

# The Delightful and Vibrant Natural Beauty of Kashmir: The Mystical Paradise on Earth

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**Abstract:** *The culture and traditions of Kashmir are a rich and varied mosaic that has been made over hundreds of years. Located in the northernmost part of India, Kashmir has been influenced by a numerous of cultures and religions, resulting in a unique blend of traditions and practices. The people of Kashmir are known for their warm hospitality, intricate handicrafts, delicious cuisine, and music and dance that reflect their heritage. Despite its beauty and richness, Kashmiri culture has faced challenges such as conflict, displacement, and environmental degradation, Kashmiri culture and traditions have remained resilient and continue to thrive. By exploring the unique practices and customs of the Kashmiri people, this paper aims to highlight the beauty and richness of their cultural heritage and the importance of preserving it for future generations.*

**Keywords:** Kashmir, Tourism, Culture, Tradition, Occupation, Earth, Language, Festivals, Beauty, Handicraft, Literature, History, Paradise, India

## I. INTRODUCTION

Jammu and Kashmir is an Indian state located in the northern Himalayas. Kashmiri apple, Kashmiri saffron, and Kashmiri wazwan are famous all over the world for their ethnic/heritage and region-specific delicacies. Jammu and Kashmir's ethnic and region-specific delicacies have made a name for themselves in both international and domestic markets. The Kashmir valley is known around the world for its natural beauty as well as its cultural diversity. Kashmir is characterised as an old territory with its own ethnicity, character, language, dress, customs, rituals, and cultural history. The culture of India's Kashmir valley is broad, colourful, and multifaceted. The Kashmir valley is a spectacular mixture of many ethnic groups and social units, an amalgamation of countless civilizations that have inhabited the Kashmir valley at various times and left their mark on Kashmir's culture. Kashmir has been at the crossroads of numerous civilizations and religions for the past 5,000 years of its history. Chinese, Indian, Central Asian, and Persian civilizations and cultures have all had an impact on Kashmir. Kashmir is considered to have strong cultural linkages with China, Tibet, Central Asian cities, Afghanistan, and Iran. All of these causes have played a significant role in the formation and development of modern-day Kashmiri culture.

The Kashmir valley, nestled in the foothills of the majestic Himalayan mountains, is known for its rich culture as well as its scenic splendour. Despite the religious divisions between Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, and Christians, the population is largely homogeneous. Their coexistence reflects Kashmir as a melting pot of diverse communities who bring colour and fragrance to each other's lives via humanism, secularism, tolerance, peace, and harmony.

The prepossessing people of Kashmir represent the vivid culture and tradition of the region. They are known for being hospitable, God-fearing, and humble. Kashmiri, their native tongue, is essential to their cultural identity. The sole Indian language that belongs to the Dardic group of Central Asian languages, this vernacular holds a unique position among the Modern Indo-Aryan languages. Kashmiri is a lovely and multi-layered system of expression, with terms adopted and absorbed from a variety of other languages, resulting in a vast vocabulary. Kashmiri literature holds a special place in Indian literature because it preserves the political, economic, and linguistic characteristics of Kashmir.

Handicrafts are the inhabitants of Kashmir's traditional occupation, and there are many buildings with considerable architectural heritage. Carpets, shawls, and other delicate and exquisite tapestries have brought international acclaim to the region's artisans. Wood carvings and ceilings are prized for their beauty, while needlework and papiermâché are well-known worldwide. The cultural whirlwind of influences of Central Asian styles and themes is best reflected in

papiermâché. On the world- famous Dal Lake, exquisitely decorated traditional small wooden boats known as Shikaras and house boats are equally acclaimed cultural icons. Many local craftspeople get inspiration from Kashmir's stunning scenery. However, the impact of intermediaries between artists and art lovers, who take a cut of the commissions, leaving the artist with a little portion of the true value of their work, is jeopardising this dynamic cultural heritage. This process has had a significant impact on the thinking of craftsmen and women who have been compelled to relinquish traditional and generational skills in order to acquire better paid jobs. Because it was difficult to bring in things from outside in the past, the area's seclusion aided local craftsmen. As access has improved, new designs are now accessible at lower prices. The creative industries have been gradually declining as a result of this, as well as apathy among the younger generation, who are mostly disinterested in spending lengthy, boring hours studying a talent. Furthermore, the fighting in Kashmir has wreaked havoc on the commercial sector. Communities have grown tired of business and have gravitated toward the safety of government work. However, with the assistance of the local administration, efforts are being undertaken to restore Kashmiri art. Kashmiris are cuisine connoisseurs. Their ultimate formal dinner is a royal cuisine consisting of 36 courses, 15 to 30 of which are meat dishes prepared overnight by expert chefs. Kashmiri cuisine has been inspired by the numerous meals of successive kings and tourists who arrived from Persia, Afghanistan, and other parts of the world over the centuries. Guests are seated in groups of four and share their meal from a single huge metal dish at these feasts. Tea is consumed in large quantities. Nun Chai (salty tea) and Kehwa (saffron tea with almonds) are two of the most popular beverages. Saffron, apple, and other dry fruits such as walnut and almond are also popular in Kashmir. Kashmiris enjoy music in its different forms, such as sufi music and 'chakar.' The men execute the 'Dumhal' dance, while the women do a unique folk dance known as 'Rouff.' Other entertainments peculiar to Kashmir in terms of form and structure include 'Band Pather' (Folk Theatre) and 'Shah' (the national chronicler). 'Ladi Local attire lends extra uniqueness to Kashmiri culture while the lovely green woodlands radiate the feeling of peace. Men wear a 'Khan dress' or Pathani suit with a skull cap, while women wear a 'Pheran' (a knee-length, loose cloak style) and a 'Shalwar' with traditional 'Kasaba' (headgear). The term 'Pheran' refers to a type of clothing worn by everyone (men, women and children). During the bitterly cold winters, a 'Kangri' (fire kettle) with heated embers keeps them warm.

#### **Aims and Goals of the Study**

- To study the early history of culture of Kashmir.
- To study the mystical blend of culture of Kashmir.
- To study the Arduousness of artisans to promote and preserve the cultural heritage of Kashmir.
- To Study the problems of cultural art in Kashmir.
- To study some prime majors to preserve the cultural heritage of Kashmir.

## **II. METHODOLOGY**

The present study is based on the qualitative data collection method. Both primary and secondary sources of data are been used. A Direct personal investigation and extensive literature survey has been done. Primary data include interviews, questionnaires, observations, and case studies, etc. Secondary data including books, Reports, research papers, newspapers, magazines, and websites has been used for the purpose of study.

### **2.1 The Origin of Kashmir**

The origin of Kashmir is shrouded in historical and archaeological complexities, and it has been a subject of scholarly debate. The region's history is marked by a blend of myth, legend, and historical evidence. In ancient times, Kashmir was mentioned in various ancient texts and scriptures. The Nilamata Purana, an ancient Hindu scripture, contains references to Kashmir's geography, mythology, and religious significance. The Rajatarangini, a historical chronicle written by Kalhana in the 12th century, provides insights into the early history of the region. According to these texts, Kashmir was believed to have been a lake, which was later drained to make the fertile valley. Kashmir's early history was influenced by various dynasties and empires, including the Mauryan and Kushan Empires. It became a prominent center for Buddhism during the reign of Emperor Ashoka. The region's location along the Silk Road facilitated cultural exchanges with

Central Asia, Persia, and China. In subsequent centuries, Kashmir witnessed the spread of Islam, particularly during the medieval period. Various Muslim rulers, including those from Central Asia, ruled over the region. The Mughal Empire established its control over Kashmir, contributing to the cultural and architectural landscape of the area. In the 19th century, Kashmir came under the influence of the Sikh Empire, and later, the British East India Company. The signing of the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846 established the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir under the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh. The partition of British India in 1947 led to the complicated political situation in Kashmir, with its predominantly Muslim population ruled by a Hindu Maharaja. This resulted in conflict and eventually led to the Indo-Pakistani war over the region. The Line of Control, established after the war, divided the region into Indian-administered and Pakistani-administered parts.

The historical origins of Kashmir are thus intertwined with a diverse range of cultures, empires, and influences over the millennia, shaping its unique identity and significance in the Indian subcontinent.

### **The Natural Beauty of Kashmir:-**

Kashmir is celebrated for its enchanting natural landscapes that have captivated wanderers throughout the ages. Its breathtaking beauty is attributed to the unparalleled charm of iconic destinations such as Dal Lake, Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and Pahalgam. Each of these places, snuggled in the heart of the Himalayas, contributes to the divine allure that defines Kashmir's enchanting appeal.

### **Dal Lake: The Dynamic Heart of Srinagar's Scenic Beauty**

Situated in Srinagar, Dal Lake holds a central position in the scenic Kashmir region. Revered as the "Lake of Flowers," the "Jewel in the crown of Kashmir," and "Srinagar's Jewel, Dal Lake is not merely a picturesque attraction; it is a dynamic hub integral to the livelihoods and leisure of those who call it home. Beyond its aesthetic significance, Dal Lake plays a vital role in the local economy and tourism industry, supporting a range of commercial activities. From fishing and water plant harvesting to providing the backdrop for iconic Shikara rides and houseboat stays, Dal Lake encapsulates the natural beauty and cultural vibrancy of the region.

### **Gulmarg: Where Nature's Poetic Masterpiece Unfolds**

Gulmarg, known as the "Meadow of Flowers," is a poetic masterpiece of nature within the PirPanjal range. Its rolling green meadows adorned with wildflowers seamlessly merge with snow-clad peaks that touch the clouds, creating an idyllic landscape. Transforming into a pristine white wonderland in winter, Gulmarg becomes a hub for winter adventure sports like snowboarding, heli-skiing, and off-piste skiing. The majestic Apharwat peak cradles Gulmarg, accessible via the world's second-highest cable car ride, the Gulmarg Gondola. With a rich history dating back to Sultan Yousuf Shah in 1579-1586 AD and favoured by Mughal emperor Jahangir, Gulmarg's cultural significance adds to its allure as a captivating destination.

### **Pahalgam and Lidder Valley: A Symphony of Natural Splendor**

Situated within the jurisdiction of Pahalgam tehsil in the Anantnag district, the Lidder Valley stands as a picturesque expanse bordered by the Kashmir Valley to the west and the Sind Valley to the north. This enchanting valley, carved by the meandering Lidder River, is surrounded by the PirPanjal Range to the south and southeast, the Sind Valley to the north, and the Zaskar Range to the northeast. It serves a vital role by providing freshwater to neighbouring districts and supporting agricultural irrigation. The Lidder River gracefully winds its way through the valley, gracing it with natural landmarks and tourist hotspots, including the charming towns of Aru, Pahalgam, Betab Valley, and Akad. Pahalgam, also known as the Valley of Shepherds, offers a blend of natural beauty and cultural richness, making it a must-visit destination. For those seeking an immersive experience in the enchanting landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir.

### **Sonmarg: Gateway to Ladakh's Serene Beauty**

Perched at an impressive altitude of 2,740 meters, Sonmarg beckons nature enthusiasts seeking a serene escape amidst the hills. Aptly named the "Meadow of Gold," Sonmarg is a gateway to Ladakh, offering visitors a canvas of verdant valleys and snow-draped peaks. From the frozen spectacle of Vishansar Lake to the adventurous trails at Thajiwas

Glacier, Sonmarg unfolds nature's beauty. As the starting point for the famed Amarnath Yatra, Sonmarg's accessibility is limited to the summer months, revealing a rich historical and geographical narrative. The Zoji La Pass, positioned about 15 km east, is one of the highest road transport passes, enriching the region's significance.

### **Nishat Bagh**

Constructed in 1634 by Mirza Abul Hasan, Nishat Bagh is one of the most remarkable Mughal gardens. Located along the Dal Lake, it spans approximately 116.70 acres. The garden boasts twelve terraces, symbolising the zodiac signs, and its trapezoidal layout aligns with the char bagh (four gardens) concept. Nishat Bagh's key feature lies in its compound terraced design, offering breathtaking views of Dal Lake and the Zabarwan mountain range. The Mughals introduced the char bagh style to India. The char bagh design draws inspiration from the four paradisiacal gardens mentioned in the Quran, symbolising the progression of the soul within Islamic mysticism :-

1. Garden of the Soul
2. Garden of the Heart
3. Garden of the Spirit
4. Garden of the Essence

### **Shalimar Bagh**

With origins dating back to the 6th century, Shalimar Bagh gained prominence during Emperor Jahangir's reign. Expanded by Shah Jahan, this garden covers approximately 594 x 250 m. Divided into Diwan-i-Aam and Diwan-i-Khas, it showcases architectural splendours like the Pink and Black Pavilion. Shalimar Bagh uniquely blends landscape and architecture, reflecting the grandeur of Mughal aesthetics.

### **Achabal Bagh**

Empress NurJahan enhanced the existing garden at Achabal, creating a trapezoidal masterpiece spread over 9.7 acres. The spring at Achabal, with its Chinar trees and cascading water channels, epitomises Mughal landscape genius. Despite its modest scale, Achabal Bagh's remote location and natural setting distinguish it from Kashmir's Mughal gardens.

### **Chashma Shahi**

Commissioned by Emperor Shah Jahan in 1632, Chashma Shahi is characterised by high terraces, cascades, and a Mughal-style gateway. Situated on three ascending terraces, the garden's unique feature lies in its narrow rills and singular fountains. Chashma Shahi's enduring appeal is best experienced during late afternoons and evenings.

### **Pari Mahal**

Built around 1650 by Prince Dara Shukoh, Pari Mahal occupies the slopes of the Zabarwan mountains. Initially a Buddhist Monastery, it was transformed into gardens for astronomical observations. Pari Mahal's domed ceilings, six terraces, and pavilions reflect a blend of Mughal and Kashmiri influences.

### **Verinag**

Constructed in 1619-20, Verinag's octagonal pavilion surrounds a spring considered as the source of the Jehlum River. Mirza Haider, under Emperor Jahangir's orders, designed this geometric marvel, showcasing the fusion of formal geometry with Kashmir's natural landscape.

These Mughal gardens exemplify the pinnacle of Mughal Garden evolution, representing exceptional beauty and offering invaluable insights into garden history during the Mughal era. Their engineering brilliance in adapting challenging topography and utilising abundant water resources showcases the Mughals' mastery in garden creation. Furthermore, the gardens' ecological richness, transforming with each season, enhances the sensory experience for visitors. The distinct mountainous settings of these Kashmiri gardens set them apart from other Mughal gardens in India. Inscription on the UNESCO List of World Heritage Sites would not only bring international recognition but also clarify the responsibilities of current stakeholders in managing and preserving these historically significant gardens.

### **Festivals and Observances**

The people of Kashmir take part in a wide variety of festivities, each of which they embrace with great zeal and happiness. J&K is home to a diverse cultural legacy, which is easily reflected in the festivals that are celebrated by the people of Kashmir. Here are some of the major festivals and observances celebrated in Kashmir:

#### **Eid-ul-Fitr**

This festival marks the end of Ramadan and is celebrated with great enthusiasm across Kashmir. People wear new clothes, exchange gifts, and prepare special dishes.

#### **Eid-ul-Adha**

This festival commemorates the willingness of Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God. It is celebrated by offering prayers, sacrificing animals, and distributing meat among family, friends, and the poor.

#### **Muharram**

This is the first month of the Islamic calendar and is marked by the commemoration of the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad. The Shia Muslim community in Kashmir observes this month with great solemnity and mourning.

#### **Navroz**

This is the Persian New Year and is celebrated by the Kashmiri Shia community. It marks the beginning of spring and is celebrated with feasting, dancing, and other festivities.

#### **Shivratri**

This festival is celebrated by Hindus across India, but it holds special significance in Kashmir, where it is celebrated as a four-day-long festival. The main day is celebrated by fasting, offering prayers, and visiting the holy shrine of Amarnath.

#### **Baisakhi**

This festival is celebrated by the Sikh community in Kashmir to mark the harvest season. It is celebrated with great enthusiasm, with people wearing colourful clothes, singing and dancing, and preparing special dishes.

These are some of the major festivals and observances celebrated in Kashmir, reflecting the cultural and religious diversity of the region.

### **Dance and Music**

Kashmir has its own style of music and dance that is both simple and great. Dance and music are a big part of almost every festival and fair, which is also a big attraction for tourists. There are many different kinds of dance and music that are used for various events. During the Hemis Festival, Mask dance is one of the most well-known types of dance. The dancers wear colourful costumes, masks on their faces, and robes made of brocade. They do dances for ceremonies. Chakri, Ladishah, Ruf dance, and Dandaras dance are also important types of dance. Some types of folk dance are Roul, Dogri, and Wuegi-Nachun. The people of Kashmir are huge fans of folk music and tap their feet on the most famous Rabab music. Most of the time, Sitar, Dukra, and Nagara are played in this music. Wanawun, Ghazals, Sufi, and Choral are some of the most popular types of music in Kashmir. They are often sung at weddings and other events.

### **Food Habits**

Kashmiri gastronomy presents an exclusive fusion of spices, flavours, and culinary methods, shaped by the geographical, climatic, and historical factors inherent to the region. This culinary medley is an amalgamation of Indian, Persian, and Central Asian influences, yielding a diverse array of dishes that boast opulent aromas and enticing tastes. The use of saffron, dried fruits, and yoghurt imparts a distinctive character to Kashmiri fare. Among the prominent delights, Rogan Josh stands out as a beloved dish a lamb-based curry meticulously prepared with a blend of spices such



as fennel, cumin, and cinnamon. This slow-cooked marvel allows the spices to permeate the meat, producing a luscious, tender, and fragrant curry that pairs best with steamed rice or naan. Equally conc, Gushtaba features minced lamb crafted into meatballs, pounded with spices, and simmered in a creamy yoghurt-based gravy. In the Muslim tradition of the region, the Wazwan multi-course feast holds profound cultural significance, serving as a cornerstone of the people's identity and customs, often gracing festive occasions as a culinary masterpiece.

Even the vegetarian spectrum of Kashmiri cuisine flourishes with culinary wonders. Dum Alon, for instance, showcases potatoes bathing in a tomato-based gravy infused with spices like ginger and cumin. Haakh, a beloved vegetarian preparation, entails greens like collard greens, spinach, or mustard greens cooked in mustard oil, enhanced with garlic and red chili. Dried fruits, a hallmark of Kashmiri cooking, including apricots, raisins, and figs, lend a subtle sweetness to dishes like biryanis, pulaos, and kebabs, resulting in distinct flavors setting them apart from other regional cuisines.

The prominence of saffron further accentuates the Kashmiri palate. Its infusion into rice-based dishes such as pulao and biryani, as well as desserts like phirni and kulfi, bestows an opulent, aromatic dimension. Reflecting the region's historical and cultural tapestry, Kashmiri cuisine harmoniously combines spices, dried fruits, and yoghurt, imbuing a singular savor that entices every palate. The inclusion of both meat-based and vegetarian options caters to a diverse range of dietary preferences. In essence, partaking in Kashmiri gastronomy is an essential endeavor for connoisseurs of cuisine and enthusiasts of cultural heritage, offering a delectable journey into the soul of the region,

### **Kashmiri Cuisine**

Our Valley is known for its delectable cuisine, which includes both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. Kashmiri cuisine is a distinct and inextricably linked part of Kashmiri culture. It includes seven to 36 mutton or beef, chicken, fruit, and vegetable dishes. Wazwan's significant ethnic meat products include kabab, tabakmaaz, aab gosh, rogan josh, nate-yakhni, rista, and goshtaba; all of these meals are made with fresh Kashmiri veggies. Desserts include Sevan, Phirni, GajarkaHalwa, and others. The enticing flavour, texture, and palatability attributes of Kashmiri wazwan ethnic meat items have made them popular. Traditional knowledge of these ethnic meat products in other dimensions, on the other hand, is not well documented. Due to the ever-increasing demand for ethnic/heritage meat products as a result of rapid urbanisation and industrialisation, significant efforts are required to accommodate such rising demands. Furthermore, due of their popularity, there is a huge possibility for them to be introduced at the national level and promoted for export.

### **Customs**

The Kashmiri people's attire is vibrant and appealing. The majority of people dress in traditional garb, and ladies accessorise with beautiful jewellery such as nose rings, bangles, earrings, necklaces, and loose salwarkamiz, which keep them cool throughout the summer. Men, on the other hand, wear kurta pyjamas, shalwars, gurabi, and skullcaps. Pheran is a winter overcoat worn by Kashmiris that is embellished with bright patches and embroidery work.

The majority of Kashmiri people's outfits are flowy gowns that vary in quality of fabric depending on the weather. The majority of the men wear headgear, and the majority of the ladies wear a skullcap. In order to show respect to strangers and elders, the majority of the women cover their heads and shoulders. The Kashmiri outfit reflects their culture and way of life. It also demonstrates that India retains its cultural values.

### **Handicrafts**

Kashmiri handicrafts are products that are made, crafted, and decorated by hand by Kashmiri people and artisans. Srinagar, Ganderbal, and Budgam are the three main districts in central Kashmir that have long produced handicrafts. The rest of the district's districts, such as Srinagar, Ganderbal, and Budgam, are well renowned for their cultural history, which extends to the handicraft sector in India's union territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmiri artistry with Palkis, bedsheets, trunks, inkstands, boxes, and spoons was well-known throughout India.

In addition, the shawl-making was amazing. Kashmiris typically manufacture a variety of handcraft products using simple things and materials. Textiles, iles, carpets and rugs, crewel needlework, phoolkari, silverware, woodwork, and papier-mâché are only a few examples.

Cultural Heritage and Historical Significance Kashmir's cultural richness and historical heritage add depth to its appeal as a tourist destination. The introduction of Mughal influence in Kashmir during the 16th century brought about significant changes, particularly in gardens (Bamzai, 1994). Before the Mughals arrived, Kashmir had seen various ruling dynasties. However, the Mughal emperors found themselves captivated by the region's sheer beauty and recognised its potential for their favourite pastime - the creation of pleasure gardens .

Even during Babur's time, there were attempts to annex Kashmir, and later, under Akbar's reign, a war with the Chak ruler led to the region becoming a Mughal province. Emperor Akbar's three visits to Kashmir solidified the Mughal connection with the valley. Subsequent emperors, including Jahangir, Shah Jahan, and Aurangzeb, made Kashmir their summer retreat.

Jahangir, in particular, considered Kashmir a paradise, fulfilling the prophecies of priests and the verses of poets. Over a century and a half, these emperors brought the splendour of the Indian court to the tranquillity of Kashmir's summers. The Mughal imprint on Kashmir goes beyond mere political influence. Their legacy endures in the form of gardens, arts, and crafts. The Mughal gardens in Kashmir, shaped significantly by Emperor Jahangir and his son Shah Jahan, are a testament to their profound love for the region .

### **Language and literature**

The language of the Kashmiri people is called Kashmiri, which is an Indo-Aryan language. It is primarily spoken in the Kashmir Valley in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir state, as well as in some parts of Pakistan and the diaspora community. Kashmiri literature has a rich tradition that dates back to ancient times. Some of the earliest known Kashmiri texts are the Nilamata Purana and the Rajatarangini, both of which were written in the Sanskrit language. However, the bulk of Kashmiri literature has been written in the Kashmiri language. Kashmiri literature is diverse and includes a wide range of genres, such as poetry, fiction, drama, and non-fiction. Some of the most famous Kashmiri poets include Lal Ded, Habba Khatoon, Arnimal, and Rasul Mir, among others. Kashmiri literature has been influenced by a range of cultures and languages, including Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit. In recent years, the political turmoil in the region has impacted the development of Kashmiri literature, with some authors facing censorship and restrictions on their work. Nonetheless, Kashmiri literature continues to thrive, and there are many talented writers and poets working to preserve and promote the language and culture of the Kashmiri people.

### **Occupation**

It is true that agriculture is a significant contributor to the economy of Kashmir. The region has a diverse agricultural base, with a variety of crops grown throughout the year. Rice, maize, mustard, cotton seed, radish, onions, gourd, lotus-stalk, linseed, and carrots are some of the popular crops grown in the region. In addition to these crops, Kashmir's climatic conditions are also suitable for growing a variety of fruits, including mulberry, grapes, plums, apples, cherries, apricots, walnuts, and almonds. The production of these fruits is an essential source of income for farmers in the region. Apart from agriculture, handicrafts, shawls, and rugs are also significant contributors to the economy of Kashmir. The region has a rich tradition of craftsmanship, and its handicrafts are in high demand both within the country and abroad. The production of these handicrafts generates substantial employment and income for the people of Kashmir. In recent years, the government has been taking steps to promote the export of agricultural products and handicrafts from the region, which has helped to boost the economy of Kashmir. However, the political situation in the region has been volatile for several decades, which has impacted the growth and development of the agricultural and handicraft sectors.

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### **Problem**

The famous heritage sites are not properly maintained and people are also not in thought of preserving these heritages at all. With the thought of government property they damage the same. so, government should take action for that act. The handicraft artisans are not paid according to their work. They are paid less to feed their family as a result the handicraft system is on the death bed. Kashmiri language is dying day by day due to western influence in the society. No attention is paid towards our mother tongue. Students are advised to speak in English or Urdu only, no mother tongue is allowed in the schools which led to its death because due to this the new generations will be unknown about their mother language. so effort is needed to make a strong focus on the kashmiri language.

### **Preservation**

The Governor has signed the Jammu and Kashmir Heritage Conservation and Preservation Act, which was enacted by the state legislature. The new act, which was enacted under Section 7, intends to ensure the conservation and preservation of tangible and intangible heritage.

The security situation has had a significant impact on the culture of the people who live in this beautiful area. The armed war has resulted in societal instability, disorganization, deterioration of physical and mental health, mass psychological distress, and cultural aggressiveness since 1989. Kashmiris, on the other hand, attempt to carry on with their lives while maintaining their traditions and personalities. Despite the difficulties of living in a war zone, as well as the impact of globalization, which has resulted in the abandonment of traditional values, particularly in urban areas, numerous efforts are being made to conserve Kashmiri practices, be they language or any other art form. Kashmiri is currently a required subject in the school curriculum, thanks to efforts to preserve the language. Parents who are pleased of their children's ability to communicate in English or Urdu are now eager to in still in them an interest in their mother tongue as well. Kashmir may rise anew as a result of this new ray of optimism.

### **Analysis**

Nestled in the northernmost region of the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir has long been revered for its breathtaking landscapes, rich cultural heritage, and historical significance. The region, often referred to as "Paradise on Earth," has been a subject of fascination for travellers, writers, and poets for centuries. However, the question that beckons in the present-day context is whether Kashmir remains a preferred tourist destination, given the complex tapestry of historical, political, and security factors that have shaped its image. Political disputes and security concerns have cast shadows over the valley, impacting its tourism industry. The journey of a potential tourist is marked not only by anticipation but also by uncertainty. This article ventures on a critical examination of the status of Kashmir as a tourist destination. It scrutinises the factors that contribute to its allure and the challenges that affect its reputation. Through a nuanced exploration of visitor experiences and a comparative analysis with other destinations, this article comprehensively responds to the question: Is Kashmir a preferred tourist destination today?.

### **III. CONCLUSION**

The cultural and traditional essence of Kashmir is intricately intertwined with the historical and geographical tapestry of the area. The inhabitants of Kashmir possess a profound cultural legacy that resonates through their distinctive rituals, practices, music, artwork, and literature. A particularly noteworthy facet of Kashmiri culture is its remarkable diversity. Within the region coexist a multitude of ethnic and religious groups, each nurturing its own set of cultural norms and traditions. The Kashmiri language, music, and culinary traditions, among others, vividly exemplify the array of cultural components that characterize Kashmir's ethos. The foundation of Kashmiri culture and tradition forms an inseparable thread within the fabric of the region's identity and heritage. The tenacity and multiplicity of the Kashmiri populace have facilitated the safeguarding of their cultural legacy in spite of the adversities they have encountered. The



distinctive cultural facets unique to Kashmir stand as a testament to the region's vibrant past, as well as to the imaginative spirit and resourcefulness of its inhabitants.

As Emperor Jahangir rightly said about my homeland:-

"If there's a paradise on Earth  
It is this, it is this, it is this."

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