

REBUILDING KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION ON KASHMIR BY HINDUS

Nitin Chandel - Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of History, University of Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir, India

Email - Nitinchandel19@gmail.com

Abstract: This article describes the part played by Hindus of Kashmir in awakening the masses through literary and artistic transformations. Kashmiri Pandits by dint of their knowledge perceived English education and comes in interface with European scholars led to ushering historical attainments and social subjects render to social advocacy. The paper is an attempt to depict genre issues which are germane to our understanding of the political, economic, and social developments in the region, yet the principal focus speaks about the socio-political part of the community through press, writings, literature and narratives. The study portrays scholar's relevant issues about collected works, poetries, mechanism of vernaculars used, eruditions and social issues. This study emphasized the plural veracities of the state, economic divergence, social intricacies, and literati assertions within the state and multiple lexes of Distinctiveness Politics in Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Words: Learning, Issues, Poets, Writers, Poems, Literature, Culture and Works.

INTRODUCTION:

The improved means of communication and transport in Jammu and Kashmir linked the valley with the rest of India. Contact with the outside forces and the powerful impact of the freedom movement in India created a new ferment in the minds of intelligentsia and an awakening in the souls of men. An era of fresh poets, scholars, authors, and writers breathed a fresh life into the literature of the land bringing forth the importance of new themes such as poverty, social inequality, corruption, unemployment and peace¹. The greatest benefit the Pandits in Kashmir have received was the opportunity of an interface that occurred between Pandit Scholars and Western Indologist between 1875-1940A.D, in assessing the rich wealth of Kashmir history, language and literature. The interface also bridges Pandits to the glory of their past achievements and deserving claims². The torch of Sanskrit learning was kept alight by many eminent scholars like Pt. Sahib Ram, Pandit Dama Kak, Pandit Daya Ram Shastri, Pandit Natha Ram Kala, Mahamahopadyaya, Pandit Hara Bhatta Shastri, Professor Nityanand Shastri, Pandit Mukund Ram and Pandit Madhusudan Kaul³. The introduction of western ideas and the spread of knowledge and learning under the Dogra suzerainty gave an impetus to movement for the cultural resurgence. George Bhuler, then professor of oriental language in Bombay worked in Kashmir during 1875A.D, and collected more than 300 manuscripts, many of them in Sharada Script written on birch bark leaves with the assistance and help of Pandit Damodar. Of Damodar's erudition Bhuler remarked that he was a learned scholar "*who seemed to shake Sanskrit verse and prose out of his sleeves*". He wished "*I had such teachers in the oriental college*"⁴. Aurel Stein followed Bhuler's and visited Kashmir in 1889A.D under Maharaja direction; he obtained complete manuscript of Rajatarangini from Suraj Kaul, then the Governor of Kashmir. The Darbar arranged Govind Kaul and Mukandram to assisted Aurel Stein's in the edition and translation of Rajatarangini. By paying full tribute to Pandit Govind Kaul and Pandit Mukandram for their assistance, Stein recorded, "*I am indebted to both the scholars for much information and explanation on Kashmirian topics without which correct comprehension of Kalhan's text was unattainable*"⁵.

Mukund Ram Shastri also edited and published "*Mahanaya Prakash*" one of the earliest extant works in Kashmiri. He edited whole series of texts on Kashmir Shaivism and out of 29 books; he edited 23 books including "*Shiva Sutra-vimarshini, Spanda Karika, Tantraloka, Tantrasara Ishwar Pratibijnya, Parmarthasara* etc.⁶. Pandit Ishwar Kaul's work on Kashmiri grammar "*the Kashmiri Shabdarnit*" which was former edited by George Grierson in 1898A.D. and published by Asiatic society of Bengal was notable. Of this work, Grierson observed. "*It appeared as if written by Hemchandra himself. All I did was to correct only the slips and errors of pen*"⁷. The nineteenth century saw the Kashmiri Pandit Community throw up giant's in the field of learning and letters.

Contacts with the west set into motion processes that led to an intellectual ferment in Kashmir, inspiring the Pandits to rediscover and reinterpret their past and undertake new and challenging scholarly ventures mostly in collaboration with western scholars, but also independently. Aurel Stein in July 1900 A.D. recommended the Dutch Indologist J.Ph.Vogel to Kashmiri Pandit Scholar Nityanand. Their exacting studies in the field of epigraphy connected with Sharada inscriptions on rocks in Chamba Valley led to the discovery and assessment of the earliest 10th century record of Kashmiri script. The work is well known world over as antiquities of Chamba which appeared in 1913 A.D. Of Pandit Nityanand's assistance and help, Vogel observed that "he was a scholar who dispelled avidya and who had mastered of all the shastras and whose knowledge of sciences had reached the other end of ocean with his shastric knowledge"⁸. Nityanand wrote a four volume commentary and translation of *Jaitariya Upanishad* which found its place in the Harvard University Library in the year 1913 A.D. Stein called Nityanand as the "crest jewel among the scholars of Kashmir" and sometimes 'scholars of scholars'⁹.

Under these historical developments, poets, writers felt that Kashmiri poetry needed radical change. They composed verses which touched upon the socio-economic and political life of the people of Kashmir. The writers infused a new spirit into artisans, peasants, labourers, workers and other toiling classes who pitted themselves against feudal and imperial forces. These included, Pandit Madhu Sudhan Koul who edited and critically appreciated 'Abhinavagupta's *tantralok*'. Prem Nath Pardesi and Pitambar Dhar Faani were the prose writers which depicted the social evils of Kashmiri society. Kashyap Bandhu, Janki Nath Zutshi, Nand Lal Watal, Jagan Nath Sathu and P.N.Bazaz were among the prominent Urdu journalist who took social issues, corrupt practices, women's empowerment and political rights¹⁰. The year 1887, 1889, 1893, 1903 and 1909 A.D. were the critical years of floods whereas 1864, 1877, 1892, 1902 and 1918 A.D. were identified as the severe famine stricken years. The ravages of the famines and floods left an indelible imprint on the canvas of Kashmiri poets and writers that took up the official corruption rampant in the administration and their harassment on the masses¹¹. Pandit Nand Ram popularly known as Swami Parmanand writings enriched Kashmir literature. He was the best interpreter of the philosophy of Shaivism in Kashmir. His important works are *Sudama charita*, *Radha Swayamvar*, *Dinkrandan* and *Shiv Lagam* etc. have been translated by Master Zinda Kaul. During the tenure of Maharaja Pratap Singh, Persian had been replaced by Urdu as court language of Kashmir¹². Urdu was already popular in rest of India and the educated elite comprised mostly by Kashmiri Pandits grasped it easily and took mastery over it. The part that Kashmiris played in its development and enrichment has again been historic and all-important. It would be no exaggeration to say that the very foundations of the Urdu novel and of its fiction were laid by that great genius, Rattan Nath Dhar 'Sarshar'. His classic "*Fasanai Azad*" was universally applauded as a great work of art and charted new paths in virgin soil. These included Prem Nath Sadhu '*Pardesi*', and, Prem Nath Dhar who wrote "*Kagaz-Ka-Vasudeva*" and many among others. In the field of Urdu prose stalwarts like Tribhuvan Nath 'Hajar', Shiv Narain 'Shamim', Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru to name only a few, rendered yeomen's service¹³. Again in the development of Urdu journalism Kashmiris have played a significant role. In the Kashmir State itself the legendary Har Gopal Kaul '*Khasta*', was beckoned the father of Urdu journalism. In Lahore and in others parts, the name of Gopinath Gurtu of "*Akhbar-i-Am*" fame was one to conjure with to be followed, with passage of time, by Dina Nath Chikan 'Mast's' "*Subeh-i-Kashmir*" and "*Kashmir Darpan*" of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, "*Murasala-i-Kashmir*" and "*Subeh-i-Umed*" of Brij Narain 'Chakbast' and "*Bahar-i-Kashmir*" work is exemplary. The "*Masnavi*" of Daya Shankar Tikku, '*Nasim*', holds its relevance till now. Brij Narain Chakbast - a great poet touched the very elevations of poetic genius. His "*Khak-i-Hind*" poems of the same genre should be read with Iqbal's "*Mera Wattan Wohi Hai*" and "*Naya Shawab*" written very much later. His mastery of Urdu prose was equally splendid. The diction, and thrust of "*Maarika-i-Chakbast-o-Sharar*" was a brilliant work and Pandit Brij Mohan Dattatriya, '*Kaifi*', - a venerable label in Urdu literary and cultural spheres all over India is notable¹⁴. The western educated imparted in the schools and colleges were inculcating revolutionary ideas of patriotism, equality, freedom and social justice. The more the ideas of independence spread among the people, the more demand grew for literature that the masses could understand. Pandit Anand Koul, a pioneer of modern research in the history and folklore of Kashmir during the first quarter of the 20th century said,

"Kashmir the home of Kashmiri Pandits is linked with history full of misty past infinitely remote. They are among the few races whose traditions run back to gods and divine origin of things. The happy valley of Kashmir is land of Vistas, so lavish in its prospect and Surpassing interests and beauty, a land where wonderful contrast and amazing variety can be seen, a land of the utmost miracles of bountiful nature. This marvelous and

*magnificent paradise of worlds can reproduce, in which one may see as much poetic beauty as any man has man has right to look for, is the home of Brahmins*¹⁵.

Pandit Anand Koul Bamzai was the first Kashmiri to earn the honour of writing a book in English. He was the author of the *Kashmiri Pandit*, *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State*, and *The archaeological remains in Kashmir*. His book '*The Kashmiri Pandit*' which was published in 1924 is considered to be the first ever historical and sociological study of any Indian community. He also contributed articles on the history and literature of Kashmir to journals of national and international repute¹⁶. The work of Pandit Anand Kaul which tended to glorify the community of Kashmir Pandits seemed to have inspired several historians, a large number of which belonged to the community of Kashmir Pandits. Other books written in English were *Building of Jammu and Kashmir state* by Arjun Nath Sapru (1931), *Economics of Food Grains in Kashmir* by Jia Lal Koul Jalali (1931), Ram Chandra Kak, an archaeologist by training who roused by dint of hard labour to the eminent position of the Prime-minister (1945-47) under Maharaja Hari Singh's rule wrote a notable volume on *Ancient monuments of Kashmir* (1933). Here reference may also be made of Sansar Chand Koul two works, *Birds of Kashmir* (1939) and *Beautiful Valley of Kashmir* (1942). Jia Lal Koul had translated old and contemporary poetry into English and entitled in a book *Kashmir Lyrics* (1946)¹⁷. Writers like P.N.Bazaz, Jia Lal Kilam, R.C.Kak, Jia Lal Koul Jilali, Gwasha Lal Koul and Somnath Dhar are the prominent ones who wrote about social, economic and political factors leading to the growth of freedom¹⁸.

Professor J.L.Kaul, introduced Kashmiri prose in 1936A.D, in the Pratap magazine of S.P.college adapting Perso-Arabic alphabet with suitable modification. *Satach Kahwat* (*the touch stone of truth*), *Ramunraj* (*the reign of Sri-Rama*) and *Paz Pativaratai* (*Savitri*) were adaptations and translations from Hindustani play reproduced in the magazine. Prem Nath Pardesi wrote a Kashmiri play entitled *Batahar* (*the Food Fight*) on the exploitation of the peasantry¹⁹. Pitamber Nath Dhar Faani, a poet of progressive views rejects the existence of supernatural force and was by his veins a socialist. His poems has been published in three booklets i.e. *poshi Dalya* or *bouquet of Flowers*, *posh Bagh* or *Flower of Garden* and *tarana-i-Zindagi* or *the Song of life* are of radical views and reflects a burning desire for freedom of Kashmir²⁰. Zinda Kaul popularly known as *masterji* was a poet who composed poems in Urdu and Persian. These expressed dejection, frustration, and occasionally hilarity. His poems "*Aha Ha Klerki*" was a satire on government services from 1920-1935A.D, he composed Urdu patriotic songs and satires on man and society. In 1944A.D, the poem '*sumran*' (*Rosary*) was published attaining a sort of Hegelian idealism. Master Zinda Koul work compulsion (*Majburi*) is a mastery work of translation of famous Kashmiri poet Parmanand into English. Somnath Dhar book '*Kashmir Eden of the East*' gives us clues in understanding the social evils²¹.

In the 1940's progressivism (*Pragativad*) was a much debated and a much argued topic in the literary circles in India. Dinanath Nadim was one of the major messengers for initiating the paradigm change in the Kashmiri writings. He began to ask questions on the agenda of social tensions, the exploitation by the Dogra regime, exploitation by the powerful zamindars ingredients which became the soul of the messages and columns in newspapers²². His verses represented the oppressed class and he became voice of the masses. He is known as Abdul Ahad Azad's right side up in raising his voice of revolt against the establishment. His earlier verses were full of revolution and he was considered poet of revolt by Kashmiri poet²³. His poems and writings were very famous during the late 1940's. These were:-

- 1). *Tso meri Karvan ban* (You became leader of the caravan)
- 2). *Naray Inqalab* (the call for revolution)
- 3). *Me Chu Hyand Ta Musalman Beyi Insan Banavan* (I have to turn Hindus and Muslims
Again into human beings)
- 4). *Shervani SundKhab* (the dream of Shervani)
- 5). *Kashiry Shury Sund Tarana* (the song of a Kashmiri child)
- 6). *Jangbaz Khabardar* (war-mongers beware)
- 7). *Prutshun chum* (I must ask)

He sang the dawn of freedom when the Quit Kashmir movement started in 1946A.D in his "*wouthee Baagich Kukilee*"²⁴. He was arrested in 1938A.D, for participating in the national struggle and all his poems were seized by the police and destroyed²⁵. The poem *Irada* (Determination) is a memorable poem by Dina Nath Nadim an innovative technique of refreshing imaginary and lexical cohesion depicted appropriate philological sets of nouns,

verbs and creates an effect of the movement²⁶. Dina Nath Koul Nadim wanted to eradicate social inequality. He says “*Fight for Justice is not a sin*”:-

“*Let this be thrashed out once for all
Let the shadowy chinar sooth everyone equality
Let the lines be drawn between Black and White
Free minds aspire for freedom and joy
Let high hopes not be dashed to ground*”²⁷.

The two poems that attracted the attention of the people and that of cultural front are *tsa chukh kasheri hund javan* (You are the soldier of Kashmir) and *Garv* (A complaint). During the late 1940's newspapers as well as poems evinced patriotic poems, sacrifice and martyrdom were written on this theme but inward determination of the people nature is an active participant. He has written his first Kashmiri poem in 1942A.D on *Maj Kashir* (Mother Kashmir). He wrote *Sonth* (The Spring), *Aravali Prasakhna* and *Garv* (A complaint) on themes of patriotism, revolution and freedom²⁸. Dinanath was influenced by Karl Marx and the revolution freedom movement of India. He was busy in revolutionizing the mind of an average Kashmiri to stand up in protest against the exploiters of his time²⁹. The 1947 invasion of Kashmir by the Pakistan led tribal raiders and its ongoing aftermath continue to take a heavy emotional, psychological, and social toll led a solemn blow to Kashmir and other parts of the country economically and politically. The tribal's raids had affected every Kashmiri in destructive ways- Hindus, Sikhs, and Muslims and filled their hearts with fear, anger, destruction, agony and death. Many articles, poems, and editorials were filled with the happenings of 1947 revolt. It is here that literature, life, and politics had derived together³⁰. The poem *Me cham ash pagahach* (I have hope for tomorrow) written during the late 1940s presented complex interplay of passions and expectations.

*Dapan jang chu vothvun
Pagah gotsh na sapdun
They say
War will break
But no-
Not tomorrow!*

The famous poem of Nadim was the song of the day and was circulated in every newspaper of the state with intense nationalism and patriotism. Songs were composed by poets to motivate Kashmiri Pandits and mobilises its acceptance.

*I hope of tomorrow
When the world will be splendid
When the days will be radiant
When the flowers will blossom
And flower gardens will be blooming
When the earth will be bubbling
And meadows shimmering
When the bosoms will be busting with fountain of love
When the world will be shinning
But then there is agony
They say
War will break out!
But no-
Not tomorrow!*

This poem promulgate like a fire and was attracted the state-wide attention. This poem had ideological context and signals Sheikh Abdullah as the leader of the caravan³¹. Dina Nath Wali incurred the wrath of the government for having contributed two sketches to the special Responsible government in the *Hamdard* in August, 1938A.D and one of his painting portrayed a horrible scene in which the hideous looking alien despotic government was trampling upon the teeming, toiling millions of Kashmir³². Dina nath Ganju is didactic, he instructs women on household affairs, cleanliness and good manners. The Quit Kashmir movement gave impetus

to Kashmiri literature. It is encouraging to note that in 1945A.D, the Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) opened its branch in Srinagar and for the first time in the history of Kashmiri literature, a Kashmiri play titled BataHar was written by Prem Nath Pardesi on the exploitation of pesantry³³. Some of the Urdu poets and writers who came to the forefront during this period were Master Zinda Kaul (Sabit), Baldev Kishen Tikku, Tara Chand Trisul (Salik), Shyam Lal Vali (Teerath), Dinanath Wariku (Shahid), Radha Krishan Bhan (Junoon) Shyam Lal Aima etc. besides a host of others who tried their genius in poetry, short stories, essays and almost all other literary topics. Those who attained prominence as Urdu poet and writers are Pandit Nand Lal (Talib) and Javidani³⁴. Pandit Jia Lal Kaul and professor S.K.Toshkhani the two great scholars unearthed a huge mass of Kashmiri literature which lay buried in some forgotten nooks and corners of the old houses. Pandit Raja Arzbegi was a great poet who wrote exquisite poetry in Persian, Pandit Hari Kaul, Pandit Veda Lal Dhar, Pandit Badar Joo and others have also composed good verses in Persian. Pandit Krishen Joo Razdan of Vanpoh was a great poet who produces quite a mass of poetical literature in Kashmiri language³⁵.

CONCLUSION:

This brief review of the rebuilding knowledge and scholarship on Kashmir shows that Kashmiri Pandits had adopted modern ideas and modern attitudes with respect to time demand and dissolve within it due to their quest for knowledge and requirements. The community being a minority in the Kashmir had only a weapon to fight for their demand was the education. They come interface with intelligentsia which fosters them a spirit of learning, knowledge and research in their cherished past to develop them and put them in public. The literature developed by the Hindus of Kashmir is praiseworthy and unearthed the hidden history of Kashmir by their essence, quest and enthusiasm. The spread of western education and modern thought wrought an upheaval in the old mentality and people began to reflect in modern tone and compared themselves with civilized societies where freedom of thought and expressions were bestowed. Being a literate community, they had their eye only for employment. Their demand was restricted only to safeguards their interests in employment and safety. They expresses through the press and poetry to arouse the other members of the community. The modes of expressing public opinion were distinctly western by following public meetings, organisations petitions, modern newspaper and platform. The cultural revitalization endeavoured to build a new society with democratic set up and a fund of ideas and sentiments which led to articulate their aspirations for political and economic stratum. The reconstruction of knowledge and information on Kashmir in modern times render benevolent environs for future generation to study and revisiting their past glory.

NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Khan.M.I, *History of Srinagar*, Srinagar 1978, p.194.
2. Kaw.M.K, *Kashmir and Its People*, New Delhi 2004, p.268.
3. Kilam.J.L, *The History of Kashmiri Pandits*, Delhi 2003, p.223.
4. Kaw.M.K, *Kashmir and Its People*, New Delhi 2004, p.268.
5. Kalla.K.L, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, Jammu 1996, p171.
6. Bhatt.S, "*Essays on Kashmiri Pandits Cultural Heritage*", Delhi 1995, p.75.
7. Kaw.M.K, *Op.cit*, p.192.
8. Kilam.J.L, *The History of Kashmiri Pandits*, Delhi 2003, p.223.
9. Kachru.D.K, *Kashmir in the Service of Urdu*, *Vitasta Annual Number*, Kolkata 1999, p.69.
10. Khan.M.I, *History of Srinagar*, Srinagar 1978, p.192.
11. Bazaz,P.N, *The History of Struggle for Freedom In Kashmir*, Kashmir 1994, p.194.
12. Kaw.M.K, *Op.cit*, p.192.
13. Khan.M.I, *History of Srinagar*, Srinagar 1978, p.194. Also See, In 1913 came Anand Kaul '*Geography of Jammu and Kashmir*', a well-written and authentic book that scored over the so-called guide books written by European travelers giving wrong place-names and distorted version of facts. Yet another significant effort of Anand Kaul, was his book on "*Archaeological Remains of Kashmir*." This was the result of his personal on-the-spot study of Kashmir's ancient monuments. As Anand Kaul was not a professional archaeologist, he was somewhat diffident to publish the results of his study without authentic critical opinion. So he approached C.E.A. Woldham, an authority on the subject and a friend of

Aurel Stein, for a review. And this is what Woldham wrote about it: "*It has been a real pleasure reading through the manuscript which discloses such full acquaintance with the remains of Kashmir and includes several not mentioned in other textual books and memoirs*".

14. Kachru.D.K, *Kashmir in the Service of Urdu*, Vitasta Annual Number, Kolkata 1999, p.69.
15. Bhatt.S, "*Essays on Kashmiri Pandits Cultural Heritage*", Delhi 1995, p.75.
16. Kaul, M.L, *Kashmir, Past and present: unravelling the mystique*, Delhi 1994, p.44.
17. Khan.M.I, *Op.cit*, p.199.
18. Kaw.M.K, *Op.cit*, p.192.
19. Koshur Samachar, *Journals of Kashmiri Pandits*, Political literature online, content-2.
20. Khan.M.I, *Op.cit*, p.199.
21. Toshkhani.S.S and Warikoo. K, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmiri Pandits*, p.326.
22. Sanyasi.Balakrishan, *Seeraza English Journal*, July-Dec. 2009, p.31.
23. Chatterjee. S.K, *Kashmiri Literature*, Vitasta Annual Number, Kolkata 2001, p.3.
24. Khan.M.I, *Op.cit*, p.199.
25. Toshkhani.S.S and Warikoo. K, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmiri Pandits*, p.302.
26. Sanyasi.Balakrishan, *Seeraza English Journal*, July-Dec. 2009, p.34.
27. Koshur Samachar, *Journal of Kashmiri Pandits*, Political literature, content -2
28. Sanyasi.Balakrishan, *Seeraza English Journal*, July-Dec. 2009, p.33.
29. Bazaz,P.N, *The History of Struggle for Freedom In Kashmir*, p.194.
30. Toshkhani.S.S and Warikoo. K, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmiri Pandits*, p.302.
31. Khan.M.I, *Op.cit*, p.199.
32. Bazaz,P.N, *Kashmir in Crucible*, Srinagar 1991, p.32.
33. Raina, Trilokinath, *A History of Kashmiri Literature*, Delhi 2002, p.49.
34. Kilam.J.L, *Op.cit*, p.228.
35. Kalla.K.L, *Cultural Heritage of Kashmir*, Jammu 1996, p171.