were found.\textsuperscript{166} Metal work of Kashmir involves the making of statues or figures, weapons, utensils and implements. "Kalhana records details of the commissioning of colossal gold, silver and bronze images of various deities during Lalitadatiya’s reign which witnessed an artistic renaissance in metal work in Kashmir."\textsuperscript{167}

As far the utensils for cooking, serving and eating food are concerned, they are made of copper, brass and bronze and in addition, silver utensils are also traditionally used to serve food and drinks. Despite inroads made by the machine made utensils, especially in stainless steel, copper is still given preference. Traditionally, Muslims utilise copper utensils which need to be plated with tin before they can be safely used. The most popular copper ware include, Lota, Samawar, Farsh Tram, Toor, Kenz, Ornamental tumblers, Teliwar, Isbandoz, Majma, Chamcha, Pallanor, Batichalan, Bowls, Plates, Surahis (long necked flasks), Aftabe, Tushtri (a utensil for washing hands) Claret Jugs, Trinket bones, Huqqa, Incense burners, and Rose-water sprinklers.

(a) Manufacturing Tools and Techniques:

The most important appliances include chisel, hammer. The metal-ware are beaten, chiselled, engraved, tinned, nielloed, showing polychromality, fluted, inlayed, raised, chased, repoussed, glided or blocked out.

\textsuperscript{166} Jaitley, \textit{op.cit.} p.184.

\textsuperscript{167} \textit{Loc.cit.}
(b) Styles and Patterns used for the Ornamentation of Metal Ware:

The metal-ware are highly stylised *rosettes, botch, pine or paisley, mehrab* (arch), *lotus, chinor leaf, cartouches, lozenges, calligraphy; animal figures, sunflower, star shaped flower, jasmine, rose, badam* (almonds). The floral rosette consists of numerous small rosettes assorted on a spirally twisted line, which sails through all across the object. Not only designs, but figures of objections are put in the shape of a *lotus, flower, leaf, fruits like the babugohsa* (soft and juicy pear of Kashmir), conveying the soft, sensual lines of the natural style or pattern and thus giving a softer, delicate, malleable effect to the metal objects. Box in the shape of a houseboat, or water pots in the shape of a duck are also some special features of the styles and patterns used for the ornamentation of metal ware.

4.8. Festivals, Rituals, Ceremonies and Customs:

Kashmir has a long tradition and a civilization as old as that of *Rome, and Jerusalem*. This state is inhabited by diverse communities, and like its diverse communities, its rituals, customs, festivals are diverse and are of both secular and religious character which provide common masses a diversion from the monotony and barrenness of the life. 168

On festive occasions, a state holiday is observed and people celebrate the festivals irrespective of which religion they belong to. Among the Muslims of Kashmir, the major festivals include, *Id-ul-Fitr*, which is celebrated after the holy month of *Ramzaan*, it is a thanks giving day to Almighty. The *Id* is celebrated with fervour and pious enthusiasm. Every Muslim both wears new or clean dress and relish a variety of dishes. Another big occasion for Muslims of Kashmir is *Id-ul-Zuha*, the festival of great importance. Muslims with sound economical status sacrifice a sheep, goat, or a cow (a reminiscent of *Prophet Ibrahim*), when he sacrificed his own son Prophet *Ismail*). This meat is distributed among neighbours, friends, and relatives.

Muslims of valley also celebrate (Urs-Nabi) Prophet Muhammad's birthday also known as Id-I-Milad. Although, its celebration is considered as taboo by some Muslim scholars especially of Ahli-Hadith school of thought; still a large chunk of people visit Hazratbal shrine of Srinagar, where largest congregation is observed. On this day, Prophet Muhammad's relic is displayed in public and the whole Hazratbal Mosque remains chock full. Another big event in the life of Kashmiris is Miraj-Alam. It is celebrated on 26th of Rajab (Muslim Month). It means the Prophet Muhammad’s flight to heaven. On this day also Prophet Muhammad’s Holy relic is displayed and special prayers are held in mosques, while at home people cook special recepies. Followed by Mehraj-Alam is Shab-i-Baraat, on this night Muslims keep night vigil. People also celebrate on 26th of Ramzan, Shabi-Qadr again this night all Muslims keep night vigil.

Another festival, popular among Shia Muslims is Muharam celebrated during first week of Hijra year. They take out procession and recite verses which extol the heroic deeds of the heroes of Karbala. The mourners beat their breasts and sometimes cause serious injuries to their bodies. However, “with the spread of modern education most of the westernised Shia families have given up practice of beating their breasts.”

Other festivities which are celebrated in Kashmir include Baiskshi, or the flower festival, which falls in the month of April. The day presents a grand spectacle of colour and gaiety on the Dal Lake in Nishat Garden. Earlier, in Srinagar, a month long fair at Badamwari (the orchards of almonds) used to be held in the month of March when almond blossoms start to shoot up; visiting Badamwari was halted for some period of time, however, it has been again started from 2008.

In addition, there are many festivals that belong to the Pandit community of Kashmir also. However, with their migration it has seriously influenced the tone, rhythm, and the zeal of the celebrations of these festivities. Only a handful of Pandits who reside here are maintaining the rhythm of celebrating these festivals and even among them some prefer to visit their relatives in Jammu to celebrate these

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occasions. The chief festivals of Pandits are Shivaratri which falls on the 14th day of Phalguna (winter). It is essentially a day of fasting and prayer to appease lord Shiva. In Kashmir, Shivaratri is called Heyrath. Another important festival is Raksha Bandan, most of the Pandits climb the Shankaracharya on the hilltop, Janam Ashtami (the birthday of Lord Krishna) Diwali, Har Nawam are other festivals which are celebrated with gaiety and fervour.

In addition to above mentioned festivals, there are some festivals which are purely social and secular in nature for example, festivals which are celebrated on anniversaries of great and reputed poets of Kashmir in which tributes are paid to the memory of poets who have enriched Kashmiri language and culture. These include, Habba Khatoon Day, Rasool-Mir Day, Mehoor Day, Ahad Zargar Day, etc. The Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages plays a vital role in these celebrations. They bring all local musicians on one podium to sing the compositions of above mentioned poets, with an objective to make people acquainted of their culture and heritage.

4.8.1. Marriage Ceremonies:

Like other societies, Kashmiri society has its own rituals and ceremonies which help it to identify it as a society with a distinct culture. However, its rituals and ceremonies are not only peculiar; but also very elaborate. These elaborate customs and ceremonies have been observed, celebrated and cherished since past. Marriage is an important event in every body’s life. Sociologically, it can be defined as a “legally recognized relationship, between an adult male and female that carries certain rights and obligations.”

Forty years back, when the age of girl reached the puberty, the father of the girl would ask Manzim your (match maker) to seek a suitable match for the girl. Girls would mostly get married by the age of 18 and boys 20-21 years which is still prevalent in some rural areas. However, today with the spread of modern education both boys and girls enter
late in the wedlock. Although, the customs attached to marriage have changed to certain extent, still, it is Manzimyour who arranges the marriage and true to his nature relates highly coloured stories of magnificence and generosity of his client.\textsuperscript{172}

Today both boys and girls prefer to see each other, mostly near some shrine, (earlier, the bride would see her bride-groom on the wedding day). After both parties agree, a custom called Thap-Gandun in which grooms side come and give some gold ring to girl as a token of acceptance. After sometime, Bride’s side offer for Nishani and their house is visited by groom’s parents with people ranging from 30-40 or more. On this day Wazwaan the traditional cuisine is offered to bride’s side, with multitude of delicacies often enough to through bride’s side in bewilderment. Groom’s side bring with them thaan (consisting of golden necklace earrings and ring) to offer it to bride and some cash called (Garieachwan). On this day, a plate (Trami usually for four men) full of sumptuous receipies is send to groom’s house along with some golden ornament. In reply, to the grand and extravagant Nishani, groom’s side send Haziri usually consisting of costly suits and golden ornaments, with some cash. It is called jawab (reply) or ‘Backchahies.’

On the 4th or 7th day of Holy Ramzaan, groom’s parents or close relatives visit bride’s house with ‘Roze Kushand’ usually consisting of golden ‘pound’ and some cash with pudding. Again on the day of Id-ul-Fitr, groom’s brother or father come with some cash, and then after few days six to eight person with golden jewellery and cash visit her house again called (Idhaan), in turn, same is sent to groom’s house. Similarly, again groom’s side visit bride’s house with cash and jewel on Urs-i-Nabi with similar gifts as on other occasions.

It is to be noted that if someone at bride’s or groom’s side die then each of them send the other ‘Doukh-tul wan’ and if winter comes in between the engagement, then, groom’s side send kangri full of almonds, instead of burning coals, warm cloths, golden ornaments, cash and gadgets like heating converter, gas geysers etc. Nowadays,
the custom of sending *kangri* (which is an important symbol of Kashmiri culture) is declining. Then, comes the ‘Saathnama’ or ‘Kakud,’ it is actually the temporary date for marriage fixed by groom’s side, they visit bride’s house with some cash and golden jewellery and put the proposed date before the girl’s side. However, it is always considered to be as nominal, the real power of acceptance of date lies with the bride’s side, they either accept the same date or fix a new one.

For a week before the marriage, festivities and rejoicings are held in both groom’s and bride’s house. Invitations are issued to relatives and friends. Usually it is two days before the marriage called *Mal-e-Manziraat*, on which her hair is opened called *mas michrun*. On the next day, on *Mehndi Raat*, Henna or *Mehudi* with golden ornament is send to bride’s house, and then her hands and feet are dyed with mehndi, amidst singing and dancing. On next day, bride is washed and then she puts on *Pheran* (usually embroidered with *zari*) and then girl is usually sent to beauty parlour. Earlier, girls were decorated at home, but now visiting parlours is trendy. *Nikah-Khawni* which is important event is done either on *Mehnidiraat* or on the next day. At *Nikah Khiwani Rasin* (ceremony) 4-8 people from groom’s side are present and in which the presence of both maternal and paternal uncles is considered to be desirable. Along with them, are some witnesses and *moulvi* (priest) who is chosen by bride’s side and gets cash from groom’s side and then, *mehr* (bride price) is being paid by groom’s side as fixed.

When groom reaches bride’s house, usually he is received with all welcome, while women singing traditional *Wutvun*, which is nothing but an exaggeration of boys or girls qualities. The whole house is well decorated and streamlined and often it is a costly deal. The groom’s side is served with sumptuous meals and recepies of different varieties. After finishing the meal in which several cuisines (*Wazwaan*) are served. The bride is sent with the groom. Earlier, bridegroom would come on to the horse and palanquins called *Zapaan* would be used to carry bride to her husband’s house. The
people along with groom would carry fire-torches in their hands. However, this practice is not in vogue today. Instead, luxurious cars are used than stout horses.

The moment girl reaches her groom's house she gets a heartfelt welcome and the first custom involved is Mohr tulwan, probably it is done by the mother of groom, and gives bride some golden ornament and in turn gets a golden ornament called Hashe-e-Kaenth. Earlier, along with bride Doud Mouj would accompany her, but now it is discarded, instead bride's brother on next day comes with Kehwa Khabar with golden ornament. Earlier, bride's brother would come with Samovaar which is not in vogue now except in few rural areas. Bride, usually after her marriage resides at groom's house for seven days and again both bride and groom are invited to bride's house to enjoy epicurean 'wazwaan' it is called Phir-saal and are accompanied by 12-30 people. Earlier, during seven days, each of the close relative or friend would go to meet the bride with Nabad nout, Bakirkaani, and cash, but now, on seventh day when bride is called back to her parent's house some 50-70 people pay a visit to her with golden ornaments and cash called Maaz Harie and this way the whole long and hectic procedure of marriage is winded up.

However, this nerve-racking experience according to many experts could be out of choice or compromise linked to societal compulsions. Earlier keeping the gravity of the problem in view, government announced the dish/guest control and restricted the number of guests, but it proved a fiasco. However, now, there is a growing trend of many such organisations which mobilise the awareness of the evil effects of expensive marriages among masses and focus over simple marriages, done in an austere way without any pomp and show and according to Islamic-Shariah. Among such organisations are Humsafar Marriage Counseling Cell (HMCC) which was formed in 2005\textsuperscript{173} and Koshur Khandar solution.

\textsuperscript{173} Author's interview with Fayaz Ah. Zaroo, 8 Oct. 2007, coordinator Humsafar Marriage Counseling Cell, where he revealed that "our society has lost its moral values and ethnicity and I think 'simple marriage,' is just a step forward towards restoring lost moorings, and to set free society from the malice of costly marriage."
Like marriage, there are plenty of customs attached to child’s birth, which brings fizz in the monotonous life of a family. When the first child takes birth usually his/her maternal as well as paternal grand parents and uncles come to see the child with all sorts of sweets, bakery, cash and golden ornaments. On the third-day of child’s birth, Trai-Chai is distributed among neighbours by her/his mother’s side. On seventh day, mother is bathed and then traditional cuisine (wazwaan) is cooked this is called Sundrei Batie. It is usually done by the father’s side and then on the 40th day, the mother of a child is again bathed. She receives paiv (consisting of cash, clothing’s, bed clothes and golden ornaments) after two or three months from the birth of the child. Another important event in the child’s life is shaving his head called Zarie-Kasin, earlier people would move to shrines like Baba Reshi, Tsar, to shave the head of a child along with family, however, this practice is now vanishing.

Another important event is the event of male child’s circumcision, (Khatanal). It is done at the age of 3-4 years. Again on this day, professional cook is asked to cook varied delicacies and the child on this day gets golden ornaments, cash, confectionary and bakery from both maternal and paternal side of his family. Similarly, when the ears of girl are pierced, it is again celebrated with similar pomp and joy and sumptuous meals are cooked on this day amidst folk music and dance.

4.8.2. Death Rituals:

Like birth and marriage, there are rituals associated with the death of a person. And every one who lives among the group of people has to follow these rituals. When someone in a Kashmiri Muslim community passes away, amidst cries the corpse is washed, 174

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174. Interview with Mr. Peerzada Khalid, administrator marriage bureau, Kashur Khandar, on 22 June 2007, where he revealed that the main aim of this bureau is to level the gap between the elite and lower and middle class people, and to remove all absolute customs attached with the marriage, so as to make it more simple in nature.
wrapped in a shroud and carried to the graveyard in a coffin called *tabut*. The burial is accompanied with recitations of holy verses from the *Quran*. The mourners then pray for the peace of the departed soul and return to their homes. Usually, *Islamic Shariah* permits mourning for three days, but in Kashmir, people usually celebrate the fourth day called *Rasm-e-chaharum*. Its celebrations remain as extravagant and charming as marriage. On this day, professional cook (*waaza*) is hired so as to make a sumptuous feast. In addition, order for bakery (*Kashmiri Roti*) to serve the array of males and females who visit the mourner’s house. Usually, women with *Qurab Pheran* embellished with *tila* along with *wartaav* (gifts which include milk pockets, butter, eggs, fruits or cash) visit the house of deceased one. Guests on this day are served with *Namkeen-Chaai* (salt tea) in the copper *Samovaars* and each guest is given *Halwa* (pudding) packed in small boxes made of silver foil. Some experts believe that this ritual has got perverted and a source to show once status symbol. While, others hold that it is completely un-Islamic to celebrate this custom.

After *Rasm-e-Chaharum*, on the next Friday, all the friends and relatives of the departed gather at the grave and offer *Fatilah* or prayers. On this day, even relatives are served with varied delicacies and *Namkeen chai*. Then, on the 15th day, (*Pachiwaar*) relatives again assemble and again feast is cooked. Then again on the 40th day, people come to deceased person’s house, and on this day professional cook with his band come and cook recipes. On this day, people even call *Mullahs* (priests) for invocatory prayers and who in turn receive hefty amounts for the work done. After a complete year has passed, people again congregate in mourner’s house. At this occasion, again *Namkeen tea*, with varied meals is served. Again this day, *Mullah’s*

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175 Renowned Sociologist, Prof. Bashir Ahmad Dabla believes; rituals’ like *Rasme-e-Chahrum* is vulgarized and it is equally a matter of concern that we celebrate the death of our close ones. See, Ruheela Gul, ‘Rasm-e-Chahrum’, Greater Kashmir, 15 April 2007.

176 Prof. Naseem Rafiabadi (noted Islamic scholar) divulges that we have adopted it from Zoroastrians and is no way linked to Islam, see. Greater Kashmir, 15 April 2007, op. cit.
are called for prayers etc. Some people even distribute cooked rice called (Tehr) and Sharbat (drinks) etc. among the people, so as to solace the people.

However, there is now growing faction among Muslims, who call all these rituals as obsolete and un-Islamic. These factions have mostly emerged after Ahli-Hadit and Jammat-e-Islami movement in Kashmir, who resist any un-Islamic ritual having no linkages with Quran and Prophet Mohammad’s sayings (Hadith).

4.9. Life Style and Recreation:

From past fifty years, Kashmiri society has gone through much change and development and past few years have contributed towards a new cultural renaissance. Today people around the globe are more connected to each other than ever before in the history of humankind. Information and communication flow today is much quicker than past. Goods and services produced in one part of the globe are increasingly available in other parts of the world. International travel is more frequent and similarly communication is a common place.

It can be said that today’s Kashmir is very different in many aspects than yesterday’s Kashmir. Today’s Kashmir lives in an intensely interdependent world in which all the earth’s people with their immense differences of culture and historical experience are compressed together in an instant communication. This is an era of globalisation, like other aspects of Kashmiri culture; there has been a tremendous change in Kashmiri life style and past time experiences. Earlier, modernisation brought a change in cultural elements of Kashmir, but this process is further elaborated and accelerated by the forces of globalisation.

“The most important element of (globalisation) is the revolutionary changes in the technology of communication and travel which for the first time in human history has brought inter-cultural interactions among people to a level which a few decades ago were beyond human imagination. This has been possible through television, internet, e-mail, fax and other forms of communication and its reach to people, strengthening both market and dimensions of the inter-cultural contacts among diverse
settings of culture and civilization.” Earliermore, the pace of life was simple with abundance of leisure. Earlier people had a different life style and different techniques to get diversion from the drab monotony of everyday life. Even in ancient times both kings and common men alike would entice themselves through dancing and singing and through theatrical performances. The people would also involve in playing chess and dice, in domesticating animals and would rejoice themselves with common gossip and story telling and listening. Another popular way of recreation was the puppet shows and juggling. During medieval times, dice and chess were the popular indoor games, while Polo, Hunting was among choicest outdoor games.

The Kashmiris also derived great pleasure: sitting in their skiffs and watching their hawks strike the wild fowl or some other bird in mid-air, and fly back with the prey. They would also enjoy by gathering youth who would challenge the other sections of city youth and after fixing the place and both sides would assemble with sticks and slings, and free fight would ensue. This would usually led to broken heads and limbs, and even deaths. During medieval period, despite ban by the Sharia, music was very popular, and offered both pleasure and diversion. In fact, “Sultan Zainul Abidin initiated the practice of holding occasional concerts and musical events in the boats on the Jhelum. Some of his successors were fond of holding convivial parties with their boon companies in which wine flowed freely, and dancing girls and musicians sang and danced.” During festivals and social functions, jugglers, folk dancers and folk musicians would entertain the people. There used to be concerts and musical events. The Bands or Bhagats gave performances of open air drama portraying the city and village life in a pretty meticulous manner.

179. Ibid. pp. 392, 393, 395.
180. Ibid. p.395.
182. Loc.cit.
184. Loc.cit.
However, with the changing times, there seems a paradigm shift in the life style of Kashmiris and this change is visible in the recreational and entertainment activities of Kashmiris. Today, Kashmiri society is entering into a digital life style. Satellite televisions remain a major source of entertainment for all age groups in Kashmir and it holds more true in the urban localities of the valley. The thrashing of Hollywood films, along with bollywood erotic films and myriad television serials all are influencing the socio-psychological behaviour of the people of valley and youth remains most affected. Today, media has influenced almost every element of Kashmiri society. People today are exposed to channels like Starmovies, HBO, MTV, Starworld, which are even available in the back water zones of Kashmir, and is steadily influencing them towards Western ways of thinking and living. On the other hand, like Hollywood films and serials, Indian Cinema and serials are also influencing the behaviour of the people in valley alike. In contrast to earlier television shows, the serials of today openly discuss the marital, pre-marital and extra-marital relationships. They have direct influence on the psyche of individuals.186

Apart from entertainment, the people’s mind set up towards their health is also changing. Kashmiri people whenever face any physical or mental ailment rush to the medical specialists than moving to the quacks traditional Hakims, whose credibility is getting less with each passing day. The treatment given by the quacks was very cumbersome and mostly unscientific. For instance, in order to remove infected blood; was taken out by applying leeches on the patient’s body particularly, on Novroz, (the Iranian New Year day) as it was considered auspicious and was thought to stand in good stead against diseases for the rest of the year. Today, with the advancement in medical sciences, and due to spread of modern education such ill practices are gone.

In Kashmiri society, few decades back there was no craze about maintaining once figure and turning to be calorie conscious, however, now one can find a pool of gyms in and around the city, where youth are thronging blindly. Salman Khan, Ihon Abraham, Hritik-Roshan, Arnold

Schwaznagger, all of whom are muscle freaks are twinkling as role models in the eyes of Kashmiri youth. Going gyms has not only become trendy nowadays, but also favourite past time of youth. On the other hand, Kashmiri girls, especially those living in urban areas are becoming figure conscious and are carefully watching what they eat. Most of the experts believe this as a direct outcome of satellite television, foreign magazines and western style advertisement. However, this trend of becoming health conscious is taken as a welcome sign, not only girls but more and more elderly women are following this trend.

Today, most of the urban youngsters also prefer cafes, fast-food joints and pool halls to hang out in during the evenings. Despite over priced menus in these cafes; they always remain jam packed amidst pictures of Hollywood stars and western music. It could be seen that due to the expansion of tele-communication networks, people’s additional exposure to entertainment and information through mass-media, particularly through cable televisions have brought a shift in people’s taste and temperament and have also accelerated the incidence of acceptability of inter-regional and international items in areas of food, beverages, dress patterns and obviously music (most common of which is Punjabi Pop, and western Pop music). In other words it can be said that expansions of road networks and communication has brought about homogenisation in tastes and consumption patterns both at regional as well as at global level in Kashmir.

Another mode of communication and entertainment today is use of Internet. From past few years, there has been a boon of internet parlours in Kashmir. In addition, various cell phone services are also providing internet through cell phones at meagre costs. There are a growing number of people in Kashmir, although still confined to well to do families, who prefer to surf through Internet, than to involve in common gossip. In other words, it is leading to a growing trend of ‘virtual localities’ and

'virtual neighbourhoods', which goes hand in hand with the erosion of real-time and real-space bonds of communitarianism.

At present, in Kashmiri society, we find that rapid Modernisation, Urbanisation which has been further accelerated by the processes of globalisation has influenced the family, neighbourhood, and interpersonal relationship in a destabilising manner. Today due to exposure to "dehumanising and retrogressive cultural products," in the form of entertainment and consumerism, there is growing incidence of moral deviance, in the form pornography, mobile misuse and in the form of pre-material affairs. With the coming of cell phones, people have benefited to a larger extent, but, on the other hand, it has its darker side of which youth seems to be more vulnerable than the rest of the population. Due to cellular phones, the value of privacy has gained a further space and due to this fact, it is also affecting the parental control over their children.

Most of the parents in valley feel concerned that due to modern technological devices, toilet humour like adult jokes are being exchanged and exchange of porno especially among youth is common by using bluetooth, MMS (multi-media messaging), and through GPRS (General package Radio Services) and other latest technology which is affecting the moral standards of the society. Western values and practices have also been adopted by youth in interpersonal relationships. The practice of dating and acceptance of new values regarding sexual relationship and marriage are now more common. Today, pre-material relationships are very common among Kashmiri youth and celebrations of Valentine’s Day, friendship day are also earning fame. Youth especially exchange cards and friendship bands on this day.

As far family in Kashmir is concerned which is a “group defined by a sex relationship sufficiently precise and enduring to provide for the procreations and upbringing of children.” is still a strong institution in Kashmiri society. However, joint family is steadily giving way to the nuclear type of family. This phenomenon is more common in the urban

areas than the rural areas of Kashmir. The reason emerges clearly that the value of collectivity is taken by the value of individuality. Today people are more concerned about their own selves and more about their family of procreation than the family of orientation. Similarly, people in valley are entering late into the wed-lock. There are numerous reasons for this. Most of the boys and girls are seeking higher education or looking for government jobs together and eventually cross the marital age. Besides, growing materialistic approach has also aggravated this problem. It has led to so many social-psychological problems. Marrying at early age, which used to be a norm, has ceased to exist. Today, a large number of highly qualified men and women are waiting for an eligible partner. However, while contracting the marriages the caste is still given due consideration and it is more conspicuous among the upper castes of the valley. It is believed by some experts that they have pulverized the social fabric of Kashmiri society by ossifying the caste systems. Since, claiming to are the descendants of saints and having a rich pedigree they would hardly marry their children outside their caste and usually it takes a full fledged revolt on part of a girl or boy to marry outside his/her caste followed by the social boycott and persecutions. In contemporary times, not only has the institution of family and marriage been affected, but, how one would be married is also changing. The earlier traditional ways of getting married is now changing. Today, e-marriages are catching up with valleyites. Nowadays, some nuptial knots are tied in internet cafes through video and voice chats. Although, it has not been yet as trendy, still some families particularly from good economic and educational background are taking up the help of World Wide Web to get their children a suitable match, in this way, breaking the traditional rules of match making through middleman or matchmakers.

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193. Experts like Prof. Bashir Ahmad Dabla hold an opinion that seeking higher-education and then to look suitable job usually takes much time and meanwhile girl or boy turn over-aged for the marriage, see, Ruheela Gul, 'Delayed Marriages Taxing Consequences', Greater Kashmir, 24 June 2007. See also, Ruheela Gul, 'Aging Brides', Greater Kashmir, 23 July 2006.


4.10. Position of Women:

Empowerment of women conceptually implies processes by which women’s power of self organisation is promoted and reinforced, it is to develop her capability for self-dependence and to outcross the relationship of subordination on account of gender, social and economic status and the role in the family and society. It also includes enhancing their ability to make choices, control the resources and also to enjoy participatory relationship within family and community. Like other unique aspects of Kashmiri culture, the status and the position of the women in Kashmir have been unique because down the history till the present era of Kashmiri society, women have had experienced both good and bad days. She has experienced the fortunate as well as the vicissitudes moments of time. “At times they have risen to the pinnacles of glory distinguished themselves as rulers in their own right, as regents of major princes, as powerful queens-consort, as diplomats in peace and war, as commanders of armies, as thrifty land ladies, as builders and reformers and as preceptors of the religious lore.”\(^{196}\) And at times, they had to suffer many buffets at the hands of ill fate, during which, they were deprived of the rights and were enslaved both intellectually as well as physically.

Broadly speaking, it is believed that during early times, Kashmiri women enjoyed remarkable freedom, wielded ample power and exercised responsibility. Both men and women shared equal responsibility. Women were afforded opportunity to distinguish themselves in any sphere of social activity. As a matter of fact, it could be said that women, “had emerged from the domestic into the political stage, were free, owned landed and other immovable property, managed their own estates and even fought on the battlefield as generals and commanders at the head of troops. At least, some women attained enviable positions in the social or political life which enabled them to exercise enormous influence so that at times even kings and nobles had to bow before their stubborn resolve.”\(^{197}\) In fact, no coronation ceremony of any king would be completed unless the queen would remain absent. Like the Kings, she

\(^{196}\) P.N.Bazaz, Daughters of Vitasta, op. cit. p.2.

\(^{197}\) Ibid. p.3.
used to hold her own open levees and receive the homage of the feudatory chiefs, prominent nobles and big officers of the state. The Hindu women of higher castes were educated and even participated in philosophical debates. The ancient Kashmir produced a number of women who rose to the sky heights of success, major among the ranks are Yashovati, Sugandhadevi, Queen Dida and Kotadevi. There are other illustrations, where women of the ancient Kashmir played an admirable task of managing state and state-affairs, prominent among them stand Islhandevi, Vakpushta, Ananglekha, Srilekha, Suryamati, Jayamati, Raddhadevi, and Kalhanika.195

However, there is also another side of the coin and often a darker one. There were many agonising restrictions that traditional Hindu society had imposed upon her. A woman, according to authoritative law givers like Manu and Parashar, had an inferior position than a man, more often she was equivalent to that of Shudra irrespective of her law. The girls of the poorer classes and low castes could never visit the schools. The iniquitous laws like burning of widow (sati-pratha), child marriage and ban on widow marriage where some of the savage practices which had reduced the status of women quite low.199

However, when Islam reached the valley in the 14th century, it conferred many blessings to the women-folk in Kashmir. Kings like Akbar had abolished sati-pratha. Remarriage of widows was introduced, women were given the right of separation and divorce, and right to inherit a moiety of ancestral property which she was denied earlier, were given to her under Islamic shariat. Many noted female scholars and poets like, Lalad, Arnimal, Habba-Khatoon and Farzi emerged during this period. Nevertheless, the exploitation continued in one way or the other. It is believed that most of women were confined to house-hold activities, many under the influence of religious (Islamic) zealots denied them the right to education, and freedom to move in and out of their houses. In addition, women became the victim of humiliation and witnessed its peak during the rule of Afghans (1752-1819 A.D.).200

198. Ibid.
199. Ibid.pp.3, 4, 10, 11.
200. Ibid.p.16.
As time proceeded, the Kashmiri women who had sunk to a low level of destitution and ignorance started emerging up from the oblivion again. The new wave of western ideas which slowly but steadily advanced in the wake of British domination also influenced the Kashmiri society. The vast administrative, educational and economic reforms that were introduced by the Britisher's also helped the Kashmiri women. Especially, providing education to women to empower her was one of the dominant tools to reform her position and status. It precluded with the establishment of Presentation Convent school in Srinagar, in March 1936, by some nuns of Catholic Church. In addition, women like Begum Abdullah (wife of Sheikh Abdullah) who was popularly known as Madar-i-Mehrban (kind mother), took immense pains to persuade Kashmiris to send their girls to the schools and also encouraged them to get the higher education. The new laws with reference to Kashmiri women which were framed to protect her interests and rights, after, 1947, helped in her empowerment.

Today we find that in Kashmiri society the progress of women has accelerated. They have become highly self conscious of their discriminations in several areas of family and public life. In terms of education, women are now outnumbering their male counterparts. Today in Kashmir, out of 12000 schools in valley 5000 schools are alone meant for women,\(^\text{201}\) which is an encouraging step. It has given them a good opportunity for economic independence, prestige and better mate selection. Similarly in other aspects of life, she is realising her potential and also contesting for her identity both in and outside her home.

However, there are some worrisome elements still prevalent in Kashmir. Still discrimination based on gender is prevalent in Kashmir. A recent research conducted by Prof Basher Ahmad Dabla, revealed some surprised facts: 63% of women respondents revealed that they were discriminated within their own families. The areas of discrimination included clothes, gifts, diet/food, ownership, decision making, property, social treatment and employment. 39.08% of the working women’s in-

laws families appreciated the working role of their women, but 31% families partly appreciated and partly condemned it. The practice of wife beating was going on in 31.84% respondent's family. The practice was carried on by their husbands as well as in-laws. 39.49% of women faced torture and harassment at the hands of their in-laws and the major reasons include demand for dowry, dislike for women's career, to grab salary of working women, not giving birth to a male child. Similarly, 22.2% concerned women faced the threat of divorce, of which 4.55% women were then actually divorced. 89.50% of the women were not ready to tolerate domestic violence against them.

The above mentioned facts clearly reflect the discrepancy in the ideology and practice of the egalitarian policy for women in Kashmiri society and it also reflects the socio-economic and cultural backwardness of Kashmiri society. Since, the empowerment of women in a society is most effective index of measuring modernization and development, and Kashmiri society has still long distance to traverse to attain this goal.

While concluding, it could be said that since past, Kashmiri society has changed to a considerable extent and globalization process has added to its speed. Today, people are by and large more materialistic, and individualistic in nature. Life in Kashmir is becoming faster than ever; with little time for leisure. They have adopted different modes of entertainment that were hardly prevalent in traditional Kashmiri society. Today Kashmiri culture has experienced change in every mode and aspect. Today's Kashmir is quite contrary to what George Foster in 1783 observed. As he writes, "The Kashmirians are gay and lovely people, with strong propensities to pleasure. None are more eager in pursuit of wealth, have more inventive facilities in acquiring it, or who devise more modes of luxurious expense, when a Kashmiri even of the lowest order finds himself in the possession of ten shillings, he loses no time in assembling his party, and launching into the lake, solaces himself till the last farthing is spent."^203

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