

# HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES

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*Bhaskar Roy Barman*

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**PROMOTION OF FOLKLORE LITERATURE AS AN  
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*Aijaz Ahmad Khaki, Ansum Makhdoomi,*

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## ABHINAVAGUPTA'S SCRIPTURE THEORY

*BHASKAR ROY BARMAN*

Abhinavagupta has been adored by the Kashmiri scholars subsequent to him, his disciples and admirers as *Mahamahesvara*, meaning 'great devotee of Lord Shiva' or 'supreme self' in Shaivite jargon. Kashmiri tradition endorses his enormous versatility. He exemplifies the enormity of versatility in his verbalization of his philosophy in his book entitled *Shaiva-Darshan*, a commentary on the Bhagvad Gita and in his commentaries on Anandavardhan's *Dhvanayloka* and Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, thus combining in himself the flairs for philosophy, rhetoric and criticism on dramaturgy.

Before proceeding further in the discussion of Abhinavagupta and his philosophy, I shall touch in brief upon Anandavardhan's *Dhvanayloka* and Bharata's *Natya Shastra*, in as much as they have come up relevantly in the discussion and particularly because it would be unwise to leave lay readers conjecturing about what these works are about. Unless their curiosity is satisfied, the significance of this discussion won't sink in.

*Dhvanyalok*, a work authored by Anandavardhana (820-90) enunciates the philosophy of aesthetic suggestion. This work acclaimed by the modern Sanskritists as an epoch-making work in the history of Alankara (rhetoric) literature and compared with Panini's *Asgadhyayi* in grammar and Shankaracarya's commentary on the Vedanta, is, in other words, the 'dvani theory', or the theory of sound or resonance considered the soul of poetry. The theory says that the moment the poet sits down to write a poem, a resonant field of emotions is automatically created. When he reads his poem to his listener, the listener is on the same wave length as

him, which entails a sensitivity on the part of both the reader and the listener.

The *Natya Shashtra* is a Sanskrit text dealing with the performing arts, attributed to the sage Bharata. This text is dated to somewhere between 200 BCE-200 CE. It contains as many as thirty-six chapters dealing with diverse subjects including dramatic composition, the structure of a play, stage construction and so on. Considered an ancient encyclopedic treatise on the arts, this text has produced an immense influence on dance, music and literary traditions in India. Its further influence lies in the incorporation of an aesthetic Rasa theory which predicates the effect of a performance on the transportation of the members of the audience into a reality in which they experience the essence of their own consciousness and ponder, at the same time, on the spiritual and moral questions that present themselves in the performance.

While dealing with Abhinavagupta's philosophy, it is worth touching in some detail upon Utpaladeva, his predecessor who exercised considerable influence upon Abhinavagupta in the interpretation of his scripture theory on which this article focuses a good amount of its torchlight. Utpaladeva (ca. AD 900-950), one of the great teachers of the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism is famous for his philosophy and theology of the *Ishvara-pratyabhijna-karika*, a collection of verses on the recognition of the Lord and the Shivastroravali. We shall concern ourselves with the Pratyabhijna philosophy expounded by Utpaladeva in his *Ishvara-pratyabhijna-karika*.

The early life of Utpaladeva remains still obscure and we know very little about it. But what has come down to us about him is that he lived somewhere at Nowhata in Srinagar in the ninth century and rose to be a renowned mystic saint of Kashmir. From the colophons of the works of the authors contemporary with and after him we get to know that he was a Brahmin and son of Udayakara, and lived a married life. One of his disciples Lakshman Gupta was one of the preceptors of Abhinavagupta.

It was owing to his precocity, his sharp quality and his intense quest for learning that the great philosopher Siddha Somananda, famous for

his great work *Shivadrsti*, the *Pratyabhijna Shastra* (Philosophy of Recognition) took him on as his disciple. This great book, suffice it to say, galvanized Utpaladeva into writing the *Ishwara Pratyabhijna Karikas*. In this book he gives a rundown of the teachings of his guru or preceptor. It is also known as the reflection of the wisdom taught by Somananda and the Persian speaking scholars of Kashmir call it *Khird-e-kalim*, meaning, the wisdom of the sage. Centring on the *Karakas*, also called *Sutras*, of Utpaladeva there grew up a mass of literature. Owing to the immense popularity and important position of these *Karikas* the whole system of Kashmir Shaiva philosophy took on the name the *Pratyabhijna Darshana*.

Although difficult to comprehend, because it deals with an abstruse logic, Utpaladeva's *Ishwara Pratyabhijna* is considered to be a great work on this philosophy, in as much as it expatiates on practical yoga. It helps those who aspire for the highest ability to flesh out a constant awareness of Supreme Consciousness. The three means espoused in Kashmir Shaivism, to be dealt with in course of the discussion, are recognized in this philosophy also known as *Anupaya*. Abhinavagupta himself comments in his commentary upon this doctrine : 'Since there is no existence of impurity, whence can there be any erosion? It is only a change in view. Otherwise nothing has happened to Shiva. No Jeeva Bhava has been assumed by Him.'

It is really interesting and fascinating to know of how Somananda, the guru got the doctrine of 'Recognition' across to his disciple Utpaladeva in the following instancing:

Take for instance a girl and a boy who, their marriage having been fixed, do not know each other. One day it so happens that the boy and the girl meet up with each other at a fair with their friend and relatives. Both the parties invite one another and sit at empty tables close to one another in a tea-stall. The tea is ordered and placed in saucers in the table and the girl is asked to serve tea to her would-be groom. There will be no feeling of emotion in either of them. The moment tea-saucer is handed to him and she sits by him out of etiquette, a wave of the feeling of love starts running through the bodies of the boy and the girl, particularly because they are going to be married in a while. Then the girl mentally recognizes her lover.

This is the philosophy of 'Recognition' in a nutshell. Utpaladev went a step farther in explaining about this philosophy of Recognition. It is said of him that he calmed himself down into tranquility when writing down his abstruse aphorisms. These abstruse aphorisms written down in self-introspection established themselves as his philosophy. Earlier on, Gaurapada, the great preceptor of Adi Shankaracharya, had expounded on this doctrine in his *Ajatavada* in the Advaita-Vedanta philosophy.

The three means espoused in Kahmiri Shaivism are *Shambhavopaya*, *Shaktapaya* and *Anavopaya*.

*Shambhavopaya*, a unique way of yoga eliminating all mental activities, is a path in which one has to adopt the practice of completely voiding all thoughts from one's mind in preparation for acquitting the knowledge of the ultimate reality. It is also called Nirvikalpa because it voids all ideas so as to keep one's mind completely stock-still and peaceful, but not unawake. Abhinavagupta in his book *Tantrasara* names it Ichhopaya or Ichha yoga because this yoga materializes through one's strong will. In this book Abhinavagupta further abridges in lucid style the precise summary of the thirty-seven chapters of *Tantraloka*. By practising this yoga a yogin finds himself gripped by a feeling of a sudden change of the supreme energy of Shaivahood getting stronger and stronger day by day through a constant mental drill. In this way *Shambhavopaya* becomes a direct means to achieve absolute liberation.

*Shaktopaya*, a yogic practice of thought, stresses consciousness on God-consciousness. *Shaktopaya*, as a theory, is interpreted in the following way: when a seeker concentrates himself on a particular thought of consciousness independently of Pranamaya and mantras etc., he develops that consciousness and the state he has reached is called *Shaktapaya*.

The particular thought that revolves round the statements 'I am all', or 'I am Transcendental Bliss' must accord harmoniously with the awareness that the thought cherished should not be knocked out of its place by another thought. The aspiration to this state of awareness gradually makes its way to the Transcendental consciousness, then moves on from duality to unity. *Shaktopaya* does not appertain to any objective

and intellectual meditation. An expedient of very high order, it is intended for those aspirants who abandon themselves to single-minded devotion and are endowed with a sharp intellectual acumen, It is meant for those incapable of living through the Nirvikalpa yoga of *Shambavopaya*, because it is guided by the inbuilt impressions of impure *vikalpa* or thought aberrations. *Shaktapaya* is also called *Inanapoya*, because with it are associated the mental activities of meditation and, thus, it guides the aspirant to complete liberation. *Shaktopaya*, a yogic practice of thought, is interpreted as a theory in the following way: when a seeker concentrates himself on a particular thought of god-consciousness independently of Pranayama and mantras etc., he develops that consciousness and the state he has reached is called *Shaktapaya*. The particular thought that 'I am all consciousness' needs to be harmonized with the awareness that no other thought intercepts it and the person steeped in that awareness finds himself transmitted into that state of Transcendental consciousness which propels him from the duality to the unity. *Shaktopaya* does not lay itself open to intellectual meditation but steers itself, as an expedient of high order, towards those extremely devoted and possessed of intellectual acumen and particularly towards those incapable of submitting to Nirvikalpa yoga of *Shambavokalpa*, because associated with it are the deep-rooted impressions of the impure *vikalpa* or thought-aberrations.

This *Shaktopaya* also goes by another name *Jnanapaya*, linked because it is to the mental activities of meditation. It paves a way to complete liberation.

Now let us direct our attention on to the third means, that is, *Anvopaya*, the expedient that concerns itself with 'anu' a limited being.

This expedient stresses the mental effort on the part of the 'anu' at eliminating the ignorance of his true nature by concentrating all the faculties of understanding or perception on particular objective entities separated from the self which is itself to be experienced through these objective entities. Shri Purbashastra explains *Anvopaya* explicitly. A few relevant terms come up in course of dealing with *Anvopaya*.

One of the terms is 'Uchhar'. This term possesses the undertones of

an awareness during inhaling or exhaling with the consciousness of the person realizing this awareness flowing through between these two breaths in a sweet-toned collaboration. 'Karan' signifies the mental effort at tailoring and grooming the organs of the senses and action, orchestrated on one's domain of activities. 'Dhyaan' is the experiencing of one's endless nominal and phenomenal nature through recourse to an abstract meditation on one's perception.

Varna is the interminable practice built on the Dhvani (sound) that impinges on the ears when one is deep in meditation. When the seeker situates his consciousness on the heart, the navel or the space between the two eye-brows, while intoning the mantra, he is practising 'Sthaankalpanaa'. The action involved in this intonation pushes him upwards to such stage as creates in him a God-consciousness along the path called *Anyopaya*.

Now that we have dwelt in brief upon the three means, let us steer our attention back to discussing Abhinavagupta and his theory.

Abhinavagupta combined in himself the flairs for philosophy, rhetoric and criticism on dramaturgy. As we know he opened his mind out to all branches of knowledge and subjected himself to strenuous pains to learn literature (sahitya) and acquire the rigour of the art of rhetoric. His command over the art of rhetoric so enthralled Mammatta, the renowned author of *Kavya Prakash* that he refers to him as Abhinavagupta Pada, 'Pada' being the honorific title suffixed to 'Abhinavagupta', as it did Vaman, who propounds the Riti school in Indian art of rhetoric and comments on *Kavya Prakasha* or *Bala Bodhini*, that he calls him an intellectual giant and the serpent (terror) to his contemporaries.

This paper concerns itself with the scripture theory and other scriptural works. He is so versatile a genius that no single paper, however long, can cope with the versatility. He can be easily dealt with as philosopher, aesthetician, art critic, dramaturgist, tantric, sadhaka, yogin, master of performing art, metaphysician, devotee, researcher, historiographer, author, editor, commentator and what not; but all the pursuits he had devoted himself to converge on one common mission which

he defines to be non-dualism (*advayavada*). He again interprets *advaya* as fullness, harmony and integrity. Although these three terms, fullness, harmony and integrity carry different connotations a single essence, which gives us to understand that the changing universe of discourse and the fleeting variety of phenomena are but the manifestations of what can be interpreted as self-referential awareness. These three terms link themselves to the exploration of the real identity associated with the phenomena and the ultimate unitary essence and perceived through the efficacy of the inherent agency of the Reality. As a sequel this unified essence always stays contented with remaining enriched with its grand ideas. This unified essence gives a summing-up of his personality which manifests itself as a living cognizance of his vision and his constantly unfolding personal identity and his enigmatic multi-dimensional personality as well. The way he analogizes and analyses a *puruuu* (person) is adopted in the Indian parlance to breathe an element of wholeness into the idea postulated. Abhinavagupta is likened to Kavy-Puruia or veda-puruia as being a *prajna puruia*, as he fuses in himself the essential features of Saraswati and Nataraja. The notion that clings about *prjna puruuu* typifies a visualization of knowledge as a whole through the adaptation of an integrated approach to knowledge. Abhinavagupta's personality is fed by the ideas of an encyclopedic thinker who presents himself as a nodal point on which converge all streams of Indological studies.

We read of Abhinavagupta as the metaphysical thinker par excellence of the Kashmir Shaivism that encompasses all the offshoots of the Shiva-Shakti speculation which stands interpreted as a consortium of all monistic strands of thought centred on the Shiva—Shakti combine. This consortium enshrines as the main strands the *Pratyabhijna* and the Trika schools of thought and it is Abhinavagupta who has imbued both the strands with his metaphysical thought. Under the second strand or segment in the realm of the *Pratyabhijna* are, written by Abhinavagupta, *Ishwarapratyajna –vimarsini* and *Ishwarapratyajna –vivcti-vimarsini*. Unfortunately, this great scholastic work running to about 1, 200 pages has not still now been critically edited as a text, nor has it been translated



into any other language. In respect of system in scholarship, this work can be compared with the glosses of Vatyasaiana, Sabara or Sakara. In the Trika System Abhinavgupta's versicular commentary, *Malini-vijaya-vartika* on *Mālinivijayottaratantra* upon which the Trika system has drawn and has set the path for in-depth scholarship has come down to us unedited and has still not been edited into any other language.

Now that I have mentioned *Malinivijayottaratantra* (published in 1922 along with the Sanskrit text, partly described as No. XXXVII in the Kashmir Series of Texts and Studies) I need to touch in brief upon this book, drawing upon the Introduction by Madhusudan Kaul so as to facilitate the reader's comprehension of Abhinavgupta's commentary. This work, as says Madhusudan Kaul, forms the basis of Abhinavgupta's *Tantraloka*. This introduction, I should like to tell the readers, picks on a few essential features to deal with and I shall limit myself to these features. The chapters discussed below, it should be noted, are characterized as Adhikars.

The third Adhikara concerns itself with the unfolding of the mantras or incantations and such Matrika devis as Maheshi, Brahmani, Kaumari, Vaishnavi, Aindri, Yamyā, Chamunda and Yogishi, who presides over the eight letter groups, as they are eight themselves. This chapter deals with *dhyana* or meditation images and the mantras or *vidyas* associated with the meditation images.

The fifth Adhikara deals with another feature encompassing, as it does, the different worlds, the different heavens and the different underworlds peopled by spirits, demons, gandharvas and gods, the Rudras domineering over them.

The sixth Adhikara that deals with the body dwells upon the five elements and their positions.

The eighth Adhikara speaks at length on ordinary worship of deities, whereas the ninth Adhikara on initiation and mandala, drawing of circle necessary for this rite. This theme is carried into the tenth Adhikara, as it discusses Abhisheka, while the eleventh Adhikara relates itself to initiation or diksha proper.

The twelfth Adhikara concerns itself with the dharanas identified



with the five tanmantras or the objects of self-impressions, whereas the thirteenth Adhikara exercises control over these elements. This Adhikara encapsulates the detailed meditation images of the elements and out of these meditation images are manifested various siddhis. By meditating on Varuna (water) one becomes ruler of water and wetness incarnate. This yogic practice brings forth fire visualized in a triangle of air and the other two elements linked to it.

The fourteenth Adhikar treats of the techniques related to the impressions of smell, taste, sight, touch and hearing and these techniques are continued into the fifteenth Adhikar.

This sixteenth Adhikara is about the dharanas concerned with the tarrva and the seventeenth Adhikara with different types of breathing and the movement of the vital air through the body.

The eighteenth Adhikara talks about the outer lingam made of clay and the inner lingam existing within the body, the nineteenth Adhikara about the Kalachakra and the twentieth about the nature of the mantras.

The last two Adhikars respectively deal with the yogic techniques appurtenant to the Moon and the Sun.

Now it is time we should return to the philosophy of Abhinavagupta. He has earned for himself a particular fame by contributing his thought and erudition to literary criticism and aesthetics. His illustrious Locana on the *Dhvanyaloka* has carved out a permanent niche not only in the history of literary criticism but also in the history of *Dhvani* school. Abhinavagupta did not rest contented by illuminating the literary criticism and aesthetics with his thought and erudition, he has established an inner cord between them, His celebrated four-volume work *Abhinavabharati* comprising around twenty thousand pages acquires an enormous value by sort of commentating on Bharata's *Natyasastra* and is considered seminal to the current insight into the Indian aesthetics. In course of talking about the *Natyasastra* that deals with dramaturgy, Abhinavagupta tries his hand at a subtle transition from dramaturgy to aesthetics under the guidance of his master Bharata himself who perceives drama as the primary art form, subordinating other art forms such as music, dance,

sculpture and architecture. It is by upholding in the Locana the role of Vyanjana being a vehicle of transmission of art experience and the immediacy of art experience conforming to poetry and drama that he rears down the screen between poetry and drama, thus making a powerful foray into the realm of fine arts.

His twelve-volume magnum opus *Tantrasastra* that runs to two thousand and five hundred pages and is regarded as an encyclopaedia of the tantric literature, ritual and praxis is said to be a commentary on *Malinivijayottara-tantra*. Abhinavagupta himself synthesizes the text dealt with in this mammoth book onto various avatars such as *Tantrasara*, *Tantrocaya* and *Tantravanadhanaka*. Though he forays into the realm of knowledge and spirituality (jnana) in his *Tantrasastra*, he endeavours to make great strides into the paths of devotion and action. Besides writing treatises aimed at paying homage to the divine, he also wrote devotional poems telling of his roots in the tradition pioneered by Bhanna Narayana and his grand teacher Utpaladeva. Ananda yoga, ananda meaning bliss, the term coined by him, is abundantly referred to in his *Malinivijaya-vartika* and other works allied to it.

It should be noted in this connexion that while the whole of Indian philosophy talks of meaning or meaning of word, the entire monistic Shaiva tradition of Kashmir treats of reality as word. Both the Indian philosophy and the monistic Shaiva tradition conceive of reality as a synthesis of the world and the meaning. But Abhinavagupta thinks of the meaning as an evolute curve of the word-principle. A good number of religious scholars opine that the meaning is a priori anticipation of what the word represents or signifies. Abhinavagupta considers word to be of a piece with pure awareness, which means that objects and images are not contingent, they synthesize themselves to concretize the pure awareness. His linguistic thesis presented here opens out a subtle inner link between the word and the meaning on one hand and the conveyance of art experience on the other and the way he treats the subject matter torchlights the encyclopaedic functioning of his intellect. In fact all the disciplines he has engaged himself upon are all built on an identical structural pattern. All the texts are

adapted to a summing-up of a systematic theory of devotion. This adaptation stands substantiated by the benedictory and concluding verses of the respective works. By marshalling such structural organization he gathers and treasures all the information relevant to the ideas, literature and practices organized into a systematic framework appurtenant to the methodology to be pursued so as to sublimate everything before it is consecrated to the divine. The next level of textual integration lies a level beneath the fundamentalism. Abhinavagupta, for example, does not mean *Tantraloka* to be studied as an individual text; he conceives of it as a compendium of *Malinivijaya-vertika*, *Tantaloka* and *Patatrisikaivarada* to be read as complimentary texts. He also insists on integrating and synthesizing the *Locana* and the *Abhinavabharati* on the one hand and the *Ishwarapratnabhijna-vimarsini* and *Voccti-vimarsjini* on the other, and, thus, by advocating the integration and synthesis of the two sets of these two sets from separate disciplines he paves the way for the integration and synthesis to be achieved at a higher and larger scale. A subsequent level of integration and synthesis is perceived in the process, at work in all major texts, in which the subject-matter of a given text is schematized. In the *Tantraloka* Abhinavagupta proceeds to subsume under the notions of *tantra-prakriya* and *kula-prakriya* all these two systems to synthesize, on the one hand, all the monistic Shaiva systems and, on the other, all the Shaiva systems of non-monistic shade. In the *Abhinavabharati* he lucidly orchestrates a logical whole of all the theories as an experience. Such experience is attendant on the realization that the self is both revealed and enjoyed.

Among all art forms Abhinavagupta ascribes the highest status to drama, because drama offers the analogical character of the Absolutic enactment of the world and the actor playing in a drama interprets a character. Shiva is portrayed as a cosmic actor and the arena as a huge dramatic stage on which He acts out a cosmic play. At the end of the drama he reverts to His own identity. The myth centring on the Absolutic descent and the return to its original being is symbolized in the dramatic art form. The actor, while acting on the stage, experiences an intuitive

self-realization consequent upon the universalizing process. The Absolute Being, though playing the dramatic role, finds Himself undergoing a beatific experience, subject to the process of universalizing the self-recognitive realization. Abhinavagupta substitutes dramatic art for ritual and praxis with a view to applying his theology to the field of tantras and philosophically rationalizing the central soteriological doctrine of the Absolutic agency the tantric praxis and ritual typically internalizes. In the Kashmir Shaivite terminology Shiva is thought of as the supreme agent (*karta*) and everything else is his agency or act (*kriya*). The world is conceived of as actualizing the powerful through its own agency. The torrent of tantric practices and rituals are the tantric articulation of the divine functionalism through which unfolds and enfolds the Godhead Himself.

There is still another route that leads us on to Shiva-Shakti unity. The overall pattern of the spiritual practices consistent with the broad tantric mythical structure is the recourse had to the sexual rituals physical or visualized in order to demonstrate the cosmogonic sexual unity of Shiva and Shakti.

Abhinavagupta's singular achievement does not rest on his originality or on the way he has broken with his past tradition; it rests on his having opened up a new vista for Indian thinking. From out of the two basic strands of Indian thought, analytical and synthetical, he chooses the latter, because the analytical strand espouses a negative approach that stems from selectivity to divide the society in the pigeonholes of language. Caste, creed and gender, thus depreciate the social value, whereas the synthetic strand nourishes itself on the affirmation of life as a value and prevents the society from being pigeonholed into different segments. Abhinavagupta's selection of the strand is buttressed by his metapsychological theory of unlocalization of time and place and his life-embracing approach emanates from the doctrine of totality and complete integration that value-structures all finite truths as human truths. This thesis points to his central belief in the possibility for the manifestation of the multitudinous modes of the ultimate reality.

Abhinavagupta utilizes the main-stream tantricism to outline power

as a central theme of the tantric myth, symbolism and practice, the entire tantric mechanism tailored to the actualization of the power. The sole direction of the cognitive activity ideologically rationalized is steered towards discovering or rediscovering the power and that of the agential activity towards actualizing this power at the level of experience.

Abhinavagupta's scripture theory is strengthened by his message that the *Bhagavadgitarthasangraha*, *Pratyabhijna* and *Iswara-pratyabhijna* characterized by unity in diversity ushers one into the spiritual awakening. This scripture theory provides a fertile ground for those researching on Abhinavagupta which will enable them to restructure and reshape a new system of Indian thought by having recourse to their comprehension of Abhinavagupta's scripture knowledge and to infringe the artificial barriers that corrode the social cohesion so as to advocate and foster the power talked about a bit earlier, the real tool for achieving agential freedom and creating the atmosphere congenial to the divination of man and the celebration of life conferred upon him by the divine.

Before concluding this article I should like to further elaborate upon Abhinavagupta's *Pratyabhijna* to bring the discussion round to Abhinavagupta's theory of scriptures.

As we all know, the Indian systems of thought are typified by a deeply interthreaded relationship of the two phenomena called philosophy and religion. The *Pratyabhijna* philosophical theology propounded by Abhinavagupta 'represents an illustrative example,' says David Peter Lawrence (hereinafter to be referred to as 'David'), in his article 'Aspects of Abhinavagupta's Theory of Scriptures for the fundamental interrelation between philosophical argumentation and religious revelation.' The importance of the *Pratyabhijna* system lies in the cosmogonic myth of Shiva exuding the universe through Shakti as his self-realization. Both Abhinavagupta and Utpaladeva link Shiva's self-recognition to a proposition of the metaphysical crux of scripture, that is supreme speech, derived from Bhatrihari, the great linguistic philosopher. Shiva, says David, 'emanates through fragmenting his speech or self-recognition, as discrete acts of linguistic judgment or apprehension...which idealistically constitute

all states of affairs experienced by all creatures.' Abhinavagupta centralizes his thought on the monistic Shaiva metaphysics of divine self-recognition and supreme speech in a variety of areas of epistemology, ontology and aesthetics.

Abhinavagupta postulates two basic definitions of scripture, each containing both innate and external-cultural aspects. The first definition interprets scripture in terms of the immanent modality of Shiva's self-recognition in human experience and the second as meaning a strong belief that does not directly advert to *Pratyabhijna* theory of recognition. This definition pairs up with *Prasiddhi*, a sense of being established. *Prasiddhi*, the essential nature of the cognizer, is a conviction that embraces the nature of verbalization, discrepancies or doubts having no place in verbalization. Because of *Prasiddhi* being free of discrepancies and doubts it is self-evident and is the omniscient Shiva.

Another meaning ascribed to *Prasiddhi* is public knowledge. Abhinavagupta enlarges upon the significance by saying that at some ancient time *Prasiddhi* aligned itself with a single individual who was omniscient by Himself. 'He is,' David states, 'Bhairava, the Supreme Lord, who is adorned with hundreds of *Prasiddhis*, which cause enjoyments and liberations; and who is the essential nature of the recognitive apprehensions (*vimarsa*) which constitute those [*prasiddhis*].' Thus *Prasiddhi* has undergone a division into various aspects and a diffusion as oral lineages and written texts, paving the way for various practices of humanity.

In the thirty-sixth chapter of the *Tantraloka* Abhinavagupta tells of how Shiva as Bhairava originally gifted the scripture to Shakti as Bhairavi and from Her it was passed round to a long succession of gods, preceptors and lineage

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## IN SEARCH OF LINGUISTIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN KASHMIRI AND KHASI LANGUAGE

*AFAQ AZIZ YATOO*

There are numerous languages across the globe, which share some common features regarding their origin, semantics, etymology, morphological structure, syntax etc. Same is the case with Kashmiri and Khasi languages. Khasi is a compound word of *kha* and *Si*. According to the traditions of Assam, *Si* is the name of a woman and *kha* means to give birth,<sup>1</sup> while in Kashmiri language, '*kha* or *kah*' means 'to dampen the land'. The word Khasi was familiar in the areas, where it was spoken till 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> According to K.P. Bhadar, Khasi tribe came from north Assam, but the scholars of that area connected their origin with Burmese.<sup>3</sup> Some scholars opined that they were offshoots of Mon-Annam family of eastern India, who were Mongoloid by race.<sup>4</sup> It is also believed that Khasis were the progeny of *Iksavaku* race of India,<sup>5</sup> who were identified as Austrolids by the anthropologists. Actually the Khasi is an amalgamation of Mongoloid and Australoid race.<sup>6</sup>

According to the *Markandey Purana* and *Mahabharata*, Khasi was a mountainous tribe, residing in the hills of Meru and Mundari, located near Saluda river. It is believed that the hill districts of Assam were mostly inhabited by Khasi tribe.<sup>7</sup> Presently 6, 157 sq. miles are occupied by these Khasi people,<sup>8</sup> whose capital city was Varanasi. The area under the Khasi tribe, was conquered by the Kosalian people before the age of Buddha.<sup>9</sup> During the invasion of Kosala, and the emergence of lord Buddha, Khasi was a powerful kingdom in Northern India.<sup>10</sup> Kosala was the seat of *Iksavaku* race since remote antiquity. In pre-Vedic times, Kosala was divided into



northern and southern parts. The south Kosala was known as Orissa and north as Oudh, while the Chhattisgarh area including Mahanadi, was its nucleus in sixth century B.C. The Khasi people were not only the residents of Kosala and Khasi, but had occupied some areas of Kashmir also.<sup>11</sup>

In *Brahatsamhita*, the Khasis were mentioned with Kulutas, Tanganas and Kashmiris, but in Varahamihira's *Brahatsamhita* (A.D 500), they were grouped with Abhisaras, Darads and Kashmiris. Ancient source of Kashmir history, the *Nilmata Purana*, grouped Khasis with Sakas, Kashmiris and Tanganas.<sup>12</sup> Von Christian Lassen mentioned in his book that the name Khasi has been used in Sanskrit literature since early times for the designation of a tribe, who were widely settled in different parts of Himalayan region.<sup>13</sup> The information provided by the *Rajatarangini*, reveals that the Khasis had inhabited the Valley lying to the south and west of Pir Panjal ranges between the middle course of Vitasta in the west and Kishtw War in the east.<sup>14</sup> *Rajatarangini* informs us that the area called Rajouri, was populated and ruled by the Khasi tribes.<sup>15</sup> The troops of the ruler of Rajouri were also Khasis. Towards the east of Rajouri, the upper valley of river Panjgouri was the seat of Khasis.<sup>16</sup>

*Rajatarangini* informs us that most parts of Kashmir were inhabited by the Khasi tribes from south to north, between the Vitasta valley.<sup>17</sup> Downwards of the Vitasta, *Varmul* (present Baramulla), Kathai and Muzafarabad (POK) was the seat of Khasi tribe.<sup>18</sup> The view is well supported by ethnologists and geographers.<sup>19</sup> The Lohara dynasty and their descendants who ruled Kashmir after Didda, were designated as Khasa.<sup>20</sup> Later on these Khasis were identified as *Khakhuas*<sup>21</sup> in Kashmir.<sup>22</sup> The Khakha chiefs of Vitasta region retained their semi-independence up to the Sikh period.<sup>23</sup> According to the census report of 1891, the population of Khakha tribe was 4, 046 among the Mohammedan hill Rajputs.<sup>24</sup> Nowadays these Khakhas are found in Boniyar area of Rajwar in tehsil Handwara and Machipora in border tehsil of Kupwara district of Kashmir.<sup>25</sup> These areas were offered to them as jagir<sup>26</sup> in 15<sup>th</sup> century by the king of Kashmir Budshah. Keeping this in view, there is no doubt



in accepting the ground reality that the maximum portion of Kashmir was occupied by the Khasi tribes. It is also mentioned in the Purans<sup>27</sup> that Kashmir was populated by the Khasi tribe through the ages. According to the *Mahabharata*, Kasmira was originally the home of various tribes like Khasa, Darda, Darva, Abhsara etc.<sup>28</sup> These tribes appear time and again in the epics and have their own historical importance.

### KASHMIRI

In pre-historical times, Kashmir was known as Satisar (the vast lake)-the lake of Sati, named after Parvati, the divine consort of lord Shiva. The *Nilmata Purana* informs us that Kashmir was occupied by the Naga tribe in ancient times. Nagas were the progeny of Kashyapa and his wife Kadru, the daughter of Daksha. According to local traditions, the name Kashmir is derived from the word Kashupa or Kashyapa-the place of Kashyapa Rishi. It too cannot be ruled out that Kashmir was named after the goddess 'Kasmira', whose worship is prescribed in the *Nilmata Purana*. *Mahabharata* (vi 10-52) says that 'Kasmir,' was actually the name of a tribe which had occupied the parts of Valley, known as Kashmir. The fact is that the word 'Kashmiri' is being used as the designation of Kashmiri people for their nationality. Their language is known as *kosher*, a derivation of the word Kashmir. However, complete explanation of Kashmir or Kashmiri is uncertain, particularly from the linguistic point of view. But it is certain that the people inhabiting Kashmir in early era, were the Nagas- an offshoot of the Australoid race. It is believed that the Nagas residing in Kashmir, were the speakers of the Austric language, but at present they speak Kashmiri-an ancient Indo-Aryan language.

### COMMON FEATURES

As already mentioned that Khasi is a mixed race, most probably Proto-

Austerloid, in spite of few Mongoloid traits.<sup>29</sup> They speak a dialect related to the Mon-khmer group of Austric language family.<sup>30</sup> Linguists have divided the Austric language family into two major groups.<sup>31</sup>

1. The Austronesian.
2. The Austro-Asiatic.

The Austronesian language family is represented by the Indonesian, the Melanesian and the Polynesian languages, while the Austroasiatic languages are Munda, Mon-Khmer, Khasi, Koul dialects, Nicobares and the Tibetan-Burman.<sup>32</sup>

In 1906, Peter w. Schmidt classified the Mundas with Indo-China languages of Austirc family, while as Prof. Kuhn has suggested it as a separate family. The Munda languages are spoken from Central India to Assam, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia. They were spread in eastern, northern and southern direction. The Hawaii Islands, the Pacific, North and Eastern Island, south New Zealand and Madagascar have retained their original language, known as Munda.<sup>33</sup> The linguists have divided the Mon-Khmer language family into five groups as Me-Kong, Mon or Talaing, Anamese- Cambodian, Palung-wa and Khasi.

The dialects of Khasi language are Lyng-Ngam, Synteng or Pnar and war.<sup>34</sup> The Khasi has close relation with Mon-khmer dialects, Munda, Nicobares, Malaya peninsula and other dialects of Austric languages. They also have some differences with other non-Aryan languages including Tibet-o-Burman and Dravidian.<sup>35</sup>

All these languages have suffixed structure, while in Khasi the system is completely prefixed.<sup>36</sup> Same is the case with other Mon-Khmer languages. However, Khasi language is the sole representative of the Austroasiatic family in north eastern India, particularly in Assam.<sup>37</sup> It is mentioned in the Puranas that the offshoot of Austerolid or *Iksavaku* race, known as Nagas (Palae-Alpines), were early settlers of Kashmir. It has been accepted by the Dravids and Aryans that the Nagas of Kashmir were descendants of Austerolids, who were the speakers of Austeric language family.<sup>38</sup> Therefore, it is believed that the present representative of these Austric

languages are those Muslim and non-Muslim masses of northern India including Kashmir, who speak the Aryan languages.<sup>39</sup> In fact these people have absorbed the early and latter elements of the Austric languages.<sup>40</sup> It is doubtless that the originality of Kashmiri language can be traced out in those Austric languages, which had direct or indirect relations with Kashmir or Kashmiri.

After analyzing few elements of Kashmiri language, one can draw a specific conclusion regarding the relationship of Austric and Kashmiri. For example a Kashmiri word *Ba:gah* is used by the peasants of Kashmir,<sup>41</sup> whose background is as under.

In all times the peasants around the world had their respective irrigation canals to irrigate their lands. During the summer season in Kashmir, water shortage often took place among farmers. The shortage of water gives birth to quarrels and disputes among the peasants. There is a rule known as irrigation Act, part third,<sup>42</sup> to avoid the quarrels and solve these disputes. There are some traditional rules also in Kashmir to solve these problems. The people divided available water in different canals according to the irrigation act and traditional rules as per the records of land under irrigation. The respective parties divided water through quacks and sometimes by feet. Such a division of sharing water among the shareholders, is known as *bā:gy* in Kashmiri language. The *Bā:gay* (share-divided) is a compound word *Bā* and *gy* with same meaning and concept as it is in the Khasi word *Bhah*,<sup>43</sup> and in Sanskrit word *Bhagh*. According to the latest Root Theory<sup>44</sup>, the words *Bā:gy*, *Bhagh* and *Bhah*, have a common root base in the Austric language family. Of course the root of the word *Bā* is purely an Austric one, but the suffix of the word *gy* may be the influence of Sanskrit or Dardic languages. Therefore, one can say that such type of morphological formations would have taken place immediately after the arrival of Aryans. The word *bā:gy* is being used in different ways in Kashmiri such as:

1. *Yi chi Sā:nbā:gy* (This is our share).
2. *Tshtha:v pā:nybā:gy* (You keep yourself the share of water).

Another Kashmiri word *Banh* (demarcation) is most probably a

derivation of Khasi word *Bynta* (demarcation).<sup>45</sup> In Kashmiri dictionary published by J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages, it is mentioned that the word *Banh* has its origin in Sanskrit *Bandana*. But the expression and pronunciation of Sanskrit *Bandhan* is not close to Kashmiri *Banh*, as compared to the Khasi *Byanta*. The word *Banh* can be used in Kashmiri language as:

*Yami-yo:urchumiyo:nbanh* (from here, it is my demarcation)

*Yi chuso:nbanh* (it is our demarcation).

The origin of another Kashmiri word, *ko:tah* (how much) is most probably in Khasi *katna* (how much), which is closely related to Hindustani *kitna*. There are more examples of word *ko:tah* in Kashmiri like:

1. *Tse-ko:tahkoruthkharhchv* (How much did you spend).

2. *Tshko:tahpokukh* (how much did you walk).

*Phet*-to run, is a Khasi word,<sup>46</sup> which can be the verbal root for Kashmiri word *phata-pha* (quickly or fast). *Jot* (collide), a Kashmiri word had its origin in Sanskrit *jout* or *jota* (gosan) as mentioned in Kashmiri dictionary, but its origin can be traced out most probably from Khasi word *joit-at* once.<sup>47</sup> *Girdam* (to hedge round, leaving no opening), a Kashmiri word, has its verbal root in Khasi word *Kirdam* (to hedge).<sup>48</sup> A Kashmiri word *Tha:p*-to lay in wait, is directly rooted in Khasi *Thap*-to lay in wait.<sup>49</sup> *Me:r* in Kashmiri (elder), used with different suffix, like *Mer:ab* (minister of water In Persian language), *me:r-e-mehfil*, *me:r-chu:dher* and *me:re- majlis*. The word *me:r* existed in German and Khasi language also in same meaning and concept. The noun root of this word can be seen in Khasi word *Mir*.<sup>50</sup> One more Kashmiri word *guti-za:r* (hole- gambler) has been used during this game by the people of Valley since antiquity. The hole gambler threw coins into a hole from a marked distance.<sup>51</sup> The last player threw the coin into the hole, called *me:r* the elder one. The Kashmiri dictionary has related the origin of this word to the Arabic language, which probably is not correct. *Lu:nt* is a Khasi word, meaning a hill, a mountain or outer side of the village. Besides this the meaning of Kashmiri word *la:mhn* is also meant for a high *karewa* and outer side of the village. The first part of the word *La:m* may probably have its stem in Khasi *Lum*, but the second part of

the word un/an may be the influence of the Dravidian language, not of the Aryan, because suffix is not found in the proper and common names of northern India. The word *Khrang* (scream or cry), used in Kashmiri has its origin in Khasi *Kyang* or *Khong* (cry-scream). There are many words which are common in both the languages. Some parallels of Khasi and Kashmiri words are listed below:

| <b>Kashmiri</b>              | <b>Khasi</b>                        |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. <i>Bra:nd</i> (veranda)   | <i>Bera:nda</i> (veranda)           |
| 2. <i>Nebar</i> (outside)    | <i>Nubar</i> (outside)              |
| 3. <i>Bon</i> (many)         | <i>Bun</i> (many)                   |
| 4. <i>Teli</i> (Then)        | <i>Teli</i> (then)                  |
| 5. <i>Ma:lh</i> (mountain)   | <i>Mala</i> (mountain)              |
| 6. <i>Phe:rh</i> (to differ) | <i>Pher</i> (to differ)             |
| 7. <i>Po-khhr</i> (spring)   | <i>Pukhri</i> (well)                |
| 8. <i>Ra:khh</i> (a guard)   | <i>Rakho</i> (one who tends cattle) |

The other Austric languages have also close relations with Kashmiri. For example:

| <b>Munda words</b>                      | <b>Kashmiri words.</b>                   |
|---|--|
| 1. <i>Ku:ri</i> (daughter)              | <i>Ku:r</i> (daughter in vocative voice) |
| 2. <i>Bocha</i> (brother)               | <i>Bo:y</i> (Brother)                    |
| 3. <i>ManoworManwa</i> (men)            | <i>Moh-neoc</i> (man)                    |
| 4. <i>Gidra</i> or <i>Gadra</i> (child) | <i>Gadrh</i> (male child)                |
| 5. <i>Kuri-han</i> (daughter)           | <i>Ko:ri-han</i> (daughter, on asking)   |

Kashmiri also has some resemblances with other languages. For instance, a word *zuti* has been used in Semanag dialect of Tibeto-Burman language, while the word *zutni* has been used in same meaning in the jargon of the cobblers and scavengers of Kashmir as well,<sup>52</sup> but the 'ni' ending of this word is probably Sanskrit or Dardic. The Angami Naga word *nichu* (child) has a parallel Kashmiri word *nechu* (son). Same is the case in Angami word *Ba* used in the meaning of 'to sit', while as in Kashmiri the word *beah* has same meaning. The word *mansai* (Bodo), *Mehnuc* (Kashmiri), *guru-horse* (Garo dialect of Tibetan-Burman family), *Gur*

(Kashmiri), *al*-fire (Kutch dialect of bodo group), *alla:v*-fire (Kashmiri), *hai-hai*- ala:s (kachari and lalung dialect of Bodo), or Kashmiri *hai-ai* are deeply inter-rooted.<sup>53</sup>

The resemblance between the Munda, Mon-khmer and other dialects of the Austric language family has been considered by many scholars including Kuhan.<sup>54</sup> Nils M Halmer writes that Kashmiri language has conserved the common Austro-Asiatic features of ancient linguistic structure.<sup>55</sup> But the Austric languages differ from the Khasi in some aspects. For instance, the Khasi have really a compound word formation, but other dialects of Munda contain many undoubted polysyllables. On the other hand like Khasi, Kashmiri language has a compound word structure too, such as *king-khap* (Khasi), *kim-kha:b* (Kashmiri)-a kind of cloth, *ja-pa-a* heavy bamboo clothes basket (Khasi),<sup>56</sup> *Monji-gor*, *Vadun*-weeping, *ru:dh-ährani*, heavy rain, and *davon*-to run (Kashmiri).

The most important resemblance between Khasi and Kashmiri is in its word order. The usual word order in Khasi is subject, verb and object (svo). e.g.<sup>57</sup>

U (he) *Laphet (ran) ruh (also)*.

U (he) *la-don(was) ha (in) tyngkha (field)*.

In Khasi language the article or pronoun is put before the subject for the sake of stress. Same is the case in Kashmiri word order. Examples are given below.

*Ba chuskheva:nbath* (I am eating food).

*Tamischi Zhnechiv* (he has two sons).

*Su chucha-va:n chai* (he is taking tea).

The word order of Kashmiri language has complete resemblance with the Siamese language of Indo Chinese family. In Siamese the word order is *svo*, while in Tai group of language, the order is simple as that of the Khasi.

The resemblance among the Khasi and Kashmiri language can be noted in some other linguistic aspects also. The word stress of the Khasi language always falls on the last syllable,<sup>58</sup> while in Kashmiri the same

action is being practiced. But in compound words the stress is more powerful in Kashmiri than Khasi, such as:

*Kami-sa:th=* at what time, *kap-tavun-to* cut(Kashmiri words), *dyngkang*-a stamp, *jindong*-shallow (Khasi word).

There are also some common vowels in both the languages. The function of vowels is higher in the Khasi and Kashmiri as compared to Indo-Aryan languages. Such similarities can be traced in the following words:

*Bakha*-a son or daughter, *lano-lano*-in future (Khasi words), *Ka:nsh-kot*(youngest one) and *Kara-kuli* (round cap in Kashmiri).

Similarities can be found in transitive and intransitive verbs of concerned language. The various terms used in intransitive sentences developed such relations in which the verb stands for other parts of sentence as well. This type of relationship is common in Khasi and Kashmiri languages as shown in the following sentences.

#### **Khasi**

*U ksaruda Phet-noh* (the fox is running away).

*Kashnongka dang-pluh* (the village is still burning).

#### **Kashmiri**

*Ga:mchuvuhnidaza:n* (the village is still burning).

*Mai nishro:zdo:r* (stay away from me).

In transitive sentences of Kashmiri language, one can find its similar verb action in the Khasi language as passing over from the subject to an object such as:

#### **Kashmiri sentences:**

*Tsa:vhjchebathKhaiva:n* (the goat is eating cooked rice).

*Sarfan-ditsbachstoph* (the snake bit the child).

#### **Khasi sentences:**

*Kablangka bam ia u kharw* (the goat is eating cooked rice).

*U bysein u lay puhia u khynnah* (the snake bit the boy).

In vowels, the formation of words and in the morphological structure,



a close relationship between the two languages, Khasi and Kashmiri, becomes evident. In short these languages are agglutinative in different aspects like morphology, syntax and semantics.

## CONCLUSION

The ancient people of Kashmir known as Nagas, Khasis, Kasmira, Mujvant, etc., were the speakers of Austric language. According to the *Mahabharata*, Kashmir was the original home of Kasmira and Khasi tribes. Kashmir was the seat of Khasi people from North to south, who in latter times were identified with Khakha people. The Lohara dynasty, who ruled Kashmir, was a Khasi race. The Kashmiri and Khasi languages have some common features at different stages. The word stress of the Khasi and Kashmiri always falls on the last syllable. The function of vowels is high in both languages, as compared to Indo-Aryans. The terms used in intransitive and transitive sentences, developed such relation, in which the verb stands for other members of the sentence and the verb action passing over from the subject to an object in both languages. A number of parallel words are found in the Khasi and Kashmiri verbal roots. The analysis of various aspects of these languages depicts that Khasi and Kashmiri were the inhabitants of one geographical area, speakers of the same dialect.

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# MYTHS IN KASHMIRI SOCIETY

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## ABSTRACT

Myths are the baseless stories found in all societies worldwide. Certain myths have religious base and many have political base as well. Myths are created for the safety, security, religious soothing, attacking an enemy, etc. Like other societies, Kashmiri society too has a long series of myths which have been created in different periods of history. These depict the social psychology, history, beliefs, traditions etc. Myths have created many a times social strife within people. These have sometimes strengthened the faith and sometimes disturbed it. These have been also considered for treating the patients, as well.

*Key points: Mythical deities, rakhshasas, pasildhar, cannibalism, sufrashah, Neuroz, Folklore, ghar dewta, pir.*

## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVE

A myth is a symbolic, idealized representation of social reality to which it is organically related.<sup>1</sup> As a sociological term, however, the primary use of the word myth has been rather casual. As per Smart (1996. p131) “ All myths are stories but not all stories are myth.” Myths usually refer to collective past of a group. It thus helps to create group identity, e.g. Nagas of North East, Jews etc. Sociological writers are likely to refer to the “myth” of masculinity (Pleck 1981 ), the “myth” of self-esteem (Hewitt, 1997) or the “myth” of the mommy role (Douglas & Michaels, 2006).

According to Smart “there is tendency of a dominant culture to treat their own stories as truth and that of the others a myth. The Christians who dominated the world since colonial period did not include Bible in

myths but all other cultures as myth status.”

Some times myths scenarios serve as elaborating symbols for social action. They provide guidelines for people to act, e.g. *Ramayana* for Hindus<sup>2</sup>. Myths are often complete histories of a people or region as they usually provide the entire story from the beginning to the end of creation. Myths change character as they travel from one culture to another.

Myths have close relationship to nationhood and ethnic identities, e.g. the deteriorating condition of women in India is claimed to be due to influence of Islam.

As per Levi-Strauss (1967: 203), “In order to understand what a myth really is, we must choose between platitude and sophism. Some claim that human societies merely express their fundamental feelings common to the whole of mankind, such as love, hate, or revenge or that they try to provide some kind of explanation for phenomena which they cannot otherwise understand—astronomical, meteorological, and the like, through their mythology”.<sup>3</sup>

There are four basic theories of myth. : The rational myth theory, functional myth theory, structural myth theory, and the psychological myth theory.

**The Rational myth theory** states that myths were made to better understand natural events and forces that occurred in the everyday lives of people. This theory also explains that the gods and goddesses controlled all the happenings of nature.<sup>4</sup>

**Functional myth theory** states that myths told about what types of things should and shouldn't be done and the consequences for those wrong doings. The functional myth theory also states that myths were created for social control and served the function of ensuring stability in a society. Levi Strauss claims that myth is like a language. He suggests that it can be approached the same way as language is approached by the same structuralist methods as is used to address language. A myth cannot be interpreted in isolation but only has meaning within an entire cultural system or structure of myth.

**Psychological myth theory** states how myths are based on human

emotion and that they come from the human subconscious mind. Cultures all around the world had similar fears, questions, and wishes which, to them, were unexplainable.<sup>5</sup>

The analysis of the structure of a myth can reveal (to a lesser or greater extent) the structure of the society from which it emanates. The analysis may centre on one of the two perspectives, either the sequence and the order of events or the schemata and organization of the sequences at different levels. Ultimately the myth is concerned with the quest for understanding the significance of nature and culture. The action of myth is usually the narration of sacred history which is believed to be a true event which has taken place in the past. Since these primordial events are often associated with supernatural beings they also tend to take on the character of model for action and for ritual. Most myths being explanatory (whether explicitly stated as such or not) are related to the origin or the commencement of a particular event or action. Myths made the past, intelligible and meaningful, which related to the present, for the continuity of myth is largely with reference to the present.<sup>6</sup>

In most pre-modern societies where tradition rather than the use of literature is the more functional means of communication on large scale, myth becomes one of the means of passing information. There is, therefore, a process of constant adjustment and myths from earlier periods are recast in conformity with the social assumptions of later periods. The repetition of the same myths with perhaps some modifications from age to age is partly to ensure the message getting through and partly to indicate new nuances. Myths, therefore, have a vividly overarching relationship to all aspects of society and each major myth could be subject of an expansive analysis<sup>7</sup>

Myths are found in all societies and thus have made anthropologists like Levis Strauss to explain them as emanating from the very structure of the human being. Sigmund Freud, the psychologist has traced the evolution of human race through its myths and Jung has referred to these as the collective memory of the human race. Some of the myths that are very common are regarding trees and snakes that play an important role in

most cultures. Both these objects are believed to symbolize fertility, sexuality and regeneration.

## FUNCTION

Sociologists and anthropologists have looked at functional aspects of myths and the role they play. Myths have been widely used in the study of history of religions as they provided concrete material not otherwise available for the study of many cultures.

One of their important characteristics is that they are seen as having passed down from immemorial times, although modern myths also exist. Each time a myth is created, it renders validity to something like a deity, a ritual or an identity whenever a human being is elevated to the status of a deity. There are a number of myths to validate it; these often include stories of men associated with miraculous birth, performance of miracles, extraordinary feats and so on. Thus myth in the form of narrative helps a group achieve a kind of togetherness that help them to develop as a congregation, to perform ritual together or to behave in the same goal.

Significance of myth to the historian lies more in its being the self image of a given culture, expressing its social assumptions. Thus myths have been instrumental in triggering of social and political movements at times. Since 19th century it has been common to use the term myth to refer to something that is untrue. It reflects the secularization of our beliefs for myth in its original sense is a sacred tale or received truth. Other people's myths may be false but not their own.

Myths may serve as cultural histories alluding to actual events and practices from the past such as migrations, earlier forms of social origin and natural occurrences like meteor showers, eclipses or floods. Sacred history myths may serve as justification for particular institutions in a society. They link the present social order with a sacred past and condition behavior towards desired ends.

Myths may strive to produce in them a prescribed view of the world and an attitude toward social institutions responsible for maintaining the

status quo that will ensure continuity of the existing social order. It constitutes conservative socializing force whose function is to sanctify existing institutions and foster the values of sociality.

Claude Levi-Strauss, a structuralist and anthropologist, saw myths as stemming from a human need to make sense of the world and to resolve cultural dilemmas. These dilemmas are embodied in the structure of myths, which is made up of opposites, such as good-bad, night-day. For Levi-Strauss, myths are kind of universal languages. While the events of myths vary, the basic structures, like grammar, are similar in myths worldwide - because people are similar.

On another level of 'making sense', myths explain the world, making it manageable. For example, the myths worldwide in which human beings are fashioned from clay by a divine potter, such as the Egyptian Ptah, fulfill our need to know how and why we came to be here. Other widespread myths explain death and the seasons. Function of myth is to strengthen the traditions and to endow it with a greater value and prestige by tracing it to a high, better, more supernatural and more effective reality of effective event, as stated by Malinowski.<sup>8</sup>

### MYTHS IN KASHMIR

Kashmir has been referred to as abode of Shivaism. Hindu mythology has deep influence on its history as well as on the traditional socio-cultural values. The origin of Kashmir has been derived from Kashyap Rishi. According to *Rajatarangini*, Kashmir was inhabited by savages and *rakhshasas* who had made the life of people miserable. They lived in *Sati Sar* lake which surmounted the Valley. The great Kashyap Rishi came to the rescue of the people. The result was that the *rakhshaass* were thrown out of the Valley and it became safe for the people. Thus Kashmir has a mythical beginning.

It is not only that, the later stories mentioned in *Nilmata Purana* and Kulhan's *Rajatarangini* also mention many mythical events, which are supposed to have built the history of Kashmir. The race of Nagas of

Kashmir is connected to snakes. The springs in Kashmir are called *nags* and are linked to these snakes. It was believed that the snakes lived in these springs and often people are advised to be careful while going to take bath there. There is a story *Heemal Nagray*, linked to nagas living in one spring.

There are many legends about Kashyap Rishi in Hindu mythology. In other texts it is said that Daksha Prajapati was born out of the right thumb of Brahma and all people were his descendants. He had one thousand sons and fifty daughters. Sage Kashyapa was married to Daksha Prajapati and Prasuti's thirteen daughters, named Aditi, Diti, Danu, Kala or khasha or Vishwa, Danayu or Danu, Sinhika, Krodha or Krodhavasha, Pradha or Muni, Vinata, Kapila or Surabhi, Tamra, Ira and Kadru (also Arishta, Surasa). Thus Kashyap was a mythical god and using his mythical power, he threw the devil out of the Valley and made it safe for the people and the Valley was named as Kashyap-mar- the place of Kashyap, which with usage became Kashmir.

According to one version, Kashyap was embodiment of virtues and good, a well wisher of the people, and was responsible for the settlement of Kashmir. He was either a man like giant or giant like man, for his good qualities he was called Rishi and was, according to *Nilmata Purana*, born great by birth and belonged to the offsprings of Brahma.

The myth also goes like this that, Shiva once used miraculous powers to see his wife Sati Parvati in full glory and beauty. As a result Parvati turned into a clean and crystal clear lake. By association, the lake was called Sati Sar. Sati resumed her original form. But Jal Dev, the monster and cannibal emerged out of the water. How he emerged and why lake existed even after Sati got her original form? That is why this is a myth.

The miseries which this Jal Dev inflicted upon the masses moved the Rishi. He abandoned his journey he had undertaken that time. He went and stayed at the peak of Pir Panjal in Nowbadan area to offer prayers to deliver the people from the monster. After constantly worshipping for a thousand years, he was able to get the help of Mahadev to fight against Jalod Bhava for one hundred years with the support of locals. At last he



dug through a mountain near Baramulla to make a canal for the water to flow out, killed the monster and made it possible for the inhabitants to live there.<sup>9</sup>

The Hindu traditional history is filled with mythical stories and mythical deities. As the present society has legacy of its ancient history and traditions, so the traditions, rituals and social practices of present are having mythical base in the society of Kashmir as well.

There are birth myths related to households. It is held by most of the people in Kashmir that a house has a spiritual house keeper, who is referred to as *paasil dhar*. He is found in every house and takes care of the house spiritually. It is believed that a *paasil dhar* can be of any faith, a Muslim or a Hindu, living in any house without consideration of religion. (Muslims believe that Jinns too have adopted the religion of Islam.) Generally, as heard from elders in the family, the *paasil dhar* takes care of house from other people. It does not harm the members of the family. It is believed that it becomes alive during night hours. Many people claim that the *paasil dhar* some times create trouble to the strangers coming to the family. People have been heard saying that *paasil dhar* had come during night time and sat on the legs and thus making difficult for the person to move the legs while asleep. But none claims that they have seen the *paasil dhar* during day time or night time visually, but only claim to have heard its sound, e.g. it goes on the stair case and the sound of the footsteps is heard, etc.

The *paasil dhar* is actually the *ghar dewta* or the deity of home as per Hindu mythology and Muslims too believe that it can exist as they believe it to be a jinn and jinns are considered a creation of Allah as per Quran. (*Al Quran Sura Jinn*). However, Hindus perform several rituals to please it. They offer specially cooked rice called *teher* (yellow rice). However, Muslims some times use it to terrify the kids if they cause nuisance. It has been seen that kids are frightened by mentioning the presence of such a spirit. So it is a means of social control at lower level.

The other things related to myth is the belief in deity at birth times. When a child was born, the mother was to sleep on a bed with dry hay /

grass spread underneath. This bed was referred to as *hur* and a deity called *hur devota* was believed to be there. This deity was worshipped by the Pandits but Muslims too believed in it. They served food to it. When the lady was given ritual bath on 7<sup>th</sup> or 10<sup>th</sup> day, special food called *sunder* was served. Some food from the *sunder* was kept for the *hur* deity as well. It was placed in a basket filled with the hay of *hur*, which was dropped in a ditch nearby. This ditch was called *hur dhoub*, i.e. ditch of the *hur*. It was believed that the deity would eat the food and prevent any damage to the lady and the newly born kid. It was believed that the *hur dhoub* is a haunted place and none would pass near that during night times.

There are many medieval myths which are still found among Muslims. These may have political basis and are sometimes the result of internal communal strife.

The day of Nuroz, i.e. 21<sup>st</sup> March, is new years day in Persian calendar. This day is festival of Persian and Central Asian people celebrated throughout the world since centuries. It has greatly influenced the Kashmiri society as well, as Kashmir is in close proximity to Central Asia and the saints from Iran have been responsible for disseminating Islam in Kashmir, which is also referred to as *Iran-i-sageer*. i.e. little Iran. The Nuroz was celebrated in India and Kashmir during Mughal era and may be prior to that as well. However this festival is still celebrated by the Shia Muslims of Kashmir. There are many myths connected to this festival.

It was believed that as per the astrological calculations many climatic changes take place on the 21<sup>st</sup> March. That movement is called *tahweel*. (passing of sun from one zodiac to another). It is believed that at that moment Hazrati Ali (a.s) comes and enters all houses. He blesses every house with his benign presence. In order to greet him and get his blessings, (as per Zoroastrian traditions) the seven items comprise; *Sabzeh* (greenery of wheat, barley, mung bean, or lentil sprouts grown in a dish), *Samanu*, a sweet pudding dish; *Senjed*, (fruit from a lotus tree), *Serkeh*, (vinegar) *Seeb*, (an apple); *Seer*, (garlic) and *Somaq* (sumac). All these items are laid upon a special cloth, named a *sofreh*, where recitation of Holy Quran and other supplications was made for the occasion. It was believed that when

the juncture of *tahweel* arrives, impression of a hand appears on the flour. Also some fruit (apple) which was kept there in water would start vibrating in the water, showing the event of *tahweel* time. It is called *sufra shah*.

On this day different delicious cuisines were cooked before the *tahweel* time would arrive. These delicious cuisines were kept in a confidential place, which was specially cleaned. It was believed that Imam Ali (a.s.) would come and taste the food. It was only after the *tahweel* that the family would eat the food and no body was allowed to taste the cuisines prior to that time, so as to prevent the person from polluting the food before it is tasted by the Imam. This practice might have been due to some pre-Islamic or Hindu ritual. However, it is a tradition among Turkish people as well that they keep *sufra shah*, seven materials mentioned above, for the time of *tahweel*. They believe that Hazrat Fatima (a.s) arrived and tasted / touched the edibles specially made for the occasion.<sup>10</sup>

There are some other myths about Nauroz. Non-Shia Muslims often believe that it always rains on the day of Nauroz and it must be rainy day. They consider that if it doesn't rain on that day, the enjoyment is lessened. It was also held by non - Shia Muslims that Shia used to cook Nauroz cuisines in human blood. They often blamed Shias of cannibalism (for killing non-Shites particularly on the occasion of Nauroz). The people apprehended act of cannibalism if they by chance happened to pass through a village with Shia inhabitation, particularly during Nauroz days. Many alleged that they had a narrow escape while passing through such a village. This myth is baseless like most other myths. It had political background. Such types of myths emerged in the aftermath of alien rule in Kashmir. It was basically outcome of the divide and rule policy of Mughals, Pathans and Sikhs. It was on this pretext that many a times there was internal communal strife in Kashmir. This myth often led to social distance between the two Muslim sects and there were lot of misconceptions between them. However, such myths are more or less non-existent now. More contacts, social interaction and information about each other have eliminated such fear psychosis.

There are myths related to the Shivratri or *hairat* festival of Kashmiri

Pandits. All Muslims believe that it is indispensable on the day of *hairat* to have snow fall or at least rain. This is considered by Muslims necessary for the *hairat*. If this does not happen, they believe that Hindus feel ill. It is also held that during the nights of *hairat* different devilish characters wander through out the nights. It is believed that *brum brum chok*, a devil having fire on its head moves all around and terrifies the people. That is why people would take caution to move in late hours around the Shivratri days.

It is also held that *brum brum chok* is a wandering devil and is often seen on winter nights, when it snows. Many people reported that they have themselves seen some one far away in snow fields with light on its head or so. Often science teacher used to explain in schools that it was the light of white phosphorus burning in air ( in cemeteries) emitting light which people take for a man carrying fire.

There are many myths about big trees, chinar trees, mulberry trees etc. standing in stranded places. Some say that jinns lives in these trees, so whenever any body passes during nights near those trees, they get haunted. Many reportedly say that many a times hen with chicks are seen wandering near these trees during nights. They believe that it is actually devil or jin in hen's form and chicks are its kids.

The water springs are also considered the places where fairies live. That is why often young boys are prevented from going to springs for baths. It is said that fairies may get attracted to the youth and fall in their love, and spoil their lives. Many a times if a youth has some ailment, he is taken to a *pir* ( mendicant). The *pir* may state the presence of fairy en-route his passage, as the cause of his illness.

Different diseases were also considered to be due to certain mythical organisms. It was believed that disease like measles, small pox etc. were due to the deities (*devis*). It was the deity who would cure the disease if presented some food etc. That is why during our childhood, when one caught measles and after treatment from doctors when he would get cured, *dhude wugre* (rice cooked in milk) was served to little children in the locality. This was considered as a way of pleasing the deity. Similarly small pox

too was considered due to *shutel devi* and some edible was to be presented to it in a ritualistic way. Many other diseases were also believed to be of mythical origin. The pregnant women was also believed to suffer due to the cosmic hazards. It was believed that the solar and/or lunar eclipse during her pregnancy affects the physique of the child born. It was held that if a pregnant woman performed any activity during the solar or lunar eclipse, the kid would develop some defect. For example, the defects in different parts of body were believed to be due to physical activity of a pregnant woman at eclipse hours. If a woman mops the floor during lunar/solar eclipse, the kid might have defective nose, or hand. If a woman eats coloured edibles, the kid may develop some colour on the face etc. So the mutational issues and other unexplainable phenomenon in a kid at birth time were ascribed to the elliptical phenomenon. If a person has some defect or abnormality, it is always said that it is due to *grahnmat*, i.e. eclipse.

There are many myths related to different saints as well as shrines. It is said that wild beasts like leopard etc. visit the shrines of saints situated in the vicinity of forests and even villages adjacent to forests. It is also said that the beasts come and salute the shrine on Fridays/Thursday. Different mythical faiths are found about different shrines which are associated with religious faiths of different people. These are believed to cure many ailments and hence people take their sick relatives to the shrines, offer different edibles and pray for the cure of the disease. When birth of child takes place, its head is shaved in a nearby shrine. It is vowed soon after the birth of the baby, that its head would be shaved at so and so shrine. This is believed to bless the child. This practice has been found since pre-Islamic days and is found both among Muslims and non-Muslims. Even non-Muslims used to visit Muslim shrines for the purpose such as Rishi Sahib at Gulmarg etc. Myths are also related to other aspects of religion and it is sometimes irresistible for people to call such things as myth, e.g., spiritual power of saints, healing power of material like clay, edibles from a shrine etc.

There are myths related to living pirs, saints etc. There are many such persons all over the Valley and the believers in them. We can often

see people standing hand folded in front of some person sitting on the road side, in a mohalla, or a village etc. Some people believe that these people have sacred power and due to it they can solve many of their problems. Certain clever people have been taking advantage of the innocence of commoners and using mythical ways pretend to be mystic people and take undue advantage from people. All over the Valley many people called *pirs* are found where people throng to let their issues solved, diseases cured. Thus the so called *pirs* get benefited. There may be many genuine *pirs* as well who possess spiritual powers and genuinely solve the spiritual issues of people in mystic ways. But all can not be included in them. Others pretend to be mystics and exploit people for their own gains. Such stories are often seen in the media. It is found these days that a great many people have begun to be *pirs* now, thus getting investment less profits.

Myths are also about different water bodies. As per Hindu faith, lakes and springs have spiritual and mythical importance. There are many lakes in Kashmir valley which are considered sacred by Hindus such as Vaishenser, Tarser, Marsar, Shishnag etc. There are many Hindu rituals related to these water bodies. They worship there on important occasions. They throw their dead's ashes in these water bodies to give solace to them. However, as mentioned earlier Muslims consider some water bodies as sources of fear and haunt. It might have been due to the fact that people in order to prevent the water bodies from being spoiled by misuse and pollution. That is why if anybody used to go to the water bodies and pissed there or polluted these in any other way, he felt that the jinn living there would haunt him/her. In many cases bathing in some springs was considered leading to haunting of a person. Also certain springs were considered having healing power. Sometime that too is considered due to spiritual force or blessing of saint. Many years ago water of a spring (at Burzehama, Srinagar) was rumored to possess the power of curing disease like jaundice. There was a great rush of people for a long time. People from far off places of the Valley visited that spring. People began to carry water in big cans, vessels etc. However, later scientific test proved that it was polluted water and could lead to many diseases.

There are many mythical stories about different saints. These may be for appreciating or criticizing a particular person. The above cited example of allegation of cannibalism is one. Similarly there is another myth about Makhdum sahib, Hazrati Sheikh Sultan ul Arifeen (R, A). The story has two opposite versions. According to Sunni Muslims, Shia Muslims once wanted to make fool of the saint Makhdum Sahib. They brought a youth in a coffin to the saint and told him to pray *nimazi jinaza* of the dead though he was not dead. When the Sheikh performed the *nimazi jinaza* of the living person, the youth died within the coffin itself, thus showing the miracle. On the other hand Shia Muslims alleged him of worshiping in cave in the hillock of Hari Parvat (Kohi Maran) to damage the Zadibal, inhabited by Shias, which is situated in the north west of the hill. They believe that there was a pre-caution for the success of his prayer, that no dog should bark in presence of the Sheikh and disturb his worship. Knowing this, an old lady carried some breads in a basket with a puppy under the bread. She pretended to have come for getting blessings from the Sheikh. She got the basket down to be taken to the Sheikh and as a result of the disturbance the dog made a bark. Thus the worship of Sheikh got disturbed and the cave got damaged. Thus his so-called attempt of ruining the Zadibal area was foiled by the lady. This story also in a negative way explains the spiritual quality of the saint.

The two versions or rather two different stories about the greatness of Sheikh are the myths created to out do each other. These are far behind the truth. One more important link of these stories is that both the versions are connected to the conflict between Makhdoom Sahib and Mir Shams ud Din Iraqi.<sup>11</sup> The stories claim that there was conflict between the two saints and as such the two sects were at daggers drawn with each other. When analyzing the history, it is found that Mir Shams ud Din Iraqi was during Shahmiri rule in 1502 C.E., while Makhdum sahib was during Chak rule in 1562 C.E. There is tentative difference of 50 years or so between the two saints' period. Also Makhdum Sahib had stable relations with the Chak rulers as he was their contemporary. Chaks had great reverence for him and on his demise, his mausoleum was built by Chak kings.



In connection with this Shia Sunni conflict there are many other myths, that Shias grow horns around midnight.<sup>12</sup> Shias spit in the food, if any Sunni Muslims come to a Shia and is to be served tea etc. The Shias spit his cup or utensil before s/he is served in that. There was something called the *Yindri Trus*. The needle used for spinning on wheel, i.e *yinder* and *trus* means prick. There was a belief that while passing through a Shia area, you would be pricked by a needle and your blood would be drawn. There was another myth – blood in flour. The myth dictated that the Shia Muslims would draw some blood of the Sunni Muslims, mix some of it in flour, and make bread out of it. There was another rather mystical belief about the beauty of Shia women. It was believed that Shia women, after marriage, would lose their beauty. The nickname *khuode* given to the Shia people comes from another myth, something along the lines of Shia people digging trenches and living in them.

It may be due to the fact that during Shia - Sunni riots in places having less population of Shia Muslims, they would construct a basement in their house and would remain there during the riots days and also perform Moharam rituals there, so that none heard the sounds emerging due to mourning ceremonies of Moharam.<sup>13</sup>

## CONCLUSION

There are lots of myths of ancient and medieval eras, which have different religious, political, cultural basis. The myths have been changing in version, names, places etc. Old myths die and new myths emerge. Thus the myths are universal phenomenon and cannot end even in the midst of scientific era. The myths sustain the false claims, histories, traditions of people etc. These get created, continue and also end with change in knowledge, faith and vision of people. The myths have some times supported humanity and other times created confusions and devastations. Politicians took advantage of myths and befooled public. Economic gains have been acquired through myths.



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## CRAFTS OF KASHMIR

SAKSHI SAHNI, RAWAL SINGH AULAKH *and* ZARNAIN FATIMA ASHFAQ

### ABSTRACT

Craft refers to an activity that requires skill and expertise. There are numerous varieties of crafts, for example textiles that includes embroidery, lace making, felt knitting, quilting, tapestry art, weaving. In the name of wood craft, there are wood carving, furniture making etc. Paper craft includes paper modelling, origami paper folding, paper mache. Pottery craft includes various types of ceramics, mosaic art etc. Jewellery making includes the metalwork, engraving as well as enamelling. This paper seeks to understand the type of crafts and the history of crafts in Kashmir.

*Keywords* : Art, Craft. Kashmir, Paper Machie, Shawls, Kahatamband

### INTRODUCTION

Craft refers to an activity that requires skill and expertise, particularly when manufacturing things, using skill and experience to produce a product<sup>1</sup>. According to Ruskin and Morris, there are numerous varieties of crafts, for example textiles that include embroidery, lace making, felt knitting, quilting, tapestry art, weaving. In the name of wood craft, there are wood carving, furniture making etc. Paper craft includes paper modelling, origami paper folding, paper mache. Pottery craft includes various types of ceramics, mosaic art etc. Jewellery making includes the metalwork, engraving as well as enamelling. Apart from this there are other craftworks that include basket weaving, toy making, floral design, book binding etc<sup>2</sup>. There is vast cultural as well as ethnic diversity in Jammu and Kashmir. Apart from this, the region is also known for its crafts that

have been flourishing and prospering for centuries<sup>3</sup>

In this research paper, an effort has been made by the authors to understand different forms of art and craft of Kashmir Valley. The research is exploratory and no primary survey has been conducted for the data collection. The secondary sources have been referred through various databases like Scopus, web of science, different blogs and websites depicting the crafts and findings have been drawn through them.

Kashmir is a territory in the north western part of Indian sub-continent which includes the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>4</sup> According to historical texts, the territory of modern-day Kashmir was formerly a lake, hence its name is derived from many water-related meanings. Kashmir, a phrase used in *Nilamata Purana*, denotes “a country dried from water<sup>5</sup>”

*Shrinagari*, Kashmir’s old capital, was first founded by Ashoka, the Buddhist emperor and the area served as a hub of Buddhism. Both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished in ancient times<sup>6</sup>.

A very old name (called the Valley of Kashir), in Prakrit it is Kashvir, because the “m” becomes “v” in the Indo-Aryan vernacular. The *Mahabharata* refers to Kasmira and its king in several places. Similarly, some Puranas refer to Kasmiras<sup>7</sup>. Sri Harsa in his *Ratnavali* (7th century AD) refers to the saffron of the land of Kashmir<sup>8</sup>. There are several assumptions about the name of Kashmir: one is Kash (attribute) Mir (mountain) - the mountain on which the Kash tribe lived. Another is of Kashyap Rishi, who is said to have drained the water of the great Satisar lake to create the present valley with the settlement<sup>9</sup>.

### CRAFTS OF SRINAGAR: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

The cultural history of Kashmir is unique. The legacy of rich culture has been inherited in Kashmir through numerous diverse cultures of the globe. The close connection and relation of its cultural heritage with Central Asia is proven by the presence of numerous sculptures of ancient times and by existence of Harwan tiles<sup>10</sup>.

“The world over Kashmir has always been seen as a garden of paradise, scented with fresh fruits and luxurious blossoms, symbolized by the golden chinar leaf. This is the art of India that we associate with the best living traditions of craft, wonderful cuisine, houseboats and shikaras, rushing mountain streams, and snow-clad peaks”<sup>11</sup> (Feisal Alkazi, 2014, pg 12).

In the city, thousands of craftsmen work individually or in groups. We can come across number of shops displaying their handicrafts and craft work<sup>12</sup>.

The most prominent emperor of the Hindu Period, which lasted from 649 to 1339 AD, was Lalitaditya (649-736AD). During his reign, Kashmiri bronze sculpture reached its creative zenith<sup>13</sup>. Avanti Varman’s rule (855–83 AD) was the most expressive as well as graceful in Kashmir’s history, and he was renowned for his specific support of arts and literature. In the reign of Sankara Varman (883-902 AD), one finds a clear reference to the creation of woollen clothing at Pattan during his time<sup>14</sup>. The reign of Harsha (1089–1101) was very creative since he was knowledgeable in a variety of sciences and was fond of arts and music. He is recognised for introducing more complex costume (and consequently, clothing) and ornamental trends, (and therefore gemcraft and jewellery).<sup>15</sup>

Zain ul Abidin, also referred to as Badshah (the excellent ruler or the great king), lived from 1423 to 1474AD. He was a great supporter of arts and crafts, and his reign was glorious and prosperous. He gathered artisans from Iran and other regions of Central Asia to improve craft quality and to offer training. He encouraged the production of hand-crafted items like paper, shawls, embroidered tapestries, silk, and wood carving<sup>16</sup>.

Kashmir saw political unrest once more following the demise of Zain-ul-Abiddin, until the Mughals took control of it in 1586. The arts experienced a revival during this time. Beginning with Akbar, the Mughal kings improved Kashmir’s natural beauty by creating gardens and supporting regional artisans and craft studios as well as workshops. Kashmiri carpets were loved by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1819<sup>17</sup>. The amazing beauty of the Kashmiri craftsmen’s surroundings

and environment is related to their artistic sensitivity. According to Bernier's description (from 1665), "The Kashmiris are exceedingly active and diligent. The craftsmanship and elegance of their bedstands, trunks, inkstands, boxes, spoons, palkeys (palanquins) and other miscellaneous items are highly impressive, and products made by them are used across every part of Indies"<sup>18</sup>.

### VARIOUS TYPES OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

In Kashmir a huge variety and techniques of motifs as well as crafts prospered as people from various countries and regions migrated to Kashmir valley and they decided to settle here with their skill art and craft<sup>19</sup>. Various types of handicrafts which are vibrant and unique to their origin are produced here. Over the decades, they have become more ornamented, detailed and intricate. The artisans or craft persons have used basic types of equipment and natural materials to make these products. The capital city, Srinagar has a wide range of handicrafts to offer; the handmade Kashmiri carpets, the *pashmina*, and *Kani* shawls, the *Sozni* work, copper utensils, wicker willow items, walnut wood carving, hand knotted carpets etc.<sup>20</sup>. Other items also include woollen textiles, different types of embroidered suits, silk sarees of Kashmir. There are other arts and crafts which are stone-cutting, bottle-making, window-cutting, gold beating etc<sup>21</sup>. Ganderbal, Srinagar and Budgam are the major areas or potential districts in central Kashmir which have been manufacturing handicrafts products since ages.<sup>22</sup>

In this research paper, an attempt has been made by the authors to document and understand the following types of crafts of Kashmir.

- 1) Kashmir Carpet industry
- 2) Paper Machie
- 3) Kashmiri Shawls
- 4) Kahatamband
- 5) Walnut wood carving
- 6) Needle work – Sozni

## 1) Carpet Weaving Industry

Carpet weaving is one of the main fields in which Kashmiris acquired mastery and whose output is still highly valued in Europe and America today. Zain-ul-Abdin, who ruled Kashmir from 1423 until 1474 A.D., brought the art to



Figure 1: Carpet Weaving

Source: <https://theprint.in/features/pashmina-takeover-debt-traps-kashmirs-dying-handwoven-carpet-industry-hurts-pasmandas-most/953988/>

Kashmir. Sultan Ali Shah, the eldest son of King Sikander, succeeded him after his death in 1416 AD. After roughly seven years, the latter abdicated, and Shahi Khan took over as ruler under the name Zain-ul-abdin. He established the carpet-weaving industry in this area by bringing carpet weavers from Samarkand. Along with them, he brought saddlers, bookbinders, gunsmiths, stone cutters, paper makers, and lapidaries, Samarkand's midwives, musicians, and fireworks makers and helped them settle here<sup>23</sup>.

In his book *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Mirza Haider Kashgari, who arrived in Kashmir in 1504 A.D. and later served as Sultan Nazuk Shah's minister, notes that, "In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon, such as stone polishing, stone cutting, bottle making, window cutting, gold beating, etc."<sup>24</sup>

A Kashmiri by the name of Akhun Rahnuma travelled to undertake the Haj pilgrimage via Central Asia during the reign of Ahmed Beg Khan, one of the Mughal Governors of Kashmir during Emperor Jahangir from 1614 to 1618. He stopped in Andijan, Persia, where carpets were made, on his way home. He picked up the skill there and took the equipment for weaving carpets back with him. He taught some people and made them restart the industry in Kashmir, with the result they made a fortune out of it<sup>25</sup>.

The carpet is woven in the loom of a very simple construction: the warp threads, which are of cotton, are arranged in parallel order upright and the fabric and pattern are produced by coloured woollen threads upon the warp. The pile carpets made in Kashmir attained great perfection. The oldest Kashmir carpets were of floral design,<sup>26</sup> with mosques, gardens, wild animals, gliding fish etc<sup>27</sup>.

The carpet business in Kashmir is in extremely good shape but is struggling at present. The artisans think that the entrance of contemporary industry and international rivalry is to blame for the decline of crafts. Artisans think that lack of institutional support contributed to the decline in the potential of crafts to produce reliable, sustainable, and acceptable incomes. Because they have witnessed their parents' struggle to find a market and a fair price for their goods, the second generation of artisan families, especially the educated ones, are not interested in pursuing these traditional jobs<sup>28</sup>.

According to Majeed, there are a number of issues at both the macro and micro levels, including inadequate infrastructure, inadequate credit, a lack of better-quality yarn available through reasonable processes, lack of facilities for product innovation and development, rising yarn prices that lead to higher carpet prices, increased competition from machine-made goods, and poor government planning. Lack of working capital, poor delivery timing, low education levels, low wages, lack of financial planning, poor infrastructure, technology obsolescence, and middlemen taking advantage of carpet weavers are a few micro level issues<sup>29</sup>.

## 2) Paper Machie Industry

Paper Machie is an art that Kashmir can claim as distinctly as its own. Along with many other arts, it was brought from Samarkand by



Figure 2: Paper Machie boxes

Source: Papier-Machie of Kashmir - Handicraft of Kashmir - YHI (yehaindia.com)



King Zain-ul-Abdin of Kashmir who ruled from 1323 to 1374 AD.<sup>30</sup> Making paper machie is an extremely elaborate technique. A few days or maybe weeks will pass in making this craft. First, several layers of Kashmiri paper are applied to the mould of the desired item, or “vassal,” as it is referred to by the workers. Next, pulp made of Kashmiri scrap paper that has been ground and mixed with rice paste is applied to the desired thickness, and then layers of Kashmiri paper are applied over it by repeatedly slowly drying and adding. The mould is taken off once the desired shape has been achieved. After that, the surface is levelled by filing it. The knots, etc., are cut out, and all imperfections are corrected. It is then covered with gutch and wrapped in a thin fabric. The gutch that is utilised must be finely pulverised from an old plastered wall of a room and combined with glue and water. The surface is then carefully rubbed with a piece of hard, burnt brick, known as *kurkut* in Kashmiri, to smooth it out. Over this is put a stain, known as *astar* by the workers, which is made by rubbing a type of stone known as *basvatar*, which is found in a quarry at Masbal, combined with water. On this stain, *zamin*, or ground color, is placed after *safeda Kashgari* (white powder) combined with glue and water is applied. This colour could be white lead, verdigris, ultra marine, gold, cochineal, etc<sup>31</sup>. The outlines are typically done with *zarda* or yellow when dry and the spaces marked for floral work are stained with *astar* and white paint. The floral design is then traced in various colours. Herein lies the art. It’s fascinating to watch an elderly artist create intricate patterns of complex artistic motifs in muted colours entirely from memory without the use of any geometric tools. Other items, such boxes, vases, and *surahis*, were produced under the influence of French shawl agents. Shawls were shipped to France in paper-machie boxes that were separately and expensively sold there. Lacquered furniture was also utilised for other things including palanquins, howdas, and ceiling decoration. Picture frames, screens, bedstead legs, tables, teapots, trays, vases, candlesticks, card and stamp boxes, and writing implements are among the items that are frequently created nowadays<sup>32</sup>. Modern production techniques as well as new technologies are putting an end to this craft. The commercial value



and sustainability of this craft has declined significantly as a result of machine carving and artist preference for other careers<sup>33</sup>.

### 3) Kashmir Shawls

From roughly 1600 to 1860, a period of over 250 years, the Kashmiri shawl served as the foundation of the Valley's economy. The Mughal, Afghan, Sikh and Dogra dynasties who successively controlled Kashmir were customers of this opulent textile<sup>34</sup>. High-quality *pashmina* shawls are created from the mountain goat's fleece found in high altitudes. In order to keep the goat warm throughout the bitterly cold winter, the fleece grows beneath the goat's outer hair and is shed in the summer. This caprahircus variety's *Keli phumb*, also known as the *pashm* of the *Kel* or shawl-goat, is an extremely fine, silky, short, flossy underwool<sup>35</sup>.

Akbar commanded the development of Kashmir's handicraft industry during the Mughal era. Akbar was astounded by the Kashmiri shawls' softness, warmth, and delicateness among the handicrafts of Kashmir. He came up with the new name "parm narm" for Kashmir's specialty: shawls of all varieties. Shawls were thought to be stylish clothing. A Kashmiri shawl was prized as a source of pride<sup>36</sup>.

The most exquisite and well-known shawls from Kashmir are *Kani* Shawls. The shawls are woven by artisans using specialized wooden needles known as *Kanis* in Kashmiri. Making a *kani* shawl requires highly specialized technique and takes at least a year or two, depending on the design. The shawls were a favorite of the Mughal emperors, and today they are rare and expensive due to their extraordinary beauty, level of skill, and labor-intensive nature<sup>37</sup>.

The Mughals established the industrial, commercial, and production



Figure3: Pashmina Shawl Weaver

Source: File:Kashmiri pashmina weaver in Srinagar.jpg - Wikimedia Commons

patterns, forming new social groups among their artisans. Emperor Jahangir lists the shawl as one of his favorite pieces of clothing in the *Tuzk-i-Jahangiri*. The shawl became a status and fashion symbol throughout the empire as a result of the royal patronage, especially during imperial festivals. Shawl gained such prominence that it was mentioned in the travel and historical writings of notable individuals, travellers as well as historians<sup>38</sup>

Shawl production increased during the Afghan Period, and shawls were exported to Europe. Through King Nadir Shah, the Afghan rulers of Kashmir sent them to Constantinople. Syed Yaheya of Baghdad received a shawl while on his trip to Kashmir through Abdullah who was governor. When Napoleon Bonaparte was conducting his campaign in Egypt, the Sayyid gave the Khedive in Egypt the gift, who then gave it to the French general Napoleon Bonaparte. Napoleon presented it to Josephine, who would become the empress.<sup>39</sup> Numerous French armed soldiers returned from Egypt with plundered shawls worn as belts over their uniform. The Kashmiri shawl became popular in Europe and as the demand for it increased, merchants came to purchase shawls in Kashmir<sup>40</sup>.

The shawl industry had consistent state support during the Sikh era. Due to this patronage, the shawl spread throughout the Punjab as a component of fashionable attire and was known to be especially liked by the Lahore dancing girls. Shawl trade with West Asia and Europe was established. The fabrics were frequently bought by traders from British India, Uzbekistan, Turkistan, Turkey, Persia, and Europe. There were 22,000 shops open during the reign of Diwan Kirpa Ram (1927–1831), and the shawl industry brought in Rs. 12 lakhs. The total trade in shawl goods was said to be 35 lakh rupees per year in the 1920s.<sup>41</sup>

In today's context there are many issues in the shawl sector. The question of labour is the most pressing concern for Kashmir's pashmina craftspeople. The average revenue of artists is between Rs 200 and 250 per day, and when the entire year is taken into account, it may even be as low as Rs 150 due to changing demand and days spent preparing the warp that do not produce as much income as weaving yields. According

to the current market value, the average wage for workers is quite low<sup>42</sup>. Most artisans do not have their own looms or other tools to do their work, so they are forced to work for the manufacturer on his terms. Most of them come from poor economic backgrounds and therefore mainly have financial problems<sup>43</sup>.

#### 4) Khatamband

One of Kashmir's most ancient wooden crafts is known as *khatamband*. It is a unique style of conventional panelling made out of tiny pieces of wood that is both aesthetically pleasing and reasonably priced. Each piece of wood is carefully prepared, painstakingly carved, and then

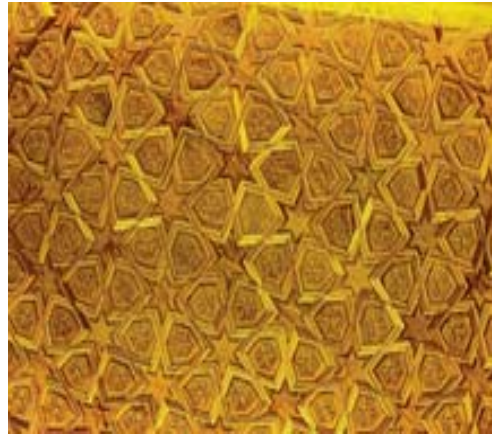


Figure 4: Khatamband Roof

<https://www.deccanherald.com/content/368977/rebirth-khatamband.html>

assembled to create intricate geometrical designs with a clear mathematical basis<sup>44</sup>. A colourful decorative craft known as *Khatamband* arrived in Kashmir sometime in the 14th century. In this variation of marquetry, delicately shaped wood pieces with carefully carved geometric patterns are used to decorate the surface of wooden objects. The process of creating a *khatam* is known as *khatam-kari* or *khatambandi*. *Khatam* literally translates as "come to an end." It is better to think of it as "an enclosure," which transforms *khatam* into a figure that has reached an enclosure rather than a representation of a line that ends. *Band* is short for close. The term "joining the two" (*Khatam Band*) refers to the closing or joining of a figure using a wooden bead. This style of art has been popular throughout the world and is still utilised to enhance interior design. Although this art has roots in various regions of Central Asia and the Middle East, it has profoundly spread in Kashmir and is now one of the Valley's important handicrafts<sup>45</sup>.

In Kashmir, the craft of *khatamband* involves assembling tiny chunks of polygonal wood in geometric patterns and holding them all together with beadings. Since no glue is used, two elements used are known as *Gaz*

and *Patti* holding each other together. *Khatamband* is made of a special type of wood known as fir wood (*budloo*). Despite being expensive, deodar is used when customers request it. Only 20 to 30 of the approximately 200 available *Khatamband* designs are in use today. These are *pohal*, *dawazadah grid*, *char baksh*, *chengis khani*, *shash gul*, *beet dar*, *moujelehar*, *Dabriwal Chengis Khani*, *Pohal Muraba*, and *Muraba Badam* are the most popular patterns.<sup>46</sup> The industry is labour intensive and low wage. The workers after working for 14 hours are paid between Rs 500- 600 and artisans are still poor being exploited by middle men and exporters. The sector is very unorganized with lack of education, low exposure as well as poor institutional framework<sup>47</sup>.

### 5) Walnut wood carving

Under Zain-ul-Abidin's nurturing care, the wood carving business grew and prospered, drawing skilled carvers from Samarkand, Bukhara, and Persia under his patronage. According to the Sultan's court



Figure 5: Walnut wood carving

Source: CASED TREASURES - Walnut wood carving Kashmir Crafts & Craftsmen (gaatha.com)

chronicler, Pandit Srivara, the great king, also known as Budshah, gave these foreign artisans all the necessities of life, and they helped make Kashmiris more familiar with their arts and crafts<sup>48</sup>. The Sultans of Kashmir gave this art form a significant boost. All of Kashmir's Hindu structures are made of stone, but most of its mediaeval mosques are made of wood. The Khanqah-i Mualla and the shrine of Sheikh Hamza Mukhdum Kashmiri are two significant religious sites in Kashmir that serve as examples of the carpenter's trade<sup>49</sup>.

Mostly situated in the by-lanes of downtown Srinagar, it is easy to identify a wood carving *karkhana* from a distance. The periodic hammering of timber and the strong smell of shaven wood makes it distinct. A wood

carving *karkhana* has four to eight people working at any given time. Each one of them holds a distinct skill set: carving, carpentry and polishing. It is simple to recognise a wood carving *karkhana* from a distance because they are typically located in the side streets of downtown Srinagar<sup>50</sup>. Carving, carpentry, and polishing are three different skill sets that each of them possesses.

Today, Kashmiri walnut wood carving artisans face several challenges, such as the craft does not generate enough money, making it difficult for local artisans to continue the craft, and artists are worried about the future of the craft. With fewer walnut carving students and fewer active *karigars* or artisans in Kashmir, it is difficult for the current *karigars* to meet the demand for wood carvings<sup>51</sup>.

#### 6) Needle work Embroidery – *sozni* and crewel

A type of embroidery from Jammu and Kashmir is called *sozni* (or *suzani*). The motifs are made using satin stitch and are worked indistinguishably on both sides of the fabric, though occasionally in various colors. It is among the most advanced types of needle embroidery in existence.



Figure 6: Sozani work

Source: <http://risingkashmir.com/-sozni-embroidery-confluence-of-needle-thread-and-fabric->

This needlework is exquisitely detailed, delicate, and artistic<sup>52</sup>. One of the most intricate types of needlework in the world is *sozni*. There are no other places in the world that practice this extremely delicate, artistic, and fine needlework<sup>53</sup>. One of the unique embroidery techniques used in Kashmir is called *zalakdozi*, or crewel or hook embroidery. Professional tracers known as *naqshbandh* trace the design onto the fabric. Perforated sheets are placed on the fabric, and then the design is imprinted on the surface using chalk or charcoal powder.

To highlight outlines, use a wooden pen (*qalam*)<sup>54</sup>In Kashmir, needle women sell their scarves at half price. Lack of market and role of intermediaries, forcing them to work for meager wages<sup>55</sup>.

## CRAFT INDUSTRY IN KASHMIR

Since the craft industry is flourishing in Kashmir for many decades, it plays an important role in its economy. Table (1) shows the export of various crafts from Kashmir

TABLE I  
EXPORT FIGURES OF VARIOUS CRAFTS<sup>6</sup>

| S. No. | Name of the Craft                                    | 2021-22<br>(In Rs. crores) | 2022-23 ending<br>January 2023<br>(In Rs. crores) |
|--------|--|----------------------------|---|
| 1.     | Carpets  | 251.06                     | 212.23  |
| 2.     | Shawls/Rumals  | 165.98                     | 300.62  |
| 3.     | Paper Mashie   | 13.25                      | 5.14  |
| 4.     | Others (Chain Stitch/Crewel/<br>Wood carving/ Others | 132.84                     | 211.00  |
|        | <b>Total</b>   | <b>563.13</b>              | <b>728.99</b>                                     |

Source: Economic Survey, 2022-23. Jammu and Kashmir Government

Under Handicrafts and Handloom Sector, 39, 316 artisans/ weavers were registered during 2022-23 (ending January 2023)<sup>56</sup>. 6, 171 cases were sponsored under credit card schemes for artisans/weavers and 2, 058 cases were sponsored under Weavers MUDRA Scheme<sup>57</sup>.



**TABLE II**  
**ESTIMATED CRAFT-WISE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY**

| S. Year No              | Carpet Production | Namda Employment | Crewel Production | Wood Carving Employment | Paper Machie Production | Production Value (Rs. in crore) |            |            |
|-------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|------------|------------|
|                         |                   |                  |                   |                         |                         | Employment                      | Production | Employment |
| 2011-12                 | 776.70            | -                | 1.58              | -                       | -                       | 62.30                           | -          | 72.30      |
| 2012 -13                | 785.40            | -                | -                 | -                       | -                       | 63.50                           | -          | 74.15      |
| 2013-14                 | 686.10            | -                | -                 | -                       | -                       | -                               | -          | 141.24     |
| 2014-15                 | 739.50            | -                | -                 | -                       | -                       | -                               | -          | 152.25     |
| 2015-16                 | 709.20            | -                | -                 | -                       | -                       | -                               | -          | 139.52     |
| 2016-17                 | 821.50            | 1.11             | -                 | -                       | -                       | -                               | -          | 164.30     |
| 2017-18                 | 855.40            | 0.09             | 8.86              | 0.001                   | 345.90                  | 0.050                           | 8.42       | 27.36      |
| 2018-19                 | 392.92            | 0.03             | 0.01              | 0.001                   | 330.87                  | 0.052                           | 15.43      | 14.85      |
| UT of Jammu and Kashmir |                   |                  |                   |                         |                         |                                 |            |            |
| 2019-20                 | 436.928           | 0.460            | 0.00              | 0.00                    | 312.318                 | 0.361                           | 12.784     | 12.900     |
| 2020-21                 | 329.523           | 0.527            | 0.050             | 0.003                   | 182.675                 | 0.346                           | 9.750      | 15.920     |

(-) indicates not available

Source: Directorate of Handicrafts & Handlooms, Jammu and Kashmir cited in *Digest of Statistics 2020-21*, p250.

**TABLE III**  
**ESTIMATED CRAFT –WISE PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT OF HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY**

| S. Year No              | Fur and leather |            | Chain Stitch |            | Woolen shawls |            | Other handicrafts |            | Total      |            |
|-------------------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|------------|-------------------|------------|------------|------------|
|                         | Production      | Employment | Production   | Employment | Production    | Employment | Production        | Employment | Production | Employment |
| 1. 2011-12              | -               | -          | 188.33       | -          | 520.20        | -          | 193.55            | -          | 1815.33    | -          |
| 2. 2012-13              | -               | -          | 192.09       | -          | 530.60        | -          | 197.42            | -          | 1843.21    | -          |
| 3. 2013-14              | -               | -          | -            | -          | 631.20        | -          | 559.33            | -          | 2017.82    | -          |
| 4. 2014-15              | -               | -          | -            | -          | 674.25        | -          | 609.00            | -          | 2175.00    | -          |
| 5. 2015-16              | -               | -          | -            | -          | 698.05        | -          | 687.13            | -          | 2234.15    | -          |
| 6. 2016-17              | -               | -          | -            | -          | 874.50        | 0.10       | 789.70            | 1.40       | 2650.00    | 2.75       |
| 7. 2017-18              | 3.91            | 0.0005     | 237.23       | 0.034      | 439.44        | 0.052      | 4.26              | 0.0007     | 1930.75    | 0.23       |
| 8. 2018-19              | 0.70            | 0.001      | -            | -          | 611.80        | 0.098      | 11.22             | 0.051      | 1377.80    | 0.244      |
| UT of Jammu and Kashmir |                 |            |              |            |               |            |                   |            |            |            |
| 9. 2019-20              | 0.000           | 0.000      | 0.000        | 0.000      | 413.120       | 0.483      | 80.230            | 0.134      | 1268.280   | 1.460      |
| 10. 2020-21             | 0.000           | 0.007      | 0.000        | 0.091      | 258.790       | 0.850      | 4.046             | 0.064      | 800.754    | 1.917      |

(-) indicates not available

Source: Directorate of Handicrafts & Handlooms, Jammu and Kashmir cited in *Digest of Statistics, 2020-21*, p251



**TABLE IV**  
**CRAFT WISE DIRECT EXPORT OF HANDICRAFT ITEMS**

| S. Year No              | (In Rs. Crores) |       |                   |              |              |                 |              |               |                        |         |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------|-------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------------|---------|
|                         | Carpet          | Namda | Crewel Embroidery | Wood carving | Paper Machie | Fur and leather | Chain Stitch | Woolen Shawls | Other handicraft goods | Total   |
| 1. 2011-12              | 567.13          | -     | -                 | 57.94        | 136.24       | -               | 233.60       | 607.05        | 39.43                  | 1643.37 |
| 2. 2012-13              | 455.86          | -     | -                 | 69.06        | 620.02       | -               | 237.61       | 104.11        | 51.62                  | 1538.28 |
| 3. 2013-14              | 551.90          | -     | -                 | -            | 39.96        | -               | -            | 579.72        | 524.047                | 1695.68 |
| 4. 2014-15              | 492.18          | -     | -                 | -            | 71.70        | -               | -            | 368.20        | 354.96                 | 1287.04 |
| 5. 2015-16              | 293.29          | -     | -                 | -            | 24.85        | -               | -            | 376.79        | 364.43                 | 1069.41 |
| 6. 2016-17              | 369.81          | -     | 414.11            | 7.50         | 50.35        | -               | -            | 304.05        | 5.29                   | 1151.12 |
| 7. 2017-18              | 452.12          | 4.25  | 200.94            | 4.71         | 14.97        | 2.25            | 123.00       | 284.13        | 3.75                   | 1090.12 |
| 8. 2018-19              | 353.63          | 0.05  | 231.61(*)         | 10.13        | 11.00        | -               | -            | 305.90        | 5.61                   | 917.98  |
| UT of Jammu and Kashmir |                 |       |                   |              |              |                 |              |               |                        |         |
| 9. 2019-20              | 395.78          | 0     | 236.26            | 9.47         | 9.5          | 0               | 0            | 271.62        | 12.32                  | 935.25  |
| 10. 2020-21             | 299.56          | 0.04  | 140.5             | 7.22         | 13.27        | 0               | 0            | 172.53        | 172.53                 | 635.25  |

Source: Directorate of Handicrafts and Handlooms, Jammu Kashmir cited in *Digest of Statistics 2020-21*. p 261

**TABLE V**  
**DISTRICT WISE NUMBER AND MEMBERSHIP OF HANDICRAFT / INDUSTRIAL**  
**AND HANDLOOM COOPERATIVE SOCIETIES**  
*(In Nos.)*

| S. District<br>No      | 2019-20                   |                            |            | 2020-21                   |                            |            |
|------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|------------|
|                        | Co-operative<br>Societies | No. of active<br>Societies | Membership | Co-operative<br>Societies | No. of active<br>Societies | Membership |
| 1. Anantnag            | 212                       | 67                         | 1640       | 269                       | 124                        | 2317       |
| 2. Kulgam              | 123                       | 37                         | 686        | 159                       | 73                         | 820        |
| 3. Pulwama             | 171                       | 63                         | 1040       | 146                       | 35                         | 362        |
| 4. Shopian             | 92                        | 32                         | 358        | 121                       | 37                         | 370        |
| 5. Srinagar            | 827                       | 336                        | 6386       | 1003                      | 512                        | 5195       |
| 6. Ganderbal           | 185                       | 49                         | 619        | 243                       | 105                        | 1080       |
| 7. Budgam              | 150                       | 104                        | 1560       | 194                       | 194                        | 2198       |
| 8. Baramula            | 158                       | 102                        | 1262       | 255                       | 189                        | 1905       |
| 9. Bandipore           | 159                       | 99                         | 1072       | 253                       | 164                        | 1691       |
| 10. Kupwara            | 138                       | 52                         | 1185       | 146                       | 60                         | 600        |
| Total Kashmir Division | 2225                      | 941                        | 15810      | 2789                      | 1493                       | 16541      |

Source: Digest of Statistics 2020-21 cites Directorate of Handicraft and Handloom, Jammu and Kashmir

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## CONCLUSION

Kashmir Valley produces crafts that are distinctive of their kind and are not found elsewhere in the nation. Although the craft sector has enormous potential, the state of the workers and the workshops is poor, and talent is being lost daily since the younger generations are still living in appalling conditions. Handicraft artists tend to be poor since they receive lower pay, labor-intensive processes, and are exploited by others who sell their work for exorbitant rates without paying them enough. After arduous labour of 14 hours, labourers who make *khatamband* crafts, for instance, receive pay ranging from Rs. 500 to Rs. 600<sup>58</sup>. Therefore, both Centre and State Government should make efforts to make policy changes that can benefit the state handicraft industry.

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# PROMOTION OF FOLKLORE LITERATURE AS AN AUGMENTED TOURISM PRODUCT IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

*AIJAZ AHMAD KHAKI, ANNUM MAKHDOOMI and AAQIB BASHIR*

## ABSTRACT

*Jammu and Kashmir has a rich literary history, having made significant contribution to the subject producing notable poets and writers. The contributions of Kashmiri writers have received international acclaim. Kashmiri literature dates back to centuries and is based mainly on three languages: Sanskrit, Persian, and Kashmiri, in addition to Urdu, Hindi, and other languages. Original Kashmiri literature, however, began 750 years ago. Literature continues to be a vital tool for preserving cultural heritage. The more we go into people's literary history, the more we discover that part of it is committed to memory by the people and passed down orally from generation to generation, despite the fact that it is unwritten. This unwritten genre of literature is called "Folk Literature" or "Oral Traditions". Folklore tourism has become a hotspot in the exploration of tourism in recent years, with various folklore tourism initiatives taking place worldwide. Kashmiri folklore holds an important place in India's 'literature of the people', which has voiced and represented the people's collective desires and experiences since time immemorial. Folklore tourism is frequently considered a form of heritage tourism, while receiving less attention than similar heritage activities. This paper explores the connection between tourism and folklorism and the prospect of developing Folklore Tourism as an augmented tourism product in Kashmir Valley.*

*Keywords:* Kashmiri, Literature, Folklore, Tourism, Culture.

## INTRODUCTION

The Oxford dictionary defines literature as "pieces of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)". Literature is defined

as a work of art presented in a carefully chosen language, either spoken or written, that deals with an individual's or a group's thoughts, concepts, and ideas. It is the creative activity of the human brain expressed in a figurative language<sup>1</sup>. Literature is a notably effective technique of grasping a culture of a particular age, socio-economic class, or social group. Literature allows us to expand our thought and understanding of not only our surroundings but the whole world and provides us with a glimpse of the past to understand other cultures, traditions, and beliefs around the world<sup>2</sup>. The term has broadened in recent decades to include 'oral literature' which has been defined as, "the standard forms (or genres) of literature found in societies without writing." The Oral literature, also known as Folk literature, is the tradition in documented cultures wherein some genres are either unlettered or are passed down through generations by word of mouth. The basic concept is that, this type of literature contains oral histories, folklore and stories passed down through the years. Though the tradition existed a long time ago, it wasn't until after 19th century when the term "oral literature" was popularized due to the relative work (1932-1940) by Hector Munro Chadwick and Nora Kershaw Chadwick in 'growth of literature' and has been used by literary scholars and anthropologists since the 1970s. Oral literature consists of unwritten stories, songs and sayings that have been heard, sung or told by a person. For non-literate communities, oral literature is the reservoir of valuable knowledge, philosophy, and insight. This literature depicts the meaning of life as perceived by people at its particular time and location, with its unique existential dilemmas, through story, poetry, music, dances, legends and fables, and religious ritual literature.

It incorporates traditional environmental knowledge, beliefs, and values, as well as the nature of society itself. It is formed out of a common aesthetic desire to share stories that explain the nature of existence and portray human responses to obstacles. This literature depicts how to lead a moral life and describes the nature of one's spiritual ties<sup>3</sup>. Oral literature depends on performance and memory for transmission and retention instead<sup>4</sup>. According to Finnegan<sup>5</sup>, it depends on the speaker who enacts

it in words on a certain event and there is no other way for it to be perceived as a literary product. The term 'folklore', sometimes used interchangeably with oral literature, refers to features that are shared by a group of people, like language or belief systems that forms the cultural and national identity of a community. Therefore, it refers to a large and important aspect of culture. At present, folklore refers to popular cultural forms that are group oriented and has a definite practical value of teaching critical and analytical thinking while engaging the imagination and fostering ethical principles.

Folklore is a compilation of fictitious animal and human tales, cultural myths, humour, songs, stories, and even quotes. It's a cultural depiction that has been passed down orally from generation to generation, though many are now written down. "Folk literature" or "oral traditions" are other terms for folklore<sup>6</sup>. Folk literature retains hints of people's lifestyle, as well as impressions of their ambitions and overall worldview, in such a way that it develops its own identity, which, when analysed, gives insight into not only the nation's history, but also its ups and downs, as well as the highlights of its collective consciousness<sup>7</sup>. There is no universal definition for the term, as different terms are used by the folklorists. According to Brunvand<sup>8</sup>, folklore refers to the unofficial, non-institutionalized aspects of culture. It includes all traditional forms of knowledge, ideas, beliefs, perspectives, preconceptions, feelings, and values communicated through word of mouth or conventional examples. Several of these cognitive patterns are shared by all people, yet they always engage with and are impacted by the larger cultural context in which it occurs. In addition, environmental concerns, social ethics, empowering women, and other concerns find adequate space in folklores, although in a different form<sup>9</sup>. Folklore can take many forms: oral and verbal (mentifacts), kinesiological (customary behaviour or social facts), and material (relics), but folklore is the entire traditional complex of thought, content, and process that can never be fixed or recorded to its full extent; it only exists in performance or dialogue as individuals communicate with one another. Storytelling and the fixation with narrative is a feature of every culture throughout all times. The oral storytelling tradition is vast and



broad, and it is a major element of the human experience that stands the test of time, culture, and technology<sup>10</sup>. Moral decision and self-examination are guided by oral literary forms like stories, songs, proverbs, etc. that act as mirrors allowing us to see things in a specific manner and are important tools for teaching ideals that govern children's concrete behaviour in society and function as pedagogic methods<sup>11</sup>.

### FOLKLORE AND TOURISM

The most promising method of preserving folklore is through tourism. Folklore is commonly classified as part of cultural tourism or intangible cultural heritage and has the potential to help develop the environment as a tourism attraction<sup>12</sup>. "Cultural Heritage is an expression of the ways of living developed by a community and passed on from generation to generation, including customs, practices, places, objects, artistic expressions, and values, often expressed as either intangible or tangible Cultural heritage"<sup>13</sup>. For any new or developing tourism location, strong folkloristic traditions can provide the region with a competitive advantage<sup>14</sup>. Folklores are the vast intricate parts of intangible culture that serve as an icon as they blend social, ethical, aesthetic and cultural qualities unique to a country which a majority of travellers have looked for and will continue to look for in order to get a better understanding and experience of other cultures and way of life<sup>15</sup>. Regardless of the approach towards the tourism-culture relationship, it's crucial for it to exist in a way that is beneficial for both areas and the most eloquent kind of expression of this relationship is cultural tourism<sup>15</sup>. According to UNWTO, cultural tourism is a subset of the tourism industry focusing primarily on diverse cultural attractions which include plays, museums, and so forth. Museums, orchestral performances, and plays are examples of cultural attractions in developed communities while traditional and religious rituals, popular art, or cultural folklore events may be included in less developed places. Although considered as an aspect of cultural tourism, it's not easy to turn folklore into a tourism product<sup>16</sup>. Tourism is

linked to folklore as it is used to collect diverse parts of folklore, which necessitates people visiting various locations.

## KASHMIRI LITERATURE AND FOLKLORE

With a 2,500-year history, Kashmiri language dates back to the early days of Sanskrit. The poet Lalleshvari or Lal Ded (14th century), who authored mystical poetry, was the first to adopt the Kashmiri language. Nund Reshi, a Kashmiri mystic who was equally regarded at the time, composed great poetry, followed by Habba Khatun (16th century) with her *loal* style of Kashmiri poetry<sup>17</sup>. Kashmiri language's oral culture is vibrant and intricate comprising of a variety of traditional forms, with folk literature being the most prominent. In every age, the language not only has preserved but also expanded and developed its folk tradition, while representing many aspects of societal transformation, behaviour patterns, hopes, desires, creativeness, unconscious yearnings, and collective fantasies. Folk literature examines social drama within a geographical context and in light of historical compulsions which has attracted the interest of scholars from all fields of study because to its beauty, diversity, and complexity of interpretation. There are different types of folk literature in Kashmir broadly classified as follows:

1. **Folk tales or *lukk kath***- These include traditional and imaginative stories called *Kath* or *Daleel*, targeted mainly towards children. Storytelling (*Kath* or *Daleel*) is an old source of entertainment in Kashmir. For ages, stories have been used to record significant events, to glorify the achievements of heroes and heroines, to impart the essence of an event or a historical period alongside the facts, and to highlight patterns or cultural evolution. This is typically an elderly member of the family (grandmother or grandfather) who imparts history, pride, and a sense of identity to the children following behind. Folk stories and myths that have survived in Kashmir's cultural environment have similar characteristics. They frequently discuss the victory of good over

evil, the superiority of love over force, and the importance of generosity, humility, and virtue. These ancient tales usually emphasise the necessity of taking personal responsibility, caring for others, and serving humanity. The majority of these “values” or “rules of conduct” are missing from the daily lives of students, particularly those with behavioural issues. Unquestionably, one of the most significant benefits of stories, myths, and tales is the increased sensitivity to other cultures and the window they offer into other worldviews. Stories and tales are representations of the hearts and souls of the individuals who made them, since they often last for a very long period of time. They serve as priceless mementos of the past (in both good and terrible times) and provide outsiders with a glimpse into some of the mental models and worldviews that have shaped various communities into what they are now. Folktales and legends may be used by teachers and students to start communicating, understanding, and appreciating one another. In order to give the listeners a sense of connection to a solid and powerful tradition, the stories are interwoven with components that reveal the ceremonial tradition of the storyteller’s people and make important points to some listener who is about to make a mistake or who has some trouble to resolve.<sup>18</sup> Kashmiri folktales are made up of three sections which include a wide range of tales from *pataal* (underworld), *janawar* (animal) and *zameen* (earth)<sup>19</sup>. Most people’s childhoods have included a significant amount of folklore such as Himlal Nagrai, haya band and Zohra Khatun, Three blind men, Shabrang, prince and thief, The clever jackal, good king Hatim, the story of a weaver and so on. The emotional and physical security associated with bedtime stories is recreated in Kashmiri folk talks.

2. **Folk songs**, i.e., traditional songs which include *Beath*, *Ladishah*, *Rauf*, *wanvoun*, *neande beath* (sung at the time of crop harvest) and so on. Every region has its own peculiar folklore that distinguishes it from the rest of the world, and Kashmir has a rich cultural

heritage in addition to spectacular natural beauty. Whether it is dance, song, or open-air theatre, Kashmiri folklore has a long history. These songs were written in the local language and are associated with the community or group that wrote them. Folk songs are learned and passed down from generation to generation, and they are widely sung at festivals and weddings. Alternatively, folk rhymes are rhythmic arrangements of words for children's enjoyment. Folklore takes many forms, as outlined below.

- i. Wanvun:* The *wanvun* is a prayer that is sung as folk music during weddings and festivals, and it is primarily sung by women. Both Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir perform *wanvun* songs about marriage. However, the lyrics of the Muslim songs use language from Islamic traditions, while the Hindu songs use chants from the Vedas<sup>20</sup>. This type of singing doesn't involve any musical accompaniment. The traditional folk expression of *Wanvun* music is no longer as popular as it once was. Tourists continue to travel here from all over the world, attracted by the remnants of this folk music. They may hear the Kashmiri people performing during their religious rituals.
- ii. Rauf:* Rauf is a traditional Kashmiri dance genre that is usually performed by women in groups at religious festivities and marriages. The women amuse themselves by standing in two rows across from each other. Each woman places her arms on the other women's arms. The women's feet go forward and then backward in unison. This is how the dance moves forward. The songs are in the style of questions and answers. In Kashmir, two groups are generally established in remote areas. While performing *Rauf*, one group asks questions and the other group responds musically.
- iii. Ladishah:* The performer, *ladishah*, travels from one location to another during harvesting season, wearing the traditional clothing called *Pheran*, holding a rod with metal discs, singing a sarcastic cum comic style song depicting the numerous societal

concerns, current events and everyday concerns of Kashmiri society which are humorous as well as educational. At the beginning of each song, he exclaims *Assalamualaikum ladishahaav* which translates to “may peace be upon you, the *ladishah* has come”.

*iv. Beath:* It is a short poem or a short composition of words that is meant to be sung. There is a variety of *beath* in Kashmiri language depending on type of celebration or occasion such as harvest, marriage ceremonies, festivals and even death songs which tell the story of after death.

**3. Folk drama:** Kashmiri folk dramas are performed usually at village squares depicting a satire form of social situations through clowns, dance and music. These are known as *bandh jashan* where *bandh* means clown and *jashan* means festival. The oldest form of Kashmiri drama is *bandh pather* (*bandh*- folk actors; *pathar*-dramatic performance). It begins with a musical performance which creates an emotional atmosphere that accord with the drama and attracts spectators<sup>21</sup>.

**4. Riddles:** Kashmiri riddle known as *preach* is a question or remark that challenges one’s creativity in figuring out how to respond to it or what it means. They are entertaining, humorous and widely popular.

*Baras peth kale shahmar, Letteasmilavith, Oreayaskenkalet, Let ninasgilavit.*

Translation: A black snake is on the door with its tail and mouth joined, a lizard came up and twisted away its tail. Answer: Padlock and key.<sup>22</sup>

**5. Proverbs and sayings (*Daeputh*):** these are brief phrases or sentences that are typically well known and express a common experience or offer guidance. These communicate the truth and makes brief and precise remarks. A few examples of this are as follows:

- *Nyath haavun* (to show one’s thumb) - to cheat

- *Shaal tsalith bathein choub* (Hitting the ground after the jackal escapes)-Acting later than required
- *Shana chhai Phoran* (Your shoulder blades are twitching)- Calling out for trouble<sup>23</sup>

**6. Jokes:** Jokes or *mazaak* are brief oral tales with a final funny twist. It's something spoken or done to cause laughter.

The combination of Sanskrit and Persian morphological neologisms resulted in a large amount of folk literature in Kashmiri including *Katha Saritasagar*, *Panchatantra*, and *Brihat Katha*, which according to Grierson were documented in the Paishachi language spoken by pre-Aryan people in Kashmir between 700 and 400 BC and compiled by Gonada and the epic stories by Kshemender and Somadeva from Persian literature called *Brihat Katla Mangri* from the 11th century that include domestic skills and expertise. The Europeans made a great contribution towards the folk literature of Kashmir, which they believed to be a true mirror of society and made several attempts of collecting various categories of the genre which include the comprehensive collection of Kashmiri folk tales by J. H Knowles (1887) titled *Folk tales of Kashmir* and *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs and Sayings* by the same European Scholar and *Hatim's Tale* by Aurel Stein and later edited by George A. Grierson (1937). The Hindi collection of the Kashmiri folk tales by Nand Lal Chatta and C. L. Hakhoo titled *Kashmir ki lokkathaein*, *The tales of Kashmir* by S. N Dhar, *Poshe Thaeer* by Noor Mohammad Roshan, *Baleyar*, a collection of six tales, by Shambhu Nath Bhatt Haleem are amongst the well-known folk literature additions. Kashmir offers a wealth of folklore which are old. There are several folklores like Zohra Khatun and Haya bund, Gulala Shah, Bombur and Loare and the very famous Himal and Nagrai; having a Kashmiri origin. The region also contains two well-known compilations of fairy tales, Wazir Mal and Lal Mal, which are written entirely in Kashmiri dialect (rewritten in Kashmiri and Persian), and are regarded as prized belongings by the locals<sup>24</sup>.

There is an abundant demonstration, in Kashmiri folk literature, of the environmental approach of people who were aware of the importance

of environment and local ecology, and could perhaps anticipate future risks if not addressed in a timely manner. In Kashmir, folk songs, presenting a wide range of themes, content and forms, preserve myths, customs, traditions, and legends from older times that are live memorials of Kashmir's poetic splendour. The Valley's folktale is both rich and unique with stories and melodies, that are well liked by the people, along with fascinating mythology with a rich illustrious history. Folk literature is always considered as people's national heritage, which is never used as a source of religious division or conflict, in Kashmir, and is still preserved by the people as an achievement on national and personal level. There is a wealth of unwritten socio-cultural history spanning generations in the folk literature of Kashmir which is especially true for the folk songs that describe life in a variety of colourful features of traditional Kashmiri society, and are rich in conveying emotions, dreams, and miseries, bringing to light the diverse hues and values of Kashmiri community<sup>25</sup>. Opera, dancing songs, pastoral stories, romantic ballads, theatre songs, semi-mystic songs, wedding songs, and so on are all types of music. Various songs are performed at different times of the year or to accompany specific activities.

In Kashmir, folk songs preserve myths, customs, traditions, and legends from older times. These are everlasting memorials of Kashmir's poetic splendour, which have primarily been passed down through generations via word of mouth by rural travelling minstrels while playing a *dahra*, an iron rod fitted with loosened iron rings, and singing folk melodies.

### TOURISM PRODUCT AND FOLKLORE TOURISM

The term "product" can refer to a "good" (a visible, tangible object that can be transferred from a seller to a buyer) or a "service" in the market (which is intangible, invisible, and individual-based). According to marketing theory, a "product" is "anything that may be supplied to a market in exchange for attention, acquisition, usage, or consumption that may satisfy a need or desire"<sup>26</sup>. This concept of Kotler is particularly



relevant in this context since it makes explicit that products include physical objects and the stuff that makes up tourism—services, people, places, organizations, and ideas. Medlik and Middleton<sup>27</sup> define tourism products as “a package of activities, services, and advantages that collectively provide the overall tourism experience.” This package includes the following five components: destination attractions, destination amenities, accessibility, destination image, and price.

People don’t buy things for products; they buy them because of the benefits or solutions they provide<sup>28</sup>. Certain sellers may fail if they focus exclusively on the things, they sell rather than on the benefits they deliver. Thus, products can be simply defined as producers of solutions to actual or latent issues; these answers are bundled into something physical that the consumer consumes.

As Mckercher & Cros<sup>29</sup> assert, products exist on three levels:

- Basic,
- Tangible, and
- Augmented.

At the basic level, sellers must consider whether the benefits their products deliver genuinely satisfy the customer’s needs or not. At the tangible level, marketeers must judge whether their products have the characteristics that customers demand and whether these attributes are more critical than competitors’ offerings. Finally, marketeers must assess whether their products have additional features and services beyond what customers expect at the augmented level.

In the case of folklore tourism, the augmented product is the fact that people can see and learn about their culture. The basic benefit of folk culture is that it is a source of national pride and social cohesion<sup>30</sup> which is why movies at the cinema often include scenes from traditional cultural festivals (such as Ramayana, dance dramas, or shadow puppeteers) to provide audiences at home a connection to their cultural tradition. Through such festivals, tourists can learn about the “varieties” of art forms and patronize local artists, gaining a better appreciation of their society’s cultural roots<sup>31</sup>. Folklore festivals have prompted a dramatic increase in



cultural tourism<sup>32</sup>. Mckercher & Du Cros<sup>33</sup> proposed common features that would allow new tourism marketers to create augmented cultural tourism products and increase the satisfaction of visiting tourists. These features include the following:

1. *Tell a story*: Tourist stories constitute the underlying meaning of cultural tourism, and it has been identified that a culture's stories are defined by the underlying values of its people<sup>34</sup>. Tourists have been described as consumers of stories, so tourism businesses need to create stories from the host culture. By creating a story with local colour, background, and traditions, tourism businesses can give tourists a sense of understanding the place they are visiting.
2. *Bring the asset to life*: This implies that the items should incorporate new and exciting message techniques to provide a delightful experience for tourists. The message should be created in such a way that it is exciting and includes attractive features that appeal to the senses of sight and sound<sup>35</sup>.
3. *Make it a participatory experience*: The majority of cultural tourism offerings, such as cultural events, festivals, and so forth, provide opportunities for tourist participation, thus contributing to tourists' enjoyment and satisfaction. Tourists should be encouraged to participate in events that spur them to create new relationships with local people and stimulate practices such as food tasting, which becomes a part of an enjoyable experience for tourists<sup>36</sup>.
4. *Make it relevant to the tourist*: Cultural tourism products are supposed to meet the requirements and desires of tourists; they should be tailored to their knowledge and frame of reference. Tourists should be able to learn something new during their stay, thus satisfying the desire for adventure, "something different" and the search for a "self-fulfilling experience"<sup>37</sup>.
5. *Concentrate on quality and authenticity*: The tourists (consumers of cultural tourism products) are likely to be well-educated and intelligent; they will have a greater awareness of culture. Therefore, the quality of cultural products and services must be

consistent with high standards rich in history and authenticity. Appropriate pricing and publicity are essential channels for consumers to learn about the product<sup>38</sup>.

Folklore and art are part of the hosted experience, and they have a high potential to add value to tourism businesses<sup>39</sup>. In tourist cities, folklore, art, and architecture are complementary forces that represent the cultural essence of tourism. Each tourist city wants to build a profile that suits its cultural attractions, and the profile of a city should be clear, understandable, and consistent<sup>40</sup>. Therefore, augmenting folklore and art in the tourism industry can make people feel the greatness of culture and enhance the city's brand knowledge and recognition as an international tourist city<sup>41</sup>.

## FUTURE STUDIES AND LIMITATIONS

The study has some limitations and it's necessary to note them. First, the study is qualitative in nature so all information is based on secondary data and no population/sample was examined for the results. Future studies can incorporate a quantitative method to explore various forms of folklore while experimenting with the younger generations from a Kashmiri cultural background in order to revive the old traditions. Second, this study did not examine the changes in Kashmiri folklore over the years and future studies can explore these changes with respect to the changes in cultural values of Kashmir across time. Comparative studies can also be conducted with western or other cultural folklores. Further studies can be conducted to explore the preferences of reading across different demographics. Lastly, this study only explored a few Kashmiri folktales briefly. Future studies can be focused on different Kashmiri folktales in an extensive manner. Additionally, a virtual reality aspect for the Kashmiri folklore should be explored.

## CONCLUSION

Folklore and art are part of the hosted experience, and they have a high potential to add value to tourism businesses. In tourist cities, folklore, art, and architecture are complementary forces that represent the cultural essence of tourism. Each tourist city wants to build a profile that suits its cultural attractions and the profile of a city should be understandable, consistent and clear<sup>42</sup>. An effective way to do this is through the creative use of online resources for cultural attraction marketing, where the virtual environment provides a channel for the connection between tourism, artists, and art events. Kashmiri folklore is embedded with rich and varied traditional music, dance, and poetry and can be effectively promoted as an essential component of cultural heritage. Kashmiri dance and music, being one of the indigenous cultural products, would definitely gain importance to future generations and could become part of the folklore tourism menu. Folklore tourism products, based on folk traditions, can play a significant role in developing traditional tourism products. The use of literary elements in tourism can help to revitalize local cultural life while simultaneously channelizing tourists to participate in more meaningful cultural activities that can be recorded, studied, and reinterpreted.

However, critics argue that with the emergence of the formal tourism industry in Kashmir, less popular elements such as folk festivals, fairs, and markets have disappeared from the tourism itinerary. Further, it is argued that the new generation of Kashmiri youth being tendered to more sophisticated and urban skills such as computer programming and software design find folk culture irrelevant to their economic and social situation. This leads in a certain kind of separation between the inhabitants and the tourism business, with the community being left out of employment opportunities.

The tourism authorities need to launch a campaign highlighting and emphasizing the assets of infrastructural heritage that can supply both an alternative and different resource base to the existing tourism product offerings. The sharing of folk culture expressed in different media will be of interest to tourists, who can be encouraged to buy books and souvenirs;

the involvement of artisans will also help them reduce their financial losses. Folk culture and vernacular architecture should be enlisted as essential activities to be carried out in rural areas. Besides, it is necessary to generate awareness amongst the public about their heritage and create a sense of pride and identity. The authorities should formulate a Tourism Development Policy and, most importantly, develop, publicize and implement plans to promote this type of heritage. With adequate planning, Kashmiri folklore can be introduced as a supplementary tourism product in an innovative way. Innovative opportunities can be utilized to display the diversity of folklore among various visitor groups through heritage tours and heritage walks. As a way to address the lack of resources for heritage development, public-private partnerships can be effective at developing folklore products. Additionally, indigenous expertise should be tapped for research and documentation of folklore performances and rituals. Such strategies could draw global attention to this state and stimulate tourist inflow, which will generate more employment opportunities, economic prosperity, and sustainable development in this region.

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**THE SACRED ALTAI**  
**(REPORT OF PANEL DISCUSSION AT IIC,**  
**21 FEBRUARY 2023)**

The Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation and India International Centre organised a discussion on the theme **The Sacred Altai** at IIC, Conference Room II on 21 February 2023. Gornyi Altai (part of Russian Siberia in mountainous Altai) is treated as sacred territory by its indigenous people since old times. The famed Sumeru Parvat is also located here. The people of Altai have great reverence for the Five elements and also Sumeru Mount, which are treated as sacred. There are many commonalities between the traditions and practices still prevalent in Altai and India. It is in this context that this discussion underlined such commonalities and importance of these traditions and practices for the preservation of ecosystem and biodiversity, both in Altai and India.

**Dr. Mahesh Ranjan Debata**, of Centre for Inner Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi introduced the audience to the enormous work done by the Himalayan Foundation in terms of its over 20 books and regular publication of its quarterly journal *Himalayan and Central Asian Studies*, right from 1997. He showed slides of the book covers and special issues of the journal focused on Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Xinjiang, Kashmir, Kargil conflict, Indus Waters Treaty, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Buryatia, Khakassia, Altai, Myanmar, Gilgit Baltistan, Tajikistan, Yakutia, Siberia, Mongolia, North East India, Zoroastrianism, Women issues, Ecology, N.Roerich and so on. Prof. K.Warikoo, Secretary General of the Himalayan Foundation and Editor of the journal pointed out that all this was made possible with voluntary



participation and collaboration of noted academics, cultural specialists and institutions across the region, both from India and neighbouring countries of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Mongolia, Russia, Siberian Republics of Buryatia, Khakassia, Tuva and Altai. He named the eminent academics and personalities from these countries who have participated in such a wonderful journey of bringing to fore the issues pertaining to the Himalayan and adjoining Central Asian region.

**Prof. K. Warikoo** narrated the wonderful experience of his pilgrimage to Sumeru (using slide presentation). He pointed out that Altai is considered sacred by the indigenous people. Several sacral complexes include archeological, astronomical and ritual ceremonial complexes besides petroglyphs, natural objects, water, fire, trees, mountains. Nicholas Roerich was of the firm belief that Altai and Himalayas are two magnets, two poles of a cultural axis.

**Prof. Shashibala**, Head, Indology Centre, Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan and an authority on ancient Indian knowledge system spoke on the sacredness of five elements in Indian ethos.

**Prof. Rajnish Mishra** of Centre for Sanskrit Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University dwelt upon the sacredness of water (*jaltatva*) in Kashmir.



From the left Prof. K. Warikoo, Sunita Dwivedi, Prof. Rajnish Mishra



**Ms. Sunita Dwivedi**, silk road traveler and author, gave comprehensive report/slide presentation on the India and Central Asia: The Cultural Connect.



A Section of the audience



From the left Dr. Mahesh R. Debata, Dr. Madan Yadav,  
Dr. Gatikrushna Mahanta, Dr. Athar Zafar

**HIMALAYAN AND CENTRAL ASIAN STUDIES** is a quarterly Journal published by the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation, which is a non-governmental, non-profit research, cultural and development facilitative organisation. The Journal is devoted to the study of various issues pertaining to the Himalayan and trans-Himalayan region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, connected with its environment, resources, history, art and culture, language and literature, demography, social structures, communication, tourism, regional development, governance, human rights, geopolitics etc.

While the principal concern of the Journal is on its focal area, i.e., from Afghanistan to Myanmar including the Central Asian states of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, China, Mongolia, Nepal, Bhutan and the Indian Himalayan States of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand and North East states; papers with a broad sweep addressing environmental, social, cultural, economic, geopolitical and human rights issues are also welcomed.

The objective is to make a scientific appraisal of the issues confronting the Himalayan and adjoining region in South and Central Asia or parts thereof, and to make specific policy oriented studies and need based recommendations as the means to promote the human, educational and economic advancement of the peoples of the region besides preserving and enriching their ethno-cultural, literary and historical heritage. Promotion of human rights, social justice, peace, harmony and national integration are the other key areas in which the Himalayan Research and Cultural Foundation has been active.

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