



# MONTHLY THEME

## KASHMIR RIGHTS FORUM CUSTODIANS OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN KASHMIR

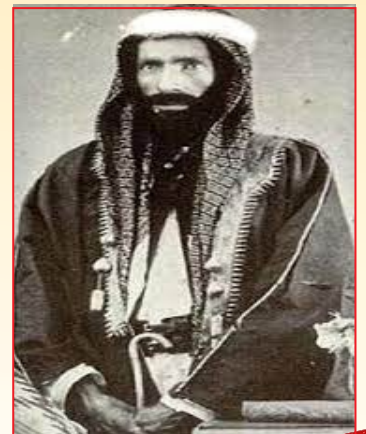
The Kashmir Rights Forum (KRF) is an informal, secular, apolitical and forward looking interactive platform highlighting human rights violations perpetuated against innocent Kashmiri population by terrorists either directly supported by separatists and their over ground workers or indirectly by sympathizers over last three decades as a result of proxy war initiated by Pakistan on our homeland.

KRF is dexterous, focused forum with overarching mission to mobilize expertise and public opinion to counter the organized attempt to violate human rights of common innocent Kashmiris of all generations by the nexus and tarnishing the image of government and security forces by certain section of media, intelligentsia and conflict entrepreneurs by flaring up allegations of human rights violations on them, thus diverting attention from the real perpetrators of these violations.

We, at KRF encourage response by likeminded or otherwise, people and organizations, on documents, articles & video content produced on multiple social media platforms by us to apprise all citizens of such violations. KRF will endeavor to expose the designs of the perpetrators by studying the past and present and producing the facts for public scrutiny as part of our research and highlight such events in present, earliest on occurrence.

### Glimpses of Monthly Theme SEPTEMBER 2022

## KASHMIR'S RADICAL NARRATIVE - A DEATH TO KASHMIRIYAT. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE ?



**JIHAD**

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## PREFACE

In the absence of any great political leadership in Kashmir, the shroud of leadership has fallen on religious leaders who have, in their regular congregations used the issue of continuing violence in the valley. Kashmir is one of the living ideals of diverse traditions where a variety of religious beliefs have peacefully co-existed and flourished alongside for centuries without any opposition. However, the Valley's history has also witnessed periods when all major religions have competed for political and social supremacy. Religion has been employed as an instrument for political domination, both by political and religious leaders and institutions. The political turmoil in the post-1930s period has often witnessed periods of religious radicalization, seeking to redefine and set Kashmir's political agenda. However, this period has also witnessed a neutralization of the forces that have spearheaded radicalization movements in the first place. Such neutralization has happened as a natural consequence and because of certain deliberate state actions as well. Today armed with greater level of education, Kashmiris are working both ways. At one level they are creating a critical mass of people who are more willing to understand, respect and co-exist with people of other faiths. At another, greater exposure to global political developments, mainly in the Middle East, evoke sentiments of radicalization and aversion to peaceful co-existence with other religions. For another section of the population, religion remains a key instrument in furthering the political agenda and seeking a restoration of Kashmir's political rights. For this segment, secular democratic politics has failed in the realization of the greater political goals. There are two facets of the debate on religious radicalization in Kashmir. At one level, the trends of organized radicalization are on a clear decline. The decimation of the structures and cadres of organizations like the once influential Jamaat-e-Islami and its offshoot organizations during the last twenty years has been a base for significance in trend of organized radicalization.

Equally, in post-nineties scenario, Muslims in Kashmir by and by were divided on the basis of casteism, sufiism, peerism and fundamentalism. New sections of the ahl Hadees and Tableeg schools of thought are emerging, their institutions resembling Jamaat-i-Islami, which does not believe in sufiism or shrine worship, however their faith is in overall Islamization of the Kashmir – giving an impetus to religious radicalization. The aim being to literate every Kashmiri to contain the hatred for the mainland through their literature, speeches, lectures, Friday sermons and other sort of religious gatherings. They had almost occupied the youth to arm themselves with vehemence against the mainland.

To undo the wrongs being perpetrated, responsibility comes upon the mature section of the society to untie them from this menace that could prove fatal for their future. It can cause ruination in no time, given the consequences in larger context, meanwhile we'll be discussing in the section forth to come, what caused it to spread also how we can counter it to save our future and the valley at the same time.



There is the psychological dimension, if waging “jihad” satisfies psychological needs of retribution or “keeping up the fight,” quenches a “spiritual addiction,” or bestows honor (perhaps through martyrdom), then broad political processes are unlikely to fully contain violence associated with militancy. Islamic concept of Jihad possesses great moral value, except limiting it to religiously sanctioned warfare, both Sunni and Shia schools of Islam distinguishes between a 'greater jihad' and 'lesser jihad'. The greater jihad involves a spiritual and moral transformation of the believer itself whereas jihad in terms of warfare constitutes the lesser Jihad. In Kashmir especially with regards to refugees in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, there is no stark distinction between greater and lesser jihad both of them exist in a continuum. [1] Undertaking greater jihad prior to performing lesser jihad gives legitimacy to the latter. The reason being the Refugees who either have experienced firsthand violence or the Kashmiri Mujahids from Muhajir settlements, who have been involved in militancy, help induce transformation by reinforcing the narrative of state perpetrated violence; thus this state of being aware of violence against one's own community (quom) creates an obligation to act on behalf of the larger community.

Jihad as an armed struggle, in the Kashmiri communities, is legitimized by promoting a connection between human rights (insani haquq) and the individual's religious duties (farz) towards other individuals. At its core, the 1989 insurgency



provided a confluence between a search for Islamic identity and Kashmiri sub-nationalism. [2] While, there were many reasons for insurgency to emerge such as disenchantment with the electoral process, failing political economy, and external state sponsorship but what differentiated the Kashmir dissent from other secessionist movements faced by mainland, is the mixture of secular nationalist liberation struggle with the assertion of political Islam.

#### ORIGIN OF ISLAMIC RADICALIZATION

The political motivation of the leaders of Islamist jihadist-type movements is without any doubt a reason for dissemination of the radical ideology. A glance at the theatres where such movements flourished shows that most fed of their political — and usually military — encounter with the West. This was the case in India, Sudan in the nineteenth century, Egypt and Palestine in the twentieth. The moral justification and levers of power for these movements, however, were for the most part not couched in political terms, but based on Islamic religious sources of authority and religious principles. By using these levers and appealing to deeply ingrained religious beliefs, the radical leaders succeed in motivating the Islamist terrorist, creating for him a social environment that provides approbation and a religious environment that provides moral and legal sanction for his actions. The success of radical Islamic organizations in the recruitment, posting and ideological maintenance of sleeper activists (the 9 - 11 terrorists are a prime example) without their defecting or succumbing to the lure of Western civilization proves the deep ideological nature of the phenomenon. Therefore, to treat Islamic terrorism as the consequence of political and socioeconomic factors alone would not do justice to the significance of the religious culture in which this phenomenon is rooted and nurtured. In order to comprehend the motivation for these acts and to draw up an effective strategy for a war against

terrorism, it is necessary to understand the religious-ideological factors — which are deeply embedded in Islam.

#### FACTORS BEHIND THE GROWTH OF KASHMIRI RADICALISM EMERGENCE OF SEPARATIST PROPAGANDA

Although evidences clearly points on involvement of Pakistan in Operation Topac in feeding terrorism in valley, some rely on the belief that the alleged rigged elections in 1987 – a propaganda that was raked up by the Pak backed stooges fostered disillusionment among the Kashmiri Muslim population, emboldening the youth to cross the LoC to receive arms training in so called 'Azad Kashmir' (Pakistan occupied Jammu & Kashmir) which however is not the case. JKLF led by Amanullah Khan committed itself to the self-styled secular political struggle advocating secession of Jammu & Kashmir from India. Yasin Malik, along with Hamid Sheikh, Ashfaq Wani and Javed Ahmad Mir, formed the core group — dubbed the "HAJY" group — of the JKLF terrorists in the Kashmir Valley. The JKLF started its terrorist activities in the Valley and struck first on 31 July 1988 by exploding a bomb in Srinagar to make their presence felt and exposed themselves open. Later on striking again on 8 December 1989, Dr. Rubiya Sayed, daughter of Union Home Minister Mufti Mohammad, was kidnapped by JKLF, which demanded the release of terrorists. Submitting to the pressure of desecration of innocent daughter of Kashmir, the government facilitated the release of terrorists thereby giving them new confidence and stimulating their movement.

Ashfaq Majeed Wani got killed in confrontation with the security forces in March 1990, while Yasin Malik was captured in a wounded condition and imprisoned until May 1994. Another accomplice Hamid Sheikh later released by the Border Security Force after being captured in 1992. The organized struggle led by JKLF and supported by Pakistan was at its crowning in 1990, and took a violent turn resulting in abductions, senseless killings and other criminal activities. Once the insurgency was efficaciously launched, Pakistan decided to withdraw its support from JKLF, they being perceived to be committed to the independence of Jammu & Kashmir rather than its accession to Pakistan and as a result much of its squads had either been dispersed, destroyed or absorbed into other groups and the movement almost died down by 1993. Its leadership also split into factions, some of them renouncing militancy. HM, a pro-Pakistani Kashmiri Muslim terrorist group formed by Muhammad Ahsan Dar in 1989, marked the beginning of the second phase of the movement and its shift towards radical Islam. HM introduced

jihad to rationalize political violence in the name of religion and at one point about 2,000 young terrorists were said to have been associated with HM. Pakistan facilitated the formation and promotion of various other terrorist groups which included Harkat-ul-Ansar, Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, Harkat-ul-Jihad al-Islami, and LeT under the umbrella of Islamic jihad. To impose the radical Islamic culture on Kashmiris, Pakistan initiated a strategy to convert the multicultural Kashmiri society into a hardcore Islamic one through the fear of gun. Many Sufi shrines and 7 mosques were targeted by the Pakistan-backed terrorist outfits. In May 1995, the Islamist mercenaries from Afghanistan and Pakistan destroyed the ancient shrine of saint Noor-u-Din (Nund Rishi for Kashmiri Pandits), called Charar-e-Sharif. This shrine had been a center of pilgrimage for hundreds of thousands of devotees, both Hindus and Muslims, over the past six hundred years. Such brutal practices by Islamist terrorists, who exhorted the Kashmiri Muslims to banish these 'un-Islamic practices', as visiting ancient holy shrines of saints (Sufis/ Rishis), caused revulsion among the common masses in Kashmir.

# JIHAD

### JIHAD AS A TOOL OF SOCIAL MOBILISATION

Terrorist organizations found it excessively easy to mobilise the common populace with Islamic slogans. But this, in turn, motivated the radical players to become more serious with Islamic aspirations. In the past, organizations such as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) (which for all practical purposes had a secular understanding of Kashmiri nationhood) capitalized on the sway held by political Islam by creating a 'crusader' like narrative against the supposedly 'Hindu/ Indian State' (thus promoting notions of Group think and In group - Out group Bias). Motivational literature used symbols and metaphors of Islam extensively, carefully selecting terrorist strands of Islamic history all the while harking back to the heroic deeds of the holy Prophet Muhammad. Several leaders used Islamic fables to persuade the population that 'jihad and martyrdom' would 'secure freedom' from mainland India. The JKLF also used the Friday Namaz (prayer congregations) at the Jama Masjid in Srinagar to mobilise public support. On occasions, when huge number of masses

gathered at the mosque and after the Imam (religious leader) finished prayers, the JKLF boys dispersed amongst the crowd and raised slogans — "Islam zindabad" (long live Islam) and "hum kya chahatein, azaadi" (we want what - freedom). Thus, to portray Kashmir's identity as distinct from the Indian state, a narrative has been created wherein Kashmir as a state has unique Islamic identity that is threatened by Indian notions of secularism. Thus, in this scenario, Jihad should be waged against the Indian state, as Quran 'legitimizes' violent action to defend the Shariat, which in this case is the Kashmiri people's right to govern themselves democratically. Establishing an Islamic state is not the end but the means to achieve the fantasy of independent Kashmir.

### THE KASHMIRI PANDIT FACTOR

Generally, the Kashmiri Pandit community has been a tolerant and accommodative community of people. However, over the last few decades, the emergence of radical Kashmiri Pandit groups, like Panun Kashmir, which espouses radical political and religious ideologies, has changed the perception of the community. The group's political ambition of creating an isolated and separate homeland within Kashmir Valley remains a radical agenda, which has the potential of stirring reactionary radical responses from Islamist groups in Kashmir. An ordinary Kashmiri does not get affected due to this agenda, but the question remains striking in the minds of politically conscious people giving an impetus to radical Kashmiri section. This agenda also serves to draw parallels with the Palestinian issue, making Kashmir's political question acquire increasingly religious overtones. Any further delay in an honorable return of the Kashmiri Pandits to their original homes and their assimilation with the majority Muslim community holds the potential for further radicalization among both the communities, fueled by reactions and counter reactions.



### DECIMATION OF THE JAMAAT-E-ISLAMI

The decimation of one of Kashmir's main religious political parties, the Jamaat-i-Islami, during the insurgency era has been a significant political process. On the one hand, some of its cadres' embrace insurgency, and eventual neutralization saw a significant erosion of its political structure. On the other, the erosion of its cadre base and grassroots presence gave a fillip to the emergence of other religious groups like the Jamiat-e-Ahlihadees. All this has had two significant ramifications for Kashmir. There is one perspective which views the political ideology of groups like the Jamaat-e-Islami as more accommodative than that of groups like the Jamiat-e-Ahlihadees. The other views the decimation of the Jamaat-e-Islami as having sealed its capacity to create another grassroots-base and mobilize students in the near future. Post-9/11, most of the cross-LoC radical political affiliations and insurgent networks have been severed. Many of such networks, mainly consisting of Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and other such organizations and their over ground offshoots had started importing ideologies which were earlier mostly alien to Kashmir.

### GROWTH OF WAHABI IDEOLOGY

With the increasing unpopularity of certain practices of Kashmiri Muslims who identify themselves with the Hanafi school of thought, mainly the practices concerning the Sufi shrines, Wahabi ideology is gaining ground in Kashmir. Mosques which would traditionally be run by people of Hanafi thought, highly influenced by the Sufi ways of religious practice, are increasingly being overtaken by Wahabi ideologues. This is happening not only in Kashmir's countryside, but in Srinagar city as well, including the Old City – considered a strong bastion of Hanafi Islamic thought. Although this transition does not necessarily mean outright religious radicalization, it leaves scope for transformation which over a period of time attains a degree of radicalization – both social and political. On the other hand, the Jamiat-e-Ahlihadees's plan of establishing an Islamic University in Srinagar is seen as a direct response to the Mata Vaishno Devi University established in

### THE MADRASA PHENOMENON

Although there is a clear growth in the number and influence of Islamic Madrasas in Kashmir, the fact remains that they are, for most part, politically passive. The emphasis of the educational curriculum in these madrasas is mostly on the teachings of the Quran and Hadith (the traditions of the Prophet of Islam). Examination of the sample trends in these madrasas suggests that their proliferation does not

necessarily translate into religious radicalization, given the nature of their curriculum that generally focuses on individual reformation rather than political Islam seeking political domination. The objective of the students remains to attain jobs in local masjids and attain highest degrees in religion to survive themselves. It necessarily does not have any political ramifications at all, given the curriculum of these madrasas. But somehow it may also affect incase the teachers take any diversion from the passive environment of the school. Certain instances have given impulses where teachers have given emphasis to ideology.



### AMARNATH LAND CONTROVERSY

The Amarnath land controversy, 2008 was a watershed in the state's history. It created divisions which are hard to reverse and also gave birth to a new wave of radicalization. Those who were against the land transfer argued that as per government figures alone, in 2008, the number of Hindu pilgrims to the Amarnath cave stood at a record high of 536,000 until 1 August 2008. They also argue that Kashmiri Muslims are publicly committed to host the pilgrims and facilitate the logistical needs for the same. The J&K government is legally committed to make available the best possible arrangements for the Yatra. At the same time, the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB) remains legally empowered as before by virtue of the SASB Act 2002 to autonomously conduct the Yatra. However, an exponential increase in the number of pilgrims beyond the area's carrying capacity, contamination of fresh water sources which feed 80 per cent of Kashmir's drinking water system and hijacking of the Yatra by rightwing elements have been serious matters of concern which rakes up the radicalism in certain section of the valley. Though the impulses are yet embedded and not yet clearly visible but the effect is certain to come fore and cause disturbance.

## EXTERNAL DIMENSION

The Pakistan Factor Training via terror camps in the aftermath of the Uri attacks in 2016, the Indian Army, on receiving credible and specific inputs, decided to hold a pre-emptive strike to neutralize the team of terrorists who had positioned themselves at launch pads along the Line of Control (LoC).<sup>[3]</sup> The existence of these terror camps, along the LoC, was vehemently denied by the Pakistani authorities. The situation became all the more serious when, soon after the Mumbai attacks (2008), under mounting international pressure, the Pakistani authorities sealed the Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) offices in Muzaffarabad and arrested the Lashkar Chief– Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi from there. Apart from providing training, these camps were also used to disseminate propaganda against the Indian State by creating an array of narratives – some of which states that Islam is in danger, from the polytheist forces of Hinduism, as evident from communal incidents such as Babri Masjid. During their Dawati training, the fighters involved in 26/11, were made to watch various propaganda videos showcasing the plight of Kashmiris at hands of the Indian state agencies.

## MANIPULATION OF RELIGIOUS SENSITIVITY TO FUEL THE PROXY WAR

Individuals from poorer economic backgrounds were attracted to such terror organizations who then promised a functional job and decent remuneration. Ajmal Kasab upon being interviewed by the Mumbai Police stated that he was indoctrinated wherein he was made to believe that Muslims were not allowed to offer Namaz in India. He further stated that he was pleasantly taken aback when he first visited a mosque in India and realized that nothing was out of the ordinary; at the micro-level, Kasab's poverty status was further exploited as he was made to believe that, inherent prosperity of the Indian state was directly responsible for his economic woes. In the early days of insurgency, individuals crossed the border via J&K to attain military training and infiltrate the LoC to wage 'Jihad'. For the ignorant individual, a two-fold narrative of 'revenge and recognition' was concocted – revenge against the security forces who were responsible for personal losses (both of family and material possessions). Narratives adopted consisted of 'legend like formulations', an example being recognition in the eyes of God as the individual attains shahadat that is their body upon burying bypasses decomposition and elevates them to a saintly status with a promise of rewards in the afterlife.

Tehreek -e- Hurriyat's ideology has been particularly successful in attracting youth. Some of its important techniques are:

**Mosques:** Leaders of Hurriyat fully utilizes the Friday prayers to persuade people of their right to self-determination and incorporate Islam into the daily workings of their life.

**Strikes and Protests:** By these strikes, Hurriyat attempts to draw international attention to the Kashmir dispute. According to Geelani, strikes are the only way by which oppressed people can fight for their rights.

**Funeral Processions:** The leaders of THJK often offer Namaz – e – Jenaza of terrorists who are locally known as Mujahideens; the funeral procession becomes a rallying point for highlighting the excesses of the state agencies and to stress upon the right of self-determination.

**Meetings:** Meetings (ijtimas) are held at the tehsil, unit and district levels. These meetings are attended by the general public and are addressed by party leaders. The party also organises seminars, discussions, and speeches in which different sections of the society are invited.

Print and Electronic Media are also used for the dissemination of ideology.

**Calendar:** In the year 2009, Geelani came up with a calendar to mark the history of the J&K dispute. The calendar also contains his preaching's, addresses and alleged human rights violations by the State.

**Literature Distribution:** To popularize their books and pamphlets, the Tehreek-e-Hurriyat has adopted different tactics like Maktabs (book shops) where they sell such literature at lower rates and even distributes it free of cost. Many workers of the party voluntarily move from door to door to introduce their literature to different sections of society. The patriarch of the organisation — Geelani writes in Urdu.

**Bait-ul-Maal:** Bait- ul- Maal essentially means 'treasuries'. Hurriyat gets its funds from the 'obligatory contribution' of the members of the organisation, sale of 'hides' of sacrificial animals during Eid-ul-Azha, sale of books and zakat.

## LACK OF SOCIAL AMALGAMATION

Another popular recurring theme with regards to political radicalization in the valley, is the lack of social amalgamation with the rest of the Indian Society, caused by Article 370 and Article 35-A. Finally, the process of political radicalization in Kashmir can be explained by the 'Social Movement Theory' which took shape in the 1940s, with the idea that movements arising from irrational processes of collective behavior occurring under strained environmental conditions, produces a mass sentiment of discontent, [4] wherein individuals would join a movement because they passively succumbed to the overwhelming forces. In the

present quasi-violent era interdiction spontaneous mass gherao of security force missions could provide an ideal scenario to view from SMT lens. Interdiction also involves stone-pelting in a coordinated way to divert or hamper security forces seeking to kill or capture terrorists. When security forces lay a cordon for an impending kinetic engagement with terrorists, locals gather at the encounter site, form human barriers between security forces and their targets, and pelt security forces with stones to buy time for the terrorists to escape. Security forces are then forced to operate in an environment with high risk of civilian collateral damage and, as a result, cordon-and-search operations tend to go awry because terrorists escape and civilians are injured or even killed. Contemporary terrorist funerals also provide spaces for collective public expressions of separatism. Sometimes, terrorists are directly able to address the attendees in funerals which then functions as venues for direct and indirect terrorist recruitment, mass incitement, and mobilization, as mourning often escalates into street protests and stone-pelting. Thus, risky and reckless cathartic mass confrontational behavior is caused by anger with state's political system, and an inherent strength derived from the communal nature of such events, which often leads to a lack of regard for the power of organized security forces. In due course, the erstwhile J&K state's party politics adopted 'coalitionist' overtones, thus inherently making state political parties more conforming towards the Centre's eradication-oriented counter-terrorism efforts, as submission can be coerced from these parties with a threat to dissolve state government coalitions. Priority given to counter-terrorism efforts tends to encourage corruption, poor governance, and financial irregularities in exchange

### UNDERSTANDING KASHMIRIYAT

In Kashmir, for centuries, people affiliated to different faiths have lived together, and their religious affiliations never affected their sense of belongingness to each other as a Kashmiri. In Kashmir, conversion from one faith to another also did not obliterate all the practices of previous faith that was their earlier way of life. The close and constant interaction between the people of different faiths in Kashmir developed a culture that became an important component of the Kashmiri ethnic identity irrespective of their religious affiliations. It is to characterize the harmonized living together of the Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits, with difference but without conflict that the term Kashmiriyat implies. Growth of composite culture reflects the shared experiences of her people: the Hindus and the Muslims worship in common shrines

and revere common saints. The emergence of composite culture requires constant interaction between communities. Composite culture endorses common sense of belonging and it is endowed with a shared body of beliefs and practices through which its members define and conduct their relations. Different cultures contribute to the making of a composite culture, which in turn provides a wide range of common sources of enjoyment, shared interests, collective achievement and collective pride.

The present-day hatred for the opposite community had been triggered by the radical elements. It was not always there, A chunk of population who were funded and misguided or, had an inimical intent to cause suffering to the people started to push the vehemence. The spirit of Kashmiriyat is still living and green in the hearts of true Kashmiris who share their mutual respect and love for the rest of the communities. There is a crucial need of spreading the nerve of Kashmiriyat to all corners of the population and encourage the spirit of brotherhood and secularism even more.

Kashmir, at this point in history, has been widely shifting from the epitome of 'Paradise on Earth' to a slightly pessimistic connotation of 'Trouble in Paradise'. Each side involved in the conflict, has their own lens from which they perceive the conflict and beseech their followers to adopt their world view. Thus, the need of the hour is of a constructive dialogue which keeps the most urgent interests of the Kashmiri Populace at the forefront alongside effective representation. Since, radicalisation is as much a social process as it is psychological, it would be wishful thinking to believe that radicalisation could be stopped just by a transformation within the individual - encouraging the spirit of Kashmiriyat; social institutions also require adequate shifts. The armed sides should take cognizance of the fact that 'violence begets violence', the information dissemination mechanism, undertaken by the media in valley, should also be constantly aware of the fact that the valley is a sensitive region and proper well-founded research should go in, anything misleading could spurt the violence. While reporting events, perspective from all sources should be curated to dispel any biased narratives. Thus, in sum while 'counter-terrorism' is the 'antidote', 'countering radicalisation' should be the prescribed treatment for conflict in the Valley.

### COUNTERING RADICALIZATION

There are serious inherent, external and religious issues in the valley, which need to be addressed in a constructive way; there is also a need to understand each other's perspectives and address both, real and perceived grievances.





Commissions should be set up and studies undertaken to enquire into the different problems. This is important given the significant mistrust regarding what has happened in the last two decades vis-à-vis the indoctrination of youth. It is essential to have independent studies on these issues, with a view to take out what has actually happened. Governance must be taken down to the grassroots level and political decentralization should take place through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs). One of the major challenges to effective governance in J&K is the question of decentralization, which took place after a long time. Projects implemented by the State and Union governments were caught up in State capitals — Jammu and Srinagar. They seldom reached the district headquarters in valley. Even if they did, they never move beyond the district headquarters. Effective implementation of PRIs is the only way to ensure that the decentralization process reaches the grassroots level in the far-flung areas of J&K which in turn will ensure maximum engagement of youth in various schemes laid down by the government to safeguard the employment of population.

There exist serious grievances — real and perceived, along regional and religious lines. Irrespective of whether they are real or imagined, however, there is a need to first, create awareness and an understanding of each other's sentiments as a means to promote peace and tolerance within the state. Second, besides creating awareness, there is a need to initiate a debate at two levels — between and within the communities. Such a debate should not only be aimed at seeking to understand the other's grievances, but must also attempt to find common ground and understanding. The two major communities are Kashmiri Pandit community and Muslim community residing in Kashmir — a harmonious relationship with understanding of differences in both cults will result in intermingling of culture which has a positive connection to oppose the polarization on either sides. In the way, religious radicalization can be cut short to yesterday only. In

addition to the debate between the communities, debates within each community are equally important. Unfortunately, in recent years, the debate has been inward-looking, as was seen during recent past's controversies such as the Amarnath land transfer and new Central University for J&K. There is a need for communities to strive to arrive at a consensus within themselves as also to be cognizant of the sensitivities and grievances of others given the plural ethos of the valley of Jammu and Kashmir. In case the gap is not filled shortly, it might have consequences of foreign intrusions — involvement of external factors like ISI to fuel up the polarization at cost of religious sensitivities within each community to destabilize the region.

Recent years have also witnessed an enormous and increasing strain on Sufi Islam in J&K, which until now has remained the bedrock of peace and tranquility in the state, ensuring harmony both, within and between communities. The revival of Sufism should therefore, be encouraged, to dilute radical elements. As part of the endeavor to promote communal harmony and peace, there is a need to strengthen institutions, such as shrines, across the three regions which welcome devotees from all faiths. For example, the shrine of Baba Ghulam Shah in Shahdara near Rajouri is a symbol of harmony; people from different regions and faiths, not only from J&K, but also from outside visit this shrine. Such institutions should be encouraged.

There are numerous apprehensions regarding the safety and maintenance of places of worship, especially in Kashmir Valley. Kashmiri Pandits, living outside the Valley for instance, fear the desecration or occupation of their temples. On the other hand, the Kashmiris feel that the local civil society has taken extra care of these places of worship and that the fear of the Pandits are exaggerated. Many in the Valley would welcome an independent study on this issue, to ensure that these fears which are exaggerated or motivated may be addressed. Lack of connectivity had been the major factor in keeping the regions divided — physically and psychologically. Measures to improve infrastructure to promote connectivity and mobility between regions should be undertaken. Unless there is a physical movement of people, especially students, media, and the business community, the regions are likely to remain divided. Besides improved connectivity between the regions, there is also a need to improve connectivity within the regions. Gurez in Kashmir Valley; Doda, Rajouri and Poonch in Jammu region; and Batalik, Nyoma and Turtuk in Ladakh, remain on the peripheries. Unless the border districts are physically connected with the

rest of the region, and each of these regions in turn, are connected with the others in J&K, people are likely to remain disconnected not just physically, but also emotionally. Initiatives such as the revival of the tourism industry and other cultural activities will help in the growth of the economy and facilitate cross-regional movement. Tourism has a major role to play in not only developing the local economies, but also bridging gaps between the different regions and also with the rest of the country. The tourism industry in J&K needs to be revived through special packages and schemes that will help the communities to invest in addressing basic issues.

Role of media is crucial in bridging the gap between the two communities set apart years ago. The media as a platform to voice the concerns of the people within the three regions in a constructive manner, is also of vital importance. It has a responsibility to objectively communicate the ground realities in J&K to the other regions as also to the rest of the country. People must be made part of the solution and must begin to see opportunities within several problems that confront them rather than focus their energies on the problems alone. For this to come about, the efforts of the civil society along with the government will be crucial to prevent further radicalization and build peace among various communities and regions of J&K. It is imperative to promote inter-regional movement for which the youth in particular, must take the lead to participate in cross-cultural and educational programme. Both the Universities in Jammu and Srinagar could act as nodal agencies to facilitate such interactions. The regional media could provide space in each other's respective papers to highlight the several instances of communal harmony within their regions which often go unreported. As a means to counter growing religious radicalizing tendencies therefore, the regional media could publish a series of progressive stories on communal harmony within each region and highlight the significance of certain shrines in Jammu and Kashmir regions such as the Sharda Sharif and Kheer Bhavani, which could become religious centers of attraction for all faiths.

## CONCLUSION

Although the genesis of terrorism is often attributed to the alleged rigged elections, in reality it was the realization phase of Pakistan's Operation Topac to inflict a thousand cuts on its adversary, India. Pakistan has always refuted the truth of Operation Topac but it has proved to be a reality both documentarily and circumstantially. The founder of JKLF, Amanullah Khan and Dr. Farooq Haider, Vice Chairman of JKLF, have explicitly spoken to the press at several occasions conforming the legitimacy

of Operation Topac and the fact that they were running Pakistan funded weapon training camps in Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir. Pakistan has been successful in its design of stoking the fires of massive insurrection in the Kashmir Valley in early 1990. JKLF, funded by Pakistan organized a struggle of so-called self-determination, eventually resulting in violent abductions, senseless killing and other criminal activities. Though JKLF, that chose to be the face of insurgency claimed that insurgent movement was for freedom of the State, it never tried to liberate the part of the State (Gilgit Baltistan and Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir) which is under illegal occupation of Pakistan. Instead, it used Pakistani funds to establish weapon training centers in Pakistan Administered Kashmir for young boys from the Kashmir Valley to get trained, fight their own people back home and eventually get killed. They demanded the right of self-determination in the name of the people of Jammu & Kashmir but, in essence, campaigned on behalf of Pakistan. Pakistan withdrew its support from JKLF giving way to another terrorist organization, Hizbul Mujahideen, that favored the idea of the State's merger with Pakistan and establishment of an Islamic order while introducing the concept of jihad. The next decade was characterized by not only widespread violence throughout the Kashmir Valley but also structural changes of the Kashmiri society with an emphasis on the establishment of Islamic order. There was a mushroom growth of terrorist organizations that decreed the objective of their struggle as "Islamization". Mosques became platforms for religious sermons intermingled with fiery political speeches, delivered by trained Islamic scholars (Mullahs) from Pakistan. Central government officials, Kashmiri Pandits, liberal and nationalist intellectuals, social and cultural activists, liberal Muslims and writers became the primary target of the gun-toting self-styled revolutionaries. Pakistan embarked on a strategy to convert the multi-lingual and multi-cultural Kashmiri society into a hardcore Islamic society, on the lines of Afghanistan, through the fear of the gun. Consequent to these developments, almost an entire population of minority community of Kashmiri Pandits was forced to run away from their ancestral land and continues to live in exile today. Considering the array of events, it is hard to phantom that the struggle was in any way related to demands for greater political rights. Pakistan took advantage of a weak political system and palpable political divide among the people of State by imposing social changes associated with religion giving rise to Islamic fundamentalism and subsequently creating an environment from which insurgency thrived.

The Islamic Terrorists are the new role models for the unemployed youth who are made to believe that Muslims across the world are fighting and dying for them as a service to Islam. The disappearances of (now killed) Osama bin Laden and Mullah Omar have been turned into myths and replaced by stories that Allah helped them to disappear and these stories are used by Islamic clerics in Kashmir while preaching to the youth in mosques. The education system has been destabilized, with the mushrooming growth of madrassas outpacing the modern institutions of education. Jihad is not only fought with arms and weapons but also has a cyber dimension to it. Social media has glamourized militancy and an ideological war is being fought in this new operational theatre, using web based applications that allow creation and sharing of messages. 'Electronic Jihad' includes activities such as the provocation to engage in terrorist activities and carry out violent attacks, radicalization and recruitment of supporters and carrying out a psychosomatic war aimed at increasing the enemy's vulnerability. Despite the bloodshed and ongoing unrest for nearly three decades, for a sizeable population, religion remains a key instrument in furthering the political agenda and seeking greater political rights. It is for these people to understand that practices that led to tampering of social order, pluralism and interreligious harmony can never be divine. It needs to be acknowledged and accepted that no movement has succeeded in achieving its objectives unless it is inclusive in its political character and social base, representing political interests of all ethnic groups. It is high time that media, civil society and most importantly, the political leaders who have been acting as the corporal hosts of the State, educate the youth of the Valley and discourage them to hero worship terrorists, who majority of the times, are angry victims of pseudo-religious eyewash and economic deprivation.

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