CHAPTER - I

INTRODUCTION :

The Jammu and Kashmir State, comprising of Kashmir Valley, Jammu region and Ladakh, is the home of Indo-Aryan and Mangoloide races. Economic as well as politico-cultural relations with India, Central Asia and Tibet has stimulated migration of varied cultural and ethnic groups to permanently settle in different regions of the state\(^1\). Hence many communities with diverse cultural practices, religion, social systems, folklore and value orientations form the mosaic of the state's diversity. Despite being a part of Tibetan plateau and inheritor of its lamaist-monastic tradition, Ladakh, in most of its history has remained a sovereign kingdom. Also known as Maryul and Khachanpa, its typical Tibetan Mahayana Tantrayana tradition earned it the name of little Tibet.

Ladakh is bounded by China in the south, in the east by Tibet, in the west by Baltistan and in the north by Kashmir Valley. Before the cease-fire between India and Pakistan in 1949, Ladakh comprised of three Tehsils of Leh, Kargil and Skurdoo embracing a deserted bald area of 97000 sq. km. Pakistan's encroachment from the Kargil side and Chinese from Skurdoo reduced the area to about 59000 sq. km. With a total population of 232864 which is one of the lowest densities in the world\(^2\).

In Ladakh tribals and ethnic groups of varied racial stocks are thinly dispersed like Changpa, Mon, Balti, Drokpa or Dukpa. Contemporary Ladakhi society is a synthesis of diverse cultures, markedly manifested in physiognomy on one hand and cultural syncritization on the other Ladakhi personality and character is a blending of Mon, Dard and Tibetan racial stocks. Dard is a fair complexioned community of Aryan racial stock, quite easily recognized in the mongoloide sea of Ladakh by virtue of their height, physique and sharp features. Dard tribes under varied historical circumstances have migrated from Chilas Gilgit to this part of state and both groups claim descent to the Dards of

---

\(^1\) See the list appended to the Chapter for reference

\(^2\) See the list appended to the Chapter for reference
Chilas Gilgit. The philology and archeological evidence indicate that the migration might have taken place much earlier than 17th century as claimed by many historians. Almost all the travellers have been fascinated by their unique physiognomy, typical cultural practices and Taboos. One of the tribes settled in Drass Valley on the left bank of Drass river on somewhat an open Valley. The other tribe moved up the gorges around Indus river. The people are popularly known as Brokpa or Drokpa. In fact it is a nickname meaning high landers or ‘men of pastures’ connoting actually ‘rough’ and uncivilized. However the Budhist Dards call Muslim Dards as Brokpa and themselves label as Drokpa. The Budhist Dards are settled exclusively in the small settlements of Dah, Hanu, Garkoon, Darchik and Batalik.

The group settled in Drass Valley, after their conversion to Islam have lost most of their ancient culture, custom, religion and folklore. On the contrary, the group, settled around Indus-gorges although converted to Buddhism have been successful in preserving most of their cultural traits, social system and many a typical behaviour patterns, earning for them a name of being the ‘purest of Aryan races’. However Jammu and Kashmir constitution schedule tribes order 1989 has grouped Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard and Shin under the single category of schedule tribe. Buddhist Dards number in census reports and encyclopedia profiles has been placed at a dewindling figure of (2500) and of Muslim Dards at 7000 for special treatment as a scheduled tribe.

The Muslim Dards of Drass are subgrouped into Sunni, Shia and Nurbakshi sects while as Budhist Dards belong to red Dukpa sect; their Lamas wear red dress (rather maroon) pay special reverence to ‘holy dorje vajra’ or thunderbolt and come under the canopy of Tibetan version of Mahayara Tantrayana Budhist tradition.

Although converted to Buddhism, Dards of Dah have rather diluted their ancient animistic Bon practices and retained most of their ritual, folklore and taboo. Besides racial affinity, both communities share a common language known as Shina, spoken in both of the communities with a marked difference
in accent, dialect and vocabulary. The Shina spoken by Muslim Dards is more polished than Buddhist Shina. There is a rich research field open to linguists to investigate. As concepts of 'primitive isolate' have long vanished and reduced to the optical illusions created by theoretical bias of early anthropologist. These so called primitive isolates including Dards of Ladakh have long been connected to main social fabric. Dards have been influenced by two kinds of changes; one is the regular process of contact with neighbouring communities characterised by general historical influence; the other is more aggressive, deliberate and induced type associated with acculturation in general and modernization in specific forms. It is realized that modernization as a process of transformation does not always have disastrous effects. More often it leads to modifications in traditional system without replacing it altogether. Acculturation and its consequent changes can be termed as orthogenetic. Where borrower and lender, dominating as well as dominated have been both traditional in content and form. The modernization, on the other hand, in its strict sense, with its allied subcultures and peculiar ethos and behaviour patterns can be dated back to the advent of British, and independence in 1947. The date is marked by increase in communication and contact, presence of army and its allied infrastructure, decentralized administration with planning and development projects, political participation and above all mass modern education.

NEED OF THE STUDY:

The ramification of modernization in both Dard communities have been significantly different. Being ethnically similar and ecologically alike the difference is ascribed to the difference in religious variable. Religion is one of the important institutions in so called closed as well as open societies. As part of a larger system it (religion) effects and is being effected continuously. No doubt religion is losing its social significance and prominence, but despite secularization and differentiation it (religion) through rationalization and compartmentalization, with its validating and identity functions, is playing and will continue to play a significant role in providing motivational force to social action. Therefore, there is a need to understand the religious make-up and value orientation of a traditional community in transition.
Secondly, both communities are still structurally simple and culturally homogenous that these can be directly observed as wholes; and lastly that transformation is at the takeoff stage, therefore, to be studied sooner or never.\textsuperscript{8} The focus of inquiry are two Dard villages Kharboo (Muslim) and Dah (Budhist) and their attitude towards modernization. The explanation for their varied responses are sought in the manner in which each community values the attitude object (modernization) and expects the desired consequences while responding to the stimuli.

Modernization has been a prominent theme of investigation for social scientists for, it is one of the areas of social sciences where in a powerful interdisciplinary thrust has been made. Its impact on traditional social fabric in general and on human behaviour in particular has made modernism as the most favourite subject of social research. Same applies to the attitude construct, which although being a psychological disposition has been regularly dealt with by sociologists, economists and political scientists alike for varied hypothetical and theoretical purposes. The study is an effort to ascertain the correlation if any, of religion and attitude. This pattern is to be studied among different age, sex and mobility majors. The studies in modernization / conservative context, usually have a ‘before’ and ‘after’. In absence of such specific studies in this isolated part of the country, resulting in dearth of background theoretical material on which to develop hypothesis, the study is expected to provide a ‘Zero point’ for further research. While there have been many studies concerning other communities of Jammu and Kashmir, there is almost no specific study available, postulating religion as an independent variable viz-à-viz modernization. As Dube has observed that our need for facts is so great that almost any type of study; descriptive or problem oriented should be a welcome, implying that there are a few studies.\textsuperscript{9} What Dube holds for village studies can aptly be said about tribal and community research related to Jammu and Kashmir State.

The study is a humble effort to investigate the ethical codes of two communities an important component of evaluation process for right and wrong which for generations together has denied the Buddhist Dards the
nutritional ingredients of food like milk, curd, ghee, butter obtained from cow, and egg and fowl which probably accounts for their extreme sterility in addition to chronic inbreeding through endogamy, polyandry and polygeny. This aspect is unexplored and demands socio-medical research, likewise polygamy, resistance to birth control measures in Muslim Dards results in increasing numbers, therefore a squeeze on already exhausted land resources. Which again, lead to migration for new job opportunities, differentiation, trade and education.

No doubt religious behaviour and attitudes have been fascinating concepts in sociology and psycho-social investigations with regard to desired social changes, but such comparative studies have almost been neglected in Jammu and Kashmir State. Whatever we find are passing references particularly in the field of sociology of religion. Rest pertains to history, economics, politics, travel, ethnography, geography, and fine arts in general. The study is an effort to open new areas of investigation.

Finally, the findings, besides establishing a relationship between religion and social action, might provide us with some interesting inquires regarding processes like acculturation, assimilation, syncritization and development which might prove helpful in the inter-cultural and inter-religious understanding. Dard people have never been completely beyond the pale of influences as myth of isolation has long been rejected and had no relevance to Dards of Drass and Dards of Dah. Both are located on the famous silk route. The geographical variable determining degrees of mobility and contact, has a strong relevance to acculturation and modernization with its strong feedback. The variable finds a place in present study, but religious variable giving meaning to one's own world, is the main focus of inquiry.

Dards are the most backward community of Jammu and Kashmir State. Many opinions are floated to ascertain various factors responsible for their resistance to adopt new forms of behaviour patterns and change. The opinions vary from geographical isolation, lowest population density, regional imbalances, to the state discrimination towards the welfare of the people. But
unfortunately these opinions have been either politically motivated or economically titled, missing an important element in the process of social development i.e. the structure and function of the value system. The value system of both communities has passed through two different processes of acculturation before facing the modernization. The Muslim Dards have gone through revitalization, by conversion to Islam, wherein the whole setup of cultural milieu was replaced. The change in this case was sudden and complete. The revitalization reorganised the society along with its value system within a single generation. Contrary to Muslim Dards the Dards of Dah opted for syncritization instead of revitalization, insulating their old Bon practices on the one hand, and blending new forms of Buddhism on the other, resulting in the reformulation of a new system. The syncritization lead to spontaneous reformulation of borrowed as well as indigenous cultural traits to suit a new pattern. Both communities therefore, developed quite separate micro-macro structure and tradition. Consequently there is a variation in psycho-social make up which gives driving force to socio-cultural responses. The study tries to arrive at logical conclusions as to ascertain the association of these varied patterns. Despite its antithetical role wherein religion has blocked the path of progress and change and adopted retrogressive attitude, the most enduring and powerful influence of religion and formulated value system lies in the sphere of ethics; the validating mechanism of right and wrong, which makes religious devotion as the ultimate motive force of social activity. Bypassing the evolutionary and metaphysical debate about religion, the study is an attempt to highlight the religion's driving force, pushing and pulling adherents towards formulating and reformulating new identities and new responses.

The study is a record of people, sharing common racial, linguistic historical and ecological settings with a difference in value system only. For both Dard communities, religion is of a great literate tradition with well developed concept of ethics and well defined theories of merit and sin. Modernization on the other hand is treated in its specific context as a historical than a universal evolutionary reality, implying that the modernization in the socio-cultural tradition of Dards might not be identical to or replica of changes taking place in other small communities or regions of the country. On the
contrary in its essential attributes, modernization implies an exposure to new behaviour patterns. The problem thus formulated is stated as:

"Significance of Religious Precepts in Attitude Formulation of Muslim and Buddhist Dards of Ladakh"
- A comparative study.

The study does not explain the changes in religion itself, but considers religion, with three dimensions: faith dimension, ritual dimension, and consequential dimension, as one of the main factors of causation in attitude formulation, working as a barrier or initiator of change. Therefore, the study presents religion as an independent variable or at least places it at a higher level of causation more effecting than effected.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS:

- For the present investigation religion is defined as 'an organized body of knowledge that possess a system of beliefs, rituals and expects some activities from its adherents.'

- Modernization: A process of change where by historically evolved institutions are adopted to rapidly changing functions; an attitude of mind that tends to subordinate the traditional to modern.

- Precept: Code, embodying values and norms, to check, to guide and to control human conduct vis-à-vis God and fellow beings.

- Value: A construct emerging from collective experience of the group which defines what is considered desirable.

- Norm: Rule of behaviour specific to a given situation.

- Attitude: A psychological disposition, readiness to respond to certain stimuli caused by some object, person or a situation.

- Impact: It is operationally defined as 'the observed implications on certain aspect of individual behaviour and social life.'

- House Hold: House of person or a group of persons, male or female living under the same roof and sharing a common hearth.
The purpose and the main objectives of the study are thus spelled out as:

1. To give a comprehensive overview of the religion and religious practices of Muslim and Buddhist Dards;
2. To identify the comparative religious prescriptions and proscriptions acting as the barriers to or initiators of modernization;
3. To ascertain the attitude of Muslim and Buddhist Dards towards modernization;
4. To give a detailed account of the impact of modernization in the areas of marriage, family, women's status and health and hygiene.

HYPOTHESIS:
The study aims to test the following hypothesis:

1. The attitude scores of Buddhist Dards with regard to modernization will be normally distributed;
2. The attitude scores of Muslim Dards with regard to modernization will be normally distributed;
3. There will be significant difference between Buddhist and Muslim Dards with regard to their attitude towards modernization;
4. There will be significant difference between highly religious Buddhist Dards and highly religious Muslim Dards with regard to their attitude towards modernization.
5. There will be significant difference between attitude and overt behaviour.

The study contains seven chapters strictly designed in accordance with the objectives laid down in the synopsis. The first chapter is the introduction of the research of problem. The second chapter deals with methodology and research design; contains characteristics of the universe, sampling, research tools and the measuring scales; one to measure religiosity and the other to evaluate attitude towards modernization. The third chapter is a survey of related literature composed of the most relevant historico-cultural studies, religio-social studies and the studies depicting psychology of attitudes and
dynamics of modernization. The fourth chapter gives a comprehensive overview of the religious beliefs and practices of Muslim and Budhist Dard communities, highlighting the elements acting as barriers or initiators of change. The fifth chapter deals with research findings in two parts. The first part is a record of responses of the sample subjects with regard to religiosity and the second part presents responses of sample subjects with regard to modernization. The data is statistically treated and interpreted simultaneously. vis-a-vis set hypothesis. The sixth chapter is a discussion of the impact of modernization in the areas of marriage, family women's status and health and hygiene in two communities. Seventh chapter is the conclusions drawn in the light of research findings and contains suggestions for further research.

Since the universe from where the two samples of the study are drawn, is arbitrarily selected, hence precautions are to be taken while generalizing beyond Muslim and Budhist Dard groups. Same is recommended for the application of labels designed to depict modernization extent or religiosity extent like 'modern', 'moderate', 'conservative' or 'high religiosity', 'low religiosity, specifically formulated on the basis of scoring on modernization and religiosity scales. Generalization if any, are to be made pertaining to Muslim and Budhist Dard communities only.
References:


2. Census Report of India, provisional population totals, papers 1,2,3. 2001


