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1 Advantages and Disadvantages of Exodus of Kashmiri Hindus and their future

By A.K. Watal

The mass exodus of Kashmir Hindus from Kashmir valley took place in 1990, when their psyche came under tremendous strain while observing that:-

- i) A movement for killing prominent Kashmiri Hindus has started in 1989.
- ii) The fate of Kashmiri Hindus women was heading towards a black and dark future.
- iii) The militant organisations had given an open press call for vacation of the valley by Hindus.
- iv) Large processions were being carried out in the Valley at different places in support of Azadi.

And in most of the instances Muslim well wishers suggested, rather advised their fellow Hindus to leave the Valley for a period of two to three months, leaving the things to cool down. A few families came out in taxies, while a number of them were transported by trucks driven by fellow Muslims.

After some time when Sh. Jagmohan took over as Governor of J&K on 19/1/1990 some insane elements blamed him for the exodus of Kashmiri Hindus from the Valley, who were already in trauma and under strained conditions.

Post Exodus Period:-

The condition of Hindus who were seen running out of the Valley in truck loads, buses, vans, cars and taxies was pathetic. They were a depressed and dejected lot and found themselves hapless and helpless in the increasing temperature of the plains viz Udhampur, Jammu, Delhi and other cities. Most of the migrant lot was accommodated in tented accommodations at Udhampur. (Sports Stadium, Battal Ballian, Garhi). Jammu (Nagrota, Muthi, Purkho, Mishriwala, Jhiri, Railway station etc.) and Delhi.

The allowance of free ration and a meager relief of Rs 300 per head per family of unemployed persons and leave salary to employed ones by the then government was a big respite to the displaced community. Now that the community has seen different phases of evolutions during last thirteen years of exodus, they have been able to reconcile a bit, because of certain advantages, though they would always be nostalgic because of many a dis-advantages.

Advantages:-

Not with standing the fact, that Kashmiri Hindus have lost their homes and hearths their land of peace, moderate to cold temperature zone and their culture is at the verge of disappearance, yet the following advantages can not be neglected.

- (i) The economics of Kashmiri Hindus which was based on either government employment or agriculture business has become broad based. though the consolation and mental solace is at the lowest ebb.
- (ii) The educational standards have gone up, because of certain dispensations extended by a few state government, especially Maharashtra. The community ought to give the credit to one of its revered members, Sh. M.K. Kaw, who was instrumental in broadening the net of education for Kashmiri migrants.

Disadvantages:-

The major disadvantage of the migration could be summed up as under:-

- (ii) The elders have lost their mental peace, balance, social status and health for the causes and after-effects of the migration.

It has been seen that diseases like cardiac problems, hypertension, dementia, diabetes, arthritis and sun-strokes have been common in elders of the community, who got suddenly exposed to the vagaries of weather.

- (ii) The middle aged and the students have got more exposure in the garb of development which has lead to many a social problems.

(iii) The children, on account of media boost are being groomed in a culturally different way than it used to be in Kashmir, keeping the social ethos at bay.

(iv) It should not be construed as a conservatism, if we advocate that the inter caste and in caste marriages have failed to a great extent, because of inbuilt effects of maladjustment and loss of values and tolerance.

(v) The great disadvantage is that the minuscule minority of Kashmiri Hindus often classified as KP's will decay away with the passage of time, in case steps are not taken to address this issue.

(vi) A lot of displaced persons were bitten by snakes in the camps and a few consumed by gushing water of canals.

(vii) The most unfortunate disadvantage is that Kashmiri Hindus are living a life of refugees in their own country under appalling sanitary and unhygienic slum conditions.

Future:

The future of the community lies in the hands of one and all, who have an iota of belongingness the valley of "*Kashyap Rishi*". In this regard it may not be out of place to mention that the future of this community will be bright and illuminated, in case a consideration is given to the following aspects:-

(i) World KP's Directory:

A directory of all the KP's living across the world needs to be made and published at the earliest as a data base. Some efforts have been made by Kashmiri Samiti Delhi, which need to be re-doubled.

(ii) All the KP's organisations need to come under one umbrella like APHC in J&K to achieve a common goal of political value for Kashmiri Hindus and thus increase their density.

(iii) To fight for our common cause like Tibetans, while establishing Health and Educational Institutions like SGPC, Muslim Auqaf Trust, Christian Societies and other minority bodies.

(iv) To create a "World Kashmiri Hindus Crisis Management Group" to look after the economic interests of the community while looking towards the industrial sector.

(v) In case the Kashmiri Hindus have to last, everybody has to come up, co-operate and help in the establishment of:

(a) Cottage, small scale, medium scale and large scale industries.

(b) Health, Education and Research Institutions.

(c) Educational Institutions and universities.

(d) An International confederation of Kashmiri Hindus.

Potential

Kashmiri Hindus at large have the potential of creating the aforementioned institutions, provided they give a little pause and thought to their duties, responsibilities and rights.

*The writer is a social activist, based in Ambala.

2 *Legislative imbalance in J&K*

By Col. D.S. Jamwal

THERE seems to be a misconception in the minds of the Valley leaders, and also with so-called secular experts in Delhi, that Kashmiris of the Valley specifically are a special people, need extra special treatment and therefore must be molly-coddled. It is indeed a travesty that this false impression has been created over the years. Does it imply that Valley Kashmiri's face different problems of economic, social, educational, financial and administrative nature which are different from the citizens of the other two regions of the State and the rest of the States of the Union?

Local political parties of other States of the Union as well as all-India level political groups are individually and collectively concerned about improving the lives of their countrymen, and in the process, promise better governance, administration and other benefit and facilities. Yet, rather than work to this end, with malafide intent, Valley-based leaders continue to mislead their followers with trans-national thinking, encouraging political activity of a nefarious variety, and concocting hare-brained schemes.

The Accords of 1952, 1975 and 1986 with Congress-run Central governments were obviously blackmailing tactics for more 'concessions' despite Article 370. As a matter of fact, the administrative set-up progressively became more inefficient and politically, the situation worsened. These armtwisting tactics of the Valley leadership now need to be finally stopped once for all.

The question that begs an honest answer therefore is that how does autonomy, more political concessions, pre-1953 status, etc. give them an edge on overall improvement. Surely that all-India yardsticks for a better life, applicable to all communities in India, should also apply to them. Article 370 has already granted them extensive funds, multifarious loans and unfettered advances, much above all-India averages. If anything, this magnanimous licence to Central largesse, practically unaudited and totally misused, needs to be curbed and sensibly re-distributed within the State. Particularly, that it does not reach anti-India groups in the Valley, as has been the case so far.

The elections that were held in October 2002 elected representatives to the Legislative Assembly, must be equally adjudged against the present legislative layout of the three provinces of the State, Ladakh, Jammu and the Valley, and whether after the past 50 years with so many elections having been held earlier, the aspirations of the three areas have been fulfilled. If not, the reasons behind this lack of performance.

Legislative Index, Impact & Fallout

As per the Indian Constitution, seat allotment in legislative assemblies is on the basis of geographical size, population, road communications etc. The criteria laid down specifies the number of seats that must be allotted against these yardsticks. This aspect is covered by the Representation of J&K People's Act as per Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

In this context, the "Table of Population on "Census and Area" under "Fact and figures", Kashmir valley has an area of 16000 kms, and a population of 31.0 lacs. Jammu Province an area of 26,500 kms and population of 27.0 lacs and Ladakh an area of 96,700 kms with a population of around 14.0 lacs.

Population figures are based on 1981 census.

Applicability of the number of seats is therefore to be based on the following facts. Firstly, Jammu Region is one and a half times the size of the Valley and comprises 45 percent of the States population; Secondly, Ladakh Province is the largest of all the regions with its population thinly spread over a large area; Thirdly; The Valley is much smaller in size and has a comparatively denser population (only); and lastly; The Ladakh and Jammu regions combined overall comprise more than half the States area and over 50 percent of the total population.

Despite these basic parameters, the initial De-Limitation Commission, obviously under misadvised political pressure at that point of time, made seat allotments to the State Legislative Assembly in an inconsistent and unproportionate manner, effects of which have had long reaching consequences on the

J&K scenario. Before proceeding further, it would be appropriate to study the seat allotments as made by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah post-1947 after accession of the State to the Indian Union.

Jammu was initially given 30 seats, (later raised to 32 seats), while Ladakh was given a paltry 2 seats. The Valley was given a total of 43 seats. This was a patently un-equitably allotment put across under a stage-managed show of representation, which unfortunately under Sheikh Abdullah's influence on the then PM, went unnoticed. Subsequently the last De-Limitation Commission, failed to correct the biased and parochial representation and proceeded to retain the imbalance by giving Jammu 37 seats but unnecessarily without valid reasons increased the Valley representation to 46 seats. Ladakh was not given any additional seats despite several protestations.

After the Praja Parishad agitation and recommendations made under Governor rule, the Wazir Commission was subsequently set-up in 1983 to go into these complaints of the Jammu and Ladakh regions. The Commission came under severe pressure from the State Government of Dr Farooq Abdullah to ensure that the overall majority allotments to the Valley were not damaged and that the status-quo in the imbalance was maintained.

The Wazir Commission, while staying quiet on the assembly seat ratios, held that three more districts be created in Jammu Region, at Reasi, Kishtwar and Bhau, and that there was no necessity for any changes in the Valley and Ladakh. This was over-ruled by the State government which felt that adding another three districts to Jammu would convey too much weightage to the region and create complications for them later. Instead, three new districts of Badgam, Kupwara and Baramulla in the Valley and a Shia-dominated district specifically created in Ladakh on the sensitive Srinagar-Leh Road at Kargil.

The Ladakh Buddhist Association vehemently protested against this discriminatory and potentially dangerous act of unnecessarily carving out of a Shia District in Ladakh. Dr Farooq Abdullah's sop of granting two additional MLA seats for Ladakh did not satisfy the Ladakhi people, who fully supported by the Jammu Region, commenced a determined agitation with strikes, administrative logjams and representations to the Central government. It was indeed a fortunate circumstance that immediately thereafter, President Rule came into operation in J&K. The Ladakh Region's Autonomous Hill Council status was approved, something which could never have happened under the National Conference government.

Additionally, for reasons unknown, the Valley returns representatives to the Lok Sabha as MP's, at the rate of one per 10 lac people, whereas Jammu and Ladakh regions have reps respectively in the Lok Sabha at the rate of one per 14 lakh people. This is a further political imbalance based on incorrect norms. The Gajendragadkar Commission in its 1986 Report made many detailed comments on the discrimination shown and its after effects. Unfortunately matters were allowed to drift. Even the Sarkaria Commission failed to spot this weightage since it was being fed with inputs from the state government and given no special aspects to consider.

In the Future Contest

From all these observations, it can be seen how legislative manipulation has ensured that the Valley has dominated the entire geographical territory of J&K State. There can be no gain saying the fact that overtly and covertly, the Valley based leadership, have aimed at, practiced unhindered, and brazenly endorsed the fact of Kashmir valley precedence in all the three regions, despite geographic, demographic, cultural factors dictating otherwise. This has been done by passing legislation at will, and then claiming it represented the people's wishes as expressed in the State Legislative.

Under the present allocation of MLA seats, the overwhelming legislative majority is with the Valley, Already this excessive majority element in the Assembly has created problems through embarrassing resolutions time and again.

The Valley only does not comprise J&K State. What is suitable to the Valley, does not necessarily endorse itself to being suitable for the other two regions. The existing dichotomy needs to be corrected at the earliest by the creation of equally balanced representation within the State Legislative Assembly. Only this can give the other two provinces of J&K a chance to fulfill their aspirations without being

legislatively overshadowed and dominated. The demand for trifurcation is based on these incontrovertial facts and hence needs to be addressed at this crucial stage. The imbalance must be corrected so that adjustments fit into our future plans for the State.

“Devolution talks” should be to enforce better governance and specifically decentralization of powers, presently totally with the Valley; definitely not to jeopardies our security, solidarity and integrity. Devolution of powers must also re-adjust the seat allotments rationally and not pamper to or promote secessionist ideas based on long term plans of anti-India groups. Further concessions of any kind whatsoever will not change the ground situation as a bench-mark has already been reached. Any further erosion of the Valley’s tenuous relationship with the Indian union must not be allowed under any circumstances whatsoever.

3 Restoring normality in Kashmir - A Left view

By Satya Pal Dang

ONE of the most important tasks before the political 'class' of India today is to ensure that mandate given by the people of state of Jammu and Kashmir in the recently held elections is honoured and the Kashmir dispute is finally resolved. This can be discussed fruitfully if relevant background is first recalled.

There were in a manner two Indias before India won her independence. One, British India which was ruled directly by the British imperialist rulers. Second India consisted of 500 Princely states each one of which was being ruled by supposed-to be-autocratic Princes/Maharajas/Kings etc. A few like J&K were big. Some were very tiny. All others were in between, area wise as well as population-wise. In fact all the rulers were puppets of the British. People of the princely states thus thus suffered under double yoke.

Leadership of the freedom movement/struggle was in the hands of the bourgeois class. It chose to make compromises with the British rulers who had realised that they could not help quitting India and who too therefore were keen to have a compromise/settlement. It was a part of the settlement that sovereignty in relation to the Indian states would rest with the rulers and each ruler would decide whether his state would join India or Pakistan or remain independent.

Maharaja of Kashmir wanted that J&K should join neither India nor Pakistan. He had the support of Praja Parishad (an RSS front organisation) They believed that independent J&K ruled by a Hindu Maharaja would be a Hindu State ala Nepal. Leadership of the National Conference headed by Sheikh Abdullah wanted J&K to be in India as it was the leadership of India's freedom struggle that had been supporting their struggles against the Princely rule and its oppression and exploitation. In this matter Kashmiris like people of Jammu and Ladakh were whole heartedly with the National Conference.

Rebuffed by the Kashmiris, new rulers of Pakistan sent "raiders" (Army disguised as raiders) into the Kashmir. Indian Army could not be sent as J&K Maharaja had refused to sign the instrument of accession. Resistance was put up only by activists of National Conference and Communists besides the common people. Maharaja at last signed the instrument of accession and agreed to Sheikh Abdullah (father of Farooq Abdullah) taking over as Chief Minister of the State, when Pakistanis were almost at the gate of Srinagar. Indian Army was ordered to enter J&K and throw out the so-called raiders. Indian Army was greeted by Kashmiris with great enthusiasm, welcome-slogans and with flowers and garlands. Valley was got rid of raiders. India had sought the help of the UNO against Pakistani aggression. A cease-fire was ordered. There was also a resolution which said that after Pakistan had withdrawn its forces from the entire state, there would be a plebiscite to decide whether the people of the J&K State as a whole would join India, Pakistan or remain independent. Had Pakistan fulfilled the conditions including withdrawing from the part beyond the cease-fire line and a plebiscite had then taken place, whole of J&K State would have undoubtedly come to India. Instigated by the British and the USA, Pakistani rulers violated the resolution and refused to withdraw. The resolution therefore lapsed. India had insisted that the resolution was not made enforceable by the UNO. It was under a clause which governed such agreements as would be enforced only by the parties to the agreement. Not long ago it was conceded by the present General Secretary of the UNO that this resolution could not be enforced by UNO. India's contention has now been recognised even by the "World Community" that the resolution could no longer be invoked after Pakistan's refusal to comply with the conditions it had agreed to and after ground realities under went many changes.

Unlike most of the rulers, Maharaja of J&K did not agree that Constitution of India would be applicable to J&K too. The leadership of the National Conference too wanted greater autonomy. As a result of mutual negotiations, it was agreed to have Article 370 of the Constitution (originally its number was different) and that J&K State would have its own constitution to be framed by an elected Constituent Assembly. No body disputes that this Assembly was elected through a completely free and fair elections.

Constitution of J&K adopted by it declared that J&K would be a part of India. It also provided that transfer of more powers to Centre would take place only with the consent of J&K Assembly.

With this essential background, we can discuss mandate of the recent elections to the J&K Assembly and tasks ahead.

II. Mandate of the recently held elections is clearly fractured (i) People of J&K as a whole have voted against the rule of the National Conference headed by Farooq Abdullah. Alienation is the result of its failure to continue the struggle for greater autonomy that the state has at present and using the Autonomy slogans only to win elections; its opportunist alliance with BJP and its misgovernance and corruption. The fact that Farooq was all the time flying between Sri Nagar and UK must have also weighed with some voters. (ii) People of Jammu have given a very strong mandate in favour of Congress while BJP stands routed in the entire state including Jammu, earlier its strong hold. RSS slogan that J&K must be trifurcated has been decisively rejected by people of Jammu as well as Kashmir (iii) In the Valley National Conference is still the strongest party. People's Democratic Party (PDP) comes next with fairly strong support. Congress which has swept Jammu has not fared well in the Valley. (All this is in terms of seats won and it is that which is relevant as far as formation of Government is concerned. A fully correct picture will emerge when voting figures are available and the same are analysed objectively).

Whatever views one may have, no one can assert that the Congress-PDP government with Mufti Mohammad Sayeed of PDP as the Chief Minister in any way violated the mandate of the people. It needs to be noted that some sort of unwritten cooperation took place between the two parties even during the election itself.

Mandate needs to be examined not only in terms of Government formation but also and much more deeply as to what the coalition government should do. Clearly and first and foremost it is a mandate against terrorism and for restoration of peace. Clearly also it is a mandate for greater autonomy. People of Jammu have given a mandate to undo injustice done to them by the governments of the National Conference. Within J&K State, they should get regional autonomy. People of Ladakh may be for UT status but they too would welcome regional autonomy which will in fact would be better for them.

Clearly the peace constituency is considerably bigger than would appear from percentage of voters who exercised their voting rights risking their lives. Many though wanting peace must have considered it wiser not to risk their lives by exercising their right to vote. Even if there were complete peace already, 30 to 40 percent may not have exercised their right to vote as happens invariably. On the opposite side of peace can be counted only those who did not vote in response to the call for boycotting elections. They would obviously be a minority-may not be insignificant but surely not a very big minority either. The new government therefore must do all it can for restoration of peace and towards that end it should seek and get full help and cooperation from the government of India.

It would be totally wrong to think as some people seem to that mandate is to crush terrorism in the way the USA has done (!) it in Afghanistan. It would also be wrong to think that alienation from India which had developed is a thing of the past and we are where we were when Indian Army marched in to Kashmir to throw out the raiders.

Alienation from India had grown mainly because Government of India had been rigging elections to J&K Assembly (except once when Morarji Desai was the Prime Minister, to some extent in 1996, and now in 2002. For the largely fair elections now, India has to be thankful to the Election Commission of India). To some extent, bourgeoisie that grew in Kashmir valley as a result of capitalist development, fuelled the demand for Azad Kashmir because it thought that Azadi would enable it to have the best of both the worlds. Kashmiri Muslims always had kept a long distance from fundamentalism though religious fundamentalism could not in the given circumstances but exercise some influence. Perhaps last straw on the camel's back was the totally wrong and unconstitutional dismissal of Govt. of Farooq Abdullah and installation of Shah as the Chief Minister in 1984. Alienation reached its peak. But for this, terrorism

would not have grown on the soil of Kashmir. Cross border terrorism too can succeed only if a section of the people because of their deep rooted grievances is at least sympathetic to it.

Rigging of election was done to ensure a loyal government in the state. And with the help of the loyal governments autonomy of J&K was very much diluted. This could not but evoke strong resentment.

Experience of fight against Khalistani terrorism in Punjab has shown that terrorism can be best fought if it is fought both on law and order as well as political front. The latter to remove/lessen alienation and feeling of injustice, real or imagined, and on law and order front because no government can take the ridiculous position that killings by terrorists must be suffered till a political solution is found. Unfortunately governments of India of various hues never adopted a correct policy in actual practice. Emphasis has been only on "bullet for bullet" and hardly anything to overcome alienation.

For overcoming alienation of the Kashmiris it was necessary to ensure that excesses were not committed during the fight, that every possible effort was made to prevent killings of innocents, where some innocent get killed unavoidably to own it and to render maximum help to the family. Secondly, and this would be the meaning of fighting on political front, to agree to considerably greater autonomy than J&K enjoys today.

Excesses committed by terrorists began alienating them from the people. More than once opportunities came when alienation of the people from India could have been overcome. These were missed. There is a golden opportunity now and this must not be missed. To ensure that, the new government must take steps to undo wrongs done previously.

It should not release any terrorists but those who had not committed any act of terrorism or have surely given up terrorism should be released. Those in the process of giving up terrorism, should be helped by all suitable measure, whether they are outside or inside the jail. Hue and cry being raised by BJP against commitment that POTO would not be used is ill conceived. POTO can do more harm than good just as TADA did that. Infact POTO is worse and a more lawless law. The necessary warning should be that killers must not be shown any mercy and there must be no soft corner as till they give up terrorism.

As far as autonomy for J&K State as a whole is concerned, there may be no going back to pre-1953 position i.e. only 3 departments for the Centre. But state will have to be given considerably greater autonomy than it has today. May be some thing on the lines of 1975 Indira-Sheikh Agreement. Concrete packages will have to be worked out for Jammu as well as Ladakh. J&K government cannot deliver all this. Only the Govt. of India can deliver. State government do whatever it can and press New Delhi for the rest.

State government can deliver a lot in the matter of good governance e.g. ensuring decrease in unemployment, as well as corruption bettering the lot of the poor, etc. It can do that despite its limited powers if the ruling politicians prove to be of a different metal than generally India's politicians are today. Whether in power or in opposition they are governed only by two considerations (i) what will enable them to enrich themselves, and (ii) What will help them to fetch them votes.

There is no such thing as principles or long-term interest of the people. Mehbooba Mufti looks like a politician of the type J&K needs to day. I hope there are many more of the required mould. If J&K politicians-ruling or otherwise-act with the same spirit with which our freedom fighters did, they would save not only their own state but the whole of India. Return of Pandits too must be on their top agenda.

Given advances in the above correct direction and given steps to take the whole truth to the people of Pakistan, it will not be difficult to resolve the Indo-Pak dispute Kashmir. Let us not forget that neither people of India nor of Pakistan want another Indo-Pak war. Both want lasting peace and friendship between the two countries. And this reality will make possible a just and honourable settlement on the basis of Shimla Agreement.

*The author is a veteran communist leader based in Punjab.

4 Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga - A born Philosopher and original thinker

By Dr B.N. Sharga

HINDUISM is the oldest religion which has not been confined to any time frame and is generally considered as the way of life, based on scientific approach for an all round development of human personality. That is why Hinduism has the greatest power of absorbing and assimilating different faiths and even divergent views into it. It is simply because the Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. According to this concept every body is born as a Hindu and is then taken to different faiths after going through certain prescribed customs and rituals to have his separate distinct identity in the society.

The Vedas are not merely books but they are the accumulated treasure of divine laws discovered by different persons in different times. The discoverers of those divine laws are called as “Rishis” and we honour them as perfect beings. They were actually the original Hindu Philosophers who defined the way of life for all human beings and initiated a process of thought in them.

It is because of all this wisdom and knowledge contained in the Vedas and its interpretation in Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads that it is generally believed that the Hindu Philosophy starts where the Western Philosophy ends. In India Kashmir has always been regarded as the highest seat of learning from times immemorial, which has produced a galaxy of original thinkers and eminent Philosophers like Kshemendra, Mammata, Kaiyyat, Vijrat, Uvvat, Kalhan, Bilhan, Bhallat and Kantak etc. Acharya Abhinavagupta is being regarded as the founder of Kashmir’s Shaiva Philosophy, which was further elucidated through Tantra Shastra by Acharya Vasugupta. One such outstanding Kashmiri Philosopher and original thinker was Professor Iqbal Krishna Sharga, who elucidated the Vedantic Philosophy in an entirely new perspective correlating it with the modern thought about the theory of evolution after deeply studying the works of reputed western scholars and thinkers.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga’s ancestor Pt. Zind Ram Kaul “*Dattatreya*” was originally a resident of Rainawari Mohalla in the Srinagar district of the Kashmir valley, who came to the imperial capital Delhi during the rule of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb (1658-1707) from the Valley after taking refuge at different places on the way like Murree, Rawalpindi and Lahore. He was a Sanskrit and a Persian scholar. After some time he got a job in the Mughal court and started living in Bazaar Sita Ram with his family members. Not much is known about his son Pandit Sahab Kaul “*Dattatreya*” as to what type of job he did for his livelihood. Pandit Sahab Kaul “*Dattatreya*” had two sons. They were Laxmi Narain Kaul and Niranjana Das Kaul.

Since the decline of the Mughal empire started after the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, so both these brothers Laxmi Narain Kaul and Niranjana Das Kaul after completing their traditional education in Urdu and Persian language at Delhi came to Oudh during the rule of Nawab Shujaud Daula (1753-1775) to get a good job in his court at Faizabad which was the seat of the provincial government at that time. Since both these brothers were quite robust in health and were stoutly built with very good physique so they got a job very easily in the Shahi Fauj and were made the commanders of its mounted division by the Nawab Shujaud Daula. The Nawab then made them responsible for the security of his daughter in law, Begum Shamsul Nisa and her jagir. The Nawab’s wife Jenab Bahu Begum Ammat-uz-Zuhara became so much pleased with the work of both Laxmi Narain Kaul and Niranjana Das Kaul that she granted them a royal Wasiqa in 1813, a sort of hereditary pension.

When Nawab Asafud Daula shifted his seat of government from Faizabad to Lucknow in 1775 after the death of his father Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula, both these brothers Pandit Laxmi Narain Kaul and Pandit Niranjana Das Kaul came to Lucknow along with the royal entourage and started living in Rani Katra Mohalla which was founded around 1720 by Rani, the wife of a Hindu Risaldar Girdhar Nagar during the rule of Mughal Emperor Mohammed Shah. Pandit Laxmi Narain Kaul and Pandit Niranjana Das Kaul after getting the royal recognition for their services in the form of Wasiqa started writing Kaul Sharga as their surname.

The elder brother Pandit Laxmi Narain Kaul Sharga had three sons. Durga Prasad, Sheo Prasad and Prem Narain while the younger brother Niranjana Das Kaul Sharga had four sons Nar Singh Dutt, Badri Nath, Kanhaiyya Lal and Kedar Nath besides two daughters Chando married in a Mushran family and Meena. Pandit Niranjana Das Kaul Sharga died in 1824. His third son Pandit Kanhaiyya Lal Kaul Sharga had a son whose name was Pandit Sheo Krishna Sharga. The name of his wife was Rameshwari who died around 1878.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga was the son of Pt. Sheo Krishna Sharga. He was born around 1861 in Rani Katra, Lucknow. He had his traditional education in Urdu and Persian language under the guidance of learned Maulvis in a nearby Maktab. He then took admission in Government Jubilee College and did his matriculation around 1877. He took admission in Canning College for higher studies which was established by the Taluqdars of Oudh, originally in 1862 in a rented building in Aminabad in memory of Lord Canning. He did his F.A. in 1879 and B.A. in 1881 from this institution, which was affiliated with the Calcutta University at that time. Here it must be kept in mind that the British after taking over the administration of India from the East India Company in 1858, in order to introduce the European pattern of education in this country established initially three universities in India, at its important port cities Calcutta, Bombay and Madras around 1862. The whole of north India from Calcutta to Peshawar was then placed under the jurisdiction of the Calcutta University for conducting the examinations and for awarding the degrees.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga after completing his education took up a teaching job around 1883 to become a Professor of Philosophy in Bareilly College, Bareilly. He was a voracious reader and an original thinker, so he became quite popular among his students, who used to listen to his lectures on Hindu Philosophy with rapt attention. He wrote some books and became a well recognised authority on Hindu Philosophy for his original ideas and interpretations. His basic concept was that the whole Hindu Philosophy originates from the syllable "Om". This syllable is indeed Brahma; this syllable is highest, whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires.

The goals which all the Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which men desire when they lead a life of contentment is symbolized with this syllable "Om" as per the following saying.

"Na the jab Ved or Brahma

Hua tab Shabd Onkara"

Impressed by Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga's originality of thought and his interpretation of the Vedantic Philosophy Prof. William Knight of the St. Andrews University of Scotland while commenting on one of his books wrote the following lines "I rejoice that such teachings are given to the young men who attend the lectures at Bareilly".

Likewise another Professor of Philosophy of the St. Andrews University of Scotland Prof. DG Ritchie commented on Prof. Sharga's book that it was most admirably written.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga was such a learned person that although he was simply a B.A. but he used to teach the Philosophy even to M.A. students with great authority. He was very progressive in his ideas and views and therefore used to keep himself always ahead of his time. He used to command a great respect in the society for his academic depth.

When the annual convention of the Kashmiri Pandits' National Club was held in 1882 in the historic "*Ganju Walon Ka Shadikhana*" in Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow, he took an active part in that convention in which the prominent leaders of the community from all over the country like Pt. Ayodhya Nath Kunzru, Pt. Shyam Narain Masaldan, Pt. Jagat Narain Malla, Pt. Ganga Prasad Taimni, Pt. Bishna Narain Dar, Pt. Rattan Nath Dar "*Sarshar*", Pt. Manohar Nath Sapru, Pt. Bisheshwar Nath Hangal, Pt. Madho Prasad Sharga, Pt. Sangam Lal Chak, Pt. Sri Krishna Tikku, Pt. Bishan Narain Razdan Pt. Brij Narain Gurtu, etc. had participated. The emphasis was laid in this historic convention to bring about social reforms in the community and to encourage the members of the younger generation towards the European education so that they may not feel any difficulty in getting good jobs under the fast changing social and political scenario in the country with the British at its helm of affairs.

Dr. Annie Besant came to India in 1893 to study the Vedas in depth. Later on she formed the Theosophical Society of India for the revival of the Vedantic philosophy and way of life in the country. Pt. Suraj Narain Bahadur, who was a sub judge and an educationist became the secretary of this society. He used to organise its meetings at his residence in Kashmiri Mohalla in which progressive minded and liberal Pandits of the locality like Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga, Hari Krishna Kaul, Sri Krishna Tikku, Jagat Narain Mulla, Bishan Narain Dar, Madho Prasad Sharga and Ratan Nath Dar “Sarshar” etc. generally used to take part in the deliberations. In this way Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga came into close contact with Dr. Annie Besant, who became highly impressed by Prof. Sharga’s command over the English language and his deep knowledge of the Vedantic Philosophy.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga also helped and guided Pt. Brij Narain Chakbast to start a library and to form Kashmiri Youngmen’s Association in Kashmiri Mohalla in 1905 to prepare young Kashmiri Pandit boys to face the challenges of life with grit and determination.

In Kashmir after the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1857-1885) in 1885, his son Maharaja Pratap Singh became the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir Riyasat. To provide good education to the people of the Kashmir valley, on the initiative of Dr Annie Besant, Sir Pratap Singh Hindu School was established around 1898 in Srinagar in a rented house at Sattho Barbar Shah which later on became famous as S.P. College at Kothi Bagh on Maulana Azad Road, imputing European pattern of education to its students in the Valley. Actually S.P. College, the prestigious institution of higher education in the Kashmir valley was founded in 1905 as an intermediate college managed by the Central Hindu College Trust, Benaras. Its first Principal was Prof. M.U. Moore a reputed Irish scholar and a graduate of the Cambridge University, London.

He functioned as Principal of this institution upto 1908. After that another European scholar Prof. E. William Collie was appointed as the Principal of this college in 1908, who unfortunately died in the same year due to a fire accident in the houseboat in which he was staying. Then in his place Prof. Vinamali Chakarvorty, a Bengal fellow was appointed as the first Indian Principal of this college. But he could not function as Principal due to certain reasons.

In 1909 Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga along with another Mohalla fellow Pt. Chand Narain Bahadur went to Kashmir just for excursion from Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow and became the first Indian and a Kashmiri Principal of SP College whereas Pt. Chand Narain Bahadur became the Professor of English in the same institution. Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga due to his awe inspiring personality and deep knowledge about his subject soon became very popular among his students who used to respect him like anything. He used to live near Amira Kadal, on the Residency Road, besides a famous bakery shop owned by a Parsi fellow nicknamed as Odu. He was fond of wearing the European dress and was a reserved person by temperament. He never used to indulge in loose talks during college hours and was a very strict disciplinarian. He was also a very good chess and Bridge player and a lover of Urdu and Persian poetry. Due to the untiring efforts of Iqbal Krishna Sharga, S.P. College became a degree college in 1911 which was affiliated with the Benaras Hindu University initially. After its take over by the state government in 1911 under the pressure of the British who became alarmed due to the growing influence of Annie Besant in the valley this college was then in 1912, affiliated with the Punjab University of Lahore and the word Hindu was dropped from its name. It was during the tenure of Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga that science classes were introduced upto the intermediate level in this institution. He also started the tradition of celebrating the spring festival in the college premises on a lavish scale every year. Now this college is affiliated with the Kashmir University, Srinagar and Dr SG Sarwar is its Principal at present.

Swami Vivekanand was the first Indian who introduced the essence of the Hindu Philosophy to the Western World when he kept the Americans spell bound for three days by delivering an extempore lecture on Zeero in Chicago in 1894. According to him it can not be proved that thought has been evolved out of matter, and if a philosophical monism is inevitable then spiritual monism is certainly logical and no less desirable than a materialistic monism.

In his words “this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live, who live for others the rest are more dead than alive”.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga during his tenure as the Principal of S.P. College not only toned up its administration but also tried his best to maintain high academic standards in the institution by imparting good education to its students to build up the reputation of the college just to make it one of the best educational institution of the valley and he succeeded to a very great extent in his mission and that too during that period when the percentage of literacy was very low in the Valley. Due to his efforts M.A. classes were started in 1917 in the college. His pioneering efforts in the field of higher education in the Valley will always be remembered. He retired from service in 1921 and after that he went to Benaras (Varanasi) to live with his son who was employed there. He was succeeded by Lawrence Marcdermat, again a British scholar of repute.

Actually Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga was an authority on all the branches of modern Philosophy. He had written a number of books and treatises on various aspects of this subject, which won him both admiration and fame in Europe and America. His comprehensive treatise on the famous Barkley’s theory of vision was highly appreciated in the foreign countries. He used to teach English and Philosophy with equal case. He used to derive great pleasure while teaching his pet subject Philosophy to the post graduate students. He had evolved his own style of teaching. His lectures were always very rich in their contents and his way of explaining even the most complex theories was really very superb. He all through maintained poise and dignity of his profession like a savant. Though his independence of character was not very much appreciated by the then minister in charge of higher education Dr. A. Mitra, a Bengali fellow with a great liking for sycophants around him. To bring about a better understanding between the Hindu and Muslim students in the college he founded the common tea club for them and he used to subsidise it. To encourage the meritorious students he used to give them prizes and awards from his own pocket. He also used to give the financial aid to widows and orphans from his income. To improve the over all performance of the students, he introduced the monthly examination system in the college to assess their knowledge. He used to organise debates and lectures of the eminent people in the college regularly just to broaden the outlook of his students.

Naturally being the Principal of a prestigious college, he was well known among the elite of the town. He also developed a good rapport with Mr. Neidu, the owner of the Neidu’s Hotel in Srinagar.

He was a member of that coterie of Kashmiri Pandits, who went from Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow and other places to Kashmir during the British period to take up various jobs there like Pt. Har Sahai Bahadur and his grandson Prof. Chand Narain Bahadur, Raja Suraj Kaul and his son Raja Sir Daya Krishna Kaul, Dr. Roop Narain Haksar, Pt. Sri Ram Taimni, Pt. Brij Lal Nehru, Pt. Shiv Narain Bhan, Pt. Brij Mohan Dattatreya, Pt. Autar Krishna Wattal and Pt. Praduman Krishna Kitchlu etc. who were very close to Maharaja Pratap Singh (1885-1925) and all of them were regarded as his most trusted people at that time.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga was married around 1874 with Jai Kishori (Iqbal Rani) who was the daughter of Pt. Kedar Nath Muttoo of Khetgali, Rani Katra. He had a son and a daughter. The name of his son was Pt. Hari Krishna Sharga and that of his daughter was Raj Dulari who was married with Dr. Roop Narain Haksar, the son of Dewan Swaroop Narain Haksar of the Indore State. Dr Roop Narain Haksar was the personal Physician of Maharaja Pratap Singh. He used to live in Srinagar. He died quite young. His wife could not bear the shock of his death and committed suicide by jumping into the well. She had three sons Shyam Sunder Haksar, Ram Chandra Haksar and Mahendra Haksar.

Pt. Hari Krishna Sharga was employed in the education department in the then United Provinces and used to live in Kamachcha in Benaras now Varanasi. He was married with Krishna Dulari who was the daughter of Pt. Ram Narani Channa of Kashmir. He had three daughter Lalita, Kamla and Girja. His eldest daughter Lalita was married with Pt. Chand Narain Haksar. His second daughter Kamla was married with Pt. Madan Mohan Lal Kitchlu the son of Pt. Kishori Lal Kitchlu who was a sub judge in Jammu. His third and youngest daughter Girija was married with Pt. Shyam Sunder Padru.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga in the fag end of his life developed throat Cancer, perhaps due to intake of tobacco with beetle leaves, a Lucknavi fad and died due to this dreadful disease around 1925 at the age of about 64 years in Benaras at his son's place.

Prof. Iqbal Krishna Sharga enjoyed his life in full measure and did remarkable work in the field of Hindu Philosophy. He used to say that Vedas teach us that creation is with out any beginning or end. The science on the other hand has proved that the sum total of cosmic energy always remains the same. Then if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy then? This million dollar question is still eluding a clear cut convincing answer to satisfy the seekers of knowledge. This fallacy forces me to quote the following words of Adlai Stevensen in this regard.

“It's hard to lead a cavalry charge, if you think you look funny on a horse”.

*The writer has authored four volume history of Kashmiri Pandits, '*Kashmir Ke Anmol Ratan*' and is based in Lucknow. His researches into unknown aspects of social history of Kashmiri Pandits have won wide acclaim. He has been making untiring efforts to bring old Kashmiri Pandits, who have lost their language, closer to Kashmiri-speaking Pandits.

5 Indigenous Rishis v/s Sayyid-Sufis from Central Asia

Differentiations and Contradictions

By Prof. Mohan Lal Koul

Deeply embedded in the rural ambience of Kashmir Nund Rishi, a first generation convert of Rajput origins from Kishtwar, can be characterised as the saviour of peasant masses in the wake of their conversion to the Islamic faith through '*Qahran va Jabran*' as history frankly told in the Baharistan-i-Shahi, a Muslim chronicle in Persian. Inspired by 'old inheritance' and 'indigenous culture model', he in a saint-like humility placed himself in the uninterrupted line of *rishis* thereby aligning himself with the entire repertoire of rishi tradition rooted in the *vedic* age. The Sayyid-sufis as fugitives from Central Asia operating under the protective shield of the Muslim state power brought about the destruction and forcible occupation of the hermitages (*ashramas*) radiating the light of humanitarian spirituality. As evidenced by the Neelmatpuran, such hermitages set up within the locales of secluded spots were littered over the entire picturesque landscape of the Valley of Kashmir. The present day *ziarats* or *astans* (*asthapans*) of rishis were the same old hermitages that were cruelly destroyed and then used for installation of graves or *samadhis* of the rishis who in the apt and pithiful words of Abul Fazl formed a specific cult within the matrix of Hinduism. Islam in Kashmir was just sixty year old when Nund Rishi emerged on the scene to assert the native roots and ethos which were under onslaught from the Central Asian Sayyid-Sufis and *Ulemas*.

The whole lot of Sayyid-Sufis and other theologians were wedded to mundane politics and were fully conversant with the role and importance of political power to weed out infidelity as a pre-requisite to expand the space for Islam. As an expression of their religious culture they were extremely uncharitable in condemning the natives as '*kafirs*' and their religious practices and customs as 'heretical'. Shariat (Islamic law and precedent), to them, was the light-house and Persian, their native language, was the store-house of all knowledge. Having a deep streak of hubris and arrogance in their personal culture they openly spurned the natives of all shades as 'wretched people' given to polytheistic, animistic and other pagan practices. As they had no smattering in the local dialect they could not have close rapport or interaction with the natives with a view to transforming their pagan behaviour for a new baptism. Yet they created a critical situation for the natives through cynical rejection of indigenous belief systems, traditions and mythic lore without filling in the empty space thus created by an alternate culture model, which is the product of generations of value accumulation. In view of resistance from the subjugated natives they made lot many compromises which despite their orthodoxy could not be termed as truly Islamic in content and spirit. Prayers as per the Islamic way were not digested as spiritually elevating and the Sayyid-Sufis and *Ulemas* meekly gave in to allow the Hindu manner of hymn-singing (*kirtan*) though with a changed content of alien origins. Over-awed by the sweep and vast range of indigenous social codes and axiologies the Sayyid-Sufis in a steep climb-down introduced Hanafi brand of jurisprudence for the natives lest they should slip out of the tenuous Islamic fold to their birth religion which appeared to them more liberal than the new imposition. Stuck to orthodox religiosity they were the least spiritual and their concepts and precepts about spiritual goals and trajectories were dim, feeble and blurred. Many an eminent sociologist has termed conversions in Kashmir as anything but spiritual for the converted lot, termed as 'statistical Muslims' never abandoned their Buddhist-cum-Hindu practices, customs, attitudes and value systems.

As a prescient representative of native roots, ethos and milieu Nund Rishi spear-headed a rishi cult, purely spiritual in content and perception, to revive and reinforce the ramparts of the indigenous identity of natives who were completely alienated from the foreign Sayid-Sufis and *Ulemas* enjoying unprecedented favours and patronage from the Muslim state that had negated and rendered false the so-called egalitarian content of Islam through pursuit of paradigms that were iniquitous and crass cruel. Nund Rishi was in the theologian by culture and orientation. He called himself Nunda Sanz stands testified by his *shrukhs* (*slokas*) and also by the elegy written by Shyama, an inmate of the *khanqah*, in the wake of his death. Jonraj in his Rajtarangini names him as Noor-ud-Din and that testifies to his having been re-christened as

Noor-ud-Din by the same oppressive forces even though he had flimsy and cosmetic Islamic bring-up. He provided substantial cultural succour and support to a large section of peasant masses through his poetical outpourings that are suffused with indigenous lore and learning, cultural moares and motifs. Given to asceticism and self-mortification he struck a note that evoked a vibrant and spontaneous response from the peasant plebians who were the recipients of ascetical and introspective mind and temperament as heritage from the Buddhists and Vedantins of yore.

What can be gleaned from historical and other literary sources is that caste barriers in Kashmir were not the same rigid and hide-bound as we find them in the Smriti-Puranic belt. As an impact of the Buddhist ideology and committed egalitarianism the caste hierarchies had loosened, weakened and nearly crumbled. The crippling conversions unleashed by the Sayyid-Sufis with an active support of the Muslim state had no social significance in the sense of regeneration and revitalisation. As a paradoxical social milieu the amorphous ranks of Muslims, better termed as 'statistical Muslims', got vertically divided into '*ashraf*' and '*ajlaf*', one comprising high-brow and high-bred foreigners from Central Asian lands and the other comprising the mass of neo-converts, dubbed as deviants, idolatrous and 'wicked'. The Sayyids as a distinct class of glory and grandeur crowned the battered social pyramid for the affinity they claimed to the Prophet's family. The mass of 'cultural destitutes', a phrase from Nirad C. Choudhary, suffered a severe trauma both psychological and social, as they had no such lineage as could get them closer to the people of foreign extraction. In utter desperation some of them invented their new genealogies which were rejected as absurd and ludicrous by the superior brand of Muslims treating them as 'low as dust', a phrase from Srivar. Having realised the predicament of the 'cultural destitutes' floating in mid-air, more Hindus, less Muslims, Nund Rishi assured them of an equalitarian status in the *rishi* cult with *khanqah* as its fulcrum. Be it said that *khanqah* as an institution is a variant of the Buddhist Vihara.

The foreign Sayyid-Sufis were a breed entirely different from the native stock of *rishis*. They were vituperative hard-liners sticking to shariat and at one stroke they polarised the broad waters of Kashmiri society into lagoons of Hindus and Muslims. Sufism by and large has supposedly been associated at least in theory with love, humility, philanthropy and more than most belief in brotherhood of man. But the Central Asian *sufis* who poured into Kashmir as persecuted people sowed the seeds of hate and incoclam and invoked 'divine sanctions' and '*quranic* tenets' for eradication of infidelity and infidels. They as it appears can be featured as the direct recipients of the spirit of old Israel. They preached and practised blatant discrimination and hatred on grounds of race, religion, and creed and harnessed the Muslim state power for forcible conversions and destruction of indigenous roots. The author of the Zakhiratul-Muluk, a Kubrawi Sayyid-Sufi, has drawn a catalogue of twenty conditions for application to non-Muslims and prescribed without any qualms loot and murder of hard nuts daring to flout them. The Tohfatul-Ahbab, a Muslim work in Persian, has delineated the Sayyid-Sufis batted on beef and enormous quantities of food waging war on the natives who thwarted and resisted their iconoclastic activities.

Islam, to the Sayyid-Sufis, was imposition, infact, imposition at pain of death. It had no humanistic facets which have been the essence of Hindu faith facing extermination at their hands. They conceived of nothing but conversions and beyond that they harboured no visions to re-orientate and rejuvenate the society as a whole on the sound foundation of equity, humanism and justice. They were so narrow-minded that they could not see all shades of humans emanating from the same Divine Essence. The Central Asian Sayyid-Sufis including the Khurasanian brand, no doubt, carried the imprint of Buddhistic and Vedantic influences. But, despite that, their views on '*kufra*', 'religious conversions' and 'treatment to be meted out to men of other faiths' were the same hide-bound and fanatical. They were not only an integral part of the unjust system established by Muslims but also perpetuated it through their scholastic tradition.

The native *rishis* as models of asceticism and quietism with no interest in affairs mundane walked not in harmony but in total discord with the foreign Sayyid-Sufis out to spill blood in the name of Islam. They were holymen of peace, harmony, piety, non-violence and non-injury. The assiduous cultivation of noble qualities as already mentioned was a 'value' with them. They were so much humanised that they saw life and its vital pulsations in all manifestations of natural life. Any injury inflicted on any form of Divine

manifestation was detested as sinful and ignoble. Generation of debilitating conflict, discord and disharmony was never their mission. 'Peace with all' as a Buddhist value was their hall-mark. The message of *rishis* was to endeavour to tear away from meshes of the world for attainment of a new uplifted incarnation through emergence into and identity with God. They shunned and detested the company of greats like kings, nobles and glamorous people in the corridors of power. They were humble, calm and spiritually on higher perches with contempt for material goods and material well-being.

The Sayyid -*Sufis* and *Ulemas* under the motivations of their religio-political culture totally rejected the spiritual goals of *rishies* and also the methodologies that they adhered to for attainment of the objective of their quest. The native concepts of spirituality were beyond their ken and experience. Deficient in sense and spirit of enquiry they had no faculties to know and learn about them even from theoretical perspective. Cynical rejection was all that they could conceive of. They spurned the *rishis* as a class of recluses having no credibility as per the Islamic tenets. The practice of visiting the graves or *samadhis* of *rishis* to implore for their intercession had no sanction from Islamic authorities. So the Sayyid-*Sufis* detested them as shirk, a deviation from the real Islam. *Rishis* detested meat-eating and lived on locally grown specific greens. Many of them had given up even the greens and lived just on water. To induce them to meat-eating of all types termed as '*halal*' hagiographers mostly of foreign origins have figmented spiritual conferences to impress its obligation under '*Suna*' and '*Shariat*'. *Hari Rishi* was denounced for breaking his rigorous fasts with pebbles and stones. To the Sayyid-*Sufis* Nund Rishi was illiterate and ignorant having no knowledge of Islamic scriptures. His going into lent (*Chillas*) was a practice that was denounced totally as un-Islamic. The *rishis* as a class had gained popularity with the mass of devotees not for their strict adherence to Hadith and Sharia but for their asceticism, meditation and hard living like the native '*hatha-yogis*'.

6 The Crisis in Kashmir: An American Indian Perspective

SECESSIONIST violence in Kashmir represents a major challenge to the stability of the Indian nation state. It is a direct assault on two significant features of Indian polity - democracy and secularism. In terms of security forces deployment it is India's largest and most significant counter-insurgency to date. The expulsion of the entire Hindu community through a process of ethnic-cleansing has put a question mark over the future of secularism in India. How India responds to decisively defeat the forces of violence and communalism in Kashmir will have profound bearing on future of democracy and secularism as vital ingredients in nation-building exercise.

Indian political leadership, during the past thirteen years, has blundered too often in handling the insurgency in Kashmir. Lack of vision and political will besides the manipulative role played by international agencies and country's corrupt decadent metropolitan elite have thwarted all positive initiatives. Opportunities turned into liabilities.

What has led to the snowballing of the fundamentalist rebellion in Valley? Is rise of separatist sentiment only a recent arrival? Who is the Villain in the entire drama? All this has baffled scholars, politicians and the people alike. Much of the scholarship on Kashmir remains prejudiced, polemical, incomplete and self-serving. No one seems to be interested in addressing the fundamentals. Harangues on alienation and victim-hood of Kashmiri Muslims pass as serious scholarship. All this has served to obfuscate the real issue at stake - Kashmir's survival as a democratic and secular society.

The crisis in Kashmir by Sumit Ganguly is another addition to this skewed scholarship on Kashmir. Published as a part of Woodrow Wilson Center series, this volume does not add something, which is not known. It hashes and rehashes the old formulations in a new package. At times these formulations seem too simplistic. Mere linking the rise of insurgency to so-called second wave of ethnolinguistic assertion in India or the curbing of democratic dissent does not explain the evolution of insurgency or its social and political content. This book enjoys considerable exposure in the US media for the only reason that the author underplays Pakistan's role in stoking the insurgency and advocates conferring protectorate status on Kashmir as a solution to the impasse.

Legacy of Muslim Question:

Terrorist campaign in Kashmir can be better understood if it is situated in the context of the Muslim question and not the national question. In the Leninist sense there is no national question in India. There is no dominant nationality, which oppresses other national groups. Neither before 1947 or after it has self-determination ever been on the agenda of the political emancipation movements of Indian people. Colonial policies pursued by the British to consolidate their rule weakened the basis of linguistic subnationalism but strengthened religious sub-nationalism. The Muslim question is a legacy of British Colonial rule.

Would Kashmir have responded the same way with federal Centre had it been a Hindu-majority region? What would have been the Contours of Kashmiriat then?

The main challenges to Indian unity have surfaced in those peripheral border regions, where the dominant social group is also a national religious minority. Even in case of Punjab, majority of the Sikhs did not feel fundamentally alienated from the Indian state. They had specific grievances against Congress and the Central government. In North-East twin process of underdevelopment and modernisation superimposed on the tribal nature of society fuelled the revolt. Christian missionary zealots and the external agencies played no less role in converting routine discontent into full-blown rebellion. Similarly failure of Indian state to check demographic invasion by Bangladeshi Muslims turned a section of Assamese against Delhi.

Limitations of Ethnic Muslim Nationalism

Fundamentalist insurgency in Kashmir is a consequence of a complex interplay of internal and external factors. Inherent contradictions in ethnic Muslim nationalism influenced the political line of National Conference, the premier political organisation of Kashmiris. Its ambiguity towards secession and anti-secular character need to be studied in this context. Subsequent role of Sheikh Abdullah and National

Conference i.g loud thinking on “Independence”, launching of Plebiscite Front, hobknobbings with Jamaat Islami, hostile attitude towards Kashmiri Pandits and people of Jammu and Ladakh are an extension of this political line. Intra - Muslim conflict between rural and urban sections or aspiring and ruling middle class would not have led to insurgency had not the 1973 oil boom in Gulf and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan created the ideological and politico-military infrastructure. The role of Americans and Pakistan has also been critical to the emergence of secessionist movement. US has been guilty on many counts. Its map-making intrigues on Kashmir, raising doubts about accession, raking up bogey of human rights’ excesses, conniving in Pakistan’s blackmail on war and stalling effective action against terrorists or terrorist bases in PoK, are direct incitement to terrorists to carry on the campaign. Pakistan’s blatant sponsorship of cross-border terrorism has made Kashmir impervious to resolution at least, in the short term. ‘Militancy is on last legs’ or attributing terrorist acts to desperation do not reflect reality on the ground. It has to be a long haul in Valley. Successful Indian strategy would have to address reducing the costs of fighting proxy-war by localising the arena of conflict, denying the hideout to subversives and raising stakes constantly for Pakistan to force it to abandon the proxy-war. At the international level, Indian diplomats need to link resolution of Kashmir issue with the secular principle and highlight the multi-ethnic, multireligious character of society in J&K.

The inherent limitations in the secular and nationalistic character of National Conference made separatism a perpetual phenomenon since 1948. Its leadership headed by Sheikh Abdullah and Mirza Afzal Beg promoted Muslim identity at the cost of secular identity. Generations of Kashmiris were brought up on the politics of Plebiscite and Muslim exclusivist identity. How could secular institutions or opposition be nurtured in this atmosphere? Jamaat Islami only added a fundamentalist hue to what Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference were preaching. In 1965 the leadership of Ghulam Sadiq more than anything else was responsible for defeating the Pak game. He never wavered in his commitment to Indian Unity. On the contrary, Sheikh Abdullah, who knew about Operation Gibraltar as per recent disclosures, did not take Indian leadership in confidence.

Sumit Ganguly’s study lacks historical perspective and is poor in analysis. It remotely touches the issues/phenomena linked with rise of fundamentalist violence in Kashmir. To him the rise of this sentiment is a recent development and pacification of ‘disgruntled’ Kashmiris the only issue at stake. His whole analysis is reduced to one argument that insurgency is product of political mobilisation and institutional decay. He argues that as part of wooing strategy the Indian state went out of way to expand literacy, mass and higher education in J&K. This process produced a generation of politically knowledgeable and “sophisticated” Kashmiris. Simultaneously, the national government, fearful of potential secessionist proclivities among the Kashmiris, systematically stultified the development of political institutions in the state. Unable to express dissent in an institutional context, the new generation of Kashmiris resorted to violence. Even the rise of indigenous Islamist movement he attributes simply to a conspiracy by immigrant Bangladeshi and Assamese Moulvis. Prof. Mustafa Kamal Pasha’s work on this dimension seems more convicting.

Rigging Factor

Rigging factor has been overplayed in Kashmir, and invariably the blame has been laid at Centre. It is strong competitive politics that generates accountability. Sheikh Abdullah’s organisation, National Conference stood aloof from electoral politics till 1975 and championed the separatist politics of plebiscite. In 1977 and 1983 Centre did not create any obstacles for NC’s return to power. In fact in these competitive elections, it were the minority groups that were sidelined through fraudulent delimitation, rigging and physical harassment. If curbing of democratic dissent and rigging were enough justification for resorting to violence, the minority groups should have been up in arms.

Dismissal of Farooq Abdullah government in 1984 or rigging in 1987 elections need to be seen in the context of launching of ‘Operation Topac’ by ISI in 1979. Hype on greater autonomy or moving of Resettlement Bill were not isolated acts. These motivated agendas had serious ramifications for national security. ISI as part of ‘Operation Topac’, was trying to cultivate politicians and members of bureaucracy for smooth-sailing of the plan. There were strong allegations that NC leadership was hob-nobbing with

Sikh extremists in Punjab and a training camp was held at Shaja Marg (Pulwama). Mysterious agencies and people visited the state during this period and had access to the highest authorities. Senior Ministers in Abdullah's cabinet were issuing provocative statements against tiny minority of Kashmiri Hindus. Army generals were publicly saying that their sources on the border were drying up due to political-bureaucratic interference. As per media reports, even General Hamid Gul, the then ISI chief is alleged to have visited J&K a number of times. At a seminar in Srinagar Club in September 1989, the man to whom Sheikh Abdullah dictated his memoirs stunned the audience by claiming, "*Agar Sheikh Sahib Zinda Hoteh Voh Jail Meh Hoteh*". What was the state government doing to foil ISI's gameplan? It is true that installation of GM Shah was a remedy worse than the disease, but many would agree that continuation of Farooq Ministry was not in national interest then.

In 1987 elections, MUF game was not to test the fairness of elections. As part of Pak game-plan its design was to capture power for administrative subversion. It openly exploited religious sentiments and harassed its opponents/minority groups. Even MUF leadership in private said that it could not win more than twelve seats in a fair election. Ganguly fails to locate the causes of 1984 and 1987 episodes and blames Mrs. Gandhi for playing a game of one upmanship against Farooq Abdullah. Referring to Farooq Abdullah's meeting with Bhindrawn Wale, Ganguly apologetically comments, "The meeting took place during a ceremonial visit that he had paid to the Golden Temple in Amritsar. It lasted all of fifteen minutes. The symbolism of the meeting, however, was infelicitous. At that time it was well known to all political observers in India that Bhindran Wale had close links with various secessionist Sikh groups in the Punjab."

Fundamentalist Generation

Kashmir's new generation of youth in late 70's and 80's grew under the shadow of Zia's Islamisation programme in Pakistan, Khomeinist revolution and militarised Pan-Islamist movements in the Muslim world. This generation was fundamentalist to the core and detested secularism in any form. It was strongly anti-Hindu, Jihadist in outlook and disliked democracy or democratic institutions. It was inspired by the Jihadist dream of carving out a new Islamist caliphate extending from Turkey to Indonesia. Ganguly does not address this and resorts to polemics, "More disturbing, the domestic gains of the 1971 war were also frittered away. The 1975 Beg-Parthasarthi Accord, despite all its limitations, could have placed the Central government's relations with Kashmir on a more secure footing. Unfortunately, even the limited provisions of the accord were never implemented... In the background of this political scene, Kashmiris were becoming better educated and more politically aware... Finding virtually all institutional channels of expressing their discontent closed, they mobilised and resorted to other, more violent methods of protest. Since secular politics, as represented by the NC was corrupt and undemocratic, it is not surprising that the movement took on an ethno-religious dimension". This generation which imbibed the retrograde ideology of theo-fascism is described by Ganguly as "politically knowledgeable" and "sophisticated". New youth's utter contempt for democratic dissent was indicative from attacks on communist leaders, Mr HK Surjeet in Khanyar (1982) and Mr HN Wanchoo in Batmaloo (1984). These youth would often convert agitations on Price-Rise or against raised Power tariff into communal or secessionist issues. The new Muslim youth opposed democratic movements in Pakistan and endorsed fascist military junta and Jehadi elements. On the middle-east these youth did not identify with secular movements led by Palestinians or other democratic elements.

The rise of this generation on Kashmir's political scene was a direct threat to pluralistic co-existence. Attacks on Pandits in 1986 or subsequent ethnic-cleansing was a logical corollary of the politics these youth practised. In a guarded defence of these revanchist elements, Ganguly comments, "As law and order in Kashmir deteriorated, relations between members of the minority Pandit (Hindu) community and their Muslim Counterparts in the Valley started to fray. Historically, unlike other parts of India, Kashmir had not been witness to widespread communal tension and violence. However, two factors undermined sense of security and safety of the Pandit community in Kashmir. First, the governor hinted that the safety and security of the Hindu community could not be guaranteed. Second, the fanatical religious zeal of some of the insurgent groups instilled fear among the Hindus of the Valley".

The author attributes the ethno-religious mobilisation to four factors--predominantly Muslim character of Valley, the geographical isolation of Valley which insulated Kashmiri Islam from larger currents of Muslim politics in India, failure of secular politics and lastly the role of Pakistan in fomenting subversion. These arguments look incomplete. Right since 1930 Kashmir's mainstream political mobilisation has been along ethno-communal lines. It never allowed secular politics or institutions to flourish. The author's observation seems to be off the mark, when he comments, "since secular politics, as represented by the NC, was corrupt and undemocratic, it is not surprising that the movement took an ethno-religious dimension". The premise itself is wrong, as NC never subscribed to secular politics. The politics of autonomy, regional autonomy report or the Resettlement Bill negate the essence of secularism.

Indian state too contributed to the mess. It appeased too often the Muslim communal groups in Kashmir and lapped up communal-secessionist agendas as commitments made by the nation. The Indian leadership undermined the position of nationalistic groups in the state and discouraged patriotic elements among Kashmir Muslims, who were willing to contest the separatist politics.

Sumit Ganguly refers to Bhutto-Swaran Singh talks at length. He says Nehru called off these talks when Indian was handed an Anglo-American proposal, demanding giving up substantial portions of the Kashmir valley to Pakistan, besides total autonomy to the remaining portion. Bakshi Gh. Mohd's role during this period and subsequently his removal under Kamraj Plan has also not been dealt.

The author ascribes "Operation Gibraltar" to three miscalculations by Pakistan. First, in the wake of Nehru's death, the potential for disintegration in India was great. Second, on the basis of the popular discontent in the aftermath of the Hazratbal episode, Pakistan believed that widespread pro-Pakistani sentiment existed in the Valley. Third, bizarre, and essentially racist notion of the inherent martial prowess of the Pakistani (Muslim) army. Ganguly's observations on the Hazratbal Episode (1963) and Sheikh Abdullah's role during the crucial years 1962-1965, look commonplace. Why was Sheikh adopting an increasingly intemperate and, on occasion, even taking on a communal tenor in his public speeches? Ganguly's argument is reductionist. He remarks that Abdullah's attempts to generate widespread dissatisfaction against Sadiq regime were prompted by a desire to oppose greater integration with India. It may be recalled first Youth League and then Al-Fatah armed outfits were launched, some say, with blessings from Plebiscite Front leadership, to stoke subversion in 60's.

1971 War and its

Aftermath

The outcome of the 1971 war had significant consequences for the Kashmir dispute. The author sums up the gains - it significantly undermined the Pakistani irredentist claim on Kashmir; with the breakup of Pakistan, the emergent structure of power on the sub-continent now dramatically favoured India; there was little or no opportunity for Pakistan to exploit the situation in Kashmir and lastly, the Simla Agreement addressed one of India's long-standing concerns - de-internationalisation of the Kashmir dispute. Though GoI failed to get Pakistan around for accepting LoC as international border, the Simla Agreement's explicit recognition of the principle of bilateralism in Indo-Pakistani relations was widely construed in Indian policy-making circles as a major diplomatic victory. India's problems were further eased by other related developments. Political developments in Pakistan increasingly drew Bhutto's attention away from Kashmir. Insurgency in Baluchistan and ethnic violence in Sind left him little time for Kashmir. With the quadrupling of oil prices in 1973 in the wake of the third Arab-Israeli conflict, relations with the Arab Middle East States and Iran became important concerns for Pakistan. But this shift in Pakistan's foreign policy concerns and priorities and India's brief sense of euphoria as the emergent great power in the region made India complacent to internal security, particularly in Kashmir.

About Rubiya Sayed episode, the author says that the release of militants signalled to the insurgent groups in Valley that the new government "lacked the necessary discipline to stand firm when confronted by an act of terror." He adds the government of VP Singh failed to fashion a coherent strategy to deal with the emerging political crisis in Kashmir. This major failure he attributes to two factors. At the national level,

VP Singh government remained preoccupied with imperatives of political survival. At the state level, Farooq Abdullah appeared at a complete loss to curb the growing lawlessness and violence.

Ganguly's observations on Jagmohan's tenure are that his "iron-hand" strategy "proved to be costly from the outset but had only very limited success in blunting the insurgency". About Kunan-Poshpora, he remarks, "the true story may never be unraveled. The villagers' accounts cannot be accepted as completely reliable because they are riddled with inconsistencies. The Press Council report appears too ready to grant the army the benefit of the doubt".

The handling of the Charar-e-Sharief episode, Ganguly says, from its start to its tragic end, revealed the lack of a clear-cut set of procedures and directives for dealing with such a crisis, though there was no lack of precedent. He explains the fiasco at Charar-e-Sharif as, "the blame cannot be placed on the tactics adopted by the army and the BSF. Rather, civilian authorities in Srinagar and New Delhi were at fault". "Strangely enough, Ganguly describes GoI's willingness to dilute sovereignty over Kashmir "as the only positive development that ensued in the wake of the destruction of the shrine". The author refers to a little known fact that Qazi Nissar was assassinated because he had accepted the role of intermediary to seek release of son of David Housego, the former correspondent of the *Financial Times* In India. There are references to Chavan-Pilot feud and Sheikh Abdullah's authoritarian style.

Conclusions

What are the prospects for this fundamentalist insurgency to succeed? Ganguly believes it is highly unlikely that the insurgents can prevail on the battle-field or can effectively obtain the intervention of the international community. India's staying power on the ground in Kashmir is inestimable. The Indian state has historically fought and successfully fended off previous challenges to its integrity even at a time when it possessed significantly less coercive power. However, he hastens to add the continued sanguinary conflict in Kashmir may indeed be extremely corrosive to the ethos of the Indian army, not to mention the paramilitary forces.

Ganguly concedes that the overwhelming opinion in India feels that the government has not responded with sufficient vigor in dealing with the insurgents or their principal supporter, Pakistan. There are compelling reasons why India will not concede Kashmir. First, virtually all Indians Consider Kashmir to be a part of India. The Kashmiri insurgent claim of national self-determination, if allowed to prevail, could lead to disintegration of the Indian state. The demonstration effects of Kashmir seceding from India would be profound. Second, Ganguly says, the secession of Kashmir would unwittingly implicate the remaining Muslim population in India, Third, the insurgent claim for self-determination is itself proleptic. The vast majority of the insurgents would not extend the privilege of self-determination to members of other communities.

The author discusses various strategies and options to resolve the crisis. He refers to Ethnic flooding, the Mailed-Fist strategy, The Wear-Down option, conceding the Valley, Shared Sovereignty, Holding Plebiscite, Independence, The Protectorate Option etc.. He says given India's unhappy experience with the Kashmir issue at the UN, it is doubtful that India will allow the issue to be internationalised. The best hope for the redressal of the grievances of all minorities, Ganguly remarks, remains within the ambit of a secular, democratic, and federal Indian polity.

**The Crisis in Kashmir*

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7 Panun Kashmir - A solution to Kashmir problem

By Dr. Ajay Chrungoo

Pak Claims

Pakistan right since its inception has been engaged in destabilizing Kashmir to annex it eventually on the basis of two nation theory. It makes a dangerous claim that Kashmir was unfinished agenda of Partition. If this premise is accepted then the position of 14 crore Muslim community living in rest of India becomes untenable. Pakistan's real strategic objectives in pursuing its game plan in Kashmir can be enumerated as:-

- *seeking parity with India by fomenting separatist stife;*
- *pursuing the goal of strategic depth;*
- *building justification for army's permanent involvement in Pak politics;*
- *Play its role as the frontline Muslim state for eastward expansion of Islamic fundamentalism;*
- *dismantling India's Northern Frontier and*
- *finally facilitating India's encirclement by hostile countries and internal balkanisation.*

Internationally Pakistan is trying to project itself as an aggrieved party claiming that India has not fulfilled the international commitments it made on Kashmir. The truth, however, remains that the basic requisite for this commitment i.e, vacation of Pakistani troops from PoK was never implemented by Pakistan. Pakistan also created hurdles by joining the cold war to complicate the Kashmir issue. And finally by annexing the northern territories it projected itself as a party that treated Kashmir issue as a real estate and a game of sharing spoils. The numerous agreements have superseded the so-called international commitments of earlier years.

Much is being made of India's so-called commitment to Kashmiris that the future of Kashmir would be settled by reference to the wishes of the Kashmiri People. Under the Indian Independence Act the future of princely states was to be settled by the ruler. Accession of Kashmir to India was perfectly legal and it was unique in the sense that both the ruler and the then popular leadership of the Valley endorsed it. Neither the ruler nor the popular leadership attached any conditionalities to the issue of accession.

Mountbatten's desire that the reference be made after the accession to the wishes of the people has neither any legal nor moral binding. In fact it carried the seeds of a future destabilization. Nehru made a larger commitment to the Indian nation that Kashmir would become India's secular crown. India rightly regards accession of Kashmir as a refutation of two nation theory. Secondly, accessions cannot be done and undone every now and then. Any dilution of sovereignty of India over Kashmir will have a domino effect and hasten the process of balkanisation.

Harold S. Johnson in his celebrated work, "Self determination within the community of Nations", rightly observes, "*A belief in Self-determination can have anarchical implications within the present international state system. It suggests the opportunity for a group of individuals to disregard all established political relationship in search for new ones...No government could hope to survive which consented in principle to a secession of a part of its territory by a vote of secessionist groups. The stability of the state itself rejects any such claim.*"

Blinkered Vision

The founding fathers of Indian republic recognised continued accession of Kashmir with India as a key element in India's pursuit of secular nation building. Yet their blinkered vision did not link Kashmir's functioning as a secular society with India's secular nation building process. The problem was further compounded as the leaders of Indian national movement over estimated the secularism of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah and ignored the strong undercurrents of communalism in the ideology of National Conference.

In many respects the National Conference was pursuing a strategy which was not fundamentally different from the path chosen by Muslim League in the pre-Independence India. Delineating the many strands in Sheikh Abdullah's ideological outlook, Dr K.N. Pandita remarks:

“Sheikh Abdullah did try for rapprochement with the Muslim League and Jinnah in 1944-45 but Jinnah was unaccommodating. In 1947 again, Sheikh tried to toe the PC Joshi and Adhikari line (on Two-Nation Theory). P.N. Bazaz who had worked closely with Sheikh and who understood him far better than anybody else, stated that the NC and Sheikh stood for Muslim nationalism and Muslim precedence in the state of J&K but for Congress and secularism outside the state of J&K. One may call it sheer opportunism, nevertheless it was the Central feature of Muslim question in India...The National Conference continued its tactical support to accession but ensured to prevent the integration of Kashmiri Muslims with India (Kashmiri Muslims: Vexed Identity, Business and Political observer, New Delhi 5th June, 1993).

A full scale review of the history and social background of the Kashmiri anti-autocratic movement lead by National Conference is outside the scope of this write up. There was inherent incompatibility in the nation building models pursued by Indian National Congress and the National Conference. Leaders of Indian National Congress visualized the success of secularism through delegitimising religion based identity politics. But the very ‘raison-d-etre’ of National Conference politics was avowed pursuit of Muslim identity politics., In the situation aggravated by imperialist intervention Indian leadership resorted to short cuts. They ignored that the secularization of Kashmiri society would be the soul of Kashmir’s continued accession with India. Indian leadership abandoned non-Muslim and pro-India social groups in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh to the mercy of Muslim communal leadership of Valley and overlooked the calculated attempts by Kashmiri Muslim leadership to inject communalism in the body politic of Jammu and Kashmir.

To counter the secessionism which was in built in this situation Indian leadership decided to patronise pro-accession communal politics. Prof M.K. Teng, the distinguished Political Scientist explains:

“The Congress leaders had always believed that improvised power equations, redistribution of political patronage and wider financial inputs into Muslim communalism would end the “Muslim alienation” in Kashmir and provide the settlement for peace. In sheer self-conceit, they clung tenaciously to their belief that the Muslimisation of the state did not conflict with Indian secularism, and they could strike a bargain with the militant regimes, even if it was at the cost of the Hindus and the other minorities.” (Kashmir-Myth of Autonomy, Anmol Publications).

Over a period of time pro-accession and anti-accession communal politics developed a symbiotic relationship. While the anti-accession groups were building separatist movement to detach Kashmir from India, the pro-accession groups were using separatism as a lever to blackmail Centre and squeeze the non-Muslim groups in the state. Both groups cooperated in strengthening the Muslim precedence, facilitating Muslimisation and the Islamisation of Kashmir and adjoining regions of Doda and Kargil and weakening Kashmir’s link with India through instrumentalities of Article 370 or outright secession.

Root Cause

The emergence of secessionist movement in Kashmir cannot be delinked from the changing sociology of Kashmir Society over the years and the rise of militarised trans-national Islamic fundamentalism.

In the first two decades since independence urban Muslim middle class and the commercial bourgeoisie were co-opted in the political power structure of Kashmir. However, these very groups subsequently thwarted the aspirations of lower middle class in urban areas and resisted the strong urge of the rural propertied groups for rightful share in the political power structure. This created the groundswell which facilitated the rise of disaffected political groups in the Kashmir valley. Indian leadership’s policy of patronising personalised politics syndrome strengthened the oligarchic tendencies among the ruling families of Kashmir. These families created a network of interests which looted the public exchequer, creating a big rentier class and alienating people through rampant misgovernance. Pakistan was quick to reach out to disaffected political sections and the alienated populace rallied behind these disaffected political groups.

Prof. Mustapha Kamal Pasha has examined this phenomenon in his essay *“Between the Two-Nation Divide: Kashmir and Islam”* (Perspectives on Kashmir ed. Raju Thomas). He says:

“Increasing social differentiation and rising political consciousness among new social groups coincided with kleptocracy, nepotism, corruption and the politics of greed, rather than a functioning democratic order with political accountability as its chief aspiration”.

Rise of transnational Islamic fundamentalism both in the context of Gulf oil boom in 1973 and the Afghan war 1979 onwards created social and logistic base for Pakistani intervention in Kashmir and arms-financial pipeline for sustaining the terrorist movement. The western powers’ global designs helped provide the crucial diplomatic support to the terrorist movement in Kashmir.

The unwillingness of the national political leadership of India to adequately fathom the subversive potentialities of the National Conference politics is the main reason that solutions to end militancy elude us. There are three genres of separatist politics in Kashmir. One the avowedly pro-Pak groups which seek annexation with Pakistan. Secondly, the so-called pro-independence groups which seek an independent Islamic state. Thirdly pro-autonomy groups which seek an Islamic state on the territory of India with weak constitutional and political links with the country.

The subversive potentialities in National Conference politics can be enumerated as:-

1. Its penchant to link the Muslim majority character of Kashmir with accession and weaken the constitutional links with the country.
2. Its pursuit of Dixon Plan which implies in the first stage to create Greater Muslim Kashmir and in the second stage an autonomous Greater Muslim Kashmir.

Sheikh Abdullah is on record having endorsed the dangerous Dixon Plan, which seeks to take Kashmir valley away from India. In a letter to Col. GA Naseer, the then President of Egypt, in 1965, Sheikh wrote:

“Sir Owen took a detached view of things and considered this as the best practicable solution under the circumstances. It appears to be a fair method of resolving the present tangle. In order to avoid a number of complications, that might arise by holding a plebiscite immediately in the territory referred to in clause (c) above, a reasonable way can be found in keeping the said territory under UN Trusteeship for a specified period (i.e. 5 to 10 years) The people of the territory can be given an opportunity for the exercise of the right of self-determination in a suitable way, after that period.”

In 1948 NC created Doda district in Jammu province to consolidate Muslims in Jammu region. This facilitated the spillover of plebiscite and later fundamentalist militancy politics into the Doda region. In 1979 when Sheikh Abdullah was at the helm NC created Kargil district as a Muslim majority district to consolidate the Muslim identity there. The dangerous regional autonomy plan of NC seeks to balkanise Jammu province on communal basis. NC’s patronage to Chenab Development Council which seeks to merge Gool and Mahore tehsils of Udhampur with Doda leaves no one in doubt about the seriousness of NC to implement Dixon Plan.

Similarly NC has been trying to patronise Muslim groups in Poonch, Rajouri and Bani (Kathua) to weaken the Dogra identity of Jammu. In Jammu also patriotic groups have alleged that under a definite plan National Conference has a greater design to change the demography of Jammu province. Praveen Swami, a well-known journalist and author of *“The Kargil War”* exposes National Conference’s game-plan to undermine secular-plural identity of Jammu. He observes“:

The Regional Autonomy Report forms an important backdrop to recent events, and underlining the multiple ways in which democracy and secularism in J&K have come under assault. Released by the RAC, the Report calls for the historic regional formations of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh to be broken up into new entities. In some important senses this holds out more fundamental threats to the prospect of a secular and democratic J&K than any number of Lashkar-e-Toiba insurgents.. But the most dramatic impact of the RAC recommendations would be on Jammu. The district of Doda, and the single Muslim dominated tehsil of Mahore from the adjoining district of Udhampur, would be made into a new Chenab Valley Province. Largely Hindu Jammu, Kathua and Udhampur districts would become the Jammu province. Poonch and Rajouri districts, for their part, would form the Pir Panjal province. The existing Province of Jammu would thus be turned into three provincial blocks divided along the geographical

fault lines of Hindu and Muslim majorities..The strange history of the RAC and its equally bizarre recommendations, suggest that meaningful democratic change is the last thing on the National Conference's mind...The sole outcome of the RAC proposals will be to enable National Conference politicians in the Jammu region to represent themselves as defenders of local Muslim communities against a largely fictional hegemony of Jammu's largely Hindu urban trading communities." (The Kargil War).

National Conference is trying to silence the criticism of pro-India groups by pursuing a policy of ethnic preference and ethnic exclusion. In the Ladakh region it is patronising the minority Argon Kashmir Muslim group to under cut the Buddhist majority. In Kargil district aspirations of the Zanskari Buddhist are being counteracted by adding Muslim areas to the Zanskar assembly constituency.

The interests of the strongly patriotic 16 lakh strong community of Gujjar Muslims are being harmed by subverting the benefits of ST reservation and raking up Paharis as a counter group.

In the wake of ethnic cleansing of Hindus in Kashmir, Doda, Udampur, Poonch and Rajouri the policies of ruling National Conference have created a situation where the exiled Hindus can never go back to their homes.

Stakes

In the context of separatist violence in Kashmir there are four issues which need to be addressed

1. Restoration of the law and order by ending the terrorist violence.
2. Reversing the genocide against Kashmiri Pandits and Hindus in Jammu region.
3. Rebuilding the edifice of participatory democracy in the state.
4. Weaning Kashmir Muslim populace away from the separatist politics.

Terrorist violence in Kashmir is still not being treated as a war by the Indian leadership. There is an inherent contradiction in the policy of Govt. of India. It only seeks bringing down the terrorist violence to manageable levels in the hope that it would create space for a political solution. Due to this flawed approach destroying the support structures of terrorists does not become a priority. To defeat the terrorism comprehensively the Indian state needs a new military doctrine.

A key objective of Pakistan's game plan in Kashmir is to push out Hindus from the Muslim majority areas. This is being achieved through physical destabilization of Hindu minority and by imposing genocide. So far the successive leaderships at the Centre have demonstrated total lack of vision and will in evolving a doctrine of survival for these patriotic minority groups. The communalisation of the Kashmiri Muslim society and its intense socialisation with separatist politics has contributed to the destabilization of the Hindu groups. Thus reversing of genocide entails secular governance as well as secularisation of Kashmir society.

Policy of promoting Muslim precedence by National Conference has lead to the political marginalisation of people of Ladakh, Dogras, Kashmiri Pandits and Gujjars. Even a partisan writer like Gautam Navlakha, whose sympathies lie with Muslim communal leadership of Kashmir concedes:

"It goes without saying that the absence of a clear cut policy towards non-Muslims is a shortcoming of the political leadership in Kashmir. It has seldom bothered to go beyond the generalities, which only assuage the insecurity felt by Kashmiri Pandits" (Economic and Political Weekly, Bombay November 6, 1993).

There has to be a new approach in ending communal and ethnic discrimination against the patriotic groups. Restoration of participatory democracy, which accommodates aspirations of all ethnic groups will strengthen the nationalist base of polity in J&K.

The Muslim alienation in Kashmir has many strands. One section has political grievance that the ruling national conference has thwarted their chances of upward mobility by following oligarchic policies. Second section is alienated because of rampant misgovernance. The third section feels alienated from India because of heightened sense of communal identity reinforced by autonomy politics, and Islamic fundamentalism practised by Jamaati-Islami. There is a need to reorient the politics by building high

stakes for separatist politics and communally oriented agendas. At the same time attention has to be paid to evolve a methodology for the entry of disgruntled political groups into the political mainstream and rebuilding the edifice of good governance.

Prospect

The practice of Muslim precedence politics and the long legacy of separatist politics has made Jammu and Ladakh colonies of Kashmir and pushed out Kashmiri Pandits from their homeland. After throwing Kashmiri Pandits out from Kashmir, the Kashmir Muslim leadership is engaged in destroying the secular and plural identities of Jammu and Ladakh. Continuation of Jammu and Kashmir as a unitary state has not only lead to the politico-economic marginalisation of people living in Jammu and Ladakh but it has also lead to the spill-over of terrorist violence and separatist politics into these areas. The nation - building model adopted in the form of the present Jammu and Kashmir state is in essence a subversion of secular vision of India.

Panun Kashmir

There is no other solution for restoring the Kashmiri Hindus to their homeland and ending communally motivated regional discrimination against Jammu and Ladakh other than political reorganisation of the Jammu and Kashmir State. This reorganisation which entails the quadripartition of the state would restore secular identity of Jammu and Ladakh and help Kashmiri Pandits recover their homeland.

The creation of Panun Kashmir in Kashmir valley would not only restore Pandits to their homeland but it also holds the potentiality of creating the basis for secular accountability in the Kashmir valley. It is the first strategic response in the Modern India to the sinister proposal of communally motivated Dixon Plan. Panun Kashmir is thus not only a solution to the problem of Kashmiri Pandits as such but is also a solution to the Kashmir problem on a long-term basis. It would raise stakes for pursuit of separatist communal politics in Kashmir and help in consolidating India in Kashmir on its own strength. With creation of Panun Kashmir, the politics of Doda and Kargil will also undergo change. The creation of two political systems in Kashmir valley holds the potential of creating national consensus on Kashmir.

*The writer heads Panun Kashmir

8 Cry Freedom

By Dilnaz Boga

A Japanese modelling agency picked him up from a college full of teenage Kashmiri boys in Srinagar, many moons ago. These days, lensmen complain how difficult it is to capture him on camera as he rarely makes eye contact. Yasin Malik, the Jammu-Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) chief, smiles, and simply dismisses this by saying, "Maybe, I'm camera shy."

Born on April 3, 1966, Malik and his three sisters grew up in a far-from-flashy, two-storied *haveli* in Srinagar, where he still lives. "Living with one another at close quarters inculcates a strong sense of belonging. You won't find this in any upper-class colony. Here, each child belongs to the whole *mohalla*."

Malik's participation in "the freedom movement" began 17 years ago, when his "motivation for freedom was born out of events." He says, "We never got a chance to decide our future. I remember clearly, in July 1980, when I was 14; Shaktiman (an army vehicle) knocked down a man on the street near my house. People reacted and they slapped the drunk driver. The same evening, several defence vehicles lined up on the same street and armed men started burning shops. I hid and witnessed the whole tragedy. I don't know how I was saved. I can still remember chickens squawking as they were being burnt alive. That was the first time I was convinced that we were slaves".

Despite his radical views on Kashmir and its people, Malik is a poet at heart. "I love Kahlil Gibran, Iqbal and Faiz." That's probably why he scribbled, "Courage, confidence and patience is tested here," on the wall of his death cell in Agra's Central Prison. "I used to stare at that sentence for 24 hours," recalls the soft-spoken leader, who is a visiting lecturer at Harvard University.

Spending over a decade in jail has taken a toll on Malik's health. Instances of food poisoning, infections and lack of treatment further deteriorated his condition. In a bid to escape being captured by the Border Security Force years ago, Malik's only escape route was to jump from a five-storeyed building. "I was the most wanted man. I was in coma after the jump. I was later told that I was vomiting blood and my ears were bleeding profusely. I was given 10 pints of blood. The doctors wrote me off and rumours were rife that I was dead. I was confined to bed for three months".

In February 1992, Malik underwent surgery to replace a heart valve. He was placed in solitary confinement for long spells on several occasions. "That is where I read almost 1,000 books". A staunch vegetarian for 12 years, he recently switched to meat for health reasons on the advice of his friends and family. "I even smoked my first cigarette in prison," he remembers.

Life has been far from easy for Malik, and death, according to him, will come in its own time and place. Recently released from prison by the government, Malik comments on the state of affairs, "Innocent people have been booked under false cases. They still haven't released all the poor people booked under POTA (Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act)".

Malik is also displeased with the J&K elections. He explains, "People were not allowed to boycott it. What kind of a democracy is this? The chief election commissioner of India stated that the total votes cast were 28.53 per cent. Out of this, five to eight per cent were coercive votes. This means that only 20 per cent voted, whereas 80 per cent abstained. How 'free and fair' is that? Indian intellectuals and the media should have questioned this. Sadly, they are guided by blind Indian nationalism".

He attributes his strength to his family and loved ones. "I have buried dear friends and children. I have no words to express what my family means to me". At the end of the day, all Malik wishes for is freedom.

Source-Times News Network

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9 *Politicking with minorities in J&K*

By Raja Jaikrishan

Can you recall the time

when, in the scorching sun

in the middle of the blackened road

your verse-burning, aflame - was written

in crimson, warm, vibrating dove-blood?

To this question of Abdul Rahman Rahi, a Kashmiri poet, one can recall many instances. One can start from Lal Chowk in Srinagar and go on to Florida, (USA), Bindura (Zimbabwe), and London.

Before 1947 Sher-i-Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah waged a crusade against the monarchy in the state. In 1967 thousands of Pandits dared the government and demanded the right to life, liberty and employment. In the nineties multitudes of Muslims gathered to demand independence from India and usher in Nizam-e-Mustafa.

When Hindu girls were raped and men killed in Anantnag as a precursor to the anti-Pandit crusade in the late eighties, a section of protestors against the politics of fear and intimidation urged the well-settled Pandits outside the Valley to strive for the timely migration of Pandits from the Valley.

The elderly who savoured the cool air of the Valley in summer, while enjoying secure jobs in the plains, questioned this assertion. They said if minorities left the Valley, what would happen to the secular character of the Valley? In this manner they would be handing over Kashmir on a platter to Pakistan. Events that followed, of course, proved them wrong.

Recently when Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal opened the gates of Punjab to besieged Kashmiri Sikhs during the bhog ceremony of 35 Kashmiri Sikhs at Chatti Singhpora, it was evidently welcomed by people of varied political shades.

This politicking with human life and dignity is not confined to politicians of the Indian variety alone. Politicians in Americans are engaged in a battle over the custody of six-year-old Elian Gonzalez who survived a shipwreck escaping from Cuba along with his mother and step-father (the mother didn't survive).

Fidel Castro has said the boy should be reunited with his father. But Elian's Miami relatives want him to remain in the USA. Cuban exiles who fled the country and settled in Florida declare that "we will go the last mile" to prevent Elian from either being re-united with his father or heading back to 'Castroland'.

Cuba is an idea preserved in the lyrical memory of exiled novelist G.Cabrera Durante. He has written that the metaphor of the ship that sinks and a Cuban, Lord Jim, who cowardly saves himself is completed not with Fidel Castro's famous phrase "the rats are leaving the sinking ship", but with the only "Titanic" crew member who had survived - "I didn't abandon my ship, your lordship, my ship abandoned me," he told an English judge.

Cuban exiles in the words of Kassabova, the writer of novel "Reconnaissance", are aware about "those in the freedom and the prosperity of the mature West who suffer from broken manicure, lack of the love and understanding, excessive body hair, failed relationship, paranoia, fatty thighs, ennui and children - they hate us, our misery, our darkness of our East". Still they prefer exile to Castroism.

In Oxfordshire a gang of white youths tried to set on fire a mulatto. The victim, Christopher Barton, escaped with superficial burns but indelible marks on his psyche of hate against whites.

It seems the world over one suffers because a section of society perceives that you are different, they abuse you for being so, and then hound you to the concentration camp or throw you on the pyre.

Dictatorship of or on behalf of the proletariat gobbles up human rights of all, including the dictator.

Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe supported the right of squatters to invade white farms and asked white farmers "if you can't accept rule by blacks you can leave: no one will stop you from leaving. All

doors are open". He listed all the border crossings through which whites could flee Zimbabwe and added, "if you want a plane, we can accompany you to Harare airport..let (white) farmers not create unnecessary circumstances that might lead them to being hurt". There was also a vote in Parliament to remove the right to compensation for land seizure.

These utterances and actions by a Non-Alligned Movement leader kindle the historic acts of Sher-i-Kashmir. On assuming the charge of Jammu and Kashmir's Prime Minister after the state's accession to India he ordered land to tillers without compensation by the stroke of a pen, thereby dispossessing many, including Pandits, of their land holdings.

Years later acting on behalf of the Muslim majority in the Valley, Congress Chief Minister Gulam Mohammad Sadiq passed a law to ensure preference to the Muslim majority in state jobs and admission to professional and other educational institutions. These measures curbed the rights of minorities in the Valley and forced them to fend for even small jobs outside the Valley.

The anti-Brahmin movement in Tamil Nadu and other South Indian states proved a precursor to the anti-Mandal agitation which unleashed caste-based majoritarianism. Bihar is the worst example. The majoritarianism in Jammu and Kashmir is of religious variety, different from racial and caste ones. Perpetrators of majoritarianism in the state lack sympathy of the majority in India.

An exile from the state is caught in between the culture within him and the culture of his adopted place. He can't leave the former and accept the latter either. His condition of siege has been described by Keshav Malik as:

*But come the hour of ghostly moon
And once more the marauders from the deep
Will batter at the gates of reason-not to retire
Until crimson has been drawn
Upon the heart of peace".
(Source: The Tribune)*

10 J&K: Iron Fist vs Velvet Glove

J&K government's soft policy has overturned the people's verdict against terrorism

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

BJP general secretary and spokesperson

The Congress and the PDP should not think that the mandate they received in Jammu and Kashmir was for a soft stand on terrorism. Rather, the people of the state, braving terrorist bullets, intimidation and the boycott call given by separatists, ensured a victory for democracy. Even in the so-called separatist strongholds, people came out in large numbers to cast their votes. To shut one's eyes to this is to act against the interests of the state and the nation.

The Congress is a national party but, unfortunately, in J&K it is behaving like a regional outfit. The soft stand it has adopted on terrorism in the state will rebound on it elsewhere in the country.

It is completely untrue that the J&K government consulted the Central intelligence agencies before releasing the terrorists. An important leader like Sonia Gandhi should not have misled the nation on this. No responsible officer of the Central government - neither the home minister nor the home secretary - gave clearance on the issue. Informal consultations with some local officers don't count. And after the state government released the terrorists, the Centre sent a strong letter to it expressing its disapproval, as such actions can only be counter-productive. Conflicting statements and actions by political parties will only boost the morale of the terrorists.

True, the common minimum programme of the Congress-PDP coalition says it will not use POTA and that it will release terrorists. But the Congress, before agreeing to the CMP, should have considered the consequences of honouring such promises. It is also untrue - as is being put out - that the Congress consulted the prime minister on the CMP.

Rather than follow a policy of appeasement towards terrorists, the Congress-PDP government must tackle issues such as development and unemployment. Of course, one should try and bring such elements into the national mainstream, but despite the best efforts of successive governments this has not happened. But it is also a fact that there are now only a handful of people left who have a separatist mindset.

Does the Mufti government want to spend time on this handful, or in the vast majority in the state who have rejected terrorism? To release hardened terrorists will be an injustice to those boys who have laid down their arms, and will create confusion in their minds. The Congress-PDP government should be given time to prove itself, but not to appease Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.

Agreed the core issue in J&K is terrorism, but it won't disappear by releasing those jailed for terrorist acts without proper screening. The Centre has suggested the setting up of a screening committee to separate the innocent from the guilty. The NDA government has offered full cooperation on this and though law and order is a state subject, it would be useful for the state to consult the Centre on how to deal with terrorism. After all, the NDA government has had a great deal of success in checking terrorism - it has been a major achievement of the government that public support for it had gone down. The state government should, therefore, rethink its policy.

The recent attack on the Raghunath temple in Jammu was an attempt to communalise the atmosphere there as well as elsewhere in the country. I salute the people of the state - as I salute the people of Gujarat after the assault on Akshardham - that they did not retaliate. And while one cannot say that the government's soft stand on terrorism led to the Raghunath temple episode, the release of terrorists, combined with the disbanding of the Special Operations Group and suspension of POTA sent out a clear message that the government there is soft on terrorism. People are trying to compare the attack on Akshardham with that on the Raghunath temple, but it is not a fair comparison. Those how attacked Akshardham wanted to provoke post-Godhra-like riots, but the attack on the Raghunath temple happened because the morale of the terrorists was high.

The Mufti government has to create a sense of security and tackle effectively the socio-economic problems so that people from outside the state can be encouraged to go there and an atmosphere of normalcy is created. This will help to further reduce local support for separatist tendencies. Already, the proportion of foreign terrorist groups has hugely increased as compared to the home-grown variety. If restoring normalcy becomes a priority, that will completely overshadow the few terrorist acts which will continue - one cannot expect them to end overnight.

A dialogue with Pakistan isn't possible as long as that country does not accept responsibility for sponsoring terrorism here. But war, too, is not a solution. The US carpet-bombed Afghanistan, but Osama bin Laden is still at large. But the Indian way has met with some success - the fact that terrorist groups no longer find it possible to operate from Indian soil is proof of this. And this has not happened by being soft on terrorism.

(As told to Smita Gupta)

Source: The Times of India

11 Success at the operational level is contingent on providing a healing touch to the affected people

Muzaffar Baig

J&K Law Minister and PDP acting President

I refute the suggestion that chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's 'soft' policy towards militancy is responsible for the worsening law and order situation in the state, indeed that it contributed to the attack on the Raghunath temple.

First of all, it is not only the chief minister's policy; it is the policy of the coalition government, in which the Congress is an equal partner. Our's is a first-hand experience of the situation on the ground: We, in the PDP, have followed events in Kashmir over many years and have closely interacted with the people, so closely that we know them by their names.

In our understanding, militancy is not just Pakistan-sponsored militancy. There is a degree of local involvement, which started in the aftermath of the rigged elections of 1987. That was the time young people took to militancy in large numbers ;young, gentle and law and Constitution-abiding men like Salauddin, Yasin Malik and so many of my junior colleagues resorted to violence to give expression to their anger and frustration at the injustice.

Given this background, it is the PDP's view that militancy has to be fought, not just at the operational level (that is through security forces), but equally in the political arena, which means providing the right climate for rehabilitation of militants.

Good governance and empathy with local sentiments are necessary to hold out hope to the youth and involve them in the development process. We want to reach out to the aggrieved families whose kith and kin have been killed or unlawfully detained. We believe that success at the operational level cannot be achieved without providing a healing touch to the affected people.

Fortunately, for the first time the Election Commission and the government of India actually held 'fair' elections. Yes, this time the process was fair. And that was important for us, for it cleared two major hurdles in reaching out to the people. Namely, lack of faith in the fairness of the electoral process, and lack of faith in the integrity of the politician. We overcame the first hurdle because of the EC and GOI, and now it is our job to clear the second by restoring the trust of the people in politicians. To achieve this, we have to provide a clean and just government, create a climate of transparency and goodwill and start a series of dialogues.

And all this is possible only by reaching out to those languishing in jails and held on offences for which we thought we could apply Article 21 of the Constitution. For us this was an act of hope and we expected GOI to stand by us. Unfortunately, the gains made by GOI are being frittered away because of the electoral battle in Gujarat. Here I must add that home minister LK Advani did not link the temple attack to the released militants, even though he complained that militants were being released without going through a screening committee. Let me bring to his notice that we have screening committees at the district levels and also a full-fledged review committee which is headed by a retired judge of the high court.

To describe our policy as 'soft' is a subversion of truth, for it takes more courage to talk to a militant than to shoot him down. Also, let me say that we are not under any pressure, nor are we in a hurry to release the militants. We have released them only after a proper application of mind, and strictly following the rule of law.

As for giving a communal slant to the attack on the Raghunath temple, the government should remember that this is not the first attack of its kind. Militants had earlier attacked Charar-e-Sharif and Hazratbal shrines. In fact, they did not just attack Charar-e-Sharif, they burnt it down, ruining it. The same Raghunath temple had been unfortunately attacked this March when Farooq Abdullah was chief minister and was following a pro-active policy against militancy.

Here, I will also like to say that it was this very government at the Centre that released five hard-core militants. One Central minister even escorted them to Kabul. Why are we conveniently forgetting that it is the five released militants who are today heading the most dreaded organisations in Pakistan?

Though we are aware of the compulsions of the BJP which has to cater to a certain constituency, problems of our state have to be viewed, appreciated and tackled from a larger perspective. J&K's significance far overrides that of any party's political interest. We cannot afford to let pessimism and haplessness return to Kashmir. That will amount to betraying the electoral mandate. We have to rise above electoral interests and tackle the problems of J&K between us - the state and the Centre. The problem is one of lack of communication rather than that of conflict and we should overcome this in the interest of the state and its people.

12 The Governor's address

KS Correspondent

JAMMU, Nov 21 (2002): The Governor highlighted following points in his address in the state Assembly

Review of cases of all detainees: The government has decided to review the cases of all such detainees, who have been detained without trial or are held on non-specific charges or are not charged with serious offences or have been held on charges that are such that the period they have spent in jail exceeds their possible sentence, shall be released.

Doing away with POTA: The existing laws are adequate to deal with militancy and as such there is no need to resort to POTA.

State Human Rights Commission: The government shall strengthen the State Human Rights Commission to make it an effective instrument for redressing the grievances of the people of the state. The government shall extend full cooperation to the Commission to ensure expeditious investigation of complaints of custodial killings and violation of human rights so that persons responsible for the same are identified and brought to book. The recommendations and suggestions of this Commission will receive due, serious and prompt attention of the government.

Relief package: The government shall soon formulate a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation package for the families affected by militancy during the past decade. The ex-gratia relief, which is being paid at present to the next of kin of those who are killed in militancy-related violence, will be raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 2 lakh. The government will examine whether to keep a part of this amount in affixed deposit in the name of the next of kin so that the financial relief in the shape of interest accurable on the deposited money is available on a monthly basis to the affected family.

Rehabilitation of the former militants: Rehabilitation of those who have left violence and rejoined normal life is high on the agenda of the government. The existing surrender policy shall be substituted by a policy of responsive rehabilitation. The government will reach out to all the victims of militancy, including children, widows and parents of deceased militants, and make an endeavour to provide free education to the militancy-affected orphans.

Commission for reforms in police and administrative functioning: A Commission will be set up by the government to make recommendations for bringing about reforms in the police and administration. The government shall introduce systems to improve efficiency and accountability at all levels in the police force. The process of improving the role and image of the police has to begin from the process of recruitment. The recruitment policy shall be suitably revised to provide better-qualified personnel, which shall form the base of a modern, sensitive, humane, highly-skilled and trained police force.

SOG: The government is also committed to assimilate and relocate the personnel of the Special Operations Group in the regular police force so that they are subjected to the discipline and law and are made accountable for their deeds.

Dialogue: The government appreciates the initiatives taken from time to time by the Prime Minister of India through dialogue and moral persuasion. My government believes that long-lasting peace can be achieved in the state if and only if the Government of India initiates a serious and result-oriented dialogue, without any pre-conditions, with the Members of the State Legislature and other segments of public opinion in all the three regions of the state. It is the considered view of my government that a historical opportunity is knocking at our doors. We have to create an atmosphere of good will and trust. Only then will it be possible for us to walk together, in harmony and not in discord, with combined strength and determination towards a future of peace and prosperity for our people and our nation.

Fractured identity: The second major challenge facing the people of the state in general and the people of Kashmir in particular is that of fractured identity and the deep pathos that has permuted the souls of Kashmiris because of the migration of Kashmiri Pandits. Without the presence of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the Valley, its political and cultural landscape is incomplete and substantially barren. The secure and dignified return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homes and hearths in Kashmir is an essential

ingredient of "Kashmiriyat". My government will seek the cooperation of all sections of the society to create an atmosphere conducive for their safe return to the Valley. It shall take all the necessary steps to ensure their safety and devise effective measures for their rehabilitation and employment.

Regional harmony: The government is also deeply concerned about the intraregional and inter-regional sense of alienation from which the people suffer. This feeling of alienation manifests itself in many forms and shapes and undermines the feeling and pledge of solidarity between various regions and communities. My government is committed to take steps, both short term and long term, to remove the causes of this phenomenon of alienation. In this direction, the very composition of my government and its Common Minimum Programme guarantees that the people from all the regions will fully participate not only in the decision-making process but also in implementing and monitoring those decisions. I can confidently say that my government will be just and equitable in allocating funds to the three regions and that it will empower the administration, particularly in far-off and backward areas with adequate administrative and financial powers to ensure a sense of self-government and due participation in the affairs of the state.

LAHDC: The government has decided to grant full powers, consistent with the Constitution, to the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council. The necessary legal and administrative framework for this purpose is already under preparation. An Autonomous Hill Development Council would be set up in Kargil in consultation with its people for the speedy development of this district.

Languages: The government is conscious of the aspirations of the linguistic communities, who speak the Dogri and Ladakhi languages. It will accordingly, request the Government of India to include these languages in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution of India.

Minorities Commission: All the three regions of the state have got religious minorities with their unique sensibilities and special problems. My government shall give full protection to the minorities and safeguard their legitimate rights and shall also, in due course of time, set up a minorities commission to look after their interests.

Borders: The government is aware of the problems of the people living close to the Line of Control and the International Border due to recurrent tension and the cross-border violence. The government will construct permanent shelters in all vulnerable areas to prevent loss of life. Early disbursement of admissible compensation to families, affected by the shelling and mining of borders, will receive high priority.

Welfare measures: With a view to ensure that the various schemes for the welfare and uplift of poor of the state are implemented properly and timely, my government has already initiated certain reforms. The programmes and schemes of the Social Welfare Department would not only provide financial aid to the destitute, but also an opportunity to the beneficiaries to improve their educational skills. The government has already decided to increase the monthly pension in respect of the physically-challenged from Rs 150 to Rs 200 per month and deliver it at the doorstep of the pensioners through a money order. The money order charges in this regard would be borne by the government. A similar approach will be adopted for widow and old-age pensioners. The government shall streamline the grant of scholarships available to students who are handicapped or who belong to the weaker sections of society. The government shall also facilitate the recruitment of physically-challenged persons. Suitable steps would be taken to make the State Women Commission and the State Backward Classes Commission more effective.

Accountability Commission: Another momentous decision of far-reaching consequences that my government has taken is to establish in the state an institution of 'Accountability Commission' for inquiring into the complaints received against the Chief Ministers and Legislators and others. This will ensure that accountability and integrity flows from the highest echelons of power to its lowest corridors.

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13 *The J&K 'peace process': Chasing the chimera*

By K.P.S. Gill & Ajai Sahni

ANY permanent peace can only be created out of a process and perspective that is firmly rooted in the realities on the ground. The belief that good sense, good intentions and good men can, or will, eventually prevail over these lines in the face of the evidence of history.

An unrealistic pursuit of peace can only defer violence, and often magnifies it. The notion of 'peace at all costs' of self-destructive, and negotiations, and on unrealistic or divergent assessments of the realities on the ground, inevitably result in greater, escalation though they may produce a temporary and deceptive lull.

It is difficult to comprehend what precisely forces each incumbent regime in India to embrace the political realism of appeasement', despite its manifest failures and the mounting evidence of chaos and violence that it yields. It is clear, however, that the present regime is yet to display the vision or the will to escape this disastrous propensity.

On the face of it, the present 'peace initiative' in Kashmir does not appear to be 'reality based' in any meaningful sense, or to have concrete strategic foundations. It is, by and large, in the nature of a 'fishing expedition': in the absence of a consistent or coherent policy to force a breakthrough in J&K--and such a policy is entirely achievable--a random element has been introduced to destabilize established equations in the hope that it may set in motion a positive chain that could, in the uncertain future, produce desired results. This is not a plan; it is gamble. And it is destined to fail for many reasons.

The character of this initiative has, moreover, been substantially defined by factors extraneous to the conflict such as specific pressure for peace initiatives from the US.

The claim that the 'ceasefire' has resulted in a radical transformation of world opinion towards India and support for its policies on Kashmir, moreover, takes inordinate advantage of the ambiguities inherent in the situation. A positive trend in favour of the Indian position has been continuous since Pakistan's Kargil blunder, and is more a consequence of what is happening in that country--and in the vortex of anarchy to its west, in Afghanistan--than of the sagacity or efficacy of India's policies in J&K. Pakistan has, indeed, repeatedly shot itself in the foot over the past two years, and this is the actual cause of the tide of world opinion turning against it.

Under the circumstances, the claim that India's 'ceasefire' declaration in Kashmir has resulted in radical transformation in international perceptions on the conflict in J&K and on Pakistan's role, has limited objective merit. There is, of course, no set of criteria or indices that can help to quantify such international impact. But there is, equally, no extraordinary evidence that the outcome would be significantly different had India followed a consistent and coherent counter-terrorism agenda in J&K, ensuring that the civilian population did not suffer inordinately, even as the state applied all necessary force to defeat the terrorists.

There are two major difficulties with a dialogue with any of these entities. The first of these relates to the impact on legitimate democratic groupings and activities in the State. Indeed, the release of the Hurriyat leaders from custody, and the first moves to initiate talks with them were specifically perceived as steps by the Centre to marginalize Farooq Abdullah's ruling National Conference, and the Chief Minister's 'fightback' through the 'autonomy demand' in June 2000 was essentially an effort to restore some balanced and reassert his political significance.

There is something absurd in accepting an organisation that has no democratic credentials and whose members are unashamed Pakistani proxies, as the 'sole representative' of the people of Kashmir in a negotiating process, and divesting the State's elected political leadership of its locus standi in the political process. The Hurriyat, moreover, explicitly derives its influence and legitimacy from the power of the terrorists' gun, though it may not openly engage in terrorist activities. To bring such an agency to the centre stage of the negotiations, and hence of the political process, is a repudiation of the fundamental principles of democracy, and a deep injury on the democratic forces in the state which have, for decades now, been the target of the militants' wrath. The second critical difficulty is the fundamental question of

the principle involved in negotiating with terrorists and their front organisations, and in the effort to accommodate and appease the terrorist warlords operating out of Pakistan.

As Yossef Bodansky expresses it: A government committed to the safety and well being of its citizenry and an organisation intentionally using the indiscriminate injuring of the same citizenry as a negotiations tactics do not speak the same language...Even if they seem to agree on certain procedures and accommodation, the difference between their respective positions is irreconcilable. There can be no common denominators or common denominators or common grounds between terrorism and democracy.

This fundamental opposition is compounded by the 'demonstration effect' of successful terrorism. The leaders of terrorist groups must be dealt with as terrorist and criminals. To appease them is to reward terror. And if terrorism is rewarded in one theatre of conflict, it will be replicated in others. This impacts not only on Kashmir, but on the entire country, and indeed, on the world at large. This has been said before, but it bears repetition: a victory for terrorism anywhere in the world is a victory for terrorism everywhere. Terrorism in the world today is founded on the successes of terrorism in the late sixties and early seventies, when some terrorist leaders were transformed into world statesmen in West Asia.

The message communicated was: if you resort to those methods, you can become a world leader, you can carve out your own little nation, address the United Nations General Assembly, find a place, in history. Because some terrorist leaders in West Asia and Ireland have been given a place in the history of the world, every criminal ganglord thinks he can also become a world leader by murdering a few hundred or a few thousand people.

The world needs to consistently tell the ambitious and impatient groupings in various theatres of conflict that they must resolve their problems by peaceful and democratic means, and that if they resort to terrorism, irrespective of the validity or legitimacy of their cause, the world will stand against them, and will defeat them. On each occasion when a legitimate, democratically elected regime seeks to negotiate with terrorists or with their front organisations, it undermines the basic edifice and viability of the democratic order, not only in its own region, but across the world.

Pakistan has repeatedly insisted that Kashmir was the core issue between the two countries, and the greatest of the flawed premises of India's strategic perspective appears to be an implicit, uncritical and de facto acceptance of this claim and its concomitant agenda. Pakistan has been extraordinarily successful in projecting and marketing this notion, not only to the Indian establishment, but also to the world at large. It is this success that constitutes the source of the extraordinary pressures, both international and internal, on India to seek solutions through negotiations within the State and with Pakistan. It is the belief that since the 'core issue' is Kashmir, it can be dealt with locally, and can be 'resolved' through the various petty plots to cut up the State on communal lines that are current today-along the LoC, or along the Chenab, or by clubbing together Muslim majority districts, etc. and that, through this device, 'peace' can be purchased in perpetuity.

But the fact is that the core issue is not Kashmir. It never was. It is the fundamentalist ideology, and the 'two nation theory' that excludes the ways of life coexisting within a single political order. The core issue, consequently, goes to the very heart and basis of India's existence, as it does of irreducible conflict between democratic liberalism and a polity based on an exclusionary religious democratic liberalism and a polity based on an exclusionary religious absolutism. Those who think it can be resolved through negotiated territorial concessions with the aggressor deceive themselves no less than the Chamberlains and the Daladiers who sought to bribe Hitler into peace with similar concessions. Even to conceive of a 'settlement' on Kashmir on the basis of a communal trifurcation would be a monumental blunder, at par with the Partition of India that destroyed and disrupted millions of lives, but solved nothing.

While the dangers of the 'demonisation' of Islam have been widely noted, both by neutral scholars and by the apologists for extremist Islam, there is a neglect of an even more vicious process of the demonisation of all other Faiths and nations among the people of Islam, and even of Muslims who do not conform to the perverse vision of the 'fundamentalists'. There is a profound ideology of hatred that is being fervently

propagated through the institutions of Islam, particularly the madrassas or religious schools and seminaries that are proliferating rapidly across South Asia, and it is winning many ardent converts.

This is, as already stated, still a small minority among South Asia's Muslims; but it is a vocal, armed, well supported, extremely violent and growing minority. The majority, by contrast, has tended to passivity and conciliation, and there is little present evidence of the courage of conviction or the will for any moderate Islamic resistance to the rampage of extremist Islam

What we see is a strategy of encirclement and penetration that seeks indiscriminate destabilization throughout the South Asian region, and its visible source is in Pakistan, though its financial flows originate in West Asia. Within the paradigm of Kashmir as the 'core issue', it may be tempting, under the circumstances to explore the possibility of a permanent settlement with Pakistan, by which it makes firm commitments on the cessation of all such subversive activities throughout the region in exchange for territorial concessions. Once again, this would be a course of action based upon a complete failure of comprehension, both of the nature of the absolutist ideology of extremist Islam, and of the complex nature of the relationship between the Pakistan state and the terrorist groupings that currently act on its apparent bidding.

Enormous faith has been placed on the 'international community' by India in its hope that Pakistan will eventually yield to cumulative diplomatic pressure or to the economic burden of sanctions. But Pakistan can yield neither to economic imperatives, nor to international pressures, nor, indeed, can it stop at any limited concessions that it may secure through negotiations with India for it is no longer in control of the forces of extremism that it has created and nurtured. It may, however, eventually yield to chaos. And while this may not be desirable even from the Indian point of view, preventing such an eventuality cannot be the overriding concern for an Indian government.

Despite its economic strength, its political resilience, and its military might, despite the courage and sacrifices of its combined Security Forces, India, today, projects an image of utter fragility and vulnerability to the world as a result of the vacillation and weakness of its political leadership and its bureaucracy. The rhetoric of being a 'world leader', a 'great power' has dominated recent political oratory, but India's governments have not learned how to act even as governments of a principled democracy, leave alone a 'great power'. Can those who advocate negotiations with terrorists and their front organisations over Kashmir, even conceive of the US government initiating similar 'negotiations to arrive at a settlement on the 'issue' of the US military presence in Saudi Arabia?

The meaning of democracy has been distorted beyond measure in India. The idea that everybody-including terrorists and mass murderers-must be 'accommodated' in the political process and kept happy within a democracy appears to be the thrust of the politics of 'consensus' that has been the unique product of a succession of corrupt and craven regimes. But one cannot strengthen the case for democracy by handing over his country. It is an extraordinarily, difficult form of governance, and demands exceptional disciplined adherence to the rule of law, both on the part of the people and of governments. Freedom, in such a system, is not, as some would have us believe, a 'birth right'; it is something that has to be fought for and defended, something that nations earn and preserve through blood and sacrifice.

It is necessary now, if India is to survive, to abandon the whore's ethic of consensus and appeasement, to take on the burden of responsible and principled governance and to accept the inescapable fact that terrorism and the ideologies that inspire it will have to be defeated and that nothing is going to change unless it is demonstrated beyond a shadow of doubt that violence will not profit those who seek to use terror as an instrument of policy.

(Source: PTI)

14 Kashmir - what went wrong-II

Ground realities:

Ground situation in J&K does not indicate any improvement. Pakistan has created a war-like situation by blatantly sponsoring cross-border terrorism. Suicide attacks by terrorists on security and civilian targets are taking place on a regular basis. There is no let-up in infiltration. Area of terrorist conflict has widened and there is upgradation of terrorists' armoury. The terrorists' have been able to operate through a well-developed infrastructure of support, which includes guides/informers, harbourers and accomplices. Minority groups in Muslim-dominated areas of Jammu province continue to be under pressure. Ethnic-cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus remains unaddressed.

To what extent the war of attrition has tired down the local support for separatists is difficult to guess. However, it can be safely said that India has failed to evolve a realistic counter-insurgency doctrine to tackle terrorist menace in Kashmir. Even the Estimates Committee of Parliament in its 20th report on the Ministry of Defence (MoD) regarding policy making and system of higher direction has deprecated the lack of strategic planning and thinking at the national level. It has pointed out that directions and tasks must necessarily flow from a well-defined policy, or else the armed forces, guided by adhocism, will founder. Mr George Tanham of the Rand Corporation, the prestigious think-tank of the USA, in a study "Indian strategic thought," concluded that India has no strategic culture or tradition. It is an inward-looking country and its history, geography, culture and civilisation have shaped this tradition, he added.

The main failures of India's counter-insurgency strategy in J&K are lack of long-term strategic planning, defensive mindset built on bizarre assessments and non-coordination among different security agencies. "Proactive strategies," announced by NDA-government have remained empty rhetoric only. The security forces, operate from a defensive angle under severe stress.

The mindset of politicians has percolated down to the Army generals. 'Kashmir is a political problem and needs to be sorted out politically' has become new obsession. Kashmir problem is being attributed to the cumulative neglect of political, economic and social aspirations. If it is to be sorted out politically, then what should be the scope of CI operations. Obviously, to bring the separatists to the negotiating table. This dangerous mindset is responsible for not fashioning a pro-active strategy. Seek and destroy operations have thus been employed selectively and not as a regular strategy.

Separatists elements in Kashmir are waging a Jihadist war, which has transnational linkages and ramifications. Post-1973 oil boom in Gulf and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan are in the primary responsible for rise of Islamist rebellion in Kashmir. Jihadist violence has to be defeated both globally and locally. There are no short-cuts. No amount of appeasement of separatists or their sympathisers will deliver peace. This leads to one conclusion: Terrorist war has to be defeated militarily. Once it dawns on Kashmiri separatists that they are fighting a losing war, dissenting elements will come forward to wrap up the last remnants of terrorist violence. Peace with dignity and honour in essence means compromise with separatists. It is only after defeating the Jihadist war on the ground that addressing the problems of misgovernance or restoration of displaced Pandits to their homes will have meaning.

An important cause for the failure of the operations in J&K is the lack of coordination between the MoD, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Cabinet Secretariat. The formation of Unified Command was a laudable strategy but it failed to achieve its objectives. The original purpose was to reduce duplicity of efforts, have honest intelligence sharing and periodic review of CI strategies. In practice it never happened due to unnecessary local political interference. There was no clearly defined command and control mechanism and proper coordination between MHA, MoD and the cabinet secretariat. BSF, Police and Army witnessed competition for credit-sharing. There was no sharing of actionable intelligence and each agency held its own terrain.

There is a war-like situation in J&K. Therefore Unified Headquarter has to be headed by a senior Army Corps Commander and coordinated at the highest level. There is a need to create a single agency for directing counter-insurgency operations. The centrally administered paramilitary forces can be put under

the command of the Army to carry out internal security duties for which they are trained. The role of Rashtriya Rifles can be expanded further with integration of SOG/STF wings of state police, VDCs and SPOs. Recruitment of younger elements among VDCs and SPOs on permanent basis with better remuneration and upgraded arms would provide a strong cutting edge to CI operations, with ample actionable intelligence available. VDCs and SPOs also know the local terrain and the people better.

A realistic counter-insurgency strategy would focus on stopping infiltration, quarantining the insurgency by restricting the area in which it operates, regain control over infiltration routes in Pir Panjal, denying the hideout to the terrorists and launching seek and destroy operations to decimate the militants, ensure that suicide strikes are counter-productive to terrorists, evolving innovative intelligence strategies and lastly, neutralizing the support structures of terrorists. External components of counter-insurgency strategy to relieve pressure locally would include paying Pakistan back in the coin and destroying camps in PoK. Political content should be given to counter-insurgency and clarity of tasks and objectives should percolate down in unambiguous terms. Additionally, Army commanders should avoid controversies and dalliance with those think-tanks whose ideas are at variance with national interest. In the recent past, the army involved itself in unnecessary controversy by associating itself with a symposium in Jammu University and conducting Sadhbhavana in Turtuk (Ladakh).

Infiltration

From Chicken Neck to Pathankot there is a linear defence. After every hundred yards there is a security man. It is amazing how terrorists could sneak in and launch a strike at Kaluchak camp. If we are not able to manage linear defence, how can we deal with porous borders north of Chicken Neck i.e. LoC and PoK.

During the past ten years, to facilitate infiltration, ISI has created new enclaves in border areas of Jammu. As per a report, 16 Corps Commander, Lt. Gen. JBS Yadava, disturbed enough by the link between new enclaves and spurt in terrorist activities, sent a detailed communication to the state government. The commander revealed that hostile settlements had come up along the more than 36 rivers and mountain nullahas in the Samba sector, which constitute key infiltration routes into Pakistan.

The other major area of such settlements was across the National Highway, connecting Pathankot to Jammu. These settlements provided a staging post to terrorists seeking to target the Pathankot-Jammu road and railway line, as well as access to key areas in rural Jammu. Mr Praveen Swami, a senior journalist pointed out.

“Polemic apart, migration into Jammu poses several difficult questions, which need hard answers...Hysterical claims of a conspiracy to marginalise Jammu Hindus, then, are clearly misplaced. But the fact remains that the new migration does hold out security risks. The growth of Gujjar settlements along the Basantar, Aik and Devak rivers, for example, has been mirrored by a sharp increase in terrorist activities”.

From here terrorists cross to Doda, Udhampur and Bhandarwah or go north into Rajouri and Reasi. How responsive was the then ruling NC government to national security concerns, Mr Swami wrote:

“General Yadava’s letter (October, 2001) received a curt response. The J&K government argued that state subjects could settle wherever they wished, and the Army had no business to involve itself in the issue. One key point made in the 16 Corps letter, however, went unaddressed. The General had pointed out that many of the new settlements were coming up on government land, and that encroachments even in strategically-sensitive areas were being regularised. Although the letter was too polite to say so, National Conference cadre were often involved in the creation of such enclaves, brokering land sales and then promising regularisation of forest encroachments, and access to housing schemes like the Indira Awas Yojana. A Jammu-based Minister is widely believed to have encouraged supporters to start a large-scale forest fire near Sidhra earlier this year, an enterprise that was meant to clear land but went tragically wrong after three of the would be settlers accidentally burnt to death.”

Despite the hurdles being created by the NC government, the Central government did not intervene and allowed the situation to drift with its disastrous results. It did not want to annoy an ally.

The reasons often cited for continued infiltration in Jammu-Kathua belt are - availability of local guides to terrorists, lack of coordination between various intelligence agencies and dense population right upto the zero line. Till 1999, the Indo-Pak border in Kathua, which remained peaceful, was mostly used by transborder smugglers for bringing in gold and narcotics. Subsequently ISI started forcing these smugglers to also take a consignment of arms and ammunition along with the gold and narcotics. J&K Police as well as Punjab Police achieved a major success, when they seized large quantity of arms from Hiranagar on the instance of gold smugglers. Police realised the gravity of the situation only after three of the five heavily-armed militants, who sneaked into the state from across the border, were killed during a fierce encounter the same year. The remaining two terrorists were apprehended by alert villagers near Ghagwal.

There was no dearth of ideas on how to tackle the infiltration menace. There were suggestions to create a unified command of intelligence agencies, besides clearing two km. belt along the border of all inhabitants. Army had even demanded a role in administration in select border areas to track down guides and harbourers of terrorists. All this was ignored.

A border-management strategy addressing to both the human factor as well as the geography will take care of the problem of infiltration. Inducting mines along the routes witnessing heavy and regular infiltration and employing ground sensors to detect infiltrators have been often emphasised. This should be done without any delay. Resettlement of ex-servicemen to create pragmatic enclaves in border belts and bolstering of the patriotic groups has also been suggested.

Army on its part should go for effective deployment to check infiltration. Greater accountability and domination of all the infiltration routes will reduce the infiltration to a minimum. Simultaneously the GoI can maintain international pressure on Pakistan to put an end to cross-border terrorism. In case Pakistan fails to respond, capability to smash launching pads in PoK should be kept ready.

'Fidayeen' factor:

Suicide strikes by the terrorists has costed much to the security forces. It has created fear psychosis and led to media disgrace. Casualties have increased and additional manpower had to be deployed. "Fidayeen" attacks at Raghu Nath Mandir can be explained but not on military camps. These highly motivated terrorists have been able to sneak into high security areas primarily because security of installation is not planned or lot of local civilians have access to military camps.

There is a need to curtail this civilian access to army camps. In the first *fidayeen* attack on Badami Bagh Cantt, allowing access to doubtful journalists was a big security lapse. The disturbing trend is how repeatedly terrorists are gaining access to camps. Senior army officers instead of evolving a solution to this problem made irresponsible statements. "If somebody has to die he can die inside also. These strikes cannot be prevented". These statements do not add to the morale jawans.

Fidayeen attacks can be pre-empted through foolproof security of the camps, foreseeing the attack and maintaining vigil on the civilian staff posted with the army. Had we foiled *fidayeen* strikes in the beginning, these attacks would have gone out of fashion.

Infiltration of terrorist groups:

World's foremost expert on terrorism, Rohan Gunaratna says infiltration of terrorist groups is the only way to destroy these groups. This is necessary to track down harbourers and financiers of terrorists, nab the infiltrating groups, fomenting inter-group clashes among terrorists and finally creating confusion in their ranks. Additionally, this can become important and reliable source of intelligence gathering.

Seek and Destroy operations

These operations have one objective - to chase the terrorist right up to his hideout and kill him. Army had been deploying it selectively. Such operations demand national consensus as collateral damage at the initial stage is heavy. In the initial phase, army followed a policy of "recovery without losses" in Doda and the region was delivered to the terrorists. Security of Srinagar-Jammu highway was imperilled and

terrorists dug deep into the adjoining Anantnag district. Minority groups in Doda became targets for ethnic-cleansing. Use of helicopters to track down mercenaries in higher reaches of Doda and upgradation of weaponry for CI operations was also not seriously pursued.

Decisive battle to decimate terrorism in Kashmir has to start from Doda. Gradually this can be extended to Kashmir valley proper.

15 Press Censures Terrorists

NC, Cong, PDP, Hurriyat unmoved over Gopalpora massacre

By Ahmed Ali Fayaz

SRINAGAR, Dec 26: As both, mainstream as well as separatist politicians, have been thriving over 13-year-long era of bloodshed in Jammu and Kashmir, no political party has shed even the proverbial crocodile tears over the cold-blooded carnage of three members of a family at Gopalpora. As already reported, a Government schoolteacher, Mohammad Shafi Wani, and both of his sons - Zahoor Ahmed Wani and Jehangir Ahmed Wani - were shot dead by unidentified gunmen at their residence, in Srinagar, outskirts of Budgam district last evening. Since the assassins are widely believed to be members of a Pan-Islamist 'guerrilla' organisation, politicians have strictly stuck to the wisdom "silence is the best policy".

All the *nouveau rich* Hurriyat leaders, whose entire structure of politics is based on "human rights violations", hartal and condemnation, remained totally indifferent to the "white blood" that spilled in the Budgam hamlet. A full-page statement that came out from the Hurriyat headquarters today does not make even a passing reference to the Gopalpora killings. It sheds plenty of tears over the arrest of Al-Omar supremo Mushtaq Latram's brother, over the interrogation of several relatives of militants. But the statement, which can fetch money and favours from across the border, has conveniently ignored the Gopalpora killings.

A Hurriyat activist, Javed Mir, made yet another enactment of "protest" over a Delhi court's pronouncement of death sentence over three Kashmiris held guilty in the Parliament attack incident. He, however, did not dare to utter a single word over the gory episode that shook hearts in Srinagar and Budgam districts. All the prominent Hurriyat leaders, who claim to be the "real representatives" of Kashmiri people, enjoyed their day in cosy bungalows and luxurious cars. The moment they learned that it was an act of militants, they adopted silence as their best policy.

Democratic Freedom Party chief, Shabir Ahmed Shah - otherwise known for condemning everything around - was also silent over the triple murder that occurred in close vicinity of his Rawalpora mansion. His estranged separatist colleague and chairman of National Front, Nayeem Khan, too was not heard or seen over the Wednesday carnage anywhere in the Valley.

High Court Bar Association, which takes pride in introducing itself as a constituent of the separatist Hurriyat Conference and organising seminars and protests over "human rights violations" was also deaf and dumb in case of the Gopalpora family. So were the self-styled human rights activists, Mohammad Ahsan Ontoo and Pervez Imroz, who have carved out a niche for themselves in Kashmir's lucrative politics of protests and condemnations over the last several years. None should blame men like the former Chief Justice Mufti Bahauddin Farouqi, who have since taken retirement from this kind of dirty politics.

While as the Peoples Conference chairman, Sajjad Gani Lone, was the one-odd politician from the entire separatist camp, who showed guts to condemn the massacre, from the whole mainstream political camp it was none but the NC leader and MLC, Abdul Qayoom, who came out with a word of condemnation. Significantly, the ill-fated family actually belonged to Qayoom's Charar-e-Sharif town.

Failing to perform as the state's major political party, Omar Abdullah's National Conference did not bother to issue a statement of condemnation. Though the former Chief Minister Dr Farooq Abdullah is untraced and Omar has been sticking to his ministerial bungalow in New Delhi - even after his resignation has finally been accepted - none of the NC leaders present in town bothered to utter a word of condemnation. Even after losing power, NC is the largest political party in the State Assembly with 29 members. Its firebrand leaders like Ali Mohammad Sagar, Maulvi Iftikhar and Ghulam Nabi Shaheen are still licking the wounds of their party's defeat in the September elections.

Interestingly, witnessing the arch rival PDP taking electoral dividends by making pro-militant statements and selling the green colour of their party flag in Kashmir, die-hard guerrilla-bashers like Dr Abdullah and Sagar have been advised by their colleagues to sit calm. After the results were over, a section of their

party leadership made a point that speaking against militants and Pakistan had isolated the NC from the common man.

Ghulam Nabi Azad's Congress party has been rather generous in condemnation the killings committed by militants in the state. However, this has been observed with marked interest that none of the Congress leaders bothered to condemn yesterday's killings.

Alongwith his power ally Azad, the ruling PDP chief Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti, were also in Kashmir yesterday as well as today. Crying over the death of civilians and militants killed by Task Force and Army has become the Muftis' mark of identification in Kashmir's politics since 1996. The Chief Minister as well as the PDP's *rudaali* enjoyed the day at Gulmarg and returned to Jammu today without paying a visit to the Gopalpora family. The massacre had occurred virtually in the Mufti's backyard in Nowgam-Chadoura belt.

Nothing was heard today of the ebullient PDP MLA (Chadoura) Javed Mustafa Mir, who attempted to become a hero on account of the death of a mason in Police custody early this month. Mir had not only forced the Government to announce a magisterial inquiry into the death of the poor mason, but it was he who even locked the police station where the poor man had been found dead. The young Chadoura MLA, whose politician father was killed by Hizbul Mujahideen and the militant brother by BSF, seems to be in a misplaced dilemma over the red and white colours of the blood of his fellow Kashmiris. Hence the silence?

(Source: The Daily Excelsior)

16 A Symbol of Kashmiri Heritage

Chandrahari Mahadev Temple of Ayodhya

By Dr. B.N. Sharga

History tells us that civilizations which once flourished on this planet, the remnants of are now only preserved in the museums of different countries. The pyramids of Egypt symbolise a part of that civilization which existed during the days of Pharaohs there. We also some time watch the traces of those civilizations on the discovery channel, but in clear contrast to all this the creed and culture of the ancient Indian civilization can still be found in every village of our country, very much alive through centuries old customs, traditions and beliefs.

In ancient India both Kashi and Kashmir were regarded as the seats of higher learning. The 'Sharda Peeth' of Kashmir was supposed to be the highest seat of learning for the seekers of knowledge to attain perfection in academic pursuits. These learned people of Kashmir propounded their own doctrines from time to time which were mainly based on their studies and their practical experiences in life. The most important of them all is the Doctrine of Recognition, which we now call as Kashmir's Shaivism. It was propounded by a eighth century Sage, Acharya Vasugupta and was later on further elucidated by Acharya Abhinavgupta.

Kashmiri Pandits, the original inhabitants of the Kashmir valley, who are the descendants of those saints and sages who used to live once on the banks of the mythological river Saraswati, are the natural custodians of this Shaiva Philosophy which is deeply ingrained in their psyche. That is why all the Kashmiri Pandits are basically the worshippers of Lord Shiva.

We also know fully well that pilgrimage is an important part of Hindu religion and ethos and every devout Hindu believes in doing the same in his life time. The Kashmiri Pandits are no exception. Many Kashmiri Pandits had come out from the Kashmir valley in different times in the past on a pilgrimage to the important holy cities of north India like Hardwar, Mathura, Ayodhya and Kashi (Varanasi) where they built beautiful and magnificent Shiva temples and "Dharamshalas" for their *biradari* members. Some of them have gone upto Puri in the far far east to pay their obeisance to Lord Jagannath there.

Ayodhya has its own importance for Hindus, being the birth place of Lord Ram. It is an ancient city whose history is linked with the Vedic period. This city is being described as "Astchakra Navdwara" or "Devpuri" in Athar Veda. It is said that this holy city was established by Vaivswat Manu, the son of Vivaswan. He gave this city to his son Ishwako to make it the capital of his kingdom. Its area at that time was from Azamgarh in the east upto Lucknow in the west with two magnificent gates at both the ends. It used to have four main highways connecting the four directions and was a well planned city with rectangular buildings and well laid out beautiful gardens.

According to the information collected from different sources and then putting up the facts regarding the history of this ancient temple in their true perspective one Pandit Gulab Rai Tikku came out from the Kashmir valley in the second half of the 18th century during the Afghan rule there on a pilgrimage to Ayodhya and rebuilt this ancient temple of "Chandrahari Mahadev", around 1770. When this temple was originally built and by whom is not known to any body.

There is a very interesting legend connected with the history of this most ancient temple of Ayodhya. It is said that this ancient temple at Mohalla "Swarg Dwar" now known as "Ram Ki Pauri" was originally built by the Moon himself. When the district of Faizabad was formed by the British in 1858 they mentioned the name of "Chandrahari Mahadev temple as the most ancient temple of Ayodhya in its Gazetteer along with Ram Janma Bhoomi, Hanuman Garhi, Nageshwar Nath, Treta Ke Thakur, etc.

The unique feature of this ancient temple is that in its sanctum sanctorum 12 "Shivlingas" are placed on a single huge "Yoni". Then in its premises there is an idol of Lord Ganesh, two idols of Nandi and an idol of goddess Durga. The whole assembly of these idols is now also being called as the "Shiva Mandal" i.e. the extended family of Lord Shiva. It is being purposely done to represent all the 12 manifestations of Lord Shiva at one place, so that a devotee paying his or her obeisance here many attain salvation simply

by reciting all the 12 names of these 'Jyotir Lingams'. The origin of "Chandrahari Mahadev" temple has been traced to the period of Raja Harishchandra when he ruled over Ayodhya. The Chandrahari is actually one of the seven sanctuaries of Lord Vishnu in Ayodhya the other six are Dharmahari, Vishnuhari, Chakrahari, Guptahari, Vilvahari and Punyahari.

A European scholar Hans Bakker has done an exhaustive research work on the history and architecture of the temples of Ayodhya and he published a comprehensive document in 1986 under the title "Ayodhya" describing his findings in it. In this research document he has devoted one complete chapter to Chandrahari Mahadev temple. He has written in this document that "No doubt Chandrahari tirtha is one of the oldest holy places of Ayodhya. Its foundation might possibly go back to a visit of Gohadavala King Chandra Deva to Ayodhya in 1093 AD. Its legend which tells us about the Chandra Deva's pilgrimage to Ayodhya and his erection of an idol of Lord Vishnu (Hari) there for worship, is structurally identical with the legend which goes with this temple".

According to Hans Bakker the concept of Seven Sanctuaries of Lord Vishnu in Ayodhya came into limelight probably in the 18th century and accordingly five Hari Sanctuaries namely Chandrahari, Dharmahari, Vishnuhari, Chakrahari and Guptahari were fixed, but the other two Haris due to certain reasons may not have yet been fixed. Bilva tirth was later on transformed into Bilvahari and was recognised as such. But the name of the seventh Hari remains still uncertain. It is believed that probably it relates to king Bharat the son of Dushyanta who belonged to the Purva line of the Lunar dynasty. However a Bharathar sanctuary dedicated to king Bharat is unknown from any other source. The records only mention Punyahari as the seventh Hari and this holy place is about 17 kms in the south east from Ayodhya.

A remarkable contradiction in its description is that the modern Chandrahari temple is not an abode of Lord Vishnu but instead an abode of Lord Shiva where his "*lingam*" has been installed. The temple borders on the west side of Ganga Mahal (Palace) and infact forms a part of its compound. This temple complex contains several shrines, the central being known as "Shiva Mandala". To the left of the main shrine is the sanctum sanatorium of "Chandrahari" containing two beautiful idols of Lord Krishna and his consort Radha, which is believed to have been built by Gulab Rai Tikku, a Kashmiri Pandit in the second half of the 18th century, who arrived in Ayodhya from Habba Kadal Mohalla of the Srinagar district in the Kashmir valley around 1770 AD during the rule of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daula (1753-1775) in Oudh. Quite a good number of Kashmiri Pandit families from Kashmir and Delhi came to Faizabad during this period and all of them settled down either in Mohalla Rath Haveli or in Kashmiri Mohalla to live as a community there. Naturally they felt the need of a Shiva temple there for their religious congregations on festivals and for performing their rituals just to maintain their distinct ethnic identity in the completely new environment far away from the land of their birth. So this temple was built for this purpose for which they donated money liberally. Another Kashmiri Pandit Rama Kak who came to Ayodhya on a pilgrimage from Kashmir during the rule of Nawab Saadat Ali Khan (1798-1814) in 1805 not only repaired this ancient temple again but also built a "Dharmshala" for providing proper boarding and lodging facilities to a large number of pilgrims visiting this historical temple to pay their obeisance. Since 1805 the management of this shrine and the dharmshala attached to it is under the control of the Kashmiri Pandits, who are looking after its day to day affairs. The names of many Kashmiri Pandits are inscribed on the marble tablets fixed in this shrine who liberally donated a lot of money for the proper upkeep of this temple and the "dharamshala".

The most striking feature of this ancient temple is that the beautiful idol of Radha installed in it with Lord Krishna used to be dressed up in a Kashmiri attire wearing 'attahroos' and 'dejahroos' signifying the Kashmiri link. Pt. Amar Nath Kaul of Kashmiri Mohalla, Lucknow, who went to Ayodhya in the second half of the 19th century and subsequently became a dewan of Ayodhya Naresh, Raja Man Singh a Sakaldipi Brahmin, used to live in the 'Dharamshala' of this temple on the bank of Saryu river in the fag end of his life after taking a 'Sanyas' from the wordily affairs in the beginning of the 20th century around 1904.

In 1925 a Trust was constituted known as "Chandrahari Mahadev Trust Association" with Pandit Ram Nath Shangloo, a leading criminal lawyer of Faizabad as its Chairman for the proper management of this shrine, which was duly registered in 1926. The other important members of this Trust were Pt. Shiv Narain Jais, Pt. Parmeshwar Nath Sapru, Pt. Krishna Nath Kaul, Pt. Mohan Lal Sukhia, Pt. Shambhu Nath Kaul and Pt. Ayodhya Prasad Wantoo. According to the records of this Trust after the death of its Chairman Pt. Ram Nath Shangloo and Secretary, Pt. Hari Krishna Shangloo in 1980, Pt. Prem Krishna Ganjoo became its Chairman and Pt. Prem Krishna Shangloo became its secretary respectively. But due to non renewal of the Association's registration as per new UP's Registration Act for Firms and Societies which was enacted in 1975 this Trust became almost defunct and so a need was felt to constitute another Trust to infuse new life into the managing body of this ancient temple of Ayodhya for its all round progress and development.

It was due to the untiring efforts of Dr. Sudhakar Adeeb who was posted in Faizabad as A.D.M. (F/R) that a new Trust under the name "Sri Chandrahari Mahadeva Trust, Ayodhya" was formed on 1st May 2000 with Swami Krishnakantacharya, Pt. Prem Krishna Shangloo, Pt. Ram Chandra Kaul 'Anam', Pt. Gadadhar Prasad Wantoo, Pt. Anand Kaul, Dr Sudhakar Adeeb and Shri S. Kumar as the patron members of this newly constituted Trust. The executive body of this Trust will now consist of the following members Pt. Sanjay Shangloo, Mrs. Shobha Adeeb, Mrs. Kirti Gandru, Arvind Wantoo, Arvind Kaul, Yatin Mohan Pratap Misra, Alok Bansal, Ajeet Garg, Misrilal and Prabhat Kumar Tandon. It has also been decided that Swami Krishnakantacharya would function as the chairman and Pt. Sanjay Shangloo as the secretary of this Trust till the next elections for its office bearers. These Trustees will not only manage the Shrine and its other properties, but will also try their best to develop it as one of the important tourists' destination of the country by providing proper infrastructure facilities to the pilgrims and other foreign tourists who visit this ancient temple in large numbers on festive occasions.

On every "Shivaratri" and "Navratra" this ancient Shrine which is of great historical and religious importance attracts huge crowds of devotees from far of places who come to pay their obeisance to the deities installed there with great spiritual powers for salvation. The managing committee of this Shrine also organises regular festivals on auspicious occasions for the benefit of the pilgrims to this holy city. The 'havans' and 'yangnas' are also performed from time to time in this temple chanting Vedic *mantras* for the purity of mind and soul and for bringing all round peace, progress and prosperity in the country. The Kashmiri Pandits are the undisputed custodians of this Shrine and its other assests for the last more than 200 years, and are carrying out the affairs of this shrine with a missionary spirit with full devotion and dedication. It is hoped that they will continue to do the same for many more years with selfless, spirit. May god bless them for their noble work. The following lines of the reputed Hindi poet *Jai Narain 'Arun'* convey a lot of meaning in this respect.

*"Man garajta raha aur barasta raha
Roop pyasi dhara ka sarasta raha
Kintu ek boond ki as mein Swati ki
Hai! Chatak bichara tarasta raha".*

17 A Panun Kashmir Perspective

Kashmir - the need for a multilateral dialogue

Premises

Dialogue is the essence of open and civilised societies. It is the totalitarian states and the fundamentalist ideologies that promote exclusivism and stifle political, cultural and religious dissent. The ongoing Pan-Islamist campaign in Kashmir masquerading as the "freedom movement" has upturned the native ethos nurtured over centuries. The gifts of this Islamist campaign have been hate and violence leading to ethnic-cleansing of the entire Hindu minority, all round criminalisation of society and elimination of social and political dissent. Kashmirian society has been pushed back to medieval ages and into anarchy. This is what constitutes the "freedom movement".

It is not the so-called national aspirations of Kashmiris that is under threat but the entire value-system that symbolises a healthy democratic society. To see employment packages or autonomy deals as solution to the continued cycles of violence and Kashmir's socio-political debasement is to ignore the basic issues at stake. Kashmiris need vision and political will to come to grips with the dangerous agenda of the Pan-Islamist forces. The new Chief Minister, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has been at pains to impress upon the Centre to hold dialogue with the elected representatives of the state. The magnitude and the complexity of the problem demands a wider debate - a multilateral dialogue. This implies dialogue within Kashmiri Muslim society, between Hindus and Muslims in Kashmir, between Kashmiri Muslims and the nation, between Pandits and the nation, between Kashmiri Muslims on one hand and people of Jammu and Ladakh on the other and lastly, between Indian Muslims and the nation.

Of late, it is being said, Kashmiri Muslims are becoming tired of the war of attrition being fought in Kashmir. In view of the fluid situation, it is difficult to gauge whether this new phenomenon can be harnessed to smash the terrorist infrastructure. A senior official of CRPF said recently the militants were present in good numbers within the Valley and were still potent enough to carry out deadly strikes. He predicted that "if local populace decides that enough is enough and stop giving food and shelter to the militants, we can assure them the menace would be cleaned up in a very short time."

At the same, a section of non-Jamaat separatist leadership has been engaged in loud thinking. In private they have been claiming that they are opposed to violence of any kind and desire revival of Pandit-Muslim brotherhood. This revival, they argue, was key to retrieve Kashmir from cycles of violence and mayhem. This rethinking, if at all it is sincere, is being attributed to a realisation that Kashmiris have failed to garner crucial international support for their separatist cause. Separatist movement is being seen as a part of global Pan-Islamist terrorist campaign. However, there is little hope. The separatist leadership looks confused and repeats the old sadistic harangues bordering on paranoia against Indian state and even displaced Pandits.

Pluralism and Democracy

It is imperative that the society, which has itself invited the trouble must go for introspection. A frank debate within the ranks of Kashmiri Muslim society would have to decide whether visions of pluralism and democracy or surrender to medievalist fundamentalist ideology which preaches revanchism, violence and hate are desirable for Kashmiri self respect and futuristic development. It is said revolutions devour their own children Hasn't criminalisation of society, and rise of lumpen gangs, violence against women and suppression of social/political dissent affected Kashmiri Muslims more than anyone else? Who has benefited from the terrorist and fundamentalist entrepreneurship?

Today a Kashmiri has lost voice to defend good against the evil. He does not protest against inhuman killing of his fellow Muslims, own kith and kin, brutal slaughter of Muslim women who do not, surrender to fundamentalist diktat or terrorists lust. This loss of faculty to discriminate good from evil is also reflected in Kashmiri's tacit acceptance of the reality of the ethnic-cleansing of his neighbours, the grab and the loot of his left-over property. Jihad has taken toll of accountability and toleration. It is this

Jehadist fervor that forces a section of Kashmiris to call criminal gangs of international mercenaries as 'guest Mujahideen' Talibanised culture and value system of pluralism and democracy cannot co-exist. Bangla Muslim society can pride itself in producing a Tasleema Nasreen, who has the courage to write Lajja to depict the plight of non-Muslims and liberals in the wake of fundamentalist campaign. Did Kashmir produce a single 'moderate' Muslim, who would speak with similar pain about the genocide of Kashmiri Hindus?

The truth remains that in contemporary Kashmir the distinction between the 'moderate' Muslim and the 'fundamentalist' Muslim has become blurred. It simply does not exist. Attributing this to fear is to engage in semantics. Civil society in Kashmir has to decide how it relates to pluralism, democracy and revanchist ideology of Islamic fundamentalism. Monocultural societies are not only out of tune with the spirit of globalisation, but are self-destructive. Such societies lack broader legitimacy and deny internal enrichment, democracy and accountability.

As per official estimates, nearly thirty-thousand Kashmiris have perished in the terrorist violence. Five lakh Kashmiris have been thrown out of their homes and live a state of permanent homelessness. Thousands of widow, orphans, etc. live life as social outcasts on the margins of society in a state of total uncertainty. Minorities, who have still not abandoned their homes live in perpetual fear. Women too have been subjected to indignities, rape and slaughter for standing up to the terrorists' diktat. A sincere debate within Kashmiri Muslim society would also fix responsibility on those who have forced this situation on Kashmiris.

Aren't leaders of Jamaat Islami and other separatist outfits responsible for all this? Did not they become willing mercenaries to import ideas and conspiracy of Pan-Islamists to Kashmir? Why terrorist campaign in Kashmir took birth only in 1979, in the wake of Soviet intervention in Afghanistan? The same Kashmiris who took out massive processions to mourn the judicial hanging of ZA Bhutto, later turned ardent admirers of fascist dictator, Zia-ul-Haque. How 'zie koda' and 'zie koan' became 'Marde-momin Marde Haq'.

A frank debate within Kashmiri Muslim society would also debate if there was any justification--political, economic, social or religious for taking resort to arms. To what extent pursuit of 'Muslim identity politics' by local pro-India mainstream leadership and later on ideas of Pan-Islamism imported in the wake of 1973 Gulf oil boom and Soviet intervention in Afghanistan, has contributed to Muslim alienation in Kashmir needs proper assessment. Essence of alienation in Kashmir is psychological. The more a Kashmiri feels as a Muslim and a fundamentalist, the more he will feel alienated from secular nation-building model in India. Rigging factor, Farooq's dismissal, bad governance--all these factors have been overplayed. These are part of aberrations in India's political structure and do not reflect any selective bias against Kashmir.

Separatist leadership has also harangued that India does not trust Kashmiris and minority groups have to accept the solution, which meets the aspirations of the Muslim majority in Kashmir. They also argue that nothing short of political package will satisfy Kashmiris. This is political opportunism at its worst. You cannot wage war against the state and at the same time expect to be trusted by it. The main beneficiaries of the post 1947 largesse have been the Kashmiri Sunni Muslim-elite, the group waging war against the state. Secondly, it is only fascist societies that demand subjugation of the minority to the will of the majority--the majoritarian tyranny. The essence of the argument that only political package will deliver peace for India is that Kashmiri Muslims demand more rights than others. This strikes at the root of democracy and secularism. The more a communal group is appeased, the more intransigent it becomes. The Central focus of the intra-Muslim dialogue has to be what do the Kashmiris ultimately want.

Dialogue between Pandits and Muslims

A dialogue between Pandits and Muslims would have to address the issue of religious cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus, communalisation and Talibanisation of Kashmir's social milieu and ultimately the task of secularization. Reversal of genocide has to be linked by ensuring that displaced Hindus return to Kashmir as a matter of right and choice. In essence it means political empowerment of the minority

group. Conferring political rights would help Pandits to a role in decision making and power sharing process to perpetuate themselves.

Having gone through the humiliating experience of living as second class citizens, Kashmiri Pandits can no more be humoured by the cliches of 'amanat' or 'tokenist' return to Khirbhawani or Mattan. Speaking about the 'amaanat' concept", Dr KN Pandita observes, "The syndrome of 'amaanat'--certainly a laudable ethical precept in empirical terms--is virtual decree of Pandit's perpetual enslavement. It is shameful for those who offer and those who take". He adds "De-theocratization of Kashmir must precede its secularisation....Return and rehabilitation of Pandits can wait another couple of years. But Kashmir's de-theocratization cannot".

Much before terrorists threw Kashmiri Hindus physically out, seeds of Kashmiri Pandits' destabilisation had been sown by the mainstream so-called secular political leadership in Valley. This leadership talked of Muslim identity politics in Valley, while outside it "stood" for "secularism". The pursuit of 'Muslim identity' politics pushed Kashmiri Hindus to a state of permanent inferiorisation. Communalisation of the social milieu and finally its take-over by the fundamentalists was a logical outcome of pursuit of Muslim identity politics. This identity politics and misgovernance fed on each other and provided a fertile substratum for fundamentalist and communal trends to grow. Even a partisan writer like Gautam Navlakha, who does not conceal his sympathies for the Muslim communal movement in Valley, concedes, "It goes without saying that the absence of a clear cut policy towards non-Muslims is a short-coming of the political leadership in Kashmir. It has seldom bothered to go beyond the generalities, which only assuage the insecurity felt by Kashmiri Pandits".

Problems have only become compounded with the introduction of gun. How difficult is the task of secularization in Kashmiri society is best summed up by Dr KN Pandita.

"Kashmiri Muslim society has undergone a sea change with the rise of militancy in the Valley. Born and brought up in anti-India atmosphere and subjected to indoctrination of hatred for over a decade, a Kashmiri Muslim youth is left with very little rather negligible space for maneuvering secular politics. Having linked himself to the radical segments of the wider Islamic world, a Kashmiri Muslim, by strange quirk of unconscious imbalance and the imperatives of buffer psychosis, found himself exposed to the compelling pressures of a democratic and secular political arrangement of larger human society. He is forced to fight a religious war against an adversary that rejected religion as the arbiter. He is forced to label his struggle a secularist one when it is not. He is not fighting only with the world outside but also with the world within. Without being able to resolve his inner contradiction--an option of his own choosing--he is inadequately introspective of its ramifications beyond the boundaries of his territorial habitat. How would it be possible for him to deal with his Pandit neighbour, who, somehow, denied himself the luxury of contradiction".

Whenever Pandits contested communalisation or fundamentalisation of the social milieu or expressed concern over rise of secessionism, they were labelled as agents of India. Even Sheikh Abdullah did not spare them. Thus dialogue between Pandits and Muslims would also focus on the linkage between secessionism and communalisation.

The civil society in Kashmir has only evaded the issues of genocide of Hindus or the tasks of secularization. Faced with compulsions of legitimising the separatist movement, occasionally the members of civil society engage in rhetoric of Pandit-Muslim brotherhood, but at the same time avoiding the specifics of return. It is also argued Kashmiri Muslims were opposed to Pandits' exodus and did not approve of it. If Muslims really felt so, what did they do to protect Pandits and their property. Haven't the ideologues of separatists linked return to Pandits' joining the terrorist movement or resettlement of those "Kashmiris", who voluntarily went to Pakistan in 1947.

Kashmiri Pandits, who have gone through the experience of tribal raid in 1947 and the ethnic-cleansing in 1990 would tell the change and the transformation of Kashmiri Muslim society over the past five decades.

The mainstream politician, cognisant of the ground realities in Kashmir knows well that Pandits cannot return to Kashmir. Since somehow the legitimacy of a ruling dispensation in Kashmir has got linked with Pandits' return, compulsions for tokenist return have increased. On the one hand, a mainstream politician is reluctant to create a conducive atmosphere for return of Hindus through political mobilisation and administrative action, while on the other he has to answer the nation. If the Hindu minority in the only Muslim-majority state is not allowed to stay, can secular nation-building model succeed in India. This dilemma is sought to be resolved by trivalising genocide and exodus, creating defections and reducing the issue to the return of a few hundred desperate families in camps. Larger issues of genocide, holistic return of the community and its perpetuation are circumvented. Sangrampora and Wandhama massacres were the outcome of this short-sighted vision. Pandits deserve a better deal than role as mere pawns in the game of petty politics.

Kashmiri Muslims and the nation

A structured dialogue between Kashmiri Muslims and the nation (civil society and the state) would focus on a) compatibility of Muslim identity politics with secular nation-building in India b) how secular constitution of India undermines the political, social, economic or religious rights of Kashmiris c) compatibility between Muslim identity politics and the pluralism-secularization d) Defining the attitude towards national commitments and Pan-Islamist imperatives e) the future of harmonious religious co-existence in Kashmir, and equal treatment to Jammu and Ladakh.

Problems of alienation, misgovernance or particularly democracy are to be addressed within Valley through an intra-Muslim dialogue. Local political vested interest have kept these issues alive to perpetuate Muslim identity politics. Observers have speculated on whether mis-governance was a deliberate option to keep alienation alive. This has been supplemented by a nexus of liberal - left in Indian Civil Society. This section wants to keep the insult alive in Kashmir to force Indian nation-state to re-define federal principles by forcing a shift from administrative devolution of power to recognition of linguistic subnational separatism. In a way Kashmiri separatists and a section of liberal-left are working in tandem to undermine the unity and strength of India. When we talk of dialogue between Kashmiris and the nation, liberals and the left do not constitute part of the national consensus.

Pandits and the nation

Kashmiri Pandits on the eve of independence were led by a triumvirate, which consisted of Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, Pt. Jia Lal Killam and Pt. Shiv Narain Fotedhar. This leadership did not have illusions about the ideological moorings of Sheikh Abdullah and conveyed their apprehensions to Nehru. The latter advised them restraint. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, despite his failing health, asked Nehru to decide the future of Kashmiri Pandits.

Kashmiri Pandits, whose contribution to the nation-building remains substantial observed restraint for a number of reasons. Decolonisation process was on and Anglo-American bloc was trying to destabilise India in Kashmir. The new fledgling Indian state was weak. There were also assurances by Nehru that over a period of time their miseries would end.

These problems never ended because Indian leaders lost their track. They talked of Kashmir being secular crown of India, yet they were not serious about promoting secularism in Kashmir. As forces of destabilisation gained clout in the Valley, GoI began placating pro-accession communal groups there, leaving 42% nationalistic minorities in the lurch. Over a period of time pro-accession and anti-accession Muslim communal groups evolved a symbiotic relationship. This had a disastrous impact. It fuelled secessionist and communalist politics in the Valley. As these gained strength, pressure on Kashmiri Pandits and other non-Muslim groups grew. Indian leadership caught in a bind demonstrated neither any vision nor will to break this vicious circle. It showed only its willingness to succumb further. Rise of violent secessionism in Valley in late 80's is in part a consequence of GoI's weak-kneed approach and political hollowness. This situation allowed large-scale communal aggression against Kashmiri Hindus in Anantnag in 1986 and total ethnic-cleansing in 1990. Why was Central government totally ineffective in pre-empting the ethnic-cleansing of Kashmiri Hindus? Was not the experience of 1986 already there?

And how did the nation react to in its aftermath? The government and the civil society made this major blow to secularism a non-event. Today, the Central government looks with hope the state government's tokenist return proposals.

Kashmiri Pandit community has rejected politics that trivalises their genocide and strengthens communal forces in Valley. It knows well that Pandits can return permanently only when a) there is national consensus that whatever the cost may be, displaced Hindus are to be restored to their homeland. How Pandits are to be resettled has to be decided by them and not those responsible for their exodus.

b) it is recognised that Pandits' right to return is inalienable and not contingent upon the goodwill of the majority.

c) there is restoration of peace and state administration is capable enough to protect its citizens.

d) Political leadership in Valley demonstrates its commitment to mobilise people against forces of theocracy and communalism.

Indian state and its political leadership have so far been engaged in fire-fighting and convey an impression that they have no proper appreciation of the problem. It is this non-appreciation that is enhancing the cost of countering proxy-war. It did not visualise Pandits' expulsion as a challenge to the country's secular fabric. At the top of it, obsolete think-tanks, some of whom even enjoy official favour had the temerity to pronounce that Pandits' ethnic-cleansing was a conspiracy hatched by Jaggmohan. What better can be the specimen of national degeneration than this? By endorsing the tokenist return of few hundred desperate families and trivalising genocide, GoI is alienating one of the most patriotic groups in the country.

Between Kashmiris and People and Jammu and Ladakh:

To keep proaccession communal groups in Valley in good humour, Indian leadership abandoned nationalistic groups and made them hostage to 'Muslim Identity' Politics. It accepted the separatist Article 370 and the principle of Muslim precedence. Exchisivist politics came to be seen as politically correct, while nationalist politics became a taboo in the political landscape of J&K. Jammu and Ladakh became colonies of Kashmir while Kashmiri Pandits were thrown into the political Junkyard.

If Kashmiri leadership is sanguine that J&K should stay as one entity, then regional discrimination has to go. A section of Indian intellectuals are by design trying to perpetuate enslavement of these non-Kashmiri regions. Healthy demands of equity in economic and political participation are being dumbled by them as extension of Dixon Plan and Hindu fundamentalist game. Autonomy based on religious precedence is being articulated as consistent with 'national' aspirations of Kashmiris. Any solution to Kashmir imbroglio has to be a secular one that recognises the aspirations of all ethnic and religious groups.

Between Indian Muslims and the nation

Indian Muslim leadership cannot absolve itself of its responsibility when Islamist terrorists are trying to undermine the sovereignty of India and principles of secular nation-building. Muslims are India's largest minority. Who should have more stakes in India's secular nation-building than Indian Muslims? No section of Indian Muslim leadership from fundamentalist to Marxist has tried to present Pandits' ethnic-cleansing in perspective or argued for their return as a matter of right and choice. No Muslim leader or academician in India has stood up to the communalisation and talibanisation of Kashmir's social milieu and taking over of the forces of intolerance. Instead most of these leaders are trying to justify support for communally motivated autonomy demand at national level. One of the senior leaders was even a signatory to the dangerous resolution drafted at the symposium "Kashmir: the need for a bold initiative", held at Taj Hotel, Mumbai in June 1990. Muslim leaders are also silent on how anti-national elements are using madrassas. The nation wants to know why Muslim leadership is reluctant to support those proposals which hold to potentiality of promoting pluralism secularism and participatory democracy in J&K

18 PK Ambala reconstituted

KS Correspondent

AMBALA: A general body meeting of Panun Kashmir Unit Ambala was held in Viay Nagar, Ambala city.

Sh JL Koul who has been reappointed as Area Coordinator for two years, constituted a new body for smooth function of Unit. While addressing the meeting Sh JL Koul (Area Coordinator) assured the members that necessary steps will be taken to rehabilitate Kashmiri displaced persons by providing them job, admission in Colleges, University and Training Institutes. Relief and registration will be settled as early as possible.

Following is the new constituted body:

Sh NN Kaul (Chairman); Sh Satish Lidoo, Sh Sanjay Kaul (Vice-Chairman); Sh Ashok Walli (Incharge Organisation); Sh BB Dass, Ambala Cant, Surinder Pandita, Ambala City (Organising Secretary); Sh Bharat Bhushan Riana, Sh Shibani Jee Bhal (Public Relations); Sh ON Wattal (Press and Publicity Secretary); Sh Sunil Raina (Asstt. Financial Secretary); Sh ON Koul (Secretary).

19 Lt. Sumeet awarded President's medal

KS Correspondent

JAMMU, Dec 10: Lt. Sumeet Bhat has done pride for his state, by standing third in overall brilliance in Indian Military Academy. He has been commissioned into 90 Armoured Regiment. Sumeet was awarded the President's Bronze medal at this year's passing out parade at IMA by the chief guest and Reviewing Officer Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw.

Since the outbreak of terrorist violence, there has been an increased yearning among members of Kashmiri Pandit community to serve the nation by joining the armed forces. These officers have distinguished themselves in counter-insurgency operation in J&K. Familiarity with local language, terrain and psyche has been an added advantage in the difficult circumstances.

Lt. Sumeet Bhat originally hails from Hawal village, located near the historic town Shopian Sumeet had his early education in Army School Khanabal, Anantnag. When Kashmiri Hindu community was forced to leave the Valley, Sumeet sought admission in Kendriya Vidyalaya Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. While still in 8th Class, he successfully qualified Rashtriya Indian Military College Test (RIMC). He passed SSCE (12th) from RIMC Dehradun in 1997.

In September 1997, Sumeet appeared in NDA examination and qualified it. Out of one lakh students only four thousand qualified and in interview five hundred boys were called. In the final selection just three hundred fifty cadets were recruited. He completed NDA course in 2001 from Pune and underwent IMA training for one year. Out of 595 cadets he stood third and excelled in academics and sports.

His father Mr BL Bhat is an officer in Life Insurance Corporation. It was a proud moment for his parents, when they joined him in the final passing out parade ceremony in Dehradun, on December 10, 2002.

20 Singhal reiterates support to Panun Kashmir

KS Correspondent

NEW DELHI, Dec 10: Vishwa Hindu Parishad Chief Ashok Singhal, reaffirmed his organisation's support for creation of homeland for resettlement of seven lakh internally displaced Kashmiri Hindus in Valley. He declared that terrorism has forced the Kashmiri Pandits to live in camps in their own country and lamented India was the only country in the world where members of the majority community had been internally displaced. In order to safeguard the rights of the Kashmiri Pandits, J&K should be divided into four regions and the area north and east of Jhelum should go to them, he demanded.

Exposing the secularist hypocrisy, Mr Singhal asked why the country's human rights organisations have not issued a single statement on the thousands of Hindus, who have been murdered in Kashmir in the past 12 years. These very organisations raised much hue and cry over the killing of Graham Stains, he added.

These observations were made by Mr Singhal, while speaking at a seminar on "Human Rights" and Kashmiri Pandits", on the occasion of the International Human Rights Day. VHP supremo criticised successive governments for failing to protect the rights of the Kashmiri Pandits He remarked, "The subjugation of the Hindus in Kashmir proves that our model of secularism has failed". Linking this to the larger problem, Mr Singhal commented, "It is not only Kashmir but Hindus across the globe - Guyana, Venezuela, Surinam, Fiji, Bhutan, US and Meghalaya - have been at the receiving end," adding that they were not safe even in states like Bihar and Bengal. He blamed western and Islamic civilisations for this. Mr Singhal opined that only a politically powerful Hindu community can stop this.

Mr Sheshdri Chari, Editor *Organiser* told the audience that migration of the Kashmiri Pandits to other parts of the country was a blot on the Indian society and the beginning of losing one's territory. He reminded the Hindus of the country that it was their duty to ensure that the Pandits returned to their country. Mr Chari argued that in every country of the world and even in Pakistan rights of the members of the majority community are protected.

On the return of Pandits, Mr Sajjad Lone, new chief of People's Conference said he would like them back in the Kashmir valley. However, he hastened to add that, "We can't do enough to take them back. Our hands are tied as far as the threat perception to the Pandits are concerned." These observations he made in an interview with local daily, *The Daily Excelsior*.

21 Panun Kashmir meet criticises Mufti govt's policies

Political solution the only solution

KS Correspondent

JAMMU, Jan 5: Panun Kashmir, the frontline Kashmiri Pandit organisation, spearheading the struggle for homeland organised a community meet here today. Despite freezing cold, the representatives of major organisations, leaders associated with national political parties, representatives from various refugee camps and other opinion makers in the community, joined together to deliberate upon the post-poll scenario in the state and its fallout on displaced Kashmiri Hindus.

Soon after assuming power governance and the healing touch to the people of war-ravaged state as its key policies. The earlier National Conference government had pursued patently communal policies to break the resolve of the Kashmiri Pandit community and pave way for its total expulsion from the state. The large scale litigation which this hapless community had to resort to, to redress the wrongs, would shame any civilised government. Be it the issue of jobs, promotions, service benefits, upgradation of civic amenities in refugee camps, protection of left-over property and shrines or the political empowerment, the sole aim of the NC leadership was to disinherit the community.

Dubious Methodologies:

Would the new dispensation be different so far as the displaced Kashmiri Hindus are concerned? It has been more than two months this regime has been in power. Not a single gesture has flowed which could convey to the community that there was a government which took care of it. Explaining the background for convening this representative meeting, Panun Kashmir General Secretary, Mr Kuldeep Raina observed the situation was grim so far as the displaced Kashmiris were concerned. He said the policies pursued by the new government have baffled the common man. On one hand the state government declares its commitment to usher in good governance, while on the other its decision to release the terrorists has led to worsening of the situation on the ground. Similarly, its much-hyped 'healing touch' initiative has bypassed the frontline victims of the ongoing war. The posturings of the new government on return have also created doubts, he added. Instead of engaging the popular leadership of Pandits in dialogue, the government was adopting coercive strategies and dubious methodologies. Mr Raina said the aim of convening the meet was to deliberate upon all the aspects linked to deprivations in exile and the core issue of rehabilitation.

The general consensus in the meeting was that the very posturings of state government on return smacked of a conspiracy. How come the state government had come to the conclusion that Kheerbhawani and Mattan villages were safe for Pandits' return? If conditions were ripe, why should the Moulvi of a local mosque lead the Pandits to their homes? Was it not the responsibility of state government to create conditions for return--establishing law and order, political mobilisation on the ground on the issue of return and against communalism, firm action against vested interests opposed to Pandits' return and the most important, engaging the popular leadership.

Total unanimity existed on that the return of Pandits for tokenist purposes and without creating conditions would ultimately destroy chance for Pandit's return in the not too distant future. The representatives agreed the ground situation has not changed since 1989. Infact, it has worsened, with Pandits' properties, jobs, shrines being grabbed under a systematic plan. The government had will to tackle this. It was also felt that government's methodologies for tokenist return sounded dubious. Instead of engaging the popular leadership, the state government was adopting dubious strategies and trying to foment divisions. This was ample proof that the state government was not sincere on Pandits' return. The leaders accused the state government of having extraneous considerations in the tokenist return plan. The representatives also agreed that problems of displaced Pandits were political in nature and their ongoing genocide had political ramifications. And only a political solution could tackle problems of this magnitude. Any attempt to circumvent the political aspect and trivalise the genocide would harm both the short-term and the long-term interests of the beleaguered community.

Camps were represented by Messers Roshan Lal Raina, Bhushan Lal Raina and PL Dhar. They articulated the camp perspective and informed that they were the first to denounce the so-called rehabilitation package as a gimmick. The camp leaders added they had also conveyed to Mr Ram Jethmalani and Ms Mehbooba Mufti to desist from 'divide and rule policy'. If at all they were sincere, they should initiate confidence-building measures and upgrade living conditions in camps and address the issue of unemployment. Mr Roshan Lal Raina alleged that the 'rehabilitation package' was a conspiracy hatched by successive governments to divide the dislocated community. He stressed the need to formulate a comprehensive policy for return and bringing the whole community, scattered all over the country, together.

Sunil Hali, a leading advocate said the successive governments have always talked about the alienation of Kashmiris, discrimination with Jammu and Ladakh but never talk about the miseries of Pandits. He regretted that the displaced community is always linked with rehabilitation. Mr Hali declared the demand of homeland was an assertion of political rights of Kashmiri Hindus.

In a thought-provoking speech, Prof ML Koul linked deprivations of Kashmiri Hindus to the rising crescendo of communalism in Kashmir. Mincing no words, he emphasised that all the governments in the state were communal and ignored Kashmiri Hindus since 1947. However, the things took a critical turn for the hapless KPs after their mass exodus in 1989. The refugees putting in camps and rented accommodation suffered in equal measure and were facing worst situation over past thirteen years. He wondered if the circumstances which led to mass exodus have remained unchanged, how come the state government has come to the conclusion that Pandits can return.

Prof. Kaul was, however, all praise for Kashmiri Pandit community, which, despite all odds, continued to struggle to explore the possibilities for a better tomorrow. Whatever the community has achieved since 1947 has been by its own efforts, he added. Prof Kaul demanded healing touch for Pandit refugees and asked Pandits to support a government that made sincere efforts to eradicate militancy.

Mr ON Trisal, veteran Congress leader who heads ASKPSC described Kashmir as an integral part of India, while Pandits were integral part of Kashmir. He argued, NC when in power favoured autonomy, while Hurriyat advocated Pakistani agenda but only Pandits desired to go with India. The Congress leader argued harbourers were no less dangerous than terrorists and called for strong action to curb funds flowing to terrorists. He pointed out Panun Kashmir as a vehicle of community's aspirations should be strengthened. He said, "Pandits reject a Kashmiriat which was just three two hundred years old and carried overtones of fundamentalism and exclusivism. Pandits are proud inheritors of a Kashmiriat, which went back to five thousand years and was a part of Indic civilisation".

Mr Bhushan Lal Bhat, NC leader and former MLC said not all Muslims were supporting terrorism. He put the entire blame on Jamaat Islami. Mr Bhat said Kashmiri Pandits have always been made a scapegoat by the Central government. While describing return plan as premature, he impressed the need to look for the root cause of exodus. He suggested dialogue with government to address the problems being faced by the Pandit community.

In a brief intervention, Mr AK Dewani asked the community to prepare for a struggle to recover the shrines, grabbed in Valley by the vested interests. In his concluding speech, Dr Ajay Chhangoo, PK President said Whenever state government talked about return thoughtlessly, it invited massacres and cited Sangrampora in this context. He ridiculed the government's move and said that there is no healing touch formula for KPs as no package to address deprivations has been framed till date.

He expressed doubts on the Mufti government's ideology on Kashmir and added the CM talks of restoration of democracy but negates the secularism by putting the cause of Kashmiri Pandits in backlog. Dr Chhangoo warned the ultimate success of democracy depended on pursuit of secularism. There was no democracy, which rejected secularism, he emphasised. He wondered how healing touch was possible till terrorist violence was brought down to manageable limits.

Panun Kashmir President asked the Chief Minister to articulate his position on Kashmir. He said Mufti's policies convey that he wants to maintain a position of equivocality between India and Pakistan and also

between mainstream politicians and the separatists. Doesn't it convey to the international community that fighting secessionism has taken a backseat and how could this government be trusted on return moves?

The assertions of Mufti that all efforts GoI made failed in Kashmir there is no alternative to GoI but to hold dialogue with separatist organisations, is also a cause of concern for the nationalistic forces, he said. The way he undermined his own position as CM as well as GoI's stand on Kashmir, he added.

Among others who attended the meeting included Sh M.L. Sopori, President BJP Kashmiri Displaced Cell, Sh Opinder Bhat, Convenor JK Nationalist Front, Jammu Chapter, Sh M.K. Tiku, Secretary ASKPC, Dr R.L. Bhat, a leading columnist, Sh PL Handoo retd. Deputy Director Doordarshan, Smt. Rajni Bhat Incharge Women Wing AKPSC.

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