

Understanding the Significance of Temples in Representing the *Pabadi* Culture of Western Himalayas in Kathua District of Jammu & Kashmir

ANKUSH SHARMA¹, SHRUTI GUPTA², SABA PARVEEN¹,
ASHWANI KUMAR¹, DIVYA SHARMA³

¹Central University of Punjab, Department of History, Bathinda, Punjab, India

²University of Jammu, Department of Geography, Jammu and Kashmir, India

³Central University of Jammu, Department of Environmental Science, Jammu & Kashmir, India

Abstract

Temples are not just worshipping spaces; they have been one of the driving forces of Indian civilization. They cannot be detached from the culture of a region with which they are closely linked. As various practices and rituals of temples are influenced by the regions they are located in, temples on their part have an abiding influence on defining regions. Other than religious and spiritual importance, temples play a predominant role in social, economic, and cultural fields. The current paper is an attempt to study the cultural significance of temples in the Kathua district of Jammu and Kashmir. It tries to analyse the role of temples in designing the *Pabadi* culture of the Kathua district and also underline the influences of regions on various practices associated with the temples. Kathua has many temples dedicated to different deities linked with varying practices. The present study has concentrated on popular temples, which receive devotees from the entire district and are of historic importance as well. It uses written historical evidences along with contemporary works and oral narrations of the locals to understand the cultural composition of the temples.

Keywords: Temples; Shakti; Shiva; Kathua; Culture; Devi; Pahadi; Jammu and Kashmir.