



REPRESENTATION OF KASHMIRI CULTURE THROUGH TWO REGIONAL NEWSPAPERS :- GREATER KASHMIR AND DAILY EXCELSIOR.

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Abstract

Kashmir, the beautiful valley known for its resplendent scenery and enchanting climate has equally enthralling culture that is unique and capable of captivating everyone. And regional newspapers play a major role in disseminating the information related to the special occasions, practices and activities of the inimitable culture of the valley, thus preserving the precious local culture, the history associated with it and promoting it to the wider audience. The Kashmir valley has faced a lot through ages as many intruders tried to uproot it from its original Hindu culture through violence and proselytization leading to amalgamation of Central Asian culture with it. Time did change and today Kashmiri culture is known for its diversity with two prominent religions Hindus and Muslims thriving in unity with their delectable cuisines, colorful fairs, festivals, majestic architecture, intricately designed art forms and unforgettable history. Daily excelsior and Greater Kashmir, both are one of the oldest newspapers of Jammu and Kashmir publishing news bearing proximity value and elevating prominence of Kashmiri culture throughout the Union Territory. In this study, coverage of Kashmiri culture through articles, news and features about Kashmiri cuisines, songs and festivals, history and heritage has been examined.

Key words: Kashmiri Culture, Cultural awareness, Regional newspapers, Daily excelsior, Greater Kashmir.

Introduction

Kashmiri Culture

The heaven on earth Kashmir, known for its peculiar beauty and hospitality has an extremely vast culture with scrumptiously varied cuisines, brightly hued festivals, strikingly magnificent history and glorious heritage. Kashmiri culture and tradition are deeply rooted in the history and geography of the region. The people of Kashmir have a rich cultural heritage that is reflected in their unique customs, traditions, music, art and literature.¹ Kashmiri culture is distinct in every aspect due to its intricate history and amalgamation of different faiths that made its colors more vibrant.

Kashmir has always been the hot pot of political turmoil with every outsider trying to get hold of the valley by threatening the aboriginals. Nilamata Puran depicts the early history of Kashmir, its geography and the Hindu religion that used to thrive there. Rajtarangani written by Kalhana in 12th century explains about the origin of Kashmir from a lake by Hindu Rishi Kashyap.

Ruled by Mauryan and Kushan Empires, the Kashmir valley became centre of learning in stream of Buddhism when fourth Buddhist council was conducted there in 72 AD during king Ashoka's reign. Due to sensitive placement of Kashmir and its connection with the Silk Road every ruler wanted to invade it so did the Mughals. During the 18th century, Afghan Durrani Empire annexed the valley followed by Sikh empire's garrison and eventually Treaty of Amritsar signed in 1846 by Maharaja Gulab Singh with British Indian Forces. Living a peaceful life during Sikh reign Kashmiri Hindus again suffered when partition of India took place and a huge fight ensued for annexation over Kashmir between India and Pakistan with Pakistan taking one – third chunk of Kashmir in name of POK. Experiencing so may upheavels especially during Muslim rule created a blend of cultures in Kashmir with marks of brutal vehemence although people themselves tried to stay in peace.

¹Rather, S. A., & Rajeshwari, R. (2023). The beauty and resilience of Kashmiri culture and traditions: Exploring the unique practices and customs of the Kashmiri people. *International Journal of Economic, Business, Accounting, Agriculture Management and Sharia Administration*, 3(4), 7.

Regional newspapers as medium of cultural discourse – Greater Kashmir and Daily Excelsior

Regional print media is the best medium in portraying the authentic news that people of particular region relate to. As regional newspapers play an important role in disseminating information of proximity value. With more than 100 English newspapers in Jammu and Kashmir (http://rni.nic.in/display_state.asp) Daily excelsior is the most read newspaper of Jammu region while Greater Kashmir in Kashmir valley. Daily Excelsior and Greater Kashmir are one of the oldest newspapers of Jammu and Kashmir with Greater Kashmir founded in 1965 and Greater Kashmir founded in year 1989. These two regional newspapers play important role in distribution of important news as local people hold faith in them while Daily Excelsior has a circulation of 3.75 lakh in J&K and Ladakh both combined Union Territories (<http://www.dailyexcelsior.com/about-us>), and Greater Kashmir has a coverage of 1 lakh with its highest circulation in Kashmir valley (<http://www.4imn.com/reviews/14976.htm>). Both these newspapers reach to large audience of Jammu and Kashmir making them an instrumental medium in carrying information related to diverse culture of Jammu and Kashmir. This research aims to study articles, features and editorials related to Kashmiri culture published in both newspapers to see the frequency of topics covered and to see which newspaper has portrayed different aspects of Kashmiri culture including cuisines, folk music, festivals, and history and heritage in the best way possible.

Review of Literature

The review will examine multiple scholarly articles regarding amalgamation of different cultures in Kashmir creating a unique blend of Kashmiriyat that stands on distinctiveness and interwoven threads of multiculturalism. Scholars Dar and Mir (2023) elucidate the richness of Kashmiri culture that withholds the valley's identity.

Luka (2021) states that there was a time when Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir co-existed in peace showcasing religious pluralism but situations did overturn after partition of India in 1947 which ignited religious hatred in the valley. Article by Rather and Rajeshwari(2023) highlights that the most impressive facet of Kashmiri culture is its diversity. The resilience of Kashmiris enabled them to preserve their unique culture through ages of adversities.

Objectives

The research will examine following points

- 1) To examine which newspaper of the both Daily Excelsior and Greater Kashmir covers more topics related to Kashmiri Culture in 3 months from 1st January to 31st March, 2024
- 2) To analyse which newspaper of the both Daily Excelsior and Greater Kashmir gives preference to which topic more.

Methodology

Secondary Data : Two regional newspapers Greater Kashmir and Daily Excelsior's January, February and March edition newspapers have been taken as sample papers.

Qualitative analysis

News, articles and features have been coded for thematic analysis on categories

1. Cuisines

2. Folk songs and Festivals

3. History and Heritage

- Scriptures
- Temples
- Holocaust Day

Quantitative analysis Calculating the number of specific topics being covered by each newspaper.

Coverage by Greater Kashmir

Cuisines

Headline : Our Traditional Gulkand

Summary : The article presented in 'Greater Kashmir' on January 9 on page no. 10 written by Manzoor Akash describes about Kashmiri traditional cuisine 'Khambeer'. According to the author Khambeer is a sweet rose delicacy that holds an important value in Kashmiri culture. Recalling his golden childhood days the author writes, "I had seen my father making Gulkand by grinding rose petals in the traditional Okhli, quite umpteen times." Clean Damascus roses of valley are blended with sugar and diverse kind of spices forming delicious flavorful 'Khambeer' that is cooked by sun – infused heat when the air – tight bottle is kept outside the balcony during autumn season. The article highlights that the preservatives based mixed market packaged Gulkand is replacing traditional Gulkand. And although there are several kinds of gulkand including mixed–fruit, amla and Sandalwood gulkand, the simple traditional gulkand is indeed liked the most.

The article showcases the declining practice of creating *Gulkand* in *okhli*, that is named as Nyeam in the valley by crushing rose petals with sugar in it. The author writes that this appetizing rose treat was brought in Kashmir by Mughal rulers and is a medicinal luxury having calming and cooling effect on the physique. The word Gulkand is made by combination of two words Gul and kand with Gul meaning flower and kand meaning sweet. The author illustrates how consumption of Khambeer that acts as Ayurvedic medicine from alleviating inflammation, improving hair and skin quality to aiding digestion thus acting as an elixir for gut. And although made in every house of Kashmir whenever people used to run out of this delicacy they would never hesitate to fetch it from nearby household to mix it with their warmth instilling tea beverage Kahwa. Mentioning the anecdote of prolific writer Zareef Ah. Zareef, in which he states that home – made variety of Gulkand was pure without any preservative unlike the market based ones. The writer in fact persuades people not to forget their rich cultural heritage in glaring lights of prosperity.

Headline : Makkai Sout : A Winter Tradition in Kashmir

Summary : The article published in 'Greater Kashmir', page no. 6 on January 22 written by Manzoor Akash elucidates about the most relished winter delicacy among Kashmiri community, the Makkai Sout (Sattu), enjoyed with comfort providing hot salty beverage Nun Chai. Makkai sout (roasted corn flour), the taste enhancing

unique traditional sattu of Kashmiri community is rich in nutrients and act as bond making treat between people as gatherings without consuming it seem incomplete. Recalling how his mother used to roast maize seeds in clay pans on Dambur (the traditional chulha of Kashmir) and send it to nearest watermill. The author describes the traditional way of preparing this delicious course he states how the best quality maize seeds are used for preparation. These seeds are then half burnt, its unique smokiness adds special flavor when grinded in stone mills. The traditional flour mill known as Grutte (Ath – e – Grutte and Aab – e – Grutte) is used that helps to pulverize the seeds and add rich aromatic taste to the traditional sattu. According to the author Makkai sout serves not as a dish but as a vessel for the bonds that tie the Kashmiri people together.

Now – a – days electric mills are being used instead of Ath – e – Grutte or Aab – e – Grutte. But author narrates that there was a time when only one watermill was present in Yarbug village which was three kilometers away from his home. Long queues of people used to stand in front of the mill along with wicker basket known as Lungeon and filling up their Pheran pockets with tasty sattu was a common practise.

Headline : Preserving Kashmir's Essence

Summary : The feature published in 'Greater Kashmir' on page no. 07, February 06 written by Rabiya Bashir is about Kashmir women's of Pulwama district initiative of using tradition for advancement in their life by reviving seasonal dried vegetables like tomatoes, bottle gourd, spinach, turnip and dries chillies thus bringing rich cuisine of the valley back to the market. These women want to prepare these luscious flavors according to the age old tradition as these dried dishes have always been used in Kashmiri staple cuisines specially during chilling winter season and has always been a looked after food. Rafia Jan leads this group of 15 women and with help of NRLM they are selling their organic without preservatives products in Srinagar transforming their life in a positive way.

Headline : Fading Flames of Traditional Dambur

Summary : The article publicized in 'Greater Kashmir' newspaper on March 2nd on page no. 7 written by Manzoor Akash depicts about Dambur (Daan), the traditional Chulha of Kashmir. In today's modern world where gas stoves and electric heaters are prominent Dambur (symbol of Kashmir syncretism) has almost been forgotten. According to the writer Dambur is a sacred gift by Hazrat Fatima. Late Zoon Ded (Habba Khatun), also known as the Nightingale of Kashmir was apt in preparing Dhambur. Made with purest mud and husk, food prepared on Dhambur is not only the tastiest but also the healthiest.

There was a time when Dambur used to be in each and every household and the room where it was kept was known as Daan Kuth (a room where chulha was burnt) and all the dishes were prepared on it from morning tea Nun chai to Kahwa in traditional Somavar and the delectable dishes Yajje Sahb Daig, made on certain big 200 occasions prepared slowly by leaving it all night on shimmering heat of Dambur (Daan). Once the cooking part ended, women used to polish it with thick mud giving it a glittery look called Hurr Duyen. According to the author Dambur is not only an old artifact but a symbol of Kashmir's tradition and formidable resilience of its community.

Headline : Downtown's rose alchemist Aziz Kozgar preserves 500 – year-old fragrant history.

Summary : The feature produced in 'Greater Kashmir' newspaper on March 4 on page no. 5 written by Mehroob Mushtaq narrates about a small but unique shop named Arq – I – Gulab Waan that is 500 year old and carrying the age old tradition of distilling rose water. Located near Khanqah – e - Moula shrine, the family owned shop preparing rose water since medieval Kashmir using copper vessels. In this feature owner Aziz Ahmad recalls that his ancestors started this business five centuries ago and he is proud to carry forward that legacy as the fourth generation owner. Aziz says that they don't use any labels or markings on packaging as the fragrance in itself reflects its quality. The shop made of wood and bricks has shelves filled with numerous glass jars and bottles having Urdu and Persian words.

Kozgar mentions that the rose water is prepared in a traditional way from rose petals and herbs boiled in copper pot. The steam developed through evaporation then passes through coils, cools down and becomes liquid again

turning into rose water and this whole process takes three to four hours. The anecdote by Aziz Kazgar, “Our rose water connects people to the cultural heritage of the valley. I have seen tourists from India and across the world came just to experience its pure aroma.” Showcases the importance of rose water in Kashmiri culture.

Unlike other dissipating traditions of Kashmir the knowledge related to creation of this rose water will be continued by son of owner Aziz Kazgar.

Headline : Srinagar’s last generation of fisherwomen battle all odds to earn livelihood.

Summary : The feature printed in newspaper “Greater Kashmir” on January 29 on page no. 5 narrates about miserable condition of fisherwomen, Gadh – wajni in Kashmir. Using different perspectives from numerous fisherwomen, the author Mehroob Mushtaq mentions about heart wrenching tales of Gadh – Hanz who are trying to make their ends meet by sticking to their family profession. Jalla Begum, a sexagenarian catch fishes everyday to earn livelihood and support her family. Even after catching some amount of fishes, she buys more from wholesalers and then parts to the market to sell them. Their work is full of difficulties but they do it all for supporting their family. Due to lack of education and low wages fisherwomen face the worst in this field. Another fisherwoman named Hajra Bano who is 55 year old states that being a fisherwoman hasn’t earned them anything all these years. Even though customers want the best quality fish but they don’t want to pay for it. 56 – year old fisherwoman Khalida declared that customers argue with them and don’t pay the sufficient amount. Earlier they used to get rupees 500 but now they get only rupees 200 for their fishes as pollution has already taken a toll on fishes of Dal Lake. Even their call for selling fishes, “Gadi haa chaw” is met with hatred. Another fisherwoman named Sabreena Dar revealing her hardships says that she does not want to pass the same to her kids. Another fisherwoman named Ruksana Akhtar narrating her sorrows revealed that her daughter got married at the age of 40 due to societal issues and financial constraints. While an anonymous fisher woman says that they may be the last one to indulge in this work, we all have fixed the price of fishes to sell them at a particular price and help each other as a community.

Folk songs and Festivals

Headline : Shab – e – Me’raj observed with religious fervor across J&K

Summary : The three column news published on ‘Greater Kashmir’ on February 8, page no. 01 and then continued on page 08 by reporter Shahbir Ibn Yusuf is about grand celebration of Shab – e – Meraj in Kashmir. Also called Al – Isra wal – Miraj or night journey and ascension is celebrated when Prophet Muhammad ascended the heaven. On this pious occasion Darood – o – Azkaar sound reverberates in the shrines of the valley.

According to one of the Imam of Srinagar Masjid the pious night represents the life of revered Prophet Muhammad and an apt time to think about his teachings. As per Islamic calendar, every year on the 26th night of Rajab month Prophet Mohammad ascends to meet Allah, the lord. Along with this, the relic of Prophet Mohammad is shown after essential prayers on the first and second days.

Along with this, the statement by advisory of the Traffic Department is used in which he states that lots of devotees assembled at Dargah Hazratbal on this pious occasion on Wednesday and Friday on 9th of February and Traffic Police made all arrangements to make flow of traffic easy for the devotees.

Headline : Herath celebrated with religious fervour.

Summary : The news with subheading ‘Devotees pray for J&K’s peace, prosperity; Kashmiri Pandits visit Kheer Bhawani’ was published on page no. 1st and continued to page no. 8 of ‘Greater Kashmir’ by reporter Auqib

Salam which states that large number of devotees visited Shankarachaya temple located in Srinagar to celebrate their most celebrated and pious occasion of Herath also known as Maha Shivratri.

This reverent occasion is celebrated annually by the Hindus to celebrate the marriage of Lord Shiva and Parvati. Jagdish Bhardwaj, who is member of J&K Dharmath Trust and takes care of Kashmiri temples stated that the event was celebrated with gaiety all across Kashmir valley. Special Morning prayers were held in which tourists also participated. He also stated that there is a ritual of distributing walnuts and dried apples among devotees. While statement from a tourist was also taken who stated that she liked the welcoming nature of people and it almost felt like a home to her. Special reports from popular temples of Kashmir were conducted by different reporters

Special prayers held in Ganderbal were reported by Irfan Raina.

Large number of Kashmiri Pandits paid obeisance at Kheer Bhawani temple located in Tulmulla area in Ganderbal. On this holy occasion Deputy Commissioner of Ganderbal, Shyambir also visited the temple and took part in pooja.

Headline : Arrangements for fish availability on Shivratri made..

Summary : The news was published on March 9 on page no. 2 of 'Greater Kashmir' is about a precise arrangements made by Department of Fisheries to supply fresh fishes to Pandit community in UT on the ongoing Shivratri occasion.

A press release was made according to which various fish stalls have been established in every district including this, mobile vans were also being used to provide fresh trout / carb fish to the customers. Private fish farmers also contributed in distribution of fresh fishes to customers. **3.**

History and heritage : -

Temples

Headline : Abode of Bhagwati Ragnya

Summary : The article published in 'Greater Kashmir' on February 3, page no. 5 written by Prof Upendra Koul is about one of the most famous and revered temple of Kashmir Kheer Bhawani located in summer capital Srinagar in a village of Tulmul. The magnificent temple belongs to Bhagwati Ragnya, also called Devi Rajna, the benevolent form of Goddess Durga. The temple is known for its miracles and legendary stories. Bringesh Samhita, written by Sage Bringesh mentions the story of Kheer Bhawani Mata as narrated by Lord Shiva to Mata Parvati. It is said that Kashmiri Pandit, Yogi Krishna Pandit Taploo had a dream of Mata who guided him to the Tulmul spring. 'Aini Akbari' by Abu'l – Fazl ibn - Mubarak also mentions this place. Along with this Kalhana's Rajtarangani , a chronicle also mentions the pious place. It is said that Ravana was a grand devotee of Mata Bhawani but when he kidnapped Mata Sita, Mata Bhawani became furious and asked Hanuman ji to take her idol somewhere else so he placed it in Tulmulla. The author then reveals how he was not able to speak as a toddler but with blessings of Mata he got the ability to speak. The holy spring is in a heptagonal shape. The holy spring is known to change its color with time according to different situations. The colour is said to change to black during inauspicious events like it had during 1990 Kashmiri Pandit exodus and 2014, when floods hit Kashmir.

Walter Lawrence, the settlement commissioner in 1886 observed that the color of holy spring was violet and noted it in Sir Francis Edward Younghusband's book. Even Maharajas of Kashmir could not resist bowing down to such great temple and Dogra Maharajas contributed a lot in renovation of the temple. Dharmshala of the temple was constructed by Maharaja Ranbir Singh while the current form of the spring and temple was created by

Maharaj Partap Singh. In fact the idol of Lord Shiva was also installed by him. The shrine is surrounded by large Chinar trees that helps the devotees to relax.

A mela is held every year during 'Zyeshta Astami' during which almost all Kashmiri Pandits gather to celebrate the grand havan. After mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, it was now in 2023 that huge gathering of Kashmiri Pandits of around 1.87 lakh was found in Tulmul.

Holocaust day

Headline : Kashmiri Pandits have an existential stake in Kashmir

Summary : The article published on 'Greater Kashmir' newspaper on January 20 on page no. 7 written by Ashok Bhan is about Kashmiri Pandits who suffered the worst of violence and militancy. The author narrates that there was a time when valley of Kashmir was known as the abode of Saraswati and was called Shardha Peeth. He also mentions about Rajtarangani, book written by Kalhana mentioning about vast history of the Kashmir valley. The book mentions about the greatness of King Lalitaditya and his vast kingdom. Praising the Hindu rulers the author mentions that the city of Srinagar was infact founded by none other than King Ashoka himself. Mahayana Buddhism was spread by Kashmiri monks. The hindu sage, Pantanjali gave his yoga precious yoga sutra to humanity. RAS Siddhant along with forty six literary classics written by Abhinavagupta is being taught in eighty universities worldwide. But unfortunately all these great accomplishments of hindu legends is not mentioned in academic Hindu books.

Coverage by Daily Excelsior

Cuisines

Headline : Heritage crop, 'Kala Zeera'

Summary : The article published in 'Daily Excelsior's Sunday magazine on February 4 page no. 2 is written by Col Satish Singh Lalotra. The eye opening article reflects upon the importance of farming profession in India, about NSSO (National sample survey office) report that India needs to make agriculture an attractive profession to be persued by youngsters otherwise the country won't be able to meet the nutritional requirements of its expanding population. As 86% of Indian farmers are illiterate India needs educated farmers to bring a positive change in farming sector. Huge area of farming land of India falls under border sections. Mentioning about Gurez valley of Bandipora in Jammu and Kashmir that is again a border area and being known for revival of its Heritage, also called Heirloom crop 'Kala Zeera', the 'Site specific' crop by its people. The author narrates how an illiterate lady 'Khadija Begum' got required info and training from SKUAST (Sher- e Kashmir Universty of agricultural sciences and technology- Kashmir) and finally through correct and her innovative measures like growing garlic around heritage crop, helped her to save the crop from rodents. Her efforts won her laurels by VC of SKUAST, working for promotion and domestication of 'Heritage crops.' Kala Zeera in Urdu and Persian known as Siyoh Zeera and in Hindi called 'Shahi Zeera' is highly priced as it is known for its rich flavour and health benefits.

Folk songs and Festivals

Headline : 279th birth anniversary of Swami Mirzakak celebrated with fervor, gaiety.

Summary : The news published in 'Daily Excelsior', page no. 11 on January 13 informs about great function celebrated in Asthapan of Swami Mirzakak situated in Nagrota, Jammu, renowned as Kak Sahab on his 279th anniversary. A Maha yagya was performed followed by Kalash puja, Puran Ahuti and distribution of Prasad. While bhajan kirtan including hymns related to glorification of saint were sung in another Ashram located in Muthi area of Jammu.

Swami Mirzakak also known as Kak Sahab was a respectable saint who made immense contribution in promotion of vakhs (four-line poems, also called vatsun in Kashmiri) during medieval period in Kashmir. One of his vakhs states how he played an eminent role in ending the rule of cruel Afghanis in Kashmir. His Samadhi (shrine) is located at Hangalgund in Anantnag district.

Headline : Athrot's Kashmiri Bajan on Ram Mandir hits stands.

Summary : The news published in 'Daily excelsior', page no. 12 on January 17 reports organization of grand celebration of cultural cohesion and religious dedication by Shri Amarnath Ji Yatra Welfare Society. A beautiful Kashmiri devotional song, "Ram Ji Vaati Panun Gar Lo Loo" was concerted by Athrot Cultural Foundation. The spiritual Kashmiri Bajan depicted the return of Lord Ram to Ayodhya.

Monika Kohli Ganju, Senior Additional Advocate General praised the organizers for their exceptional contribution in preserving the culture of Kashmiri Pandit community through new media usage.

Headline : Shab – e – Meraj prayers held across Kashmir.

Summary : Two column news was published in 'Daily Excelsior' newspaper on page no. 03, February 08 is about people of Kashmir gathering in Dargah Hazratbal Shrine to celebrate Shab – e – Meraj. This day is celebrated to commemorate the miraculous day of ascendance of Prophet Mohammad to heaven.

One of the pilgrim named Ghulam Hassan said that he prayed for welfare of people of Jammu and Kashmir. Arrangements were made for easy visit and exit of devotees stated the official.

Headline : JKAACL organizes Kashmiri folk music, dance event.

Summary : The two column news published in 'Daily Excelsior' on page no. 7, February 13 is about the Kashmiri artists like Daisy Bhat, Raj Dulari Koul and many more who performed by singing folk music and dancing on the same on the event organized by J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages. Principal Secretary of Culture Department, Suresh Kumar Gupta was the chief guest on the event and he praised the Samooh group for theatre promotion and he distributed school bags to children on the occasion. While guest of honour was Bharat Singh Manhas, Secretary JKAACL. Along with this other members handled the occasion and almost everyone's name was mentioned in the news. For instance, Rohit Bains choreographed the event while Dr. Kamal Sharma, President of the Samooh presented vote of thanks.

Headline : Hurra Ashtami celebrated with religious fervor, gaiety.

Summary : The news featured in 'Daily Excelsior' newspaper on March 6 on page no. 9 is about celebration of Hurra Ashtami, a holy festival of Kashmiri Pandits connected with worship of Mother Goddess and commemorated with religious warmth and passion.

During the celebration of this revered festival night functions were organized in several temples and Ashrams of J&k UT. In Srinagar, a splendid function was organized in Shree Shree Sharika Chakreshwari Parbat by Rajit Gorkha. The function included traditional Shree Chakra Puja and Bhajan Kirtan.

In Jammu the function was organized by the Sanstha at Dhok Paloura under the leadership of Vedic guru Jai Krishan Khar. Along with this Hurra Ashtami was also celebrated at KP Sabha, Amphalla, in Bhagvaan Gopi Nath Ji Ashram Bohri, Swami Kumar Ji Ashram and Shiv temple Subash Nagar during which night long jagrans and puja was held.

Headline : Shiv Bhajans released on eve of Harratri Heyrat.

Summary : The news published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ newspaper on March 8 on page no. 11 reports about the launch of Shiv Bhajans and Swachand Bhairav document on the upcoming festival of Herratri Heyrat. The enthralling hymns and document were released by Convenor of Vishwa Kashmiri Samaj and President of Shri Amarnath ji Yatra Welfare Society, Kiran Wattal. She also praised the Athrot Cultural Festival for encouraging young children of the community and praised efforts of Kanwal Peshion too. Ex VC of CUJ also applauded the initiative taken by organizers to aware young generation of their culture.

Kenwal Peshin designed and directed the Swachand Bhairav document. Arthrot Cultural Foundation published the document devoted to Bhairav Vyag related to Heyrat and Herratri celebrated by Kashmiri Pandits. Also, Heyrat is observed by Kashmiri Pandits all over the world on Phalgun Krishna Paksh triyodashi.

During the occasion two Siv Bhajans were released which were sung by Kashir Kalakar Sharad Pandita Khah and Shivani Koul and written by Pt Prem Nath Shad and Pamposh Saproo.

Headline : Maha Shivratri celebrated with religious fervor across J&k

Summary : Three column news titled, “ Maha Shivratri celebrated with religious fervor across J&K” was published on page no. 3 on March 9 of ‘Daily Excelsior’ and states that just like other states of the country pious occasion of Maha Shivratri was celebrated all over J&K. Along with celebration of Shivratri in Jammu temples in Kashmir after doing pooja all night Kashmiri Pandits celebrated Shivratri and walnuts were offered to watuk (earthen pot).

Headline : Kongposh releases Kashmiri Bhajan on Maha Shivratri

Summary : The exuberant news that appeared in ‘Daily Excelsior’ newspaper on March 10 on page no. 11 is about a sincere endeavor for conservation of traditional Kashmiri music to promote the exquisite Kashmiri language. Kongposh Audio – visual launched a new Kashmiri Bhajan on March 9 in Vijyeshwar Karyalaya in Talab Tilloo area of Jammu. During this event, M.D of Kongposh Audio – Visual assured the journalists present there that Kongposh has started a initiative to preserve the culture and mother tongue of Kashmiri community with their splendid tunes of music to make them reconnect the youth with Kashmiri music.

‘Az Cham Shiv Naathas Poshe Pooza’, the mellifluous hymn released by Jyotshi Avtar Krishan Shastri is a melodious Shiv Bhajan. The music director of this Kashmiri bhajan is an Award winning Music Director, Rajesh Khar. The song is sung by Sanam Sajad and the unforgettable lyrics were written by Pitambar Razdan. Rajesh Khar thanked the Vijyeshwar Kararyalya for their assistance and asked the community for the support to its own culture.

Headline :- KPs belong to great cultural legacy of India: Swami Hrydyanand.

Summary : The exhilarating news published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ on March 11 on page no. 11 is about release of Saphth – Rishi Samvat calendar of year 5100 at a function organized by Sanjeevni Sharda Kendra, Anand Nagar, Bohri on ongoing eve of Shivratri.

During this divine celebration of Shivratri, Swami Hrydyanad Ji Maharaj of Hryday Deep Ashram encouraged Kashmiri Pandit community to stick to their long lived hopes of returning back to the valley. Guru ji mentioned the importance of celebrating Shivratri. Kamlesh Tufchi, scholar, Jyotish and founder of Satisar Foundation stated that the Shivratri festival lasts for 21 days along which different special occasions are celebrated. Commissioner of Relief and Rehabilitation, Dr. Arvind Arvani attended the function and stated that more such functions should be held to make young generation aware of their rich culture.

History and heritage : -

Sriptures

Headline : Document the undocumented Sharda epigraphs

Summary :The article featured in ‘Daily Excelsior’ Sunday Magazine, page no. 1 , February 4, 2024 titled ‘Document the undocumented Sharda epigraphs’ by Iqbal Ahmad, the archaeologist states the importance of preserving Sharda epigraphs in this technological era as it is the indigenous script of the Kashmir valley. The author wants the Sanskrit and Persian departments of Jammu and Kashmir universities to document the archaic inscriptions before they become obsolete. Origin of this script took place in 7th century during Gupta Brahmi period, written left to right. The basic alphabets were Sanskrit which was later changed to Persian and Arabic language however usage of Sanskrit was not entirely ended until nineteenth century. Kashmiri Pandit scholars wrote various manuscripts and epigraphs.

The writer mentions about the author of the book, ‘Corpus of Sharda inscriptions of Kashmir’ named Dr. B.K. Koul Dembi who has mentioned all the inscriptions of Sharda script in his book among which thirty two are from Kashmir valley, six from Jammu and three from Ladakh The author states that Alberuni had noted the use of Sharda also called Sidham or Sidha Matrika in the North and North – western India. In the National Museum Delhi is present early script of Kashmir belonging to 9th century A.D.

The author being an archaeologist wants manuscripts and epigraphs written in Sharda, Persian and Arabic to be preserved well by Sanskrit and Persian departments of the Jammu and Kashmir universities.

Headline : Saptrishi Samvat – 5100 : Living evidence of Civilization of Kashmir.

Summary : The article published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ on page no. 06, February 10 written by KP leader, Human Rights Defendor and senior BJP leader Ashwani Kumar Chrungoo is about Saptrishi Samvat, the oldest and indigenous almanac of Kashmiri community as this year on 9th April 2024 on eve of Navreh (New year of Kashmiris) will complete five thousand and one hundred years. According to the author there are many old almanacs in the world among which Egyptian almanac is the oldest and Yugabd calendar is the oldest in whole of Bharatvarsha about 26 year older than ‘Saptarishi Samvat’.

‘Saptrishi Samvat’ is a testament of Kashmir’s age old Hindu tradition. Even though Kashmiri Pandits were displaced from the valley they still celebrate birthday of their sacred rivers Vitasta and Jhelum. There are six seasons in Kashmir valley Vasant (Spring) called Sonth in Kashmiri, Ghreesham {Summer hot season) called Garmi, Varsha – Ritu (Rainy Season) called ‘vehraat’, Sharad (Pre autumn), Hemant (Autumn), and Shishir (winter). Both Sharad and Hemant together are called Harud and then Shishir called ‘Shisher - mass.’

The author wants the government and the community to take steps for research and preservation of Kashmiri Communities rich history and suggests that a grand programme should be organized before Navreh, that celebration should be promoted throughout the country. Along with this educational institutions should also organize seminars and symposium for awareness. Special postal stamps regarding the event should be created.

Research Through Innovation

Temples

Headline: ‘Uma Devi Temple A sacred oasis in the Himalayan folds of Kashmir’

Summary: The feature published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ on January 21 on page 2 of the Sunday Magazine written by Shakeel Bin Abdul Ali highlights the harmony between Muslims and Pandits of Kashmiri community. The feature elucidates how author visited the pious land with his old friend from Brari Angan - a place known for sacred site of Mata Uma Bagwati Temple. They were given temple keys by Fatima Apa, a lady from muslim community. The author appreciates this gesture which in turn shows the unity in between two diverse

communities. The author states, “The deep – rooted history, spiritual significance and the captivating convergence of diverse communities position Mata Uma Devi Temple as a symbol of unity in the embracing Himalayan landscape of Kashmir.”

The author then narrates the story of Shree Shiv Ram Jalali also known as Swami Shivananda who was a tax collector during the reign of Afghan governor of Kashmir, Haji Karam Dad Khan. On reaching Brari Angan Shiv Ram felt a deep spiritual devotion towards Mata Uma Devi and became a saint. As guided by Mata Uma devi to follow a crow in wee hours of the next day Shiv Ram reached in the dense forest where five springs – Brahma Kund, Vishnu Kund, Rudra Kund and Shiv Shakti Kund joined to form a shape of Omkara. He did meditation there and lid Akhant Jyoti which persisted till the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits. When the governor summoned the saint he didn't arrive so the army soldiers were deployed to bring him back. But as they reached there they were shocked to see two lions flanking the saint. Hearing the incident the governor also visited the saint and witnessing his transformative power the governor offered 1600 of revenue – free agricultural land and a forest strip for the shrine's management and pilgrims' usage. And hence the place came to be known as Brari Angan (cat's compound). The author cherishes the rich history of this sacred temple which unites faith in spiritualism in both Hindus and Muslims together.

The author mentions that the revered temple conjoins the faith of Kashmiri Pandits and Muslims , known for its five pious springs Brahma Kund, Visnu Kund, Rudra Kund and Shiv Shakti Kund formig the shape of Omkara and magnificent transformation of tax collector Shree Shiv Ram Koul during Afghan governor's rule to Swami Shivananda through enlightenment achieved at the same place.

Holocaust day

Headline : KP Leaders for time bound rehabilitation

Summary : The news published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ on page 13 on January 10 is about Kashmiri Pandit community serious concern over no strong steps being taken by government for their rehabilitation in the valley. M.K Yogi, Vinod Pandita and Vishal Jotshi who are the leaders of the community made an appeal to the Prime Minister and Home Minister for taking a concrete initiative of bringing them back to the valley with dignity.

Headline : Settle Pandits in 3 erstwhile districts of valley : KPS

Summary : The news published in ‘Daily Excelsior’ on January 11 on page 5 is about Kashmiri Pandit Sabha community praising the government for its remarkable feat in uprooting the terrorism in Kashmir valley by ending the Hawala fund. The sabha members met Lt. Governor and KK Khosa, the Sabha President submitted the memorandum containing demands of the exiled community. As per the present government they were promised the land of their forefathers back along with settlement of colonies in Srinagar, Baramulla and Anantnag with basic amenities provided there. Along with this employment to the youth, renovation of Jagti buildings and not stopping the ration being provided were the demands raised. With the memorandum the Sabha also demanded implementation of Distress Sale Act 1997.

Headline : Embracing Resilience on Holocaust Day

Summary : The article published in regional newspaper ‘Daily Excelsior’ on page no. 8 on January 19 written by Dr. Raj Nehru shows the resemblance between Kashmiri community and the tortured community by Nazis. The writer mentioning about his favourite book “Man in search of Meaning” by author Victor Frankl, known for his commendable work on psychology and his harrowing experience in Nazi Concentration camps. According to the author 19th January holocaust forced people belonging to Kashmiri community to leave their homeland. The author compares Kashmiri Pandit community to Jews, Japanese – American community, Americans, Cambodians, Native Americans who faced the atrocities from time to time by rulers and violence by people but still stood tall. According to the author, “In Unity We Thrive, In Return We Strive.” should be the slogan of displaced Kashmiris and they should adhere to unity always.

Headline :- KPs observe Holocaust Day, demand rehabilitation with dignity.

Summary :- The news published in 'Daily Excelsior' on page no. 3, January 20 is related to Kashmiri Samiti Delhi commemorating the 35th holocaust day, marking the day of displacement of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley. Sumeer Chugroo, the President of Kashmir Samiti Delhi (KSD) recalled the disastrous day as the harsh memory of loss of precious lives of Kashmiri Pandit community due to militancy brought in by belligerent Pakistan. Due to Pakistan sponsored bloodshed in the valley, Kashmiri community was forced to leave their land of origin forever. Chugroo stressed that Kashmiri Hindus suffered lots of pain and called it as genocide of the community as the Kashmiri Hindus were forced to leave their ancestral land by violence and atrocities on them. Chugroo stated that the population of Kashmiri Pandits has depreciated a lot as the community went through excruciating loss all these years. Chugroo said that the community never had any enmity with anyone yet they were left alone in adversity. Chugroo persuaded the aboriginal community members to return to their own land as thought of by Margadarshan Resolution. With virtual meeting held by Virendra Raina, the President of the organization stated that a separate home land should be created in the valley for Kashmiri Pandit community. He also stressed on this very fact that Panun Kashmir has got support from numerous other Kashmiri groups and from all over the world.

In the same way, Kashmiri Pandit Conference (KPC) also observed the Holocaust day.

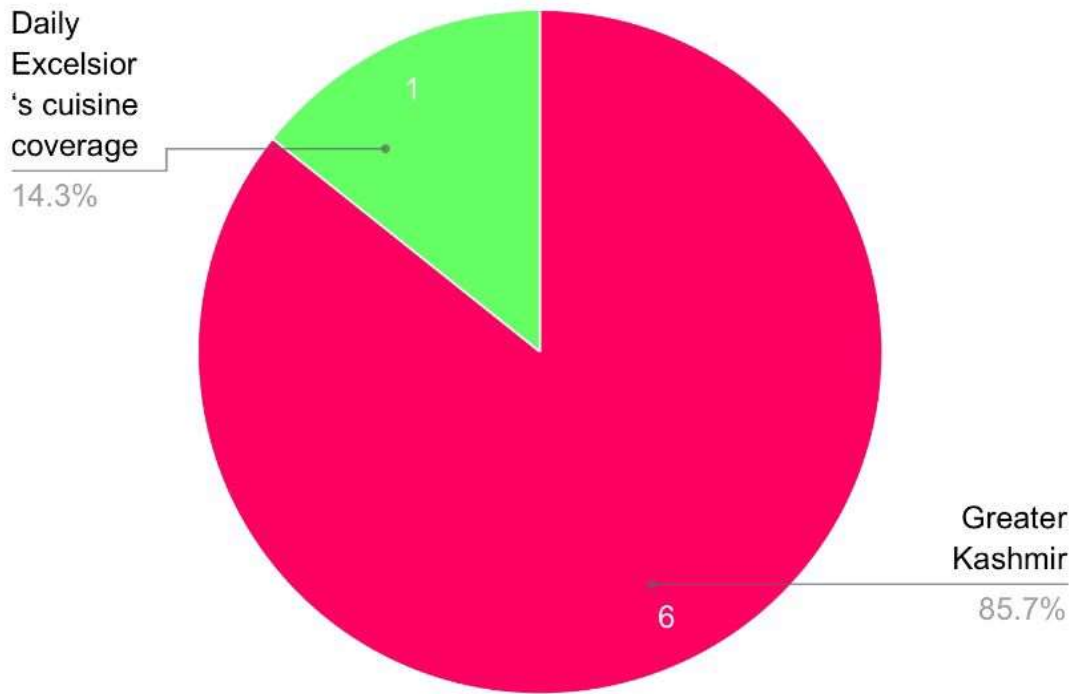
Headline : KPs urge PM to reverse exile

Summary : The news printed in 'Daily Excelsior' January 21 on page no. 13 is about 'Nishkasan Diwas' being observed by Pandits living in Gurugram which marks the 35th year of their exile. During this a seminar with banner named 'Kashmir Peace Lovers' was organized and Ashok Bhan disseminated important information about Human Rights Commission Report that compared exodus of Kashmiri Pandits to genocide. Along with this Dr. Raj Nehru, Vice Chancellor of Shri Vishvakarma University suggested the community to think forward and bring light to their lives.

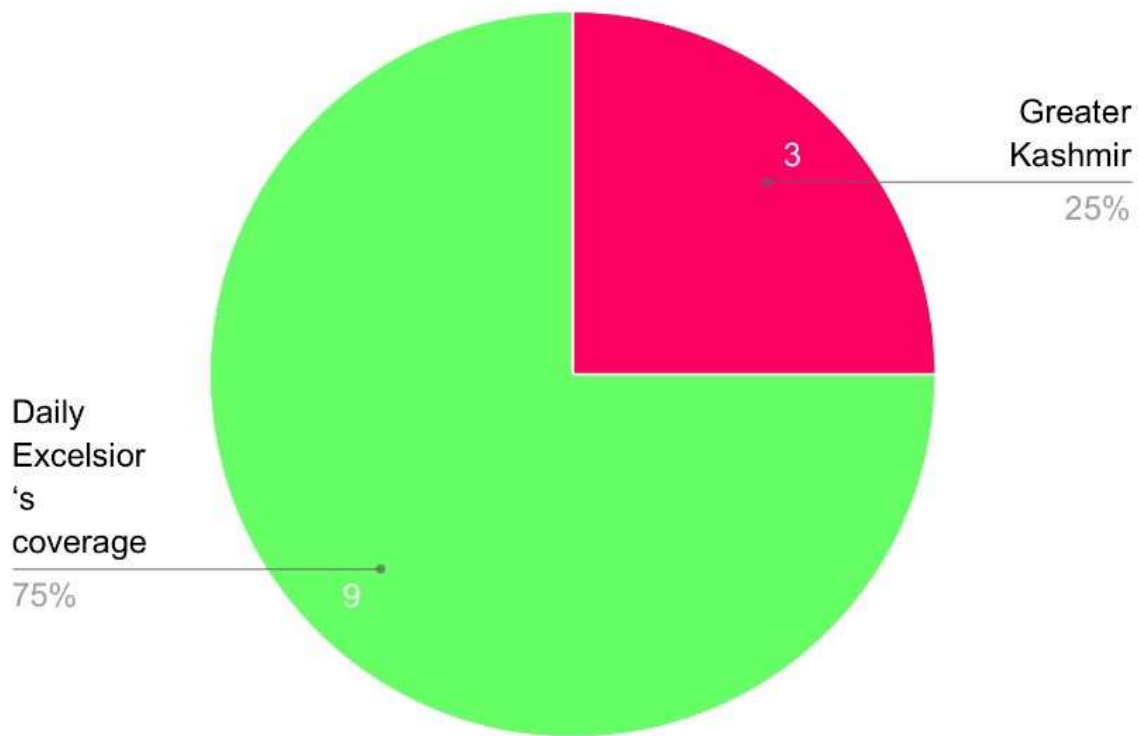


Results

Cuisine coverage in 3 months by Greater Kashmir and Daily Excelsior



Folk Songs and Festivals coverage by Greater Kashmir and Daily Excelsior

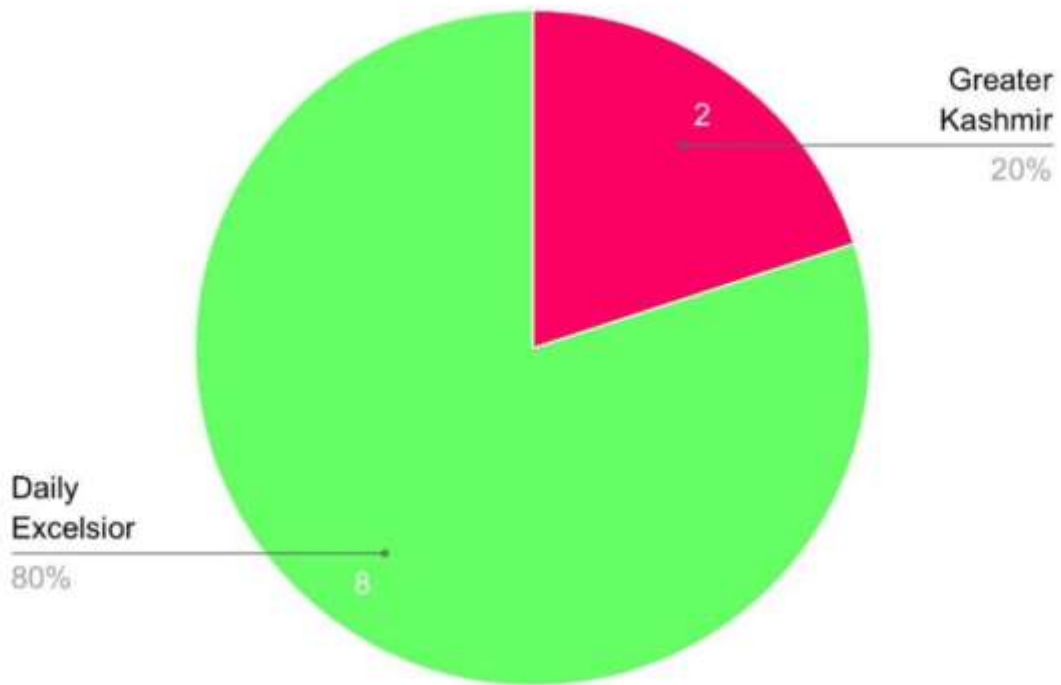


International Research Journal

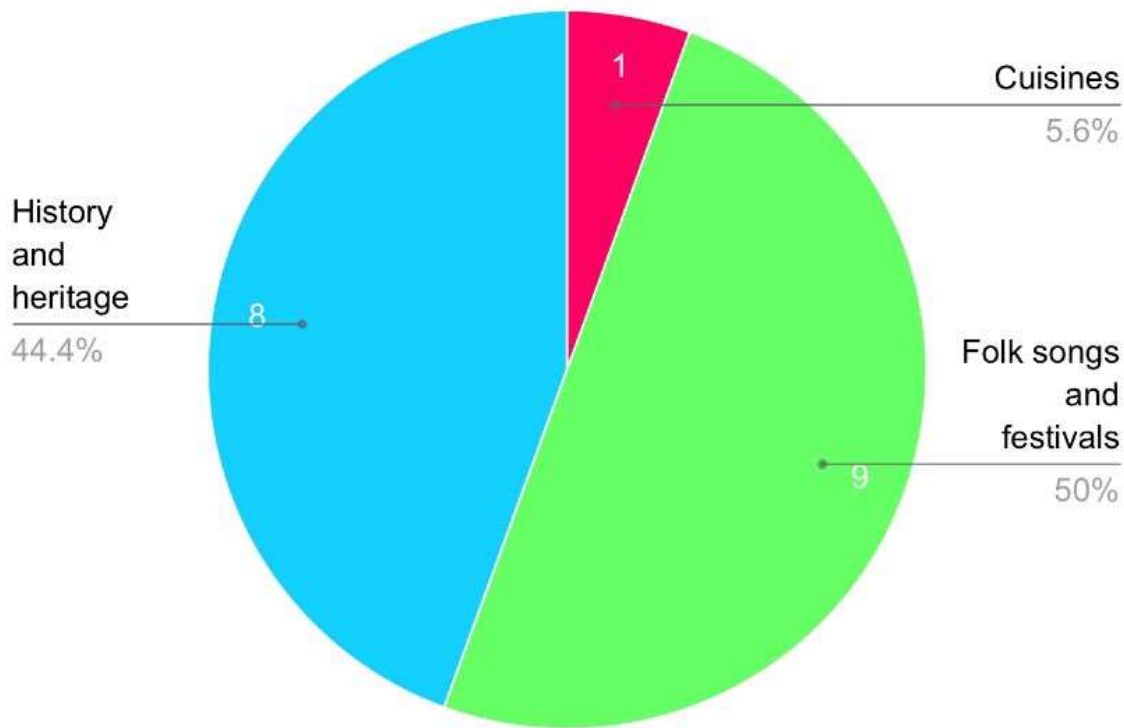
IJNRD

Research Through Innovation

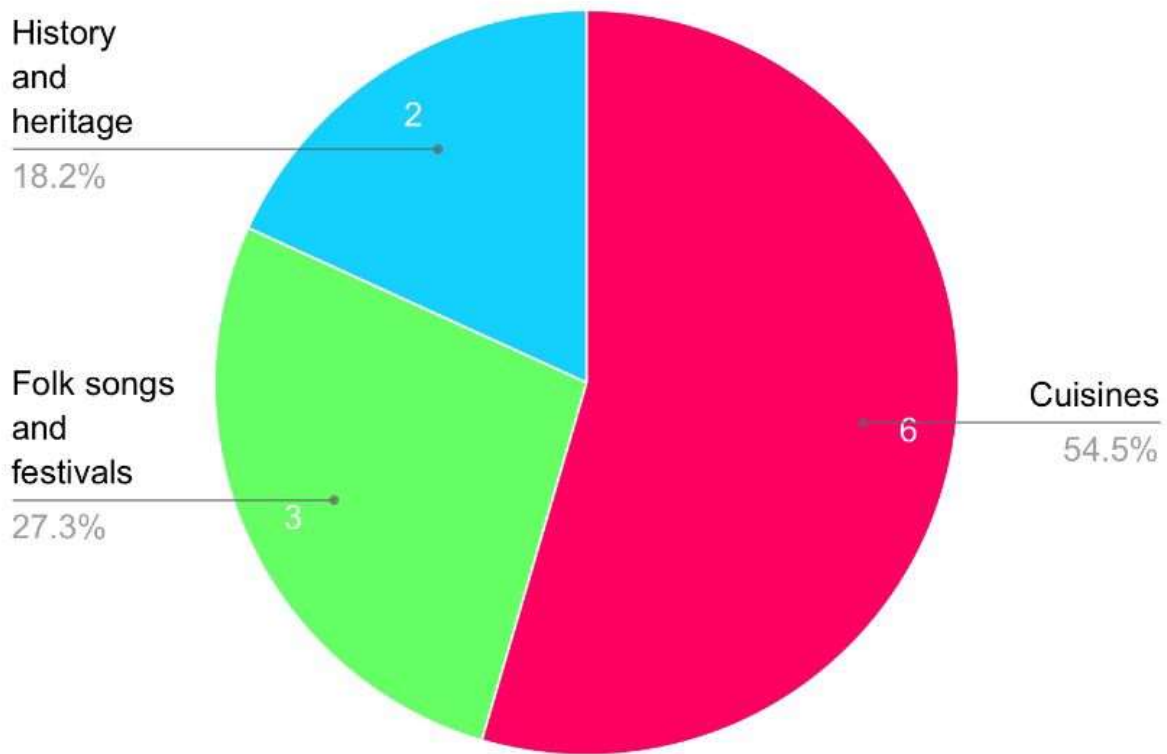
History and Heritage coverage by Greater Kashmir and Daily Excelsior



Coverage by Daily Excelsior



Coverage by Greater Kashmir



Conclusion

This study aimed to know which newspaper among the both covered the specific topics related to Kashmiri culture the more and which newspaper of the both showcased Kashmiri culture more, following which conclusion has been provided by above research :-

1. Daily Excelsior has given immense importance to Folk songs and festivals of Kashmir.
2. Greater Kashmir has provided more coverage related to cuisines.
3. Daily Excelsior newspaper gave required prominence to History and heritage of Kashmir by providing proper coverage of 35th holocaust day of Kashmiri Pandits, scriptures and temples.
4. Greater Kashmir gave less prominence to History and heritage of Kashmir by not covering any topic related to ancient scriptures and covering one article for temples and holocaust day
5. Daily Excelsior even though read more in Jammu has provided more coverage to Kashmiri culture than Greater Kashmir.
6. While Greater Kashmir even though read more in Kashmir provided less coverage related to Kashmiri culture.

Recommendations :-

1. Greater Kashmir should provide more coverage related to History and heritage so that youth of Kashmir knows their roots better.
2. More coverage related to Folk and festivals should be provided by Greater Kashmir.
3. Greater Kashmir being read more in Kashmir should focus more to cover topics of valley's rich culture.

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