

The Spectrum of the Political Consciousness Through the Kashmiri Emergency: A Study

Nirja Sharma

Research Scholar, Department of English, SSJ Campus, Kumaun University, Nainital – 263002, Uttarakhand

Prof. Nirmala Pant

Guide and Professor, Department of English, SSJ Campus, Kumaun University, Nainital-263002, Uttarakhand

Abstract:

For more than fifty years, the dispute over Kashmir's territory has dominated Indo-Pak connections. The conflict has evolved a convoluted mix of intertwining reasons, ranging from religion to material resources to ethno-linguistic groupings, from its origins before India and Pakistan's independence to the contemporary insurgency that developed in 1990. These and other elements of the Kashmir conflict are covered extensively in the extensive literature on the topic. This approach, on the other hand, employs repositioning theory to shift the discussion away from the conflict and toward the narratives that surround it. The research explains how specific discourses and discourse can sustain a conflict past its logical limit by examining the precise history and utilisation of the self-determination concept.

The 'self-determination movement' in Kashmir revived in the years following 1988. Within this movement, a relatively secular element emphasizes the concept of Kashmiriyat, a common shared orientation shared by people of many denominations. The early 1990s exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley appears to be a setback to secular nationalist assertions as well as the underlying premise of 'Kashmiriyat.'

Key words: Kashmir, Dogras, Reading Room Party, Muslim Conference, National Conference.

The emergence of militancy altered the complete spectrum. People felt it was a momentary sort of migration at the time, which many of them undertook even before 1989, but they didn't even realize the magnitude of the circumstances at the time. Just after the community was evacuated, an attempt was investigated systematically to notice changes that occurred in their socio-cultural and demographic-economic realm over time. The purpose of this research paper is to analyse the migratory pattern that led to exclusion of Kashmiri Pandits after 1989-90.

Across history, there have been several illustrations of civilizations that have suffered first and then produced excellent literature as a projection and representation of their true journey of bruised picture of their souls. Literature takes on the role of a palette on which authors strive to portray the events of their lives. Any conflicts zone history is littered with bleak, murky, and unsatisfactory tales of violence's aftermath. The violence in such a conflict zone has significant consequences for the common people, who

are the silent victims of such a conflict. Kashmir is one of these war zones a silent spectator to the horrors it has seen at the hands of cruel conquerors and unscrupulous invaders who have tormented the innocent and naive Kashmiris with barbaric and dictatorial persecution for centuries. Kashmir seems to have a complicated history as it has shifted from ruler to ruler and empire to empire. The last monarch of Kashmir, Yaqub Shah Chak, was dethroned by the Mughals in the 16th century, and the state became part of the Mughal Empire in 1586. From Akbar to Aurangzeb, the Mughals controlled Kashmir for one hundred and sixty-six years. The economic and political situations of the inhabitants of Kashmir improved during Mughal rule. Some Mughal rulers were kind, generous, and diligent, taking steps to ameliorate the economic and political situations of Kashmiris, while others were despotic dictators. Kashmir faced religious persecution and extremism during the time of Mughal ruler Aurangzeb. Persecution was carried out against Hindus and Shias. People were subjected to taxes. In her book, *Kashmir in the Crossfire*, Victoria Schofield, a British novelist, biographer, and military historian contends:

Under Aurangzeb's successors the administration deteriorated and disorder spread. Rebellion, murder, lootings, arrests and assassinations were all common occurrences. The Mughal Empire began to collapse after Aurangzeb's death. In 1753, the Afghan monarch Ahmed Shah Abdali took advantage of the power void left by this and dispatched one of his military leaders, Abdul Khan Iskandari, to invade Kashmir. Abdul Khan was victorious in overthrowing the local monarch and cementing his control over the territory, following the introduction of an Afghan dominance period. The inhabitants of Kashmir experienced the worst degradation, persecution, and deprivation throughout the sixty-seven years of Afghan administration. Religious intolerance was at its worst:

The Afghan rule proved the worst of all the despotisms that the Kashmiris had suffered in their long history. By stealing the last pennies from the pockets of the poverty-stricken people and by inventing diabolical methods to torture them, the Pathan subedars made themselves the most despicable of rulers. (Bazaz 8-9)

The last Afghan monarch, Jabbar Khan, was overthrown by Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Sikh armies in 1819, when one of his generals, Misser Dewan Chand, overthrew him. The dominion of the Sikhs lasted 27 years. During this time in Kashmir's history, Hindus had it better than Muslims, who were subjugated to religious bigotry by Sikhs. The British Empire turned its attention to the Sikh lands when Maharaja Ranjit Singh died. Gulab Singh diabolically allied with the British in the subsequent fight, in which both sides appeared equally balanced, fully knowing the British's impending ascension into the Indian political stage. The Sikhs were defeated as a consequence, and on March 16, 1846, they signed the "Treaty of Amritsar." Kashmir was given to Gulab Singh for a sum of 75 lakhs of rupees in exchange for his acceptance of British suzerainty, as stipulated in the treaty. Consequently, began the Dogra dynasty's control over Kashmir, which lasted until 1947, when it was annexed by India. Gulab Singh (1846-57), Ranbir Singh (1857-85), Pratap Singh (1885-1925), and Hari Singh (1925-47/52) were the four maharajas

who ruled Kashmir for 100 years. Hari Singh's tenure ended for all practical purposes when Kashmir was annexed by India, however he remained maharaja of Kashmir until hereditary rule was abolished in 1952.

The biggest political upheaval and instability occurred during Hari Singh's reign. During his reign, Kashmiris felt particularly isolated, leading to the formation of the "Kashmir for the Kashmiris" campaign, which was led by the educated elite of Kashmiris. Soon after, protests against Maharaja Hari Singh's policies erupted from all corners of society, Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah, a Kashmiri from Aligarh, was one of the most prominent among them. This marked the beginning of the valley's political upheaval. The early 1990s were the worst and continue to be the worst period in Kashmir's history in terms of misery and brutality. Partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 sowed the seeds of conflict, dividing India into Pakistan and secular India. On August 15, 1947, the aristocracy was not transmitted to the succeeding administrations and was dissolved. "They could accede to one or the other Dominion or could live as independent states by making suitable political arrangements with their more powerful neighbouring Dominions" (qtd. in Mangrio 255). With the exception of Hyderabad and Junagadh, states that were adjacent to India and had a majority of non-Muslim people acceded to India. While states bordering Pakistan that have a majority of Muslims acceded to Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the monarch of Kashmir at the time, was offered the option of joining India or Pakistan, but he couldn't decide because of the divide between his own ancestry and that of his followers. Kashmir's Maharaja, who desired independence, could not make a decision right away. Concurrently, when invaders from Pakistan, now known as Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunwala region, invaded Kashmir, Singh sought India's help to drive them out, and in order to get military aid from India, he had to sign "The Instrument of Accession." The Indian army reaches Kashmir on October 27. Pakistan then denounced the accession as illegitimate, and the first Kashmir war erupted. India took the dispute to the United Nations in 1948. The United Nations Commission on India and Pakistan approved a resolution urging for a ceasefire, the evacuation of Pakistani soldiers and tribals, and a plebiscite, but it has never been implemented. Sheikh Abdullah succeeded Maharaja Hari Singh as Prime Minister of Kashmir in 1948. The Indian Constitution became effective in 1950. Article 1 declares Jammu and Kashmir to be a part of India's territory, while Article 370 grants the state a privileged status based on the provisions of the "Instrument of Accession."

Religious and socioeconomic concerns spurred a social awakening in Kashmir in the 1930s. The people placed a lot of trust in the youthful Maharaja Hari Singh when he ascended to his uncle's throne in 1925. However, he placed so much reliance on his counselors that he lost contact with his countrymen and became unaware of their problems, leading to the establishment of the Reading Room Party (RRP) in Srinagar in 1930. Saraf claims that it was Mirwaiz Mohammad Yusuf Shah who proposed the name of Sheikh Abdulla as RRP leader and publicly acknowledged him as "our leader" who reflected "my opinions and those of our whole people." It is significant to mention that not only Muslim individuals but also numerous political entities in British India endorsed people's efforts to resolve their problems. For example, the 'All India Kashmir Committee', founded in Shimla on July 24, 1931, and Majalis Ahrar-i-Islam-i-Hind, which previously presented monetary support to Kashmir leaders in organizing and

managing a progression against the Maharaja, later publicly supported the Muslim movement by transferring jathas and creating havoc in Kashmir.

In response, the Maharaja endorsed three communal parties: the Kashmiri Pandits Conference, the Hindu Sabha in Jammu, and the Shiromani Khalsa Darbar. For quite a while, this culminated in Kashmir having no institutionalized political party. In 1931, a Hindu policeman in a Jammu jail vandalised the Holy Quran, igniting the people's increasing anger. As a result of this episode, a cascade of events ensued in Kashmir, sparking an insurgency. In response to the incident, the Maharaja declared martial law and imprisoned Sheikh Abdulla. As a result of these circumstances, an outsider, Abdul Qadir, who gave a callous speech at Khanqah-i-Maula, was arrested the same day and imprisoned. A huge throng gathered outside the jail on the 13th of July, interrupting the proceedings. Police opened fire on the unarmed crowd, killing 26 people along the way. Sheikh was immediately released from custody, and the Muslim rebellion became far more politically coordinated as a result of the accumulation from both inside and outside the state, resulted in the creation of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in October 1932. Many vibrant personalities, such as Sardar Budh Singh and Prem Nath Bazaz, joined it from 1935 onwards. Meanwhile, Miwaiz Kashmir Yusuf Shah quickly left and established his separate organisation, the Azad Muslim Party Conference, which quickly disbanded due to Abdulla's political preferences.

Authority subsequently transferred to Dr. Farooq Abdullah after Sheikh Abdullah's death in 1982. G.M. Shah succeeded Farooq Abdullah as chief minister in 1984. Shah, who was accountable for Farooq Abdullah's termination in accordance with Jagmohan, did not survive long; his administration was fired as well, and the state was placed under Governor's control. Farooq Abdullah was re-instated as temporary Chief Minister in 1986, ahead of state elections. "Elections were held on March 23, 1987, and there were speculations of rigging by Farooq Abdullah's National Conference" (Chadha 96). Farooq Abdullah's government in Jammu and Kashmir was deposed in 1984 by his brother-in-law, Ghulam Mohd. Shah (Gulshah). He went on to become the Chief Minister of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. He allegedly operated a renegade government, contrary to popular assumption. He is said to have launched a campaign of forceful Islamization throughout the valley. He presided over the first Hindu-Muslim riots, which occurred in 1986. The Hindu community was disgruntled, believing that they were being treated unjustly since they were a minority. Many factors contributed to Hindu-Muslim animosity, including the construction of a mosque inside the Secretariat's grounds. This drew the ire of many Hindus. As a result, several temples were demolished, including those at Anantnaag, resulting in widespread turmoil. Hindus, as minorities, felt betrayed on a regular basis and demanded that they be accorded equal status. Elections were held in 1987, and the Congress and Farooq Abdullah were accused of rigging the results. Separatists arose as a result of alleged fraudulent elections. The State elections of 1987 fanned the flames even further, as all separatist and anti-India organisations banded together to run for office in order to achieve their goals.

The people's aspirations that their will would be honoured by the Centre and/or the state were dashed after the 1987 elections, leading to disenchantment and resentment. It also created a perfect environment for Pakistan to intervene and feed the fires of dissatisfaction, allowing the common people's rage to be funneled into mayhem. In Kashmir, a blatant armed insurgency against India began in 1989 and grew rapidly. In response to the insurgency, India used military and paramilitary troops to preserve the state's order. A cycle of militancy and repression set in, with open guerrilla warfare, daily police firings, and eventual collapse of the local government, through which the state has been unable to recover.

For Kashmiris, the insurgency, and the counter-insurgency that was unleashed to flatten it, ended up shredding the everyday fabric of life. The sheer force of India's massive military commitment may appear to have overwhelmed the armed militancy, but twenty years of this presence has resulted in a deeply militarized society. (Kak x)

The Indian National Congress, on the other hand, is accused of hacking the primaries in their favour, outraging the United Muslim Front. Under Farooq Abdullah's government, the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) became increasingly dynamic. Religious strife and community animosity had erupted. In 1989, the Central Government's jurisdiction in JK was fully revoked. Another factor was sectarian animosity fostered by Pakistani officials, who used bigoted comments to agitate the people of Kashmir and push them to seek "liberation" from India. Many terrorist organisations are said to have obtained financing from Pakistan in order to drive away minorities and demand the independence of Jammu Kashmir from India. A few organisations fought for independence from both India and Pakistan. Anti-Hindu protests have erupted across the state, with posters and banners such as "Join us or leave." A big number of armed troops marched through the streets. The Kashmiri Pandits (KP) went into a panic. After Farooq Abdullah's resignation in 1990, President's rule was imposed, and there was a lot of political commotion, the anti-Hindu agitation and exodus accelerated. The Hindu community was allegedly expelled from the region because they were regarded as symbols of "Indian presence." Another argument is that the Indian government purposefully expelled the Pandits so that they could deal with Islamist extremists in their own way.

With the aid of Pakistan, Kashmiri Muslims were indoctrinated into militancy and declared their plans to kill any Kashmiri Pandit who refuses to flee (Research Participant, Sapru, 11/08/2020). Pandits were told to leave, convert, or die over loudspeakers in mosques (Ralive, Tsalivya Galive). Many more chants reverberated across the valley, reflecting the terrorists' goal of killing Kashmiri Pandits and integrating Kashmir into Pakistan under Sharia law. Another horrifying war cry was shouted, claiming that they want Kashmir Pakistan to be free of Pandit males but with Pandit women (Assigacchipanu'nuy Pakistan — batavrostuy, bateneinsaan). Hit-lists with the names of Pandits to be attacked were placed on the front doors of Kashmiri Pandit's homes, as well as in the streets and shops. As they observed the exodus, they laughed and ridiculed each other. Although there is no precise date for the start of the migration, the largest and last blow came on the night of January 19, 1990, when the Kashmiri Pandit

community was subjected to the 7th exodus and genocide. Mobs went to the streets, torching homes and murdering any Pandit they came across. Families were left with only the minimum necessities.

Kashmir has become a state under confinement, trapped between the twin evils of terrorists and Indian security forces, after more than two decades of violent insurgency. Almost every household has lost a member with this deadly conflict, many have disappeared without a trace and have been declared "missing," and even more have indeed been prisoners of custodial horrors. Their misery seemed to have no end in sight. Almost every home has a close relative who has been killed in the fighting to lament. Razor wire clogs up the environment unnecessarily, and graveyards have expanded to unimaginable dimensions within last two decades. And though the insurgency in Kashmir has been in the headlines since 1989, the rest of the world has mostly ignored it. The subsequent armed conflict between Indian security forces and terrorists has turned Kashmir into a place where death and destruction are a regular phenomenon.

Conclusion:

With the formation of the Jammu and Kashmir state in A.D 1846, the Dogras deemed the land and the people of the Kashmir as their personal property. The government apathy and policy of alienations and suppression on the Muslim majority resulted in awakening the inner consciousness of the people of Kashmir which resulted in the formation of the associations like Reading Room Party and Muslim Conference. Although these mini- parties aimed at the safeguarding the interests of their co-religious people i.e. Muslims, but with founding the National Conference under the leadership of Shiekh Abdullah, the horizon of the party was somewhat broadened which paved the way of entry for non-Muslims as well. This soon fizzled out as both (Muslim and non- Muslim leadership) lacked the broader vision of handling the situation around 1946. Sheikh Abdulla emerged as a sole monopolistic decision maker impressed by the ideology of J. L. Nehru shaped the rest history of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. His organisation could not remain stick with the primary goal of accommodating the other religions. Thus, the experiment failed.

Diverse cast members in Kashmir politics, as well as within the Pandit community, have different perspectives on Pandit migration. Between one faction and the other, indictments and assertions were hurled. Despite the fact that no one agrees on a single cause for Pandit migration, it is fascinating to note that the arguments on the matter persist even after two decades. Moreover, the differing political aspirations of Kashmiri Pandits raise the deeper theoretical issue of 'minorities in self-determination,' which pro-self-determination groups must address in order to comprehend the campaign. The question about how a movement defines 'self' and 'other' emerge. By incorporating Pandits and other minorities as part of self and their envisaged Nation, secular nationalists expanded the definition of "self." People who violate the basic rights of their own minorities cannot possibly have a moral right to demand self-determination for themselves, according to the Kashmiri self-determination movement. The crucial factor to note is that asserting the right to self-determination in today's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural society

can be exceedingly dangerous for minorities because totally homogeneous civilizations rarely coincide with defined territory.

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