

Exploring the Cosmic Insights: Kashmiri Pandit Marriages and Astrology

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Abstract:

Astrology plays a significant role in the everyday lives of a person in terms of marriage, career or job. This study explores the complex relationship between astrology and marriage traditions among Kashmiri Pandits, a significant socio-religious minority group in India. Kashmiri Pandit marriages are strongly influenced by astrological practices, which are believed to align or harmonize individual's lives with cosmic forces to ensure marital harmony, prosperity, and spiritual growth. This paper examines their cultural significance, practices and the ways in which they shape matrimonial decisions. Through a combination of qualitative interviews and textual analysis of traditional astrological texts, this research highlights how astrology continues to play a vital role in the matrimonial rituals and decision-making processes among Kashmiri Pandits and to examine the astrology remedies for solving various marital conflicts.

Keywords: Astrology, Marriage, Kashmiri Pandit, Cosmic Insights, Kashmir

Introduction:

Astrology assumes that events on Earth and the stars or planets have a major relationship. This basic idea has given rise to all the various types of astrology that are studied and performed worldwide. Since the word comes from the Greek Astron, which means star, and logos, which means "word," astrology can be thought of as the word of the stars. The stars have a voice. But within the framework of classical philosophy, we might also think that the stars have reason, or a type of logic, that can reveal significant information. (Champion, 2012, p.12)

Moreover, Khanday discusses how the astrologer fixes an auspicious day for the marriage and information is sent to the bridegroom's house for the number of guests to arrive for marriage procession based on the analysis of horoscopes, further explaining the basic role astrology plays in the whole wedding process within Kashmiri Pandits community. (Khanday, 2019, p. 1022)

Kashmir Valley

The Kashmir Valley very well is known as 'Paradise on Earth,' which holds significant geographical, cultural, and historical importance in South Asia. Kashmir is positioned between

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the towering Himalayas and the Pir Panjal mountains, Kashmir valley is renowned for its stunning natural landscapes. Its distinctive geographical features, such as fertile plains, flowing rivers, and snow-capped mountains, have played a crucial role in shaping the cultural and social dynamics of the region (Raina, 2002, p. 12). This combination of natural beauty and strategic location has made the Kashmir Valley a vital cultural and historical junction throughout the centuries.

Kashmir Valley which is also known as 'Bhusvarga' (heaven on earth). SC Banerjee in his book *Companion to Tantra* say that Kashmir "In terms of Indian culture as well as panoramic scenic beauty and a healthy environment, it does definitely hold a special place in the country" (Banerjee, 2002, p.39).

Kashmir's central location in Asia has historically positioned it as a crossroads of cultural exchange, linking Central Asia, China, and the Indian subcontinent. This strategic position has enabled Kashmir to cultivate a rich and diverse cultural heritage, shaped by the influence of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, each of which has significantly contributed to the valley's cultural identity (Banzai, 1994, p. 21). The region's cultural development is further demonstrated through its varied architectural styles, artistic expressions, and literary works, all of which highlight the valley's complex and dynamic history (Bakshi, 1997, p. 15). It is therefore accurate to state that nature has been extraordinarily generous in showering Kashmir with the greatest bounty. The valley has been given an incredible gift by nature in the form of beautiful lakes with gleaming waters, both inside Srinagar and outside the city. Manasbal Lake, Wular Lake, Sheshnag, and Kausarnag are a few examples. Not only the lakes, but also the lovely springs that locals admired as nags, are an integral component of Kashmir's beauty. The same admiration is shown to Vethvatur, Verinag, and Nilanag. The river Vitasta, currently known as Jhelum, actually has these three names as its origin (Chaku, 2016, p.10)

Review of Literature:

Arjan Nath Chaku's *The Kashmir story through the ages* this book contributed significantly to the historiography of the region. It serves as an essential reference for understanding the long and complex history of Kashmir, particularly in how it relates to current geopolitical issues. The book's focus on cultural and religious history also fills a gap in the existing literature, providing a more rounded understanding of the region's past.

S.N Pandit's *Kashmir Hindu Sanskars* this book tells everything about the culture, spiritual traditions, rituals, customs and festivals of Kashmiri Pandits. This book is based on the detailed description of the 24 Sanskars of Kashmiri Pandit with proper rituals and rites performed from pre-natal till death. This book also deals with daily rituals and rites both male and female supposed to be performed from dawn to dusk.

T.N Madan's *Family and Kinship* in this book he has given the in-depth explanation of the social structure, family dynamics, and kinship practices among the Kashmiri Pandits in rural Kashmir. The book is based on Madan's extensive fieldwork and provides a rich, ethnographic account of Kashmiri Pandits. This book is mainly for the one who are interested in the study of family and Kinship.

S. R. Bakshi's *Kashmir History and People* is a detailed explanation of the historical and socio-cultural characteristic of Kashmir. In this book author provides the in dept description of the Kashmir and Ladakh region along with the rules of dynasties and the spread of Buddhism. This book also explores the rich cultural heritage of Kashmir their customs, festivals and everyday life of people living in Kashmir as well as in Ladakh.

Shiban K Kachru *Kashmiri Pandits (Brief Culture & Political History)*. In this book writer gives account of the culture and History of the Kashmiri Pandit community. In addition to demonstrating a strong dedication to the cause, the author gives those young men and women who have lost their lives a means of learning about their pasts.

Lawrence E. Jerome's *Astrology and Modern Science: A Critical Analysis*. This Article critically examines astrology, arguing that it lacks scientific validity due to its origins in magical thinking. The author traces astrology's historical development and analyzes its principles, showing they rely on the unscientific "magical principles of correspondences. "While acknowledging scientific studies on celestial influences, he claims. The article also reviews statistical attempts to validate astrology, concluding that credible evidence exists. Though well-reasoned, it could have explored the psychological and cultural reasons behind astrology's enduring popularity. Overall, it presents a strong case for separating science from mysticism.

Significance of the Study:

There is a massive literature on marriage practices and astrology but specific studies focusing on the Kashmiri Pandit community astrology is very scare in modern context. Most existing research tends to generalize Hindu marital customs without studying the unique aspects of Kashmiri Pandit traditions. After doing literature review it is found that no particular work is done on the astrology related to Kashmiri Pandits marriage, Therefore keeping in consideration the gap, present paper is written.

Objectives:

The objectives of the study are as followed:

1. To study the astrological practices in Kashmiri Pandit community
2. To examine the Astrology remedies for resolving marital issue
3. To study the Influence of planetary positions on marriage outcomes

Methodology:

For the present paper both Primary and Secondary data is used:

Primary data: Primary data refers to information that is gathered directly by a researcher or organization especially for a particular study or purpose.

- Non-participant Observation
- Interview Schedule
- Interview

Secondary data: Information that has already been gathered, examined, and published by another party for a goal unrelated to the current research project is referred to as secondary data.

- Journals, Social media, Articles, Books, Online sources

Sampling: Purposive Sampling: In this Sample respondent fulfil the purpose of the study.

Sample Size: 50 Respondent

Astrology in Kashmiri Pandit Marriages

Astrology

The parent's initial step is to obtain a number of natal charts in order to choose a bridegroom or bride for their own son or daughter. They require an astrologer's help in this situation to choose the best and most ideal family out of a few choices based on matching along with their zodiac/lunar positions from their natal charts. As a result, people seek the assistance of the astrologer of their preference at this vital time. Astrology is a developed field that not only has a broad scope in modern science but is also used to predict future events. Astrologers make predictions by studying horoscopes, which show the positions of planets. Since everyone's horoscope is unique, these positions reveal details about a person's thoughts, strength, character, health, wealth, and behaviour. To ensure compatibility, astrologers compare the horoscopes of a boy and a girl before marriage. (Pandit, 1989, p. 173)

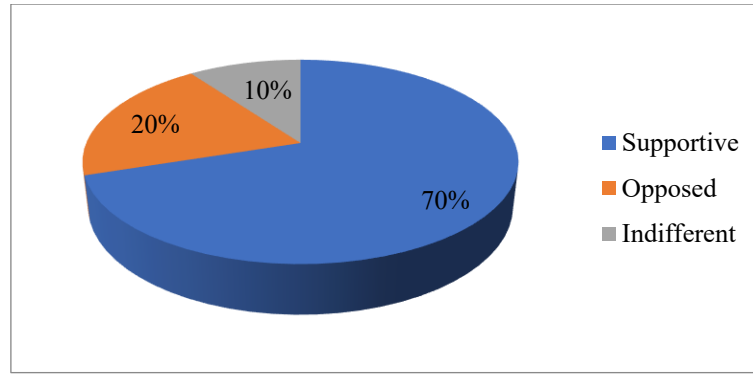
Matching of Horoscopes:

While giving approval for the marriage, the following factors are looked into by the concerned astrologer-

When matching a boy and a girl for marriage, their zodiac signs should either be friendly or neutral, and not in conflict. Among the twenty-seven Nakshatras (lunar constellations), the Nakshatra of either the boy or the girl should be the same, or at least not belong to rival categories like 'Devas' (gods) or 'Raksha's' (demons). In the twelve zodiac signs, neither person should have Mars in the 1st, 4th, 7th, 8th, or 12th house (sign) in their birth chart. Their zodiac charts should align well in these aspects for a harmonious match. (Pandit, 1989, p.173)

- Varnas – Caste
- Vashya – Obedience
- Tara – Planet/ Star
- Yoni – Source of all animate
- Griha Maitri – Friendship
- Jati Maitri – Defects
- Brikuta – Zodiac positions
- Nadi Dosh – Short comings

Source: SN Pandit, 1989



Pie Chart showing that Astrology plays a significant role in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits.

It shows that among 80% of the Kashmiri Pandits follow Astrology in mostly are the old generation, and 25% of them are those who opposed the Astrology and 15% are the indifferent. This shows that Astrology is practiced and followed among Kashmiri Pandits whereas Astrology plays a significant role in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits.

Astrology plays a significant role in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits, impacting marriage, work, health, and spirituality, among other aspects of life. An outline of astrological practices followed by the Kashmiri Pandit community is provided below:

Horoscope matching: The matching of horoscopes prior to marriage is very important to Kashmiri Pandits, as it is to many other Indian communities. This method, called Kundalin Milan or Gun Milan, confirms bride and grooms’s compatibility for the success of their marriage by looking at the locations of celestial bodies in their birth charts.

Astrological Consultations: When it comes to important life decisions like marriage, career, and life events, Kashmiri Pandits usually consult experienced astrologers. Based on a person’s birth chart’s positions, planetary aspects, and yogas (combinations), astrologers offer directions.

Muhurta Selection: In Kashmiri Pandit culture, choosing of right auspicious moment, or Muhurta, is important for life events like marriages, housewarming celebrations, or the launch of new businesses. To ensure prosperity and success, astrologers identify the best celestial alignments for these rituals.

Rituals and Remedies: Astrology is linked to religious rites and treatments in the culture of Kashmiri Pandits. People can wear gemstones (known as Ratna Jyotish) that, whenever difficulties are or adverse planetary influences, astrologer advice has to follow to do certain rituals or pray in attempt to ward off the bad effects and emit positive energy.

Planetary Movement: In Kashmiri Pandit astrology, the motion of planets and their passage through the signs of the zodiac are important. Astrologers use their interpretation of these transits to predict possibilities, difficulties, or changes in people’s lives and offer appropriate guidance.

Astrological Calendars: Kashmiri Pandits use astrological calendars, such the Panchang (Jantri), which offer details on planetary placements, auspicious days, holidays for specific kinds of activity, and religious feasts. These calendars can be used as a daily schedule or to help arrange significant occasions in alignment with positive cosmic energy.

Cultural Significance: Astrology plays a significant role in Kashmiri Pandit culture, which combines local rituals with age-old Vedic traditions. It inculcates decision-making, comprehending and managing life's difficulties, and cultivating a sense of spiritual connectedness to the universe.

In the end, astrology plays a significant role in the worldview, behaviors, and beliefs of Kashmiri Pandits by offering them a framework for understanding the relationship between human existence and the celestial realm and by revealing cosmic orders.

Effect of planetary position on marital outcomes

Similarly, like other astrologically oriented societies, the Kashmiri Pandit custom maintains that celestial alignments significantly influence the results of marriages. According to Kashmiri Pandits, planetary positions have an impact on weddings in the following ways:

Compatibility: Planetary position influence marriage which results in determining the compatibility of bride and groom. Astrologers consult horoscopes to see the placements on the planet and determine whether two people are compatible for marriage or not. Proper configuration of planet before marriage is considered auspicious for marriage, but other people who are not consulting may experience challenges or arguments in the future.

Manglik Dosha: Among Kashmiri Pandits, a presence of Manglik dosha which is brought on by Mars's (Mangal's). It's placement in particular horoscope houses is seen to have a major influence on marriage prospects. A Manglik marrying a non-Manglik is seen as unlucky since it is thought to cause marital loss, financial difficulties, or possibly the death of the spouse. Astrologers don't recommend certain ceremonies or marriages to other Manglik's as remedies for Manglik dosha in order to lessen its consequences.

Financial and Social Stability: It is also believed that financial and social stability of a marriage is also influenced by planetary configurations. Positive impact of planets is believed to provide good finance, wealth, happiness and social status to the couple, while unfavorable situations can cause money problems, disputes, or social isolation.

Health and Well-Being: The health, happiness and wellbeing of the pair are also thought to be influenced by the planet's position in the horoscope. Some planets may have negative impacts that lead to mishappening or health problems, which could risk the stability and overall health of the marriage.

Timing of Marriage: Astrology contributes in determining the most auspicious dates and times for marriage rites based on the placements of celestial bodies. It is believed that getting married under fortunate astrological alignments raises the probability of a happy and prosperous union, while those who don't believe could lead to challenges or problems in the marriage.

Marriage Stability: It is thought that marriage by pairings astrologically might reveal the stability and durability of a marriage. For couples whose horoscopes match has strong compatibility and favorable planetary alignments are believed to live a long and happy marriage. However, couples with problematic astrological configurations may face more difficulties and barriers in maintaining their marital bond.

Astrology generally has considerable influence on Kashmiri Pandit's marriage rituals, influencing decisions about who to marry, when to get married, and whether or not they expect stability and happiness in the marriage. Within the Kashmiri Pandit community, astrology continues to influence marriage results and set expectations for unions, despite differences in family and individual views.

Some Astrological remedies for resolving marital issues

In Kashmiri Pandit tradition, astrological remedies for marriage issues usually incorporating spiritual activities, rituals, and gemstone are recommended. Some few common remedies that might be suggested are as follows:

Practicing Havan and Pujas: Havan are fire rituals and Pujas are acts of worship that are performed to please particular planetary deities and obtain their blessings for harmonious marriages. Depending on the astrological study of the couple's horoscopes, different rituals and homams may be used to enhance specific planetary diseases or doshas (imbalances).

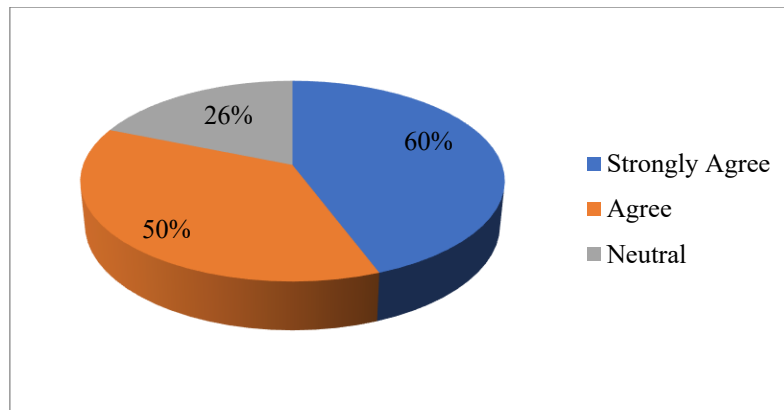
Putting on Gemstones: Gemstones are believed to have the power to influence cosmic energy. According to the couple's horoscope astrologers suggest wearing of gemstones to enhance the favorable impact of planets or decrease negativity. Wearing a yellow sapphire (Pukhraj) for Jupiter or a diamond for Venus can be suggested to alleviate marital happiness.

Reciting Hymns and Chanting Shlokas: Mantras and Shlokas are uttered for some divine benefits and to alleviate adverse effect of planets. Couples are advised to chant certain prayers and mantras on a daily basis for peace in married life.

Rituals & The practice of Vrats (Fasting): Kashmiri Pandits believe in practicing fasts or Vrats. Majority of them keep fast including their children like fasting on Janmashtami, Shivaratri etc. These fasts are practices to bring happiness and prosperity in the family or performing specific rituals on auspicious days like on Friday this day is dedicated to goddess Laxmi so, by performing Gopal Puja will give blessings of offspring.

Asking Advice from Astrologers: Kashmiri Pandits seek advice from the expert and the professional astrologer or pandit for marriage which is based on checking of couples' horoscope and after that suggest suitable remedies to finish the root cause of the problem and gives conclusion for the problems

It's important to keep in mind that while astrological remedies hold significance in the tradition of Kashmiri Pandits, practical efforts aimed at improving communication, understanding, and emotional support in marriage are often viewed as complementary to them. Therefore, it is advised that couples use astrological remedies in conjunction with therapy, communication techniques, and mutual respect to address marital issues comprehensively.



Pie chart showing the percentage that Kashmiri Pandits seek astrological consultations for various life events and decisions.

It shows that 60% of Kashmiri Pandits strongly agree that they seek astrological consultations for various life events and decisions and 50% only agree and 26% are with neutral and they also do because their elders do.

Diverse Beliefs: The basic concept of astrology is that human behaviour can be influenced by the positions of celestial bodies. When spouses have different astrological beliefs, conflicts and debates about the significance of astrological compatibility might occur.

Communication Problems: Astrological incompatibilities are sometimes associated with different communication styles. For example, the difference between a quiet, introspective sign and an outgoing, expressive one may lead to miscommunication and misconceptions.

Proposition of Conflicts: Certain astrological signs are recognized for their inclination toward confrontation and sociability, while others may prefer to avoid conflict altogether. This could make it more challenging to find points of agreement and settle disputes in the partnership.

Compatibility concern: Astrology is used among people to assess their compatibility with their relationships, which can be unsettling and stressful if one's signs are considered to be incompatible. This can cause unwanted strain and tension in a relationship, especially if one or both partners give astrological compatibility more weightage than they should.

Personality Differences: Some astrological signs are often related with specific psychological qualities, such as emotional sensitivity, confidence, or practicality. Partners who have different personality types may find it difficult to understand and relate to one other, which can lead to discontent and separation.

Astrological beliefs can affect a person's goals and actions in life, such as financial, professional, and family planning choices. When there are conflicting priorities and values based on astrological beliefs, it can be challenging to align long-term goals and collaborate while making important life decisions.

Family Dynamics: Astrological ideas can affect family members perspectives on the connection and extend to them. Differing astrological perspectives across extended families

can put additional strain on a marriage, especially if family members show doubt or disapproval.

Emotional harmony is essential in any relationship, but astrological mismatches can occasionally cause emotional disconnects and make it harder for partners to understand one another's wants and feelings.

While astrology can be an entertaining and fascinating subject for some, it is crucial to remember that there is no scientific evidence to support its use in determining a partner's compatibility. Regardless of astrological sign, mutual respect, clear communication, a willingness to compromise, and shared values are ultimately what make marriages successful. Astrologically opposed partners may find it helpful to have frank conversations, go through couples counselling, and concentrate on laying a solid foundation of mutual trust and understanding.

Along with it is seen that Astrology plays a significant role in the lives of Kashmiri Pandits and they seek astrological consultations for various life decisions

Conclusion

Astrology continues to be an integral aspect of Kashmiri Pandit matrimonial traditions, deeply influencing the selection of life partners, wedding dates, and post-marriage harmony. The practice of horoscope matching, astrological consultations, and the selection of auspicious muhurtas reflects the community's belief in aligning human lives with cosmic forces to ensure prosperity and marital stability. Through qualitative interviews and textual analysis, this study highlights the enduring role of astrology in Kashmiri Pandit marriages, despite the growing influence of modern perspectives. While younger generations may question or challenge certain astrological beliefs, the older generation continues to uphold these traditions with conviction. The study also sheds light on astrological remedies that are commonly sought to resolve marital conflicts, reinforcing the belief that planetary influences can shape human relationships. Although astrology is not scientifically proven, its significance in the cultural fabric of Kashmiri Pandit society remains undisputed. It serves as both a guiding principle and a psychological assurance for individuals navigating marital relationships. Future research can further explore how these astrological beliefs evolve in contemporary times and their intersection with modern science and rationality. Ultimately, astrology in Kashmiri Pandit marriages is more than just a ritual it is a reflection of cultural heritage, faith, and the desire for harmony in personal and familial life.

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