Artha – Journal of Social Sciences
2026, Vol. 25, No. 2, *1-22*
ISSN 0975-329X/https://doi.org/10.12724/ajss.77.1

Narratives of Identity: Folk Consciousness and Cultural Formation in Kashmir

Nakuleswar Mukherjee*

Abstract

The socio-cultural past of the Valley of Kashmir includes folklore, folklore stories, oral history, and mixed-religion customs. Folklore has a function beyond mere entertainment in Kashmir; it provides social norms, environmental consciousness, and historical consciousness through symbolic frameworks. This article analyses in detail the role of folklore, legends, and other supernatural beliefs in forming Kashmiri social identity and sustaining Kashmiri culture. It also tries to identify where these traditions fit within larger theories of folklore, oral history, and sacred history developed by Western scholars. The methodological approach utilised in this study is qualitative and interpretive, based on textual analysis of folklore literature, historical records, and secondary scholarly literature. In addition, the study examines continual narrative themes, symbolic motifs, and the presence of syncretic religious features that distinguish Kashmiri folklore traditions. The results of this study suggest that Kashmiri folklore does not represent vestiges of a pre-modern cultural matrix, but rather the centre of cultural memory, social identity, and the capacity of this society to be resilient. Furthermore, Kashmiri folklore mediates relationships between religion and society, the views of great saints such as Lal Ded and Nur-ud-Din Wali on humankind, and everyday life in the valley.

Keywords: Syncretic Culture, Folktales, Sufis of Kashmir, Folklore of Kashmir, Legends of Kashmir.

Introduction

Culture is a dynamic, evolving human practice without fixed milestones. Culture refers to the various social practices, institutions, and classification systems through which individuals in a society are taught specific values, beliefs, skills, daily routines, and behavioural norms (Bennett, 1998, p. 28). In Kashmir Valley, it reflects the values of the inhabitants of the region.

* Department of History (UG & PG), Fakir Chand College, Diamond Harbour, South 24 Parganas, West Bengal, India; nakul.mu@gmail.com

Kashmiri culture has evolved through Hindu tolerance, Buddhist harmony, and Islamic ethos. Although Kashmir's history, geography, and religious diversity are complex, Hindus and Muslims have coexisted peacefully since the 13th century, when Islam became a dominant faith in the region (Kaw, 2004). Culture can be described as the concrete framework of activities, symbols, speech, and traditions that shape the daily life of a particular community. The Rishi culture of Kashmiri Hindus and the Sufi lifestyle of Kashmiri Muslims coexisted and enriched one another, shaping a distinct cultural identity in the region (Raina, 2004). Barker claims that the growth of human ethos and biology has evolved and is interconnected. Naturally, the time frames associated with human cultural change and evolutionary adaptations differ significantly. Evolutionary changes occur over vast periods, whereas cultural changes are more readily measured in decades (Barker, 2002, p. 203). If the theories of cultural assimilation are applied to Kashmir, we can observe that a mass society has developed, which continues to bear the symbols of a truly syncretistic culture.

The evolution of Kashmiri culture can be traced through folktales, lore, legends, and beliefs. The concept of "habitus" is defined as the way culture shapes repeated action in the present, structured by an individual's past position in their social structure (Bronner, 2019). Traditional and socio-psychological imperatives driven by long-term practical action by one or more groups form a framework of human lifestyles and behaviours into which traditions and folklore can be freely assimilated and localised, giving rise to an alternative culture of that population. Anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss developed a structuralist approach to the study of folklore. He applied this method to the analysis of folklore, kinship, and visual art. Lévi-Strauss (1978) argued that the perceived divide between folklore and history can be bridged by viewing history as an extension of folklore, rather than something entirely separate (p. 18). This paper investigates the differing approaches of vernacular traditions and Western scholarship toward folklore narratives such as miracles and legends, assessing their contributions to the reconstruction of Kashmir's socio-cultural heritage in a global context.

Conceptual Framework

I conceptualise identity as a dynamic and socially constructed process rather than a fixed or essential attribute. It emerges through systems of representation, shared meanings, and collective memory that enable individuals to situate themselves within a broader cultural framework (Hall, 1996, p. 4). Rather than being inherited, identity is continuously produced through cultural practices that connect individuals to a shared past while shaping their understanding of the present. This perspective is particularly relevant in culturally layered contexts, where multiple traditions and belief systems interact to produce complex forms of belonging. Closely linked

to this is the concept of folk consciousness, understood as the collectively internalised framework of beliefs, values, and interpretive systems embedded in oral traditions and everyday practices. It functions as a cultural logic through which communities interpret their environment, organise knowledge, and sustain continuity across generations (Bronner, 2019, p. 12). As a lived and evolving form of knowledge, folk consciousness enables communities to maintain coherence as they adapt to changing historical conditions, thereby reinforcing a shared sense of belonging.

Folklore operates as the key mediating force between identity and folk consciousness. Anthropological approaches emphasise that folklore is not merely a body of narratives but a social institution that legitimises norms, reinforces values, and provides frameworks for interpreting both natural and social realities (Malinowski, 1944, p. 160; Bascom, 1965, p. 292). Through the repetition and transmission of folklore, legends, and oral traditions, folklore converts individual experiences into collectively shared meanings. These narratives encode symbolic patterns and cultural memories that enable communities to interpret their past and articulate their identity in relation to it. Moreover, folklore functions as a dynamic epistemic system that structures the production and transmission of cultural knowledge. Through processes of narration and reinterpretation, it continually reshapes collective memory and reinforces social cohesion. In this sense, identity emerges through narrative practice, while folk consciousness provides the interpretive framework that sustains it. Folklore, therefore, is not merely reflective of culture but constitutive of it, playing a central role in cultural formation and the ongoing negotiation of collective identity.

Interpretations of Kashmiri Folk Traditions

In anthropological terms, a tribe means the 'original inhabitants' of a given geographical area. The main idea is that anthropologists gather information about the inhabitants through folklore, stories, legends, and similar sources. They collect this information from fieldwork. As a result, folklore is considered universal, as every society has its own unique stories about its origins and development. The investigation of folklore originated in the early nineteenth century and progressively developed into a distinct and acknowledged discipline within anthropology by the latter half of the century. It is interesting to note that anthropologists and folklorists had different ideas about how to study folklore. There are two main perspectives on the study of folklore: the humanist perspective, which sees it as a creative process linked to the arts of music, drama, and literature and the other perspective, which views folklore as an integral part of society, within the context of culture, linguistics, proverbs, and tales (Bascom, 1953, p. 283).

Sociologists and anthropologists have noted that interactions between cultures can lead to long-term social cohesion, as diverse ethnic groups — both majority and minority — gradually adjust to shared values and goals (Gordon, 1964, pp. 84–114). Some folklorists consider an ethnic group a traditional social unit, holding that cultural forms express the group's "cultural values" and contribute to its distinctive unity. Many folklorists emphasise the social basis of folklore, while another group considers it the traditional embodiment of the collective ideas and values of a particular group (Stern, 1977, p. 10). Most folklore studies examine how groups and their folklore evolve due to "cultural contact." The primary unit of analysis is the culture of a specific group, which is defined by the unique combination of characteristics that distinguish it. The processes of acculturation and assimilation — though often difficult for folklorists to clearly differentiate — are considered to take place within the context of the "group" and its "culture." Kroeber (1923) explained that acculturation refers to the cultural changes that occur when two societies interact, often leading to increased similarity. In some cases, this can result in one culture being completely absorbed by another, though various forces may help maintain their distinctiveness. When many traits are exchanged between groups, the process is generally recognised as acculturation (p. 233).

Kashmiri folk traditions have been approached from different viewpoints, as highlighted above. Lalita Handoo analyses Kashmiri folktales using V. J. Propp's morphological structural approach. She sets the stage for her folklore analysis by outlining Kashmir's historical and geographical context, describing its diverse ethnic groups, linguistic connections, socio-cultural conditions, and various religions (Handoo, 1997). Folklore has contributed to the processes of identifying Kashmiri culture and to the development of syncretism and has shaped the current culture of Kashmir. Handoo (1997) explains that Kashmiri folktales, being oral traditions, are easily spread and shared, making them susceptible to influences that lead to cultural blending and the shaping of group identities (p. 15). Zutshi (2014) emphasises that historical writing in Kashmir served not only as a means of recording events but also as a tool through which individuals could reinterpret the past and the narrative tradition itself to serve contemporary purposes and validate their claims. Revisionist historian Subhash Kak has highlighted Kashmir's famous storytelling tradition through the short stories of the *Panchatantra*, *Kathasaritsagar*, and *Yogavasishtha* (Kak, 2024). These are of immense importance in discussing Kashmiri society and culture.

Historians have always been drawn to Kashmir's compelling history, rich with folklore, legends, and extraordinary events. Sufi (1974), Khan (1994), Singh (2000), Hassnain (2002), Fazili (2002), Wani (2004), and other historians have extensively used Kashmiri legendary sources in their writings. There are multiple questions about the truthfulness of folklore and

legendary sources. However, various historians successfully reconstruct the historical truth from folklore and legendary sources. Prof. Fazili, a renowned social scientist from Kashmir, examined the theoretical frameworks of world and Kashmiri folklore. He notes the following. "In our world full of fear, loneliness and alienation, folklore can console us with stories of a more heroic, more chivalrous time to sustain us. We all live in the present context also, only virtue of our folklores" (Fazili, 2012, p.14). M. M. Shah examines the miraculous facts of medieval Kashmiri Saints, Sufis, and Rishis from a wider angle. According to him, "most of these miraculous stories happen in the psychical realm and spirituality primarily concerned with the spiritual realm" (Shah, 2011). Historians should not feel uneasy about engaging with hagiographies or miracle narratives; instead, they ought to expand their interpretive approaches to thoughtfully include and respectfully analyse such accounts.

Folklore plays a significant role in shaping world culture. They create an imaginary world where people live metaphorically. Despite the different perspectives on folklore, they are an essential part of social life, reflecting human tradition. According to the classical anthropologist E. B. Tylor, folklore and science are contradictory. Tylor (1871) categorised folklore as a component of religion and placed both religion and science under the broader domain of philosophy. He argued that primitive philosophy was essentially identical to primitive religion, while primitive science did not yet exist. Modern philosophy, unlike earlier traditions, tends to separate the domains of religion and science. According to Tylor, indigenous religion served as the counterpart to contemporary science because both sought to explain the physical world. However, religious explanations are subjective and rooted in belief, whereas scientific explanations are objective and impersonal. However, the explanations are ultimately incompatible, as both offer direct accounts of the same phenomena. In religious explanation, God does not act behind or through impersonal forces; rather, He is the direct cause of those forces (Tylor, 1871). Therefore, religious explanations can never be imposed on scientific explanations.

In the nineteenth century, E. B. Tylor argued that "folklore is explicable solely in terms of animism." Andrew Lang and Sir James Frazer built upon Tylor's concept of animism by incorporating ideas of magic and totemism as additional explanatory theories (Scarborough, 2004, p. 16). Malinowski examines some primitive cultures and defines Folklore as a component of a specific culture that supports, legitimises, and governs the foundational aspects of institutions, values, laws, and morals (Malinowski, 1944, p. 160). Indeed, many different folklores are related to the most important aspects of human life, but these are particularly connected to the dominion of aggression (Lubbe, 1986). Campbell (1993) suggested that legendary fantasies are considered primitive ideas, although they can also be viewed

through historical-ethnic perspectives, referred to as 'racial concepts' or 'popular ideas.' Lluís Duch (2002) emphasises that legends are pervasive and must be continually reinterpreted in light of new variables that emerge in individuals' lives and their communities. This aspect is particularly relevant in the context of Kashmiri culture, where folklore and legends are not static but fluid, adapting to the shifting social and political landscapes over time. The interplay of folklore and community life creates a rich tapestry that reflects the values and beliefs of the people, shedding light on the intricate dimensions of life in the Kashmir Valley.

Eurocentric Paradigms in Folklore Studies

As soon as William Thomas coined the term "folklore" in the mid-nineteenth century, a debate emerged over its definition. After Edward Leech's 'knowledge of unsophisticated people,' Martland's 'psychological phenomenon of uncivilised,' Boswell's interpretation is marked as more important. Boswell (1969) characterised oral tradition as the collective memory of ancient communities, transmitted across generations through spoken language and customary practices rather than written records. According to Balys (1996), folklore encompasses the inherited creative expressions of both early and advanced societies. These expressions, often conveyed through spoken or poetic language, include beliefs, superstitions, customs, performances, dances, and theatrical traditions. Balys emphasises that folklore should not be viewed as a scientific study of people, but rather as a body of traditional knowledge and poetic expression (p. 15). Sims and Stephens (2005) explain that folklore is not limited to any one setting — it exists in urban, suburban, and rural communities, and can be found within families, workplaces, and social groups. It emerges through informal means of expression, including spoken and written language, rituals and customs, and tangible objects. Folklore reflects cultural values, beliefs, and shared ways of life. It plays a role in creative expression and in shaping how people understand themselves and the world around them. They also argue that it is practically impossible to express folklore succinctly, as it cannot be limited to folk tales, folk songs, and legends. Not only that, but folklore is also inextricably linked with folklore.

It can be said that folklore is a very ancient body of stories featuring a superhuman existence. The concept of 'folklore' emerged around 3000 BCE. The term "folklore" originates from the Greek word *folklore*, meaning "a narrative or tale." The idea of folklore gained prominence when the Greek philosopher Plato idealised it in his book *The Republic*. Aristotle also employed the term folklore. For the ancient Greeks, folklore served as a primary guide in matters of the spirit. Through folklore narratives, they explored ethical behaviour, ideals of noble character, the principle of moderation, and the perils of excessive pride. These stories also shaped their understanding of

identity, cultural values, and political life (Vernant, 1980). Although folklore conveyed clear messages, these messages often stood alone, unconnected to historical context or chronological sequence.

In the nineteenth century, folklore was primarily understood as a body of texts. Sigmund Freud held a negative view of folklore and rituals, considering them merely crutches for the weak (Doty, 2004, pp. 105-108). In contrast, sociologist Émile Durkheim emphasised how societies create models of the divine that reflect their most significant values at any given time (Doty, 2004, pp. 105-108). According to Spencer (1921), folklore can be understood as early human efforts to interpret their relationship with the universe through narratives involving gods or supernatural beings. These stories, often rooted in primitive thought, hold significant religious meaning for those who share them. Additionally, folklore may have developed to explain social structures, customs, or unique aspects of the surrounding environment (pp. 11–12). Folklore and history are closely connected, as both aim to explain the origins of the present by narrating the past. McNeill (1986) explained that what we possess is not pure history but folklore-history — a narrative tool that guides human communities in their interactions with one another and with nature (p. 10). According to Barthes (1991), folklore should be understood not by its content but by the manner in which its message is conveyed; while folklore follows certain formal patterns, its subject matter is limitless (p. 107). Traditions also serve historical and social functions and discuss the origins and evolution of various societies. Ancient Greek, Roman, Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Chinese, and Indian folklore are found in almost every country in the world. There is scientific scepticism about folk theories. Levi Strauss stresses the choice of society's involvement, which affects local social structure.

Folklore and rituals have become intertwined with religious systems and are often incorporated into ceremonies that feature music, dance, and magic. One key function of folklore is to legitimise the existing social structure and explain its customs and practices. A recurring theme in these stories is the belief that they mirror the interactions between gods and worldly events. In this context, the *Puranas* illustrate divine occurrences and societal changes. The Minneapolis Institute of Art states that folklore, especially that from the Greco-Roman and medieval periods, frequently conveys moral principles through the heroic actions of humans (The Minneapolis Institute of Art, p. 1). Folklore from around the world offers interpretations of various subjects, historical insights, entertainment, and other essential perspectives that help people analyse their experiences and understand their surroundings. However, Egan (2017) argues that while folklore is captivating and alluring, it can also lead us to a narrow view and hinder our ability to adapt to change (p. 7).

According to Toynbee, such experiences suggest an eternal truth, offering a fleeting glimpse of a deeper reality beyond what we ordinarily perceive. Freud argues that it is the projection of our internal desires and conflicts onto the external world. MacIver suggests that it is, among other things, the foundation upon which the state is built (as cited in Monro, 1950, p. 115). The folklore of a culture cannot be reduced to the formal charters of its institutions alone. These charters often blend historical facts and folklore, suggesting that folklore and institutional history are distinct yet interconnected. Folklore represents only part of the charter, but those who accept it often fail to recognise this distinction. Eliade noted that while figures in epic poetry may have historical origins, their real-life identities are often reshaped over time through folklore. Historical events, no matter how significant, tend to fade from collective memory unless they resemble or resonate with established patterns of folklore (Eliade, 1959, p. 42).

The initial stage of idol development is not folklore; rather, it involves preserving the memories recorded by numerous writers about historical events and real individuals over two or three centuries. It is essential to understand the challenges of preserving collective memory, personal experiences, and real personalities. It operates through different frameworks — relying on symbolic categories rather than specific events, and on archetypal figures rather than actual historical individuals. The real person is reimagined through a folkloristic lens, such as that of a hero, while historical events are recast as recurring folklore themes, like battles with monsters or conflicts between rival siblings. The folklore describes the sun—or a sun god—vanishing into a cave or another hidden place, only to re-emerge (often as the figure of Dawn) after divine intervention, which restores light and the world's prosperity (Witzel, 2012).

Witzel (2012) also argues that folklore should not be dismissed as unscientific or imaginary tales disconnected from truth. Rather than being deliberately misleading or irrelevant, folklore addresses meaningful aspects of human experience and the natural world, offering insight rather than fiction (p. 6). Folklore is associated with social life, and through it, the common man has tried to grasp his past culture. Anthropological, sociological, and historical analyses of folklore from various countries around the world have long been ongoing, producing diverse narratives.

The distinction between folklore, legends, and folktales was first made by Janet Bacon in 1925. She noted that folklore primarily explains natural events whose causes are unclear or ritual practices whose origins have been lost over time. William Bascom's seminal article, "The Forms of Folklore: Prose Narratives" (1965), provides a comprehensive framework for understanding folklore, distinguishing it from other narrative forms such as legends and folktales based on their cultural function, content, and

perceived truth value. In contrast, legends are regarded as rooted in actual historical figures or events tied to specific locations (Bacon, 2002, p. 13). According to Parker & Stanton (2003), "Folklore is not only ancient tales of wonder and glory, but they are all around us, in the making" (p. 13). Human beings naturally create and respond to folklore, driven by curiosity and a tendency to live within or be influenced by folklore structures and narratives. Psychologically, according to this theory, we are continually engaged in one folklore pattern or another, and our freedom as conscious beings lies in our ability to navigate — or "dance" — through the world's greatest story: life (Parker & Stanton, 2003).

Epistemic Divergence and the Limits of Eurocentric Folklore Theory

Western contact with folklore has largely been based on an evolutionist and rationalist perspective that viewed non-European systems of knowledge within a hierarchical structure of intellectual development. For instance, early anthropologists such as Edward B. Tylor considered folklore a "primitive" means of explanation and classified indigenous belief systems as lower in development than scientific knowledge (Tylor, 1871, p. 426). James George Frazer built on this view by outlining a linear progression from magic to religion and finally to science, establishing that traditional societies were still incomplete in their knowledge (Frazer, 1890, p. 224). While rooting for traditional societies, later scholars like Claude Lévi-Strauss have shown the complexity of folklore but treated it as a way to demonstrate universal hypotheses, without taking into account the history and culture of the societies from which the folklore came (Lévi-Strauss, 1978, p. 18). Similarly, Sigmund Freud treated folklore as an expression of the conscious mind and neglected its broader social and cultural roles (Freud, 1913, p. 142). Taken together, these perspectives reflect an epistemological bias that privileges Western rationality over non-indigenous traditions, which are treated as both symbolic and pre-modern in their models of thought.

In contrast to the Western-European conceptualisation of folklore, Kashmiri folklore presents a much broader notion of the term that challenges many assumptions about its role as an epistemological foundation for historical societies. Instead of functioning as an early or "incomplete" account of reality, folklore operates in the Kashmiri context as a culturally-established means of obtaining knowledge, modelling social practices and structures, establishing ethical values, and providing knowledge about the environment. The sacred landscape of Kashmir, as illustrated by its shrine sites, spring sites, and archaeological sites associated with ritual activity, shows how narrative structures are fundamentally interwoven with lived experience and spatial organisation (Zutshi 2014, p. 67). The biography of Lal Ded and the lives of other similar figures exemplify the syncretic cultural

logic that can transcend rigidly defined religious boundaries and complicate structuralist efforts to read folklore in terms of static binary oppositions (Kaul 1971, p. 1; Parimoo 1984, pp. 9-11). The ongoing oral tradition provides a community-wide structure in which memory and identity are continuously reinterpreted considering ever-changing historical circumstances (Bronner 2019, p. 12). This dynamic inter-relationship among narrative, space, and community ultimately subverts the rigid separation often established between rational and non-rational systems of knowledge and supports the idea that there may be more than one way to know. As such, it reveals the limitations of applying Eurocentric theoretical frameworks to non-Western cultures without critical consideration and illustrates that Kashmiri folklore should be approached as an internally validated and culturally contextualised system of cultural knowledge.

Tradition as Narrative Practice in Kashmiri Folk Culture

Kashmiri culture has always had an immense amount of folklore and oral history. The *Nilmatapurana* is one of the oldest texts concerning the history of Kashmir, providing insight into the foundation folklore regarding the central influence of the sage Kashyap Muni on the creation of the Kashmir valley. According to the *Rajatarangini* (The Stream of Kings), the original inhabitants of Kashmir were the *Nagas*, followed by the *Pisachas* (flesh-eating demons) and the *Manavas*, and so forth (Paray, 2016, p. 3903). However, whatever folklore may be found in the *Nilmatapurana* and the *Rajatarangini*, archaeological research conducted by Helmut de Terra and T. T. Paterson has established that human habitation in the Kashmir valley dates back to prehistoric (Palaeolithic) times and, as such, cannot be explained solely through folklore sources. As a result, Kashyap Muni did not create Kashmir; rather, the *Nilmatapurana* is a vivid refraction of the *Naga*'s superiority over the *Pisachas* in the period of conquest and the development of social institutions/frameworks. Malinowski demonstrated the importance of cultural folklore to societies in understanding and legitimising their past; the social and cultural formation of societies, as described in Malinowski's anthropological concepts, helps explain how folklore facilitates this process (Egan, 2017, p. 3).

Tradition as narrative practice in Kashmiri folk culture may be most fruitfully understood as a living and adaptive system of storytelling through which the people of Kashmir preserve memory, transmit ethical values, negotiate identity, and sustain their plural cultural imagination across generations. Rather than viewing tradition as a static inheritance, contemporary folklore theory emphasises that tradition survives only through repeated acts of narration, performance, and reinterpretation, a principle that strongly applies to Kashmiri oral culture, where legends, saint stories, ritual songs, proverbs, folktales, riddles, and shrine narratives

continue to shape communal consciousness. The oral tradition of Kashmir remains "highly colourful and complex in nature," encompassing diverse folk forms that preserve social behaviour, aspirations, and historical memory. This understanding resonates with Jaishree K. Odin's interpretation of the Rishi-Sufi continuum from Lalla to Nuruddin, where mystical verse becomes part of everyday ethical life through oral recitation and cultural remembrance (Odin, 2013, p. 1). As Odin explains:

> "An indigenous Sufi movement emerged in the countryside under the influence of Nund Rishi, who transformed the spiritual inheritance of Lalla into a people-centred ethical vision. The continuity between these figures is not merely theological but cultural, expressed in the oral memory of the people, where verse, legend, and saintly anecdote became vehicles of shared wisdom and communal harmony." (Odin, 2013, p. 1)

Likewise, Chitralekha Zutshi's formulation of a "Kashmiri narrative public" demonstrates that Kashmir's past has long been sustained through an interlinked network of textuality, orality, and performance, in which storytellers, wandering bards, and ordinary people collectively preserved historical memory (Zutshi, 2014, p. 240).

Richard Bauman's theory of performance provides an especially productive framework for reading these oral traditions because it shifts emphasis from the story as text to storytelling as event. He argues:

> "Performance, as we conceive of it, is a mode of communicative display in which the speaker assumes responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence. The act of telling becomes socially framed, aesthetically heightened, and subject to evaluation, making narrative not merely a transfer of information but a culturally marked event through which communal values are enacted and renewed." (Bauman, 1977, p. 11)

Similarly, Jan Vansina's work on oral tradition as history further strengthens this understanding by emphasising that memory survives through transmission rather than documentation. As he notes:

> "Oral traditions are verbal messages reported from the past beyond the present generation. Their authority lies not in written fixation but in repeated transmission, where memory, social sanction, and performative continuity preserve the message. The tradition survives because

> each generation receives, reshapes, and revoices the past in forms meaningful to the present." (Vansina, 1985, p. 27)

This is especially visible in stories of Lalla's wandering wisdom and Nuruddin's compassion, which circulate through villages as moral exempla. Edward Shils's theory of tradition as the transmission of beliefs and practices from past to present further strengthens this reading, as Kashmiri folk culture continually links ancestral ethical visions with current lived realities (Shils, 1981, p. 12). The saint legends surrounding springs, mountains, shrines, and chinar groves illustrate how narrative binds sacred geography to collective memory, converting landscape into a cultural text. Zutshi also notes that these narrative traditions enabled Kashmiris across sectarian and class lines to experience their collective past as an everyday shared experience (Zutshi, 2014, p. 245). In this sense, tradition operates as a public practice of remembering.

This performative dimension is central to Kashmiri folk culture. Stories told at shrines, during wedding nights, around kangri-warmed winter gatherings, or in women's domestic spaces derive meaning not simply from their plot but from the voice, rhythm, gesture, pauses, invocations, and audience response that shape the act of narration. The storyteller's authority lies in their ability to make inherited material socially resonant. In this sense, tradition is inseparable from performance. A saint legend narrated in one village may differ from another version told elsewhere, yet both remain culturally valid because the authority of tradition lies in communal recognition rather than textual fixity. Variation is therefore not corruption but continuity itself. The ability of stories to mutate while preserving ethical kernels is precisely what enables Kashmiri tradition to remain resilient across centuries.

This resilience is further illuminated by Paul Ricoeur's concept of narrative identity, which explains how communities come to understand themselves through the stories they tell about their past, present, and moral aspirations. Ricoeur writes:

> "The identity of a person or community is constituted in the stories that they tell about themselves. Narrative mediates between permanence and change by configuring temporal experience into meaningful sequence, allowing memory, action, and expectation to converge in a coherent sense of selfhood that remains open to reinterpretation across time." (Ricoeur, 1984, p. 52)

Narrative thus becomes the means by which personal memory fuses with civilizational continuity. A. K. Ramanujan's insights into Indian oral tales and contextual variation help illuminate why multiple versions of

the same Kashmiri folktale coexist without contradiction: each retelling adapts the ethical kernel of the story to local circumstances while preserving recognisability (Ramanujan, 1991, p. 34). Such multiplicity is not a weakness but the very mechanism of folk continuity. Jamshid Tehrani's work on the cultural transmission and evolution of folk narratives further supports this by showing that stories survive through variation, mutation, and selective retention across generations (Tehrani, 2023, p. 487).

Kashmiri saint legends, ghost tales, winter folktales, and women's domestic narratives all demonstrate this adaptive resilience. Women's oral traditions — lullabies, wedding songs, mourning chants, and domestic legends — serve as especially crucial narrative spaces for the effective transmission of cultural memory. In these intimate settings, tradition is embodied in rhythm, voice, and emotion rather than in abstract doctrine. Naomi Carey Nonglait's discussion of oral societies highlights that storytelling is fundamentally pedagogic, sustaining the rightful social path through nightly inter-generational narration (Nonglait, 2013, p. 32). This pedagogic function is central to Kashmiri folk culture, where stories teach humility, hospitality, reverence for nature, and interfaith ethics. Pertti Anttonen's reflections on oral tradition and book culture also help explain how Kashmiri narrative practice moves fluidly between spoken performance and later textual stabilisation without losing its oral dynamism (Anttonen, 2018, p. 9). Even when folklore enters written literature, its authority remains rooted in communal memory and performative recurrence. Anne Murphy's work on the uses of the folk in South Asian modernity further demonstrates that folk traditions are not relics of the past but active participants in shaping contemporary cultural self-understanding. This insight is especially relevant to Kashmir, where folklore continues to mediate responses to modern conflict, displacement, and social change. Stories become portable repositories of identity, surviving migration and instability, because they are carried in memory rather than fixed institutions.

Contemporary studies of Kashmiri folklore likewise affirm that oral narratives remain central to preserving regional culture amid globalisation and crisis, functioning as repositories of collective memory and cultural resilience. Claude Lévi-Strauss's structural understanding of folklore can also be applied here, as Kashmiri folktales often organise binary tensions — sacred/profane, exile/home, suffering/redemption — into symbolic forms that make social contradictions narratively intelligible (Lévi-Strauss, 1963, p. 229). Likewise, Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of dialogism reveals how the voices of Lal Ded and Nur-ud-Din, villagers, shrine keepers, women singers, and storytellers coexist in a polyphonic cultural discourse where tradition is continuously negotiated (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 272). The power of Kashmiri folk culture lies precisely in this dialogic openness: tradition remains alive because no story is final. Each retelling creates a new interpretive moment

while reaffirming shared ethical foundations. Thus, tradition, as a narrative practice in Kashmiri folk culture, is not merely the preservation of old tales but the ongoing social production of meaning through oral performance, sacred memory, emotional inheritance, and ethical repetition. In this sense, tradition is not the preservation of a dead past but the living narration of a continuing cultural self. Through saints' legends, ritual songs, domestic storytelling, and sacred landscape narratives, Kashmir continually tells itself into being, ensuring that culture remains a vibrant, unfolding conversation between memory and lived experience.

Societal Importance of Folklore, Tales, and Legends

In the midst of Kashmir's historical transformation and religious evolution, folklore has served as an important tool for promoting social cohesion and cultural continuity. Over time, from the early days of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Kashmir Valley has been transformed religiously and politically; yet the shared folklore of the social group has been a way for the people to maintain a common identity through shared stories (Sharma, 1995, pp. 253-260). For example, the story of the *Akanandun* illustrates the primary cultural element that drives social behaviour and community harmony (Sharma, 1995, pp. 253–260) and exemplifies how folklore provides a code of ethics for social interaction and reaffirms a moral framework in the community. The process of cultural coordination that takes place with these types of stories happens because the people of Kashmir have created stories that began as folklore and folklore based on religious belief, but eventually became secular (Knowles, 1893, pp. 491–504) and served to connect people within the community through social activity. While some elements of the Hemal and Nagar story may change over time and space, including the names of the characters, the characters' symbolic significance and moral relevance remain unchanged. Even stories that recount actual events can find their way into folklore and therefore lose their remaining authenticity due to the time lapse since they took place. Additionally, many Kashmiri writers create works that employ allegorical and metaphorical structures and frequently borrow elements from fairy tales and traditional forms, thereby sustaining continuity with previous eras. The *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja (1986) emphasises the theme of divine intervention in response to societal disorder, reflecting the people's devotion to a higher cosmic order. Drawing parallels between natural renewal and political restoration, Jonaraja suggests that, just as Brahma brings light after darkness and spring after the barrenness of winter, he also restores moral equilibrium by appointing a virtuous, unblemished ruler in times of tyranny. The arrival of the sinless Shri Jainollabhadina in Kashmir is thus portrayed as a divinely ordained event, symbolising the return of auspiciousness and righteous governance (p. 75).

The combination of mysterious and compulsory subjects has led people to subscribe to the appropriate measure to determine the morality of life. Kashmiris know about and have narrated the story of many legendary kings. Some tales are explanatory and can answer the philosophers' questions. Ancient and medieval rulers used folklore for their own ends. They used to claim to be God's sons. As a result, the tendency of the ruler to accept God-centred devotion and, on the other hand, his absolute supremacy could have been observed. In the case of Kashmir, Zain-ul-Abidin could earn credit among the people in the book titled *Jainrajtarangini*, or *Jain Shahi*, by the contemporary Kashmiri writer Srivara. Srivara (1993) describes the death of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin in symbolic terms, suggesting that upon his passing, his physical body was left behind while his essence was transformed into that of Shiva (p. 148). According to a local tradition, Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin was revered by the people of Kashmir as a quasi-divine figure, and, following his death, he was symbolically associated with the deity Shiva, reflecting a fusion of spiritual and royal imagery (Jonaraja,1993). Certain folktales' expressions — such as amusement, drumming, body adornment, and dance — serve as symbolic gestures central to the broader themes of folklore. In Kashmir, one example is a communal dance that involves the entire village. This type of ritualised performance transcends ordinary notions of time and space, evoking a folklore atmosphere that reflects a sense of suspension of reality.

Kashmiri folklore has undeniably been influenced by socialist ideals and has continued to carry the hopes of Kashmiris despite the oppression of rulers throughout history. The boundaries between history and folklore, the familiar and the untamed, are porous and readily crossed. Although crossing this boundary involves some risk, it is not inherently difficult. The wild, existing beyond human control, is perceived not only as a space of potential danger but also as a powerful site of transformation — offering renewal, insight, and the expansion of one's knowledge and agency. Lawrence (1895) examines the historical importance of Kashmiri customs and states that, "it was customary for almost all to visit a particular shrine on different occasions of historical importance for the fulfilment of wishes and cherished goals" (pp. 285-286).

The oral traditions of Kashmir are best captured in the lives and wisdom of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi. Their spirituality has been passed down from generation to generation through *vakh* and *shrukh* poetry, folklore, and the community's collective memories. Through these media, the wisdom of the two has remained alive not only as religious knowledge but also as an integral part of everyday life. The tales of Lal Ded depict her character as one of resistance against ritualism and dogmatism, while those of Nund Rishi portray him as a moral exemplar who is characterised by simplicity, benevolence, and self-control. Although the characters are different, it

becomes apparent that the core teachings of these Kashmiri saints emphasise some common features, including asceticism, tolerance, and piety towards God. In support, Jayalal Kaul (1973) affirms that "the sayings of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi have been preserved for centuries in the minds of the Kashmiri people and may be said to have contributed to the ethical and spiritual consciousness of the valley of Kashmir" (p. 89). Not only do their doctrines not remain restricted within textual sources, but they continue to be alive and well in oral transmission. Gowhar (2001) adds that their legends represent an amalgamated cultural heritage where mystical intuition is interwoven with the poetic imagination of folklore. Thus, the oral tradition not only serves as the custodian of their doctrines, but it is also indicative of the religious harmony prevalent within the culture of Kashmir (p. 134).

The sociological importance of these legendary oral traditions of Lal Ded and Nund Rishi lies in their potential to shape Kashmir's moral consciousness, collective cultural memory, and harmony among different religions. These oral traditions were documented into *vakhs*, *shrukhs*, and narratives and are used as tools for delivering philosophical insights on morality and social criticism. The oral teachings of Lal Ded rejected ritualism, hierarchy, and hypocrisy, while the teachings of Nund Rishi emphasised simplicity, the value of labour, environmental sensitivity, and community welfare. In sum, their traditions generated a common spiritual language that surpassed the confinements of religion and helped create what is called the composite culture of Kashmir. According to Hangloo (2010), "these saint traditions played an important role in shaping a social ethos based on tolerance, accommodation, and respect for one another" (p. 156). In a similar manner, Sikand (2003) describes the Rishi-Sufi tradition as "an indigenous spiritual tradition which merges local culture with universal ethics" (p. 87). In addition, Khan (2010) argues that such oral narratives function as "collective memory archives that continue to inform social conduct and inter-communal relations" (p. 203). Similarly, Hoskote (2011) points out that the *vakhs* of Lal Ded are examples of poetic texts that can dissolve boundaries between self and other, sacred and secular (p. 42). Along similar lines, Odin argues that the oral transmission of such teachings ensured their incorporation into people's daily lives, making them not only intellectual constructs but also lived realities (Odin, 1998, p. 119).

Folklore and oral traditions continue to serve as vital cultural resources, especially in times of socio-political situations in contemporary Kashmir. They reinforce a shared heritage rooted in pluralism and coexistence, offering ethical guidance that counters sectarian divisions. Their continued presence in storytelling, ritual practices, and popular memory demonstrates their dynamic relevance. Kaul (1973) observes that these traditions "represent a living stream of thought that has shaped the moral and spiritual sensibilities of Kashmiri society across generations" (p. 64). Their legendary

narratives are not merely religious expressions but also social texts that critique inequality, promote humility, and encourage coexistence, thereby serving as instruments of cultural continuity and resistance to division. The oral traditions about Lal Ded and Nund Rishi are not merely remnants of the past but active forces shaping social harmony, cultural resilience, and collective identity across the generations. Moreover, Mridu Rai and M. I. Khan emphasise that these traditions maintain what is known as a "composite culture," thereby encouraging dialogue between communities amid socio-political strife. As noted by Rai (2004), through his research, the presence of cultural synthesis and similar cultural practices helped people from different religions live together (pp. 287-290). Khan (2010) similarly reiterates the importance of these traditions in ensuring social equilibrium. Therefore, these traditions, which are legendary in nature, do not merely symbolise the past but continue to influence society (p. 203).

Storytelling represents a fundamental human capacity, one that plays a crucial role in shaping cultural identity and transmitting knowledge. This perspective highlights the significance of narrative as a driving force in the development and continuity of human civilisation. The social importance of folklore stories makes us more human. In Kashmir, many legends are associated with the Adi Sankaracharya temple, the Khir Bhawani temple, the Hari Parbat, the Jwalamukhi, the Amarnath Cave, the life of Lad Ded, the life of Sufi Rishi Nur-ud-Din, and so on. According to one popular legend, "Lord Shiva taught the secret of creation to Parvati at this place (Amarnath Cave)" (Pandit, 2008, p. 74). It is true that "every rock, mountain, spring, cave, stream, river, ravines and grooves possess their legends, stories and fantasies and are alive till date in one or the other form" (Fazili, 2012, pp. 12-13). These narrative traditions are deeply embedded in the daily lives of the people, reflecting their values, beliefs, and collective memory. The folklore and legends of Kashmir portray a cultural reality that often stands in contrast to the historical interpretations offered by European scholars. The influence of folklore and miraculous tales in Kashmiri society is profound; naturally, the daily lives of the Kashmiri people are deeply intertwined with these traditional narratives.

Socialist ideals in Kashmiri folklore and folklores may be understood as narrative expressions of equality, collective welfare, and resistance to exploitative authority embedded within their traditions. Folklore and tales often confront marginalised groups — such as farmers, artisans, and saints — whose moral strength challenges the power of feudal and sultanate rulers and symbolically transfers moral authority from the rulers to the common people (Bamzai, 1994, p. 318; Rai, 2004, p. 201). Zutshi (2003) argues that folklore and folklore stories challenge strict class distinctions and support cooperation, build collective resources, and provide social justice as primary objectives, rather than creating wealth and coercion, alluding to the "moral

economy" founded on a sense of dignity (p. 152). These values are closely tied to Kashmir's history, particularly regarding political control and economic disparity in the region during periods of feudal oppression, as well as the popular uprisings that have followed, which have called for land reform and social justice (Bose, 2003, p. 67).

Conclusion

This article argues that the Kashmiri identity is narratively constituted and produced through folklore that binds memory, space, and belief into a coherent cultural framework. Without foregrounding this relationship, folklore risks being reduced to mere description rather than recognised as a formative social force. An examination of both Western and vernacular scholarly perspectives indicates that folklore represents the traditional wisdom, customs, and belief systems of a particular community, often transmitted orally across generations. It encompasses a wide range of cultural expressions, including theatrical performances, rituals, folk tales, riddles, poetry, and songs, all of which contribute to the collective identity and heritage of a society. To know the history of civilisation, it is necessary to study its long-term traditions, daily life, social and cultural interactions, religious evolution, and so on. Information about this evolution of civilisation may be available in writing or only through word of mouth. Social relationships among different religious communities in Kashmir have evolved through long-term assimilation, acculturation, and cultural exchange. I show that the unique geographical features of Kashmir, along with public life, nature, the environment, rivers, lakes, places of worship, and socio-religious changes, are all deeply intertwined with folklore and legends. Folklore and stories about sages and Sufi saints in Kashmir are closely linked to the daily lives of its inhabitants, influencing their attitudes and beliefs. The gradual decline of oral storytelling practices endangers the continuity of Kashmir's ancient cultural traditions, risking the loss of invaluable cultural knowledge and identity.

Kashmiri folklore should be viewed as an active entity within the social construction of culture, not merely as traditions. Folklore surrounding figures such as Lal Ded and Nund Rishi, as well as narratives embedded in sacred geography, contribute to a shared symbolic universe that transcends religious divisions. This process generates a form of 'folk consciousness' wherein collective memory, ethical values, and spatial imagination are intertwined. Examining this from a purely Western notion would be unjust to the rich folk traditions in Kashmir. Cultural formation in Kashmir emerges through the continuous reinterpretation of these narratives, allowing communities to negotiate identity amid historical change while preserving a sense of continuity.

References

Akhter, M. (2017). Lalleshwari: Her Life and Philosophy. *International Journal of Creative Research Thoughts*, 5(4).

Bacon, J. (2002). *The voyage of the Argonauts*. Adamant Media Corporation. (Original work published 1925)

Bamzai, P. N. K. (1994). *Culture and political history of Kashmir (Vol. 3*). M.D. Publications.

Bose, S. (2003). *Kashmir: Roots of conflict, paths to peace*. Harvard University Press.

Barthes, R. (1991). *Folkloreologies* (A. Lavers, Trans.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux. (Original work published 1957)

Barker, Chris. (2002). *Making Sense of Cultural Studies: Central Problems and Critical Debates*. Sage Publication.

Bascom, W. (1965). The forms of folklore: Prose narratives. *The Journal of American Folklore, 78(307),* 3–20.

Balys, J. (1996). Definitions of folklore. In M. Leach (Ed.), *Standard dictionary of folklore, folkloreology and legend* (Vol. 2, pp. 627–689). Funk & Wagnalls. (Original work published 1950)

Bennett, T. (1998). *Culture: A reformer's science*. SAGE Publications.

Boswell, G. W., Reaver, J. R. (1969). *Fundamentals of Folk Literature*. Nether lands: Anthropological Publications.

Bringhurst, R. (2000). *Nine Visits to the Folkloreworld: Ghandl of the Qayahl Llaanas*. Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre.

Bronner, S. J. (2019). *The Practice of Folklore: Essays Toward a Theory of Tradition*. United States: University Press of Mississippi.

Definitions of Folklore. (1996). *Journal of Folklore Research, 33(3)*, 255–264. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3814683

Diane, F. (2013). *Locating Kashmir In Lal Ded: Communicating Identity And Meaning Through Narrative* (M.A. Thesis). Quebec, Canada: Concordia University Montreal.

Doty, W. G. (2004). *Folklore: A Handbook*. London: Greenwood Press.

Egan, K. (2017). *From folklore to history and back again.* Retrieved May 23, 2017, from *https://www.sfu.ca/~egan/AERA-Folkloreto.html.*

Eliade, M. (1959). *The sacred and the profane: The nature of religion* (W. R. Trask, Trans.). Harcourt, Brace & World.

Fazili, M. (2012). *Kashmir Folklores, Journal of Kashmir Studies, 2*(1).

Gordon, M. M. (1964). *Assimilation in American Life: The Role of Race, Religion, and National Origin*. Oxford University Press.

Gowhar, G. N. (2001). *Sheikh Noor-ud-Din Wali (Nund Rishi): The apostle of Kashmir*. Sahitya Akademi.

Hall, S. (1996). 'Gramsci's Relevance for the Study of Race and Ethnicity' in D. Morley and K. H. Chen (eds) *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, Routledge.

Handoo, L. (1997). *Structural Analysis of Kashmiri Folktales*, Mysore Central Institute of Indian Languages.

Hangloo, R. L. (2010). *Islam, state, and society in medieval Kashmir*. Manohar Publishers.

Hassnain, F.M. (2013). *Advent of Islam in Kashmir*. Gulshan Books.

Hoskote, R. (2011). I, Lalla: The poems of Lal Ded. Penguin Books.

Jonaraja, R. (1993). *Rajtarangini (J.C. Dutta, Trans.)* Edited by Sadhu S.L. in the title 'Medieval Kashmir'). Atlantic Publishers and Distributors. (Original work composed in the 15th century).

Jonaraja, R. (1993). *Rajatarangini: The saga of the kings of Kashmir (A. N. Mattoo, Trans.).* Sahitya Akademi. (Original work composed in the 15th century).

Jonaraja, R. (1986). *The Kings of Kashmira 2nd Series. (J.C. Dutta, Trans.)*. Gian Publishing House.

Kachroo, P. & Dhar S.N. (Ed.) (2000). *Glimpses of Kashmir, Jammu Ladakh*. New Delhi: Gyan Sagar Publications.

Kak, S. (2024). *Whispers From The Past: Art And Wisdom of Kashmir*, Noida, U.P.: BluOne Ink.

Kalhana. (1900). *Rajatarangini: The river of kings* (M. A. Stein, Trans.; Vol. 2, Book VIII). Archibald Constable and Company. (Original work written ca. 12th century)

Kaul, J. L. (1971). *Lal Ded.* Sahitya Akademi.

Kaul, N. (2011). *Kashmir and the politics of identity*. Routledge.

Kaul, R.N. (2015) Lalded: Key to the Understanding of Lal Ded (Part 2). Retrieved January 11, 2015, from http://www.koausa.org/Saints/LalDed/article6.html.

Kaw, M. K. (2004). *Kashmir and its people: Studies in the evolution of Kashmiri society*. APH Publishing.

Khan, M. I. (2010). *Kashmir's transition to Islam: The role of Muslim rulers and saints*. Gulshan Books.

Knowles, H.J. (1893). *Folk Tales of Kashmir.* London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co. Ltd.

Kroeber, A.L., (1923). *Anthropology: Culture, Pattern and Processes*. Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

Lawrence, W. (1895). *The Valley of Kashmir*. Oxford University Press.

Leach, M., & Fried, J. (Eds.). (1972). *Standard dictionary of folklore, folkloreology, and legend*. Funk & Wagnalls.

Lévi-Strauss, C. (1978). *Folklore and meaning*. University of Toronto Press.

Malik, Z. A. (2000). *Mystic traditions of Kashmir: A study of Rishi order*. Gulshan Books.

Malinowski, B. (1944). *Freedom and Civilization*. Roy Publishers.

Maroof, S.M. (2011). Hagiographical Literature and Modernist Kashmiri, Historians. Retrieved August 23, 2017 from http://maroofshah.blogspot.in/2011/08/hagiographical-literature-and modernist.html.

McNeill, W.H. (1986). Mythohistory, or Truth, Folklore, History and Historian. *The American Historical Review*, 91(1).

Monro, D. H. (1950). *Argument of laughter*. Melbourne University Press.

Morales, S.S. (2013). Folklore and the construction of meaning in mediated culture, *KOME-An International Journal of Pure Communication Inquiry*, *1*(2).

Nave, E.F. (1931). *Things seen in Kashmir*. Seeley Service and Co. Ltd.

Niles, J. 1999. *Homo Narrans: The Poetics and Anthropology of Oral Literature*. University of Pennsylvania Press.

Odin, J. K. (1998). *Kashmir mysticism and the Rishi tradition: From Lal Ded to Nund Rishi.* Curzon Press.

Pandit, B. (2008). *Explore Kashmiri Pandits*. Cazadero. Dharma Publishing.

Paray, A.A. (2016). The Geology and the Earliest Evidences of Man in Kashmir, *International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing*, 6(4).

Parashar, P. (2004). *Kashmir: The Paradise of Asia.* Sarup and Sons.

Parimoo, B.N. (1984). *Unity in Diversity*. J & K Academy of Art culture and Language.

Parker, J. & Stanton, J. (2003). *Folkloreology: Folklores, Legends and Fantasies*. Global book publishing.

Rai, M. (2004). *Hindu rulers, Muslim subjects: Islam, rights, and the history of Kashmir*. Princeton University Press.

Raina, M. K. (2004). Kashmir: The valley of Rishi-Sufi tradition. *India International Centre Quarterly*, *31*(2/3), 186–196.

Sadhu, S.L. (1995). Akanandum. In S.K. Sharma & S.R. Bakshi (Ed.) *Kashmir Society and Culture*. Anmol Publications.

Scarborough, M. (2004). *Folklore and Modernity: Postcritical Reflections*. USA: State University of New York.

Shah, H. A. (2011). Sources about Origin of Kashmir. *Golden Research Thoughts*, *1*(1).

Shah, M. A. (2012). Linking Traditional Kashmiri Folk Wisdom to Modern Environmentalist Discourse. *The Journal of Kashmir Studies, 2(1*).

Martha, C. S. & Martine, S. (2005). *Living Folklore: An Introduction to the Study of People and their Traditions*. Utah State University Press.

Sikand, Y. (2003). *Sacred spaces: Exploring traditions of shared faith in India*. Penguin Books.

Spencer, L. (1921). *An Introduction to Folkloreology*. London: George G. Harrap & Company LTD.

Srivara. (1993), *Jaina Rajtarangini* (J.C. Dutta Trans.), Edited by S.L. Sadhu in the title Medieval Kashmir). New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors,

Stern, S. (1977) Ethnic Folklore and the Folklore of Ethnicity, *Western Folklore, 36 (1),* p.10.

Toshakhani, S.S. (ed.). (2002). *Lal Ded: The great Kashmiri saint-poetess*. A.P.H. Publishing Corporation.

Tylor, E. B. (1871). *Primitive culture: Researches into the development of folkloreology, philosophy, religion, language, art, and custom* (Vol. 1). London, UK: John Murray.

The Minneapolis Institute of Art, Minneapolis. (2019). Worlds Folklore and Legends in Art, Retrieved March, 2019, from *https://www.artsmia.org/world-folklores/whatisfolklore.html*

Vernant, J. P. (1980). *Folklore and society in ancient Greece* (J. Lloyd, Trans.). Zone Books.

Witzel, E.J. M. (2012). *The Origins of the World's Folkloreologies*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Zutshi, C. (2003). *Languages of belonging: Islam, regional identity, and the making of Kashmir*. Permanent Black.

Zutshi, C. (2014). *Kashmir's contested past: Narratives, sacred geographies, and the historical imagination*. Oxford University Press.