

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Taskeen Bhat (Registration Number: 2070541), PhD scholar at the School of Humanities and Performing Arts, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bangalore will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Wednesday, 14 May 2025 at 11.00 am in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R & D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029.

Title of the Thesis	:	Weaving Narratives of Kashmiri Heritage: Reading the Pashmina Shawl as a Cultural Artefact and Repository of Social and Personal Memory
Discipline	:	English Studies
External Examiner - I	:	Dr Anurag Kumar Associate Professor Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University School of Languages and Literature Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University Kakryal, Katra - 182320 Jammu and Kashmir
External Examiner - II	:	Dr Lata Marina Varghese Professor (Former) St. Thomas College Ranni Mahatma Gandhi University Kottayam Kerala - 689641
Supervisor	:	Dr Shobana Mathews Professor Department of English and Cultural studies School of Humanities and Performing Arts CHRIST (Deemed to be University) Bengaluru- 560029 Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 07 May 2025



Registrar

ABSTRACT

This research highlights the status of Kashmiri pashmina shawls as geo-cultural artefacts that retain the region's heritage, artistry, and identity. It underscores the ingenuity and skill of Kashmiri artisans who, through weaving, dyeing, and embroidery, transform raw materials into the textiles of cultural and historical significance. By examining the relationship between textiles, memory, and place, the study reveals how pashmina shawls conserve and transmit cultural narratives, serving as repositories of both social and personal memory. The research explores the historical and external influences that have shaped Kashmiri crafts. Positioned at the crossroads of Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent, Kashmir has long been exposed to diverse cultural, artistic, and commercial interactions. While the Mughals and trade routes introduced new techniques, motifs, and designs, Kashmiri artisans adapted and innovated, creating a distinctive aesthetic. The study asserts the ingenuity of Kashmiri artisans in developing the buta or paisley motif, as a local symbol, holding their creative resilience amidst external influences. Focusing on Kashmir's rich crafts heritage, the research situates the pashmina shawl within the discourse of memory studies and material culture. It explores how these artefacts encapsulate collective heritage while reflecting personal memory, illuminating their role in shaping identity and fostering intergenerational memory. Through the lens of Paul Connerton's theory on memory transmission via bodily practices and ceremonies, the study sheds light on the shawls' enduring significance as cultural carriers across generations.

The research reads the pashmina shawl as an ethnographic text, focusing on the *Pashmina Map Shawl* housed at the Victoria and Albert Museum and the *Samavor Shawl* designed by Javaid Rathar. These cultural artefacts provide insights into Kashmiri daily life and symbolism, with emphasis on the motifs woven into these shawls. Drawing on Roland Barthes' semiotic framework, the study analyzes these motifs as signifiers, unpacking their layers of meaning and exploring their role in constructing narratives of identity and memory. By treating pashmina as a social and communicative object, the research highlights its ability to convey cultural and historical narratives, serving as both a material and symbolic artefact. The motifs interpreted as visual texts function not only as aesthetic elements but also as carriers of socio-cultural significance, bridging narratives with collective memory. This approach holds the pashmina shawl's dual role in Kashmiri culture: as a repository of memory and as a medium for the expression of identity and shared heritage. By engaging with interdisciplinary perspectives on memory studies, material culture, and artistic heritage, this study illuminates the pashmina shawl's role as a narrative artefact of transmission. It argues that these textiles bridge past and present, anchoring Kashmiri identity in a rapidly changing world while celebrating the resilience and creativity of its artisans. This research offers insights into memory, materiality, and cultural sustainability, advancing our understanding of how material culture shapes and preserves collective heritage.

Keywords: *Artefacts, Memory, Narratives, Culture, Craft, Pashmina*

Publications:

1. **Taskeen Bhat** and Shobana Mathews- The Lives Behind the Luxurious Threads: Beleaguered Sustainability of the Kashmir's Pashmina Artisans- Published in Textile: cloth and culture- SCOPUS indexed
2. **Taskeen Bhat** and Shobana Mathews- Cultural Artefacts as the Transmission of Socio-Cultural Experience: Exploring the Role of Pashmina Shawl as a Repository of Memory"- Accepted- Journal of Modern Craft- SCOPUS indexed
3. **Taskeen Bhat** -Exploring Symbolism and Myth in the Motifs of Pashmina Shawls: A Semiotic Analysis- Under final review in in Textile: cloth and culture- SCOPUS indexed
4. **Taskeen Bhat** -Book Chapter: "Fashion, Populism and Conservation of Craft", Book Chapter- Encyclopaedia of New Populism and Responses in the 21st Century- Published - "Springer Nature"