

# **Kashmiri:**

*A Guide into  
Language and Culture*



**India**

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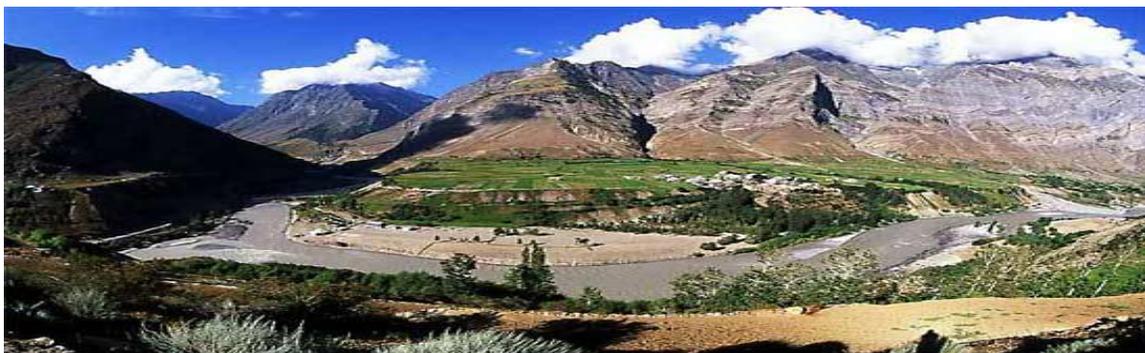
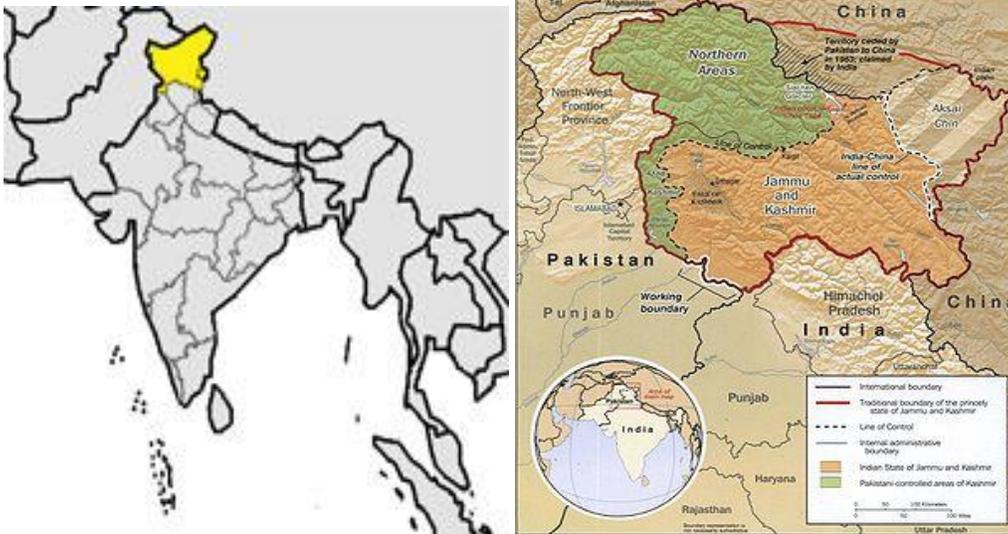
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## Demographics of Kashmiri

### *State*

- -Kashmiri is spoken in the northwest regions of India primarily the administered state of Jammu and Kashmir.
- -Jammu and Kashmir consists 3 district regions called Kashmir Valley, Jammu, and Ladakh.
- -Jammu & Kashmir is surrounded by Pakistani-administered provinces the Northern Areas and Azad Kashmir, and the Chinese-administered region of Aksai Chin. -According to the 2001 Census of India reports that the population of Jammu and Kashmir is over 10 million people.

\*Information taken from-[http://india.gov.in/knowindia/st\\_jammukashmir.php](http://india.gov.in/knowindia/st_jammukashmir.php)



\*Photos taken from Google Images

## Language

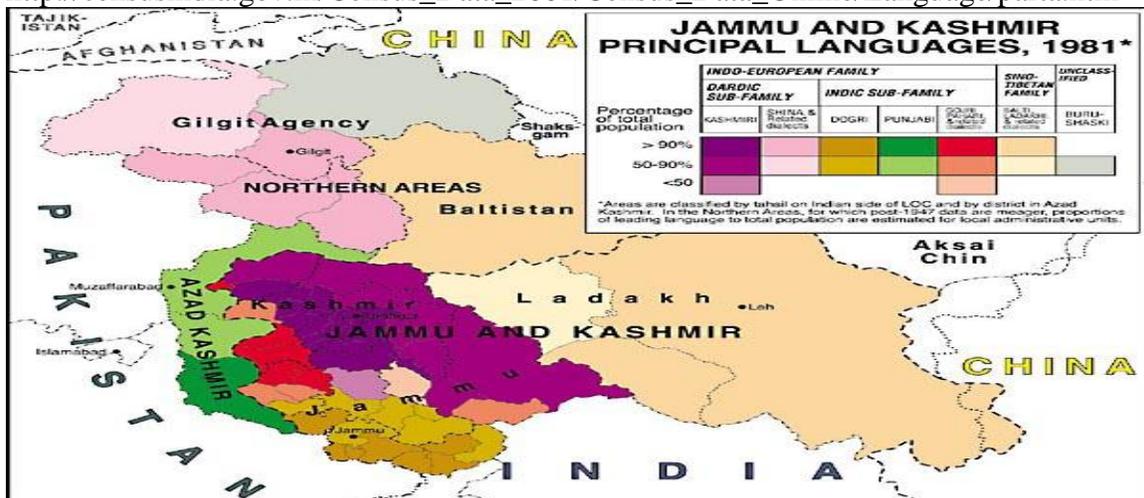
- Kashmiri is one of 22 national languages in India.
- Approximately, over 5 million speakers in the northern regions of India.
- It is primarily spoken in the valley of Kashmir in the administered state of Jammu and Kashmir, where it is the official language.
- 105,000 immigrants also speak the language in Pakistan from the Kashmir Valley.
- Speakers of Kashmiri also speak Hindi, English, and Urdu as a second language.

\* Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris

### 2001 Census Data on Kashmiri

<i>India State/Union Territory</i>	<i>Persons</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
1. Jammu & Kashmir	5,425,733	2,804,306	2,621,427
2. Himachal Pradesh	50,192	26,695	23,497
3. Delhi	21,325	11,204	10,121
4. Maharashtra	5,344	2,902	2,442
5. Uttaranchal	4,175	2,261	1,914

[http://censusindia.gov.in/Census\\_Data\\_2001/Census\\_Data\\_Online/Language/parta.htm](http://censusindia.gov.in/Census_Data_2001/Census_Data_Online/Language/parta.htm)



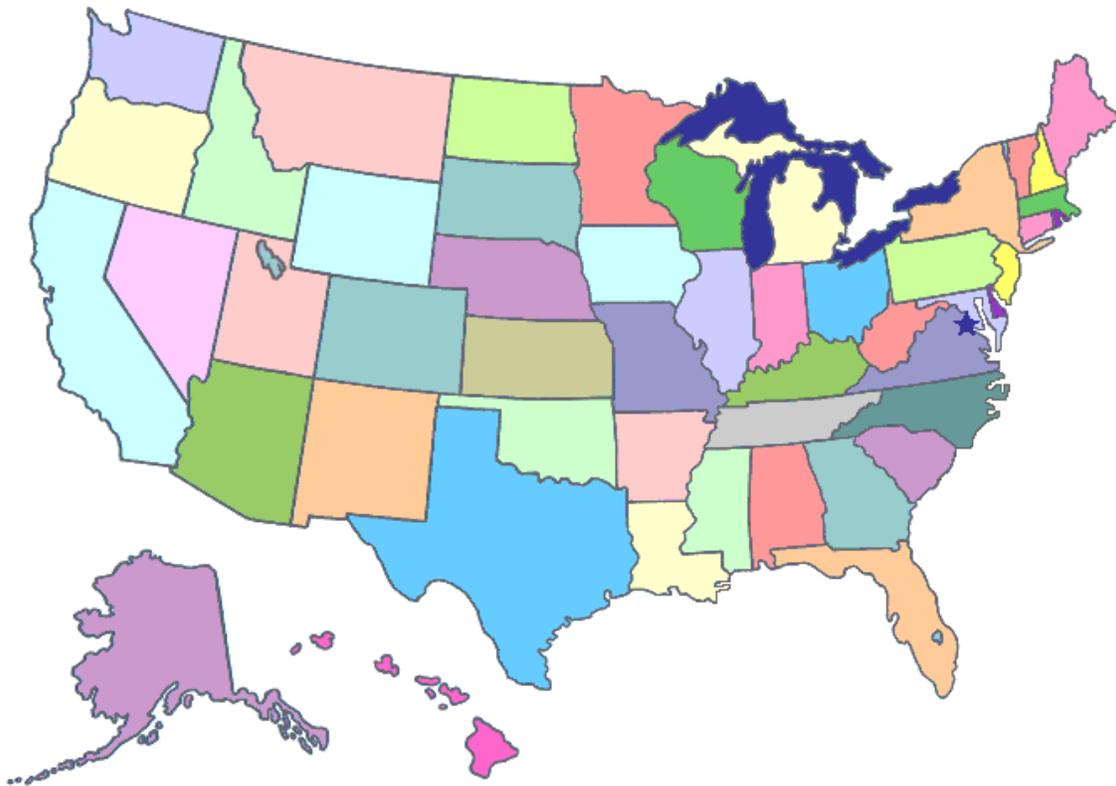
\*Photo taken from Google Images

## *Kashmiri and the United States*

- According to the U.S Census Bureau, the number of persons speaking another language other than English in the home during 2006-2008 was over 55 million people.
- Of those only 833 people in the United States speak Kashmiri.

<b>U.S Census 2006-2008</b>	Number of Speakers	Spoke English less than “Very Well”
Kashmiri	833	202

\*United States Census Bureau



## The Kashmir Dispute

- Since 1846, Jammu and Kashmir, had been ruled by Dogra Hindu; however, most of the people within the state were predominately Muslim.
  - Since the early 1930s, these Muslims were fighting/arguing against the insensitivity and heavy taxation caused by the ruler.
  - Muslims from all over the region revolted against him and the Indian ruler retaliated with brutal force against them, hence, causing violence.
- In light of this violence, the Indian ruler and his family sought military assistance from India.
  - India agreed to help if only they would make the state part of their country.
- In 1947, a major conflict between Pakistan (Muslims) and India (Hindus) took place within the regions of Jammu and Kashmir.
  - Causing numerous of violence and death.
- Its eventual accession to India became a **matter of dispute** between the two countries, with both India and Pakistan claiming ownership of Kashmir.
- After a brief war in 1947-48, Kashmir was divided between Pakistan and India administered territories. A ceasefire line was agreed under UN supervision, which has since been renamed the 'Line of Control'.
  - Around one third of the territory has since been administered by Pakistan, with the remainder administered by India, including Kashmir Valley, which has a strong Muslim majority.
- Further wars have broken out between India and Pakistan in Kashmir in 1965 and 1999, whilst there is also a Kashmir separatist movement.
  - Kashmir people have been fighting for independence, peace, and overall freedom from the riot – consequently, causing more problems.
- Given the apparently conflicting territorial claims in Kashmir, there is no immediate end in sight to this conflict.
- In this difficult context, local peace builders work to diffuse tensions.
- Since then, the conflict still continues in the regions of Jammu and Kashmir.
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=As2xZrqfbT4>

\*The above information obtained from: <http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/basicfacts/basics.html>

## The Kashmir Dispute



Photo obtained from: <http://www.meramirpur.com/are-mirpuri-punjabi-or-kashmiri.html>

### Possible Solutions to Kashmir Conflict:

- Leaving the divided regions intact without any further damage.
- Kashmir's accession to Pakistan
- India and Pakistan granting independence to disputed areas under their control and let Jammu and Kashmir become a neutral country.

## Language History and Linguistic Community

- Kashmiri, also known as Koshur is a Dardic language, a linguistic sub-grouping belonging to the Indo-Aryan Language Family which is also a subfamily of the Indo-European language family.
- The main dialect of Kashmiri is Kishtwari.
- It is spoken in the Koshtawar valley in southeast Kashmir.
- Poguli is the second most prominent regional dialect of the language and is spoken in the Pogul and Paristan valleys.
- Other key dialects are Rambani and Siraji.

Above information taken from:

<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=198&menu=004>



\*Photos taken from Google Images

## Language Variation

The four dialects of Kishtwari, Poguli, Rambani, and Siraji:

- Both Rambani and Siraji do not share typical linguistic characteristics of standard Kashmiri, the two are closely related dialects which share more features of Dogri (Indo-Aryan language).
- Both Kishtwari and Poguli have a high degree of mutual intelligibility.
- Poguli shares 70% of its vocabulary with Kishtwari Kashmiri.
- Along with regional dialects, Kashmiri has social differences in dialects: Hindu Kashmiri and Muslim Kashmiri.
- They both differ from the standard Kashmiri in regard to vocabulary, phonology, and small grammatical properties.

Information obtained from:

<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=198&menu=004>

## Orthographic Differences

- Kashmiri is one of the Dardic languages that uses its own writing system.
- The main writing system is a modified Persio-Arabic alphabet.

Information obtained from:

<http://www.lmp.ucla.edu/Profile.aspx?LangID=198&menu=004>

### Kashmiri Consonants

ذ	ڈ	د	خ	ح	چ	ج	ث	ٹ	ت	پ	ب
[z]	[d̪]	[d]	[kʰ]	[h]	[t͡ʃ]	[d͡ʒ]	[s]	[t̪]	[t]	[p]	[b]
ع	ظ	ط	ض	ص	ش	س	ژ	ز	ر	ر	ر
[ʔ, ø]	[z]	[t̪]	[z]	[s]	[ʃ]	[s]	[t͡ʃ]	[z]	[r]	[r]	[r]
ے	ہ	و	ن	م	ل	گ	ک	ق	ف	غ	غ
[j]	[h, e]	[w]	[n]	[m]	[l]	[g]	[k]	[q]	[f, pʰ]	[g]	[g]

Picture obtained from: <http://www.omniglot.com/writing/kashmiri.htm>

## Linguistic Features

### Phonological Characteristics

#### Transcription

<i>Vowels</i>	Front Unrounded	Central	Back Rounded			
High	i i:	ɨ ɛ:	u u:			
Mid	e e:	ə ə:	o o:			
Low		a a:	ɔ ɔ:			
<i>Consonants</i>	B.	D.	R.	P.	V.	G
Stops:						
VL unasp	p	t	ʈ		k	
VL asp	ph	th	ʈh		kh	
Vd. Unasp.	b	d	ɖ		g	
Affricates:						
VL unasp.		ts		c		
VL asp.		tsh		ch		
Vd. Unasp.				j		
Nasals:	m	n				
Fricatives: VI.		s		sh		h
Vd.		z				
Lateral:		l				
Trill:			r			
Semi-vowels		v			y	

The above chart was obtained from: <http://www.koshur.org/Kashmiri/transcription.html>

### *Vowels:*

- Kashmiri vowel have front, central and back vowels.
- All nasals are nasalized.
- The high and mid central vowels in Kashmiri are not found in any other Indian languages
- Unrounded back vowels have developed and are not common in other Indo-Aryan languages.

### *Consonants:*

- Kashmiri consonants consist of stops, affricates, nasals, fricatives, lateral /l/, trill /r/ and semi-vowels /v,y/
- Kashmiri does not have voiced aspirated stops.
- Palatalization is an important feature of Kashmiri.
- All consonants except palatals can palatalized.

## **Morphological Characteristics**

### *Nouns:*

- Nouns are declined for number, gender, and case
- There are four cases: direct or nominative and three oblique cases- dative, ergative, and an ablative.
- Different case markers are added to the nouns in oblique cases.
- Various postpositions govern two different oblique cases: dative and ablative.

All the above information was obtained by: <http://www.koausa.org/Vitasta/6a.html>

### *Pronouns:*

- *Pronouns are declined for person, number, gender, and case*
- There is a three-term distinction in the demonstrative pronouns:
  - (1) proximate
  - (2) remote (within sight)
  - (3) remote (out of sight).
- Pronominal suffixes are very frequently suffixed to finite verbal forms to indicate personal pronouns.
- The usage of pronominal suffixes is optional in the case of first and third person but their use is obligatory in the second person.

### *Adjectives:*

- There are two types of adjectives: declinable and indeclinable.
- Declinable- declined for gender, number, and case.
- Indeclinable- do not decline for number and gender.

### *Verbs:*

- Inflected for person, number, gender, and tense.
- All verbs are conjugated and can be classified in different sets according to the sentence patterns.
- All but seven verb roots end in consonant.

All the above information was obtained by: <http://www.koausa.org/Vitasta/6a.html>

## *Syntax*

- The word order in Kashmiri is different from other languages in Jammu and Kashmir
- The unmarked word order is:
  - SOV – found in conditional, alternative questions, nonfinite and relative clauses
  - SVO – in all other clauses (e.g. declaratives, imperatives, yes-no questions, finite subordinates, etc.) – except interrogatives

## *Pragmatics*

- Greetings in Kashmiri fall within two categories
  - Closed greetings are those which have only one fixed response
  - Open greetings may have more than one response
- Greetings phrases are mostly related to queries about one's health, well-being, happiness, and longevity of life. The replies from elders take the form of blessings.
- Verbal greetings are the same for different times of the day
  - No special phrases referring to morning, evening, etc.

\*The above information was obtained from:  
<http://iils.org/pdf/ModernKashmiriGrammar.pdf>

## Social Aspects:

### *Religion*

- The people of Jammu and Kashmir are divided into three different religious groups: Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism.
- Over three quarters of the population of Jammu and Kashmir are Muslim.

Information above obtained from: Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris

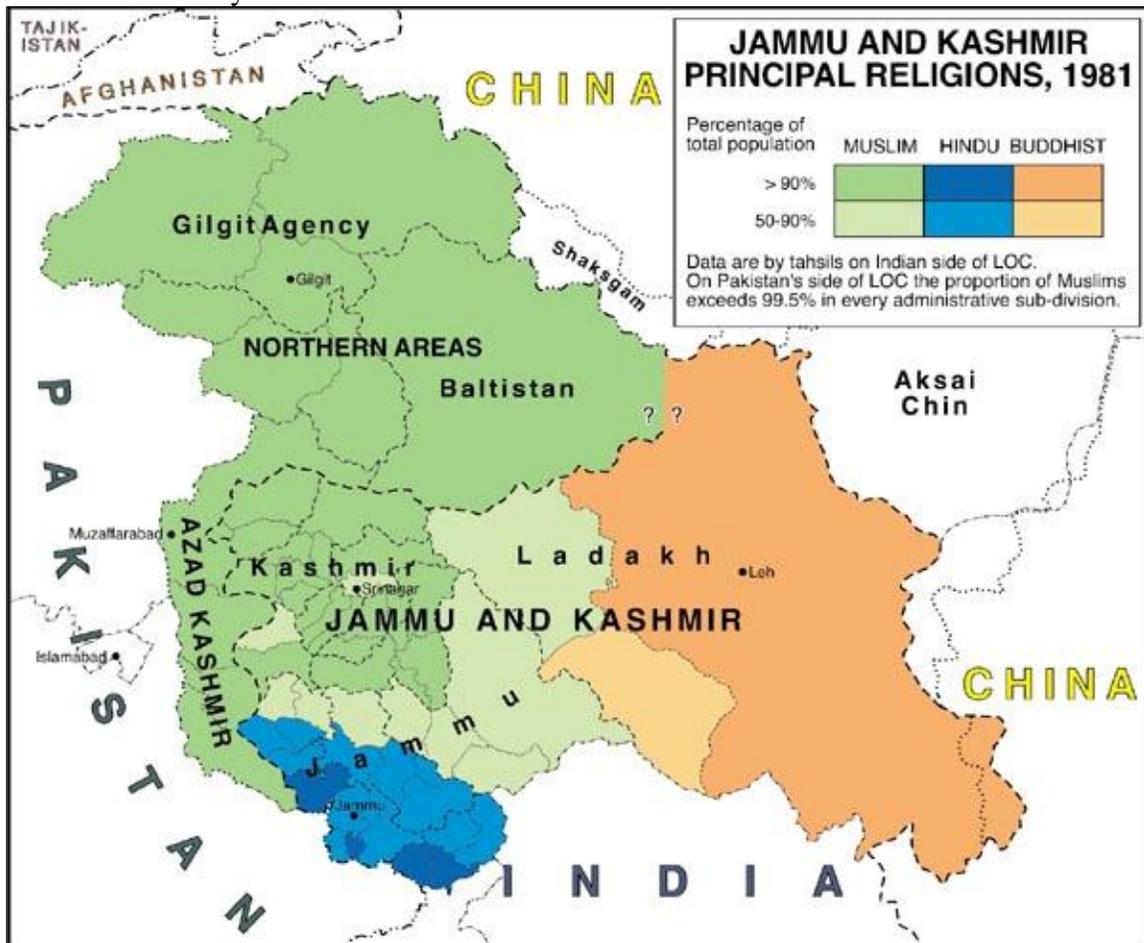


Photo above obtained from:

<http://www.kashmirstudygroup.net/awayforward/mapsexplan/religions.html>

## ***Major Religious Holidays***

- All major festivals celebrated by the Kashmiri people are mixed between Islamic, Hindu, and Sikh people from the region.
- A popular Hindu festival is Navaratra (New Years Day), which is celebrated on the first day of the New Moon in March/April. It begins with the invocation of Laskshmi, the goddess of wealth who seeks the blessing of the goddess for moral and material development of the family.
- The Urs is another popular Kashmiri festival that is held annually at the shrines of Muslim saints on the anniversaries of their death.

Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris



Navaratra



Urs

\*The above images were obtained from Google Images.

## *Kashmiri Cuisine*

- Kashmiri people eat variations of both vegetarian and non-vegetarian food.
- Kashmiri food normally consists of a few signature dishes such as: boiled potatoes with heavy amounts of spice (dum aloo), solid cottage cheese (tzaman), spicy lamb curry (rogan josh), and rice.

Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris

### Vegetarian Cuisine



Nadeir yakhean – Lotus Stem



Dama Oluv- Potatoes

### Non-Vegetarian Cuisine



Rogan Josh- Lamb Curry



Chamani Qaliya

All above photos obtained from Google Images

## *Desserts*



Shufta



Phirni

## *Drinks*

- Kashmiri's are not heavy drinkers of alcohol but are drinkers of tea.
- Some popular tea drinks are Nun Chai and Kahwah.



Nun Chai

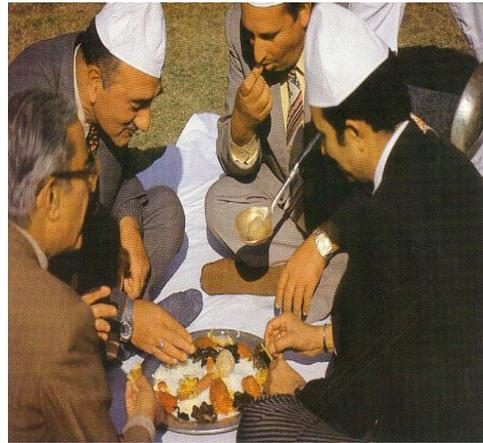
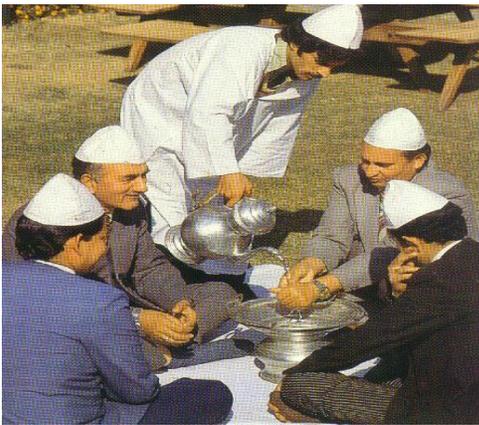


Kahwah

All the above images were obtained from Google Images.

## *Wazwan*

- Many people of Kashmir participate in the formal meal called Wazwan.
- It is a ritual serving of food that turns out to be more like a ceremony for weddings and parties.
- The ceremony takes days of planning and hours are spent cooking. As many courses of food are given to guests.
- Table settings are placed on the floor for groups of 4 where the main dishes are served.
- First the Tash-t-Nari is passed around for guests to wash their hands. The last meal is the Gushtaba and one that is never refused by guests.
- A dessert Phirni and a cup of Kahwah tea is also served during Wazwan.



All the above information and pictures were obtained from:  
<http://www.koausa.org/Cookbook/wazwan.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYQh7EwDa8c&feature=related>

## *Clothing*

- Three different cultural backgrounds influence the clothing and costume styles of Jammu and Kashmir.
- There is not much difference in clothing being men and women.
- They both wear what is called *phiran*, which is a gown that is made of wool during the winter months and cotton during the summer months.
- Muslim and Pandit men wear the gowns differently.

Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris

- Hindu women's often wear head dresses called *taranga*

The above information was obtained from:

[http://www.indianetzone.com/2/costumes\\_kashmir.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/2/costumes_kashmir.htm)

- However, modern western have become increasingly popular in urban areas and amongst the young.

Information taken from Worldmark Encyclopedia of Cultures and Daily Life-Kashmiris



<http://www.kashmirhub.com/kashmir-culture/clothing.html>

[http://www.indianetzone.com/2/costumes\\_kashmir.htm](http://www.indianetzone.com/2/costumes_kashmir.htm)

## *Music and Dance*

- Ruf Dance
  - Most famous dance forms practiced
  - Performed as a welcoming dance for the spring season
  - The dance is clearly inspired by bee and it is the lovemaking of the bee that is portrayed in the dance.
  - 2 – 4 groups are formed consisting of 2 -3 women; they stand facing each other and hold the hand of the adjacent partner.
  - The song used is in a form of a question and answer from where one group questions the other in a rhythmic way.
- Bachha Nagma Dance
  - Means “adolescent melodious voice.”
  - Famous in marriage ceremonies and/or any cultural event
  - Dance is performed only by men – attire resembles with the dress that is worn by the dancers
  - Dance group has 6 – 7 members consisting of one lead singer.
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9tilLKHUads>
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Cgmzo1sL2CA>
- Dandaras Dance
  - Highly professional dance that requires high levels of skills and practice.
  - A model of peacock is made of bamboos and colored paper is carried by each group
  - Every member has a stick in their hand
  - During the dance, the performers hit the stick carried by the other person in different postures.

\*The above information was obtained from: <http://www.kashmir-tourism.org/jammu-kashmir-information/music-dance.html>

## ***Television Programs***

- Cooking shows, talk shows, drama/soap operas, and music channels
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fj4qoUNq9ho>

\*The above information was obtained from: <http://www.hamarakashmir.com/index.php>

## ***Festivals***

- Snow Festival
  - Held around Christmas
  - Winter games: alpine, snow boarding, ice hockey, and cross country events
  - Local artists perform cultural shows
  - Whole resort wears a festive look
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yh42KUEenSI>
- Saffron Festival
  - Held in October when saffron is in full bloom.
  - Offers an opportunity to see the intricate harvesting of saffron in the colorful fields, especially during moonlit nights
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dRDRLDI7n2g>

\*the above information was obtained from: <http://www.jktourism.org/inside.aspx?id=79>

## **Social Etiquette**

- Since Kashmiri practice three different faiths, social etiquette should be taken into considerations when socializing with Kashmiri people.
- Here is a list of norms to be sensitive to throughout India and people who speak Kashmiri:

### **India Meeting Etiquette:**

- Religion, education and social class all influence greetings in India.
- Greet the eldest or most senior person first.
- When leaving a group, each person must be bid farewell individually.
- Shaking hands is common.
- Men shake hands with men and women shake hands with women. However, religious diversity can determine handshakes. If uncertain wait for them to initiate.

### **Gift Giving:**

- People of India entertain in their homes, restaurants, private clubs, etc.
- Indians are not always punctual but expect foreigners to arrive on time.
- Take off shoes before entering the house.
- Dress modestly and conservatively
- Politely turn down the first offer of tea, coffee, or snacks.

### **Food:**

- Hindus do not eat beef and many are vegetarians.
- Muslims do not eat pork or drink alcohol.
- Sikhs do not eat beef.
- Lamb, chicken, and fish are commonly served as main courses for non-vegetarians.

Above information was obtained from:

<http://www.kwintessential.co.uk/resources/global-etiquette/india-country-profile.html>

## **SLPs with Target Language**

Indian Speech-Language-Hearing Association

<http://ishaindia.org.in/index.htm>

Meenakshi Speech & Hearing Clinics

<http://speechhearingaid.com/speechhearingaid/home.html>

## **Resources**

### Websites

1. Jammu and Kashmir, official website, department of tourism; government of Jammu & Kashmir -  
<http://www.jktourism.org/>
2. Jammu and Kashmir – the complete knowledge base  
<http://www.jammu-kashmir.com/basicfacts/basics.html>
3. Koshor: An Introduction to Spoken Kashmiri  
<http://www.koshur.org/index.html>
4. Koshor Music  
<http://www.koshur.org/music/index.html>
5. University of Kashmir  
<http://www.kashmiruniversity.net/>
6. Linguistic Features  
<http://iils.org/pdf/ModernKashmiriGrammar.pdf>