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# Profile

## Introduction

The Kashmiri people occupy an area in northwestern India administered as Jammu and Kashmir state, India's only state with a Muslim majority. It lies within the broader Kashmir region which reaches into India, Pakistan, and China, and a presently disputed region. Kashmir region also includes Azad Kashmir ("Free Kashmir" in Pakistan, but referred to in India as "Pakistan-occupied Kashmir") and the Northern Areas. Both are claimed and administered by Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> China administers The Shaksgam Valley and Aksai Chin both in the east. Most Kashmiri-speaking people, however, live in the northwestern section of Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir state in an area called the Vale of Kashmir (Kashmir Valley). This relatively small Kashmiri linguistic area is the focus of this report.



© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri mother and child

The dispute between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir region began in 1947, when British India was partitioned and India and Pakistan became independent nations. The princely states, including the state of Jammu and Kashmir, became sovereign states as Great Britain's authority over them lapsed upon partition.<sup>2</sup> The Hindu ruler of Jammu and Kashmir state chose to be part of India, and Pakistan did not accept this decision. Tension over the issue turned into war between India and Pakistan in 1947–1948 and 1965.<sup>3</sup> Since that time, fighting has sporadically broken out, almost turning into full-scale war in 1999, and a militant insurgency which seeks independence from India has developed in the Vale of Kashmir.<sup>4</sup> Because India and Pakistan became nuclear powers in 1998, the stakes are enormous for resolving the longstanding dispute. The Kashmiri people are at the center of the conflict.

## Geography

### *Area*

Jammu and Kashmir is India's northernmost state. The portion of this state controlled by India has three divisions: Jammu in the south, Ladakh in the northeast, and Kashmir

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<sup>1</sup> Embassy of India, Washington D.C. 2007. A Comprehensive Note on Jammu and Kashmir. "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir." [http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir\\_MEA/POK.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir_MEA/POK.html)

<sup>2</sup> International Relations and Security Network. Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH). Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. Hingorani, Aman. "The Kashmir Issue: Differing Perceptions." 2007. (Article)

<sup>3</sup> Even though the central issue of the 1971 Indo-Pakistani war was the secession of forces in East Pakistan, there was also heavy fighting along the cease-fire line between Pakistan and India.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. U.S. Department of State. "Background Note: India." December 2006. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>

(Vale of Kashmir), a river valley in the central state.<sup>5,6</sup> Jammu and Kashmir state is further administratively divided into 14 revenue districts.<sup>7</sup>

The Kashmiri-speaking people live mainly in the Kashmir and Jammu divisions of the state, both bordered on the east by Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir.<sup>8</sup> The shared border between Pakistan and the state of Jammu and Kashmir is 1,085 km (674 mi) in length.<sup>9</sup> The Kashmir division of the state covers 15,948 sq km (9,909 mi). Jammu division, south of Kashmir Valley, covers 26,293 sq km (16,338 mi) and is bordered on its south by two Indian states, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.<sup>10</sup> The Pir Panjal Range separates Jammu and Kashmir divisions.



China lies northeast of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, and Tibet lies to the east. Arranged after the 1947–1948 war, the Line of Control or Pakistan–India cease fire line separates India and Pakistan.<sup>11</sup> It extends west-southwest from Karakoram Pass in northern Ladakh division, and separates Azad Kashmir and the Northern Areas in Pakistan from Jammu and Kashmir state in India. Around 770 km (478 mi) long, the line ends approximately 130 km (81 mi) northeast of Lahore.<sup>12</sup>

### *Climate*<sup>13</sup>

At an altitude of only 300 m (984 ft), Jammu has a three-season climate typical of the Indian plains. From October to February or March, the climate is cool. July and August are the months of highest rainfall. The monsoons end in October, leaving clear skies that are free of dust. Nighttime temperatures are cold in December and January. The hot season begins in February–March, with temperatures rising as high as 40°C (104°F) by the end of June. Sometime around July, the monsoon rains arrive, clearing the dust from the air although temperatures remain hot.

<sup>5</sup> Maps of India. “Maps of Jammu and Kashmir, India.” 2007.

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/jammuandkashmir/index.html>

<sup>6</sup> Embassy of India, Washington D.C. 2007. A Comprehensive Note on Jammu and Kashmir. “Geography and History.” [http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir\\_MEA/geography.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir_MEA/geography.html)

<sup>7</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal. SATP. Institute for Conflict Management. Marks, Thomas A. “Jammu and Kashmir: State Response to Insurgency – The Case of Jammu.” 2005 (Vol. XVI). <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume16/Article1.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Azad Kashmir is officially named “Azad Jammu and Kashmir” but appears on most maps simply as Azad Kashmir.

<sup>9</sup> Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. Country Profile: India. December 2004. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/profiles/India.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal. SATP. Institute for Conflict Management. Marks, Thomas A. “Jammu and Kashmir: State Response to Insurgency – The Case of Jammu.” 2005 (Vol. XVI). <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume16/Article1.htm>

<sup>11</sup> The Line of Control is also referred to as the Line of Actual Control.

<sup>12</sup> Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. *Pakistan: A Country Study*. Blood, Peter, Ed. 1995. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>13</sup> Kashmir Tourism. Jammu & Kashmir. “Climate in Jammu & Kashmir.” 2003. <http://www.kashmir-tourism.com/jammu-kashmir-climate.htm>

At the much higher altitude of over 1,000 m (3,280 ft), Kashmir Valley has cooler temperatures than Jammu. Its best season is considered to be May through June, when temperatures average 20°C (68°F) during the day. In October, the tourist season ends. Nighttime temperatures frequently fall below freezing between November and February. February, March, and April are the months of highest rainfall for Kashmir, although the area receives rainfall throughout the year. Kashmir is spared the heaviest of the monsoons by the mountains which surround it.



© Miran Rijavec  
Winter, Dal Lake

### *Topography*

Jammu and Kashmir state is mostly within one of India's three main geological divisions known as the Great Himalaya Range, which extends along India's northeastern border. The southern part of the state lies within another geological division, the Great Plains of northern India. The combined area of Jammu and Kashmir state includes mountainous highlands, foothills, plains, and river valleys.

### **Vale of Kashmir**

Kashmir division is formed by a river valley along the Jhelum River, called the Vale of Kashmir (Kashmir Valley) in the central portion. This lush valley is surrounded by high mountains and has long been a popular tourist destination. The area is known for its gardens, lakes, picturesque scenery, and wildlife sanctuaries.<sup>14</sup>

### **Karakoram Range**

To the north of the Vale of Kashmir lies the Karakoram Range, the southeastern extension of Pakistan's Hindu Kush mountains. This large mountain chain forms the main geographical split that divides Central Asia from India. The Karakoram Range is also one of the three mountain chains that together form the Himalaya Mountains.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Karakorums

### **Pir Panjal Range**

Jammu division consists mostly of a low plain that is bounded on the north by mountains, the Pir Panjal Range. With an average elevation of 5,000 m (16,400 ft), the Pir Panjal traces the southern edge of Kashmir Valley and connects to the Banihal Pass. At the pass, it joins the ridgeline that separates Warvan Valley from the Vale of Kashmir.<sup>15</sup>

### **Banihal Pass**

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<sup>14</sup> Kashmir Hub. "Kashmir Valley." <http://www.kashmirhub.com/regions-of-jammu-kashmir/kashmir.html>

<sup>15</sup> Travel Himalayas. Himalayas. "Himalayan Mountain Range." <http://www.travel-himalayas.com/about-himalayas/himalayan-mountain-range.html>

The Banihal Pass is situated in the Vale of Kashmir's southern end, near the beginning of the Jhelum River. It links the valley to Kishtwar.<sup>16</sup>

### *Rivers and Bodies of Water*

#### **Jhelum River**

The Jhelum is the main river that runs through Kashmir division. Its source is an underground spring at Vernag, approximately 80 km (50 mi) south of the city of Srinagar.<sup>17</sup> The river runs northeast through the Vale of Kashmir to Wular Lake. It then flows southwest into Pakistan where it eventually drains into the Indus River.<sup>18</sup>

#### **Chenāb River**

The Chenāb River begins in the Himalaya Mountains of Himachal Pradesh state, south of Jammu. It flows northwest through Jammu and Kashmir state and then shifts direction to the southwest, into Pakistan. There, it merges with the Sutlej River, which connects to the Indus River. The river's total length is 960 km (600 mi).<sup>19</sup>



© Showkat Ahmed Mir  
Chenab river

#### **Wular Lake**

One of the largest freshwater lakes in Asia, Wular Lake lies north of Srinagar, just past the small town of Bandipora. This lake absorbs the Vale of Kashmir's annual floodwaters and thus serves the valley's entire drainage system. Surrounded by marshes, it is a wildlife habitat and is also important as a source of fish: 60% of the state's total fish production comes from Wular Lake. For this reason, several thousand people who live nearby rely on this lake for their livelihood.<sup>20</sup>

#### **Manasbal Lake**

Manasbal Lake also lies north of Srinagar, about 30 km (18.6 mi). At an altitude of 1,583 m (5,193 ft), this calm, tranquil lake is known for its many species of birds and the lotus flowers that line its shores in July and August. It is the Vale of Kashmir's deepest lake and is connected to the Jhelum River by an outflow channel. Local people in the small surrounding villages use this lake for water, fishing, and harvesting lotus rootstocks, a source of food in the state. Extensive tourism has put pressure on the lake's ecosystem.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Travel Himalayas. Himalayas. "Himalayan Mountain Range." <http://www.travel-himalayas.com/about-himalayas/himalayan-mountain-range.html>

<sup>17</sup> Indian Travel Portal. India Travel Guide – Rivers – States – Jammu & Kashmir. "Jhelum River." <http://www.indiantravelportal.com/jammu-kashmir/rivers/jhelum-river.html>

<sup>18</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. "Jhelum River." 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9043618/Jhelum-River>

<sup>19</sup> MSN Encarta. Encyclopedia. "Chenāb." 2007. [http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761576781/Chen%C4%81b.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761576781/Chen%C4%81b.html)

<sup>20</sup> World Wildlife Fund. Freshwater and Wetlands. "Wular Lake." 24 May 2006. [http://www.wwfindia.org/about\\_wwf/what\\_we\\_do/freshwater\\_wetlands/our\\_work/ramsar\\_sites/wular\\_lake.cfm](http://www.wwfindia.org/about_wwf/what_we_do/freshwater_wetlands/our_work/ramsar_sites/wular_lake.cfm)

<sup>21</sup> International Lake Environment Committee Foundation (ILEC). World Lakes Database. "Manasbal Lake." 2002. <http://www.ilec.or.jp/database/asi/asi-57.html>



## Dal Lake

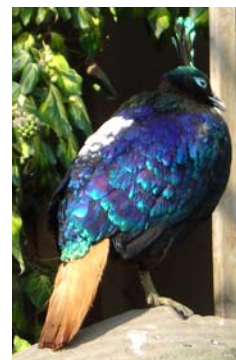
Dal Lake is a popular tourist destination in the Vale of Kashmir, known for its still waters that reflect the surrounding mountains. It is dotted with houseboats and shoreline vendors who offer tourists boat rides in *shakiras*, similar in design to gondolas. A few of the 500 (approx.) Mughal gardens that were created in the 16th and 17th centuries still line its shores.<sup>22</sup> The second largest lake in Jammu and Kashmir state, Dal Lake supports a fishing industry as well as the tourist trade.



© Philippe Houmont  
Shikaras on Dal Lake

## Biodiversity

In the Himalayas and their sub ranges of the Kashmir region are found many species of birds and animals. A variety of rare bird species inhabit the area, such as the Monal pheasant. Animals include the rarely seen snow leopard, which has survived from the Pleistocene Era. Also found is the Hangul (Kashmir stag), one of the world's most endangered red deer species.<sup>23</sup> The Himalayan Black Bear inhabits the region along with numerous others such as yaks, mountain goats, and deer. During the cold winters, many of the animals move down the sides of the mountains to graze.



© 2004 David Monniaux  
Monal pheasant

Several wildlife sanctuaries are located in Jammu and Kashmir state. The Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve near Srinagar stretches across 180 sq km (112 mi).<sup>24</sup> This large sanctuary contains natural habitat of forests and wetlands that is home to foxes, bears, various birds, and the Himalayan musk deer. Another sanctuary is the Dachigam National Park, also located near Srinagar. With its thick green forests and a glacier-fed stream running through it, Dachigam is one of India's largest natural reserves. It is considered one of the most beautiful parks in the world and is home to a wide range of animals, birds, and a trout fish farm.<sup>25</sup>

Plants in the region include forests of silver fir and pine in the mountainous regions. Other tree species include horse chestnuts, birch, almond, willow, walnut, and maple. Rhododendron flowers and herbal plants grow in the areas of high altitude. Different kinds of brush plants and thorn bushes are found in the lower areas. The Vale of Kashmir is home of a large tree called Chinar, which changes its color with the changing seasons. Varieties of



© Lokai Profil  
Chinar - Oriental Plane Tree

<sup>22</sup> Kashmir Tourism. "Kashmir Dal Lake." <http://www.kashmir-tourism.net/kashmir/dal-lake-kashmir.html>

<sup>23</sup> Kashmir Hub. "Kashmir Wildlife Sanctuaries." <http://www.kashmirhub.com/kashmir-wildlife-sanctuaries/index.html>

<sup>24</sup> Kashmir Hub. "Gulmarg Biosphere Reserve." <http://www.kashmirhub.com/kashmir-wildlife-sanctuaries/gulmarg-biosphere-reserve.html>

<sup>25</sup> Kashmir Hub. "Dachigam National Park." <http://www.kashmirhub.com/kashmir-wildlife-sanctuaries/dachigam-national-park.html>

flowers also grow profusely in Kashmir Valley.

## Major Cities

Srinagar, known to locals as the “Lake City,” is the summer capital of Jammu & Kashmir state and its historic state capital. Srinagar sits 1,730 m (5,676 ft) above sea level in Srinagar District. The Jhelum River flows through the city, which spreads along both sides of the river. Seven wooden bridges cross the river, and canals intersect the city.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Srinagar reflected in Jhelum

Although its origins as an inhabited area are much older, the present city was founded in 631 CE.<sup>26, 27</sup> Full of gardens, mosques, and picturesque scenery, Srinagar has long been a tourist resort. A 7th century temple, a fort built in the 16th century, and old ruins are located here alongside the University of Kashmir and the National Institute of Technology. The city is also a manufacturing center for wool, carpets, and silk. As of 2001, the population was 971,357.<sup>28</sup>

Baramulla names both a city and the valley’s largest district in terms of both population and area. The city lies on the Jhelum River near Wular Lake in northwestern Jammu and Kashmir state. It is approximately 45 km (28 mi) west of the city of Srinagar.<sup>29</sup> Baramulla is a gateway into the Vale of Kashmir. It has been a stopping point for Mughal emperors and other dignitaries and visitors to the valley since as early as the 15th century. Baramulla has been a city of religious importance, sacred for centuries to Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims. The Muslim saint Syed Janbaz Wali visited the valley in 1421 CE and is buried here.<sup>30</sup> His shrine draws pilgrims from around the valley and beyond. Throughout its history the city has been a cultural mix of Muslims, Sikhs, Hindus, and Buddhists.

The city of Jammu in Jammu District is the winter capital of Jammu and Kashmir state. However, it is located in the extreme southwestern part of the state, and few Kashmiri people live here. Jammu is an ancient town, its original site founded in the 14th century BCE according to legend.<sup>31, 32</sup> It lies next to the Tawi River at the southern end of a highway that links the plains of North India to the Vale of Kashmir.

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<sup>26</sup> CE = Current Era, formerly referenced as A.D., or *Anno Domini*.

<sup>27</sup> Kashmir, Paradise on Earth. “Srinagar – the Lake City.” c2000.

<http://www.jktourism.org/cities/kashmir/srinagar/index.htm>

<sup>28</sup> MSN Encarta. Encyclopedia. “Srinagar.” 2007.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761578851/Sr%C4%ABnagar.html](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761578851/Sr%C4%ABnagar.html)

<sup>29</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica Online. “Baramulla.” 2007. <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9013267/Baramulla>

<sup>30</sup> District Baramulla. 2007. <http://baramulla.nic.in/intro/intro.htm>

<sup>31</sup> BCE = Before Common Era, formerly referenced as “Before Christ.”

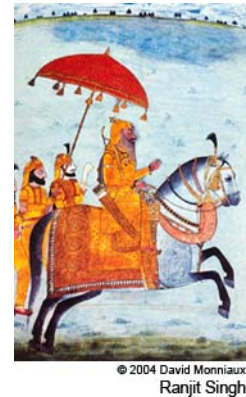
<sup>32</sup> Kashmir Herald. “Jammu (Tawi).” September 2001.

<http://www.kashmirherald.com/peopleandplaces/travelplaces/jammutawi.html>

## History

### *Early History*

The Kashmir region is an area of ancient civilization. According to tradition, it derives its name from the Khasi, a pre-Christian era people who inhabited the high mountains of the northern region.<sup>33</sup> Buddhism came to the region around 245 BCE and Hindus and Buddhists ruled the region of Kashmir until Muslims conquered it in the 14th century.



### *Middle Ages to 20th Century and British Rule*

Between the 14th and 20th centuries, rule over Kashmir changed several times. Around 1586 the emperor Akbar conquered the area and it became part of the Muslim Mughal Empire that had been founded by Babur, a Turkish ruler. Although this empire lasted in India until 1857, Kashmir became independent of it by 1751. Instability followed along with a brief period of Afghan rule. In 1819, rule over Kashmir transferred to India when the Punjabi Sikh *maharaja* (Indian prince) Ranjit Singh conquered Kashmir.

Finally in 1846 the British “pacified” Kashmir, ruling the still predominantly Muslim region through a Hindu prince.<sup>34</sup> By this time, Britain ruled most of India, spearheaded by the British East India Company whose administrators gained power through arranging local support. The British generally ruled India through this ‘divide and conquer’ method of establishing and maintaining control. The strategy of using local rulers who followed *sanad* (subsidiary agreements drawn up by the British) had proved successful.<sup>35</sup> Under such agreements, the *maharajahs* remained independent as long as they acknowledged ultimate British control over foreign affairs, defense, and communications.

The British method of controlling a region while allowing local limited self rule led to what are called the princely states, or the Native States. Alongside this was the adjunct method of British rule, “outright military conquest or direct annexation of territories.”<sup>36</sup> These annexed areas included most of northern India, and the territory conquered by annexation was called British India.

### *Partition and War*

On 18 July, 1947, The British Parliament enacted the Indian Independence Act. This Act stipulated that as of 15 August, 1947, Britain’s authority over the princely Indian states

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<sup>33</sup> MSN Encarta. “Jammu and Kashmir.” History. 2007.

[http://encarta.msn.com/text\\_761552307\\_0/Jammu\\_and\\_Kashmir.html](http://encarta.msn.com/text_761552307_0/Jammu_and_Kashmir.html)

<sup>34</sup> Fact Monster. Encyclopedia. Kashmir. “History.” 2007.

<http://www.factmonster.com/ce6/world/A0859099.html>

<sup>35</sup> Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. *Pakistan: A Country Study*. Blood, Peter, Ed. 1995. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>36</sup> Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. *Pakistan: A Country Study*. Blood, Peter, Ed. 1995. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

would lapse.<sup>37</sup> On 15 August, 1947, partition of British India also went into effect. The princely states gained independence, India with its Hindu majority gained independence, and Pakistan with its Muslim majority gained nationhood and independence. All this happened more or less simultaneously, with very little time for planning and processing these destabilizing events. Since that time the two countries “have been locked in a tense rivalry” and have gone to war twice over the issue of Kashmir.<sup>38</sup>

The problem was triggered when Hindu *maharaja* Hari Singh of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir chose to be part of India. Jammu and Kashmir state with its majority Muslim population borders both India and Pakistan. India agreed to this accession decision, but Pakistan objected on the grounds that it violated the India Independence Act which left the princes free to choose their country. Pakistan expressed its misgivings that the *maharaja* of Kashmir had been coerced into choosing India. In fact, he had been reluctant to choose one over the other. However, when armed fighters from Pakistan’s North-West Frontier Province invaded his territory, he asked India for help. India agreed to provide it, and Hari Singh acceded his state of Jammu and Kashmir to India on 26 October, 1947. India also expressed its wish for a plebiscite to determine the people’s will after the invaders had been driven back. Pakistan rejected the accession and launched military action to undo it.



Courtesy of Wikipedia  
Jinnah and Gandhi

This first Indo–Pakistani war lasted from 1947 to 1948, with the cease-fire taking place on January 1, 1949. A cease-fire line known as the Line of Control was mediated by the United Nations (UN) and drawn up, ceding approximately 30% of Kashmir to Pakistani control. The line remains in place today. The central and eastern area of Kashmir held by India is called Jammu and Kashmir state, broken into three divisions. It includes the Muslim-majority Vale of Kashmir, the slight Hindu-majority Jammu division to the south, and the Buddhist Ladakh division to the east, part of the Tibetan plateau.<sup>39, 40, 41</sup>



© Abhinay Rathore  
Indian tanks in battlefield 1965

In 1965, the second Indo–Pakistani war broke out. It lasted for three weeks, ending with a cease-fire brokered by the UN. Under the terms of the cease-fire, Pakistan

<sup>37</sup> International Relations and Security Network. Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH). Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. Hingorani, Aman. “The Kashmir Issue: Differing Perceptions.” 2007.

<sup>38</sup> Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs. U.S. Department of State. “Background Note: India. Foreign Relations: Bilateral and Regional Relations, Pakistan.” December 2006.  
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm>

<sup>39</sup> One of Ladakh’s districts is Buddhist and the other is Shi’a Muslim.

<sup>40</sup> Federal Research Division. Library of Congress. *Pakistan: A Country Study*. Blood, Peter, Ed. 1995. Washington D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>41</sup> Mohiuddin, Yasmeen Niaz. *Pakistan: A Global Studies Handbook*. 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO.

and India agreed to withdraw their forces to their respective areas that had been established by the Line of Control.

India and Pakistan agreed formally at Simla in 1972 that they would in the future abstain from using force to resolve the dispute over Kashmir. As part of their agreement, they formally recognized the Line of Control, and India agreed to release its Pakistani war prisoners, numbering around 90,000.<sup>42</sup> This agreement was complicated, however, by a separatist Muslim movement which began operating in the late 1980s. Protesting Indian control over Kashmir, the movement entered into armed struggle against India.

### *Recent Events*

Since the emergence of the separatist movement, the conflict over the Kashmir region has intensified. The insurgency has mixed causes that incorporate both religion and ethnicity. The original separatists were mainly Muslim Kashmiris, but they have been joined by Arabs and Afghans. Some of the militants want to be under Pakistani rule and some simply wish to gain independence from India in a Kashmiri state. Many have infiltrated into the Kashmir area of conflict from Pakistan and are supported materially by Pakistan. The Pakistani government claims the militants are independent Kashmiris who are willing to fight for their freedom. The Indian government, however, claims they are mainly Muslim mercenaries and members of the Pakistani army.

One study states that violence over Kashmir claimed the lives of around 12,000 civilians between 1990 and 1995.<sup>43</sup> Sources report that as of mid 1993, the Indian government had sent 175,000 (est.) soldiers along with 30,000 paramilitary forces into Jammu and Kashmir state.<sup>44</sup> The Indian military has been accused of torture and human rights abuses. Opposition militants have been accused of unprovoked attacks on security forces and civilians and of violating civilians' civil liberties by forcing them to accept the militants' political views.

In the May–July 1999 Kargil incident, India and Pakistan came close to all-out war over the Kashmir issue. It was preceded by a period of escalated tension reflected in the nuclear arms race between India and Pakistan. Following the 1998 exploding of nuclear weapons by both nations, Indian prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee accepted an invitation to visit Pakistan. Both countries were responding to international pressure to de-escalate the tensions between them by resolving the Kashmir issue. About three months later, however, Pakistani troops crossed the Line of Control at Kargil and Dras, and Indian troops repelled them. U.S. President Bill Clinton interceded and negotiated with Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, gaining



© Prashant Bhanwaj  
Kargil memorial

<sup>42</sup> MSN Encarta. Encyclopedia. "Indo-Pakistani Wars." 2007.

[http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia\\_761588350/Indo-Pakistani\\_Wars.html#s1](http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761588350/Indo-Pakistani_Wars.html#s1)

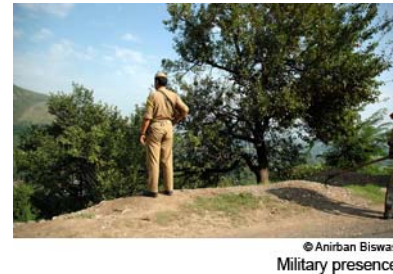
<sup>43</sup> Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir and Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. 2001. London: Anthem Press.

<sup>44</sup> Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir and Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. 2001. London: Anthem Press.

Sharif's agreement to again respect the Line of Control.

In 2001, tensions again flared when Pakistani insurgents in Delhi attacked the Indian parliament. Several people were killed, and the incident led to India's recalling its ambassador from Pakistan. India also cut rail and road links and sent more troops to Jammu and Kashmir state and along the border with Pakistan. Since then, insurgent attacks have continued in Jammu and Kashmir state and along the Line of Control. The two nations restored diplomatic ties in 2003 and Pakistan agreed to stop supporting militant separatists at the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) Summit in 2004. At the New Delhi summit in April 2005, India and Pakistan again agreed to pursue peace.

Still, the dangerous dispute remains. In 2006, violence in the region caused 900 deaths, 300 of them civilian.<sup>45</sup> Altogether, violence in India-controlled Kashmir territory has "killed tens of thousands of civilians..., rendered millions homeless... Hardly a day passes without a large number of terrorism related incidents such as grenade and bomb explosions, [and] rocket attacks..."<sup>46</sup> The militants are reportedly using "state-of-the-art weaponry" including anti-tank missiles, anti-aircraft guns, remote controlled aircraft, and grenade launchers. Their communications methods include satellite phones and systems that can penetrate military broadcasts.<sup>47</sup> The violence is mostly based in the Vale of Kashmir and to a lesser degree in Jammu division.<sup>48</sup>



## Economy

The Muslim majority in the valley traditionally earned a living through agricultural or pastoral labor or as boatman, called Hanjis. Hindus (Pandits), who comprised around 3% of the valley's population, had a vested interest in business, land ownership, and bureaucracy. Their literacy rate was twice as high as that of the Muslim majority. Until approximately 1990, Kashmiri Pandits monopolized the insurance, banking, and telecommunication sectors, holding 80% of all professional jobs in the Vale of Kashmir.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Country Profile: India. Kashmir. 27 June 2007. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018965323192>

<sup>46</sup> International Relations and Security Network. Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH). Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. Hingorani, Aman. "The Kashmir Issue: Differing Perceptions." 2007. (Article)

<sup>47</sup> International Relations and Security Network. Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule Zürich (ETH). Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich. Hingorani, Aman. "The Kashmir Issue: Differing Perceptions." 2007. (Article)

<sup>48</sup> U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Country Profile: India. "Kashmir." 27 June 2007. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018965323192>

<sup>49</sup> Das, Suranjan. Kashmir & Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia. [p. 43] 2001. London: Anthem Press. [book]

Although a small amount of industry is found in the valley today, the economy in the Vale of Kashmir is based almost entirely on agriculture. Moreover, the agricultural economy is spread throughout the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir, where around 80% of the population relies on it.<sup>50</sup> This is also true farther south in Jammu division, where farmers have settled in the foothills and plains of the area.



## *Agriculture*

### **Maize**

Maize, one of the main crops, is planted between May and July and harvested between August and November. It is grown on approximately 303,000 acres of land in the Vale of Kashmir and requires a climate that is hot and dry.<sup>51</sup> After millet and maize have been harvested in late summer, people who live in the higher regions migrate to lower areas where they find work in mills, factories, or local businesses.

### **Wheat**

Wheat is widely grown throughout Jammu and Kashmir state, with 78,000 acres under cultivation in Kashmir division.<sup>52</sup> It is over twice the amount grown in Jammu division. In August the wheat is planted, and in March and April it is harvested.

### **Rice**

Rice is the main crop in the region, grown mostly in the Vale of Kashmir at an altitude of 2,100 m (6,890 ft). It requires a climate that is hot and moist, with enough water to flood the fields. In the Vale of Kashmir, 374,000 acres of rice are under cultivation.

### **Fruits and Nuts**

The Vale of Kashmir is famous for its rich abundance of fruits, which include peaches, pears, apples, apricots, grapes, cherries, plums, and pomegranates. Almonds and walnuts are also cultivated. These fruits and nuts grow well in the cool climate with plenty of rainfall and sunshine. Fruit growing has been extended in recent years with the availability of improved seeds and nursery facilities. Machinery and technical support are provided free by the state. Training programs for gardeners have increased, and a fruit research center has been established. Transportation has also improved so that large quantities of fruits and nuts can be exported. They are a significant source of income for the entire state.



<sup>50</sup> Kashmir News Network. Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Agriculture and Crops." c2005. <http://ikashmir.net/geography/chapter2.2.html>

<sup>51</sup> Kashmir News Network. Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Agriculture and Crops." c2005. <http://ikashmir.net/geography/chapter2.2.html>

<sup>52</sup> Kashmir News Network. Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Agriculture and Crops." c2005. <http://ikashmir.net/geography/chapter2.2.html>

## Other Crops

Several other kinds of crops are grown. They include tobacco plants, saffron, tomatoes, spinach, carrots, potatoes, turnips, cauliflower, radishes, lotus plants, and onions.

## Silk and Wool

In the Vale of Kashmir, silk worms are grown, feeding on the leaves of mulberry trees which grow plentifully in the area. The cocoons are used to manufacture silk yarn. Wool is also a product of the Vale of Kashmir, the main area in the state where sheep are raised. Kashmiri farmers have imported high quality breeds of sheep from Australia to improve the breeding lines in Kashmir.

## Industry

A limited amount of industry is found in the Kashmiri area of Jammu and Kashmir state. Most of it is located in the city of Srinagar, a manufacturing center for silk, carpets, and wool. Previously, the area was known for its handcrafted cashmere shawls woven by hand. Now such items are mostly manufactured. Carpets are woven on looms for export, using wool of the highest quality from sheep grown in the region. Some of the cotton yarn, however, is imported from Amritsar. The state government runs a factory in Srinagar that produces high quality blankets, woolen cloth, and tweeds. A silk factory in Srinagar and one in Jammu manufacture silk yarn.



Courtesy of Wikipedia  
Shawl Makers, 1867

Other small-scale industrial facilities manufacture paper products, machinery, beverages and food products, drugs, and chemicals. Small factories produce watches, TV sets, tape recorders, electronic clocks, and automobile batteries. Close to Srinagar, the Raven Craft factory produces juices, jams, and sauces. In Srinagar District, a cement factory is run by the government and produces approximately 54,431 kg (60 tons) of cement daily.<sup>53</sup>

## Government

As part of India, Jammu and Kashmir state has a bicameral legislature and is governed by a chief minister. The legislature has one elected house. The state also has a governor whom the president of India appoints. This organization follows the Indian Constitution's system of central and state government, in which authority rests at both cabinet and parliamentary levels. The Indian president is elected for a five-year term and presides over the Lower House, Lok Sabha ("House of the People") and the Upper House, Rajya Sabha ("Council of States"). The Lower House members are elected by Indian voters. Members of the Upper House are indirectly elected by state assembly members.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Kashmir News Network. Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Industries, Handicrafts, Exports, and Imports." <http://ikashmir.net/geography/chapter4.1.html>

<sup>54</sup> U.K. Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Country Profile: India. "Kashmir." 27 June 2007. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029394365&a=KCountryProfile&aid=1018965323192>



India's judiciary is independent. The country has a strong tradition of a democratic civil society, functioning within a caste system. The media in most of the country is free, with a diversity of opinions expressed. One source claims, however, that India's mainstream press has failed to present an objective view of the degree of human rights violations in Kashmir, whether by insurgents or Indian security forces.<sup>55</sup>

In the disputed Kashmiri region, however, the government does not operate smoothly. The ongoing violence is disruptive of daily life and includes threats made by militants against witnesses and judges. The large military presence in Kashmir is always in the background, at the very least. Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, formerly a Home Minister of the Indian government, states that there has been "a total collapse of administrative machinery and other institutions in Kashmir."<sup>56</sup>

### **Ethnic Groups and Languages<sup>57</sup>**

Kashmiri Muslims are the majority population in the Vale of Kashmir and in part of eastern Jammu division. Most of the people in Srinagar, the capital city, are Muslims, but Sikhs and Hindus are also present. They all refer to themselves as simply Kashmiris. Languages of the Vale of Kashmir vary. In some areas, Panjabi, Pahari and Shina are spoken. However, the main language is Kashmiri, with linguistic roots in the Vedic and Buddhist Sanskrit periods. The Indian Constitution recognizes Kashmiri as the main language of Jammu and Kashmir state.<sup>58</sup>



© Dave Watts  
Kashmiri men, Dal Lake

In Jammu division, 60% of the people are Hindu, although Sikh and Muslim minorities are also present. Three of the districts in Jammu, Rajouri, Poonch, and Doda, have Muslim majorities. In Jammu, the most widely spoken languages are variations of Punjabi, such as Pahari and Dogri. Kashmiri is also spoken to a lesser degree, in Jammu's eastern section.

In Ladakh division of Jammu and Kashmir state, outside the region of conflict, there are two districts. Leh District is mainly Buddhist, and Kargil District is 73% Shia Muslim. The languages spoken in Ladakh are Ladakhi and Balti.

As the Kashmiri language lacks a developed alphabet, other written scripts have been used to render Kashmiri into written form. They include Perso-Arabic, Roman characters translated into English, and Urdu.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *Kashmir and Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. Das, Suranjan. 2001. London: Anthem Press. (book)

<sup>56</sup> Cited by: Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir and Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. 2001. London: Anthem Press. (book)

<sup>57</sup> Embassy of India, Washington D.C. 2007. A Comprehensive Note on Jammu and Kashmir. "Pakistan Occupied Kashmir." [http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir\\_MEA/POK.html](http://www.indianembassy.org/policy/Kashmir/Kashmir_MEA/POK.html)

<sup>58</sup> Koshur. An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri. Jammu, Kashmir & Ladakh. Pushp, P.M. "Kashmiri and the Linguistic Predicament of the State." <http://www.koshur.org/Linguistic/1.html>

# Religion

## Overview

Between 90 and 95 percent of today's population in the Vale of Kashmir are Muslim.<sup>60, 61</sup> Many are Shi'a, but the majority are of the Sunni branch. Hindus are also present in the valley, where they comprise between six and eight percent of the population in the Srinagar District. In all other districts of Kashmir division, however, Hindus are less than two percent of the population.<sup>62</sup> A small number of Sikhs live in the city of Srinagar.



© Steve Evans  
Mosque

## Religious Background

After Muslims conquered the Kashmir region in the 14th century, most of the population converted to Islam. Prior to that time, it had been predominantly Buddhist from as early as 245 B.C.E., although many Hindus also lived there. The Hindu religion of the ancient Pandits (indigenous Kashmiris) included fire ceremonies and rituals that had roots in Zoroastrianism, born in central Asia.<sup>63</sup> In the Middle Ages, Islam came to endure as the dominant religion of the Kashmir area, blending into existing religious practices. For instance, fire ceremonies and other elements of Zoroastrianism, such as the use of astrology to choose auspicious dates for certain occasions, have endured in the religion of Kashmir. Not only are related rituals found in Hinduism, they are also found in altered form among the Shi'a religious practices in the Vale of Kashmir.<sup>64</sup>

### *Muslims and Hindus in India's Moghul Dynasty*

Under the dynasty of Babur, who descended from Genghis Khan, the lives of Muslims and Hindus in India were intertwined. They influenced each other so greatly that between the 15th and 19th centuries, a blend of the two cultures appeared in Moghul civilization. The Taj Mahal is a famed architectural wonder of this Indian Muslim cultural synthesis. However, the Moghul civilization was not to last. Building and expanding their



© Philippe Houmont  
Mughal Gardens

<sup>59</sup> Vitasta Annual Number. Prof. Suniti Kumar Chatterjee. "Kashmiri Literature." Volume XXXIV (2000-2001). <http://www.vitasta.org/2001/2.1.html>

<sup>60</sup> WebIndia123. Jammu and Kashmir. "The People: Kashmiris." c2000. <http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/PEOPLE/kashmiris.htm>

<sup>61</sup> Kashmir Mart. "Religion in Jammu and Kashmir." Undated. <http://www.kashmirmart.com/religion.html>

<sup>62</sup> South Asia Terrorism Portal. SATP. Institute for Conflict Management. Marks, Thomas A. "Jammu and Kashmir: State Response to Insurgency – The Case of Jammu." 2005 (Vol. XVI). <http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/publication/faultlines/volume16/Article1.htm>

<sup>63</sup> Vitasta Annual Number. Dr. K. N. Pandita. "Kashmir: The Roots of our Culture." Vol. XXXIII, 1999–2000. <http://www.vitasta.org/2000/6.11.html>

<sup>64</sup> Vitasta Annual Number. Dr. K. N. Pandita. "Kashmir: The Roots of our Culture." Vol. XXXIII, 1999–2000. <http://www.vitasta.org/2000/6.11.html>

colonial empire in India, the British deposed the Moghuls in 1858.

### *Religion as a Wedge Issue*

To understand how the multiple religions in Kashmir intersect today, it is necessary to view them in context of the underlying political background. The British ruled indirectly in India, leaving intact some Muslim institutions along with much of the Sufi culture.<sup>65, 66</sup> Their focus was on resources and political power, not religion or culture, both of which they tended to leave to local rulers. Religious differences were, however, effectively exploited by nationalist leaders in India and Pakistan for political gain. During the period of British dominance and beyond, tensions grew between Hindus and Muslims. The tensions were accelerated by Hindu extremists who advocated for a Hindu state in which Sikhs and Muslims would be secondary citizens.<sup>67, 68</sup> Tension was of course generated by the plans for “a separate homeland for Muslims,” plans which Mohammed Ali Jinnah and others effectively developed.<sup>69</sup> Political-religious tension eventually led to the partitioning of India into a Pakistan dominated by Muslims and an India dominated by Hindus. With his state bordering each nation, the Hindu ruler of Jammu and Kashmir chose to place his Muslim-majority state under Indian dominion. The Kashmir conflict today has its very roots in this division of India and Pakistan.<sup>70</sup> It follows that religion in Kashmir today, similar to its role throughout this region in the past, is sometimes used as a divisive wedge issue in this conflict.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Dome and minaret, Hazratbal

### *Islam*

Islam is the majority religion in Kashmir. It is also the world’s second largest religion, with over one billion followers worldwide. Those who profess Islam are members of the *Umma*, or community of believers throughout the world.

Founded by the Arab Prophet Muhammad in the 7th century C.E., Islam took root in Arab culture. Within a century, it had spread through North Africa, parts of Asia, and the Iberian Peninsula. Today, around half of the world’s Muslim population is found in South and Southeast Asia.<sup>71</sup> It is the largest minority religion in India, where Muslims are mostly Sunnis.

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<sup>65</sup> Mohiuddin, Yasmeen Niaz. *Pakistan: A Global Studies Handbook*. 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO.

<sup>66</sup> The Milli Gazette. Engineer, Ashgar Ali. “Secularism in India.” 23 June 2006.

[http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623\\_secular\\_india.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623_secular_india.htm)

<sup>67</sup> The Milli Gazette. Engineer, Ashgar Ali. “Secularism in India.” 23 June 2006.

[http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623\\_secular\\_india.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623_secular_india.htm)

<sup>68</sup> *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies, and Modern Myths*. Bhatt, Chetan. 2001. Oxford: Berg.

<sup>69</sup> *Pakistan: A Global Studies Handbook*. Mohiuddin, Yasmeen Niaz. 2007. Santa Barbara, CA: ABC CLIO.

<sup>70</sup> Country Studies. U.S. Library of Congress. “Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir.”

<http://countrystudies.us/india/117.htm>

<sup>71</sup> Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. *Islamic Societies in Practice*. 2nd Edition. 2004. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

The Islamic religion fell into two divisions after the Prophet's death in 632 C.E. The reasons for the split had less to do with theology than with succession and leadership of the Muslim community. Muhammad did not select a successor; this decision was left to the religious community. They chose Muhammad's friend Abu Bakr to be the first *caliph*, or presider over the period of 'God on earth.'<sup>72</sup> The question of rightful succession came up in 656 at the time of the fourth *caliph*, Ali, who was the Prophet's cousin. Disagreement over whether religious leaders should be of the Prophet's lineage or independent of it led to war. Shi'a Muslims believed that successors to Muhammad should be family members. Sunnis, who now comprise more than 90 percent of the *Umma*, believed such leaders should be chosen through an election or selection process.

Whether Sunni or Shi'a, Muslims believe that the Holy Qur'an (Koran) contains the words revealed by Allah (God) to the Prophet Muhammad.<sup>73</sup> They believe in living one's life in accordance with the laws of Allah as set forth in the Qur'an. To accomplish this, believers must follow the Five Pillars of Faith. These include affirming one's faith, observing daily prayer, giving alms to charities, fasting during Ramadan, and going on pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca during one's lifetime. The Islamic religion encourages Muslims to lead lives that reflect the qualities of honesty, mercy, kindness, and courage.



© el17bara / flickr.com  
Holy Quran

### *Hinduism*

Unlike most other major religions, Hinduism does not have a centralized authority or doctrine. A famous Hindu religious saying is, "Truth is one; sages call it by different names."<sup>74</sup> Not a formal organized religion, Hinduism is instead a system of beliefs based on the authority contained in India's oldest sacred texts, the Vedas. The author of the Rigveda, earliest of the Vedic texts, is not known. It was written sometime around 1500 B.C.E. Besides the Vedas, Hindu priests, or *Brahmans*, are also sources of authority for Hindus.

Hindu beliefs include the existence of an undying soul that reincarnates after death, and *Karma*, a cyclic law that guides one's destiny through successive lifetimes. Underlying most rituals of the religion is an awareness of the division between purity and pollution.<sup>75</sup> Water and fire are often used as a purifying agent in Hindu religious ceremonies. Hindus also believe it is necessary to avoid impure acts, such as killing animals, in order to avoid spiritual



© smiling camel / flickr.com  
Shankaracharya Temple

<sup>72</sup> *Islamic Societies in Practice*. 2nd Edition. Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. 2004. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

<sup>73</sup> The Qur'an is distinct from the *hadith*, which are the sayings of Muhammad.

<sup>74</sup> Religion Facts. "Hindu Beliefs." 15 November 2006. <http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/beliefs.htm>

<sup>75</sup> Geographic.org. Photius. India. "The Ceremonies of Hinduism." 10 November 2004. [http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india\\_society\\_the\\_ceremonies\\_of\\_hi~88.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india_society_the_ceremonies_of_hi~88.html)

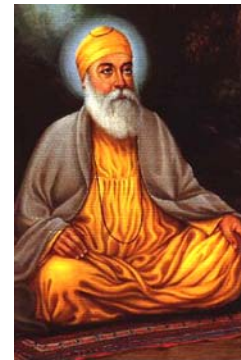
pollution. Most Hindu religious devotion and ritual ceremonies take place in the home.

Hindus venerate or worship more than one deity and see all deities as representations of “ultimate reality,” which has various names.<sup>76</sup> Ultimate reality is the one source of everything, and thus it is not possible to call Hinduism a polytheistic religion, even though it acknowledges more than one deity.

In recent years, nationalistic Hindu groups have arisen in India, and some have ties in Kashmir. Similar to Islamist or other fundamentalist groups,<sup>77</sup> nationalist Hindu groups promote an authoritarian, supremacist religious state. The religious symbolism of Hindu nationalism can be seen in the naming of India’s ballistic missile “Agni,” a Vedic god of fire. This name was assigned by the nationalist Hindu BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party-led) government of India in 1998.<sup>78</sup> An affiliated organization, the VHP (Vishwa Hindu Parishad), requested that a temple be built near the nuclear test site and dedicated to Shakti, Hindu goddess of power.<sup>79</sup>

### *Sikhism*

The Sikh religion was founded in the 16th century in opposition to Hindu practices such as the caste system and the array of idols representing gods and goddesses. The founder, Guru Nanak (1469–1539), believed in universal love and the equality of men and women before God. This, along with devotion to God, was at the heart of his philosophy.<sup>80</sup> A line of gurus, or learned teachers, followed Guru Nanak until 1708, when the order was transformed into a militant brotherhood. It is believed Sikh leader Maharaja Ranjit Singh encouraged Punjabi Indian Sikhs to relocate in Kashmir. In 1819, they conquered the Kashmir region and many continued to move into the area.<sup>81</sup>



Courtesy of Wikipedia  
Guru Nanak Dev

The Sikh holy book, the *Adi Granth*, later named *Guru Granth Sahib*, is “revered as a continuation of the line of gurus and as the living word of God.”<sup>82</sup> In this holy book, reference is made to God in all of God’s Hindu names and also in the name of Allah, signaling the inclusiveness of this faith. Members of the Sikh religion practice daily

<sup>76</sup> Religion Facts. “Hindu Beliefs.” 15 November 2006. <http://www.religionfacts.com/hinduism/beliefs.htm>

<sup>77</sup> The term “Islamist” refers to Islam that has an added-on layer of militant political action. The term “Islamism” derives from the term “Islamic Fundamentalism,” which refers to Islamic ideas that have been very narrowly or literally interpreted and then politicized. Alternately, it is similar to using religion in the political arena. Source: Fluehr-Lobban, Carolyn. *Islamic Societies in Practice*. 2nd Edition. 2004. Gainesville: University Press of Florida.

<sup>78</sup> *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*. Bhatt, Chetan. 2001. Oxford: Berg.

<sup>79</sup> *Hindu Nationalism: Origins, Ideologies and Modern Myths*. Bhatt, Chetan. 2001. Oxford: Berg.

<sup>80</sup> Geographic.org. Photius. “India: Sikhism.” 10 November 2004.

[http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india\\_society\\_sikhism.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india_society_sikhism.html)

<sup>81</sup> The Sikh Times. Wallia, C.J.S., Ph.D. “Protesting Vikram Chandra’s ‘Mission Kashmir’.” 12 September 2007. [http://www.sikhtimes.com/news\\_031305a.html](http://www.sikhtimes.com/news_031305a.html)

<sup>82</sup> Geographic.org. Photius. “India: Sikhism.” 10 November 2004.

[http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india\\_society\\_sikhism.html](http://www.photius.com/countries/india/society/india_society_sikhism.html)

prayer and meditate on the name of God. They believe that the spirit reincarnates until one's karma is resolved and the spirit can merge with God.

Sikhs attend religious services in a *gurdwara*, or Sikh temple, several of which are found in the Vale of Kashmir. A *gurdwara*, however, is also seen as any place where the holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib*, is present. Thus, Sikh homes can be centers of devotional worship. Most of the Sikhs in Kashmir division live in and around Srinagar. A large number of Sikhs also live in the Jammu division of the state.

## The Role of Religion on the Government

At partition in 1947, India's borders were defined according to the religious majority present in the area, reflecting the divide between Muslims and Hindus. The lines of separation within Kashmir mirrored the divisiveness of the split when Jammu and Kashmir, primarily Muslim, became part of Hindu-majority India. Kashmiri Muslims were forced to become a part of a country in which they were the minority and continued to be under the influence of a non-Muslim government.



In addition, India is deeply pluralistic, with societal divisions marked by several factors other than religion. Caste (class assignment at birth) and language, for instance, create divisions in society. Many state boundaries have also been drawn based on linguistic differences. Framers of the Indian Constitution were aware of the potential dangers inherent in underlying ethnic and religious divisions. They were also aware of the societal split caused by the Hindu caste system, which determines that each person is born into one of four castes, or no caste at all.<sup>83</sup>

To create a stable state based on law, the framers therefore wrote the Constitution to assure that fundamental rights would be granted to all citizens of India. For instance, Article 14 states that each person in India is entitled to equal protection under the law. Article 15 of the Constitution further addresses religion: "The state shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex, place of birth..."<sup>84</sup> In Article 17, the category of "Untouchable" was abolished by the Constitution, and any associated discriminatory practice forbidden. Article 25 of the Constitution specifically

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<sup>83</sup> The castes are Brahman (scholars and priests), Kshatriya (rulers, landowners, and warriors), Vaishya (merchants, and farmers), and Shudra (menial or farm workers). The fifth caste is that of the untouchables, now called Harijan according to a term used by Mahatma Gandhi. Each caste in turn is broken into subcastes (2,500 to 3,000 total) based on geography and other points of difference. Source: CSU Chico. Indian Caste System (the Varna and Jati systems). Callahan, Terence, and Roxanna Pavich. 1998. <http://www.csuchico.edu/~cheinz/syllabi/asst001/spring98/india.htm>

<sup>84</sup> Human Rights Watch. "Broken People: Caste Violence Against India's 'Untouchables.'" "Appendix A: Selected Articles of the Indian Constitution." March 1999. [http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-15.htm#P2394\\_516084](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1999/india/India994-15.htm#P2394_516084)

addresses religion, stating that “all those who reside in India are free to confess, practice, and propagate religion of one’s choice...”<sup>85</sup>

## Separation Between Religious and Secular Law

During India’s transition to independence, secularism emerged as a dominant governing principle for all its states. Secularism in India was conceived of as respecting all religions equally. This contrasts with the Western view of separating the worldly from the otherworldly, or separating the state and God. In India’s new power structure, secularism was not viewed as worldly so much as “a political arrangement between different religious communities.”<sup>86</sup> Leaders of the Indian National Congress



© Akshay Mahajan  
Srinagar street

such as Gandhi, Nehru, and Azad were committed to this ideal of a secular state. Secularism was written into the Indian Constitution to assure that no particular religious group would have unfair advantages over another religious group.

Nationalist political parties in India such as the RSS (Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh) and the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) are opposed to freedom of religion. They believe that one religion, Hinduism, should have preeminence over all others. Under this separatist view, members of the non-favored religion would be second-class citizens. Followers of these nationalist groups are estimated to be fewer than ten percent.<sup>87</sup>

## Influence of Religion on Daily Life

Religion in the Kashmiri region does not necessarily fall along sharply delineated lines. For example, Muslims attend many of the Hindu festivals and celebrations, and Hindus attend some Muslim events. The lines between religions in the Vale of Kashmir sometimes blur in this fashion because the culture is so mixed and has a long tradition of diversity. However, the separatist movement in the area has predictably had a tendency to divide people based on their religion, ethnicity, and political views.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Women at prayer

Hindus reside more in the Jammu division but also live in small numbers throughout the Vale of Kashmir. Although the Hindu caste system has created an extremely hierarchical society in India, and especially in rural areas, the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits do not follow a caste system. Theirs is a less structured approach to Hinduism. Their religious practice includes daily devotion in the early

<sup>85</sup> The Milli Gazette. Engineer, Ashgar Ali. “Secularism in India.” 23 June 2006. [http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623\\_secular\\_india.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623_secular_india.htm)

<sup>86</sup> The Milli Gazette. Engineer, Ashgar Ali. “Secularism in India.” 23 June 2006. [http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623\\_secular\\_india.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623_secular_india.htm)

<sup>87</sup> The Milli Gazette. Engineer, Ashgar Ali. “Secularism in India.” 23 June 2006. [http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623\\_secular\\_india.htm](http://www.milligazette.com/dailyupdate/2006/20060623_secular_india.htm)

mornings and at other times in the day. There are formal shrines throughout the valley, but the Pandits' observations of daily prayers usually take place in their homes, at shrines they have arranged.

**Exchange 1:** When do you pray?

Soldier:	When do you pray?	tohee kar chuwa namaaz paraan?
Local:	We pray at noon.	us cheh doopaaris namaaz paraan

Kashmiri Muslims pray ritually in their homes and on Fridays in a mosque. As there are both Sunnis and Shi'as in the valley, some of their religious events and celebrations differ, such as *Muharram*, a Shi'a rite. In general, though, all Muslims in Kashmir follow the precepts of their religion as stated in the Qur'an, and they observe the important religious occasions.



© Leon Meerson  
Jama Masjid

Sikhs are only two percent of the population of the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir. Until 2000, they had largely been able to avoid the violence in the region by remaining neutral and refusing to align with either Indian security forces or militants. However, they were pulled into a violent confrontation in March 2000, when 35–40 Sikh men south of Srinagar were taken from their homes, lined up, and shot. Some angry villagers blamed Indian security troops for refusing to defend the Sikhs as a minority population. Others blamed foreign mercenary fighters or Pakistani forces. Some separatists blamed Indian forces. A member of the Pakistani government charged that the massacre “was staged by the Indian secret service to lay the blame on Pakistan.”<sup>88</sup> Villagers present, however, said the killings had been done by foreign militants.

**Religious Events and Festivals<sup>89</sup>**

The Vale of Kashmir has many religious festivals and rituals celebrated by both Muslims and Hindus who live in the area. The following list is incomplete because of the large number of events held.

*Navaratra*, celebrated during the month of Chaitra when the new moon makes its appearance, is New Year's Day. Hindus begin this day with prayers to Lakshmi, goddess of bounty. A young girl in the family places items that represent bounty, such as coins, nuts, sugar, fruit, and a New Year scroll, on a large plate. The next morning she shows her plate to family members and asks for blessings upon them.

A week after New Year's Day, Shi'a Muslims celebrate the *Navroz* festival. It lasts nine days and is accompanied by feasting and happy gatherings with friends and family.

<sup>88</sup> Find Articles.com. Asian Political News. “Pakistan condemns killing of Sikhs in Kashmir.” 27 March 2000. [http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi\\_m0WDQ/is\\_2000\\_March\\_27/ai\\_61543882](http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0WDQ/is_2000_March_27/ai_61543882)

<sup>89</sup> WebIndia123. Jammu and Kashmir. “Festivals in Kashmir Province.” c2000. <http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/festivals/kashmir/festivkash.htm#nava>



Muslims throughout the region fast during the holy month of Ramadan between the hours of sunrise until just after sunset, abstaining from food and drink as an act of purification. This long, trying fast honors the gift of the Qur'an, through which the Islamic faith is transmitted to Muslims. During the entire month, Muslims may spend more time at mosques to pray and strengthen their belief. Ramadan officially ends with *Eid al-Fitr*, or the breaking of the fast.

**Exchange 2:** Will you be celebrating Eid?

Soldier:	Will you be celebrating Eid?	taw chah eed manaavin?
Local:	Yes!	aansa, as chih eed manaavin

At daybreak at the end of Ramadan, family members recite a prayer, and this begins *Eid al-Fitr*. In this celebration, Muslims visit each other's homes, exchange gifts, visit their family members' gravesites, give alms to the poor, and share a special meal. To get in the spirit of the celebration, adults and children wear bright colors and special articles of clothing.



© Steve Evans  
Ramadan

*Eid al-Azha* takes place approximately two months after the *Eid al-Fitr* feast that ends Ramadan. It is a prominent holiday observed by Muslims to celebrate Abraham's submission to Allah. On this occasion, Muslims gather for prayers and contemplation. Many families sacrifice an animal such as a goat or a sheep, sharing the meat among their friends and family.

*Muharram* takes place in the first month of the Muslim calendar. At this time Shi'a Muslims mourn the death of Imam Husayn, Muhammad's grandson, who was killed defending Islamic values. Ten days of mourning are followed by public processions in which participants express their grief. They do this by beating their heads or flogging themselves on the back with chains or sticks, to symbolize sharing Husayn's suffering. The atmosphere surrounding this ritual is highly charged with symbolism and has been known to lead to clashes between Sunnis and Shi'as.

In April, Hindus celebrate Lord Rama's birthday, called *Durga Ashtami* or *Ramnavami*. This same day is also a celebration for Kashmiri Pandits, Hindus whose culture originated in the Kashmir region. For them, the day is associated with the goddess Durga. They celebrate with prayers and a feast.



Courtesy of Wikipedia  
Amamath Cave - Hindu shrine

Sikhs celebrate the New Year's harvest festival of *Baisakhi* in April. At this festival which honors their sacred baptism ceremony as well as the harvest, Sikhs gather at their temples for prayers. Following this, they celebrate with processions, feasting, and folk dances. The event is much larger in Punjab, where Sikhs are the majority religious group.

*Urs* festivals (also called *Ziarats*) are celebrated in various parts of Srinagar District by Muslims, Sikhs, and Hindus. Held at the shrines of Muslim saints who have died, the festivals take place yearly on the anniversary of each saint's death. At certain festivals, such as the one that honors the saint Batamol Sahid and another honoring Rishi Mol, both Hindus and Muslims abstain from eating meat. Another *Urs* festival celebrates Rishi Pir, a Hindu saint, and is attended by both Hindus and Muslims.

*Shab-i Mairaj* is a national Muslim festival followed closely by *Shab-i Barat*. The dates shift every year by ten days, depending on when the moon appears. Muslims keep vigil at nighttime during *Shab-i Barat* as legend tells of the Prophet visiting each home during the night to relieve the sufferings of humanity.

A Hindu festival is held annually at Khir Bhawani Temple in Srinagar District. This temple is associated with Ragnya Devi, a Hindu goddess. Hindus throng here between May and June each year to seek the deity's blessings on the occasion of *Jesht Ashtami*, followed in a month by *Har Ashtami*. These two events represent the birth and incarnation of the goddess, at whose altar incense and candles are burned.

In August, Kashmiri Hindus celebrate *Janam Ashtami*. They fast and gather at religious meetings to share and spread the words of the Bhagavad Gita.

*Vaitha-Vatur-Truvah* is a festival held "on the 13th day of the lunar fortnight of Bhadon" at the source of the Jhelum River in Verinag. Here, Hindus from all over the valley gather with local Muslims at an ancient temple to participate in a ceremony.

*Diwali*, the Hindu festival of lights, takes place over five days in October or November to celebrate life and its renewal. Participants decorate their homes and businesses with colorful designs in preparation for the festival. They wear new clothing and jewelry and exchange gifts and sweets among family and friends. Each night during the festival, people light small clay or earthen oil lamps and display them for others to see.



## Buildings of Worship

Several Islamic mosques are located in and near Srinagar. There are Hindu temples in Srinagar, but more are located farther south in Jammu division.

The Khanqah-e-Moula, or Shrine of Shah-e-Hamdan, is among the oldest Islamic shrines in Kashmir. Located in the old city section of Srinagar on the banks of the Jhelum River, it was originally built between 1389 and



1413 C.E.<sup>90</sup> It has been twice destroyed by fire and rebuilt and is presently a pilgrimage site. The Hazratbal Mosque in Srinagar on the bank of Dal Lake is constructed of white marble. It is considered the most important of the Muslim shrines in Kashmir.

An important Hindu shrine is the Khir Bhawani Temple in Srinagar District, associated with Ragnya Devi, a Hindu goddess. The site of an annual festival, it was built in 1912. Maharaja Hari Singh later renovated it. Also in Srinagar, Shankaracharya Temple is an ancient Hindu shrine originally built around 371 B.C.E. One of Kashmir’s oldest shrines, it has been repaired and rebuilt at least three times. This temple overlooks the city of Srinagar.

Ruins, some restored, of Islamic mosques, Hindu temples, and Buddhist shrines and statues are found throughout the entire region. The Pandrethan Temple near Srinagar honors Shiva, one of the most sacred of Indian gods of the Hindu religion. This temple was built around 900 C.E.<sup>91</sup>

### Behavior in Places of Worship

#### *Mosques*

When visiting a mosque, it is important to dress conservatively and remember to remove one’s shoes before entering.



© Paul La Porte  
Jama Masjid

**Exchange 3:** Must I take off my shoes?

Soldier:	Must I take off my shoes inside the mosque?	meh chaa zarooree masheed andar boot kardan?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Women should wear loose fitting clothing such as a long dress or skirt. If wearing pants, women should wear a top such as a loose sweater or blouse that covers the tops of the thighs. Men should wear loose fitting pants and a shirt.

**Exchange 4:** How should I dress?

Soldier:	How should I dress?	meh keet palaaao pazan laagin?
Local:	Wear loose fitting clothes which cover your body.	kula palaaw laag yem suweet chon badan bozna eena

All clothing should be clean, and neither men nor women should wear shorts. Women are also advised to cover their head using some type of scarf and remove makeup, perfume, and nail polish.

<sup>90</sup> I Up India. “Jammu & Kashmir State, Pilgrimages.” c2000–2001. <http://www.1upindia.com/states/jammu-kashmir/pilgrimages.html>

<sup>91</sup> I Up India. “Jammu & Kashmir State, Pilgrimages.” c2000–2001. <http://www.1upindia.com/states/jammu-kashmir/pilgrimages.html>

**Exchange 5:** Do I need to cover my head?

Soldier:	Do I need to cover my head?	meh peyaa kalas poodz taavin?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Once inside the mosque, visitors should observe silence as the sound of one's voice may interrupt prayers. Also, visitors should refrain from walking in front of a person praying as this may invalidate his prayer. Women and men generally pray in separate sections, and it is necessary to be sensitive to this tradition. It is important to ask permission to enter, as some mosques may not allow non-Muslims inside.

**Exchange 6:** May I enter the mosque?

Soldier:	May I enter the mosque?	kyaa saa bu hekaa masheed manz adzit?
Local:	Yes.	aayni

*Hindu Temples*

Orthodox Hindu temples are often built on hills to emphasize the ascendancy of spiritual life over worldly concerns. They may be dedicated to different gods or goddesses and endowed with idols, such as the statue of Nataraja, representing Lord Shiva in a dance pose. This particular posture has deep meaning, signifying “evolution and destruction of the Cosmic universe (Big Bang theory)...The dwarfish demon crushed under the feet represents the demonic ego...”<sup>92</sup> Such representations should be approached with deep respect and an attitude of meditation. Visitors entering a Hindu temple should dress conservatively, remove their shoes before entering, remain quiet inside, and refrain from touching paintings or statues.



© Theodoranian虎兒 / flickr.com  
Nataraja

**Exchange 7:** Is this acceptable to wear?

Soldier:	Is this acceptable to wear?	yi chaa teek agur bu yi laaga?
Local:	Yes.	aansa, yih chu teek

Visitors should not interrupt those who are praying or meditating. Also, it is advisable to ask permission before entering.

<sup>92</sup> Advaitin. “Hinduism.” No date. <http://www.advaitin.net/Hinduism.htm>

## Traditions

Kashmiri culture has evolved from the blended traditions of people from India, Persia, Greece, Rome, and Central Asia. The distinct customs of the region reflect a mixture of languages, religions, and races.

### Traditional Economy and Jobs<sup>93, 94</sup>

The Vale of Kashmir has long been renowned for the rich variety of handicrafts produced here, forming the base of the traditional economy. Handicrafts include woven carpets, paper-mache objects, engraved copper and silver household items, and embroidered hats, clothing, rugs, and shawls. Artisans make furniture carved of wood from walnut trees, which grow profusely in Kashmir. Those who live around the rivers and lakes also produce income from weaving baskets of willow rushes.



© andy cheung  
Paper mache

The Kashmiris' long tradition of making hand-woven carpets is thought to have originated in Persia. Designs used are “distinctly Persian,” with some local variation.<sup>95</sup> One exception to the Persian motif is the tree of life design, which is of Kashmiri origin. The construction process incorporates knotting rather than tufting, using yarn of wool and silk and a cotton or silk base. The knotting method increases the carpet's durability and value. Smaller rugs called *namdas* are also made. They are hand-pressed into the desired shape and then embroidered using cotton and wool thread.

Creating decorative objects out of paper-mache has long been an art form in Kashmir. To create the basic material, the artists use water-soaked paper that is mixed with glue. They then shape this material into a design, allow it to dry, and apply paint and varnish. Gold paint of different qualities is used as a background or highlight color, and intricate designs are painted into it. The final products include samovars, plates, jewelry boxes, and vases of different shapes. The price of these items varies depending on the grade of paper and the quality of the paint, pure gold leaf being the most expensive.

Embroidering has been a traditional handicraft in Kashmir for centuries. The chain stitch that Kashmiris are famous for is done with silk, cotton, or wool thread. A hook (*ari*) rather than a needle is used to make tiny stitches. Preshrunk white cotton is usually the background fabric. The product's value is based on thread



© Showkat Ahmed Mir  
Embroidered shawl

<sup>93</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir, India. “Profile. Occupational Profile.” 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

<sup>94</sup> WebIndia123. “The People: Kashmiris.” c2000. <http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/PEOPLE/kashmiris.htm>

<sup>95</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir, India. “Profile. Occupational Profile.” 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

quality, embroidery style, and size of the stitches. Embroidery is used to embellish all manner of clothing and household items, from traditional *pherans* (the traditional style of dress in Kashmir) to elegant shawls and practical floor coverings.

Sericulture, the production of raw silk from silkworms, is one of Kashmir's important traditional industries. The silk cocoons from the area are said to yield fine silk fibers of very high quality. Kashmiri raw silk is used to produce certain fabrics, such as crepe de chine.<sup>96</sup>

Among other major industries is the weaving of tweed, done with pure wool that is never blended. Tweed is used to make men's *pherans* (a traditional loose garment worn by Kashmiri men). Additional fabrics produced in Kashmir are woven wool, used to make moderately priced shawls. Pashmina yarn is woven from the hair of the ibex, an animal that roams the mountain valleys at an altitude of 4,267 meters (14,000 feet).<sup>97</sup> It is used to make shawls that are more expensive than those made of wool. The highest priced shawls are uniquely made of *shahtoosh*, a fiber made of fur from the necks of Tibetan antelopes that inhabit the plateaus over 5,000 meters (16,400 ft) above sea level.<sup>98</sup> These shawls are extremely expensive and famous for their lightness and warmth.

People have also traditionally survived economically in Kashmir by farming the land and cultivating crops. The rich soil and prime growing conditions have supported a wide range of vegetables, fruits, and grains, as well as almonds, walnuts, and saffron. In fact, Pampore, an area close to Srinagar, is the only place where saffron is grown in the world outside of Spain. Saffron is produced from the stamens of the crocus *Sativus* plants, which grow in Kashmir.

In addition to farming and cultivating, local people have developed unique ways of marketing and selling in this area. Many Kashmiris around the lake areas near Srinagar have traditionally earned income by selling flowers and fruits from colorful boats.

## Greetings

It is always important to extend politeness and respect for the culture when greeting a local person. For Hindus, the preferred greeting is the spoken *namaste*, accompanied by a gesture of clasped hands or



© Steve Evans  
Namaste

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<sup>96</sup> "...also spelled *Crêpe De Chine* (French: "crepe of China"), light and fine plain-woven dress fabric produced either with all-silk warp and weft or else with a silk warp and hard-spun worsted weft. A crepe de Chine texture has a slightly crepe character, a feature produced by the use of weft, or filling, yarns spun with the twist running in reverse directions and known as right-hand and left-hand twist, respectively." Britannica Online. "Crepe de Chine." <http://www.britannica.com/eb/article-9027850/crepe-de-Chine>

<sup>97</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir, India. "Profile. Occupational Profile." 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

<sup>98</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir, India. "Profile. Occupational Profile." 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

hands in prayer position while tilting the head forward. It is also common and acceptable to use English greetings such as “good day” or “good afternoon.”

For Muslims, the following phrase is a traditional greeting that can be used at any time for the day.

**Exchange 8:** Traditional Muslim Greeting

Soldier:	Good morning.	asalaam aleykum
Local:	Good morning.	wa-aleykum salaam

Visitors who are introduced to family members should first greet the elders and they should ask about the health of the family. They should avoid asking about the women in the family as this would be an affront to the host and the family.

**Exchange 9:** How is your family?

Soldier:	How is your family?	garbaar chwaa sorvee teyk?
Local:	They are doing fine, thank you.	anhaz toom chi teek, shukreeyaa

Shaking hands is a preferred greeting when meeting Muslim or Hindu men. When meeting women of either religion, however, men should not offer to shake hands. Also, use only the right hand to shake hands as the left hand is considered to be unclean. Hugging or kissing on the cheek is reserved for relatives or close friends.



In general, if meeting a member of the opposite gender, either Muslim or Hindu, it is safe to greet with a head nod and a spoken greeting. Also, follow the female’s lead. If she offers to shake hands, a light handshake grasping only the fingertips is appropriate. Otherwise, it is not.

**Exchange 10:** How are you?

Soldier:	How are you?	kyaa saa vaar paayt?
Local:	Fine, very well.	bilkul teek

It is common in Muslim culture for men to hold hands or hug each other. This should not be interpreted in light of American culture, which could be judgmental in a negative way. In Kashmiri Muslim tradition, such close gestures between men imply kinship or friendship and nothing more. Kashmiri women also are emotionally expressive with each other, holding hands or kissing on the cheek. Again, such gestures are an indication of friendship or kinship.

## Hospitality and Gift Giving <sup>99</sup>

When entering a Hindu or Muslim home, visitors should be alert to the customs followed by those around them. For instance, visitors may be required to remove their shoes before entering the home. Also, if invited to dinner, be aware that many Hindus are vegetarian. Guests should be sensitive to dietary restrictions and respectful of the traditions that surround them.



© Miran Rijavec  
Srinagar hospitality

One who is invited to a local person's home should wear clean, conservative clothing. Appearance and dress are seen as indicators of good manners. Clothing that is revealing or tight should be avoided, along with short skirts for women.

**Exchange 11:** I really appreciate your hospitality.

Soldier:	I really appreciate your hospitality.	ba choos tohinz mih-maan navaazee hinz daa deevaam
Local:	It is nothing.	yi chu ni keyn teh

To express appreciation for hospitality, a visitor can bring a small gift for the host or hostess. Visitors should remember, however, to bring only gifts that are appropriate. For instance, many Hindus as well as Muslims do not drink alcohol, so alcoholic beverages should not be offered as gifts. If bringing food, it would also be inappropriate to bring a meat dish to the home of a vegetarian Hindu.

**Exchange 12:** This gift is for you.

Soldier:	This gift is for you.	yi chu tohind Khatraa toh-fa
Local:	I cannot accept this.	ba hakna yeh reytit

If guests are offered coffee or tea by a host, they should politely accept this hospitality. This is true even if a guest does not normally drink the kind of tea or coffee being offered. Rejecting the host's hospitality indicates poor manners and could be seen as a personal rejection of the host.



© Philippe Houmont  
Sharing Tea, Pahalgam

**Exchange 13:** What is the name of this dish?

Soldier:	What is the name of this dish?	yet seens kyaa vanaan?
Local:	This is tsoar.	yet vanaan dzowur

When eating, only the right hand should be used to hold utensils or to pass the food from hand to hand. The right hand should also be used when presenting a gift. It is considered rude to use the left hand for these purposes.

<sup>99</sup> USA Today. Travel. "India. Key Facts." 2007. <http://www.usatoday.travel-guides.com/newlook/Country.jsp?continent=ind&country=ind>



**Exchange 14:** This food is very good.

Soldier:	This food is very good.	ee syon chu bur asal
Local:	It's goshetaabe.	yeh chu goshtaab

If seated on the ground when eating, guests should not stretch their legs in front or cross them in such a way as to show the soles of the feet. It is an extreme insult to show a Muslim the soles of your feet.

**Exchange 15:** The food tastes so good.

Soldier:	The food tastes so good.	yi ken chen os vaaryah maza daar
Local:	Thank you.	shukreeyaa

In social situations, it is simply a good rule of thumb to notice the conduct of other guests, hosts, or local people. For instance, Parsis and Sikhs avoid smoking, and visitors to their homes or work areas should do likewise. Visitors should generally try to be aware of religious or social prohibitions by being observant.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Making rotis

## Dress Codes <sup>100</sup>

The traditional style of Kashmiri clothing includes a headpiece and a *pheran*, a “voluminous” gown that has a hemmed border and long, loose sleeves. This gown is worn by both men and women. The type of *pheran* that Muslim women wear is knee-length, embroidered in the front and on the hems. It is complimented by a red hat called a *kasaba*, shaped like a turban and held in place by silver trinkets. Hindu women wear a different style of *pheran*. Theirs is longer, reaching their feet. It has a folded *ihungi* or belt around the waist and the sleeves are embellished with brocade. Hindu women also wear a *taranga*, a headpiece attached to a “hanging bonnet” with cloth that tapers down the length of the dress. Embroidered muslin with gold thread is worn over the head and ears.

Muslim girls who are unmarried wear skull caps decorated with silver charms and amulets, contrasting against gold thread embroidered into the cap. It has become fashionable for younger Hindu women to wear *saris*. On her wedding day, a Hindu bride wears a *taranga* and keeps it as part of her trousseau.

Along with the *pheran*, Kashmiri Muslim men have also traditionally worn a turban of white cloth and a *shalwar* tunic. Their shoes do not have laces and are called *gurgabi*. Instead of wearing the *shalwar*, Hindu men traditionally wear a loose-fitting *churidar pyjama*.

<sup>100</sup> WebIndia123. “The People: Kashmiris.” c2000.  
<http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/PEOPLE/kashmiris.htm>

The *shalwar-kameez* of Pakistan (wide-legged pants worn with a long tunic), the Indian *sari*, and jeans have all become popular in recent years in Kashmir. However, the traditional *pheran* remains the most popular style of dress for Kashmiris.

Kashmiri women wear ornaments of silver and gold on their headpieces ears, arms, and around their necks. Hindu women wear a traditional ornament called a *dejharoo*, gold pendant earrings that hang on a gold chain or silk thread. For Hindus, the ears are pierced at the top of the earlobe. Muslim women wear several earrings grouped together with a silver chain supporting the weight.

## Cuisine <sup>101, 102, 103</sup>

Rice is the staple of the Kashmiri diet. Among non-vegetarians, it is often cooked with meat, especially lamb, mutton, or chicken that is prepared in various ways. Fish is also widely eaten, and a popular combination meal is fish and lotus root. Alongside meat, meals include vegetables such as turnips, *nadru* (lotus stalk), and *karam sag* (a green leafy vegetable).



© Vijay Pandey  
Rice and lamb

Vegetarian meals are also part of Kashmiri cuisine, as many Hindus are vegetarian. *Dam-aloo* is a dish made of roasted potatoes served with gravy made of curds and other ingredients. *Chaman-fried paneer* is cottage cheese prepared in a sauce.

Kashmiris eat a variety of breads, including *sheermal* and *baqerkhani*, a kind of pastry served with breakfast. Small round breads with sesame seeds and poppy seeds on the top are called *tsot* and *tsochvoru*. They are often served with salt tea to wash them down. An unleavened bread the color of cream is called *lavas*. Pastries include a poppy-seed shortbread that is sometimes sweetened, called *kulcha*.

For drink, a special and popular tea among Kashmiris is *khava*. It is made by brewing green leaves in a samovar and adding sugar, cardamom seeds, cinnamon, and crushed almonds. Another favorite tea is called *shirchai*, a drink to which salt, milk, and cream have been added.

Kashmiri food is often spiced with cinnamon, cardamom, cloves, and saffron. Different grades of saffron are used, and the finest is quite expensive. Sweet desserts are usually not part of the meals.



© Prashant Bharwaj  
Bread

A banquet meal called *wazawan* is served on special occasions such

<sup>101</sup> WebIndia123. "The People: Kashmiris." c2000.  
<http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/PEOPLE/kashmiris.htm>

<sup>102</sup> J&K Tourism. Kashmir. "Kashmiri Food." c2000.  
<http://www.jktourism.org/cities/kashmir/food/index.htm>

<sup>103</sup> Kashmir Hub. "Kashmir Cuisine." No Date. <http://www.kashmirhub.com/kashmir-cuisine/index.html>

as elaborate feasts and formal dinners. It derives its name from a migration of people who came to the Kashmir Valley in the 14th century after the Mongol ruler Timur conquered parts of India. Among the immigrants were cooks from Samarkand who eventually were called *wazas*. They now live and work in Kashmir where they are among the master chefs. Dishes of the *wazawan* banquet are influenced by central Asian, Afghan, and Iranian styles of cooking. The *wazawan* banquet includes a large number of dishes which vary, but all require detailed preparation. A traditional *wazawan* may have as many as 36 courses.

## Literary Traditions <sup>104</sup>

Kashmiri literature is known for its historical connections to both the Brahmin tradition of India and the Sufi mystical tradition of Islam. The earliest known Kashmiri literature, a 94-stanza treatise on Tantric<sup>105</sup> philosophy, was written in archaic Sanskrit as early as the 12th century.

Lalla Didi (or Lal Ded), a 14th century female saint, wrote poetry that has remained popular with both Muslims and Hindus in Kashmir. Over 110 of her poems have been translated by the Royal Asiatic Society of London. Writing at a slightly later time is Shah Nuruddin, a Muslim saint whose mystical poetry is popular among Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims.



© Steve Evans  
Woman reading

Around the 15th century, Islamic religion tempered by Sufism became prominent in Kashmir. Thus began a period of literature between 1500 and 1800 known as the Middle Kashmiri Period. During this time, Persian replaced the Sanskrit language and the merging of Sufi and Hindu thought continued. Habba Khotun (Hubb Khatun) wrote a body of lyrical poetry in this period that remains popular among Kashmiris. Her work, along with that of the 18th century poetess Arani-Mal, is eminent not only in Kashmiri literature but in Indian literature, as well. Several other Hindu and Muslim Kashmiri poets wrote prolifically during this time, often adapting Persian classics and narrative poems into Kashmiri language.

After 1800, the period of modern Kashmiri literature began. Ideas and styles of writing started becoming influenced by both Urdu and English, alongside Persian language. One of the well-known Kashmiri poets of this time was Wahhab Pare, who died in 1913. Following him were other prolific writers such as Mahmud Gami, who wrote Persian narrative romances, Maqbul Shah, and the Pandit Nanda-Rama, also known as Paramananda. Known as one of Kashmir's greatest poets, Paramananda wrote religious narratives based on Sanskrit themes. Krishna Razdan (Rajanaka), a disciple of

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<sup>104</sup> Vitasta Annual Number. Chatterjee, Prof. Suniti Kumar. "Kashmiri Literature." Volume XXXIV (2000-2001). <http://www.vitasta.org/2001/2.1.html>

<sup>105</sup> "Any of a comparatively recent class of Hindu or Buddhist religious literature written in Sanskrit and concerned with powerful ritual acts of body, speech, and mind." Dictionary.com. "tantric". <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/tantric>

Paramananda, was a Hindu poet who wrote in Kashmiri. His most famous work is *Siva-parinaya* (the Wedding of Shiva), published in 1924 in a reformed Nagar<sup>106</sup> script.

Many other Kashmiri authors have added to Kashmir's body of literature. Their writing includes narrative and romantic poetry, short stories, historical works, and Hindu and Persian religious tales. As the Kashmiri language lacks a developed alphabet, other written scripts have been used to render Kashmiri into written form. They include Perso-Arabic, Roman characters translated into English, and Urdu.

## Social Events and Non-Religious Celebrations

### *Song and Dance*

A popular social event in Kashmir is known as *bhand pather*, a traditional kind of folk theater.<sup>107</sup> The performance combines a satirical play along with singing and dancing. The topic of this play, presented by 15–20 artists, revolves around social evils and societal traditions.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Singers in Mughal Gardens

Other kinds of singing and dancing are an aspect of Kashmiri social life. People gather to hear *sofiana* music, a kind of Iranian classical music that made its way to Kashmir in the 15th century.<sup>108</sup> This style incorporates a variety of instruments and Indian ragas are blended into the body of music. Music and dancing are also a part of the month-long Muslim fast of Ramadan in Kashmir. In the evenings of this fasting period, women in groups perform a Kashmiri dance called *rouf*.<sup>109</sup>

### *Festivals*<sup>110, 111</sup>

Every year on 13 January, Kashmiris hold a festival known as *Lohri*, more formally called *Makar Sankranti*, which celebrates the coming of spring. A rural tradition that accompanies *Lohri* is practiced by young boys who approach new parents and newlyweds

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<sup>106</sup> “Dadra and Nagar Haveli, union territory (2001 provisional pop. 220,451), 188 sq mi (487 sq km), W central India, on the Arabian Sea. Portugal colonized these two inland enclaves in the mid-16th cent. India occupied them in 1954. Despite a ruling by the International Court of Justice that upheld Portugal's claim to the area, they were incorporated into India as a single union territory in 1961. The territory is being developed as a “no industry” sector for tourism.” Dadra and Nagar Haveli. (n.d.). *Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia*. Retrieved October 10, 2007, from Reference.com website: <http://www.reference.com/browse/columbia/DadraNNA>

<sup>107</sup> Jammu and Kashmir. Cultural Heritage. “Cultural Background.” 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/culture/welcome.html>

<sup>108</sup> Jammu and Kashmir. Cultural Heritage. “Cultural Background.” 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/culture/welcome.html>

<sup>109</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. Cultural Heritage. “Dance & Music.” 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/culture/welcome.html>

<sup>110</sup> MaharashtraWeb. “Festivals of Jammu and Kashmir.” No date. <http://www.maharashtraweb.com/JammuKashmir/JammuKashmirfestivals.htm>

<sup>111</sup> WebIndia 123. “Festivals.” 2000. <http://www.webindia123.com/jammu/festivals/kashmir/festivkash1.htm>

to ask them for money. A bathing ritual also accompanies the celebration, with thousands immersing themselves in the river waters. At night, people build bonfires and gather around to dance and talk with friends and family.

Kashmiris celebrate *Herat*, also known as *Shivratri*, in February–March. During this spring festival, Hindus clean their homes and adorn themselves in new clothing. They bring baskets of specially prepared walnuts to family and friends in honor of the marriage of Shiva and Parvati.

Various events are celebrated around the New Year. The nine-day *Navroz* festival is celebrated state-wide by Parsis, as well as, Shi’a Muslims and others. It is a time for feasting and sharing joy with family members and friends.

### *Public Holidays*

In India, most public holidays are regional, not uniformly observed throughout the country. The three secular government holidays throughout the nation are Independence Day (15 August), Republic Day (26 January), and the birthday of Mahatma Gandhi (2 October). On these days, all government offices in India are closed.<sup>112</sup>

## **Weddings**<sup>113, 114, 115</sup>

### *Hindu Weddings*

In Kashmir, a variety of unorthodox wedding customs have their origin in the mix of cultures found in the region. They may vary according to whether the marriage is Muslim or Hindu. As with other traditions, sometimes wedding rituals between various groups overlap in Kashmir. The main traditions described below apply primarily to Kashmiri Hindus, but some of the rituals could also apply to Muslims. Also, wedding traditions which used to be lengthy and spread over several days have shortened because of concerns with terrorism in the region.

**Exchange 16:** Congratulations on your wedding!

Soldier:	Congratulations on your wedding!	tohee chu Khaandrak mubaarak!
Local:	We are honored you could attend.	az gayi sataa ezut afzaaee tohee karoo yet Khaandras manz shumoleeyat

Marriage in general begins with a detailed process of matchmaking which will revolve around the bonding of two families. First, parents spread the word that their son or daughter is eligible for marriage. Potential offers, known as *rishte*, are then made and

<sup>112</sup> Excite.Uk. “India: Public Holidays.” c2007.

[http://travel.excite.co.uk/travel/guides/indian\\_subcontinent/india/PublicHolidays](http://travel.excite.co.uk/travel/guides/indian_subcontinent/india/PublicHolidays)

<sup>113</sup> India Directory – Maps of India. “Kashmiri Wedding.” 2007.

<http://india.mapsofindia.com/culture/indian-weddings/kashmiri-wedding.html>

<sup>114</sup> Indianinfo. Naidu, Rukmani. “Kashmir Weddings.”

<http://news.indiainfo.com/spotlight/jammuandkashmir/kashmirweddings.html>

<sup>115</sup> Iloveindia. Indian Wedding. “Muslim Wedding Ceremony.” <http://weddings.iloveindia.com/muslim-wedding/index.html>

horoscope readings, or *Teknis*, are studied to determine whether each member of the prospective match would be suitable for marriage. In this way, the family chooses a partner.

Once the marriage is decided upon, a ritual known as *kasamdry* is held, and each member of the couple expresses to the other his/her formal commitment to marry. Ceremonies then take place at the home of both parties intending to marry. Women gather at the groom's house, where his eldest aunt cooks *var*, a kind of rice pudding cooked in *ghee* and sprinkled with almonds. It is served to everyone present, both family and friends. At the bride's house, the family receives fresh and dried fruits along with cash.



© David Hong  
Rice pudding with almonds

Priests (*purohits*) and members of the young woman's family use the Kashmiri calendar to set the engagement day. Family members assemble for the occasion and are served a tea known as *Kahwa* along with *var* pudding, again prepared by the eldest aunts of the couple.

Both the prospective bride and groom provide each other with gifts. The young man sends a *trousseau* to his fiancé, delivered by a household maid. The gift includes a ring, headwear, a traditional dress (*pheran*), jewelry, and sacred multicolored cotton thread (*narivan*). It is also customary for the maid to bring a silver bowl filled with cream and sprinkled with dry fruit, which she serves to the bride using a spoon made of silver. The bride reciprocates, sending her brother, sister-in-law, or another relative to the groom's house with a gift similar to the one she has received. It includes a ring, a *pheran* with a waistband, a turban, fruits and nuts, and *narivan*. She also sends along cream in a silver bowl to be served in the same manner.

On every evening that follows until the actual wedding takes place, relatives and neighbors gather in the houses of both parties to sing together. After the music and singing, guests drink a special pink tea with salt (*sheer chai*, also called *noon*). This period of singing is called *wanvun*.

Prior to the marriage, a ritual known as *livun* takes place, in which the young man's and young woman's homes are cleaned. A traditional cook prepares a cooking stove made of mud and brick, usually in the back yard. This is used to cook a wedding feast, which will not include meat. Other preparatory rituals take place, including *mehendi*, the evening before the marriage. At this ceremony, the bride bathes and her maternal aunt cleanses her feet. Her eldest aunt then decorates her feet and hands with *mehendi*, a kind of henna. In another ceremony, the bride and groom in their respective homes offer prayers in the presence of a sacred fire.



Riffat / flickr.com  
Henna Hands

On the wedding day, the eldest aunt of both the bride and groom again prepare *var* and serve it to friends, neighbors, and family members. Guests at the wedding receive gifts of money just for being present and sharing in the ceremony.

**Exchange 17:** I wish you both happiness.

Soldier:	I wish you both happiness.	tohee chu Khaandrak mubaarak!
Local:	We are honored.	az gayi sataa ezut afzaaee tohee karoo yet Khaandras manz shumoleeyat

### *Muslim Weddings*

A traditional Muslim wedding begins with matchmaking undertaken by the parents as part of the important process of bonding two families. A long period of courtship follows in which formal steps are taken to advance the wedding. Some of the rituals during this period are designed to support the bride and her future well-being. She prepares a dowry and receives a wedding dress from her mother. Until the day of the wedding, the bride and bridegroom do not spend time together.

The day before the wedding takes place, a Muslim bride participates in the preparatory ritual known as the *mehendi*, or tattooing her hands with henna, a temporary colored dye. This joyous ritual is accompanied by singing, music, and dancing.

One part of the wedding ritual that is specifically Muslim is called *Nikaah*, or the actual legalizing of the marriage. It can take place at the residence of the bride or groom, or at a convenient place for both. The ceremony is conducted by a priest (*maulvi*) and witnessed by the family and friends of the bride and groom. The priest reads from the Qur'an, and mutual consent is given to the marriage by the bride and groom. Both must sign the marriage contract, or *nikaahnama*, which contains mutually agreed-upon terms of the marriage by which both bride and groom will abide. Such terms could include financial commitments and the right to divorce along with terms that surround it.

An elaborate dinner follows the ceremony. After dinner, the newlyweds are seated together for the first time. They recite prayers, and the Qur'an is placed between them.

Kashmiri Muslims have had a tradition of giving one's daughter a gift of copper kitchen utensils when she marries. Now practiced less frequently, this tradition is thought to have originated in Central Asia.<sup>116</sup>

### *Other Wedding Rituals*

An elaborate wedding banquet called *wazawan* always includes meat (for non-vegetarians) and a few vegetarian dishes. (*Wazawan* also refers to elaborate courses served at banquets and parties.) At weddings, any meat dishes are typically *rista*, mutton meat balls in gravy, and *seekh*



© Kerry / flickr.com  
Red Chiles

<sup>116</sup> Vitasta Annual Number. Pandita, Dr. K. N. "Kashmir: The Roots of Our Culture." Volume XXXIII (1999–2000). <http://www.vitasta.org/2000/6.11.html>

*kababs, tabab maz*, or fried pieces of rib meat. Kashmiri chilis give some of the dishes a rich flavor along with red color.<sup>117</sup>

A song and dance tradition known as *fumenie and jagarana* is part of a wedding ceremony in areas of Jammu.<sup>118</sup> In this event, a group of 15–20 women congregate to sing and dance on the night before a groom leaves for his in-laws' house. The ceremony is animated by the expressive emotions of the women singing and dancing, all part of the performance.

## Funerals

The many shared customs and religious traditions in Kashmir appear in the rites that surround funerals.<sup>119</sup> Although some traditions overlap, descriptions of traditional Hindu and Muslim funerals are shown separately below.

### *Hindu Funerals*<sup>120</sup>

According to Hindu tradition, when a person dies his or her soul moves to a higher level of existence, and death rites should help in this passage. One Hindu ritual called *Teraviah* reflects part of this process. During this ritual, men, women, and children mourn the death of the deceased from the time of death until 13 days after the funeral. Within this time span, family members must observe certain rules, such as avoiding sweets, festivities, and wearing new clothing. A priest uses incense to purify the house.

Hindu death rites may last an entire year. After this year has ended, elderly family members gather to participate in the *shraad* ceremony, performed in a ritually cleaned room. Here, a photograph of the deceased is placed on a low table on which a clean cloth and a bowl of flowers have been placed. Family members remove their shoes before entering and remember the deceased with gifts of food and ritual items.

The actual funeral ceremony consists of cremating the dead. Hindus believe that “the burning of a dead body signifies the release of the spirit and that the flames represent Brahma, the creator.”<sup>121</sup> After death, family members pray over the deceased, bathe the body, and dress it in white. The body of a Hindu wife whose death precedes her husband's is dressed in red wedding attire. The funeral clothing of widows is white, or a

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<sup>117</sup> J&K Tourism. Kashmir. “Kashmiri Food.” c2000.

<http://www.jktourism.org/cities/kashmir/food/index.htm>

<sup>118</sup> Jammu and Kashmir. Cultural Heritage. “Cultural Background. Jammu.” 5 June 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/culture/welcome.html>

<sup>119</sup> Countercurrents.org. Sikand, Yoginder. “Kashmiri Sufism: Theological Resources for Peace Building.” [sic]. 21 July 2006. <http://www.countercurrents.org/kashmir-sikand210706.htm>

<sup>120</sup> iloveIndia. “India Funeral Traditions.” No date. <http://www.iloveindia.com/indian-traditions/funeral-traditions.html>

<sup>121</sup> In Loving Memory. Commemorating Death in Staffordshire. “Hindu Funerals.” No date.

<http://www.staffspattrack.org.uk/exhibit/ilm/Mourining%20and%20Remembrance/Types%20of%20funerals/Hindu%20Funerals.htm>



light color. Mourners sprinkle flowers and sandalwood over the body, read scriptures from the *Bhagavad Gita* or the *Vedas*, and pray for the body as it burns.<sup>122</sup>

**Exchange 18:** I would like to give my condolences.

Soldier:	I would like to give my condolences to you and your family.	ba aas tohita tohindas Khandaanas teyzeetas
Local:	Thank you.	shukreeyaa

### *Muslim Funerals*<sup>123</sup>

In a traditional Muslim funeral, the body is buried as soon as possible and never cremated. It is believed that decomposition of the body should not be delayed. Islamic law also requires that the body be bathed and covered before burial.

The basic wooden casket is borne on the shoulders of male members of the community and carried to the burial site. The deceased may also be simply covered with a shroud rather than a closed coffin. Women are excluded from the ceremony, and most of the men who are present cover their heads as a sign of respect for the deceased.

After the coffin has been lowered into the ground, members of the family shovel earth onto the coffin. When the funeral has ended, guests go to the home of the deceased's family to express condolences and share their grief. The period of bereavement continues for a period of three days, and during this time family members pray for the deceased in their home.

**Exchange 19:** Please be strong.

Soldier:	Please be strong.	meherbaanee karit karyoo hemat
Local:	We will try.	es karo koshish

In India, Islamic committees weigh in on how certain kinds of burials should be handled. This includes the burials of those who have died through suicide. Such deceased persons may not receive a burial in sacred ground.

### *Violence at Funerals in Kashmir*

Funerals in Kashmir in recent years have been accompanied by violence and in-fighting among ethnic or political groups. The violence has been especially prevalent since 1989, when separatists revolted against India. In one incident in May 2001, Indian security forces attacked journalists covering a funeral just north of Srinagar in the town of Magam.

<sup>122</sup> In *Loving Memory. Commemorating Death in Staffordshire*. "Hindu Funerals." No date. [http://www.staffspastrack.org.uk/exhibit/ilm/Mourining and Remembrance/Types of funerals/Hindu Funerals.htm](http://www.staffspastrack.org.uk/exhibit/ilm/Mourining%20and%20Remembrance/Types%20of%20funerals/Hindu%20Funerals.htm)

<sup>123</sup> BMJ. Education and Debate. Gatrad, A.R. "Muslim Customs Surrounding Death, Bereavement, Postmortem Examinations, and Organ Transplants." 20 August. 1994. <http://www.bmj.com/cgi/content/full/309/6953/521>

They were responding to tension from the previous day, when separatists had detonated a suicide bomb against an Indian camp that housed border security, killing 11 people.<sup>124</sup>

Violence broke out again when Kashmir's law minister was assassinated in 2002. At his funeral, Islamic militants fired rifles and launched rockets against Indian troops present. The funeral took place 121 km (75 mi) north of Srinagar and was attended by approx. 2,000 mourners.<sup>125</sup>

## Do's and Don'ts

### Do's

**Do** sit with the soles of your feet flat on the ground.

**Do** use your entire *right* hand only to summon a person. Keep your palm down and wave downward.

**Do** remove your shoes before you enter a mosque or temple.

**Do** get permission before you take a picture of anyone in rural regions.

### Don'ts

**Do not** ask questions about the women of the family, if you are a male.

**Do not** stare at or make advances to women in public or private settings.

**Do not** engage in overt expressions of affection with the opposite sex.

**Do not** eat with your left hand, and do not receive a present or pass an object to someone with your left hand. The left hand is considered unclean.

**Do not** point to anybody with a finger. Use the entire *right* hand instead.

**Do not** point upward with the middle finger. It is obscene in the U.S. and equally so in Kashmir.

**Do not** use obscene or indecent language within earshot of Kashmiri citizens. Many may be familiar with American slang.

**Do not** cross your legs when sitting in a chair, or show the bottom of your feet to someone.



<sup>124</sup> IFEX. International Freedom of Expression Exchange. Comunicado de Prensa. "Troops Attack Journalists at a Civilian Funeral in Kashmir." 10 May 2001.

<http://www.ifex.org/es/content/view/full/13476/?PHPSESSID=>

<sup>125</sup> Telegraph.co.uk. Bedi, Rahul. "Islamic militants fire on funeral." 13 September 2002.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2002/09/13/wkash13.xml>

## Urban Life

With only 20% (est.) of the entire state's population living in urban areas, the Vale of Kashmir's urban population is quite small.<sup>126</sup> Although many small villages are found in the valley, urban residency is concentrated in the city of Srinagar, which lies in the center of the area populated by Kashmiris. As of the last census in 2001, Srinagar's population was slightly over 930,000.<sup>127</sup>

Two other smaller cities in the Vale of Kashmir are well-known tourist resorts. One of these cities is Gulmarg, 56 km (35 mi) southwest of Srinagar. In the winter, Gulmarg is India's most popular ski resort, with one long ski run at 2,213 m (7,260 ft) accessible only by cable car. The world's highest golf course is also located here.<sup>128</sup>

Another city, Pahalgam, is 95 km (59 mi) from Srinagar. A popular hill resort for recreational activities, Pahalgam is located where the Aru and Sheshnag rivers meet. Several hotels and trekkers' lodges provide accommodations for the tourists who visit from India and around the world.



© Showkat Ahmed Mir  
Gulmarg ski area

## Economy and Employment

### *The Economy after 1947*

After Jammu and Kashmir joined India in 1947, the state became more prosperous for a couple of reasons. For one, the state became part of India and slowly began to gain from the association and the Indian infrastructure. At the same time, development of the economy was slowed and uneven growth occurred as a result of ongoing fighting between Kashmir and Pakistan. The economy in general has been picking up over the last five years, especially in the area of services. Over 50% of the state's gross domestic produce (GDP) is now sustained by the services sector, which benefits from funding from the Indian government.<sup>129</sup> For example, the medical services sector has been a large beneficiary of government funding and provides many or most of its services free of charge. Much of the government funding is in the form of grants, rather than loans. Between 1997 and



© Madhav Pai  
Dal lake delivery

<sup>126</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir Government, India. Profile. "Facts About Jammu & Kashmir." 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

<sup>127</sup> Bharatonline.com. Kashmir. "Srinagar Travel." <http://www.bharatonline.com/kashmir/srinagar/index.html>

<sup>128</sup> Bharatonline.com. Kashmir. "Gulmarg." <http://www.bharatonline.com/kashmir/tourist-attractions/gulmarg.html>

<sup>129</sup> Infraside News. "ADB Supports Infrastructure Jammu and Kashmir India." 6 January 2007. [http://www.infraside.nl/news/news\\_article.php?ID\\_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en](http://www.infraside.nl/news/news_article.php?ID_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en)

2002, the state government filled over 60,000 civil servant positions, many of them in Srinagar.<sup>130</sup>

Secondly, the economy has improved for many people who profited either directly or indirectly from the ongoing conflict with Pakistan. The separatist movement that is largely funded by Pakistan has provided a source of income to those involved in militant activities. Other militants have received money from intelligence agencies on either side of the conflict. Many have reportedly moved from rural homes to large houses in Srinagar. More than a few benefited from the exodus of Pandits, driven from the valley by Islamist militants who then took over their businesses or their jobs.<sup>131</sup>

Bank holdings increased in Srinagar as money flowed into the economy from insurgency-related activities. Real estate prices rose steadily in the cities of Srinagar and Jammu during the 1990s. This increase was a result of people putting their money into real estate because they feared they would otherwise lose it to extortion or raids by militants. Between the onset of the insurgency and late 2002, deposits in Jammu and Kashmir Bank grew from USD 458 million to USD 2.29 billion.<sup>132</sup>



As of late 2002, the police chief of Srinagar estimated that around USD 2 million per month was entering the state as funding for militant activities. He used the example of a detained pro-Pakistani militant, Syed Ali Shah Gilani, who reported an income of around USD 350 per month when he filed taxes. Further investigation, however, uncovered his apartment in Delhi, 14 servants, and USD 30,000 in cash that he had stored away.<sup>133</sup>

One source of income as a result of the insurgency that developed in the late 1980s has been from the presence of Indian security forces stationed in the valley. They spend cash in Srinagar, rent hotels year-round, and purchase goods, all of which has stimulated the local economy.

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<sup>130</sup> The New York Times. Archives. Waldman, Amy. "Border Tension a Growth Industry for Kashmir." 18 October 2002.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E6DE133DF93BA25753C1A9649C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=2>

<sup>131</sup> The New York Times. Archives. Waldman, Amy. "Border Tension a Growth Industry for Kashmir." 18 October 2002.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E6DE133DF93BA25753C1A9649C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=2>

<sup>132</sup> The New York Times. Archives. Waldman, Amy. "Border Tension a Growth Industry for Kashmir." 18 October 2002.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E6DE133DF93BA25753C1A9649C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=2>

<sup>133</sup> The New York Times. Archives. Waldman, Amy. "Border Tension a Growth Industry for Kashmir." 18 October 2002.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E6DE133DF93BA25753C1A9649C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=2>

### Employment

Although some have benefited from the conflict, many have not. Unemployment is widespread among Kashmiris because of negative effects from the separatist movement. Urban as well as rural areas have been affected by the general disruption to daily life and the economy. Urban strikes have frequently been called by separatist organizations, closing businesses and keeping buyers away. Fear of violence also keeps people in their homes, and keeps their businesses closed.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Vegetable seller

Industrial jobs remain available in and around Srinagar since it is a manufacturing center for silk, wool, and carpets. Also, the sericulture industry (harvesting of silkworms) supports a number of jobs including those in a factory in Srinagar that produces silk yarn from the cocoons. Many urban Kashmiris have continued to earn a living through traditional enterprises such as handicrafts both handmade and manufactured. However, the industrial base is relatively small and infrastructure improvements are needed in order to boost production.

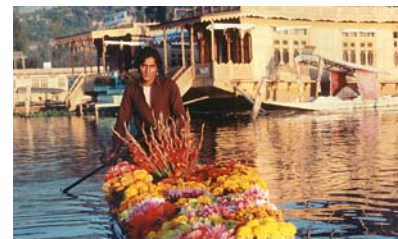
**Exchange 20:** Are you the only person who has a job?

Soldier:	Are you the only person in your family who has a job?	yeth garas manz chah to-hee aak nafar yos nokaree karaan?
Local:	No.	naa

A project scheduled between the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Indian government is expected to increase employment in Srinagar and other parts of the state. Urban services have declined in quality because of steady migration from the countryside and lagging investment that has not kept up with the increased demand for services. By building city infrastructure, the project will improve a range of city services along with boosting employment. ADB is underwriting most of the funding, providing USD 300 million of the USD 485 million total cost of the program. The funding is available in stages up to December 2015.<sup>134</sup>

### Tourism

Srinagar is a well-known resort center and a favored tourist destination. Modern tourism began developing in the 1960s, when tourists began flocking to historical sites such as the Sankaracharya temple, Hari Parbat Fort built by Akbar the Great during the 16th century, the Mughal gardens, the Hazratbal mosque, and various Buddhist ruins. The city is also popular for its picturesque setting on the Jhelum River and Dal Lake. Its canals are dotted with Victorian wooden houseboats, which are available for tourists to rent. Tourists can



© SeenyaRita / flickr.com  
Flower seller, houseboats

<sup>134</sup> Infraside News. "ADB Supports Infrastructure Jammu and Kashmir India." 6 January 2007. [http://www.infraside.nl/news/news\\_article.php?ID\\_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en](http://www.infraside.nl/news/news_article.php?ID_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en)

walk on the wooden bridges that cross the river, connecting parts of the city, or travel through areas of the city by boat. Tourist income has accrued due to the many vacation hotels, handicrafts (such as woolen cloth and woven clothing and shawls) for sale, and other tourist products and services.

**Exchange 21:** Where can I rent a car?

Soldier:	Where can I rent a car?	bu katih hekaa gaard giraayis pat enit?
Local:	Downtown.	shaheras manz

Tourism, however, has declined since the late 1980s when the civil strife escalated, making it dangerous to travel through the region. In particular, separatist attacks take place against security forces at the main urban tourist sites of Srinagar, Pahalgam, and Gulmarg. Citizens and visitors have often been caught in the crossfire.<sup>135</sup>

### *Small Business and Industry*

An industrial policy adopted in Jammu and Kashmir state in 2004 is designed to stimulate employment, encourage industrialization, and modernize industry in the state. Its mandate is based on supporting industry and raising competitiveness in the world market. In effect until 2015, the policy also underscores protection of the environment. For this purpose, it provides for state funding to install treatment plants for industrial complexes in both urban and rural areas.<sup>136</sup>



© Jeremy Martin  
Srinagar

The industrial policy functions through the Directorate of Industries and Commerce, headquartered in the cities of Srinagar and Jammu. This agency promotes small business in the state in order to generate employment. Acting through District Industrial Centers (DICs), the Directorate has a range of functions. It conducts studies and produces statistical reports on state industrial development and production, available to the public. The Directorate also acquires land to develop infrastructure for industry, provides growth incentives to small industries, and organizes workshops and training seminars. Not least, it offers direct support to entrepreneurs in areas of marketing, exporting, financing, and developing women-owned businesses.<sup>137</sup>

When individuals want to start a business, they first apply through the DIC to register their product, which will open the door to a series of business options. After being approved for registration, they can apply for an industrial land allotment. If this is approved, the state leases the land to the new business. Registered entrepreneurs can also apply through the DIC for working capital loans from commercial banks or the State

<sup>135</sup> U.S. Department of State. Consular Information Sheet. "India." 9 August 2007.

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1139.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html)

<sup>136</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Salient Features of J&K Industrial Policy 2004." 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/govt/SFIP2004.pdf>

<sup>137</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Role of Directorate, Industries and Commerce." 5 June 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>

Financial Corporation. In addition, they receive business incentives such as tax exemptions and subsidies on investments and equipment.<sup>138, 139</sup>

Srinagar District has several industrial estates in operation in and around the city of Srinagar. Industries include sericulture and production of silk, production of electronics, clothing, chemicals, and textiles; and processing of food, gems, and leather. Many finished products are exported to various countries around the world. Exports include plastics, textiles, nuts, handicrafts, and chemicals.<sup>140</sup>



## Education

Because of political and social disruptions, education in the Vale of Kashmir has been uneven.<sup>141</sup> The state is trying to rectify this and now offers free education to poor families in an attempt to strengthen primary education for children.

**Exchange 22:** Is there a school nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a school nearby?	yet chaa nazdeek kaan sekool?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Literacy statistics are troubling for Jammu and Kashmir state, although they fluctuate, being higher in urban areas. According to India's 1981 census, literacy throughout India stood at 36.23%, compared to 26.67% for Jammu and Kashmir state. In urban Kashmir, the literacy rate rose to 45.56% for the state, against 21.63% for rural areas. The literacy rate further broke down into a higher figure for males at 36.29% statewide, compared to 15.88% for females. District Jammu had the highest literacy level in the state.<sup>142</sup>



Below levels of higher education, schools are broken down into the following levels: pre-primary, primary and elementary school, and secondary level. Other types of schools in Srinagar include industrial training institutes and polytechnic schools.

Several colleges and respected institutions of higher education are located around Srinagar. Fields of study include engineering, business management, and medicine.

<sup>138</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Application Forms for Financial Assistance Including Working Capital." 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>

<sup>139</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Package of Incentives." 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>

<sup>140</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Exports." 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>

<sup>141</sup> JK Education.net. "Education Profile." 20 June 2007. <http://www.jkeducation.net/EducationProfile/>

<sup>142</sup> JK Education.net. "Education Profile." 20 June 2007. <http://www.jkeducation.net/EducationProfile/>

The curriculum of primary and secondary schools is directly affected by the heightened tension of Kashmir’s political environment. For example, a representative from an Islamic women’s separatist organization called Dukhtaran-e-Milat (DeM) or Daughters of Community has announced the group’s opposition to sex education in Kashmir schools. She referred to such plans as being part of “nefarious Indian designs to perpetuate obscenity and vulgarity in the society...”<sup>143</sup> The Board of Education for Jammu and Kashmir state denied having any such plans. The National Curriculum Framework has, however, asked state school boards to introduce topics of awareness on health, HIV infections, and the environment.<sup>144</sup>



**Exchange 23:** Do your children go to school?

Soldier:	Do your children go to school?	cheyn batchaa chaa sekool gadzaan?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

## Health Issues, Health Care, and Sanitation

### *Health Facilities*

The Government Medical College (GMC) was established in Srinagar in 1959. Its associated hospitals and health centers serve the entire population of the Vale of Kashmir. Its medical education program, one of India’s first after independence, is also comprehensive. The school has teaching departments of surgery, pediatrics, internal medicine, ophthalmology, social and preventive medicine, forensics, pathology, and pharmacology. The J-K Practitioner, one of the college’s three publications, is a medical journal that the college produces quarterly. The GMC, graduating approx. 100 students yearly, admits medical students according to merit.<sup>145</sup>

**Exchange 24:** Is the doctor in?

Soldier:	Is Dr. Khalid in, sir?	janaab, yi chaa daaktar Khaalid saab yet?
Local:	No.	naa

Located on the outskirts of Srinagar, the Government Psychiatric Diseases Hospital is Kashmir’s only hospital that specializes entirely in mental health. Doctors here treat patients for post-traumatic stress disorder, increasing in the valley, and a range of psychiatric ailments. The facility provides counseling, substance abuse treatment, and detoxification programs. In-hospital care is free to patients who cannot pay, and

<sup>143</sup> RxPG News. India Education Channel. “Women’s outfit opposes sex education in Kashmir.” 7 May 2007. [http://www.rxpgnews.com/education/Womens-outfit-opposes-sex-education-in-Kashmir\\_26935.shtml](http://www.rxpgnews.com/education/Womens-outfit-opposes-sex-education-in-Kashmir_26935.shtml)

<sup>144</sup> RxPG News. India Education Channel. “Women’s outfit opposes sex education in Kashmir.” 7 May 2007. [http://www.rxpgnews.com/education/Womens-outfit-opposes-sex-education-in-Kashmir\\_26935.shtml](http://www.rxpgnews.com/education/Womens-outfit-opposes-sex-education-in-Kashmir_26935.shtml)

<sup>145</sup> G. M.C Srinagar Online. c2000–2005. <http://www.gmc-srinagar.net/>



medicines for both in-patients and out-patients are free of charge for everyone. The hospital also has a teaching program.

**Exchange 25:** Is there a hospital nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a hospital nearby?	yetin chaa kaa nazdeek haspataal?
Local:	Yes, in the center of town.	aansa, hotin shaheras manz

Another associated GMC hospital is the Government Hospital for Children in Srinagar, providing care for children up to 15 years of age. Medicines and out-patient care are free of charge, and the cost of radio-diagnostics, such as ultrasound and X-rays, is subsidized.



© Jeremy Martin  
Medical visit

Various other specialty hospitals are located in Srinagar, providing free or subsidized services to patients. Such hospitals include the Bone and Joint Hospital, offering comprehensive care that includes hip replacement and artificial limbs, and the Chest Disease Hospital. The latter treats tuberculosis and ailments resulting from exposure to extreme cold.

### *Health Issues*

Few medical studies have been conducted in Jammu and Kashmir state, especially in the Vale of Kashmir. Statistics are therefore lacking on measurements of disease and health in general.

With this in mind and wanting to build baseline data, the Ind Medica Institute surveyed the health of adolescent girls in Srinagar and other areas. Although the results are yet to be published, it is known that this population often experiences poor physical and psychological health for reasons that include gender discrimination.<sup>146</sup> The same organization has studied the health of primary school children in Kashmir, finding them susceptible to infection and micronutrient deficiencies, including iodine deficiency.

A National Family Health Survey conducted in 1998 found that reproductive infections were high among married women and women of reproductive age in Kashmir.<sup>147</sup> The condition has largely been untreated, as it does not produce symptoms. Even when it does, women are reluctant to seek out treatment.

### *Depression and Mental Illness*

The population in the Vale of Kashmir not only suffers from a high rate of death and injury but also from widespread depression and mental illness. This is seen as a result of separatist violence and its effects on society. G.Q. Khan, who directs the Medical Department of Srinagar's Government Medical College, claims that suicide led to approximately 1% of admissions at the hospital in 1990. This was



© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri Man

<sup>146</sup> Ind Medica. RIHFW Kashmir. Studies and Surveys. 2005. <http://rihfwk.indmedica.com/training4-2.php>

<sup>147</sup> Ind Medica. RIHFW Kashmir. Studies and Surveys. 2005. <http://rihfwk.indmedica.com/training4-2.php>

before the escalated separatist revolt. In 2001–2002, however, following the revolt, suicide was the cause of close to 11% of the Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital admissions. Dr. Khan did a study which showed that a large percentage of the suicides were directly caused by the disintegration of society that resulted from the armed conflict.<sup>148</sup> Doctors assert that since 1989, when the insurgency erupted, psychiatric problems have “soared” because of the high incidence of violence that has left people dead, injured, crippled, and widowed.<sup>149</sup> The Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar reported that for a six-week period that ended in June 2007, 150 people had either attempted or committed suicide.<sup>150</sup>

### Sanitation

India’s 2001 census indicated that 30% of Srinagar’s population lived in slums that lacked sanitation services. Although piped water reached most of the city’s households, it was only available for 1–2 hours per day in many neighborhoods. Moreover, only around 70% of solid wastes in Srinagar were being collected. The remaining 30% was discharged into streams, rivers, and open drains, creating a health hazard.<sup>151</sup>

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has entered into an agreement with the Indian government to expand the sanitation infrastructure in Srinagar. The project includes services for waste management, sanitation, and the city’s water supply with the goal of improving public health.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Floating refuse in lake

### Transportation and Traffic

Mini-buses are the main means of transportation in Srinagar and its suburbs.

**Exchange 26:** Will the bus be here soon?

Soldier:	Will the bus be here soon?	yi bas yeeaa jaldee yor?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Auto-rickshaws are also used for traveling throughout the city. For tourists, luxury buses and taxis are available.

**Exchange 27:** Where can I get a cab?

Soldier:	Where can I get a cab?	meh kateen meyli taksee?
Local:	Over there.	hotin

<sup>148</sup> BBC News. Hussain, Altaf. “Kashmir Conflict Takes Suicide Toll.” 17 September 2004.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/3656048.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/3656048.stm)

<sup>149</sup> Daily Times. “Mufti urges boycott of suicide bombers’ funeral.” [sic] 30 June 2007.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory\\_30-6-2007\\_pg7\\_4](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory_30-6-2007_pg7_4)

<sup>150</sup> Daily Times. “Mufti urges boycott of suicide bombers’ funeral.” [sic] 30 June 2007.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory\\_30-6-2007\\_pg7\\_4](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory_30-6-2007_pg7_4)

<sup>151</sup> Infraside News. “ADB Supports Infrastructure Jammu and Kashmir India.” 6 January 2007.

[http://www.infraside.nl/news/news\\_article.php?ID\\_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en](http://www.infraside.nl/news/news_article.php?ID_nieuwsberichten=7320&language=en)

A national highway or route 1A, is the main road linking Srinagar to Jammu division, which is south of the Vale of Kashmir. Aside from this one highway, the network of roadways through the valley is well-developed and roads are accessible for driving by private car.



Other transportation is available. An airport has daily flights between Srinagar and Mumbai, Delhi, and Jammu. Airlines that run here include Indian Airlines and Jet Airways.

**Exchange 28:** Which road leads to the airport?

Soldier:	Which road leads to the airport?	kaper chu hawaaee aada?
Local:	The road heading east.	hami vati mashrikis kun

The nearest railway station to Srinagar is located in Jammu division 300 km (186 mi) away.

**Exchange 29:** Is there a train station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a train station nearby?	yet chaa nazdeek kaa reyl steyshan?
Local:	No.	naa

Part of the agreement between Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Indian government is to improve urban transportation in Srinagar. Funding has been provided to modernize and expand transportation services. The net effect will help commuters and enable the government and businesses to function more efficiently.



## Daily Life

Life in Srinagar and urban areas is difficult because of the ongoing insurgency, which continues unresolved after 18 years.<sup>152</sup> Much of the activity is centered in and around Srinagar, altering the lives of people who live here. They cannot travel about as freely as before and must adjust their routines to avoid violence or the possibility of violence. Urbanites are forced to use extreme caution when caught in situations in which they must negotiate either with Indian security forces or separatists. Their family life has suffered as a result of the danger and tension present in their society.

## Local Views about the Kashmiri Conflict

According to an independent poll taken in urban India, up to 87% of respondents in the Vale of Kashmir expressed



<sup>152</sup> Realtime News. News Blaze. Wani, Fayaz. "16,369 Civilians Killed in Kashmir." 23 September 2007. <http://newsblaze.com/story/20070923095212kash.nb/newsblaze/KASHMIR1/Kashmir.html>

a desire for an independent Kashmir.<sup>153</sup> They chose this option over becoming part of either India or Pakistan. Outside the valley, respondents in Jammu indicated a desire to merge with India. Kashmiris, however, rejected both the power wielded by the Indian Security forces and that employed by terrorist groups. They also indicated opposition to any division of Jammu and Kashmir state. Finally, residents of the valley, including Muslims, strongly supported bringing the displaced Pandits back to the valley. The poll was taken in 2007 by Dawn News, The Indian Express, and CNN-IBN, and it was in line with a larger 2002 survey taken by Jammu University and CSDS.

## Restaurants

The restaurants in Srinagar cater to locals as well as tourists from around the world. They serve different kinds of food, from local Kashmiri style, to Chinese, to cosmopolitan banquets.

Kashmiri food is often served family style in large plates so that the different entrees can be shared. At this type of meal, it is common to first receive bread sprinkled with fruit and nuts. This is typically followed by meat dishes, white rice, and a vegetable dish which may be served with meat gravy. Tea compliments the meal, although diners may order water or other drinks. A tea called *Kahwa*, mildly flavored with almonds, saffron, and cinnamon, is served in a samovar in most restaurants. Kashmiri *samovars* are often made of copper and have a small compartment on the side where hot coals can be placed to keep the tea warm.



**Exchange 30:** I would like coffee.

Soldier:	I would like tea or coffee.	meh gadz chaay yaa kofee
Local:	Sure.	oysh karit

Other restaurants offer the traditional Kashmiri buffet, which begins with bread and includes up to 32 dishes, mostly made with meat. This meal also ends with tea served in a samovar.

Vegetarian restaurants cater to diners who do not eat meat. Typical fare at a vegetarian restaurant may include a variety of breads, roasted potatoes (*dum-aloo*), and other vegetables. Desserts are available, but are not usually served.

**Exchange 31:** Do you have a dessert?

Soldier:	Do you have a dessert?	tohi chaa kaan moder cheez?
Local:	Yes, we have Firin.	Aansa, us chu firin

<sup>153</sup> Kashmirlive.com. Indo-Pak Opinion Poll. "87% in Valley Want Independence." 13 August 2007. <http://www.kashmirlive.com/latest/87-percent-in-Valley-want-Independence/90785.html>

Tourists frequently recommend avoiding the water that is served in restaurants. They advise drinking tea instead.

**Exchange 32:** Put this all in one bill?

Soldier:	Put this all in one bill?	yet sursee banaayoo akee bil?
Local:	Okay.	ad-haz

## Marketplaces

There are several shopping centers in Srinagar where visitors can buy all sorts of handicrafts. It is advisable to bargain with sellers at the private shops, where haggling over prices is far more customary than in the government-run shops. The latter shops, however, also carry a wide range of goods.



© Jeremy Martin  
Srinagar market

**Exchange 33:** Is the bazaar nearby?

Soldier:	Is the bazaar nearby?	yi baazur chaa nazdeek?
Local:	Yes, over there on the right.	Aansa, hotin chu dachun kin

When shopping in markets, visitors should carry the main currency, Indian rupees, in small denominations. Money can be exchanged at banks in Srinagar, including the Canara Bank, State Bank of India, and the Bund, Bank of Baroda.<sup>154</sup>

**Exchange 34:** Do you accept US currency?

Soldier:	Do you accept US currency?	tohi chewaa amreekee daalar rataan yetih?
Local:	No we only accept rupees.	na, us chu sirif yetih ropeeyaa rataan

If buyers are purchasing wooden carved pieces or furniture, they should be aware that prices depend on the thickness, quality, and cut of the wood. Pieces carved out of the root or the trunk are more expensive than those made from branches or less durable cuts of wood. Also, the quality and design of the carving influence the price.



© Heather Ward  
Carpet medallion

**Exchange 35:** Do you have any more of these?

Soldier:	Do you have any more of these?	dzeh chee yim beyih kyeh?
Local:	No.	na

Handmade Kashmiri carpets are famous for their quality. One reason for this is that they are knotted rather than tufted in their construction, and this increases the carpet's

<sup>154</sup> Bharatonline.com. Kashmir. "Money Exchange in Kashmir."  
<http://www.bharatonline.com/kashmir/travel-tips/currency.html>

durability. The number of knots, counted on the carpet's reverse side, and the knotting process is also a price factor, as it may be single-knotting or double-knotting. Carpets are usually made of wool, silk, or a combination of both, with the most expensive being silk. If buyers have some knowledge of fiber and construction process, they can bargain to their advantage.

**Exchange 36:** Can I buy a carpet with this much money?

Soldier:	Can I buy a carpet with this much money?	bu hekaa yeedzo ropeeyo su-eet yih kaaleen het?
Local:	No.	naa

Visitors can also shop for silk, tweed fabrics, and woven shawls, all among the finest quality in the world. Shahtoosh shawls are the highest priced, made from hair collected from the Tibetan antelope. These shawls are identified by their lightness, softness, and minimal embroidery. Also, they are seldom dyed; whereas shawls made of pashmina and wool are often dyed in rich colors and intricately embroidered.

**Exchange 37:** Do you sell rugs or shawls?

Soldier:	Do you sell rugs or shawls?	dzi chooka kaaleen yaa shaal kunaan?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

## Crime

Speaking in the city of Jammu in Jammu division, the state's Director General of Police announced that "conventional" crime statewide had sharply increased recently.<sup>155</sup> Referring to a recently solved crime against two young girls in the valley, the officer asked for public support and pledged due process in building criminal cases.<sup>156</sup>

White collar crime and corruption is said to be thriving in urban areas related to the large influx of government money from India.<sup>157</sup> For instance, the number of government service jobs that have been filled is excessive, according to many. Also, officials of the government will admit that many government jobs were awarded to those who could pay for them. There has been minimal prosecution of these white-collar crimes, although police are starting to react to criticism and are processing more crimes. In a recent case, police in Srinagar broke up a fraud ring whose members were promising government jobs to poor, uneducated people in exchange for money. Some government officials were part

<sup>155</sup> By "conventional crime," the DGP was excluding crime that has resulted from the separatist conflict in the Vale of Kashmir.

<sup>156</sup> kashmirlive.com. "Crime rate has taken alarming proportions in J-K: DGP." 28 September 2007.

<http://www.kashmirlive.com/latest/Crime-rate-has-taken-alarming-proportions-in-JK-DGP/92222.html>

<sup>157</sup> The New York Times. Archives. Waldman, Amy. "Border Tension a Growth Industry for Kashmir." 18 October 2002.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A07E6DE133DF93BA25753C1A9649C8B63&sec=&spoon=&pagewanted=2>

of the ring. The police seized fake identity cards, fake job offers, and computer records.<sup>158</sup>

Crime related to the insurgency that began in the late 1980s is holding steady. Violence from various militant groups often breaks out against Indian security forces. Conversely, Indian security forces are often accused of using excessive force against those whom they suspect or arrest. Civilians are often caught in the crossfire between militants and Indian police. In the 18-month period of the conflict, reports state that in Srinagar District, up to 643 children have become orphaned and up to 220 women have become widows due to related violence.<sup>159</sup>



© Dave Watts  
Soldier Guard

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<sup>158</sup> kashmirlive.com. "Fraud recruitment drive busted: 5 arrested." 28 September 2007.  
<http://www.kashmirlive.com/latest/Fraud-recruitment-drive-busted-5-arrested/92220.html>

<sup>159</sup> kashmirlive.com. "Thousands orphaned by Kashmir militancy." 13 September 2007.  
<http://www.kashmirlive.com/latest/Thousands-orphaned-by-Kashmir-militancy/92081.html>

## Rural Life

Most Kashmiris live in villages in the Vale of Kashmir and the more extensive valley of the Jhelum River, in which the Vale of Kashmir lies. Statewide, close to 80% of the population is rural.<sup>160</sup> There are approximately 6,500 villages spread throughout Jammu and Kashmir state.<sup>161</sup>



© Jeremy Martin  
Rural village

**Exchange 38:** Does your family live here?

Soldier:	Does your family live here?	chaani garik chaa yetih rozaan?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

## Economy

### *Horticulture, a Main Source of Income*

The backbone of the economy in rural areas of the Vale of Kashmir is horticulture.<sup>162</sup> Directly and indirectly, this sector provides jobs and income to thousands of people throughout the state. Fruit and flower cultivation has for centuries been a traditional and well-known enterprise in the Vale of Kashmir. The rich, naturally irrigated land of the valley supports large orchards with varieties of fruits and nuts, including apples, cherries, pears, almonds, walnuts, plums, peaches, and apricots. Many fruit growers live close to urban markets so that they can transport their fresh produce quickly to market. Vegetables and flowers are often cultivated in the margins of lakes or in reclaimed marshland.



© Showkat Ahmed Mir  
Horticulture, Srinagar

**Exchange 39:** Where do you work, sir?

Soldier:	Where do you work, sir?	janaab, to-hee kati nokaree karaan?
Local:	I am a farmer, sir.	bu janaab, chus zameendaar

The majority of small cultivators practice subsistence farming on terraced slopes. Crops vary according to local weather patterns and condition of the land. Farmers grow rice, millet, corn, beans, and vegetables. The main spring crops are wheat and barley.

**Exchange 40:** Do you own this land?

Soldier:	Do you own this land?	yih chaa chon zameen?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

<sup>160</sup> Jammu & Kashmir. The Official Website of Jammu & Kashmir Government, India. Profile. "Facts About Jammu & Kashmir." 5 June 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/profile/welcome.html>

<sup>161</sup> Kashmir News Network. Geography of Jammu and Kashmir State. "Agriculture and Crops." c2005. <http://ikashmir.net/geography/chapter2.2.html>

<sup>162</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Horticulture in Kashmir." 2007. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>



The saffron industry in Kashmir thrives since the Vale of Kashmir is the only place saffron is produced in the entire subcontinent of India.<sup>163</sup> Outside of Spain, saffron grows only in Pampore, near Srinagar. Because it is so rare and has limited production, saffron is the world's most expensive spice. Harvesting of saffron extends from mid-October through November. In Kashmir it is graded and stamped with the Kashmiri government laboratory's seal to certify its quality.<sup>164</sup>



© Philippe Houmont  
Terraced fields

### *Tourism*

The Vale of Kashmir is a well-traveled tourist area, famous through the ages for its natural beauty. In recent years, however, the tourist economy has been severely disrupted because of increased militancy centered in the Vale of Kashmir. This revolt has weakened the government's authority and placed civilians at risk.

Most violent attacks take place in rural areas, and many civilians have been killed as a result of fighting between insurgents and the government. The U.S. State Department warns that U.S. citizens should avoid traveling to the Kashmir Valley and to the entire state, except for the eastern Ladakh division.<sup>165</sup> The governments of Great Britain and Australia have issued similar travel warnings. For these reasons, far fewer tourists are visiting the Vale of Kashmir.



© Akshay Mahajan  
Rural beauty

### *Rural Business Enterprise*

There are also District Industrial Centers (DICs) in each state district, including Kashmir District, to promote rural employment and building of industry. The DICs provide services to small industry at the district level including assistance with marketing, arranging credit, and acquiring raw materials and machinery.<sup>166</sup>



© Showkat Ahmed Mir  
Building mobile tower

When individuals in rural Kashmir decide to start a new business, they follow the same procedure as in urban areas, first applying through the DIC to register their product. After being approved and registered, they can then apply for loans for equipment and working capital. Registration also makes them eligible to

<sup>163</sup> Maps of India. Jammu & Kashmir. "Economy and Infrastructure." 2007.

<http://www.mapsofindia.com/stateprofiles/jammuandkashmir/index.html>

<sup>164</sup> Bharatonline.com. "Kashmir Saffron." No date.

<http://www.bharatonline.com/kashmir/shopping/saffron-dry-fruits.html>

<sup>165</sup> U.S. Department of State. Consular Information Sheet. "India." 9 August 2007.

[http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1139.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html)

<sup>166</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. "Role of Directorate Industries and Commerce." 5 June 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/industry/welcome.html>

receive an allotment of industrial land which would be leased to them for a 90-year period through the DIC. Last, registration gives them the privilege of receiving business incentives such as tax exemptions and subsidies on investments and equipment. Through Capital Investment Subsidies (CIS) available in rural areas designated as “backward,” start-up businesses can apply for state incentives at a lucrative rate.<sup>167</sup> These particular subsidies are coupled with a state policy that defines investment liberally, trying to reach a broad base and stimulate a range of business enterprises in undeveloped areas.

### *Rural Employment Program*

The Indian government implemented a job program in February 2006 to alleviate rural poverty in poor districts, including Indian-administered Kashmir. Costing USD 2.2 billion, the program guaranteed that each rural home in 200 targeted districts would be given 100 days of employment per year. The work guaranteed by the National Rural Employment Guarantee program involved constructing infrastructure such as buildings, small dams, ponds, and village roads.<sup>168</sup>

An assessment of the progress between April 2006 and April 2007 shows uneven results. Kashmir, for instance, was one of the lower performing areas. Here, women’s share of employment rose to only 4%, compared to 40% nationally.<sup>169</sup> In Kashmir the plan did not have its intended effect of raising farm wages, creating independence for women, and slowing migration.

## **Ethnic Distribution**

### *Kashmiri Pandits*

Approximately 300,000 Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus native to the region) were driven out of the Vale of Kashmir by Islamist militants between 1989 and 1991.<sup>170</sup> Forced to resettle in refugee camps in Jammu, they live in small tents or one-room houses. Lacking jobs and adequate health care and sanitation facilities, the migrants have been stricken with a host of fatal illnesses along with depression and acute anxiety. Medical studies have shown that as their living conditions fail to improve, they continue to suffer from “premature ageing [sic] and premature death.”<sup>171, 172</sup> Dr. P. K. Hak, an Associate



© Jeremy Martin  
Kashmiri Pandit refugee camp

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<sup>167</sup> Jammu & Kashmir, India. The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. Industrial Scenario. “Salient Features of J&K Industrial Policy - 2004.” 2007.

<http://jammukashmir.nic.in/govt/SFIP2004.pdf>

<sup>168</sup> BBC News. Biswas, Soutik. “India job scheme ‘disappointing.’ ” 26 September 2007.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7005985.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7005985.stm)

<sup>169</sup> BBC News. Biswas, Soutik. “India Job Scheme ‘Disappointing.’ ” 26 September 2007.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/7005985.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/7005985.stm)

<sup>170</sup> Raina, Dinanath. *Kashmir: Distortions and Reality*. 1994. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. [book]

<http://ikashmir.net/distortionsreality/index.html>

<sup>171</sup> Kashmir Information Network. Muju, Gopi Kishen. “Psychological and Behavioural Problems.” 2001.

<http://kashmir-information.com/Miscellaneous/GKMuju1.html>

Professor in Srinagar's Medical College and author of "Kashmiri Migrants' Health Trauma," blames the migration for the upsurge in disease among Pandits. He added that malnutrition, poor living conditions, and lack of medical treatment have aggravated the problems and created new diseases.<sup>173</sup>

Kashmiri Pandits strongly opposed the forced resettlement. They believe its goal has been to pave the way for a more neutral environment in which Islamization could be systematically spread.<sup>174</sup> Prior to partition and separatism, religions merged in the valley, leading to relative harmony between Muslims, who followed Sufi-Islamic traditions, and Hindus.<sup>175</sup> Although separatism has undermined this merging of views, the Pandits have continued to express their desire to return to the valley. An independent research survey taken in 2002 found that 80% of the people polled believed that returning the displaced Kashmiri Pandits to their homes in the valley would promote peace.<sup>176, 177</sup>



© Jeremy Martin  
Kashmiri Pandit refugee retreat

A disagreement recently erupted over terminology when the state's Chief Minister referred to the mass resettlement of Kashmiris as having been "voluntary." Ajay Charango, chairperson of the Pandit organization called Panun Kashmir, criticized the use of this term and insisted that the state clarify its position. Charango cited the example of Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's recent referral to Kashmiri Pandits as being "displaced people." He also pointed out that three recent prime ministers, IK Gujral, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and SD Dewagowda, had referred to the Pandits as being "victims of ethnic cleansing."<sup>178</sup>



© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri Nomad with goats

<sup>172</sup> iDMC. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. "Kashmiri Pandits face serious health problems after many years of displacement (2001-2003)." Cited from Daily Excelsior. 3 September 2003. [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument)

<sup>173</sup> iDMC. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. "Kashmiri Pandits face serious health problems after many years of displacement (2001-2003)." Cited from The Indian Express. 19 June 2001. [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument)

<sup>174</sup> Kashmir News Network. "Politics." ©2003–2010. [http://www.ikashmir.org/ikashmir\\_politics.php?chid=44](http://www.ikashmir.org/ikashmir_politics.php?chid=44)

<sup>175</sup> Kashmir News Network. "Politics." ©2003–2010. [http://www.ikashmir.org/ikashmir\\_politics.php?chid=44](http://www.ikashmir.org/ikashmir_politics.php?chid=44)

<sup>176</sup> Ipsos MORI. "Kashmiris Reject War in Favour of Democratic Means." 31 May 2002. <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/polls/2002/kashmir.shtml>

<sup>177</sup> The research was conducted on local people in areas of Jammu and Kashmir state.

<sup>178</sup> kashmirlive.com. "J-K govt lambasted for terming Kashmiri Hindus' migration 'voluntary.'" 28 September 2007. <http://www.kashmirlive.com/latest/JK-govt-lambasted-for-terming-Kashmiri-Hindus-migration-voluntary/92221.html>

### Other Ethnic Groups

A non-Kashmiri strip of mountainous land in the Vale of Kashmir around Tithwal and Uri is inhabited by shepherds known as Gujjars and Bakarwals. This narrow belt, about 10 km (6.21 mi) in width, serves as a buffer zone between the Kashmir Valley and Punjabi speaking people living in areas occupied by Pakistan. The Line of Control crosses this belt, dividing people who are related, and people often cross to interact with those on the other side. The Gujjar and Bakarwal shepherds who live here reside in small huts on the mountain slopes.<sup>179</sup>

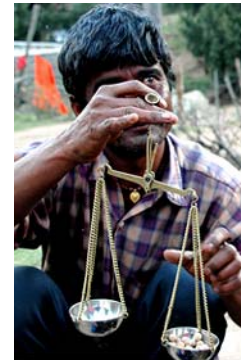
### Rural Health

The Government Medical College (GMC) in Srinagar has a network of associated health centers that serve the population of the Vale of Kashmir. The system provides free referrals for the main hospitals in Srinagar.

**Exchange 41:** Is there a medical clinic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a medical clinic nearby?	yetin chaa kaa kleenik nazdeek?
Local:	Yes, over there.	aansa, hotin

Minimal attention has been given to studying disease prevalence and its causes in Jammu and Kashmir state.<sup>180</sup> However, because of a shortage of doctors in rural areas, it is known that many people die from untreated illness or routine medical conditions. Women in remote villages, for instance, frequently die from complications of childbirth. The infant mortality rate is also high in such areas because specialists and surgeons are not available. Many of the rural health centers lack equipment and infrastructure, as well as medical staff.<sup>181</sup>



© Akshay Mahajan  
Weighing medicine

**Exchange 42:** My arm is broken, can you help me?

Soldier:	My arm is broken, can you help me?	meh foot nur, dzeh hek meh madad karit?
Local:	Yes, I can help you.	aansa, bu hek to-hee madad karit

Land mines pose health risks in rural areas of Kashmir. Many villagers, while herding cattle or walking through the area along the Line of Control, have lost limbs from stepping on land mines or the wires that trip the mines. Generally, the villagers are poor and unable to afford medical treatment. The state police and the army have helped many of them to acquire artificial limbs by organizing a providing source. However, some

<sup>179</sup> Raina, Dinanath. *Kashmir: Distortions and Reality*. 1994. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. <http://ikashmir.net/distortionsreality/index.html>

<sup>180</sup> JK-Practitioner. *Epidemiology*. Rehman, Saleem ur, A. Q. Faktoo, and Bashir Ahmad. "A Study on 'Disease Prevalence' in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir." 2004. <http://medind.nic.in/jab/t04/i4/jabt04i4p284.pdf>

<sup>181</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "Rural health mission a non-starter." 9 May 2007. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070509/j&k.htm#4>

people wait up to ten years to receive an artificial limb. During this time, they are unable to work or support themselves and become eligible for government disability.<sup>182</sup>

### *Mental Health*

Depression and suicide have risen throughout the state resulting from the violent insurgency centered in the Vale of Kashmir. In 2006, 61 people killed themselves statewide, whereas in 2007, the suicide figure was 60 for only six months, January through June.<sup>183</sup> Because of this steep rise, a prominent Muslim cleric in Indian Kashmir has issued a call for Muslims to boycott funerals of those who have committed suicide. It is hoped that this can slow the number of suicides. However, a psychiatrist in Kashmir states that the mental health of the population of Indian Kashmir, including rural areas, is not likely to improve as long as the violence continues.

### **Rural Education**

Because of the separatist insurgency, education throughout the valley has been disrupted.<sup>184</sup> The state is attempting to strengthen and restructure rural education and reach more students. It now offers outreach in rural areas and free education to poor families in an attempt to improve primary education for children.



© Philippe Houmont  
Children, Pahalgam

In 2002, the state cabinet approved plans to upgrade schools in rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir state. Preparations included setting up village committees to manage schools, monitor construction and purchase books and materials for teaching. The program planned to open 840 primary schools for children between ages of 6 and 14, with two teachers hired for each school. Of this figure, a total of 433 new schools were planned for the districts of Kashmir Valley.<sup>185</sup>

Responding to the high student dropout rate in rural areas, the University of Kashmir launched a pilot program in 2003 to strengthen pre-primary education.<sup>186</sup> The main goal of the program was to motivate parents to put their children between the ages of three and six in preschool. Also, parents were encouraged to prevent their children from dropping out of school. Program facilitators advocated strategies that could be useful in reaching this goal. As part of the effort, plans called for 30 rural girls who had attained a required level of education to enroll in pre-primary teacher education for one year. This would help to provide a foundation for the program.

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<sup>182</sup> The Hindu. "Danger Zone." 18 July 2004.

<http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2004/07/18/stories/2004071800590400.htm>

<sup>183</sup> Daily Times. "Mufti urges boycott of suicide bombers' funeral." [sic] 30 June 2007.

[http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory\\_30-6-2007\\_pg7\\_4](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2007%5C06%5C30%5Cstory_30-6-2007_pg7_4)

<sup>184</sup> JK Education.net. "Education Profile." 20 June 2007. <http://www.jkeducation.net/EducationProfile/>

<sup>185</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "Plan to revamp schools in villages." 8 November 2002.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2002/20021109/j&k.htm#4>

<sup>186</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "Varsity to popularize pre-primary education." 4 January 2003.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20030104/j&k.htm#8>

Also in 2003, the state government solicited proposals from the private sector to help extend education in remote rural areas. The state envisioned this arrangement as one in which private individuals and businesses would help in promoting and setting up new schools. The government would facilitate projects, and private sources could lend their support to make education more accessible to poor and underserved people.<sup>187</sup>

## Rural Literacy

Literacy in Jammu and Kashmir state is lower in rural than in urban areas. According to the 1981 census, literacy in urban Kashmir was over twice as high, 45.56% for the state, compared to 21.63% for rural areas. Also, the figures showed that literacy was higher among men than among women. The literacy figure for males was 36.29% statewide, compared to 15.88% for females.<sup>188</sup>

## Village Life and Gender Roles

In rural Kashmir, men are the breadwinners, and women are responsible for caring for the family. The rural lifestyle is typically agricultural. Men till the fields, cultivate the crops, and find the means to take the produce to market. Women work mainly in the home although they do spend time working in the fields, weeding crops or planting seeds. They may also be responsible for caring for chickens and livestock.



Many villages lack a regular supply of sufficient water. The Public Health Department sometimes provides water for villagers, but the supply is not reliable. One possible solution is for villagers to sink tubewells,<sup>189</sup> but the amount of water yielded is not always enough. In some villages, women, men, and children spend part of their day searching for a daily supply of water.<sup>190</sup>

Roads between villages are often in poor conditions, receiving little if any maintenance. Also, telephone service is unreliable. Some villages lack phone connections entirely.

Villagers are subject to raids from separatist groups operating in the countryside. Their lives have been interrupted by violence and the uncertainty of how to survive between the

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<sup>187</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "J&K opens education sector to private parties." 6 October 2003. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20031006/j&k.htm#5>

<sup>188</sup> JK Education.net. "Education Profile." 20 June 2007. <http://www.jkeducation.net/EducationProfile/>

<sup>189</sup> "Tubewell the term generally used to describe water well...which are termed as borehole or water well in other parts of the world. It is a device installed into a well to abstract groundwater from an aquifer. A well is first drilled into the ground and then a pipe assembly is lowered which consists of an intake section and a discharge section. The intake section consists of a slotted part, the well screen, and a blind pipe. The discharge section consists of housing pipe, pump and discharge mouth or sprout." Banglapedia. [http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/T\\_0240.htm](http://banglapedia.search.com.bd/HT/T_0240.htm)

<sup>190</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. Gupta, Ramesh. "Residents face water shortage." 20 June 2001. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2001/20010620/j&k.htm#1>

competing forces. They may be punished for collaborating with Indian security forces, for being neutral, or for trying to cooperate with an insurgent group that demands information or money. This situation creates a tension that has caused many rural families to move to Srinagar, the main urban site in the valley.

## Danger to Children in Rural Areas

Children going to and from school in rural areas have been at risk of being kidnapped by armed gangs, according to a UN report. Insurgents then use the kidnapped children as gun runners or human bombs, forcing them to use automatic weapons and attack people.<sup>191</sup> Girls who are kidnapped suffer from sexual abuse and other gender violence. Also, on several occasions bombs have exploded near schools, killing children.<sup>192</sup> The UN report notes that because of ongoing danger, parents have worried about their children commuting to school. This situation is bound to have a depressing effect on school enrollment. In fact, the dropout rate is high.



© Ippel Yuge  
Rural children

## Rural Planning

In 2004, the state's chief minister announced a development program to create model villages in the state. In an effort to transform and improve rural areas, the state would provide financing and other assistance to plan and build new villages. The model villages would include resources such as transportation, health and sanitation services, educational facilities, employment resources, clean water, and electricity.<sup>193</sup>

## Transportation

Rural transportation in India, in general, is by roadway, using cars or buses. Indian army soldiers use utility vehicles to drive through the countryside. People drive erratically, ignoring speed limits and warning signs. Traffic accidents are frequent.



© thepooldiariesvisuals / flickr.com  
Mosque, Pahalgam Valley

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<sup>191</sup> United Nations. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. "Commission on Human Rights Concludes Review of Rights of Children 19990416." 16 April 1999. <http://www.un.org/children/conflict/pr/1999-04-16commissiononhuma73.html>

<sup>192</sup> Amnesty International. "India: Children Unprotected in Jammu and Kashmir." 26 July 2005. <http://web.amnesty.org/library/Index/ENGASA200272005?open&of=ENG-403>

<sup>193</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "Plan to develop model villages in J&K." August 6 2004. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2004/20040807/j&k.htm#5>

**Exchange 43:** Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a good auto mechanic nearby?	yet chaa kaan petrol pamp nazdeek?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Rural areas of the Vale of Kashmir lack adequately maintained roads. In rural Kashmir Valley, many villages are so remote that they have no roads. In other areas, roads cannot be used during parts of the year, such as when they are blocked by landslides, fallen trees, or snow. The region would benefit from construction and maintenance of a broader network of roads that linked more villages. An effective transport system is an essential component for greater productivity and economic development. Such developments can improve the quality of life by reducing isolation and enabling more rural poor to find employment.<sup>194</sup>



© deeprivia / flickr.com  
Srinagar-Leh Highway flooded

Because the rural transportation structure is so weak, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has contracted with the state to provide money for infrastructure development. Part of the USD 250 million from the ADB is being used to rehabilitate bridges and roads in the state. This applies to both rural and urban areas. It includes roads under the Public Works Department's jurisdiction and 80 damaged bridges in the state. It is believed that the net effect will be increased interstate trade and reduction of poverty.<sup>195</sup>

The main highway through the valley is route 1A, linking Srinagar and Jammu division. Although connecting roads leave much to be desired, a network of roads does exist through the valley, allowing travel to some rural areas.

**Exchange 44:** Is there a gas station nearby?

Soldier:	Is there a gas station nearby?	yet chaa kaan petrol pamp nazdeek?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

The closest railway transit point to the Vale of Kashmir is the Jammu Tawi station in the Jammu division, south of the valley. Trains arrive at this station from Calcutta, New Delhi, and Mumbai, India.

## Militant Attacks and Landmines

Because of the ongoing conflict based in competing claims by both Pakistan and India to Kashmir, fighting between Islamists, secessionist militants, and Indian forces occurs regularly. In 2001, Islamist militants attacked Srinagar's state assembly building and killed 38 people. Members of the secessionist groups (including Islamist militants who

<sup>194</sup> Planning Commission, New Delhi, India. Workshop on Transport Infrastructure and Poverty Development. Puri, B.N. "Rural Roads Programme in India." 18–22 July 2007.  
<http://www.adbi.org/files/2005.07.18.cpp.rural.roads.india.pdf>

<sup>195</sup> ADB. Asian Development Bank. News and Events. "ADB Approves \$250 Million Loan to India for Rehabilitation of Infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir." 23 December 2004.  
[http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2004/6578\\_india\\_multisector/](http://www.adb.org/media/Articles/2004/6578_india_multisector/)



seek union with Pakistan, and local rebels who seek independence) use a sophisticated array of weapons. This dispute has proven to be “lethal and intractable.” The U.S. Department of State estimates that between 38,000 and 80,000 lives were lost between 1989 and 2003 as a result of militant attacks in the Vale of Kashmir.<sup>196</sup> The Foreign Commonwealth Office reports that terrorist attacks occur in this area “virtually on a daily basis.”<sup>197</sup>

In past decades, deadly land mines were placed along the Line of Control. Shortly after partition in 1949, the military laid land mines because soldiers were not able to patrol and guard the entire area. Although the danger zone was fenced, many of the mines slipped as a result of rain or slides into unmarked areas. Further, because of infiltration of separatists and militants along the Line of Control, additional mines have been laid, even as mines along the original border have been removed. These new weapons include more powerful anti-personnel and anti-tank mines. After the Indian Parliament was attacked in December 2001, more mines were laid along the International Border, causing thousands of villagers to migrate. Nine months later, the Indian army de-mined most of the area so that the land could be returned to farmers.<sup>198</sup>

**Exchange 45:** Is this area mined?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Is this area mined?	yet alaakas manz maa kyen bam taayvit?
<b>Local:</b>	Yes.	aaansa

## Border Crossings and Checkpoints

Foreign tourists are prohibited by the Indian government from visiting areas along the Line of Control, the cease-fire border between Indian Kashmir and Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.



© Philippe Houmont  
Checkpoint near Sonamarg

**Exchange 46:** Where is the nearest checkpoint?

<b>Soldier:</b>	Where is the nearest checkpoint?	yatyook nazdeek chek poynt katin chu?
<b>Local:</b>	It's two kilometers.	so chu dzu kiloomeetar door

Further, there is a strong military presence of both Indian and Pakistani troops along the border. Terrorist groups operating in the state frequently target these forces, and violence often happens without warning. For these reasons, the U.S. government recommends that

<sup>196</sup> U.S. Department of State. CRS Issue Brief for Congress. K. Alan Kronstadt. “India–U.S. Relations.” 15 July 2003. <http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/22731.pdf>

<sup>197</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office. Travel Advice by Country. “India.” 3 October 2007. <http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390590&a=KCountryAdvice&aid=1013618387153>

<sup>198</sup> The Hindu. “Danger Zone.” 18 July 2004. <http://www.thehindu.com/thehindu/mag/2004/07/18/stories/2004071800590400.htm>

American tourists avoid coming closer than 5–10 km (3.1–6.2 mi) from the border between the two countries.<sup>199</sup>

**Exchange 47:** Please get out of the car.

Soldier:	Please get out of the car.	meherbaanee karit vas gaardi manz bon
Local:	OK.	aadsaa

Unless travelers are Indian or Pakistani citizens, no official border crossing is open to them between India and Pakistan except in the state of Punjab. This crossing, between Atari, India and Wagah, Pakistan, is typically open but travelers must confirm to make certain.<sup>200</sup>

**Exchange 48:** Is this all the ID you have?

Soldier:	Is this all the ID you have?	dzeh chuee yootvee shanaaKhtee kaagzaa paanis?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Bus service across the Line of Control is risky for local travelers who want to visit their relatives on the other side of the divide. Bus service between Indian Kashmir and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir was restored in 2005, scheduled to run once every two weeks between Srinagar and Muzaffarbad, Pakistan.

**Exchange 49:** Show us the car registration.

Soldier:	Show us the car registration.	aas haw gard hund kaagzaat
Local:	OK.	aadsaa

A few days before the service resumed, passengers began to receive threats from members of insurgent groups in Indian Kashmir, warning them against traveling. The heightened danger prompted Indian security forces to provide security, trying to ensure the safety of passengers.<sup>201</sup> One gunman did manage to enter the heavily guarded compound where the passengers waited and set fire to the large building, destroying it. Over 20 people were injured.<sup>202</sup> Since then, the service has resumed. The Indian government built a new, modern reception center with amenities for the comfort of



© Steve Evans  
Bus on rural road

<sup>199</sup> U.S. Department of State. Consular Information Sheet. “India.” 9 August 2007. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1139.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html)

<sup>200</sup> U.S. Department of State. Consular Information Sheet. “India.” 9 August 2007. [http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis\\_pa\\_tw/cis/cis\\_1139.html](http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_1139.html)

<sup>201</sup> New York Times. Archives. Sengupta, Somini. “Militants Threaten Kashmir’s New Bus Service.” 4 April 2005.

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9E02EFDB1E3FF937A35757C0A9639C8B63&n=Top%2fNews%2fWorld%2fCountries and Territories%2fIndia>

<sup>202</sup> New York Times. Archives. Sengupta, Somini. “Arson Attack Tries to Foil India-Pakistan Bus Service.” 7 April 2005.

[http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/07/international/asia/07kashmir.html?\\_r=1&n=Top%2fNews%2fWorld%2fCountries and Territories%2fIndia&oref=slogin](http://www.nytimes.com/2005/04/07/international/asia/07kashmir.html?_r=1&n=Top%2fNews%2fWorld%2fCountries and Territories%2fIndia&oref=slogin)

travelers.<sup>203</sup> Security forces that accompany the buses have continued to be subject to sporadic attacks.

**Exchange 50:** Are you carrying any guns?

Soldier:	Are you carrying any guns?	dzeh maa chu-ee bandook su-eet?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

## Who's In Charge

The village structure has changed in Kashmir Valley as a result of the expulsion of Pandits and also on account of continuing migration to the city. In some areas, men have disappeared, either from being killed or leaving to find work elsewhere, and women have taken up arms to defend themselves.<sup>204</sup> In traditional villages within the largely Muslim rural population, however, a village elder is the leader. Possibly a landowner, this man who is the unquestioned head of his family wields authority by virtue of his standing in the community. The village elder is in charge of public activities that may affect the residents of the village.



© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri Man on street

**Exchange 51:** Does your village elder live here?

Soldier:	Does your village elder live here?	tow-hund zyoot chaa yetee?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

<sup>203</sup> BBC News. Bryant, Nick. "India's gains from Kashmir bus." 11 April 2005. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south\\_asia/4433159.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/south_asia/4433159.stm)

<sup>204</sup> Middle East Times. Women. Gupta, Prakriiti. "Kashmiri Women Take Up Arms for Self-Protection." 23 September 2005. <http://www.metimes.com/storyview.php?StoryID=20050923-083928-8729r>

# Family Life

## Introduction

Muslims comprise 90–95% of the population in the Vale of Kashmir, and Hindus are present in small numbers.<sup>205, 206</sup> Prior to partition and especially before the Islamist insurgency which emerged in the late 1980s, many cultural and family traditions were somewhat merged between Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs. The Islamic religion practiced in Kashmir had its own character, being merged with Sufiism and retaining some pre-Islamic elements.<sup>207</sup> Family traditions were likewise influenced, as Kashmiris had their own distinct identity, termed *Kashmiriyat*, which transcended religious boundaries.<sup>208</sup>

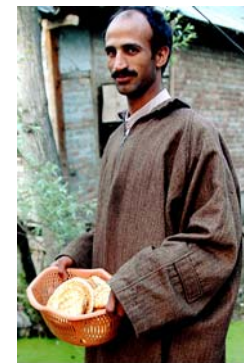


© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri Child

Since the divisions of the 20th century, however, cultural lines are more sharply delineated. Among Muslims, fundamentalism has become more defining along with the drive for separatism or union with Pakistan. A large number of the Kashmiri Pandits (indigenous Hindus) have been driven from the valley.<sup>209, 210, 211</sup> Although it is known that they do not follow a caste system, there is little information available on their syncretic or merged family traditions. For these reasons, this chapter will focus mostly on Muslim family life in the Kashmir Valley.

## Family Roles and Responsibilities

Both Muslim and Hindu families are patriarchal, and the head of household is male. Primarily Muslim, families in the Vale of Kashmir adhere to a way of life in which the division of labor falls sharply along gender lines. Kashmiri men are responsible for earning income, making public transactions, and deciding what their sons should study. Women are responsible for running the household, childbearing, nurturing children, teaching them their family and



© Akshay Mahajan  
Man with roti bread

<sup>205</sup> WebIndia123. Jammu and Kashmir. The People: Kashmiris. c2000.

<http://www.webindia123.com/JAMMU/PEOPLE/kashmiris.htm>

<sup>206</sup> Kashmir Mart. Religion in Jammu and Kashmir. Undated. <http://www.kashmirmart.com/religon.html>

<sup>207</sup> Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir & Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. [p. 29] 2001. London: Anthem Press. [book]

<sup>208</sup> Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir & Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. [p. 30] 2001. London: Anthem Press. [book]

<sup>209</sup> Raina, Dinanath. *Kashmir: Distortions and Reality*. 1994. New Delhi: Reliance Publishing House. [book] <http://ikashmir.net/distortionsreality/index.html>

<sup>210</sup> Das, Suranjan. *Kashmir & Sindh: Nation-Building, Ethnicity and Regional Politics in South Asia*. [pp 50-51] 2001. London: Anthem Press. [book]

<sup>211</sup> iDMC. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. India. "Kashmiri Pandits Face Serious Health Problems After Many Years of Displacement (2001-2003)." Cited from The Indian Express. 19 June 2001. [http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/\(httpEnvelopes\)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument](http://www.internal-displacement.org/idmc/website/countries.nsf/(httpEnvelopes)/524255683B3EAB43802570B8005A7177?OpenDocument)

social roles, and caring for the family.

Families live in close-knit, extended groups that include parents, children, grandparents, and in-laws, if space permits. Several family members may share a small space of only one or two rooms.

**Exchange 52:** How many people live in this house?

Soldier:	How many people live in this house?	yet garas manz ku-eet nafar rozaan?
Local:	Ten.	daah

The family is the center of life for Kashmiris. Its members provide each other with a network of support that extends through a lifetime. They rely on each other in good times and in times of need for child care, helping sick and elderly family members, finding employment, and receiving food and lodging. In this extended family system, younger members obey their elders and the head of household supports those who do not work.



**Exchange 53:** Are these people part of your family?

Soldier:	Are these people part of your family?	yim chaa chaani gareek nafar?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

## Status of Women, Elderly, and Children

### *Women*

Women occupy a secondary status in Kashmiri families. It is understood by all family members that women are not only subservient to men, they also represent the family's honor. Toward this purpose, their mobility is limited, their activities and behavior are restricted, and they are allowed only limited contact with the opposite sex. Women who commit or are suspected of committing adultery or who otherwise dishonor the family can receive punishment as severe as death. They are committed to following a strict policy of chastity.

Women spend most of their time in the home, venturing out for reasons approved by the family. Among rural families, their mobility may be less restricted since they frequently work outdoors; gardening, planting, doing household chores, and caring for animals. They may be employed doing piecework in their homes in either a rural or urban setting. Their secondary status leading to limited mobility and restricted activities is reinforced at all levels within the family, from children through adults, and within society.



If women work outside the home, as some do in urban areas, they still retain the responsibility to fulfill their domestic role. This requires an additional workload of managing household work and making sure that everything gets done and children and other family members are cared for.

According to Islamic law, women have the right to inherit property. If a husband dies, a woman may be able to find support from her father or a brother. Women tend to keep connections with their birth families throughout their lives. In rural areas, however, this may be difficult or impossible unless the families live close together. Lack of transportation or passable roads limits travel and leads to social isolation.

**Exchange 54:** Do you have any brothers?

Soldier:	Do you have any brothers?	dzeh chweeya beyi keyn boyi?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

### *Women's Status in Education*

A teacher who taught between 1952 and 1995 has reported on changes in education for women during that same period. Associated with the Government College for Women in Srinagar, Neerja Mattoo recalls how that institution began to grow in the 1950s, admitting women of all religious backgrounds. Both Hindu and Muslim students were enrolled and developed intellectually within its secular and humanist environment. This was also a time during which bonded labor had been abolished, and tenant farmers received free land previously owned by absentee landlords. The liberal social changes extended into education. New avenues of study emerged for girls and young women, along with career possibilities in fields such as business, law, medicine, and education. Alongside traditional subjects, the curriculum at the Government College for Women emphasized debating, sports, cultural activities, older Kashmiri traditions, drama, and educational tours. The students wore uniforms, rather than traditional dress, de-emphasizing their social and religious backgrounds.<sup>212</sup>



© Anirban Biswas  
Schoolgirl

In 1989, Prof. Mattoo reports, leaflets were strewn over the school demanding that girls immediately identify themselves according to their religion. Muslim women were instructed to wear *burqas*, and Hindu women to wear *bindis*. Students were forced to comply. The separatist upsurge behind the change caused schools in Kashmir to close and children and young adults to either leave school or move to other areas to attend school. Many schools, libraries, and laboratories were targeted and destroyed, and educational standards in general suffered. With the separatist movement continuing and still in force at the present time, formal education for girls and women has remained weakened.<sup>213</sup>

<sup>212</sup> India Together. Mattoo, Neerja. "A Kashmiri Education." September 2002. <http://www.indiatogether.org/women/education/kashcoll.htm>

<sup>213</sup> India Together. Mattoo, Neerja. "A Kashmiri Education." September 2002. <http://www.indiatogether.org/women/education/kashcoll.htm>

## *Elderly*

The elderly in Kashmir have traditionally lived in extended families, relying upon family members for support. Respect is extended to elderly people by both children and adults. Family members care for their parents and grandparents, tend to their needs, and ensure that they are not left alone.

**Exchange 55:** Is this your entire family?

Soldier:	Is this your entire family?	yi chaa chon sorvey garbaar?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

Although elderly family members rely on the extended family system, it is weakening throughout India because of economic and social pressures. In Kashmir it has been disrupted by the separatist movement which has resulted in unemployment, migration of many families, and injury or death to family members. When an extended family support structure is lacking, elderly family members are vulnerable because there is no security net for them in society.<sup>214</sup>



© Steve Evans  
Elderly Kashmiri woman

**Exchange 56:** Did you grow up here?

Soldier:	Did you grow up here?	dzi chooka badyomut yetee?
Local:	No.	naa

However, in India, citizens over 60 years of age are considered elderly for purposes of census, discounts for rail travel, and medical treatment in hospitals run by the government. If they are over 65, elderly people are eligible for air-travel discounts or income tax concessions.<sup>215</sup>

## *Children and Young Adults*

Children are an important part of the extended family. Males are preferred over females as sons are likely to stay with the parents and provide for them, whereas daughters leave the family when they marry. All children are valued for their role in family life, however. They participate in the daily household activities and work, helping both their fathers and their mothers. Children are expected to help care for the young children and elderly members of the family. They learn at an early age the roles expected of them according to their gender.



© Steve Evans  
Veiled mother, boys

In rural areas of India, children are frequently not able to receive

<sup>214</sup> The Tribune. Dahiya, Dr. Prem Singh. "Have a Heart for Elderly." 1 October 2005. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20051001/mailbag.htm>

<sup>215</sup> The Tribune. Dahiya, Dr. Prem Singh. "Have a Heart for Elderly." 1 October 2005. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2005/20051001/mailbag.htm>

formal education. This is particularly true for girls, often taken out of school to help their mothers with domestic work. Although it is known that girls drop out of school more frequently than boys in Kashmir Valley, literacy figures are lacking for this area. For India in general, however, a report states that there are no literate girls over the age of 15 in close to 50% of all rural families. This contrasts with urban areas, where illiteracy drops to between 15 and 20% for girls over 15.<sup>216</sup> Girls with no formal education are consigned to domestic, household roles for their entire lives.

### *Orphans*

The role of a man is so strong as head of household that if a child is fatherless and has only his or her mother present, the state defines that child as an orphan.<sup>217</sup> According to the Jammu and Kashmir Yatheem Trust, a non-governmental organization, the total orphan population in the Vale of Kashmir's six districts was 15,308 in 1999.<sup>218</sup> The divisional commissioner at the head of Kashmir division (province) claims the figure is much higher, based on the number of dead fathers. To address this problem, the state government designated a relief fund that would compensate families for a death resulting from a militant act and provide widows with a monthly allowance. As of 2001, no funds had been paid out.<sup>219</sup>

When children are orphaned, they along with their mother, if she survives, are forced to live with extended family members. However, if the extended family lacks the means to support the newcomers, the orphans are reduced to poverty. A child or family member may be able to get a job as a housemaid or laborer that pays little. In this case, the children are also likely to be malnourished and without adequate shelter. In addition, they suffer from stress from the loss of a family member and other illness. Some children are able to find a home in an orphanage, where they are minimally cared for as the facilities are limited.



© Steve Evans  
Child in bus window

### **Family ‘Disappearances’**

The Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons in Jammu and Kashmir (APDP) is an organization that pursues reports of missing family members. The APDP has recently claimed that over 10,000 persons are missing and is asking for a formal investigation. This is in response to the ongoing discovery of bodies after family members have reported a member of the family missing. The perpetrators could be either members of militant groups or, according to Human Rights Watch, security forces who may have suspected militant activity. On 6 February, 2007, the Indian government responded to

<sup>216</sup> RxPG News. India Education Channel. “No Literate Adult Among 26 Percent Rural Families.” 17 April, 2007. [http://www.rxpnews.com/education/No-literate-adult-among-26-percent-rural-families\\_24098.shtml](http://www.rxpnews.com/education/No-literate-adult-among-26-percent-rural-families_24098.shtml)

<sup>217</sup> Rediff.com. The Lost Generation. Sreedharan, Chindu. “The Birth of an Orphan.” c1996-2001. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/dec/11child.htm>

<sup>218</sup> Rediff.com. The Lost Generation. Sreedharan, Chindu. “The Birth of an Orphan.” c1996-2001. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/dec/11child.htm>

<sup>219</sup> Rediff.com. The Lost Generation. Sreedharan, Chindu. “For Orphans in Kashmir, Now There is Nothing.” c1996-2001. <http://www.rediff.com/news/2001/dec/11child.htm>



pressure and signed a UN treaty that condemns and opposes the criminal activity of ‘forced disappearances.’<sup>220</sup>

## Married Life, Divorce, and Birth

### *Marriage*

Marriage in the Vale of Kashmir is a celebrated tradition that joins families, not just the couple marrying. It is the main way in which extended family networks are established and as such, it is a negotiated contract between heads of household.

**Exchange 57:** Are you married?

Soldier:	Are you married?	dzeh chweeya Khaandar karit?
Local:	No.	naa

When young Kashmiri adults marry, it is likely that they will continue to live with parents on the husband’s side of the family. A young couple traditionally stays in the household of the man’s father where they are subject to the household rules established by the father. In patrilineal households, such as in Kashmir, they must submit to the authority of their mothers-in-law, as she is the highest ranking woman in the household. The new bride is usually the lowest ranking woman.



© Miran Rijavec  
Srinagar couple

**Exchange 58:** Is this your wife?

Soldier:	Is this your wife?	yi chaa chaan gar vaajee?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

If married women give birth to sons, they gain status in the family, for it is sons who carry on the family lineage. Sons are also valued for practical reasons because it is they who support the parents throughout their lives.

**Exchange 59:** Are these your children?

Soldier:	Are these your children?	yim chaa chaan baatchi?
Local:	Yes.	aansa

### *Divorce*

Although divorce is discouraged under Islamic law, it is legal, and a couple can divorce for several causes. Among other reasons, divorce is permissible if the husband deserts his family, is imprisoned, or neglects his wife.<sup>221</sup>

<sup>220</sup> Human Rights Watch. Human Rights News. “India: Investigate All ‘Disappearances’ in Kashmir: Recent Cases Reveal Pattern of Security-Force Involvement.” 15 February 2007. <http://hrw.org/english/docs/2007/02/15/india15336.htm>

Islamic guidelines require that every attempt be made to save the marriage. If a husband and wife cannot resolve their differences, they are first required to seek mediation from relatives on both sides of the family. If this fails to solve their problems, then a divorce may proceed. Once the divorce is filed, three months are allotted the couple to attempt reconciliation. If after three months there has been no reconciliation, the divorce goes into effect and the marriage is ended.<sup>222</sup>

### *Birth*

When male children are born, it is an occasion that calls for celebration, perhaps heralded by rifle shots or other forms of notification to announce that an heir has arrived. The family will typically distribute sweets to friends and relatives. If they can afford it, they may prepare or buy food to distribute to poor people as a way of sharing their happiness. The child is also likely to receive a sacred charm to wear.



© Sashwat Nagpal  
Kashmiri men, boy

For daughters, the family will distribute fewer sweets to friends and relatives, and the celebration is scaled down. Announcements of the birth may be apologetic.

If the child is Muslim, the Muslim call to prayer is one of the first sounds he or she will hear. The eldest male member of the family typically has the honor of reciting this to the newborn child. The first flavor that the child tastes is honey, placed in a drop on his or her tongue.<sup>223</sup>

Although those living in Srinagar have access to hospitals, almost all births in rural areas take place in the home. A midwife or birth attendant may help the mother, but few medical staff members are available in rural Kashmir.<sup>224</sup> Because of the shortage of doctors in rural areas, it is known that women in remote villages frequently die from complications of childbirth. The infant mortality rate is also high in such areas because specialists and surgeons are not available.<sup>225</sup>

## **Family Ceremonies**

Among Kashmiris, the most important family ceremonies include celebrating weddings and the birth of a child, and lamenting the loss of family members at funerals. These events hold great significance in a culture that venerates the family so highly. These

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<sup>221</sup> Helpline Law. "Divorce Laws in Pakistan." 2005. <http://www.helplinelaw.com/article/pakistan/270>. (retrieved on 06/22/07)

<sup>222</sup> Islam for Today. "Divorce: Some Misconceptions." 2007. <http://www.islamfortoday.com/divorce.htm>

<sup>223</sup> Mittmann, Karin, and Zafar Ihsan. *Culture Shock! Pakistan*. 2004. London: Kuperard.

<sup>224</sup> JK-Practitioner. Epidemiology. Rehman, Saleem ur, A. Q. Faktoo, and Bashir Ahmad. "A Study on 'Disease Prevalence' in Ladakh, Jammu & Kashmir. 2004. <http://medind.nic.in/jab/t04/i4/jabt04i4p284.pdf>

<sup>225</sup> The Tribune. Jammu & Kashmir. "Rural Health Mission a Non-Starter." 9 May 2007. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070509/j&k.htm#4>

events solidify family ties and serves as a social connection among the members of extended families.

## Naming Conventions

Muslim parents traditionally name a child seven days after the baby is born. The name may be selected by both parents, by the father, or with the help of other family members. The name may have several parts, in contrast to the three-part Western name. Sometimes an Islamic name has four parts consisting of a first name, followed by the father's name, the grandfather's name, and the family name. The family name may be a tribal name, shared by thousands of other people. Also, the words *Abu* (father), *Ibn* (son), *Bint* (daughter), or *Abd* (servant) may be inserted into the name. For instance, the name *Ibn Mohammad* means "son of Mohammad" and the name *Abd Allah* or *Abdullah* means "servant of God."



© Steve Evans  
Kashmiri mother and child

In the Pandit community, naming ceremonies are similar to those in Brahman groups in other areas of India. The ceremony, called *namkaran*, takes place eleven days after the child is born. The child's name can be chosen in different ways in a rather complicated process. Among some families, a priest is called on to offer the first letter of a name, based on the child's horoscope. Also, the mother's or father's relatives may give suggestions. Although the name may be assigned at the ceremony, parents may also wait until later, calling the child *niki* (fem. *nich*), meaning "baby," until a formal name is chosen.<sup>226</sup>

The Pandit name has three parts, a first name, optional middle name, and family name. The first name, or given name, often refers to a Hindu mythological or scriptural god. A nickname is also commonly given, and a kinship name (such as "dear brother") may be used by close family members. The last name may change, developing over time from a class name into an institutionalized family name.<sup>227</sup>

Pandits do not name their children after parents or grandparents. The names they have traditionally chosen show both a Persian and Sanskrit connection.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>226</sup> University of Illinois. Sociolinguistics and Anthroponymy. Naming of Kashmiri Pandits: Gotras, Surnames, & Nicknames. Kachru, Braj B. "Naming in the Kashmiri Pandit Community." No date. [http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP\\_names.html](http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP_names.html)

<sup>227</sup> University of Illinois. Sociolinguistics and Anthroponymy. Naming of Kashmiri Pandits: Gotras, Surnames, & Nicknames. Kachru, Braj B. "Naming in the Kashmiri Pandit Community." No date. [http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP\\_names.html](http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP_names.html)

<sup>228</sup> University of Illinois. Sociolinguistics and Anthroponymy. Naming of Kashmiri Pandits: Gotras, Surnames, & Nicknames. Kachru, Braj B. "Naming in the Kashmiri Pandit Community." No date. [http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP\\_names.html](http://www.koausa.org/Names/KP_names.html)