

FIELD SURVEY ON HERITAGE PLACES OF SRINAGAR FOR ASSESSMENT OF THEIR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE

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ABSTRACT

In the literature, we come across terms National heritage site, Historic site, Cultural heritage, World Heritage Site, List of destroyed heritage, Food heritage, Heritage language, Industrial heritage, Natural heritage, Virtual Heritage, Inheritance, Heritage science and Heritage studies and their importance. Heritage is our past that has been preserved for the present and it will be inherited for the future generations. The architecture of Kashmir represents a traditional knowledge base that has evolved in response to the climatic conditions, the traditional lifestyle of the residents, and various natural threats in the form of earthquake, flood etc., affecting the region. It is unfortunate that in the present 'modern scientific age' we witness an eroding of this rich heritage. Srinagar city of Kashmir valley is well known for its rich heritage character with more than 1200 years of urban history. The field visits of the heritage places of Srinagar revealed that most of the monuments are in dilapidated condition. To retain its heritage character, the state government has implemented various conservation policies and identified various heritage zones in district Srinagar city in its Master Plan 2035. In this paper, on the basis of field survey, we discuss current status, significance of heritage places, measures and issues for conservation of heritage of Srinagar.

KEYWORDS: Srinagar, Kashmir, Heritage, Culture, Inheritance, Conservation.

INTRODUCTION

Kashmir once an independent country popularly known as the paradise on earth because of its beauty and people

(Kashmir information, 2018) situated on the Central Asian trade route-the famous silk route has been a stopover for caravans traveling between the expansive plains of India and the great civilization of China and the Central Asia. Consequently many traders, adventures, warriors and missionaries have passed through this beautiful land. The beautiful valley of Kashmir was known to ancient Greeks and Romans (Ptolemy's Geography and Histories of Herodotus). A great contribution to literature on Kashmir, its inhabitants, their culture, religion, arts, crafts, the architecture, living condition, trails and tribulations has been made in various accounts by foreigners. Kashmir was from the earliest period, a seat of learning and even today it offers a rich field of study for a Botanist and Zoologist, Geologist and Geographer, Archaeologist and a historian and the like. The earliest known inhabitants of Kashmir were Nagas around 2000 B.C. The Khasas, Dars, Bhuttas, Damars, Nishadas etc appeared later. The first known king of Kashmir was Gonanda and his successors were weak. The more known rulers of Kashmir after Gonanda-II were: Ashoka (273-232 B.C.), Kushan dynasty (around 100 C.E.), Mihira-kula (515-550 C.E.), Karkota dynasty (631 C.E.), Lalitaditya (724-761 C.E.), Avantivarman (855-883 C.E.), Uptala (upto 939 C.E.), Vyasaskaradeva (939-949 C.E.), Parva Gupta (949 C.E.), Ksema Gupta (950-958 C.E.), Didda (958-1003 C.E.), Samgramaraja (1003-1028 C.E.), Ananta (1028-1063), Kalsa (1063-1089 C.E.), Harsa (1089-1101 C.E.), Uccale (1101-1111 C.E.), Jaya Simha (1128-1155 C.E.), Bopadeva (1171-1286), Damra dynasty (1286-1320 C.E.), Rinchana (1320-1323 C.E.), Shah Mir (1339-1342 C.E.), Shihab-ud-Din (1354-1373 C.E.), Qutub-ud-Din (1373-1389 C.E.), Sultan Sikander (1389-1413 C.E.), Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1420-1470 C.E.), Mirza Haider Daughlat (1541-1551 C.E.), Chak dynasty (1561-1586 C.E.), Mughals (1586-1753 C.E.), Afgan's (1753-1819 C.E.), Sikhs (1819-1846 C.E.), Dogras (1846-1947 C.E.). It is a matter of pride that Kashmir has written history thousand years earlier than many modern developed countries. Kashmir also famous for cultural heritage is the treasure house for archaeologists, historians, researchers surrounded by snow-clad mountains and ever green forests on all sides. It is stated that Kashmir valley was previously a lake and the lake was worn out by the great Rishi Kashyapa, son of Marichi, son of Brahma, by cutting the gap in the hills of Baramulla. The language spoken by People of Kashmir valley is Kashmiri (Koshur). The carpet, shawl weaving, paper machie, music like Wanvun, Rouf and Koshur Sufiaana forms a very important part of Kashmiri identity. Heritage is deemed to mean those buildings, artifacts, structures, areas and precincts that are of historic, aesthetic, architectural or cultural significance and should include natural features within such areas or precincts of environmental significance or scenic beauty such as sacred groves, hills, hillocks, water bodies (and the areas adjoining the same), open areas, wooded areas, etc. The culture of Kashmir valley sprang from Aryans and was influenced during the course of history by Jews, Greeks, Chines, Turks, Muslims, and what not. Heritage comprises archaeological sites, remains, ruins, and monuments protected by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and their counterparts in the States, and also a large number of unprotected buildings, groups of buildings, neighborhoods, and public spaces

including landscapes and natural features which provide character and distinctive identity to cities. The three key concepts need to be understood to determine whether a property is worthy of listing as a Heritage are namely according to Historic significance, Historic integrity and Historic context. The valley of Kashmir possess a wide range of varied architectural monuments that reveal important historical facts about different time periods, religions and rulers spread over different centuries. Srinagar is the largest city of Kashmir valley with population more than 10 lakhs. The earliest records, such as Kalhana's Rajatarangini, the name Siri-nagar (or Sri-nagara) is mentioned, which in turn is a local transformation of the Sanskrit name Sūrya-nagar, meaning "City of the Sun". The name Sri-nagar is also used in the records of the Chinese Tang Dynasty. Alternatively, it may have drawn its name from two Sanskrit words: śrī (venerable), and nagar (city), which would make it the "City of Wealth". It lies in the Kashmir Valley on the banks of the Jhelum River, a tributary of the Indus, Dal and Anchar lakes. The city is known for its natural environment, gardens, waterfronts, houseboats, traditional Kashmiri handicrafts and dried fruits. The district Srinagar of Kashmir valley is well known for its heritage character with more than 1200 years of urban history. The main agencies concerned with the conservation of heritage are: Heritage Conservation Committee (HCC) under Ministry of Urban Development, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State Archaeological Department, Govt. of NCT of Delhi, Srinagar Development Authority (SDA), Trust and Wakf Boards. The three major factors responsible for the deterioration of heritage buildings are (a) Natural Factors : Flood, Moisture, Rainstorm, Ground salts and water, Windstorm, Air Pollutant, Solar Radiation, Temperature, Vibration and Earthquake (b) Social Factors: Fire, Urban Development, Vandalism and Floods (c) Biological Factors: Biological agencies such as mosses, fungus, algae, and insects affect construction materials like timber, bricks, etc. To retain its heritage character, the government of state had implemented various conservation policies and identified various heritage zones in the Srinagar city in its Master Plan 2035. In view of the literature (*The Calcutta Review*, 1872; Muhibul Hassan, 1959; Koul, 1971; Khan, 1978; Kak, 2002; UNESCO, 2006; Alkazi, 2014 Khan, 2017 etc), we conducted this field study with the main purpose to examine the current status of heritage places of Srinagar and discuss their social, political, economic and religious significance.

METHODOLOGY

In this study, field survey was conducted during 2014-2020; frequent visits were made at all the historical places of district Srinagar of Kashmir valley. Photographs were taken by the researchers and were compared to the earlier photographs that were available on different websites and in the literature. Personal interactions were made with the caretakers, employees, elders and people surrounding the areas visited. The people living around these

places were also contacted during the present study to know about the role of these heritage places they play in social and economic life of the people. The observations were recorded and reported in this study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The field visit revealed that the most of the historical places in Srinagar are in depilated conditions and little care is being taken to save them. It was noticed that few historical places have not been renovated over the years. Furthermore, political problems of Jammu and Kashmir has caused great damage to these historical places. The buildings also suffered due to earthquakes and floods. The lack of manpower is witnessed the main issue for maintaining our historical places in Srinagar. The old city of Srinagar is a must visit location which displays a very splendid wooden work throughout the city. There are many mosques that promise tranquility like never before. The old city also offers many sightseeing and viewpoints that could amaze anyone. The main historical places in Srinagar, their history and present status is discussed below:

JAMIA MASJID: The Jamia Masjid at Srinagar is the most impressive and marvelous representation of wooden structure in Kashmiri style of architecture. It was built by Sultan Sikandar in 1394 C.E. father of great Sultan Zain-al-Abidin who laid its foundation in 1398 C.E. and completed one of the most extraordinary achievements of early Islamic art in the Kashmir valley in the year 1402 C.E. The engineer of the Masjid was Sadar al-din Harasani (Mufti Zia al-din, 1990), it was burnt after a time and rebuilt by Sultan Hassan (1472-84 C.E.) adding to its aesthetic attractions. Jamia Masjid burnt the 2nd time in a massive fire on the occasion of Eid (Tazuk-I-Jahangiri, 1914) and by the order of Mughal ruler Jahangir, Malik Hyder Chadura rebuilt the Masjid in 1620 C.E./1029 A.H) as witnessed by the inscription on the gate of the Masjid showing Malik Hyder Chadura built it. The Jamia Masjid caught fire third time during the reign of Mughal ruler Aurangzeb in 1672 C.E. when Governor of Kashmir was Iftikhar Khan (1672-75 C.E.) and it was reconstructed using the bricks and wooden pieces of equal size of bricks as was in original construction in the fourteenth century (Nicholls, 1906; Hugel, 1972).

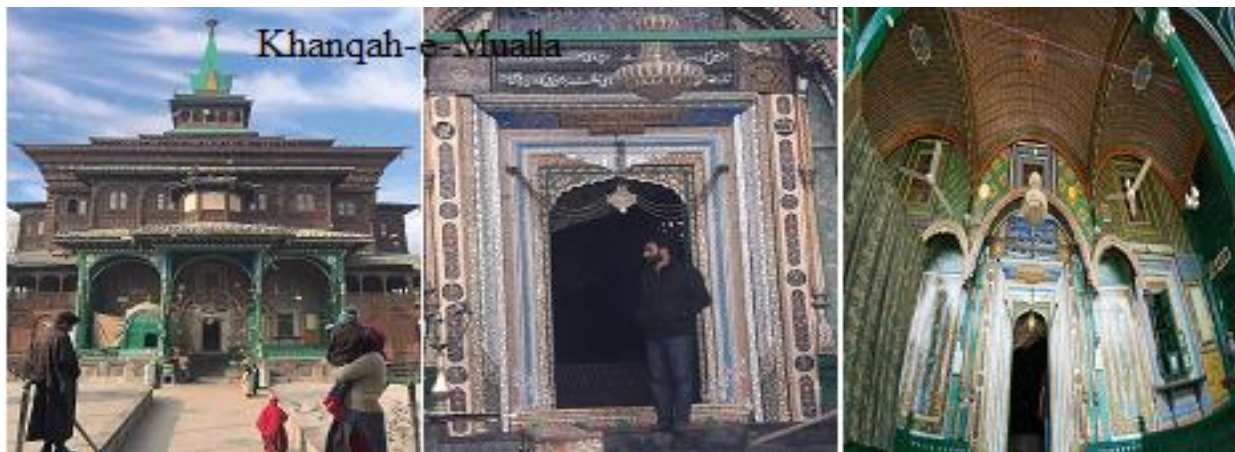
The Jamia Masjid is a quadrangle, roughly square in plan, composed of four huge and wide colonnades. It is noticed that the space covered with pyramidal colonnade resembles with the architectural style of the Stupa court of the Buddhist monasteries or the prototype of Hindu Temples and principal features of Jamia Masjid are its four *minars*, one in the middle of each side, covered by a series of pyramidal roofs, which terminate in an open turret crowned by a high pinnacle. The western colonnade of Jamia Masjid Srinagar represents the *mehrab* and the other three, eastern, northern and southern colonnades have arched entrance. Jamia Masjid also has a stone slab

with Persian inscription in Nastaliq script and the centre of the Masjid is an open space with a large tank or *Houze* represents a fountain in the centre which also serves purpose of ablution for Muslims. The Jamia Masjid Srinagar with its unique architecture has majestic 378 wooden deodar pillars, each one an entire tree-trunk of deodar, even in its present condition reflects a remarkable current of religious fervor witnessed in the Kashmir valley soon after its occupation by the Muslims. The Jamia Masjid Srinagar has religious, business as well as political importance.



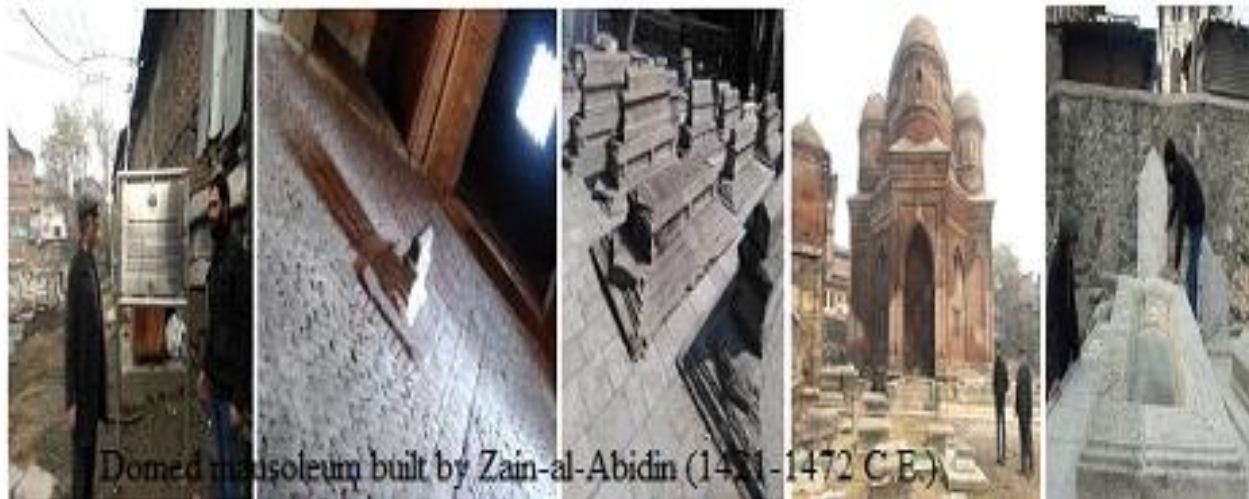
KHANQAH-E- MULLA: The Masjid of Shah Hamdan or Khanqah-e-Mualla is one of the oldest Muslim structures in Kashmir situated on the banks of river Jhelum above Zaina Kadal. Many saints like Bulbul Shah, Syed Jalal Uddin Bukhari, Syed Taj Uddin, Syed Hussain samnani, and Yousuf came to the Valley of Kashmir to preach and to propagate Islam but the one who was very influential in spreading Islam in Kashmir and had a major hand in shaping the culture of the Kashmir valley was Ali (RA), popularly known as Shah Hamadan (king of Hamadan, Iran) or Amir-e-Kabir (The great commander). He was born on 12 Rajab-ul-Marjab 714 Hijri (12th October 1314 C.E.) in a noble family in Hamadan (Iran) did not stay in the Kashmir valley permanently but visited on various occasions. First during the reign of Sultan Shahab Uddin in 774 Hijri he came, stayed for six months and left it. Secondly, he visited in 1781 Hijri when Qutub Uddin was a ruler, stayed for a year and tried to extend the movement to every nook and corner of Kashmir valley, returned to Turkistan via Ladakh in 783 Hijri. Third, he visited in 785 Hijri with the intention to stay for a longer period but had to return owing to illness. Amir-e-Kabir spent a great traveler spent day and night during his stay in Kashmir in Tabligh, establishment of Khanqah, mosques and libraries for books on religion in such times when there was no well knit. Amir-e-Kabir's (RA) greatest contribution was the character building of the Kashmiri people to literate them from the fear of the new system and their love for the older one. Khanqah-e-Mualla is a typical example of the wooden architecture of the Valley. The Masjid was originally constructed by Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 C.E) in 1395 C.E by the orders of Mir Muhammad Hammadani. The foundation of Masjid is composed of the material remains of ancient monuments. It is nearly square in plan and is double storied. The lower portion is comprised of a large hall which is decorated with finely carved wood while the upper story is quite simple. There are fourteen chambers out of

which seven number are at each southern and northern side of the hall. The decorated wooden pillars support the entire hall from the four corners. Each pillar is about 20 ft in height. However, the Masjid with its eight sided pillars with foliated bases and capitals, arched and recessed *mehrab*, paneled walls, painted ceilings in multicolored designs and the valuable prayer carpets of different colors on the floor give it an air of elegance and dignity. The tomb chamber is decorated with glass and glazed work. The Khanqah-e-Mualla in Srinagar has undergone lots of additions and alterations. The Masjid was destroyed by fire for the first time in the days of Sultan Hassan Shah (1772-84 C.E.). He rebuilt it in 1479 C.E. The Masjid was burnt for the second time in the days of Abul Barakat Khan, the Mughal deputy governor of Kashmir and was again rebuilt by the order of Mohammad Shah in 1733 C.E. In fact, Shah Hamadhan (RA) was a social reformer besides being a preacher. Among seven hundred followers who accompanied him to Kashmir valley, were men of arts and crafts who flourished here. They introduced the Central Asian Architecture in the Kashmir valley and when fused with the Kashmiri architecture, gave rise to a new style. They popularized Shawl-making, cloth-weaving, pottery and calligraphy. It is believed that because of Shah Hamadhan (RA) the wonderful arts and crafts turned Kashmir into a mini Iran and brought about a revolution in the thinking process of the people of Kashmir. The sacred relics of this place include the Holy Prophet Muhammad's (peace be upon him) flag, the pillar of the Holy Prophets (peace be upon him) tent, and Shah Hamadhan's walking stick.



TOMB OF ZAIN AL-ABIDIN'S MOTHER: Tomb of great Kashmiri King Zain-al-Abidin is one of the oldest Muslim buildings of masonry style. The high and massive domed mausoleum built by Zain-al-Abidin (1421-1472 C.E.) in 1427 C.E. entombing the mortal remains of his mother. Many greats are buried here as Sultan Sikander, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (Budshah) and his mother and reputed nobles of the time. Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was reputed for being enlightened and for restructuring Kashmir, inviting artists, architects, craftsmen and artisans from Iran, Turan, Hindustan and Turkmenistan to prosper through their skills and settle in Kashmir. He was aptly surnamed –Budshah- The Great King! The tomb has unique blue tiles embedded in the brick masonry.

that give this domed structure a distinctive look. The plinth of tomb is like few surviving Buddhist Viharas but the brick structure above the plinth is built in the style of Muslim tomb. In plan it is square, with the angles cut off and replaced by rectangular projections. The whole structure consists of a single chamber in the middle and is surrounded by five cupolas, four small and one large central dome. All the domes however possess more or less the same features. This feature of cupolas at four corners with a dome in the center appears for the first time on this building in the history of Indo-Muslim architecture. Each wall face has been provided with an arched opening. The inner doorway of the structure is in the semi-circular form and the exterior walls are studded at intervals, with glazed blue bricks.



DASTGEER SAHB: Dastgeer sahib popularly known in Kashmir valley is a 200 year old Sufi shrine situated in Khanyar Srinagar. There's an interesting story behind this Sufi shrine of Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani in Srinagar although he never stayed here. Saleem Beg, chairman of Indian National Trust For Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH), Jammu and Kashmir chapter says: An Afghan traveller on a visit to Kashmir valley offered the then governor of the state, Sardar Abdullah Khan, with a holy relic belonging to the renowned sufi saint Syed Abdul Qadir Jeelani. The holy relic was deposited with Syed Buzargh Shah, a prominent Qadri order sufi of that time. A shrine was constructed at Khanyar Srinagar in 1806 A.D. from where the relic was displayed on various religious festivals. The shrine was expanded in 1877 A.D. by Khwaja Sanaullah Shawl. The wooden shrine was an architectural marvel of Kashmir and was covered with traditional Khatamband ceilings which were unfortunately destroyed in fire. Dastgeer sahb shrine which was more than 200 years old ancient shrine was gutted in a devastating fire on June 24, 2012 and on the same old pattern it was rebuilt. Dastgeer sahb is the center of activity of Khanyar area and is surrounded by a large market. There are five graves situated inside shrine and it said that it is of the one members of Sheikh Syed Abdul Qadir Jelani. The shrine was constructed again after fire

incident on the same pattern. It has the old Quran written by Hazrat Abu Bakr Sidiqq (r.a), Hazrat Ali (r.a) and the Mouia Pak, a piece of hair from Sheikh Syed Abdul Jelani (r.a). The shrine receives a trickle of people round the year but the massive rush is just on one day, 11 Rabi-us-Sani.



TOMB OF MADIN SAHIB: The tomb is an example of masonry style situated at Zadibal, Srinagar and is supposed to have been built about 848 A.H/1444 C.E. during the reign of Zain al-Abidin. This is the tomb of one of the great Sufi Madin Sahib, who is said to come as an envoy to Kashmir from Madina in the reign of Sultan Sikandar (1389-1413 C.E). It has a unique square shaped tile work with different colors on the same tile, which according to sources is said to have introduced from Persia. The important feature of the building was the representation of a beast with the body of a leopard and the trunk of a human being, apparently shooting with bow and arrow at its own tail which ends in a kind of Dragon's head while nearby a fox was quietly looking on from among the flowers and cloud forms. According to sources the use of cloud forms and dragon's head are of Chinese and Persian influence. Wish this place may be open for public as it is unfortunate no one is allowed to visit this historical place due to misunderstanding.



MAKHDOOM SAHB QILLA: Makhdoom Sahib Qilla is on the southern side of the Hari Parbat. Nestled in the hillside, this magnificent shrine of Sheikh Hamza Makhdum or Makhdoom Sahib is considered one of the most sacred shrines in Kashmir. Multi-storeyed and pillared, the monument not only exhibits a remarkable architectural style but is thronged by people from all faiths, throughout the year especially on annual day (Urs) that is on 24th Safar. . Inside the shrine is a narrow water channel. The entrance has a dome inside the main structure, reminiscent of a mix of Mughal and Sikh architecture while the ‘ornate corbels’ are something to watch out for along with Khatamband decorated ceiling and marble trellis work. Kathi Darwaza was built in the 16th century and this large stone gateway was once part of Srinagar's ancient walls. It is unfortunate that illegal constructions have damaged this ancient wall. Gurdwara Chhatti Padshahi is another shrine on this hill, worshipped as one of the most revered Sikh shrines in Kashmir. It is believed that the sixth guru of Sikhs, Guru Hargobind travelled through Kashmir. Situated near Kathi Darwaza, it is built entirely in the Sikh architectural style of Gurdwaras. The story goes that the 6th Guru paid a visit to an ardent blind disciple Bag Bhari who had prepared a garment-Khadar Chola-in wait for the Guru, who granted her wish for a vision of himself with a water fountain, struck from the ground. The Makhdoom Sahb Qilla has very religious, historic and social significance as people from different religions used to meet frequently because of having their worship places around same Qilla.



KALAIE, BADAMWARI, NIGEEN LAKE: The fort of Mukhdoon sahb shrine is surrounded by fragrant almond orchards known as Badamwari and their blooming is a celebration every year. The fort is also surrounded by a wall known as Kalaie, unfortunately the wall is breathing its last due to negligence of government and responsible citizens. The famous Nigeen lake which has importance as tourists as well as fisheries point of view is viewed from this place. The tourists visiting Kashmir love to stay on houseboats around this lake so it is very important from tourist and fisheries point of view. It is unfortunate that Kalaie is encroached, people around or govt hardly cares for it.



ROZA BAL SRINAGAR: The Roza Bal is the name of a shrine located in the Khanyar quarter in Downtown area of Srinagar in Kashmir valley. The word *roza* means tomb, the word *bal* mean place. Locals believe a sage is buried here, Yuzasafor Yuz Asaf (or Youza Asouph), alongside another Muslim holy man, Mir Sayyid Naseeruddin. The shrine Roza Bal was relatively unknown until the founder of the Ahmadiyya movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, claimed in 1899 that it is actually the tomb of Jesus. This view is maintained by Ahmadis today, though it is rejected by the local Sunni caretakers of the shrine, one of whom said "the theory that Jesus is buried anywhere on the face of the earth is blasphemous to Islam." The structure stands in front of a Muslim cemetery consisting of a low rectangular building on a raised platform, surrounded by railings at the front and an entry. Within is a shrine to Youza Asouph. The building also houses the burial tomb of a Shia Muslim saint, Mir Sayyid Naseeruddin, a descendant of Imam Musa-Raza, 8th Imam of the Shia Muslims whose shrine is in Mashhad. The structure is now maintained by a board of directors consisting of Sunni Muslims as previously it was maintained by the local community. According to Fida Hassnain, a supporter of Ahmadi beliefs, the tomb contains a rock carving that is said to show feet bearing crucifixion wounds and the body is buried according to what Hassnain considers are the Jewish tradition of directions and not according to the Islamic tradition. In the history of Kashmir there is no record of the shrine during Kashmir's Buddhist period, nor during the Kashmir Sultanate (1346–1586).



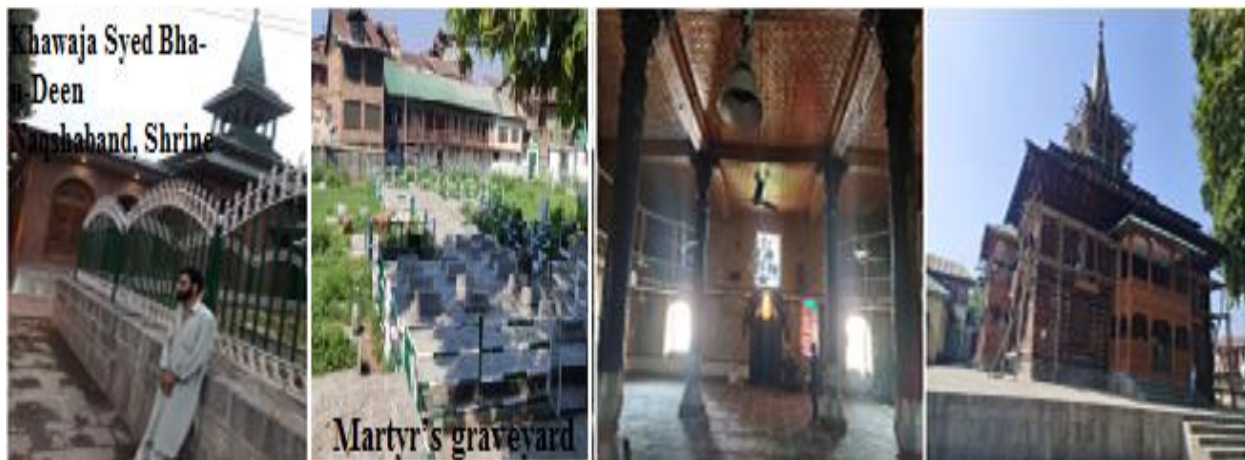
AALI MASJID: The largest mosque in Srinagar is named Aali Masjid. Sultan Hassan Shah's rule saw the building of this mosque way back in the year of 1471. The Mosque is a fine illustration of the local timber structural design of Kashmir.



PATHAR MASJID: The largest surviving example of Mughal architecture in Kashmir valley is Pather Masjid (literally Stone Masjid) also known as Shahi Masjid (Ghulam Muhiuddin Sufi, 1948) located in Zaina-Kadal Srinagar. Pather Masjid polished grey lime –stone, built by Nūr Jahan, the wife of Mughal Emperor Jahangir; in 1622 C.E. is believed to be constructed under the supervised of the renowned architect and a well-known Mughal historian Malik Hyder Chadura. The construction of the Pather Masjid has been undertaken on the plinth of heavy stone boulders used as foundation, a few feet deeper from ground level and the enclosure of the Masjid has been executed in bricks. In this Masjid there are nine horizontally constructed arches in the facade, the middle one being the largest and on both the northern and eastern sides of the prayer hall are windows openings executed in stones. The roof of the Masjid consists of twenty-seven domes, the central one of which is the largest was laid out by stone slabs and the gaps were filled with terracotta pipes. The enclosure wall of Pather Masjid is built of brick masonry, with a coat of lime plaster. Pather masjid was once a political centre of Kashmir but at present it is not protected as it should have been.



NAQSHABAND SHRINE: The Naqshaband shrine is named after the well known Bukhara mystic, Khawaja Syed Bha-u-Deen Naqshaband, the founder of a sufi order who never visited Kashmir but his followers made a Khankah in his name and in the mausoleum one of his descendants Khawaja Moin-Ud-Din lies buried. The area in which this shrine is built was called Sikander-pora because it was built by Sultan Sikander (1389-1413) and a garden during the Chak times was built by Sultan Hussain Chak (1563-1570) in this area. It is in Nawhatta area on the road between the Dastageer sahib and the Jamia Masjid Srinagar. A part of its compound was converted into Martyr's graveyard in 1931. The market in the vicinity of shrine is named after the saints shrine as Khawaja Bazar. This 17th-century shrine mainly wooden shrine has some fine panels done in the pinjra-kari style and it consists of alternating layers of wood and brick, to mitigate the impact of earthquakes. The holy relic of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was kept in this shrine initially. The historical place is not well maintained as we notice cattle's roaming inside the shrine area in presence of people who are supposed to take care of this historical place. The urs of Naqashband sahb is observed on the 3rd day of the Hijiri month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.



DARGAH HAZRATBAL: On the left bank of Dal Lake lies the most peaceful and holy place of Kashmir the Dargah Hazratbal that holds very high reputation by all Muslims of the valley. The shrine houses an important relic Moi-e-Muqaddas sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) took approximately 11 years to complete the Mosque and it is the only domed Mosque in Srinagar which offers such an enchanting vista of lake and mountains that has made it so serene. Even the entrance makes visitor a gape with the view of Nishat Mughal Garden. Hazratbal is an epitome of love and respect for Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) by Muslims. According to legend, the sacred hair of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) was brought to India by Syed Abdullah in 1635, a purported descendant of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) who left Medina and settled in Bijapur, near Hyderabad. The sacred hair was inherited by Syed Abdullah's son Syed Hamid after his death. The Mughal conquered of the region and they stripped Syed of his family estates. He was unable to care

holy relic so sold relic to a Kashmiri businessman Khwaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai who was later imprisoned by . Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and holy relic was sent to the Shrine of Khwaja Moin-ud-Din Chishti in Ajmer. Aurangzed later released the businessman and sent him home with the holy relic along with an escort. He died on the way and in the year 1700 the holy relic alongwith dead body of Khawaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai reached Kashmir. The holy relic was kept in Naqashband sahb shrine but there was not enough space to accommodate the crowd that came to see the holy relic so Mughal Governor of Kashmir donated Sadiq Khan Bagh present Hazratbal Shrine for it. Inayat Begum, daughter of Khawaja Nur-ud-Din Eshai became the custodian of holy relic, established shrine and since then her male descendants have been caretakers of the holy relic. Dargah Hazratbal at present besides religious place is also a good business centre as thousands of people offer Friday prayer here throughout the year. *The most Holy Hair is displayed to the public only on special occasions.* The shrine receives a trickle of people round the year for religious performance, *picnic of students, ritual of Zar Kasai or Mundan (the first hair cut of the new born child, as performing this ritual in this shrine is considered many people sacred), economic activities and social gathering.*



SHANKARACHARYA HILL AND TEMPLE: The Shankaracharya Temple is said to be built around 200 BC by Jaluka, the son of Emperor Ashoka, is considered sacred by not just Hindus but also Buddhists. This temple in Srinagar is one of the most famous holy sites in Srinagar and is situated at an elevation of 1100 feet. Dedicated to Lord Shiva, it stands atop the Shankaracharya Hill, known as Takht-e-Sulaiman. The panoramic view from the top of this hill is stunning; visitors can have a beautiful view of the snow covered mountains of Pir Panjal mountain range. The temple is constructed on an elevated octagonal plane, which can be easily reached by steps. Tourists can also witness a modern ceiling and Persian inscriptions inside the main temple. There are 243 steps leading up to the temple area and another 8-10 steps from there to the temple hall.

Entrance to the hill is guarded by military officers and cars are not permitted post 5.00PM. However, at present the temple remains open from 6:00 AM to 8:00PM and the transport is available upto to the temple. The area around this hill contains a good number of medicinal plants which increases its importance.



DAL LAKE: Dal is a lake in District Srinagar (Dal Lake is a misnomer as Dal in Kashmiri means lake), the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir. The urban lake, which is the second largest in the state, is integral to tourism and recreation in Kashmir and is named the "Jewel in the crown of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel". The lake is also an important source for commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting. The shore line of the lake, is about 15.5 kilometres (9.6 mi), is encompassed by a boulevard lined with Mughal era gardens, parks, houseboats and hotels. Scenic views of the lake can be witnessed from the shore line Mughal gardens, such as Shalimar Bagh and Nishat Bagh built during the reign of Mughal Emperor Jahangir and from houseboats cruising along the lake in the colourful shikaras. During the winter season, the temperature sometimes reaches -11°C (12°F), freezing the lake. The lake covers an area of 18 square kilometres (6.9 sq mi) and is part of a natural wetland which covers 21.1 square kilometres (8.1 sq mi), including its floating gardens. The floating gardens, known as "Rad" in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August. The wetland is divided by causeways into four basins; *Gagribal*, *Lokut Dal*, *Bod Dal* and *Nagin* (although Nagin is also considered as an independent lake). Lokut-dal and Bod-dal each have an island in the centre, known as *Rup Lank* (or *Char Chinari*) and *Sona Lank* respectively. At present, the Dal and its Mughal gardens, Shalimar Bagh and the Nishat Bagh on its periphery are undergoing intensive restoration measures to fully address the serious eutrophication problems experienced by the lake. Massive investments of approximately US\$275 million are being made by the Government to restore the lake to its original splendor.



MUGHAL GARDENS: The Mughal Gardens of Kashmir valley are an exceptional testimony of the creative and innovative ingenuity demonstrated by the Mughals in taking maximum advantage of the rising slopes of the mountains and the natural setting to fulfill their extraordinary landscape ambitions and needs. The Mughal gardens demonstrate the excellent engineering skills of the Mughals in making optimum use of the difficult topography and abundant supply of water. These gardens are unique and most representative surviving ensembles of a period of prolific activity that saw the creation of over 700 gardens in Kashmir during the Mughal Period. The methods and traditions employed in the creation and development of the gardens and their wider landscape settings are significant examples of the interactions between people and the natural environment. The existing continuity in land use and management of the gardens and, most importantly, their wider landscape settings is a significant tradition within the context of safeguarding the environment under growing pressures of urban development's and changes. The Mughal gardens of Srinagar are given below:

SHALIMAR BAGH: Early origins of the Shalimar Bagh garden and cultural landscape go as far back as the 6th C. As it is believed that at Shalimar a villa was built by Pravarassena II in the late 6th Century, when the garden was a sacred site. The small village at the site retained the name Shalimar, while the villa and garden vanished. The great Muslim King of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin, is said to have created the canal and a bund (embankment) to Shalimar. The Farah Bakhsh, the 'Joy-Imparting' garden or lower garden of Shalimar Bagh was created by Emperor Jahangir around 1620 C.E. The construction was overseen by Prince Khurram, later by Shah Jahan who added the Fayz Bakhsh, the 'Bounty-Bestowing' garden or the *zenana* to the earlier Farah Bakhsh and the work was carried out around 1630 by Zafar Khan, the Mughal governor of Kashmir and included the building of the black marble pavilion in the *zenana*. Shalimar garden like the Nishat Bagh was also developed along the lines of traditional *chahar bagh* concept. The present size of Shalimar garden measures approximately 594 x 250 m and represent five main terraces that make up two and a half *chahar baghs*. The whole of the royal garden was

divided into two major parts as per the requirement of the royalty. The lower portion of garden, comprising the first three terraces was the *Diwan-i-Aam* where the emperor used to hold public audience and the upper two terraces were exclusively for the Emperor and his courtiers and hence rightly called the *Diwan-i-Khas*. These two parts were screened by means of a thick masonry wall having two similar gateways at each side of the water channel. This area was also called the *zenana* and, as the name suggests, was a private zone for the Empress and her ladies.

Shalimar garden is more pretentious in architectural quality as compared with its other parallels in Kashmir as nearly all the terrace edges at the Shalimar Bagh have something interesting to present in the form of pavilions, pools, or water cascades. The two most important structures within the Shalimar Bagh are the Pink Pavilion, in the *Diwan-i-Aam* zone of the garden located over the water channel of the second terrace is a rectangular open pavilion constructed in traditional *badshahi* bricks. The significant architectural details of the Pavilion comprise the *papier mache* ceilings, the carved columns, brackets and railings made of stone and the Black Pavilion (also an open Pavilion), located in the *Diwan-i-Khas*, rectangular in plan, is located on the fourth terrace in the *zenana*. Constructed principally in brick masonry, the walls of the Pavilion have stone facing, with recessed niches and *naqashi* (paintings) on walls. Outstanding workmanship is displayed in the carvings of the stone columns and brackets around the Pavilion. The name, Black Pavilion, is related to the stone used for the walls and columns, which appears very black when polished. The enclosed Shalimar garden has six watch towers; at each of its four corners and also in the middle. The outstanding quality of Shalimar Bagh lies in the synthesis of its landscape, architectural features hence it should be valued for the fact that it is amongst the very few surviving authentic Mughal gardens that were developed for pleasure, enjoyment and also for holding Court. The garden is visited thousands of tourists throughout the year so has very importance in economic point of view. The Shalimar garden of Srinagar Kashmir is more beautiful than the Mughal garden Shalimar of Lahore Pakistan reported by people who have visited both Mughal gardens.



NISHAT: It is reported that Asaf Khan, the brother of Nur Jahan, designed the Nishat Bagh of Kashmir in 1633 C.E. Nishat Bagh is a Mughal garden built on the eastern side of the Dal Lake, close to the Srinagar city in Kashmir. It is the second largest Mughal garden in the Kashmir Valley which is visited by visitors as well as locals throughout the year.



HARWAN: Harwan garden is a picturesque natural garden, extensive picnic spot, situated at a distance of 15 km from Srinagar. A channel from neighboring dam (Dachigam Nallah) passes through the middle of the Harwan garden flanked by age old Chinar tree on one side. The garden has neat and clean concrete pathway with arched gates. There are climbing roses that adorn the arched gates and eventually enhanced the beauty of the Harwan garden. The attractive flower beds all around the garden can captivate the soul of the visitors. This garden is more preferred to visit by the families due to its cleanliness and peaceful environment. The newly wedded people along with family, school childrens, tourists visit this place throughout the year. This place is preferred many people as compared to other Mughal gardens due to its peaceful environment.



CHASHMA SHAHI: The garden was developed on the orders of Emperor Shah Jahan in 1632 C.E. by Ali Mardan Khan around an abundant spring emerging from the slopes of the Zabarwan Mountains. The waters of the spring are renowned for their cool and rejuvenating qualities. Oriented on the north-south axis, the garden is arranged on three ascending terraces. The total area within the rectangular garden perimeter is approximately 1.73 acres with a width of 70.83 m and length of 122.81 m, approximately. The spring is sheltered under a pavilion which is of a later Kashmiri period. The water from the spring, located at the uppermost edge of the garden, is led through narrow water channels that drop sharply in the form of cascades to successive lower terrace levels. The defining feature of this garden is its very high terraces and strong Mughal character of its gateway, cascades and retaining walls. Chashma Shahi continues to retain the natural spring around which it was built and is unique for its high terraces, and distant, yet outstanding, views of the Dal Lake from its terraces. The Chashma Shahi garden is known to be at its best during late afternoons and evenings. This garden stands out from the rest of the gardens for its narrow rills and singular fountains within its pools - adopting the typology of early Mughal gardens of India. It is visited by visitors as well as local people throughout the year.



PARI MAHAL: Pari Mahal is also located west of the city centre of Srinagar, near Chasma Shahi, on the slopes of the Zabanwan Mountains. Prince Dara Shukoh, the eldest son of Mughal Emperor Shah Jahan, built the gardens around 1650 C.E. It was built at the site of the ruins of a Buddhist Monastery and as a residential School of Sufiism at the instance of his revered spiritual tutor Mullah Shah Badakhshi. It is believed that Pari Mahal was constructed for astronomical observations and teachings or astrological calculations under the Mughals. Dara Shukoh named it after his wife Nadira Begum, supposed to be known as Pari Begum, the daughter of Prince Parviz, a son of Jahangir. Pari Mahal has a domed ceiling with gardens laid out on six terraces around. Arched retaining walls support the terraces, which vary in width. The garden is 122 m by 62.5 m at its widest. The terraces can be accessed via sets of steps on their corners. A pavilion or *baradari* can be found on the fourth terrace and another one connects the fifth and sixth terrace. The garden is entered from the fourth terrace where

there are a series of entrance buildings, which are believed to have contained a *hamman*. The gardens are said to have been watered by a nearby spring. There are water tanks on the terraces, but unlike most Mughal Gardens in Kashmir, the garden contains no water channels and cascades (*chadars*) that feed the water tanks. Instead water is supplied through a system of underground pipes.



TULIB GARDEN: Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip garden previously Model Floriculture Center, is a tulip garden in Srinagar, Kashmir. It is the largest tulip garden in Asia spread over an area of about 30 hectares. It is situated on the foothills of Zabarwan Range with an overview of Dal Lake. The garden was opened in 2007 with the aim to boost floriculture and tourism in Kashmir Valley. The garden is built on a sloping ground in a terraced fashion consisting of seven terraces. Apart from tulips, many other species of flowers hyacinths, daffodils and ranunculus have been added as well. Tulip festival is an annual celebration that aims to showcase the range of flowers in the garden as a part of tourism efforts by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir. It is organized during the onset of spring season in Kashmir valley. The Tulip Festival is being organized generally for 15 days from 1 to 15 April and lakhs of tourists as well as local people visit this garden every year.



GANTA GAR AND AROUND LALCHOWK: It is situated at Lalchowk Srinagar Kashmir which has historical significance. In politics of Kashmir this place has played a significant role and it is believed in 1947 Indian Prime Minister had promised people of Kashmir that they will be given a chance to decide their future so since 1990 in Kashmir we have frequent protests near this area and protest calls Lalchowk Chaloo. In its neighborhood is one of the best school of Kashmir named Tyndale Bisco School. There are few old temples around Lalchowk area of Srinagar city. It is noticed that Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir were living peacefully together as the religious places of Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir were located near river banks adjacent to each other.



BURZHOMA: The famous Burzahom site is a prehistoric settlement in the village of the same name 16 kilometres to the northeast of Srinagar on the Naseem bagh-Shalimar road. The elevation of the Burzahom site is 1,800 metres (5,900 ft) above sea-level. In the Kashmiri language 'Burzahom' means "birch", a tree species (that generally grows in the elevation range of 3,000 to 4,200 metres (9,800 to 13,800 ft) in the Himalayas), which is found in the excavated housing area in the form of roofing material, and thus confirming the existence of the tree even in the pre-historic Neolithic times. The first excavation at the Burzahom site was a limited exercise in 1936, carried out by the Yale–Cambridge Expedition headed by Helmut de Terra and Dr. Thomson Paterson. The Frontier Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India made detailed investigations of the site between 1960 and 1971; these were carried out by T.N. Khazanchi and his associates. The extensive excavations done at this site, unearthing stratified cultural deposits were the first of their type in Kashmir. In 1944, Mortimer Wheeler, Director General of the Archaeological Survey of India had conducted the first stratified archaeological excavations on the lines of geological model at other sites. Based on a similar model the Burzahom site has been named as the Northern Neolithic Culture in view of its distinctive structural features with profusion of tools made of bones and stones and tools representing the ritualistic practices. Skeletal remains of Neolithic people found at Burzahom are similar to those found in Harappa of the Indus Valley Civilization. The Vedic Aryan culture extended into Kashmir as per some historians, but archaeological investigation at Burzahom does not support the "Aryans in Kashmir" theory. The management and protection of the Burzahom site, including the buffer zones, are under the

jurisdiction of the Archaeological Survey of India and the State Department of Archaeology conforming to the Ancient Monuments and Sites Remains Act 1958 (Amended in 2010). This site was nominated on 15 April 2014 for inscription as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, and is yet to be approved. Pot, excavated from Burzahom with painting of a wild goat with long horns and hanging ears is shown below. It is sad to notice the current status of this site which is used as play ground and grazing place for animals.



KASHMIR UNIVERSITY

The University of Kashmir was established in the year 1948 which was the first state university located at Srinagar of Jammu and Kashmir. The University of Kashmir is accredited by National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) with grade A and is approved by University Grants Commission (UGC). It provides the students with courses in fields of Social Sciences, Physical and Material Sciences, Biological Sciences, Applied Sciences and Technology, Law, Education, Business and Management Studies and Arts, Music and Fine Arts, Oriental Learning, Engineering, Dentistry and Medicine. The university has basic facilities like classrooms, e-classroom, auditorium, cafeteria, medical, gym, sports, computer labs, hostel, laboratory and library within the campus. The University of Kashmir has a beautiful campus and it provides scholarship opportunities to the students based on research, merit and students aid in order to help them excel in academics. The Companies like ICICI Bank, Airtel, HDFC Bank, Prudential Life etc. are top recruiters.



SKUAST KASHMIR

The plan of establishment of Agricultural University for the development of various sectors of agriculture was under persuasion by the government of Jammu and Kashmir right from early 1970's and its dream came true in the year 1982 when Agricultural University was establishment and was named after the famous Kashmiri leader, the Sher-e-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology with its main campus at Shalimar, Srinagar with a vision to pursue teaching and conduct research and extension services in agriculture and allied sciences directed to food, nutritional and livelihood security. It is committed to develop quality human resource, innovative technologies and their dissemination so as to serve the farming community of the State with dedication and zeal. It makes the provisions for imparting education in different branches of study in agriculture, horticulture, veterinary and animal sciences, forestry, fisheries, agricultural engineering, food science, environmental sciences, sericulture and other allied sciences. During 1998-99, the territorial jurisdiction of the University was redefined by amending the SKUAST Act under which a separate Agricultural University was established for Jammu Division and accordingly the parent University was renamed as Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K). Over the last ten years Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir has contributed significantly in the areas of diversification of cropping systems through the introduction of high-density orcharding in apple, pear, cherry etc., high value crops, organic vegetable production, revival of the land races suited to propagation of walnut and other fruits, integrated nutrient management involving bio-fertilizers and vermi-composting, bio-waste management. The university supports the Govt. of Jammu and Kashmir on human resource development, training and policy issues.



In Srinagar city we have many old historical as well as religious places which have social, cultural and historical importance. In this paper, we have touched only few. The research work is in progress to cover all religious as well as other important place of Srinagar. The pictures of few important places are shown below:



CONCLUSION

The historical places are the correct representation of the historical monuments as these places have preserved the art and architecture over the years. The historical buildings of Srinagar exhibits a generous array of amazing constructional wonders. The Heritage places of Srinagar have social as well as economic importance to the community for various reasons including their historic, aesthetic, social or spiritual qualities, or a combination of these traits. The wooden architecture and other religious places of Srinagar indicates Kashmir's ancient history. The history of the Srinagar is written in its old buildings and streets so it is not sensible to lose the old buildings, as every building has some history related to it. The Area delineated as Heritage Area need to develop special plans for conservation and improvement of controlled areas and alteration or demolition of any building strictly prohibited in the controlled conservation areas without the consent of the Planning Authority and Municipality as well. The conservation cannot be the sole concern of government departments, but it has to be a coordinated effort of local authorities, ASI, Archaeological and Heritage Commissioners Officers, Town Planning agencies,

architects, related professionals, NGOs and citizens. The conservation measures, if taken in time will save Srinagar from losing its precious heritage from gradual but imminent destruction. The encroachments near the Heritage buildings need to be cleared and proper alternative arrangements are to be provided. It is concluded that the main purpose of writing this paper was to call on the administration to rejuvenate and preserve these marvels like Forts, Gardens, Castles along with mosques and temples, the hub of educational and political activities in ancient times. The call of the time is that we must preserve our ancient monuments not only for their economic and social importance but also for their historical importance as we can proclaim with the beat of drum that our past was great and illuminating.

Acknowledgement: *The authors would like to thank all the people who gave their valuable input related to our topic especially Dr. Parmil Kumar, University of Jammu, Professor M.A.Wani, University of Kashmir, Advocate M. Rajab Bhat and Ms Asifa Ali, Research Scholar, DLIS, University of Kashmir.*

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