



## SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF KASHMIR DURING 20<sup>th</sup> CENTURY

**Khursheed Ahmad Bhat**, Pursuing PhD (History), Jiwaji University Gwalior (M.P)

**Imran Ahmad Wani**, Pursuing PhD (History), Jiwaji University Gwalior (M.P)

**Aejaz Ahmad Kuchy**, Pursuing PhD (History), Jiwaji University Gwalior (M.P)

**Abstract:** *A society is a group of people involved in doing social interaction, or a large social grouping sharing the same geographical or social territory, subject to the same political authority and dominant cultural expectations. Society is characterized by patterns of relationships between peoples who share a distinctive cultures and institutions; a society may be described as the sum total of such relationships among its members. In the social sciences, a larger society often shows clearly a dominance patterns in subgroups. A society can enable its members to get benefit in ways that would not otherwise be possible on an individual basis; both benefits can thus be distinguished, or in many cases found to overlap. A society also consists of like-minded people governed by their own norms and values within a dominant, larger society.*

**Keywords:** *Pheran, Straw, Kutch, Lopanu, Hamams*

### INTRODUCTION

The society of Kashmir was heterogeneous, stratified into Muslims and Hindus besides a small number of Sikhs who entered the Kashmir during the Sikh rule (1819-1846). Generally both the Hindus and Muslims were superstitious and orthodox. The Hindus and Muslims shared intimate relations with each other. Caste system was the main cause for social stratification amongst the Hindus. Except for a few well off, the general life of people were ridden with poverty. Among them the happiness was a relative luxury. The general life style of the people i.e., building of houses, food habits, use of dress, ornaments, position of woman, pastimes, there were no changes till the end of 19<sup>th</sup> century, on the whole the customs of the Kashmiri Muslims and pundits did not undergo much perceptible change. The people of the villages under reference practiced a myriad of variegated customs and ceremonies and were almost uniform in their socio cultural behavior celebrate different along religious and economic lines. Many rituals and ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death hardly underwent much change. However, there were ripples visible in the stream of people's thinking.



According to the historical records, Kashmir maintains a distinctive cultural past of thousands of years. The local inhabitants in the valley adopted, shaped and transmitted (to the following generations) this cultural heritage which at its earliest stage was characterized by the tribal social organization. They have developed specific cultural traits-features which revealed in their social, economic, religious, linguistic, political, physiological, educational and other fields of human life. These traits-features were original, indigenous and locally oriented and needed. It seems necessary to explain three points related to the culture of the Kashmiri at the earliest stage of their history. First, the geography- location of the valley played a decisive role in the formulation and maintenance of the Kashmiri culture at its earliest stage. Second, the religions were intimately of the local culture in a peaceful way. The role of religious in this situation didn't contribute to antagonism but to the peaceful coexistence at the cultural plane. Third, the Kashmiri culture didn't exist in isolation but had encountered the cultural contact with non-locals too.

It is to be noted that the period of our study witnessed revolutionary changes in the different walks of Kashmiri life. After the death of Ranbir Singh St. John was appointed as the first Resident in Srinagar in 1885 and he was succeeded by C. Plowden. The introduction of residency paved the way for the modernization of Kashmir. It was under the influence of British residency that a series of reforms were introduced into the different fields of life. It was during the same period that the first comprehensive land revenue settlement of the state was completed under the supervision of British settlement commissioner Sir Walter Lawrence. Under this act the peasants were granted hereditary rights, which ushered in a new era in the history of Kashmir; the government restructured all the departments of state besides instituting the new ones (For the promotion of agriculture, Dept. Of agriculture and horticulture was established) to put Kashmir on the rails of development so that Kashmir could bear the fruits of the Modern Age. The Maharaja on the advice of the Resident commissioner abolished some of the objectionable features of the beggar system in 1891. However the beggar in all its forms was completely abolished in only in 1933 A.D., under the recommendations of Glancy commission. The abolition of the beggar system gave a sigh of relief to the depressed people of Kashmir. The period is also underlined by a revolution in the communication and transport sector. The Jhelum valley cart road from Kohala to Baramulla and then to Srinagar was completed in 1897. In 1922 Banihal cart road



connecting Jammu and Srinagar via Banihal was thrown open to traffic. These measures certainly improved the communication system in the valley. It has a great impact on trade and commerce. It not only facilitated the people of Kashmir to trade in high bulky goods but also boasted the carpet and fruit industries respectively, which formed the back bone of the economy of the province. Besides it linked the valley with other parts of the subcontinent and facilitated the transmission of ideas. A hydroelectric plant, first of its kind was constructed at Mohra in 1907 A.D, instead of providing power supply to the silk industry of Srinagar it replaced the traditional lighting system of Srinagar. It was in 1880 that an era of modern education started in Kashmir by the establishment of a missionary school by Rev. J.H. Knowles, besides a number of missionaries who came to valley and attempted to produce modern education in Kashmir by establishing missionary school. In 1905 with the efforts of Miss Annie Besant a Hindu College was started in Srinagar, latter this college was taken over by the state and came to be known as Sri Partap College. Under the influence of British Missionary Schools, the Maharaja passed the —Compulsory Primary Education Act. Primary schools were opened in large numbers and by the end of 1945 there were about 20728 primary schools in the state. After the partition the Kashmir became the dominion of India. State and central government took the revolutionary steps for the development of the people. Their steps change the outlook and infrastructure like power, transport and provisions of social and community services in the form of schools, health centers, piped water supply, social welfare centers etc.

## **SOCIETY**

Society showed little tendency to change in Kashmir valley until the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. But throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century various changes took place. By the means of communication, transport facilities, Education, availability of goods and most important change was the end of Dogra rule in Kashmir. Revolutionary changes took place in the social life of the people. Although majorities of the people were conservative, there were a few who were ready to challenge the old traditions and customs.

The joint family system remained in vogue especially in rural areas and small and nuclear families got importance in urban areas. In the former the family consisted of the eldest male as the head of the family. His will reigned supreme. His young brothers or grown up sons were obey him and all their earnings were put at his feet. His wife in a similar manner ruled



over her daughter-in-law, who had to obey her implicitly. Such families were believed to be well behaved and relatively more cultured. The joint family had a special economic significance. As a very high proportion of working population resided in the villages, so every member of the joint family directly or indirectly participated in the productive activity of the village to earn livelihood and improve their material life. After the death of the father the sons owned the herds and flocks, land and house. But under the Hindu customary law daughters did not claim any share in the estate of their father in presence of the sons. However they were given a part of the property in the shape of ornaments and other presents. With the establishment of Sultanate, Muslim law of inheritance was also introduced in Kashmir. Under the Muslim law daughters have equal right to equally share their father's money and property with their brothers. But it appears that Kashmir especially villagers followed the Hindu law of inheritance. However, Dokhtar-i-khananishin got the share of the property of her father if her spouse lived with her parents. Only staunch Muslims followed the Muslim law of inheritance. With the acceptance of the daughters claim to the share in their fathers property the economic position of the women particularly Muslim women marked some improvement.

## **HOUSES**

In a cold and mountainous country where the temperature in winter goes down several degrees below the freezing point and the entire landscape is covered with snow, every human being has perforce to have some shelter the pattern of houses varied according to their location.

## **RURAL HOUSES**

In the rural areas of the Kashmir valley these were nearly all built after the same pattern. First there was a ground floor in which were two chambers, with the small hall used as gallery .the first floor contained three rooms. Outside the first floor was a balcony approached by a ladder where the peasant delighted to sit during the summer .the floor under the roof usually consisted of one long chamber, which was used as a loft for storing fire wood, kitchen stuff, and lumber. The end was left open to allow these to be thrown out in case of fire. Here the household spent the summer months. In winter the family occupied the first floor. The ground floor was dark, and in winter was filled with cattle and sheep. The material of which the houses were built were stones for the foundation, wood for the



frame-work, bricks and mortar to fill up the divisions of the frame-work. The roofs were sloping on two sides to throw off snow. The thatch was usually of straw. Rice straw was considered to be the best material. The Gujars invariably inhabited log huts with flat mud roofs, and throughout the valley of the Kishan Ganga the dwellings, with few exceptions, were built on a similar plan. There were two kinds of bricks made in Kashmir, the baked and the unbaked. The unbaked, which were the most frequently used were made of earth and dried in the sun. The baked were mostly made of clay and burned in a furnace. An ordinary peasant's house would last 10 years, if there was no bad earthquake. In front of the house was the courtyard with cattle pens. In a large house, there would be one of two granaries called kutch- made of wood, and lapanu made of mud, into which the grain was thrown by an opening at the top and taken out by a hole at the bottom. Generally there were no chimneys built in a house. Fires were used only for cooking purpose, and the smoke found its way out by the doors and windows. Wood was generally burned. Sometimes cow-dung, baked into cakes with straw, was used as fuel.

In the last two decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, new houses were built entirely in stone and baked bricks. Cement and earth was used in between the bricks and iron was also used for strength. Straw thatched roofs were replaced by iron sheets and slabs. One to three storeys are built; glasses are used in windows, plasters of different colors were also used in walls of the houses. Cattle sheds are made in the corners of the courtyard. The lushed green parks with variety of different flowers became the fashion and people delighted to sit during the summer. Bathrooms and latrines are built inside and outside the houses. Houses are built in rural areas according to the economic conditions of the people and modern outlook.

### **URBAN HOUSES**

In old days the urban houses were built of wood, oak being preferred for its stoutness. Four or five storey's high they contained a number of ornate rooms and halls. But on account of the frequent fires to which Srinagar was particularly subjects a change was made to masonry, the walls being built of stones or brick joined with cement, and the roof of slate. A frame work of vertical and horizontal beams was set up and these grooved so as to admit of receiving in them billets, averaging two feet long and four inches wide, crudely chopped with the hatchet and consequently so ill-fitting that no special arrangements were made for



ventilation. The ordinary material for the roofs of town houses was the birch-bark and earth and thatch for country ones.

At times, instead of the fine inner bark of the baj patar (*betula tartarica*), a tree which grows abundantly on the mountains of Kashmir, a reed called tshai, was used for roofing. Roofs of the description were noticed on the houses in Srinagar, Sopore, and the adjacent villages, because they were near to the Dal, Wullar, and Achar lakes, where the reed grew abundantly. The houses on the bank of the river were not remarkable; being usually of brick and wood—many of wood entirely—and mostly two storeyed. Many also were rickety. Some of the richer shawl merchants however, had built pretty houses on the water's edge with open wooden balconies in which they loved to sit. Apparently the houses in Srinagar were not exactly built in blocks and lines, but crowded together in complete disorder. "Many of the houses were off the straight leaning one against the other, like two drunken friends supporting each other. The houses vary in size from the large and spacious burnt-brick palaces of the aristocrat and his retainers, warmed in the winter by hamams, to the dull houses of three storeys, and three rooms of wood and sun-dried bricks where the poor shawl weaver lives his squalid cramped life and shivers in the frosty weather. Their wooden walls and their thatched roofs make them an easy victim to the fires which sweep at steady intervals through the city".

### **SANITATION AND CIVIC AMENITIES**

It was a Herculean task for the newly formed municipality (1890) to carry out some sanitary measures in Srinagar. The progress was slow, till the municipal administration was reorganized in 1915 and Pandit Anand Koul appointed the whole-time president and executive officer. He worked like a missionary – educating the people on the imperative need of sanitation and carrying out the plans for improvement with zeal and fairness. Being a fire hazard, straw thatched roofs were banned in Srinagar. But the rest of the town and villages continued with this roofing material. Corrugated iron sheets for roofing became popular and by 1925 nearly half the houses in Srinagar and other towns were roofed with this material. The iron sheets robbed the houses of Kashmir a unique distinction which their greenery and red and white tulips had bestowed on them.

Up to the end of the Dogra rule, the fashion of roofs has altogether changed. After independence peasants became the owners of the land, trading class and karkhandars



became prosperous and Muslims got the government jobs in different departments. Economic prosperity and availability of goods in markets changed the whole outlook of the people. People made the new houses of stone and burnt bricks, cement and steel had come up with better pattern and ventilation and lighting, glazed windows replacing the old pingra shutters. Beautiful doors and windows were made up of wood for the houses and glasses were fixed on them. Modern bathrooms and latrines with marble and tiles are made inside the houses; rich people made separate bathrooms for separate rooms. Balconies and wardrooms are the best architecture of urban houses in which carpenters used their wood carving art. There were now megdrom on roads and paved lanes in place of the filthy gutters called streets, littered with offal and rubbish.

### **HOUSE BOATS**

Kashmir has been noted for its fine arts for centuries including shikaras, traditional small wooden boats and house boats are a common feature in various lakes and rivers across the valley. By the advent of tourists, the development of house boats flourished. The Hanjis of Kashmir lived and earned their livelihood by these house boats. The hose boat became popular for tourists and has now become an integral part of Kashmiri life style.

### **HOUSEHOLD GOODS**

Changes in household goods were visible only in the apartments of the wealthy merchants and the westernized section of the population. Their houses were furnished after the European fashion. Elegant chandeliers, pier glasses, couches, chests of drawers, writing desks, chairs, sofas, tables, table lamps, etc. found their way into the rooms of rich people. But as regards the majority of the population, their household goods consisted of wooden boxes for keeping cloths and the mat (wagu) made in the villages. In the villages and the city the people slept on mats and straw, bedsteads being unknown. A cotton – spinning wheel (yander), a wooden pestle and mortar for husking rice (qunz), a few earthen vessels for cooking, and earthen jars for storing grain were the utensils found in an average household of a Kashmiri. Earthen and copper utensils were used by different households according to the economic condition of each. Samavar (kattle) and degchi (cauldron) were used for the preparation of tea and cooking of rice. Generally vegetables were prepared in an earthen vessel called leig. It was believed that vegetables could be cooked well only in earthen pots and not in copper utensils.



The kanga which forms so important a part of the Kashmiris life continued to use during winter. The kangar or kangri, a portable vessel, generally consists of two parts: the inner earthenware bowl of a quaint shape called kundal, in which the fire is placed, and its encasement of wicker- work, sometimes simple, sometimes pretty and ornamented with rings and colors. A little wooden or silver spoon (tsalan), tied to the handle, completes this oriental brazier. The kangri can also be consists of only an earthen vessel. It is called a manna.

With the dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century however, smoking the huqqa gained currency and increased day by day. Remarkable changes took place after the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Earthen pots remained till the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century especially in hilly areas. Utensils of different metals came in place of earthen utensils viz, Copper, Sliver, Brass, Steel and Aluminium. Plastic utensils were also used. Besides earthen china cups (chin pyala), bowls, hand plates was in great demand and in every house there was cups of chin pyala. Now people started slept on Carpets, Namdas (made up of sheep's wool) and Beds made up of wood, a cotton-spinning wheel, a pashm spinning wheel remained still. The steel boxes and later lockers were used for storing clothes money and other precious things. With the development of electricity most of the people have television, tape recorder, VCP, electric fan, refrigerator, washing machine and grinder etc. according to their economic conditions .kerosene stoves, domestic gas and electric heater are used for cooking purposes, which have changed the outlook of people.

## **FOOD**

The food habits of the common people changed little during this period. The staple food of the inhabitants' was rice: it was taken in a plane boiled state, stuffing with any ingredients being avoided. Kashmir's are heavy rice eaters and consume half a kilo of rice per meal. On festive occasions they prepare boiled rice with coloring of turmeric. But wheat, barley, maize, and several other grains were also eaten. Vegetables such as kuram sag (hak), cabbages, turnips radishes, lettuces, spinach, cucumbers and many other varieties were also very plentiful and were exclusively used. The leaves of the dandelion, plantain, and some other plants were made into soup, and the catkins of the walnut were employed as food, seasoned with a little salt, mustered and walnut oil. The stem of the lotus, when boiled and flavored, was also eaten. It is called nadru as is of a pale straw color, cylindrical, about ten



inches long and one inch in diameter. It was considered to be highly nutritious. In winter both Hindus and Muslims consumed a large number of turnips in large quantities. Dried fruit (hokh phal) and dried vegetables formed an important article of diet in Kashmir in winter. Milk formed a daily items of food. Nearly every cultivator owned a cow or two. Nearly all the Kashmiri Pandit families had a cow. The Muslims living in urban areas depended on milkmen for their milk. Apart from the cows owned by them, milk came daily from nearby villages. A family which kept a cow would not think of selling the milk but later they start selling the milk and also churn the surplus into butter, made cheese and distribute the milk among their neighbors. The water-nut or singhara, ground to flour and made into bread, formed the chief article of diet of hanjjs who lived on the margin of the lakes during early phase of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

### **NON-VEGETARIAN FOOD**

Mutton was taken both by Hindus and Muslims. Poultry (fowls, ducks and geese) were abundant. Whenever fish could be caught, it was eaten. Hindus would not touch poultry or eggs, but they did eat wild fowl and the eggs of lake birds. This curious fact was brought to the notice of Sir Welter Lawrence was that Hindus in Kashmir insisted on having any birds they are made Hallal in Musalman's fashion. Beef was not procurable, as the killing of a cow was regarded as sacrilege by the Dogra rulers-a crime which involved capital punishment. Kashmiris excelled in the preparation of several delicious meat dishes. For their daily consumption they boiled mutton in water adding a little mustard oil, a pinch of turmeric and salt and challis. Another popular dish was shabdeg. Meat and turnips were boiled together and kept simmering on for the night. With salt challis and oil added it formed a tasty and nourishing item of diet. On feasts and marriages the Muslims engaged professional cooks whose waza wan or dainty preparation were much sought after and relished. The Hindu professional cooks were adepts at preparing roganjosh; kalia, yakhni, and tabakmaz, till the end of 20<sup>th</sup> century these all dishes were become the part of waza wan of Muslims in Kashmir.

### **TEA**

The Kashmir's rich and poor passionately fond of tea, of which two kinds found their way into the markets of Kashmir by land transport direct from china. In 1875 bates wrote there were two kinds of tea, surati and sabiz. The surati was like English tea, and reached Kashmir



from Ladakh and the Punjab. The sabiz tea, on the other hand, was the famous brick tea, which came through Ladakh. In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the tea was exported from Assam and besides sabz tea, Lipton, saffron kahwa, milk kahwa tea was also served.

Formerly guests were served superior quality bakery products called bakir khani or kulcha. But with the establishment of hotels and sweet shops in the city the food habits of the people began to change slowly. Now cakes, biscuits, pastries, etc are now in extensive use on special occasions.

## **DRESS**

The dress of the common people in Srinagar, both male and female, commonly consists of a long loose wrapper (Pheran) and trousers. Pheran covers the body and the arms and falls below the calf of the leg. In winter, the people of Kashmir put on Pheran generally made of woolen cloth so as to keep themselves warm. Another change which was visible in the form of dress was the use of the hat and fur caps which gradually supplanted the turban (dastar). The fur caps were worn only by well-to-do people who could afford to pay exorbitant prices for them. The English dress was more in evidence among the educated classes. The usual headdress of Kashmiri little girls was skull caps. After marriage, Muslim girls would have, as her headgear a thicker turban (qasaba) attached with various pins and over it a part of country cloth (called pooch) to act.

The Pandit women's headgear was known as Taranga. It was a white turban which was skillfully set. Contact with the Punjabi, Hindu and Muslim women, however, brought about many changes in the mode of dress of the Kashmiri women. Not only qasaba and Taranga disappeared with the advent of the Dupatta but also Shalwar, Churi dar Pyjama and the frock were preferred because they permitted greater activity

One common dress of the Pandit women was lungi. This was a long piece of cotton cloth, and worn round the waist, over the Pheran. It is said that a Panditani never left her home without this girdle. This article of dress did not find favour with those who discarded the Pheran.

This complicated practice known as "wankapan" slowly disappeared with the increasing education among girls. Formerly the girls used to apply raw butter to their hair, but they developed a hatred for this practice when they began to use cosmetics. After setting up of different modern cloth shops in the cities and later in rural areas and by the impact of



outside world, cinemas, TV revolutionary changes took place in the dress of the people. Now women's have started to use the pherans of velvet, wool, cotton, polyester, tricot of different shades and colors. In which embroidery of gold stitches and silver stitches are used on the upper front and borders. Long coats were also used by high society and bureaucrats. Women's have given the names to their suits like three pieces, umbrella, Patiala etc. Kurta pajama, Jean pants, cotton pants, trousers, shirts of different clothes, t-shirts, cotton inner wears, jackets, and banyans became common dresses of young people.

## **POSITION OF WOMEN**

The occupation of women furnishes a subject of much interest and importance. Besides preparing food women's most laborious work was that of husking and grinding grain. The rice was cleaned in a wooden mortar, in which it was pounded with a heavy wooden pestle. It was a healthy work, which produced a fine physical development in those accustomed to the exercise. The women of the artisan class supplement their husband's work. For example, the porter's wife dug the clay for her husband and painted the pots with streaks of color before they were baked. The shawl industry gave work to a number of women in their homes. The "pashm" was given in its raw state of to these women who spun into the reed to different degrees of fineness. They sold it in small quantities to shopkeepers in the bazaar, from whom it was bought by the karkhandars and others. The decline of shawl industry however rendered hundreds of such women destitute and helpless. The beginning of industrialism gave scope to the labor of women. It is interesting to note that silk factory employed a large number of women.

In Kashmir rural society the women have been the boon of economic prosperity. They worked shoulder to shoulder with men in carrying out a multitude of agricultural operation from sowing to harvesting. In addition to this they also assisted in other pursuits like food production, fuel gathering and bee-keeping. They looked after domestic affairs. The tending and caring of cattle was her responsibility. It was she who gathered it to be used as manure in the fields.

Also, the Kashmiri women alongside, men-folk as washers, cleaners, milk-sellers, vegetable growers, and sellers, basket makers and flower vendors. They also manage shops and sold commodities like bread, butter, cheese, fruits and fish. Their activity did not stop here. One can easily find potters women making earthen utensils in their workshop locally known as



wan. Another class of women was known as gaan (prostitute). There were two ill-famed centers of prostitution in Srinagar e.g. Tashwan and Maisuma. The sale of young girls in Kashmir to established houses of ill-fame in Srinagar and India was both protected and encouraged by the Dogra rulers. The suppression of immoral traffic act of 1934 had a disastrous effect on a very number of prostitutes.

The pernicious custom of child marriage among the both the communities were eating into their vitals. However among the pundits, thanks to high degree of literary, there was an appreciable rise in the marriageable ages of both boys and girls. The Muslims particularly in the villages, stuck to the old custom. After independence, Kashmiri women got a boost when reform took place in various fields including the field of education which broke the shackles that bound women to traditional roles and conservative expectations. Many Kashmiri women took up jobs in various fields like , medicine ,teaching, journalism ,police , civil services , lawyers etc. and girls left no stone unturned.

### **RELIGIOUS CONDITIONS**

Out of a population of 8, 14,241, 52,576 are Hindus, 4,092 are Sikh, and the rest are Muslims, who thus form over 93 percent of the total population of the valley. At the census of 1890. Until the beginning of this century, there was not a single religious association in Srinagar, where people could discuss religious affairs and raise their voice against the superstitions practices. It is not, therefore, surprising that Srinagar did not see any religious reform movement worth mentioning till the dawn of this century. However, in Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign Husain Batku, a resident of Srinagar, attempted to preach what was termed 'Wahabi' doctrines. He raised a cry against pir-mureedi, superstitions, and rituals and denounced the worship of asthans (shrines). But the opposition of the local mullahs was so strong that the Maharaja was compelled to give orders for Husain's expulsion from the city. Husain Batku's mission was carried on by Sabzar Shah and Sidique Hassan Khan. They made the mohallas of Narwara in Srinagar a centre of their religious activities. Later, in the twenties of this century the 'Wahabis' founded the Anjuman-i-Ahl-i-Hadith which came in the limelight under the inspiring leadership of Maulvi Ghulam Nabi Mubaraki and Maulvi Nur-ud-din. The Anjuman's official organ was the Muslim. The paper aimed at the extirpation of social evils among the Muslim community.



It should be remembered that the 'Ahl-i-Hadith' represented an advanced school of Muslim thought. They confined themselves to the text of the Quran and Hadith (tradition) and relied upon individual judgment for their interpretation. They disowned the doctrine of Hayat-i-Nabi (the prophet being still alive and in touch with his followers). They believed that there could not consequently benefit each other. They stood for reform in Muslim manners, customs and life and aimed at the elimination of superstitions and rituals. They laid emphasis on the unity of Godhead, denounced the worship of pirs and advocated the abolition of anti-Islamic practices among the Muslims. The preaching's of the 'Ahl-i-Hadith' brought them into conflict with a great majority of the conservatives. For many years a heated debate took place in some mosques of Kashmir among the adherents of the shrines and the 'Ahl-i-Hadith' with regard to the religious issues. It is interesting to note that the 'Ahl-i-Hadith' was dubbed contemptuously as kutas by the devotees of the shrines and mullahs. So devoted were the Muslim masses to the priests that even the leaders of the Kashmir political movement had to seek the support of Mir Waiz Muhammad Yusuf Shah while using the religious places for the furtherance of their political objectives. Besides the 'Ahl-i-Hadith', Ahmediyas under the leadership of Maulvi Abdullah also did a lot of propaganda against the rituals. Though a very large majority of the Muslims of Kashmir remained uninfluenced, the religious reformers brought about a change in the attitude of many. Even many custodians of shrines admitted that 'Ahl-i-Hadith' ideas were gaining ground in Kashmiri. This leads us to the inference that the practice of tying knots at the gates of shrines must have died down among the 'Ahl-i-Hadith' families. Participation in the festivals in one way or the other was current to a great extent though side by side growing indifference towards them also existed.

As regards Kashmiri Pandits, no religious reforms took place among them during this period. Even the Arya Samaj which had denounced in the strongest terms the worship of idols' the performance of shradhas and old customs and beliefs outside the Valley could not achieve much in this direction in Kashmir owing to the hostility of the Brahman priests. It should however, be remembered that the Samaj did much to improve the social position of Kashmiri Pandit women. Towards the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the educated populations of both Muslims and Hindus have played an important role to reform their respective religion.



## **EDUCATION**

Modern education does not seem to have existed in Kashmir until the advent of Christian missionaries when a changed outlook gradually came into being. The makhtabs of Kashmir were generally affiliated to the mosques, where the boys were taught to read Arabic so that they might be able to read the Quran. Likewise the Kashmiris Pandits had their schools called patshalas where Sanskrit was taught to enable them to read the sacred books. Persian, introduced in Kashmir by the Muslim rulers, continued to remain the official language till 1907 when it was replaced by Urdu. Thus Persian was also taught in makhtabs and patshalas and both Hindus and Muslims showed a keen interest in learning Persian. Both boys and girls were interested to the care of the Maulvi or of the Pandit by their parents who taught them the fundamental rituals and principles of their religion.

The education of the pattern imparted by schools and colleges in the rest of the country began late in the State. The Mission School, the first to follow the University syllabus, was originally established by the Rev. J.S. Doxey in 1881, with only five boys on its roll. The good missionary content at having made a beginning and confident of its expansion persevered in this labour for two years after which he was succeeded by the Rev. J. Hintom Knowles who worked hard, and with his untiring zeal and tact the school made rapid progress. In 1892 when he handed over the charge to Rev. C. Tyndale Biscoe, the number of the roll was over 500. The school made sustained progress under Rev. Biscoe and produced boys not only educated in English and other subjects, but moulded in the best traditions of an English Public School.

The State School, a sister institution, run by the State government was established originally by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1874, but it was a school in which education was imparted in Sanskrit and Persian. In 1886, Dr. A. Mitra raised the status of this institution to a regular school introducing English teaching and imparting education according to the University curriculum. Both the schools turned out a large number of matriculates every year who clamored for government jobs, to be given to them in preference to the Punjabis. Education had made rapid progress in the State after 1931 and the number of students appearing in various university examinations was increasing in geometric progression. All the colleges in the State were affiliated to the Punjab University of Lahore. With the partition, the Indian Part of the University of Lahore. With the partition, the Indian part of the University had to



face strenuous times and to set itself up from scratch. It naturally created a great difficulty for the students' of the State. The Jammu and Kashmir University thus came into existence on 1 November 1948.

The Central Government extended its helping hand in setting up the University. Apart from financial aid from the Government, it received moral support from top ranking personalities in India. The first convocation in 1949 was addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari addressed its Con-convocation in 1950 and 1951 respectively. This University started on its career as an examining body, but slowly it was transformed into a teaching university. In recent years it had expanded into Arts, Science, Medical and Engineering Faculties and has its own enclave in charming surroundings on the western bank of Dal Lake.

After independence state and central governments took the various steps to modernize the education, various schools and colleges were established throughout the valley. The mass literacy which was during the first decade of 20<sup>th</sup> century were 0.10%, it rises up to above 50% in the 2001 census. Private schools have also played an important role in the growth of education in Kashmir.

## **MARRIAGE**

As regards marriage, boys and girls did not the freedom of selecting their spouses. The selection was the exclusive privilege of parents or the guardians as it was believed that the children, however, grown up they might be, would not, because of their inexperience, be able to make the correct choice. The unmarried people did not even participate in the discussion about the offers received from various household as this was regarded as an act of misbehavior. Among the Muslims each class would prefer to enter into matrimonial alliances with persons belonging to the same class. The sayyid families in particular endeavored to marry only in the sayyid families. But if suitable matches were not available, they did not hesitate to marry in other classes. The hanjis and the watalis, however, married only in their respective class, because they ranked last in the social hierarchy.

As compared to the Pundit's, the Muslims of the city spent little on marriages. Their main item of expenditure on marriage was on the wazwan (feast). Both the Muslims and Hindus gave sumptuous and prolonged feasts on the occasion of marriage. Dowry was practically non-existent among the Muslims, but among the Pundit's the system of dowry had almost



attained the force of law system of dowry seems to be largely a result of the rapid progress of western education among the pundits; for a young man who had done well at collage was a most desirable bridegroom, and naturally the price had tended to rise as steadily as the demand. The tyrannical custom which compelled a father to spend huge sums upon feastings, processions and dowry on the occasion of a daughter's wedding, pressed heavily on the poor. Most fathers were compelled to barrow huge sums of money and in consequence, passed the remainder of their lives in debt and worry. With the growth of prosperity and rising prices the nourish spent large sum on marriages and festivals. This led to over-spending by those who could not afford it. They had therefore to borrow money at exorbitant rates of interest and mortgage their immovable property. To the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the Muslims have started high expenditure on marriages besides waza wan, gold ornaments, precious gifts, expensive clothes, make up material and a huge amount was spent on marriages .dowry was also practiced by economically well to do, families selection of life partner was also enjoyed by the boys and girls, houses were decorated and shamiyana's etc were used.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this work an attempt has been made to trace the social life of the Kashmiri people from 1900-2000 A.D. During the period of our study, the people of Kashmir were passing through a transitional period and witness a considerable change in the social life on account of an introduction of social reform movements, which were launched by different organizations for the up-liftment of the people. Since the social reform movements were largely confined to the urban areas as such the rural population of Kashmir by and large was not benefited till the 80's of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Britisher's have played an important role on the Kashmir society, the introduction of modern education, games, clothes, dining habits, architecture and helped a great deal in emancipation of Kashmiris women. The elements of life viz. village community, joint family system, group feeling, simple life etc, which were vanished in cities later also followed by rural society. This century witness the several changes in the standard of life of the people. The economic prosperity, relations with outside world, and availability of goods changed the structure of furniture and other house hold goods. The structures of houses were changed, the dining habits, marriages became expensive, and also dress of the people also changed.



The Kashmiri people especially youths, adopt the new languages, new dresses and new life styles. All these developments created a situation in which the Kashmiri culture faced new challenges and new problems in modern times which it had not faced so far. The Urdu replaced the Persian as court language in early of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and after independence the democratic government has given the death blow to Kashmiri language, because it became neither an official language nor became the medium of instruction. On the other hand various poets and writers have written their works in Kashmiri, Urdu and English languages. The Sufiana Kalam, Kashmiri folk, Band Pather and other several arts, were ignored. With the development of education the fairs and festivals have lost importance. However, now government and youth realize the loss and steps were taken to save the cultural heritage of Kashmir. Cultural academy was established for this purpose which encouraged the growth and proliferation of new ideas.

## REFERENCES

1. Khan, Mohammad Ishfaq, "**History of Srinagar**" (1846-1947)
2. Bamzai, P.N.K. "**Socio-economic history of Kashmir**" (1846-1925)
3. Parvez, Ahmad, **Economy and society of Kashmir**, a study in change and continuity (1885-1925)
4. Veena Mathur, "**Position of women in ancient and early medieval Kashmir**", (Unpublished thesis submitted to Jammu University)
5. John Collett, —**A Gide for visitors to Kashmir**, Calcutta, Newman & Co.
6. Ernest. F. Neve, —**Beyond the Pir Panjal**, Salisbury Square, London, E.C. 1915
7. Foreign Deptt. Sec.31st. March 1848, file no's 60-77. **National Archives of India (NAI).**
8. Wakefield, M.D. —**The happy valley: sketches of Kashmir & the Kashmiris**, London Fleet Street, 1879,
9. Yattoo, G.N, — **J and K at galance**", Book Depot. Srinagar, 2010-2011.
10. McKee B. James, Sociology, —**The study of Society**, published by Ray Ashton, CBS College, 1981.
11. M.L Kapoor, —**Social and Economic history of J & K State**, Anmol publications 1992
12. Dabla Bashir Ahmad, Cultural Development in Kashmir, J K Book, 2010.



13. Raza, Monis —**The valley of Kashmir**, Vikas publishing house pvt, ltd. New Delhi, 1978.
14. Bamzai, P.N.K —**Socio- Economic History of Kashmir 1846-1925**,
15. Prem Nath Bazaz, “**The history of the struggle for freedom in Kashmir**”, National Book Foundation, Karachi, 1976,
16. Brinckman & Robert Thorp, —**Kashmir oppressed**, Weis publications Srinagar, 1996
17. Pandit prem Nath Bazaz, “**Inside Kashmir**”, Verinag publishers Mirpur, 1941
18. Sharma, Usha —**Cultural, Religious and Economic life of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh**, Radha publications, New Delhi.2001