castes with population figures in the State (Jammu & Kashmir) are: Watals (169), Saryara (13,327), Ratal (1,913), Meg (3,00980), Jolaha (467), Gardi (3,268), Doom (1,59,908), Dhyar (7,566), Chura (3,855), Chamar (1,87,277), Batwal (39,385), Basith (18,866), Barwala (27,982) & generic castes (5,192).12

Moreover, the list of backward classes notified by Government of India shows following backward classes in the State:


Religion-wise distribution of population in the State changes position of religious communities. The population of region Kashmir (in 2001) was 5,476,970, out of which Muslims comprised 97.16%, Hindus – 1.84%, Sikhs – 0.88% and others – 0.11% of the total population of the region. The population of Jammu region was 4,430,191, out of which Hindus comprise 65.23%, Muslims – 30.69% and Sikhs 3.57%. The population of Ladakh region was 236,539, out of which Buddhists constitute 45.87% and Muslims 47.40% and Hindus 6.22%, respectively.14

3.4 Language and Culture:

Religious communities in Jammu and Kashmir State can be re-grouped on the basis of language. Languages spoken in the State are: Kashmiri, Dogri, Urdu (official), Hindi, Pahari, Gogri, Balti, Ladakhi etc.15

Kashmiri, a language of Indo-Aryan group, is widely spoken from Kashmir Valley to district Doda of Jammu region and a few people speak it in Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu.16 It is interesting to note that in Valley of Kashmir all the religious communities speak Kashmiri; that is why Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus) are culturally more close to Kashmiri Muslims than their Hindu counterparts in Jammu region because they share same language and dress pattern as other Kashmiris.17
“From Jammu stretching east along the plains of Punjab the people are Dogras – whether they be Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, whether high-born Rajputs or low-born menials and have certain National characteristics for example, a common dialectic differentiates them from any other people”\textsuperscript{18}. Most of the Dogri speaking people are by faith Hindus and are culturally more close to other Hindus in northern India\textsuperscript{19}. Pahari speaking people are mostly concentrated in Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu region. As compared to non-Muslim Paharis, the number of pahari Muslims is more. They represent a distinct linguistic and cultural identity. Though the people of this area have religious ties with Kashmiri Muslims, culturally they are closer to Muslim Punjabis living now in Pakistan administered area of Kashmir\textsuperscript{20}.

Gogri is spoken by Gujjars who are tribal people. They are spread all over the Valley and Jammu region. Gujjars are ethno-linguistically close to Muslim Punjabis lying towards South and West of the State\textsuperscript{21}. Balti speaking linguistic community is mainly concentrated in the Kargil and its adjacent areas of Ladakh region. Ethno-linguistically Baltis are nearer to people in Baltistan (now in Pakistan). Ladakhi is a Tibetan language group and majority of people belonging to this linguistic category are found in Leh district of Ladakh region\textsuperscript{22}.

Kashmiri culture is a mosaic of different cultural traits contributed by different people who have come to Kashmir and made it as their homeland. Various groups belonging to different religions, tribes, races and speaking different languages contributed in the development of pluralistic culture in Kashmir. The character of Kashmiri culture is synthetic and multi-coloured like colours in a Kashmiri carpet with wrap of the culture of Kashmir Valley, the Dogra woof and Ladakhi design. Kashmiri culture has flown through the ages like the river Jhelum incorporating in it with open heart, the waters of all tributaries\textsuperscript{23}.

3.5 Economy:

Jammu and Kashmir's economy is mostly dependent on farming, animal husbandry and tourism. Agriculture is the mainstay of the State’s economy as about 80 percent of the population depends on it \textsuperscript{24}. The Kashmir Valley is known for its sericulture, cold water fisheries as well as agricultural produce like apples, pears and many temperate fruits as well as nuts. In Valley, rice, corn and saffron are the main crops while
Jammu province is known for wheat cultivation. Kashmiri saffron is also very famous and brings the State a handsome amount of foreign exchange. Agricultural exports from Jammu and Kashmir include apples, barley, cherries, corn, millet, oranges, rice, peaches, pears, saffron, sorghum, vegetables, and wheat, while manufactured exports include handicrafts, rugs, and shawls. The region of Jammu is known for its horticulture industry.

Of the natural resources of Kashmir, forests need the special mention. The finest quality of timber available from the forests particularly the Deodar has been for long its major export.

Before insurgency intensified in 1989, tourism formed an important part of the Kashmiri economy. The tourism industry accounts approximately 10 percent of State’s income. Moreover, tourism generates considerable employment opportunities ranging from hoteliers, houseboat owners, guides, local artisans to coolies, horsemen and other workers.

3.6 History:

Kashmir has a rich and long history. It has the distinction of being the only State of India, which possesses uninterrupted written records of its history. Kalhan’s Rajatarangini provides historical information of Kashmir from ancient period to the time of author (12th Century). Historians have referred the period as that of Hindu and Buddhist rulers. Ancient history of Kashmir was dominated by the Hindu religion. Reaction against Hindu religion started when famous Mauryan emperor Ashoka introduced Buddhism to Kashmir in the third century B.C., which was later strengthened by Kanishka, Kushan dynasty ruler. However, under Kanishka’s successors, Buddhism in Kashmir started declining. Huns who got the control of the Valley in early sixth century (A.D.) also favoured Brahmanism. After Hun’s, Kashmir came under the rule of Ujjain based ruler, king Harsha. After the death of king Harsha, Valley had its own rulers.

Muslim rule in Kashmir started in 1320 when a non-Muslim- Rainchana converted to Islam. He ruled there for a brief period of three years (1320-23 A.D). Uninterrupted rule of Muslims in Kashmir was established by Mir Shah who dethroned (in 1339

Sikander was another prominent Sultan of Kashmir who became the Sultan of Kashmir in 1394 A.D. after fifty-five reign of Shahmiri dynasty. He founded the town of Sikandarpur (now-Nowhata) in Srinagar and built a magnificent palace and a grand Jamia Masjid in Srinagar. Sikander also laid the foundation of Idgah and constructed the Khanqah-i-Maula (monastery), the site where Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani had preached the faith.

Sikander was succeeded by Zain-ul-Abedin (1420-1470 A.D.), popularly known as Budshah in Kashmir. He abolished those laws that discriminated against Hindus and worked on the principle of tolerance for all religions. Budshah died on 12th May 1470 A.D. and was succeeded by his son (Haider Shah) who was defeated by Chak tribes. In this way, the period of Salatin-i-Kashmir came to an end. The chaks came from the country of Dards – lying towards the extreme north of Kashmir and were Shia Muslims. Ghazi Khan in 1554 A.D. laid the foundation of chak rule in Kashmir. Chaks were replaced by Moghal's during the rule of Yakub Khan in 1586 A.D.

Kashmir became a part of Moghal Empire on 28th June 1586 A.D. during the rule of Emperor Akbar. He built the famous road known in Kashmir as Moghal Road. Akbar appointed Ramachandra I as the governor of this Himalayan kingdom. Ramachandra I founded the city of Jammu. Akbar died in 1605 A.D and was succeeded by Jahangir who built the Shalimar Garden. After the death of Jahangir (1628 A.D.), the Moghal rule under his successors in Kashmir lasted till middle of the eighteenth century (1752 A.D.) and was replaced by Afghans in 1752 A.D. under the leadership of Ahmad Shah Durani. That period of Kashmir history was known as the period of Shahan-i-Durani. Afghans ruled upon the thrown of Kashmir for about 67 years (1752 to 1819 A.D.). Afghans were succeeded by Sikh’s in 1819 when the then ruler of Punjab, Ranjit Singh with support of Kashmiri Pandit community invaded Kashmir and captured the Valley on 15th June 1819. Thus, after five centuries of Muslim rule during which nine-tenths of the population embraced Islam, Kashmir was again under
The capital city of Kashmir was renamed Srinagar. The Sikhs ruled Kashmir for 27 years (1819-1846). Their rule proved to be worse than that of their predecessors. In 1818 during Sikh attack on the city of Jammu, Ranjit Singh was impressed by Dogra Chieftain Gulab Singh and his brothers. Ranjit Singh gave Jammu to Gulab Singh in 1822 and made him a raja. He conquered Ladakh in 1834 and Baltistan in 1840. After Ranjit Singh’s death in 1841, British managed to secure the cooperation of Gulab Singh in connection with the invasion of Afghanistan. Unlike Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh offered the British his support and the use of territory.

The British defeated the Sikhs in the Battle of Subraon in the Anglo-Sikh war on 10th February 1846. The British captured Lahore and other parts of Punjab that had been under the Sikh control. Following this, the British negotiated with Gulab Singh which resulted in “The Treaty of Amritsar 1846” which was signed at Amritsar, Punjab under which Britishers sold this Himalayan State to Gulab Singh for cash payment of 7.5 million rupees and Gulab Singh was recognized as the future ruler of the State. Thus the foundation of Dogra rule was laid who ruled upon the thrown of Kashmir for about 101 years. Like Sikhs, Dogra rule could not also become popular due to their exploitative policies. Their exploitative policies and imposition of exorbitant land revenue led to deterioration in the economic condition of peasants mostly Muslims. Dogra rulers suppressed all kinds of freedom in Kashmir. Kashmiris especially Muslims were not allowed to express their grievances or demand their rights. They even were not allowed to ask for their mosques and shrines, which were in the possession of Dogras. In fact, it is this oppression and suppression of legitimate rights of Kashmiris, which led to the emergence of Muslim protest movement in Kashmir.

The Muslim protest movement was led by Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah and Sheikh Abdullah. They formed All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (AJKMC) in October 1932. The aims and objectives of the movement (AJKMC) were secular from the very beginning. Kashmiri Muslim leadership focused its attention on the problems of peasants, artisans and working class who were suppressed under the burden of oppressive taxes. However, by January 1933 Muslim leadership in Jammu & Kashmir got divided into two groups, the followers of Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah and the followers
of Sheikh Abdullah. Main reason of their difference was that Sheikh Abdullah wanted to secularize the movement in order to bring non-Muslims into party’s fold. Whereas, Yusuf Shah group wanted to run the movement on politico-religious grounds. Eventually Sheikh Abdullah changed name of the party in 1939 and consequently his party came to be known as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. After this move, some of the non-Muslims who were associated with Indian National Congress started supporting Sheikh Abdullah. This split in Muslim leadership brought the party led by sheikh Abdullah (AJKNC) close to Indian National Congress. The party led by Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah (AJKMC) after the split drifted towards Muslim League headed by Mohammad Ali Jinnah – the founder of Pakistan.

On 15th of May 1946, Sheikh Abdullah launched “Quit Kashmir Movement” and demanded that the Dogra ruler should leave Kashmir immediately. This movement led to widespread protests and agitation across the State. In order to suppress the agitation, Maharaja imposed martial law in Kashmir and arrested Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues. On 20th February, 1947, Prime Minister-Clement Attlee announced that the British empire in India would be liquidated and power would be transferred to responsible hands by a date not later than June 1948. In view of this, on June 3, 1947, Lord Mountbatten-Governor-General of India, came out with partition plan under which each State was to join either of the two dominions (India or Pakistan) keeping in view its geography and the mandate of the people. Moreover, on 18th June 1947 Mountbatten visited Srinagar in order to persuade Maharaja Hari Singh to accede to either country/ dominion after consulting his people before 15th of August 1947. Inspite of Mountbatten’s insistence, Maharaja of Kashmir remained undecided up to 15th of August 1947 with the result State of Jammu and Kashmir became a source of conflict between India and Pakistan because after the partition both countries laid their claim on the State. Thus it could be argued that before independence the roots of Kashmir problem were laid in: British sale of Jammu & Kashmir to Gulab Singh in 1846, suppressive rule of Dogras and the indecisiveness of Dogra ruler to declare his options and consequently the claim of both the newly independent countries India and Pakistan on Jammu and Kashmir.
References:

1. This includes areas retained by China and Pakistan also.
5. Ibid., p. 35.’
12. Ibid., pp. 40, 52 & 53.
13. Ibid., pp. 67-69.
20. Ibid., pp. 151-52.
30. Ibid., pp. 81-82.