

The Tragic Paradise

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She has to live to pay ...

It was a pathetic end of a long brave struggle for Ushaji in Nadimarg village of Pulwama. Her husband had been ill. Both of his legs were crippled. She herself had a numb right leg, the sign of leprosy but she never cared for her and struggled hard to earn for the treatment of her husband. She had already spent Rs. 1.5 lakh on his treatment. The doctors had told her that further treatment would cost another 50 thousand. She had borrowed in one and two thousands from many to collect the money and when she had almost managed the needed amount, all was lost. She was not in the village on the fateful night of March 24, when the killers struck. They looted all the jewellery and cash in the house before killing her husband, mother-in-law and son, a student of class 12 along with 21 others in the village. Life has no more meaning for her but she has to live to pay to her creditors.

Motivation

(March 24, 2003)

When I heard the news of lynching of 24 Kashmiri Pandits in Nadimarg, terror-struck faces of women and children in Gujarat surfaced in my memory where I had visited immediately after the gruesome killing of Muslims by Hindu fanatics. I thought of Krishan Kumar, my best friend of school days in Delhi and his affectionate mother who used to feed me rice, the Kashmiri way with her own hands. They were Kashmiri Pandits from Jammu. Though I have lost contact with them, I kept wondering how would he be feeling about Muslims and me now. There was no choice. I had to go there. I could explore the ways to help them after meeting the hapless victims while extending my condolence.

The Visit

(April, 2003)

My friend Prof. V. K. Tripathi of Sadbhav Mission advised me to contact Miss Nirmala Deshpande before the departure. She was out of station but Mr. Shivnath at her residence asked me to contact Mr. S.P.Verma, their man in Jammu for guidance and help. There were apprehensions of risk in visiting the valley so I took only Shabab, a Muslim volunteer of our Organisation 'WORK' with me and we reached Jammu on the noon of 2nd. April. Mr. S.P. Verma was out of Jammu but he had made arrangements for my stay in Vivek Hotel. He had prior information that we would be visiting and was expected to accompany us with his colleagues to Nadimarg. Later I thought it was good that Verma couldn't accompany us. He might have stopped Hindus being frank and scornful and Muslims would also not have opened in his presence.

The next morning we had to depart for Srinagar but we had time in the evening to visit a few Kashmiri Pandit Migrants' Camps.

In Jammu:

Incidentally the manager of Vivek Hotel R. K. Raina was himself a migrant from valley. He was luckier of the lot as he had a job and was leading a satisfactory life in Jammu. He had no grudge against Muslim community and maintained good relations with the Muslims of his village who often visited him. He told us that the propaganda of threat by militants to the Pandits that they leave their women behind was false. Many of their houses in the valley were burnt but none occupied them, he said. We also met Joginder Singh, a Sikh migrant. He did not feel secure in the valley. He was picked up twice and was released after paying a ransom of Rs. 2000/-. He requested us not to take his photo.

Muthi Camp:

We reached Muthi Camp which is 6-7 Kms from Jammu at 5.00 PM. Muthi houses around 1000 families in Phase I and II. The Govt. has now constructed single 14x9 ft. rooms per family for them with no kitchens, toilets or any partition whatsoever. Often that room houses the members of three generations of a family. There are commune toilets, one for each 9 households. It is a pathetic no-option situation for those, most of whom had their own homes, fields and orchards.

Their hostility on meeting and talking to Muslim visitors was obvious but natural. We were reluctantly offered a chair on the roadside where quite a few suspicious males gathered around us, ladies watching from a distance from the doors of their one-room houses. Mr. Vinod Pandita 37, President of Relief Organisation who came to the camp 12 years ago was very sceptical at first. He and others could not believe that any Muslim could visit them with the intention of helping them. "The history of migration of Hindus from the valley was centuries old, they had always been facing Muslim tyranny", many of them said. "In 1947 too, the Hindus were butchered in the valley while no Muslim was killed here in Jammu", they told us. They smiled sarcastically when I said I was not aware of any such history. But then a couple of them including Jagannath, a retired Govt. employee sensed our concern and pain and tried to convince others. An argument

ensued and finally others reluctantly decided if there was no gain, there was no harm either in narrating their woes and grievances, which they had narrated to thousands of visitors in the last decade.

Dilip Kumar, residing in a village in Shopian, Distt. Pulwama was promised a Govt. job by a local political leader Habib Rishi for Rs. 20000/- As Dilip had no money he was persuaded to sell a portion of his land. Dilip was always convincing them to sell land as ultimately it would be usurped by the militants, if not sold. In addition to the cash of Rs. 20,000/- he borrowed agricultural implements worth 50,000/ from Dilip. In turn, he had asked local militants not to touch them. When there was no sign of getting job for sometime, Dilip asked him to return the money and the implements. The next day, the militants struck. Dilip was murdered and his mother, grandmother and sisters were taken to Jammu by security forces. The tale was narrated by Dilip's mother.

Mohan (Full name withheld on request) had invested about a lakh, all his lifetime saving on his house, so he stayed back while other Hindu families left. He had to pay Rs. 300/- p.m. *Jiziya* (tax imposed on Hindus) as contribution towards the fund of *Azadi* (freedom) to continue living in Srinagar. From March to July 1990 he paid the extortion money but then came other militants from out of Srinagar. He was deprived of all their valuables, beaten up and made to flee. No Muslim, not even those whom he paid came to his help. The militants are now living in his house, Mohan wailed.

Karam Chand, 60 who came three years back told that he had sold his lands in the valley. His sons just killed time and they were living on meagre Govt. allowance. Others who had not sold their houses told that their houses and fields were occupied by Muslims. Strangely, men folk in the camp were more depressed. A number of youth were complaining about non-availability of Govt. jobs. Living on Govt. dole, they made no effort to search jobs in private sector in Jammu or any other part of the country. In many households women were the main supporters of the family.

They showed us many houses (rooms) from inside. Married couple with their children and in-laws were living in many houses in the same room partitioned by see-through torn sarees for changing. The more affluent ones had constructed small kitchens adjacent to those rooms. There were very few infants in the hamlet as marriages were scant for lack of employment and lack of privacy. Most of those who married had decided to delay the issues as they thought they could not support them. Every year there are more deaths than births. With each passing day, they are losing their distinct culture and worse, their hopes of a better future.

Purkhu Camp:

5 Kms from Muthi, in Purkhu we saw about 20 people playing cards. Shubhan Krishna, their president greeted us and when we disclosed our identity, he politely asked us to follow him to his house. After the Muthi experience we were prepared in advance for a cold reception but the attitude in Purkhu camp was pleasantly disappointing. A number of other inmates of the camp followed us. Shubhan asked the ladies to prepare the tea and we sat on the floor of his drawing cum-bedroom cum-study room. '*Pata Nahin Kis Ki Nazar Lag Gae?*' (Who knows whose jealous eye hit us?), 'We were living so peacefully and brotherly for generations', he sighed. There was no complaint of atrocities for generations and though critical of post 1986 behaviour of Muslims, he did not hate them. Others too shared his sentiments. The marked difference in attitudes of the residents of two camps so close to each other may be worth investigating.

There are about 1500 single room concrete households in Purkhu. There were complaints of large-scale misappropriation of funds in their sub-standard construction. Shubhan told us that on 19.1.90 all the loud speakers from all the mosques of Kashmir simultaneously relayed warnings to Pandits to leave Kashmir. The general slogan on those days was, '*Aey Zaalimo, Aey Kaafiro, Kashmir Hamara Chhor do*' (O oppressors, O infidels, leave our Kashmir). Another popular slogan was, '*Yahan Chalega Nizam-e-Mustafa*' (Here will prevail the Prophet's order). "Does the *Nizam-e-Mustafa* means the expulsion of peace loving Hindus?" Shubhan asked. He had no grudge against Muslim community as a whole. His village folks regularly visited him. There is a Haji Sahib near Kupwara. One Pandit had left his cow behind. The Haji took charge and she bore three calves. Haji sold them and delivered the money to the owner in Jammu. Shubhan's own orchard in Baramulla is bearing fruit and his Muslim friend who has taken charge, regularly delivers to him half the gains keeping half for his labour and investment. He related many such incidents. Maharaj Krishan, another resident of the camp was of the opinion that Jama'at-e-Islami schools were responsible for spreading the hatred.

We chatted for some more time, the subject being religion, Sanatan Dharma and Islam. We really hit a rapport in Purkhu. People insisted that we stayed for the night. They also wished to reach Jammu Tawi station to see us off on the day of our departure. We thanked them and promised to keep in touch. Many of them embraced us when we rose to leave.

Srinagar:

Starting on 3rd morning, we could reach Srinagar on April 4 as we were stranded for 10 hours due to landslides in the way. All shops and offices were closed as the previous day Ghulam Hasan Khan alias Saiful Islam, the Indian Commander-in-Chief of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen was killed and the Hizb had given a two days strike call. The B.S.F claimed to have shot him in encounter but it was common knowledge that he was picked up from the house of one Abdul Salam Dar in Chanapura on a tip off at 13.00 Hrs. and shot in custody at 17.00 Hrs. in Pehroo, Nowgam. Such fake encounters by the army on the pattern of police in other states are very common there. The High Court Bar Association also supported the strike. The transport was at standstill and large number of people were stranded at different places. We asked a middle-aged person to whom we had given a lift, the reason of strike and he started swearing that he did not know anything. Such is the terror and atmosphere of mistrust for every unknown (we later found that for known too) person that none is ready to part with any information howsoever harmless it may seem. One of my close friends in Srinagar later advised me to lie low and not to speak my mind even to acquaintances. Relating one incident, he told, "There was an area commander killed a few years back and I was shocked to see his name and photo in the papers. He was a very gentle person, my ex-teacher and had met me only two days before being killed. I never could imagine that he was the area commander of a militant group".

We discovered that all middle and upper class people were paying extortion money to the militants, some willingly and most of them unwillingly. One of my friends had to cough out Rs. 1.5 lakh. The catch was that his ailing father would be shot if he did not pay. Another friend was demanded Rs. 5000/- per month and he was living under govt. security as he had refused. We saw a few burnt homes of Kashmiri Pandits (KPs). We were told that while some were actually burnt by militants, the fleeing Kashmiris themselves burnt the others to claim the insurance. Most of the vacated houses were in bad shape and falling as they had been vacated 13 years back. There was no evidence of any occupation of vacated houses by Muslims. Most of those who left had sold out (very cheap) their lands and houses. "It was utterly a false allegation that the public or even militants occupied the vacated houses. Pandits are still selling", the Muslims in Srinagar told us,

“Moreover no militant can dare occupy a house as militants are always on the move. They cannot afford to stay at one place. Occupying Pandits’ houses is all the more risky for them as all such houses are in the eyes of police and army”.

A sophisticated lady came to meet us in Srinagar and advised us restraint as we did not know what the Kashmiris had faced. We found that she had crossed over to the other side of border twice and was caught the next time but released on the intervention of the Governor. She also had represented the militants in a conference abroad and again the Governor had reportedly intervened when she was arrested. Was she a militant or the Governor’s plant among the militants? None can tell. This incident warned us that I had to check my mouth but I didn’t as I could not hold caution in 1998 in Poonch while addressing a large gathering of 3000 without fear which I was told, included 300 armed militants. People had told me that I was the first in 10 years who had publicly spoke against militancy in a large public gathering and got away with it.

Prof. Altaf Hussain Talk, head of the English Dept. of Kashmir University verified that Muslims and Hindus were living peacefully before 1989. He said, “The exodus of Pandits started immediately after Jagmohan took over as Governor in January 1990. Jagmohan made the Pandits migrate as he thought he could tackle the militants with iron fist in their absence. He had miscalculated the resilience and magnitude of militancy and had to resign in May but the damage had been done. Mistrust was created between Pandits and Muslims. The Pandits could never come back though most had thought at the time that they were shifting for 2-3 months”. Dr. Altaf narrated that his family in his native town, Bijbehra always helped his Pandit neighbour financially but while leaving they threw human secretion on the Qur’anic verses pasted on his door. “How can they face us if they come back? No one is stopping them but they can never muster moral courage to come back and live in my neighbourhood”, Altaf felt.

I asked an elderly person, “KPs told me in Jammu that Hindus were massacred in the valley in 1947 too while Muslims remained safe in Jammu. Was that correct”? “No”, prompt came the reply, “ On the contrary, no Hindu was unsafe here in 1947 and Muslims were killed in Jammu”.

Though the tales of excesses by the Army, the stories of missing persons, rapes and killing were on the lips of every one. We saw quite a number of women and small girls of even 5-6 years demonstrating and slogan shouting in favour of *Azadi*. The pitch of the slogans increased and they did not disperse as we saw army vehicles approaching them. We retreated from the scene. This was the new generation born in the shade of guns and sound of firing. It would be very difficult to contain them if immediate remedial steps are not taken.

More and more Muslims we met asked us the same question? “Why did Pandits flee? There are not more than 1,000 Kasmiri Brahmin casualties while 90,000 Muslims have been killed, most of them from general public by the army and the militants both. Pandits should have stayed and fought and faced alongside us”.

Nadimarg, the sight of recent massacre:

On the morning of April 5, we departed for Nadimarg. On our way we saw many deserted clusters of vacated houses by the Pandits. Apparently most houses or lands of Kashmiri Brahmins in urban areas had been sold out but there were no buyers in villages. Almost in the vicinity of every vacant hamlet, there was a small army post. This confirmed that the houses of Pandits had not been usurped. Though if and when they decide to come back, their houses would have turned

into heaps of broken wood and mud but the plots of land and their fields and orchards still belonged to them.

In Shopian, the birthplace of slain Commander-in-Chief of Hizb, we needed to ask the way to Nadimarg. Our Sikh driver stopped beside a Sikh in the market. Sardarji, before telling the way, wanted to know about us and even our driver who was from Jammu. Finally he told us the way though his pretended actions and expressions conveyed an impression to the probing eyes of bystanders as if he was asking his friend something about his family. The people were staring at us. Sardarji made sure not to point in any direction while guiding us. Only with his tongue he directed us to turn around and named the landmarks where we had to take turns on left or right. He seemed to be very cautious. Only the previous day lakhs of people in Shopian had participated in the funeral of the slain commander of Hizb.

It was a narrow path to Nadimarg. The CRPF Jawans posted outside the hamlet of Pandits in Nadimarg softened after seeing my identity card and knowing that we were from U.P. The Jawans were also from U.P. They pointed to us the houses where surviving Pandits were living. A scary silence of death still spread all over. Two ladies and a young boy looked at us with blank eyes that were dried up after weeping for days.

Surrounded by Chinars, there were more than 40 houses belonging to Pandits. 40 families had migrated earlier while only 10 remained before the massacre. There were about 40 adults in the village and some children. The terrorists came at about 11.00 P.M. The policemen posted outside the village surrendered their arms to the killers. They dispossessed every inmate off their cash and jewellery and asked all those present to gather outside. Some residents including a few ladies were not in the village and some managed to escape or hide. The killers had precise information about every household. They enquired about the missing persons by name. The survivors suspected that the policeman posted in the village willingly co-operated with them and gave them information. All the posted policemen were ex-militants who had surrendered and were rehabilitated in services.

In all, 25 persons including 11 ladies and 2 small children, Suraj, 4 and Malu, 5 were gathered under a chinar tree and the burst of bullets ended their lives within minutes. Only middle aged Choni Lal miraculously survived with a cracked leg and a superficial wound on one shoulder. His wife was killed.

Vicky and Kaka, two youths took us inside and offered us tea, which we reluctantly accepted. I could not hold my tears seeing the beautiful and innocent 7 yrs old girl Anit whose father was killed. Vicky told me that they had observed movement of suspicious persons two days before the incident. The villagers went to the police officers of Shopian and Pulwama but they laughed at them saying they could not post a guard at the doorstep of every individual.

Ushaji was uncontrollable. Sobbing with his face between his knees, she complained that they had been living there for the last 14 years without fear though most of their neighbours had migrated. They had very cordial relations with the Muslims of adjacent villages. No, she did not hate Muslims, as it were they who were consoling them for the last 11 days. She narrated that the killers had cut the fingers and hands of many women who were wearing the ornaments. They burned many of the victims before shooting them. "I can't get peace unless their ladies and children are burned like ours", she sobbingly wailed. Upon asking how she knew of dismembering and burning of victims when she was not in the village that night, she said the people visiting from Jammu had told her so. There were no eyewitnesses of the scene left except Choni Lal the lone survivor of the 25 victims. He denied any such incident occurred. There also

was no sign of burning near the Chinar tree under which the lynching occurred. Killing of innocents was gruesome but obviously there were some from Jammu who wanted to spray salt on the wounds to increase the hatred as much as possible.

We saw local Muslims visiting almost every household for condolence. We were offered tea in every house which we politely refused. Chhandji, about 24, studied in Pulwama. He managed to hide while his father and sister, a student of B.Sc were not so lucky. He was uncertain about his future. How could he continue his studies there? They now feared even inside their houses. It did not seem that the remaining 16 persons of the community could stay there for long. They have to migrate as news of fresh spate of migration was pouring in from other parts also. There were about 20,000 KPs remaining in the valley while more than 500,000 have reportedly left for Jammu, Delhi or other parts of the country.

The Chronology

14th Century A.D.

Majority of population is converted to Islam under the influence of Sufis like Syed Ali Hamdani, Sheikh Nooruddin Noorani and Lal Ded equally revered by Hindus to this day.

Shah Miri Dynasty 1339-1561

Two rulers of this dynasty, Sultan Shihabuddin (1354-73) and Sultan Zainul Abideen (1420-1470) are praised by all historians. The first migration of Hindus from the valley occurred in 1400 but Zainul Abideen called the migrants back and compensated them for their loss.

The Chak rule (1561-87)

Small period of unrest.

Moghul rule (1587-1752)

In this period undoubtedly the people enjoyed peace and orderly Govt.⁽¹⁾

Afghan rule (1752-1819)

The Afghans were brutally repressive regardless of the class or religion of Kashmiris.... Kashmiri peasants, jagirdars, nobles and merchants alike were buried under the burden of heavy taxations...⁽²⁾ Interestingly, it was in the Afghan period that Kashmiri Pandits attained proficiency in Persian and not only began to form part of the administration of the land, but more significantly, became an integral voice in the expression of a sense of longing for and belonging to the Kashmiri homeland.⁽³⁾

Sikh rule (1819-46)

The Sikh governors deputed to administer Kashmir on behalf of Maharaja Ranjit Singh were "hard and rough masters," particularly since Kashmir was at a considerable distance from Lahore. More significantly, they consistently followed anti-Muslim policies in Kashmir, thus subjecting the majority of the population of the Kashmir Valley to severe hardships in the practice of their religion. The second Sikh governor, Deewan Moti Ram, ordered the closure of the Jama Masjid in Srinagar to public prayers and forbade the Muslims from saying the *azan* (call to prayer) from mosques in the Valley. Moti Ram also declared cow-slaughter a crime punishable by death. The lands attached to several shrines were resumed on order of the state. Furthermore, it was the Sikh governors who began the policy of declaring mosques, such as the Pathar Masjid, as the property of the state...the peasantry became mired in poverty and migrations of Kashmiri peasants to the plains of the Punjab reached high proportions. Several European travellers' accounts from the period testify to and provide evidence for such assertions.⁽⁴⁾

Dogra Period (1846-1957)

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) State is created in 1846 under the Treaty of Amritsar between the East India Company and Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu who buys Kashmir Valley from the East India Company for Rs.75,00,000 and adds it to Jammu and Ladakh already under his rule. Kashmir Valley is a Muslim majority region speaking the Kashmiri language and a composite cultural identity called 'kashmiriyat' transcending religious barriers; the people are hospitable and engage in Sufi tradition.⁽⁵⁾

In **1931**, the movement against the repressive Maharaja Hari Singh begins; it is brutally suppressed by the State forces. Hari Singh is part of a Hindu Dogra dynasty, ruling over a majority Muslim State. The predominantly Muslim population was not adequately represented in the State's services.⁽⁶⁾

In **1932**, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah sets up the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference to fight for Kashmiri freedom from the Maharaja's rule, which would eventually become the National Conference in 1939. The Glancy Commission appointed by the Maharaja publishes a report in April 1932, confirming the existence of the grievances of the State's subjects and suggests recommendations providing for adequate representation of Muslims in the State's services; Maharaja accepts these recommendations but delays implementation, leading to another agitation in **1934**; Maharaja grants a Constitution providing a Legislative Assembly for the people, but the Assembly turns out to be powerless.⁽⁷⁾

In **1946**, National Conference launches Quit Kashmir movement demanding abrogation of the Treaty of Amritsar and restoration of sovereignty to the people of Kashmir. Abdullah is arrested.

In **spring**, internal revolt begins in the Poonch region against oppressive taxation under the recently imposed direct rule by the Maharaja; Poonch was a predominantly Muslim area. Maharaja strengthens the Sikh and Hindu garrisons in the Muslim areas and orders the Muslims to deposit arms with the police. In August, Maharaja's forces fire upon demonstrations in favour of Kashmir joining Pakistan, killing innocent people. The people of Poonch evacuate their families, cross over to Pakistan and return with arms. In the last week of August, a condition of unrest and spasmodic violence turns into an organised rebellion resulting in killings of Hindus and Sikhs and at least 60,000 refugees fleeing to Jammu by 13 September. The rebellion spreads to adjacent Mirpur and Muzaffarabad. The Poonch rebels declare an independent government of "Azad" Kashmir on 24 October⁽⁸⁾.

In **September**, massacre of Muslims start in Jammu by armed bands of Hindus and Sikhs with active support from the State forces. Hundreds of thousands of Muslims flee Jammu. On 12 October 1947, Pakistan sends telegram to Kashmir detailing the atrocities and demands an impartial inquiry; Kashmir does not deny the charges in the reply telegram and promises an inquiry which would never be carried out. There was no communal violence in the Kashmir Valley itself.⁽⁹⁾

On **22 October 1947**, thousands of Pathan tribesmen from Pakistan, recruited by the Poonch rebels, invade Kashmir along with the Poonch rebels, allegedly incensed by the atrocities against fellow Muslims in Poonch and Jammu. The tribesmen engage in looting and killing along the way. The tribesmen and the Poonch rebels are unofficially supported by various individuals and high-ranking officials in Pakistan including Prime Minister Liyaquat Ali Khan and Chief Minister of North West Frontier Province. India accuses Pakistan of violating the Standstill Agreement with Kashmir by disrupting the supply links and of engaging in aggression by sending in the tribesmen. Pakistan refutes the charges.⁽¹⁰⁾

Maharajah Hari Singh signs the Instrument of Accession, acceding Kashmir to the Indian Union, on **27 October 1947**. The Indian Army enters the state to repel Pakistani raiders. Sheikh Abdullah is appointed head of the emergency administration.⁽¹¹⁾

Pathan tribesmen engage in looting and killing a large number of people in Baramulla, which results in the exodus of over 10,000 residents. There are also charges of atrocities by the Indian army.⁽¹²⁾

On **Jan. 1, 1948**, India takes the Kashmir issue to the United Nations Security Council and offers to hold a plebiscite, under UN supervision, after the raiders are moved back. On 13 August, a UN commission proposes that the state's future be decided in accordance with the will of the people.⁽¹³⁾

On **20 December**, Pakistan also accepts the UN resolution.

In **1949**, a ceasefire between Indian and Pakistan forces leaves 84,000 sq. km of Kashmir under Pakistani control. On 17 October, the Indian Constituent Assembly adopts Article 370 of the Constitution, ensuring a special status for Jammu and Kashmir. An interim constitution for the state comes into effect in November.⁽¹⁴⁾

In **1951**, First post-independence elections are held. The UN passes a resolution to the effect that such elections do not substitute a plebiscite, because a plebiscite offers the option of choosing between India and Pakistan. Sheikh Abdullah wins, mostly unopposed. There are widespread charges of election rigging which continue to plague all the subsequent elections.⁽¹⁵⁾

On **July 24, 1952** an agreement is arrived between Sheikh Abdullah and the Government of India which provides for the state's autonomy within India.

On **9th of August 1953**, Sheikh Abdullah is dismissed and arrested. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed becomes the state's prime minister. The governments of India and Pakistan agree to appoint a plebiscite administrator by the end of April 1954.

In **1956**, the state Constituent Assembly adopts a constitution for the state which has a provision making it an integral part of the Indian Union.⁽¹⁶⁾

It was on **26th Jan. 1957** that the Kashmir Constituent Assembly ended the hereditary rule of the Hindu monarchy in the state exactly after one hundred and ten years of its establishment.⁽¹⁷⁾

1964

Sheikh Abdullah is released on **8 April**. The conspiracy case against him is dropped. Talks take place on 29 April between him and the Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah goes to Pakistan on 25 May, at Nehru's instance, for talks with Field Marshal Ayub Khan. Jawaharlal Nehru dies on 27 May. Protest demonstrations occur in Kashmir on 21 December against Articles 356 and 357 of the Constitution being extended to the state.⁽¹⁸⁾

1965

Pakistan undertakes Operation Gibraltar and sends in a few thousand armed infiltrators across the cease-fire line, and incidents of violence increase in Kashmir valley. A full Indo-Pakistani war breaks out which ends in a ceasefire on 23 September. In January 1966, Tashkent Declaration is signed by both countries agreeing to revert to pre-1965 position, under Russian mediation. Pakistan supported guerrilla groups in Kashmir increase their activities after the ceasefire.⁽¹⁹⁾

1972

India and Pakistan sign the Shimla agreement on **2 July**; a new line of control was delineated bilaterally to replace the cease-fire line between the two countries in Jammu and Kashmir. Mrs Gandhi is persuaded by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, against her better judgement, to allow in a final clause which says, “both governments agree that their respective Heads will meet again at a mutually convenient time in the future and that, in the meanwhile, the representatives of the two sides will meet to discuss further the modalities and arrangements for the establishment of durable peace and normalization of relations, including the question of repatriation of prisoners of war and civilian internees, a final settlement of Jammu and Kashmir and the resumption of diplomatic relations.” This last line leaves the door open on Kashmir.⁽²⁰⁾

1974

The Kashmir accord is signed on **3 November** by G. Parthasarthy, for Indira Gandhi, and Mirza Mohammed Afzal Beg for Sheikh Abdullah.⁽²¹⁾

1975

Sheikh Abdullah is sworn in as chief minister on 25 February with the support of the Congress Legislature party.⁽²²⁾

1977

Sheikh Abdullah resigns after the Congress party withdraws support on 27 March. The Assembly is dissolved. The elections on June 30 give the National Conference 47 out of 76 seats.⁽²³⁾

1979

The USSR invades Afghanistan. The US and Pakistan are involved in training, recruiting, arming, and unleashing the Mujahideen on Afghanistan. The Mujahideen so recruited would take on their own agenda of establishing Islamic rule in Kashmir from the late 1980's. The Sikri Commission is appointed to inquire into regional grievances in J&K.

1981

On **23 January**, Sheikh Abdullah formally nominates his son Farooq as his political heir.⁽²⁴⁾

1982

Sheikh Abdullah dies on 8 September and Farooq becomes Chief Minister.⁽²⁵⁾

1983

Farooq Abdullah leads the National conference to a convincing victory in assembly elections in June. The Congress Party immediately starts a campaign to discredit the election and Farooq's relations with Mrs Gandhi worsen because of his public association with the opposition parties whom he invites to a conclave in Srinagar within months of becoming Chief Minister.⁽²⁶⁾

1984

Jagmohan Malhotra is appointed Governor in April and Farooq Abdullah's government is dismissed on 2 July. His brother-in-law, G.M. Shah is sworn in as Chief Minister.⁽²⁷⁾

1986

The Shah government is dismissed on 7 March. By November Farooq is back in power, after coming to an agreement with Rajiv Gandhi. This alliance loses both the National Conference and the Congress party considerable support in the Valley.⁽²⁷⁾

1987

Farooq Abdullah wins the elections. The Muslim United Front (MUF) accuses that the elections have been rigged. The MUF candidate Mohammad Yousuf Shah is imprisoned and he would later become Syed Salahuddin, chief of militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and United Jihad Council.. His election aides (known as the HAJY group) - Abdul Hamid Shaikh, Ashfaq Majid Wani, Javed Ahmed Mir and Mohammed Yasin Malik would join the JKLF.⁽²⁸⁾

1988

Protests begin in the valley along with anti India demonstrations. At least ten people are killed in police firing, the protests continue and there is curfew in the Valley in August.⁽²⁹⁾

1989

Militancy increases with bomb blasts. On 8 December, Rubaiya Sayeed, daughter of the Home Minister Mufti Mohammed Sayeed is kidnapped by the JKLF. She is released safely on 13 December in exchange for the release of five JKLF leaders. Kashmiri Pandits Jia Lal Taploo and Neel Kanth Ganjoo are killed by militants, the latter for sentencing Maqbool Butt to death in 1984. Soviet occupation of Afghanistan comes to an end. A large number of militant and weapons enter Kashmir through Pakistan, further fuelling the discontent.⁽³⁰⁾

1990

The Exodus begins. In January, Jagmohan is appointed as the Governor. Farooq Abdullah resigns. On 20 January, an estimated 100 people are killed when a large group of unarmed protesters are fired upon by the Indian troops at the Gawakadal Bridge. With this incident, it becomes an insurgency of the entire population.⁽³¹⁾

On **13 February**, Lassa Kaul, director of Srinagar Doordarshan, is killed by the militants for pro-India media policy. In the end of February, an estimated 400,000 Kashmiris take to the streets of Srinagar, demanding a plebiscite.

On **March 1**, an estimated one million take to the streets and more than forty people are killed in police firing. Massive protest marches by unarmed civilians continue in Srinagar. The JKLF tries to explain that the killings of Pandits were not communal. The rise of new militant groups, some warnings in anonymous posters and some unexplained killings of innocent members of the community contribute to an atmosphere of insecurity for the Kashmiri Pandits. Joint reconciliation efforts by members from both Muslim and Pandit communities are actively discouraged by Jagmohan. Most of the estimated 162,500 Hindus in the Valley, including the entire Kashmiri Pandit community, flee in March.⁽³²⁾

In **May**, an estimated 200,000 Kashmiris take to the streets in a funeral procession of the martyred leader Mirwaiz Maulvi Farooq; over 100 are killed in police firing. Jagmohan resigns and Girish Saxena is appointed as the new Governor. An officially estimated 10,000 desperate Kashmiri youth crossover to Pakistan for training and procurement of arms. The Hizb, which is backed by Pakistan, increases its strength dramatically. ISI favours the Hizb over the secular

JKLF and cuts off financing to the JKLF and in some instances provides intelligence to India against JKLF.⁽³¹⁾

1991

In **April**, Kashmiris hold anti-Pakistan demonstrations in Srinagar following killing of a JKLF area commander by the Hizb

1992

Pakistan forces arrest 500 JKLF marchers led by Amanullah Khan in POK to prevent bid to cross the border. India also uses intelligence from captured militants.⁽³⁵⁾

1993

In **January** forty people are killed in Sopore by security forces who burn down a section of the town after two of their men are killed. In March, General K V Krishna Rao becomes Governor again. In April, state policemen go on strike after a constable, Riyaz Ahmed, is killed in army custody.⁽³⁶⁾

The most serious incident of a communal nature namely the murder of sixteen male Hindus in Kishtwar in **August 1993** is condemned by the JKLF and the Hizb.⁽³⁷⁾ In October militants inside the Hazratbal mosque are surrounded by security forces. After several days of siege, security forces open fire on protesters in Bij Behara killing sixty people.⁽³⁸⁾

1994

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao tries to start a political process in the Valley by releasing militant leaders like Yasin Malik and Shabbir Shah. There is increasing evidence of foreigners entering the Valley in support of the militant movement. Also, evidence that it is turning into a larger Islamic 'jihad'.⁽³⁹⁾

JKLF militancy declines. The JKLF faction led by Yasin Malik announces unilateral ceasefire and pursues political agenda under the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference (APHC) umbrella.⁽⁴⁰⁾

1995

Foreign militant outfits with Islamic agenda such as Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen have dominated the militancy in Kashmir, besides the indigenous Hizb, all of them under the umbrella United Jihad Council (UJC). Other indigenous and foreign militant organizations proliferate.⁽⁴¹⁾

Jammu and Kashmir declared backward state under the new industrial policy, entrepreneurs exempted from income tax by 5 years. In May Charar-e-Sharief town is set ablaze along with the 14th century Charar-e-Sharief shrine by militants led by a foreign mercenary Mast Gul. In July, 5 foreign tourists are abducted from Pahalgam by a militant group (Al Faran).⁽⁴²⁾

1996

In **March** during an encounter with security forces at Hazratbal, 33 top militants are killed, virtually annihilating JKLF (Aman) Group. In April elections for 6 parliamentary seats are held successfully. In September election to the State Assembly are conducted successfully.⁽⁴³⁾

1997

Amanullah Khan's JKLF faction declares ceasefire. In Jan, Govt announced setting up of a State Human Rights Commission. In Feb, Rs 7200 crore (US \$ 1714.28 million) economic package is announced for J&K. In March, elections to the Legislative Council were held with National Conference winning all but one seat that went to BJP.

1998

On **Jan 23** Kashmiri Hindus are killed by militants at Wandhama village in Srinagar District. Percentage of foreign militants killed goes up to 47 percent in 1998, thereby indicating a sense of despondency in Pak ISI and Pro Pakistan groups.⁽⁴⁴⁾

On **January 30**, in one of the deadliest incidents of its kind in years, army soldiers fatally shot at least nine villagers during a search operation in the town of Qadrana in Doda district after some of the villagers began throwing stones at the troops in protest over the arrest of a number of village men.⁽⁴⁵⁾

On **April 18**, 27 Hindus killed in Prankote in Udhampur district in Jammu region. On June 19, 25 Hindus killed in Chapnari area of Doda district in Jammu region. On July 28, 16 Hindus killed in two villages of Doda District in Jammu region. On August 8, 35 labourers killed in Kalaban on Jammu-Himachal Pradesh border.⁽⁴⁶⁾

In **June 1998** A Farooq Abdullah instituted Regional Autonomy Committee (RAC) proposes devolution of political power at regional, district, block and panchayats levels and allocation of funds according to an objective and equitable formula. Measures are also suggested to safeguard and promote cultures of various ethnic communities. 6 months after the recommendations, the State Government substitutes the RAC report with its own report recommending the division of the three regions (Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu) into eight autonomous units on ethnic-religious lines without proposing any devolution of political and economic powers.⁽⁴⁷⁾

According to official reports, 307 Hindus and 377 Muslims have been killed in the Doda and Rajouri districts as of 1998. Hindu fundamentalism by the local armed Village Defence Committee (VDC) backed by the Army and terrorism by Muslim insurgents in defence of the Muslim community, have fed each other. Some militant groups with Islamic agenda have attacked women sporadically for not wearing the veil, which has been condemned by the indigenous militants. The APHC has recently called for foreign militants to leave Kashmir, since they are tarnishing the image of their freedom struggle.⁽⁴⁸⁾

1999

In **Feb**, Indian and Pakistan Prime Ministers meet at Lahore and sign a Joint Declaration expressing resolve to settle all contentious issues between the two countries including Kashmir problem, through bilateral dialogue. In May Pakistan soldiers accompanied with some Afghan /Pushto speaking men infiltrate across the Indian side of Line of Control in the Kargil sector and precipitate a crisis with the aim of internationalising the Kashmir issue. Indian troops commence flushing out operations assisted by the Indian Air Force.⁽⁴⁹⁾

On **June 30**, Fifteen Hindu labourers killed in Anantnag district of south Kashmir. On July 19, 15 Hindus killed at Layata in Doda district Of Jammu.⁽⁵⁰⁾

2000

On **February 28**, five Hindu drivers killed near Qazigund in Anantnag district of Kashmir. On August 1, 2000 31 people including Amarnath Yatis are killed At Pahalgam in Anantnag. On

August 1-2, 27 labourers gunned down in Qazigund and Achabal in Anantnag. On August 2, 2000: Seven family members killed in frontier District of Kupwara in North Kashmir. On August 2, 2000, 11 Hindus are killed in Doda district of Jammu.⁽⁵¹⁾

On **March 20, 2000**, around the time of US President Clinton's visit to India, unidentified gunmen gun down 35 Sikhs at Chittisinghpora; India blames foreign militants; Kashmiris blame renegade militants employed by Indian security forces; A few days later, security forces kill five persons in an "encounter" at Panchalthan village and claim they are "foreign militants" responsible for the Sikh massacre. Later, in July 2002, DNA testing of the corpses proves that the five persons killed were civilians. No judicial inquiry has been conducted on the Sikh massacre till date.⁽⁵²⁾

2001

On Feb 11, 15 members of nomad (Gujjar) families Massacred in Kot-Chadwal in Rajouri district of Jammu. On Mar 2, 15 policemen and two medical assistants killed in Manjkote area of Rajouri. On March 17, eight people massacred near Atholi in Doda. On July 21, 13 people, including seven Amarnath pilgrims killed at Sheshnag in Anantnag. On July 22, 12 people massacred in Cheerji and Tagood in Doda district of Jammu. On August 4, 15 villagers killed in Ludder-Sharotid Har area of Doda.⁽⁵³⁾

October 1: Militants attack the Kashmiri assembly in Srinagar, leaving 38 people dead. Farooq Abdullah, Chief Minister of Indian-controlled Kashmir, asks the Indian government to attack militant training camps across the Pakistani border. On 13 December unidentified men attack the Indian Parliament in New Delhi, leaving 14 dead, including the attackers.

2002

On January 7, 17 Hindus killed in Ramsoo area in Jammu. On February 17, 8 Hindus killed in Rajouri area in Jammu. On March 30, 12 Hindu temple-goers killed in Raghunath Temple in Jammu. On May 14, 32 Hindus killed in Kaluchak, Jammu. On July 13, 20 Hindus killed in Kasim Nagar, Jammu. On August 6, Nine Amarnath pilgrims killed and 29 others injured at Nunwan base camp in Pahalgam area of Anantnag district in south Kashmir. On August 24, 10 Hindus killed in Rajouri district of J&K State. On November 24, 14 Hindu temple-goers killed in Raghunath Temple in Jammu.⁽⁵⁴⁾

On **14 May** militants attack an army camp in Indian Kashmir, killing more than 30 people and ruining a new effort to ease the tension between India and Pakistan.

2003

On **March 24, 2003**, 24 Pandits killed in Nadimarg, Kashmir. All separatist and pro-Pak militant organisations in India and Pakistan condemn the killing and blame it on the security forces to malign their image.

On **April 22**, six civilians were blown to pieces in a landmine explosion in Tral in Pulwama district.

Hindu v/s Muslim Casualties

As no authentic statistics are available, the comparative figures must lie between the claims of Kashmiri Pandit organisations and the claims made by Muslims. According to KP organisations, 765 Kashmiri Pandits and 554 other Hindus were killed in terrorist related incidents from June 16, 1986 and April 18, 1997 while the number of Muslims killed in the same period is 8,360.⁽⁵⁵⁾ This is a ratio of 13.63 % Hindus v/s 86.37 % Muslims. The number of rape victims among Hindus according to them is 18 Kashmiri Pandits and 70 other Hindus in that period while for the corresponding period; the number of Muslim rape victims is 16,029.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The ratio of total Hindu victims to Muslim rape victims thus is computed to 0.55 % Hindus v/s 99.45% Muslims. The Muslims claim that around 90,000 Muslims have till date been killed by the militants, the security forces and the counter insurgents backed by the security forces from the start of the militancy in Kashmir while they claim that not more than 1,000 Hindus were killed in that period. Arriving at a mean figure of those killed from **1986 to 2003**, we may assume that there are a total of **1,519 Hindu** casualties v/s **51,460 Muslims** killed, which is calculated as **2.87 % v/s 97.13 %**

The above figure of more than 50,000 Muslim casualties may not be unrealistic as I saw a large number of huge graveyards in Srinagar alone, the biggest of them must have accommodated at least 25,000 graves, all bearing the names and the date of killing of the deceased.

Other independent sources estimate 60,000 dead in Kashmir. The International Crisis Group reported: “The Indian government officially estimates 30,000 deaths in the last twelve years. Kashmiris, including the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), estimate between 80,000 and 100,000 deaths, primarily civilian. Most observers estimate the total to be roughly 60,000 deaths, again mostly civilians. No authoritative statistical account is available because of continuing insecurity in the state and the Indian government practice of frequently banning foreign journalists and non-governmental organisations, including Amnesty International”.⁽⁵⁷⁾

Paradise to Hell — Four Main Players

1. Nehru and Abdullah Families:

They were friends; the first Prime Minister of India, Pandit Jawaharlal Lal Nehru, a Kashmiri Brahmin and the first Prime Minister (later Chief Minister) of Kashmir (after 1947), Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, known as Sher-e-Kashmir. Both were charismatic leaders of their people. Nehru was the champion of democracy in India and Abdullah fought and sacrificed for the democracy in Kashmir. Both these towering Kashmiris were sincere for the cause of democracy in Kashmir but their political decision and personal moves of grooming their heir who were more ruthless than sincere, proved fatal for the land of their origin.

On 22 October 1947, Pakistan sent the Pathan tribesmen in to the State of Jammu and Kashmir to spread terror and occupy territory. (Later the same tactic was to be employed in 1986 when it started infiltrating the trained militants into Indian side of Kashmir and in 1999 to annex Kargil).

Later events proved that it was in India's interest to reject any third party mediation including UN. Indian army could have pushed the infiltrators back but Nehru succumbed to the pressure of Lord Mountbatten. He took the Kashmir issue to the UN Security Council on January 1, 1948 and offered to hold the plebiscite under UN supervision after the Pakistani raiders were moved back. Initially, Pakistan denied that its troops were present on the soil of Kashmir but when a 3-member UN delegation (subsequent to the UN Security Council resolution dated 20 January 1948) visited the actual scene of fighting, the Pakistan government admitted the presence of its troops. Consequently, the UN included the Kashmir issue on its agenda. On 5 February 1948. On August 13, the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) adopted a resolution declaring:

“The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of the State of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the Truce Agreement both Governments agree to enter into consultations with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression will be assured”.

The all-important declaration did not mention the accession of J & K to either India or Pakistan while referring to the will of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. India could have left it at that to take the air out of future Pakistani demands of plebiscite. Pakistan accepted the resolution in December only after India acceded to its demand of amendment. Consequently on the request of Pakistan and India's no-objection, UNCIP passed another resolution on January 5, 1949, which clarified:

“The question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite”.

In the mean time Pakistan had occupied 84,000 Sq. Km. that is equivalent to two fifth of the area of whole State of Jammu and Kashmir. The cease-fire came into effect and cease-fire line was ordered by UN to be maintained till the tribals were pulled back, Pak Army was put under local authority in the Commission's supervision and plebiscite was held under UN supervision. The Pakis never complied with their obligation of the resolution but Pakistan continued to mislead the world community and more important, the Kashmiri people, demanding plebiscite.

In 1951, Sheikh Abdullah won the first election held after the state of the document of accession was signed in favour of India. All opposition was wiped out in that election so much so that Abdullah won most of the seats unopposed. Though he was instrumental in Maharaja's signing the accession, he advocated the state's autonomy within India. First his win and later his dismissal and arrest in 1953 was resented by Kashmiris. He was released in 1964 and made special emissary of Nehru to meet Field Marshal Ayyub Khan of Pakistan but Nehru died two months later.

In Nov. 1974 Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister contacted Sheikh Abdullah, signed with him The Kashmir Accord, got him elected Chief Minister with the help Congress Legislature Party, through elections that were again alleged to be rigged only to withdraw support in March 1977. Again, both his election and dismissals were resented by Kashmiris. They felt they were being played by Nehru, Indira and Abdullah.

Only two fair elections were held in Kashmir, according to Kashmiris, when the Prime Ministers in Delhi were not from Nehru family. First in 1977 when Morarji Desai headed the Janata Party Govt. at centre and later in 2002 when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the PM in NDA Govt.

Farooq Abdullah won the elections in 1983 and his relations worsened with Mrs. Gandhi when the Congress Party immediately started discrediting him. She appointed Jagmohan as Governor of J & K who dismissed Farooq on July 2, 1984 installing G. M. Shah in his place. In 1986, Rajiv Gandhi made a pact with Farooq. Shah was dismissed on March 7 and Farooq was back in power with the help of Congress by Nov. 1986.

Then came the election of March 1987, which Farooq won with the help of Congress and people could take it no more.

2. Militants and Their Affiliates:

Following is an excerpt from an article written by B. Raman, Additional Secretary (retd), Cabinet Secretariat, Govt. of India, and, presently, Director, Institute for Topical Studies, Chennai, published by South Asia Analysis Group on March 22, 2000

Since 1996, practically all acts of terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir have been carried out by the Lashkar, which is the militant wing of the Markaz Dawa Al Irshad, the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HUM), formerly known as the Harkat-ul-Ansar, which has been declared by the US as an international terrorist organisation since October, 1997, the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), which is the militant wing of the Jamat-e-Islami of Kashmir, and the Al Badr, a splinter group of the HM. The Lashkar and the HUM consist almost entirely of Pakistani and Afghan nationals, with many of the Afghans coming from the Nuristan area of Eastern Afghanistan. They also have a small number of Arab mercenaries of Afghan war vintage.

The HM has a large percentage of Kashmiris recruited on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and the Al Badr is essentially an organisation of Pakistani nationals, most of them Pakhtuns from the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). The Al Badr was created by the ISI in the then East Pakistan in 1971 and massacred over 10,000 Bengali intellectuals. It disappeared from view after 1971 and made its appearance again in Afghanistan in the 1980s and then in Kashmir as an integral part of the HM, from which it split and started operating separately.

The Wahabi extremist influence is the strongest on the Lashkar and the HUM, moderate on the HM and weak on the Al Badr. The Lashkar and the HUM, almost entirely, and the HM, partly, recruit their volunteers from the religious Madrasas of Pakistan through the Tablighi Jama'at, headed by Lt. Gen. (ret'd) Javed Nasir, former ISI Director-General, who was removed in 1993 by Mr. Nawaz Sharif, then Prime Minister in his first tenure, under US pressure due to his involvement with terrorist organisations in a number of countries and other reasons.

However, the Al Badr recruits its cadres largely from the non-religious educational institutions. It has the largest number of educated cadres — many of them engineers, doctors, software experts and other professionals. One of its cadres killed during the Kargil conflict last year was a commercial pilot.

The Lashkar, the HUM and the Al Badr are members of Osama bin Laden's International Islamic Front For Jihad Against the US and Israel, whereas the HM is not. While the Lashkar and the HUM have close relations with the Taliban, which has allowed them to run their training camps in its territory, those of the HM have been strained because of its continuing support to Gulbuddin Heckmatyar of the Hizbe Islami. As a result, it does not have any training camps in Afghan territory. After breaking with the HM, the Al Badr has been trying to mend its relations with the Taliban.

Despite these differences, these organisations co-operate at the ground level in Kashmir and Syed Salahuddin, the Amir of the HM, is the head of the 14-member United Jihad Council, based in Muzaffarabad in Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK).

Before the coup on October 12 last year, Mr. Nawaz Sharif, partly under US pressure and partly due to his own concern over their activities, had ordered the ISI to round up the cadres of these organisations and there were indications that he was planning to ban the Lashkar and the HUM. After the coup, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive, released all the arrested cadres and has resisted US pressure to ban them. On the contrary, he has allowed them to hold public rallies against India all over Pakistan, without the display of arms, whereas under Mr. Sharif and Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, they were allowed to hold rallies only in their respective headquarters.

Abdullah Muntazir, spokesman of the Lashkar, told the "News" (February 20) of Islamabad: "A few weeks before the military coup, the police arrested more than 500 supporters of our four major groups waging jihad against the Indians in Kashmir and raided our offices in various cities. Rumours were rife that the Govt. planned to ban our annual gathering. We were worried and prayed to Allah to remove the obstacles in our way. Our prayers were answered with Nawaz's removal."

Mr. Ilyas Khan, Pakistani columnist, wrote in the "Herald" (January 2000) of the "Dawn" group of publications: "In October, 1999, former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif publicly acknowledged the Taliban links of Pakistan's terrorists saying "we have made it clear to the Taliban that this is not acceptable". However, since the military take-over, Islamabad has remained silent over the issue, presumably because this would antagonise the Deobandi militants who have acted as the linchpin in Pakistan's Kashmir policy."

Even in the past, the Lashkar and the HUM were describing their ultimate objective as the liberation of the Muslims of the rest of India, after having liberated those in Kashmir. Now, the entire United Jihad Council is projecting its mission as "Jihad-e-Hind" ("Jihad for the liberation of India") as against their past mission of Jihad-e-Kashmir.

Gen. Musharraf has also been pressuring these organisations to dissolve their individual identities and form a United Kashmir Liberation Organisation, on the model of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

The Pakistan Muslim League (PML), the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and Mr. Abdul Qayyum Khan, of the POK Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of the POK, have strongly advised Gen. Musharraf against his policies, which, they apprehend, might prove suicidal, as Mr. Qayyum Khan has put it.

Sardar Kosa, a PML member of the suspended National Assembly, said ("Nation" of February 13): "Declaring such a jihad against an independent country without any provocation will be quite diabolical and beyond my imagination."

Mr. Khalid Ahmad Kharal of the PPP was quoted by the same paper as follows: "While Jihad-e-Kashmir is a separate issue, Jihad-e-Hind is tantamount to declaring a war against a sovereign and independent country. It is inconceivable, morally as well as religiously."

All these organisations as well as the Jama'at-e-Islami of Pakistan, the political mentor of its counterpart by the same name in Kashmir, have been calling for the expulsion of the Hindus and the Buddhists from Kashmir, but they had never in the past criticised the Sikhs.⁽⁵⁸⁾

The conflict is at its worst today. The series of attacks on army camps, increased number of encounters and heightened security operations all support this — a view which both the state and central governments are at pains to contradict. The government's claim that local support to militancy has died down doesn't swing much weight either. "Make no mistake about it, the locals still support militants," a keen Kashmir watcher says, summing up the sentiments of many.

One aspect that everyone agrees on is that the militants today are better trained and equipped. "They used to come in with Chinese pistols and AK-47s. Now they have Universal machine-guns, missiles, rocket launchers, grenade-throwing rifles capable of throwing six grenades in six seconds and improvised explosives with great sophistication," reveals the RAW official. "The communication sets provided to their leadership have in-built speech scrambling devices capable of transmitting data in code at high speed," he adds. "They are recruiting science graduates to maintain these equipment. Which all very clearly shows that they are prepared for a long drawn-out war."⁽⁵⁹⁾

Supported by weak democracies or military dictators in Pakistan, these groups are engaged in Jihad, their licence to enter in to paradise without reckoning. They did not declare Jihad against Pathans Muhajirs and Sindhis, killing each other on Karachi streets. When Muslims were killing Muslims indiscriminately, they did not raise funds and trained volunteers to fight them. They never waged Jihad against any Pakistani govt. or ruler who never declared Pakistan an Islamic State. Their mentors, Pakistani Ulema, though very learned have either been brain-washed or forgotten in the hysteria of crying Kashmir that Muslim majority in Kashmir was not the result of any Jihad but tolerance, love and compassion preached by Sufis whom the Hindu Kashmiris respect to this day. They have also forgotten that their own existence as Muslims is indebted to Khwaja Moinuddin Chishti and other such saints whom the Hindus of India love. There are a few other misguided militant Muslim groups in other parts of the world who call terrorism, Jihad but they are in minuscule minority highlighted only by the media microscope. It is only Pakistan whose formation resulted in the suffering of millions of Muslims, where a majority favours

terrorism in the name of Jihad, driving more and more Non-Muslims of India away from Islam. They will indeed enter in to paradise without reckoning.

3. The Security Forces And The Counter Insurgents:

Robbery by Indo-Tibetan Border Police Commandant:

On April 12, 2003 a white Gypsy screeched to a halt outside Chief Minister Mufti Mohd. Saeed's residence on the high security Maulana Azad Road. The car which had 'police' written on its side, blocked the passage of a car on the busy street. Four people in uniform ordered Zahoor Ahmad Hakak, the sole occupant of the car to come out. Hurriedly they asked Hakak to hand over the attaché he was carrying.

Automatic weapons, uniforms and the fact that car was stopped outside the CM's residence left Hakak in little doubt that he was in safe hands. He handed over the suitcase, which contained nearly 2 kg of gold. The cops quickly departed and it took Hakak some time to realise that he had been robbed in Srinagar's most secured street.

He rushed to the nearby Kothibagh police station and reported the robbery. Four days later, Hakak rushed to the same police station and reported that he had spotted the robbers' Gypsy. Police flashed messages all over the city to seize the vehicle. The Ganderbal police meanwhile intercepted the Gypsy and found to their surprise that it belonged to the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP). Hakak identified one of the guards, Rakesh Kumar, and he was immediately arrested.

Kumar's interrogation opened up a Pandora's box. He admitted that he was one of the robbers and said he joined the gang on orders of his deputy commandant, Rawat. A police party was rushed to the Gund head quarters of ITBP's 8th battalion, where Rawat finally confessed to his crime and returned the booty. Now the police are clearing the decks for Rawat's arrest because they need the permission of his superiors...

Bur one unanswered question on the minds of many people is how the thieves knew that Hakak was carrying so much gold? They fear this means the thieves had accomplices who keep an eye on locals.⁽⁶⁰⁾

The above is one of the rarest of cases where the effort was made to apprehend a security force officer for robbery, probably because the daring day-light robbery was made opposite the CM's house who has been talking (and trying) of his healing touch and also the PM had only five days back, promised of the healing touch in Srinagar. The people in Srinagar may relate to you all sorts of stories about murder, rape, robbery and other atrocities by the security personnel.

Licensed to kill and abduct:

November 12, 1999 was a Friday. At 0830 hours his family had finished tea. His 26-year-old daughter Rifat Ara was cleaning their house in Kajabagh, Baramulla. And seven Jammu and Kashmir policemen barged in. "They didn't let me say anything. Just put the gun on me and ordered me out," Nabi says. "Then they went upstairs." The police were searching for Shaukat Hussain, Rifat's husband. Nabi describes him as a surrendered militant who is now "nothing more than a goonda."

The cops came down quickly. They ordered Rifat to accompany them. When she refused, they pulled her out of the house by her hair. Outside Nabi's younger son, 14-year-old Ali Waheed watched his sister being dragged out. He tried to stop it. As her assailants forced her towards the waiting vehicle, the boy caught hold of Rifat's *pheran* (a loose coat). For that, he paid with his life.

"I saw the *havaladar* (head constable) signalling the constable... and he shot my son in the chest," Nabi says. His eyes are dry. But his voice, which had been steady, breaks slightly. "Ali didn't even cry out. He just fell down and died."

Rifat, meanwhile, had been pushed into the vehicle. She was made to lie on the floor. The policemen placed their booted feet on her, and the vehicle set off for Srinagar. "It was winter... I didn't even have sandals on my feet," Rifat says. "They threatened me, abused me... said they would bring my little daughter and lock her up with me. I told them I didn't know where my husband was... I never wanted to marry him... He *forced* me to. He said he would kill my family if I didn't marry him..."

In the evening, the Baramulla police reached Srinagar. They found Rifat huddled in the corner of a lockup, shivering with cold and fright. "They didn't tell me my brother was dead," she says. "They brought me back home... and here I saw..."

Not surprisingly, the Indian authorities and Kashmiris take up opposing stands. While the former claim that violations are now minimal, the latter hold that the situation has worsened. Sample these sentiments:

"They don't consider us human. So where does the question of rights come in?" asks a lawyer in Baramulla, who requested anonymity. "The law here is the security personnel. If they want to kill you, they will kill you..."⁽⁶¹⁾

But it is the Special Task Force STF (or the Special Operations Group) of the state police, they dread most. Born in 1994 with less than 10 personnel to counter insurgency, it has grown into a massive force. It holds the best anti-militancy record in the valley. Better than the army's, the BSF's or the CRPF's — and also the worst in human rights.

"It is as if the government has given it a licence to kill," says Zahir-ud-din. The creation of a renegade force to fight militancy, though it paid dividends, has brought with it dire consequences. The pro-India militants now work in tandem with the STF and are, like the police force, dreaded by everyone. Even army and paramilitary officials agree that they need to be contained.

"They are criminals. They have weapons. They rape people, there's extortion... They walk into any house, take away jewellery, take away girls..." says a Kashmiri, who understandably doesn't want to be identified.⁽⁶²⁾

The general public in Kashmir is more afraid of counter insurgents supported by the army than the army itself or the militants. They are the goons who will slay with immunity any one with whom they have the slightest of discord or who refuses to pay them extortion money. Their brutality has been verified by so many neutral agencies that it cannot be denied. They don't even hesitate from abducting journalists.

Abduction of journalists:

In 1997, Surinder Singh Oberoi, who reports from Kashmir for Agence France Presse, narrated:

“Last July I was one of 19 journalists travelling in a chartered bus to a press conference in southern Kashmir. At Anantnag, about 45 miles south of the Kashmiri capital of Srinagar, we were stopped by a dozen Kashmiri youths armed with AK-47s. They ordered the bus driver to follow them, and at gunpoint we were guided to a private home. Once inside, we realized we were guests of the Jammu and Kashmir Ikhwan (“Brotherhood”), a counterinsurgent group funded by Indian security. Our captors complained that the local press, who they said was sympathetic to the separatists’ cause, had ignored their orders to stop publishing. They told us that all coverage of the insurgency must stop. Six local newsmen were moved to another part of the house and threatened with execution. The rest of us, all members of the national and international press, remained together. Our captors were so confident that their demands would be met that they allowed me to use the telephone to tell my colleagues in the local press that we had been kidnapped. I called as many people as I could, including newsmen across Kashmir and government officials in Srinagar. I told the director of information for Kashmir that he was personally responsible for our safety, as government-backed militants were holding us hostage. Our captors ordered my group to leave the house; they said their quarrel was with the local media, and we knew that they did not want to risk international condemnation by harming journalists with a beyond-Kashmir audience. But we refused. We would go nowhere unless the local newsmen were also freed.

Only after 10 horrifying hours, during which time we were repeatedly prodded with the barrels of automatic rifles, did pressure from journalists’ organizations and orders from New Delhi persuade the Indian army to come to our aid. When Indian troops surrounded the building, our captors threatened to open fire if the troops took any action. But once the militants realized they were outnumbered, they gave up. Not only was there no gun battle, no one was arrested. Our captors gleefully departed, unlicensed weapons in hand.

Our kidnapping was unusual not because of what happened — government-supported militants seizing members of the press and then walking away unmolested — but only because so many captives were involved. The truth is, kidnappings have become commonplace in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir since Muslim rebels began their most recent campaign against Indian rule in 1989. Over the years, at least 20,000 Kashmiris have perished by official count, and citizens continue to be abducted, tortured, and killed by rebels, the Indian military, and a network of government-backed counterinsurgents”.⁽⁶³⁾

The abuse by the men of STF is so widespread that even the men in uniform admit that they are proving to be counter productive.

“Continued services of the surrendered militants was proving to be counter-productive in view of reports of excesses during the operations”, Director General of Police Gurbachan Jagat in October 1997.⁽⁶⁴⁾

There are charges that many Non-Muslim killings are also the handiwork of counter insurgents to malign the foreign militants. Many independent agencies have declared that counter insurgents were behind the killing of 35 Sikhs in Chithi Singhpora.

Chithi Singhpora Killings of 35 Sikhs:

On March 20, 2000 35 Sikhs were torn with bullets in Chithi Singhpora in Anantnag district by gunmen wearing Army uniforms.

Holding militants responsible for the Sikh carnage, the Army and the state police's anti-militancy Special Operations Group claimed they killed all the five militants responsible for the massacre at far-off Gujjar village of Panchalthan. Most of the five bodies were roasted beyond recognition. Villagers in the belt termed the encounter fake and alleged that the five were among the 17 persons who disappeared after Chittisinghpura massacre Seeking justice and exhumation, most of the south Kashmir remained paralysed for a week. On April 3, 2000, when a procession of these villagers were on their way to meet the district authorities in Anantnag, they were stopped in the peripheral village of Brakpora and fired upon. Eight civilians were mowed down and 14 were injured. The dead included the son of missing Juma Khan, who had traced some belongings of his father from the site of the "encounter". The government was forced to act. As part of the investigations of Panchalthan "fake encounter", all the five corpses were exhumed on April 6, 2000, and handed over to the claimants after samples were collected for DNA fingerprinting. In March 2002, it was widely reported that samples had actually been fudged. The report said that officials tempered with the samples in order to mislead the investigations. An embarrassed government put a number of doctors and police officials under suspension and ordered a commission of enquiry, the report of which is awaited.

At the same time teams from CFSL and CDFD were flown in and fresh samples collected, analysis of which proved that ...Five persons killed and burnt in remote south Kashmir hamlet in March 2000, and dubbed militants responsible for the massacre of 35 Sikhs at Chittisinghpora, were innocent local civilians.⁽⁶⁵⁾

Independent enquiries made by Justice (Retd.) Ajit Singh Bahns, Inderjit Singh Jaijee & Lt. Gen. (Retd.) Kartar Singh Gill and others suggest that counter insurgents were used to kill 35 Sikhs by the security forces to put pressure on Pakistan and militants on the eve of Bill Clinton's visit to India. Following are a few excerpts from their report.

"The fact that the RR Unit was located close to Chithi Singhpora, and the statement of Principal Ranjit Singh and teacher Niranjn Singh clearly indicated that the security forces knew fully well about the identity of the visitors to Chithi Singhpora and did nothing about it. The team feels that Law and Order being a State subject, the handling and allotment of tasks to the Counter-Insurgency Force was done by the state authorities under the aegis of the Director General of Police. **Events as they unfolded clearly indicate that this force was mis-utilised for criminal acts outside the parameters of law.** ...We feel that a Central Agency directed this operation *without* the knowledge of the State Chief Minister and his Cabinet. This, therefore, is an act that needs to be condemned and a high level probe ordered to punish the guilty.⁽⁶⁶⁾

No wonder even those who are not pro-Pakistan feel recompensed whenever the militants successfully hit at security personnel.

4. Jagmohan Malhotra:

Most Kashmiri Pandits will scorn and scoff at you if you tell them Jagmohan, the governor in 1990, planned, inspired and facilitated their exodus. They were terrorised, their community attacked and driven out of their homes in an attempt of ethnic cleansing to make it easier for an all-Muslim Kashmir to be annexed by Pakistan, they would tell you. They would pooh-pooh Kuldip Nayar who observed:

“The plight of the Pandits has only worsened because they have been used as pawns in the game which the various rulers and different political formations have played in Srinagar and New Delhi. Mr Jagmohan, now a BJP MP, encouraged the Pandits to leave the Valley when he became governor of the state for the second time. Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah has confirmed this. Mr Jagmohan gave the Pandits air tickets, provided them with transport and arranged financial and other help to ensure their journey to Jammu. It was as if he wanted them to be out of the way to be able to deal with militants. Did he want to communalise the situation; plan to use the Pandits one day against the Hurriyat’s demand for independence? Whatever the reason, his rough methods provided a spark to an already combustible situation. Not many Pandits were willing to leave their homes, hearths and neighbourhoods, where they had lived for years with the Kashmiri Muslims. But most of them were assured that they could return after the situation was brought under control. So good was their equation with their Muslim neighbours that they entrusted their lands and shops to them. Pandits in government service readily used the opportunity to get transferred to Jammu. At no time did the Pandits realise that their departure from the Valley would end the prospects of their early return”.⁽⁶⁷⁾

What Kuldip Nayar analysed is not only Farooq Abdullah’s allegation and common Knowledge of all Kashmiri Muslims but a number of impartial observers witnessed it. Balraj Puri relates his personal experience as follows:

“The Jagmohan regime witnessed the exodus of almost the entire small but vital Kashmiri Pandit community from the valley. Padma Vibhushan Inder Mohan (later he renounced the title) and I [Balraj Puri] were the first public men to visit Kashmir in the second week of March 1990 after the new phase of repression had started. Though the Kashmiri Muslims were in an angry mood, they heard us with respect and narrated their tales of woe. At scores of the meetings to which we were invited during our short but hectic visit, Kashmiri Muslims expressed a genuine feeling of regret over the migration of Kashmiri Pandits (KP) and urged us to stop and reverse it. Encouraged by the popular mood, we formed a joint committee of the two communities with the former Chief Justice of the High Court Mufti Bahauddin Farooqi as President, the Kashmiri Pandit leader H.N.Jatto as Vice-President and a leading advocate Ghulam Nabi Hagroo as General Secretary, in order to allay the apprehensions of the Kashmiri Pandits. Jatto recalled that the Pandits had reversed their decision to migrate in 1986 after the success of the goodwill mission led by me. He expressed the hope that my new initiative would meet with similar success. A number of Muslim leaders and parties, including militant outfits, also appealed to the Pandits not to leave their homes, **Jatto welcomed and endorsed their appeals, but soon migrated to Jammu himself. He told me that soon after the joint committee was set up, the Governor [Jagmohan] sent a DSP to him with an air ticket for Jammu, a jeep to take him to the airport, an offer of accommodation at Jammu and an advice to leave Kashmir immediately.** Obviously the Governor did not believe that the effort at restoring inter-community understanding and confidence was worth a trial.

The experiment came under cross fire. The official attitude was far from cooperative. The rise of new militant groups, some warnings in anonymous posters and some unexplained killings of innocent members of the community contributed to an atmosphere of insecurity for the Kashmiri Pandits. A thorough, independent enquiry alone can show whether this exodus of Pandits, the largest in their long history, was entirely unavoidable”⁽⁶⁸⁾.

What Bred Terrorism?

Four main factors mainly contributed to the breeding of terrorism in the valley.

A. Repeated Unfair Elections:

People have long been deprived of their right to choose their governments. Repeated sham elections engineered by the centre and their allies in the state made Kashmiris lose all faith in the democratic process under an Indian confederation. Left to them, Kashmiris will always choose *Azadi* (freedom) in comparison to being a part of India or Pakistan. *Kashmiriyat*, their composite geographical culture has always been sacred to them and they have been referring to the territory bearing *Kashmiriyat* as a *Mulk* (country). The revolts erupted against oppressions of Afghan, Chak, Sikh and Dogra rule but they never took part in the freedom struggle beside other Indians. Even Maharaja Hari Singh agreed to the accession with India under compulsion of circumstances. Eighteenth century historian Mulla Muhammad Taufiq in his versified history, '*Shahnama*', included a chapter, '*Ahwal-e-Mulk-e-Kashmir*' (Account of the country, Kashmir). Another famous historian, Saiduddin Shahabadi, the author of History of Kashmir, '*Bagh-e-Sulaiman*' (Solomon's Garden) wrote, "There is one thing on the lips of people: Rule of religion, destruction of *Mulk*."

The main alleged culprit of toying with the elections and the govts in the state has been the Congress governments that ruled in the centre. Whenever it supported Abdullah family rule, the elections were alleged to be largely rigged in its favour returning Sheikh Abdullah and later Farooq Abdullah with thumping majorities. Whenever they fell from grace, they were unceremoniously removed either by charging them with conspiracy against state or by withdrawal of supporting Congress party in the state or by simply getting them dismissed through the governor.

First widespread charges of large scale rigging in elections were made in the very first election in the state in 1951 that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah won. On Aug. 9, 1953 Sheikh was arrested and Bakhshi Ghulam Mohammad installed as Prime Minister of Kashmir in his place. He was released in on April 8, 1964 and the conspiracy case was dropped against him. He was made Nehru's special emissary to talk to Ayyub Khan but then Nehru passed away in May. On 21st Dec. 1964, there were large-scale demonstrations against articles 356 and 357 of the constitution being extended to the state of J & K. On Dec. 25 1975 Sheikh was again sworn in with Congress support. Congress withdrew the support on March 27, 1977. In June 1977, the first fair elections were conducted and National Conference of Sheikh Abdullah won 47 out of 76 seats. In 1983, N.C. of Farooq Abdullah won, who was appointed heir by his father and took over the reins after his death. In 1984, Jagmohan was appointed governor for the first time and he dismissed Farooq's elected govt. His brother-in-law G.M.Shah was sworn in as Chief Minister. On March 7, 1986 the alliance of Congress and NC lost support in the valley and Shah govt. was dismissed.

In 1987, Farooq again won elections and people could take it no more, taking to streets alleging large-scale rigging. It was common knowledge before and after the polling that Md. Yusuf Shah of Muslim United Front (MUF) was winning with thumping majority from Amirikadal area of Srinagar. Sensing rigging he had forewarned of taking to arms if he was defeated through rigging. People of his constituency swear to this day that more than 80 % had voted for him but he was

declared defeated after the counting. Same was the case with many MUF candidates. Yusuf sneaked in to POK and became, with Pakistan's help, Syed Salahuddin, the Chief of Hizbul Mujahideen (HB). His election aides including Yasin Malik and Javed Mir joined pro-Azadi Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) of Amanullah Khan. Later Pakistan with Indian help (by passing over to them the intelligence input on JKLF activists in India) successfully marginalized JKLF.

Sensing people's frustration at their peak, Pakistan exploited the situation successfully by sneaking armed volunteers on to Indian side. In 1988, protests began in valley with anti-India demonstrations. 10 people were killed in police firing and curfew was imposed in the valley. In Jan. 1990, Jagmohan was appointed governor for the second time. Farooq resigned in protest. 100 unarmed demonstrators were killed in firing by security forces on Jan. 20. Encouraged and aided by Jagmohan, the exodus of Pandits from the valley started on the same date. 400,000 Kashmiris came out on the streets demanding plebiscite. Though Jagmohan had to be withdrawn only after five months in May, the steady increase of terrorism and migration of Pandits could not be checked from then on.

The confirmation of elections being rigged in Jammu and Kashmir came from no less than Mr. L.K. Advani, the Home Minister of India and Mr. J. M. Lyngdoh, the Chief Election Commissioner. Advani informed the Parliament that some officials had sought to advise him before the J & K Assembly Polls last October to take steps to "direct the results in certain manner". This is the most authoritative acknowledgement yet that the rigging of election had become a common feature of politics in that sensitive state... Mr. Advani's disclosure validates the suggestion made by Chief Election Commissioner J.M. Lyngdoh after last year's polls that efforts were sought to be mounted by elements in the police to take unlawful steps to confer unfair advantage on the then ruling party in the state. This had got Farooq Abdullah hot under the collar. His party even contemplated legal action against the CEC. The National Conference has saved itself an embarrassment by not pursuing its threat.⁽⁶⁹⁾

B. Pandits' Migration From The Valley:

Ask any Kashmiri Pandit Organisation and it will tell you it is ethnic cleansing there in the valley. In a way it is, despite more than 97% victims of all killings in Kashmir since 1990 being Muslims. There are hardly 10000 Kashmiris Pandits left in the valley, more than 500,000 having migrated. But Pandits cannot be absolved of at least some of the blame. They became easy prey to Jagmohan's scheme that backfired. He thought he could deal sternly with the militants with Pandits out of the way for some time. To convey to the militants that he meant to be tough he let loose the Jawans on unarmed demonstrators from the day he joined. Instead of dousing the fire it acted as fuel. Terrorists and their Pakistani mentors could not have asked for more. They gained tremendous public support overnight and the exodus of Pandits gave them a new idea. If the remaining Pandits could be driven away, an all-Muslim valley would be more susceptible to their designs. They did terrorise and issued warnings to Pandits in a planned way after then. Some stray incidents were enough for the remaining Brahmin population to be panicky.

"Leaf through Kashmir's history of insurgency. Stop when you reach September 14, 1989. You will see the first Pandit murder recorded there: Jia Lal Taploo's", Analysed Chindu Sridharan from Kashmir in Dec. 1999. He goes on, "That murder can be explained away as political. Taploo was a Bharatiya Janata Party politician. For that reason alone, he was eligible to be killed as far as the militants were concerned. The next was Neel Kanth Ganjoo. On November 4. His crime: as sessions judge he sentenced Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front leader Maqbool Bhat to death.

The Pandits had by then started moving out. The euphoria following the release of five jailed JKLF militants gave the impression that Kashmir was about to break away from India. The minority members felt more insecure.

Then came 1990. The year brought with it Jagmohan as governor. Also, a series of murders. Among the Pandits killed were B K Ganju, Professor K L Ganju, Satish Tikoo, Sarwand 'Premi' Koul, Bhushan Lal Kaul, Bansi Lal Zutshi, Makan Lal Raina... The Pandits' panic peaked. The exodus intensified. When it ended, some 300,000 Hindus (and 70,000-odd Muslims) had migrated from the valley, mainly to Jammu and Delhi. The majority now lives in relief camps, on a monthly government dole of per family and some essential commodities.

Jagmohan, who is now a Union minister in the BJP-led government, comes in for scathing criticism here. He is said to have encouraged the migration. "He wanted the Hindus out of the way so that he could unleash the army and the paramilitary on the Muslims," says a senior bureaucrat who served with Jagmohan. "But for him the exodus wouldn't have taken place."⁽⁷⁰⁾

With Pandits in Jammu and Delhi and having almost no direct contact with their old neighbours for more than a decade, the misunderstanding and mistrust between the two communities developed and grew. Some organisations working for the cause of KPs, communalised the situation to the maximum possible extent. They left no opportunity to pollute the minds of KPs against Muslims and Islam. With each passing day, the return of the Pandits to their original homes is becoming more difficult and by aggravating the atmosphere of mistrust, they are also helping the terrorists cause. In Nadimarg, Ushaji who was out of the village on the massacre's night told me the killers cut fingers and hands of the victims and burned them before shooting them. The only eyewitness to the scene, the lone survivor of the 25 gathered to be slain denied this. Who told Ushaji that the victims were burnt before being shot? Someone from Jammu told her so and in the state of paralysed mind she was in, she believed. Obviously that some one who came from Jammu to Nadimarg wanted to make doubly sure that the survivors of Nadimarg migrated too.

The Pandits I met in Jammu camps were unanimous that they could go back to the valley only after the return of normalcy. The complexity of the problem is that the normalcy cannot be returned till the Pandits come back. Their homecoming is one of the main requirements for the return of normalcy. Unfortunately unlike the beginning of 90s, the Muslims of the valley are no more interested to welcome them back in the valley. The communication gap between the two has given rise to misunderstandings that are increasing with each passing day. A lot of courage has to be infused in KPs to face what the Muslims are facing there. KP Organisations are doing just the opposite.

A minuscule minority of KPs could muster courage to stay back. 24 of them were slain in Nadimarg on 24th of March 2003. Such incidents occur and shall continue to occur occasionally if more Pandits migrated due to the above incident. Pandits must realise that it is not Muslim public who is attacking them but some desperate elements who are killing Muslims too. Both have to muster courage to fight them. Chamalal Razdan saw this logic and stayed.

"Snug in a traditional Kashmiri *pheran* (a loose-fitting coat), 53-year-old Chamalal Razdan sits on the floor in his small living room. "I never felt insecure," he volunteers. "Nobody has come to threaten me. The Muslims have only given me love..." Razdan lives in Kajibagh, Baramulla. In case you need a reminder, the entire district was a hotbed of militancy. It still is. In 1990,

threatened with what they have since dubbed 'ethnic cleansing' by Islamic fundamentalists, thousands of Pandits fled the Kashmir valley. Baramulla was then a separatist furnace. Today things are not much different.

Yet, here's a Pandit who opted to live on in the volatile area. And says 10 turbulent years later that no, he never seriously considered migration. "Ten families stayed back. Not one of us came to any harm," Razdan says. "My son was born here, he studied here. When I go out of town for 10-12 days I need not worry about my family. I know they are safe."

Yes, there were moments when Razdan too felt threatened. When he heard about Pandits being killed in Srinagar and other districts, he *was* frightened. But that scare passed in a few hours. There's no special threat to Pandits, he believes. Not in Baramulla town. "If there really was threat, I wouldn't be here," he says. "There was a panic in 1990. People left because they saw others leave."

Was that how it was? Hirdey Nath Ganju, who returned home after six years in a Jammu relief camp, doesn't agree. But he is one with Razdan about the amity shown by Muslims. "When we returned in 1996 the entire town turned up to welcome us," he says.⁽⁷¹⁾

C. Kashmiri Muslims' Anti-India Stance:

Though an overwhelming majority of Kashmiri Muslims aspire for *Azadi*, a stance opposed by both India and Pakistan to the extent of co-operation between the intelligence of the two countries to counter it, they are Anti-India and favouring Pakistan if they have to choose between the two. Following are the reasons:

1. In India they never got a right to decide their own fate, election, after election being doctored to suit the political parties in centre who disposed of at will even those chief ministers who they had themselves installed through unfair means. Only for the second time in the history of Kashmir relatively fair elections were held in 2002. Pakistan at least talks of plebiscite, the right of self-determination, under UN supervision. Though the Pakistani demand of plebiscite, if accepted, does not promise them their cherished *Azadi*, (33% Kashmiris are not aware of it)⁽⁷²⁾ it at least promises a free and fair choice of their own between the two limited options. Things could have been different if the political parties in centre had not toyed with Kashmiris in the name of elections for half a century. Ironically it was India who took the Kashmir issue to the UN on January 1, 1948 and suggested plebiscite. Pakistan reluctantly agreed to it in December 1948.
2. Continued repression of Kashmiris through draconian laws and human rights abuse. In order to curb militancy, instead of winning people's confidence through democratic process, special laws were framed which were used so often by every political and military authority that it is unimaginable for anyone who has not visited the valley in the last decade to gauge the scale of human rights abuse there. Politicians, administrative authorities, police, Special Task Force (STF), Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon (IUM) and security forces can do anything to any one with immunity. Both the 1990 Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act and the general Special Powers Act remain in effect and are still used. Although the Terrorist and Disruptive Activities Prevention Act lapsed in 1995, people are still detained under its provisions in cases where the authorities argue crimes were committed before it was repealed. All these laws and more recently Prevention of Terrorism Act come in handy while apprehending anyone. The worst culprits are STF and IUM (counter insurgents and surrendered militant goons, both supported by security forces). They kill, abduct, rape, demand extortion money and

commit excesses in day light before the eyes of helpless police with no accountability. There are more than 10,000 persons missing since the militancy started. Whatever the authorities claim, foreign militants cannot survive if they resort to such excesses.

3. Though there were 95% Muslims in the valley, the employees posted in Central Govt. services, offices and banks always comprised more than 95% Hindus. This fact was always resented by Kashmiri Muslims and though it never affected their cordial ties with the Hindus in the valley, they always looked at India as a Hindu state.

D. Motivation In The Name Of Jihad:

Pakistani rulers well supported by Pakistani Ulema (Islamic scholars) successfully motivated the youth in training camps that to kill and be killed for Kashmir's secession from Hindu India was a sacred Jihad (holy war) that gave them licence to enter paradise after death irrespective of deeds. They got tremendous help from the rise of VHP, the demolition of Babri Masjid and more recently, the state sponsored killings of Muslims in Gujarat. Gross misinterpretation of Islam and the projection of terrorism as Jihad by a minuscule minority of Muslims in some countries but widely publicised by the world media as the real face of Islam played an important role in eulogizing the so-called Jihadis and provided extra impetus to the misguided trainees. The religious fervour of Usama and Taliban used by USA through Pakistan to defeat USSR in Afghanistan had its dangerous fall out in Kashmir and Pakistan could successfully involve the Afghan militants too in its declared Jihad of Kashmir.

Recommendations

1. Ensure Sanctity Of Democratic Political Process:

All future political parties in power in the centre should resolve to let election commission hold free and fair elections in the state of J & K. Centre should never use governors to dismiss democratically elected governments in Kashmir. For over half a century Kashmiris have been tricked and teased in the name of elections. Only one more rigged election in future and the valley may explode.

In the Opinion Poll conducted by a British Agency, MORI in May, 2002, the vast majority opposed an Indo-Pakistan effort to find a permanent solution to the situation in Kashmir, instead believing the correct way to bring peace to the region would be through free and fair elections to elect the people's representatives (86 per cent). While the vast majority of respondents in Jammu and Leh (the largest city in Ladakh) believed peace was possible through democratic elections, only a bare majority (52 per cent) around Srinagar agreed. Moreover, there was a statewide consensus (65 per cent) that democratic elections were not possible while violence continued.⁽⁷³⁾

2. Start Job Oriented Development Projects:

Unemployed youth are most susceptible to the lures of militants who recently have started giving economic incentives to the recruits including risk insurances. Almost all affluent people we met in Srinagar were against militancy.

MORI survey of 2002 disclosed that 93 % favoured economic development to provide more job opportunities and reduce poverty, an estimated 61 per cent of respondents said they would be politically and economically better off as Indian citizens and only 6 per cent as Pakistani citizens.⁽⁷⁴⁾

3. Organise Moral Training Camps for STF And Ex-Militants:

The incentives for counter insurgents and surrendered ex-militants should not come from loot and rape. The govt. should formulate a policy to provide proper incentives to the counter insurgents. It is necessary that moral training and orientation camps should be organised to infuse humanity in these groups. It may also be explored that instead of making use of these groups in combating terrorists locally, we must take the fight to the enemy camp. If Pakistani terrorists, with the help of ISI and Pakistan army can infiltrate in to our side, we could also train the militants who could be smuggled into the enemy territory to strike the terrorists' targets. Let their bravery be used in the terrorists' territory instead of letting them holding the public to ransom.

4. Set Up of Special Accountability Courts:

Special high power accountability courts should be set up to hear and investigate the grievances of the public against atrocities. Even the security forces should be made accountable to these courts. The formation of such courts should also include known human right activists.

5. Engage The Separatist Leaders In Dialogue:

Efforts should not be given up to engage the popular separatist leaders in dialogue even after some rebuttals from their side. It will take some time after their long disillusionment to reassure them that even if all their demands could not be met, solutions could be found within the framework of Indian constitution. Holding the dialogues with Kashmiris may be more constructive than the usefulness of dialogue with Pakistan on Kashmir. Send such persons as emissaries whose humane face is known and recognised by all. Do not make mockery of talks by shelving their recommendations into cold storages.

In MORI opinion poll, 2002 in J & K, an 86 % supported direct consultation between the Indian government and the people of Kashmir (86 per cent).⁽⁷⁵⁾

6. Ensure Early Return Of Displaced KPs To Their Homes:

Courage will have to be infused into Kashmiri Pandits to return back to their homes. They could be convinced that they are not the exclusive targets of the terrorists. They should not wait for the end of militancy for their return. Their return will be a step towards the end of militancy. They should be prepared to face the militancy alongside their Muslim brethren. They should be offered economic packages to return and rebuild their homes. Besides incentives, proper motivations should be there to instil confidence and courage in them. They are making sacrifices and their lives are miserable in camps. Motivations could be searched to prepare them to make sacrifices while occupying their homeland with honour.

A majority (80 per cent) in an MORI survey believed the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to their homes would help bring peace.⁽⁷⁶⁾

7. Involve Courageous And Sincere NGOs:

No govt. alone, howsoever sincere can bridge the gap of mistrust created out of communication gap between the KPs and Muslims of the valley. Courageous NGOs should come forward and the govt. should help them help bridging the communication gap. Representatives of KPs belonging to every town and village could be taken to their villages to witness that their lands have not been occupied by Muslims and their burnt or falling houses could be rebuilt with the help of Govt. and the Muslims. All out efforts should be made by these NGOs to wipe out the communal virus spreading after the segregation of two communities.

8. Seek The Help Of Trusted Indian Islamic Scholars:

Though Indian Ulema have not been as vocal in condemnation of terrorism against KPs as they should have been; the prominent among them have always issued condemnation statements against terrorism of any kind. Unfortunately our press has not been highlighting their statements to that effect. This has been a grave slip as their statements could affect the Kashmiri Muslims and some militants too. Indian Ulema in general are in contrast to their Pakistani counterparts more clear-cut in differentiating Jihad from terrorism. Instead of creating hype that Indian Madrasas are breeding terrorism too, their help should be sought to combat terrorism on ideological ground. Sincere effort should be made to involve other Islamic scholars of repute whom the Muslims trust to educate the Kashmiri Muslims about true Islamic teachings. Islam neither backs territorialism, nor separatism. Jihad is very distinct from terrorism. It is not to win territories but to help the oppressed. It is unanimously agreed that Jihad could not be declared by stray groups. Only an Islamic State is authorised to declare Jihad and no Islamic scholar including Pakistani Ulema consider Pakistan an Islamic State. HB and Let should first fight in Pakistan to make it an Islamic State. These facts could be highlighted with the help of trusted Muslim scholars. Once the masses are educated, though it may take a lot of time, the terrorism in the name of Islam will die.

This last step of the solution or recommendation of this Report is the most important one that could have a decisive effect in combating terrorism.

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