



## Not A Lost Treasure: The Social Culture of Chenab Valley



What the people of J&K have achieved through a long and most unique spiritual journey in terms of a unique symbiosis of religions in the realm of spirituality and thus shaped a culture and society is being lost at the altar of politics. What has been gained at as high as an altar of spirituality and religion is being lost at the altar of as baser a thing as today's politics. The treasure has continued to be inherited until the generation of the elders, in each

family, community and the society. They have lived that culture, but the passing on of the inheritance of this treasure stopped in between the elders and the post 1990 generation who has grown and lived in terror, violence and trauma. Point is, that the treasure is not buried into a distant past, it is very much within their reach, it is accessible, waiting to be owned up by the present generation. Chenab valley has 30-70 and in places 40-60 ratio of Hindu- Muslim population and makes no difference between the two. Militancy did not do them apart, but recent events like communal flare-up last year (on the day of Eid 2013) in Kishtwar are sowing the seeds of discord and communalization, frustrating the elders, the holder of the inheritance. (see SP report on Kishtwar Violence, Sept 2013 )



Figure 1 Our Sahmsipora, Anantnag Team

People in the Chenab have a deep sense of deprivation as against rest of J&K. They ironically identify themselves as “&” – Chenab valley people are only ‘&’ within Jammu ‘&’ Kashmir.” It is the Kashmir and Jammu region which take the development pie...” Having no medical, engineering or even agricultural or such higher and specialized educational facility the youth have to go out, spend more than they should and can, and thus only those

who can spend can pursue such studies and not all who deserve. There are three huge power production plants in the Chenab Valley, but people there get none. It goes out of J&K and the state buys at a higher premium what is produced from the Chenab waters!. The list of instances of discrimination,

deprivation and step-motherly behavior by the State is long and perhaps justifiable. This area has seen hard, wide spread militancy. Now it is almost gone.

The youthful SP of Doda, who joined Police Service in 1990, at the height of militancy in Doda and elsewhere told me “we will have to go searching for a militant now”. But the youth is in unrest, angry. It has to be not just J&K but Jammu, Kashmir, Chenab and Laddakh.



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