

## A Study on Religious, Social and Economic Significance of Historical Monuments as well as Natural Resources of District Pulwama, Kashmir Valley

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Valley of Kashmir is popularly known as heaven on earth. It is a land of natural resources, Mosques, Shrines, Temples, and Gurdawar's and the majority of them have been listed in Archeological Survey of India. In the current study an attempt has been made to study the natural resources and historical monuments of District Pulwama, Kashmir valley. The current study based on literature available and filed surveys discussed the religious, social and economic significance of historical monuments as well as natural resources along with current status and issues. The survey revealed that Pulwama district is rich in agriculture, fruit cultivation, quality saffron production and historical monuments. It was concluded that historical monuments are not currently in good state and needs attention from the government of J&K. Further, the Pulwama district need planned efforts for its speedy integrated and balanced development in economy and education. This study explore the potential of District Pulwama besides the economic benefits, employ ability and poverty eradication.*

**Keywords:** *Kashmir, Historical buildings, ASI, Shrine, Mosque, temple, Saffron, Wetland*

## **I. INTRODUCTION**

The original name of Pulwama as per revenue records was Panwangam comprising of 4 villages namely Malikpora, Dangerpora, Chatpora and Dalipora. The Panwangam later was called as "Pulgam" which with the passage of time changed to name of Pulwama. Pulwama district has a rich social, cultural and historical

background as many legendary people were born and brought-up in the Pulwama district and ancient kings choosing Pulwama area as their capital. The ruler of Kashmir Avantiverman founded Awantipore as his capital city as the remains of capital city are still located at site 28 km from district Srinagar. Pulwama being a part of the beautiful Kashmir valley is bounded by district Srinagar in the North by Budgam and Poonch Districts the west and by district Anantnag in the South and East. The Pulwama District was formed in 1979 by separation of Tehsils Pulwama, Shopian and Tral of District Anantnag. It is the 6th largest city in J&K and popularly known as the "Anand of Kashmir" loosely translated to the delight of Kashmir, this place has apple orchards, waterfalls, natural springs and scenic valleys. Pulwama is famous for the numerous opportunities for adventure junkies, such as mountaineering and trekking in summers and skiing and snowboarding in winters. The total area of the district is 1090 Sq Kms as per Census 2011, the district consists of 331 villages including 08 un-inhabited. The district is administratively divided into four Tehsils I.e.Pulwama, Pampore, Awantipora and Tral which have further been grouped into six community block viz Pulwama, partly Keller, Kakapora, Tral and Pampore for development purposes. The Administrative center of the district is situated at Pulwama which is about 31 Kms from the Srinagar. The district is famous for Archaeological monuments especially for those left by Raja Avantivarman & Lalita Ditya religious shrines like that of Khan-Kahi Faiz Panah of Shah Hamdan(R.A) at Tral and temple of Jawala Mukhi at Khrew. Mughal Road, the famous Shahrah is also a communication path of the Pulwama district with other parts of the country. The climate in the district is that temperate going 30° C in summer and below freezing point in winter. Pulwama District as per census 2011 consists of 327 census villages, out of which 08 villages are un-inhabited. The villages of Pulwama district have been grouped into 8 Tehsils viz, Pulwama, Awantipora, Tral, Pampore, Kakapora, Aripal, Rajpora & Litter, 11 CD Blocks Viz Tral, Aripal, Dadsara, Awantipora, Pampore, Kakapora, Pulwama, Shadimarg, Achgoze, Lassipora and Newa. Five Municipal Counsels Viz Tral, Pampore, Khrew, Awantipora and Pulwama. We know historical monuments play a very significant role in the preservation and restoration of cultural heritage as they make aware people about the historical aspects and create a sense of respect for those who lived in different times indifferent societies. Further, historical monuments help us to understand the art and architecture of people who lived before us and give us a clue about their intelligence, religion, caste, culture. Historical monuments are also preserved for the economic purposes and are also studied by architecture to compare different designs and their importance to the modern world [Ahmad, 2007]. The historical places attract tourists from different parts of globe which generate income to local people who guide tourists to these places so it is considered important to restore the cultural heritage of previous dynasties. Pulwama district is visited very often by the local as well as national tourists and the Archeological Survey of India is taking care of these historical monuments. Historical buildings thus become important attractions for the student community for education, awareness purposes and boost the economy [Kak, 2014]. In this study in the light of the literature available (e.g., Cunningham, 1904; Archaeological Survey of India, 2012; Soundararajan & Rajan, 2006 etc) and field surveys an attempt has been made to study the current status of historical buildings and natural resources of district Pulwama and to suggest the measures for the restoration and preservation of historical places/buildings.

## METHODOLOGY

In the present study field study of district Pulwama was conducted during 2021-22. In this study group discussion with local people as well government officials were held and photographs available in the literature as well as on internet, taken during field study were reported. The observations were recorded and reported in

this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

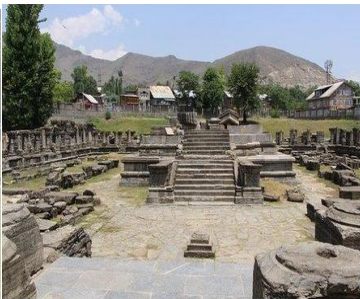
The field visit revealed that the most of the historical places in Pulwama district are in depilated conditions and little care is being taken to save them. It was noticed that few historical places have not been renovated over the years. Furthermore, political problems of Jammu and Kashmir has caused 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 study area. The main significant places in Pulwama district, their history and present status is discussed below:

### Avantiswami Temple, Awantipora, Jammu & Kashmir

It is located 28 km away from Srinagar in a small but historically important town of Awantipora is 28 km away from Srinagar in Anantnag district of Jammu Kashmir. The Awantipora town was founded by king Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty during AD 855 – 883 AD so the place was named Awantipora. He erected two magnificent temples at Awantipora, one dedicated to Lord Vishnu called Avantiswami and the other to Lord Shiva which is known as Avantisvara.



Temple View



Temple Inner View



Temple Information

Avantiswami temple was constructed before his succession to the throne and Avantisavara temple was built after obtaining sovereignty. In the medieval times, the temple witnessed invasion and destruction. Finally, it was reduced to ruins. An excavation was carried out in the early twentieth century which revealed an entire quadrangle of the temple down to the floor of the courtyard and the extent basement of the central shrine along with remains of the sub-shrines. The excavation helped to recover 121 coins that belonged to Shah Miri dynasty and Durrani Afghan rulers. The original complex consists of a temple in the middle of a spacious oblong courtyard, surrounded by four small shrines at the four corners. A pillared, open sided mandapa is seen in front of the staircase of the main shrine containing within Garudadvaja. The temple is effectively distributed with excellent carvings and sculptures which are an exemplary example of architecture and art. It is said that Avantiswami temple has gone almost 20 ft deep under the earth and that only the apex is visible. Avantiswami is a small temple dedicated to Lord Vishnu. The original grandeur of the temple has been lost and all that can be seen is the remains of the architectural fragments on the Srinagar-Jammu road. Avantiswami temple was built on the bank of Vitasta river. Avantiswami is a well-preserved temple. The edifice is comprised of a collonaded kind of enclosing a paved courtyard. The main shrine is built on a double base with four small shrines at four corners. The bases are intact but the sanctum has almost disappeared.

Awantismwami temple stands amidst the scenic green valleys. The temple was constructed in the 9th century by the king Avantivarman, during his reign in Jammu and Kashmir. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva and hence he constructed two shrines for the deities. The temple has an imprint of the aristocratic lineage of Jammu and Kashmir spanning over 1100 years. It has withstood the invasions that the town of Awantipora has faced. These ruins are part of Awantismwami temple. The ruins depict that the temple would have been a huge and great structure. Some of the pillars stay tall even today. The art seems to be similar to the temples of pandrethan as this temple has stairs on each of its four sides with width of 28.5 feet supported by flank walls of 17.5 feet along with reduced sanctum (Soundararajan & Rajan, 2006).

### Shiva Temple Payar

This temple is located at the fort of karawatable land, a jewel in stone three kilometres from Pulwama district in Payar a small village. Shiva temple is made up of ten stones that are well preserved with great architectural and sculptural glory (Soundararajan & Rajan, 2006). The shrine believed to be built in 11<sup>th</sup> century C.E. is open on all along the four sides and consists of double pyramidal roof with triangular pediments on all the four sides enclosing a trefoil arch where as eastern trefoil niche is engraved with image of Lakulisa which is seated Cross legged on a wicker seat.



Shiva temple Payar

The Shiva is dancing in western trefoil niche, Six armed Shiva carries trident and Khatanga and dances to the tune of male drummer and female flute player. The northern trefoil niche contains an image of three headed Shiva and the central image of Shiva is having Aghora on its right and Uma on its left side. The trefoil niche on the southern side depicts Shiva as Gajasamhara. Shiva in the form of Bhairava kills the elephant demon Nila. The ceiling of the Shiva temple carved out of single stone block, is dome shaped. The other sculpted reliefs on the exterior include, geese, bulls and decorative bands. It was noticed (Kak, Ram Chandra, 1933) that the Shiv Linga is present in the interior of the temple. The temple is about 5 Kms from Pulwama main bus stand, 14 Kms from Awantipora and 34 Kms from Srinagar.

## Narastan Temple



Narastan Temple.

This temple is well preserved and possessed with several features. It is located in village Narastan 6 miles away from Arpal and 20 miles mile from Avantipur that can be reached by a roughbridle path all along the barren hills. The temple 'Narastan' derives its name from Nayan Sthan which means place of Narayan and is said to be more than 1400 years old. The Narastan temple is built of grayish limestone and was originally covered with a thick coat of lime plaster, traces of which stillexist. Narastan temple is built on a single base which consists of only four instead of five courses of stones. It is noticed that the cornice is a plain, straight lined, filleted course, of which only the topmost fillet is rounded off into a cyma recta moulding with sourcebase. Further, the corner pilasters project very slightly from the temple walls and middle of each wall is a trefoil recesssurmounted by a high pitched double pediment. In turn it is enclosed by a very shallow closed trefoil arch, surmounted by a two-storied pediment. The capitals from whichthe pediments spring are crowned by human-headed birds, facing each other. The apex of the pediments is decorated with a squat human figure, which mayrepresentGaruda (vehicle of Lord Vishnu)[Goetz, 1955].The trefoil arches on the exterior of the shrine walls; the lower trefoil arch is usually shallow or closed, but the uppertrefoil is deeply recessed is novelty of this temple [Kak, 1953; Kalhana's Rajtarangni, 1979].

## Kakapora Rani Temple

Kakapora tehsil situated on the banks of river Jehlum famous for rice and saffron cultivation is located 12 Kms from Srinagar. It has very old history from Pandwas to Kalingas rule which is also mentioned in Rajterangi (one of oldest history book of India) and is also famous for making pencil slades all over India besides is a hub of various administration centers and Factories. A temple from the 11th century C.E., has been excavated near Asian Masjid in Astan Mohallah Kakapora. The Kakapora temple has only a remaining sanctum with some ruins. Many standing remains including stone-carved images of a female character (whom locals call "Rani") and a bathtub have been found [Hussain, 1988]. The monument is protected by archaeological survey of India and beautification, fencing floor reconstruction has been done by the department (ASI 2004). The temple was severely damaged by 2014 floodsand subsequent devastation. A temple is a place of refreshment for locals

during summer, and especially after sunset, local youth rest in the landscape of the temple. Kakapora temple needs attention of the ASI and concerned department, otherwise, it will become a thing of past in near future.



Kakapora temple.

### Loduv Temple

The Loduv temple 20 km from Srinagar near famous saffron fields of Pampore is situated at a distance of 3 miles from Pampore town. These temples of district Pulwama are main tourist attractions as they fall near to NH1. The larger one of the two stands in the middle of a shallow tank of water which is fed by a spring in its north-east corner. It is simple in construction but differs from other temples of Kashmir both in plan and in art and architecture (Kak, Ram Chandra 2014). Close to the Loduv temple is the Ziarat of Mir Muhammad Hamadani (R.A) with some fine ancient columns and ornamented slabs. Padampura owing to its central position in a fertile tract seems to have always been a place of importance and is often mentioned by Kalhana and the later Chroniclers. This temple is simple in construction but differs from other temples of Kashmir both in plan and in art and architecture [Kak, 2014].



Loduv temple

## Ziyarat of Hazrat Syed Hassan Mantaqi" Rehmatul Ul Lahe Allah"



## Pakharpora Shrine

Syed Balkhi at the start of the 15<sup>th</sup> century came to valley of Kashmir from Balk in Afghanistan. He accepted Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Noorani as his pee-o-murshid, stayed on in Kashmir to follow and preach Islam. Syed Balkhi's relatives are buried on the premises, and it is believed that upon his request to the Sheikh, the piece of graveyard on which they were buried in Balk was miraculously transported to its current spot. The name Pakharpora comes from the word Pokher meaning 'piece of land'. To this day, one can observe some peculiar old trees planted on that particular piece of graveyard land, trees which can not be seen or found anywhere else in Kashmir.



Pakharpora Shrine

## Shah-e-Hamdan Shrine Tral



Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani (1314–1384), popularly known as Shah-e-Hamdan (“King of Hamadān”), Amīr-i Kabīr (“the Great Commander), and Ali Sani (“second Ali), was a Persian Sufi of the Kubrawiya order, a poet and a prominent Shafii Muslim scholar. He played a major role in spreading Islam in Kashmir and he has also influenced the culture of the Kashmir valley. He was born in Hamadan, and was buried in Khatlan Tajikistan. He played a major role in spreading Islam in Kashmir and he has also influenced the culture of the Kashmir valley. The annual Urs is also observed in Khanqah -e-Faiz Panah in south Kashmir’s Tral every year with religious fervor and enthusiasm. In the shrine devotees recited verses of Qura’n, followed by Khatam-e-Sharief, Naats and supplications. *Mirwaiz Khanqah-e-Faiz Panah tral highlight the teachings of Mir Syed Ali Hamdani (RA) and our role towards Deen and society as a Muslim.* In the morning, holy relics of Ameer e kabeer (RA) is shown to the devotees.

## Tarsar Lake



Tarsar and Marsar lakes

The two most significant lakes of Pulwama Distric are Tarsar and Marsar lakes. The Tarsar and Marsar lakes of Pulwama are situated 3km and 5km away, respectively, from the village of Nagberan. These two lakes of Pulwama are also closely associated with the folklore of Kashmir. To reach Tarsar Lake, we have to take a trek



whose route starts from Aru Valley, continues to Lidderwat Valley and crosses Shekhawas Mountains before coming to an end at the lake. Tarsar lake or Tar Sar is the more beautiful one, an almond shaped lake 2 km in length and 0.8 km in breadth. The lake is separated by a mountain with a minimum peak elevation of 4,000 metres (13,000 ft) from another lake of the same nature known as Marsar.

### World's best saffron grown in Pampore town of Pulwama district

Pampore, locally known as Pampar or Panpar (Kashmiri pronunciation) in Kashmiri, is a historical town, of Jammu and Kashmir, India, situated on the eastern side of river Jehlum on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway about 11 kilometres (6.8 mi) from Srinagar city. It was known as Padmanpur in antiquity and is famous worldwide for its saffron and known as the Saffron town of Kashmir. Pampore is one of the few places in the world where saffron, the world's most expensive spice, grows. Saffron is a cash crop cultivated grown in about 3,000 acres in areas of Pampore such as the localities of Namlabel, Kadlabel, Drangbal, Frestabal, and Letrabal. Saffron is a rain fed crop and Saffron is a kharif crop. The main output of the crop is a dark yellow substance obtained from the flowers called the saffron. Saffron the identity of Jammu and Kashmir and the pride of valley is rapidly vanishing although its cultivation had spread beyond the terraces of Pampore in South Kashmir, where it has been grown since ancient times. The recorded Saffron cultivation and production in Jammu & Kashmir dating back to year 1980-89 used to be about 300-400 quintals per year. Saffron is used generally for health benefits as it is used as a medicine to cure cancer, increase sexual desire among women, to reduce weight, to reduce depression etc



### Wetlands of Pulwama District

**Chatlam:** This is the biggest wetland in south Kashmir located within the thrilly hills of beautiful land of saffron all around. It is just five minutes of drive from Pampore bus stand and was initially a game reserve, however now it is being maintained by the fisheries and fish farms. It is a notified wetland under Jammu and Kashmir's wildlife department and occupies 1972 canals on record of land and has its own sources of water. Water flow of the wetland since 2010 increased due to landslide of a nearby nala, prior to that most of the water from wetland was flowing through that nala.



Migratory birds taking refuge at Chaetlam Wetland

It is a spring fed wetland; shores of this wetland are elevated due to the deposits of fine grained sand and loam. Migratory fowls are majorly found in these areas. Encroachment is the biggest reason of wetland shrinking that is also killing this migratory life. It was observed that there is a serious problem with the breeding behaviour of migratory birds at Chatlam-Fushkooori as their peak period of breeding activity coincides with the peak time period of catching fishes by local people. Besides, cattle rearing and other agricultural activities nearby saffron fields by locals too coincides with the time period of breeding, thus creating disturbances to birds to a great extent.

**Manibughe:** The wetland is located just 2 Kms from Chatlam wetland and is 8 ft deep (the depth covers almost 3 canals of lands) after which depth decreases towards banks. It has 680 ft breadth and has 104 Canals of land covered within the wetland. Manibugh Wetland in Pampore was managed for organized shooting from November/ December till April but this practise has been stopped from past few years as protection to the wetland and flora and fauna. In this wetland there are various migratory species available but the most commonly birds found are Northern-Sovler, Northern-Pentail, Gadwal-Tufted Duck, Eursian-Wegion, Gargany, Grey-Leg Goose, Mallard, Common Coat, Purple-Swamp Hen, Grey-Herion, Ruddy-Shell-Duck, Common Moor-Hen, White-Throated-Kingfisher, Red- Crested-Poachard, and Coomon-Teal. Wetland is at present characterized by low water levels since they are surrounded by cultivation areas which washes organic and inorganic constituents in wetland.



Manibugh Wetlands

Kranchoo Wetland: It is home to the most of the migratory and gives shelter to almost 5000-6000 migratory birds. The most the birds spent their daytimes here on the wetland and fly back to Hokersar wetland during nights. The wetland is shrinking with a very high rate since last 10 years even though been one of the notified wetland and occupying the maximum number of migratory, said a govt employee of wildlife department Rouf Ahmad. This wetland is also located within 4 Kms of distance from Chatlam wetland and the entire wetland can be observed by naked eye from the hill top nearby. Birds get maximum of the food from this wetland as there are various houses constructed on the banks of the wetland and most of the waste is flown within the wetland. The wetland is 30 feet deep that covers almost 5 canals of land with the same depth and is atleast 600 fts in breadth.

### **Begam Bagh Wetland**

It takes half an hour (24 km) from Srinagar via Nowgam/Chattergam road to reach the wetland area of Kaka Pora town of district Pulwama. The road is quite good and surrounded by villages, paddy and vegetable fields, but where the wetland is situated there is no road connectivity for transport people have to go only by foot, which is covered by poplar trees.

Kakapora is a tehsil in Pulwama district, located 24 kilometres to the south of Srinagar. It is situated on the banks of the Jehlum River and Romshi, one of the tributaries of the Jhelum River. The people of this historical place are mostly associated with agriculture. In modern times, Kakapora tehsil is often referred to as the rice bowl of Kashmir. There are commercial units in Kakapora that boost the economic status of the town beyond just agriculture.



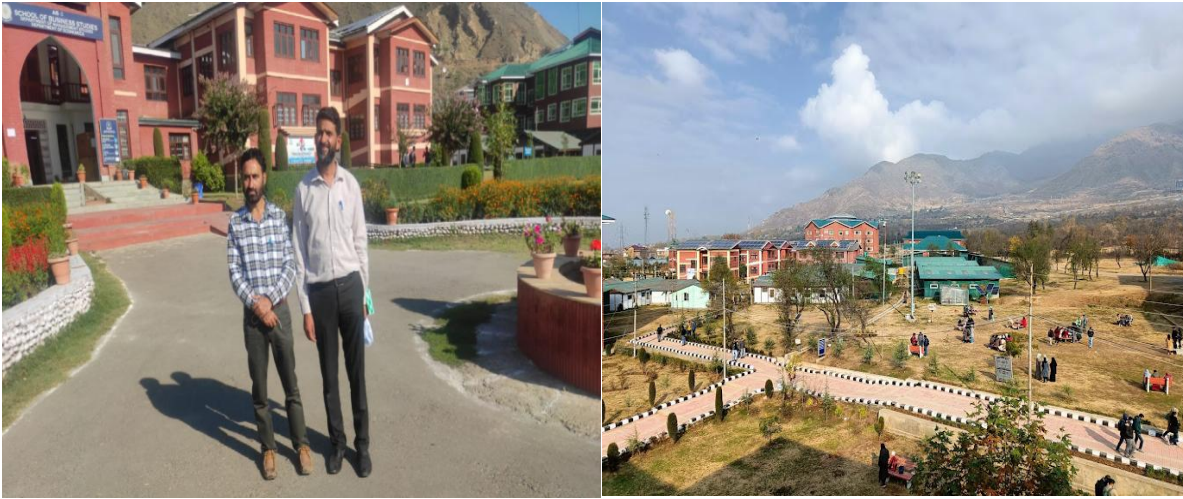
Begam Bagh wetland is situated in Kaka Pora area of district pulwama, surrounded by vegetable, paddy fields and beautiful villages. The location of wetland is between vegetables & paddy fields. The water is about 3 to 4 ft high (present). The wetland is 1630 meters above sea level. Rakhi Kawoosa Baghin south, Hokri Pora-singu Pigalgamin west Rakhi Pohu in east and Begam Bagh in north are the villages that surround the wetland. Parallel to it is a dense willow and poplar (safeda) trees area which adds to the beauty of the wetland. It is also the Habitation of the migratory birds which have been witnessed by the locals only when water is present. The Nature

of the wetland is marshy. The only Source of water is Rain and Snow. The water from the paddy field enters the wetland only when the level of water is high. According to the locals around 66/67 Kanals is the estimated area of the wetland. Its main habitation is Grass, Mojo Pototon which is used as fodder for the Cattle. The wetland was perennial in nature as it has water present all over the year through a spring named Bulbul Bagh Nag but at present time it has changed into seasonal. In only rainy season the wetlands gets filled with water. The wetland at present is not in any threat or extinction, only threat is now locals throw their waste in the wetland.



### **Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), Awantipora Pulwama**

The Islamic University of Science & Technology is a government university located at Awantipora, Jammu and Kashmir, India. The university has been set up as a centre for higher learning for the people of the Jammu and Kashmir region and its neighbouring regions. It is recognised by the UGC and AICTE and is a member of AIU. The university was promulgated by an act of Jammu and Kashmir State Legislative Assembly in November 2005. Islamic University is located 25 km away from the summer capital of the state, Srinagar. The Chancellor of the university is the Chief Minister, of the State, and its Board is the Board of Directors of the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Wakf Board. The Executive Council, chaired by the Vice Chancellor, is the executive authority of the university. The strong science and technology curriculum will be complemented by a School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The university focuses on career development and overall personality enhancement and tries to ensure education for leadership. Since the state of Jammu and Kashmir was turned into a Union territory post 5 August 2019, The Lieutenant Governor of The UT has assumed the role of chancellor of the university. Jammu and Kashmir administration has recently handed over 1350 kanals of land to the university in the vicinity of campus, where the university has planned to make solar park and biodiversity park and further more infrastructure projects in future. In 2021 university got the international standard athletic track.



## FISHERIES IN PULWAMA DISTRICT

Important water bodies for capture fisheries are Jehlum, Romshai, Rambiar, Chatlum Jeel, Lam Stream, Naristan Stream, Wantinar Stream

Number of Registered Fishermen

For the year of 2017-18 = 670

For the year of 2018-19 = 700

Fish Catch

For the year of 2017-18 = 7200 Qtls

For the year of 2018-19(up to September end) = 2633.42 Qtls

Trout Streams

Lam, Naristan and Wantinar

Number of Fishing Permits

For the year of 2017-18 = 25

For the year of 2018-19(up to September end) = 40

Culture fisheries Trout Production Government Sector

For the Year 2017-18 = 32.240 Qtls

For the Year 2018-19(up to ending September) = 12.4048 Qtls

It is encouraging that fish production in J&K was reported at 25000 Ton th in year 2022 which was 21000 Ton th for the year 2021. In view of the abundant water resources available in J&K, Govt of J&K recently approved a project worth Rs 176 crore to boost the fish production by importing improved fish seed, using modern technologies such as RAS and Biofloc, introducing species diversity in aquaculture through R & D and upgrading existing fish hatcheries as well as fish rearing units.

## INDUSTRIES

This district has the Union Territory largest cement plant viz. J&K Cements Ltd. At Khrew with a capacity of 1200 M tons cement per day Lassipora SIDCO has various small and medium factories. Zum zum milk is produced there. Pulwama District is also well known for its industries these industries include SIDCO which are located at Lassipora, a village of Pulwama where hundreds of labors are given jobs.

## CONCLUSION

Praising the beauty of Kashmir many often recite the famous quote “Gar firdaus bar-rue zamin ast, hami asto hamin asto hamin ast” which means, if there is heaven on earth it’s here it’s here. Kashmir is indeed is heaven on Earth. There is so much for one to explore. Kashmir is rightly an experience of a lifetime and a must visit destination for everybody. It has so much to offer. Form comforting splendor of nature to the beauty of the historical places. Although some of the historical places here might not be in great shape. But once you visit and witness it you will be able to connect to its beauty because though in ruins it still speaks of the emotions behind it. The temples of the Pulwama city are a true representation of the historical monuments as they have preserved the art and architecture over the years. There is unique in every temple and most of them have images of Hindu gods and goddesses engraved beautifully all around. However, these temples have lost the existing beauty as concerned authorities have perhaps forgotten to restore these structures over the years. The works has been started many times but were stopped without any reasons unknown. Urgent attention is needed by ASI and other government and private agencies to preserve and restore the past glory of ancient monuments, religious sites as well as natural resources/destinations. The hidden treasures of district Pulwama needs to be taken out and put on tourism map.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The Authors are thankful to the respondent’s for taking part in our study.

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