

Research Scholar Information Sheet  
Institute of Kashmir Studies, University of Kashmir

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Title of PhD: Azadari in Kashmir: An Ethnographic Exploration of Shia Ritual Practices(tentative)

#### Short Summary

This study investigates the rich and complex rituals of Azadari as practiced by the Shia Muslim community in Kashmir. Azadari refers to series of mourning rituals that honour the martyrdom of Imam Hussain during the Battle of Karbala. These rituals possess deep religious, cultural, & social importance for Shia Muslims all over the world. In Kashmir context, these practices take on special local meanings that connect closely with the region's history, socio-political factors, and cultural heritage.

Using an ethnographic approach, this research aims to explore the many layers of Azadari rituals in Kashmir. It focuses on how these rituals are performed, experienced, and understood within the Shia community. The study plans to document various ritualistic practices like processions, recitations of elegies (such as Marsiyas and Noha), and symbolic mourning acts including chest-beating (Matam) & flagellation (Zanjir Matam). Moreover, it will look at where and when these rituals happen from home settings and Imambaras to public spaces during Muharram processions

Additionally, this research intends to examine how Azadari helps shape & solidify collective identity and agency of women among Kashmiri Shias. By analyzing how these rituals pass from one generation to another and adapt over time, the study will add to a broader understanding of the resilience & continuity of Shia cultural traditions in Kashmir. Ultimately, this research aims to provide a thorough account of Azadari in Kashmir

Current Status: planing stage and reviewing literature