

## Seminar Report

# KASHMIR: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION

Seminar Coordinator: Brig Narender Kumar



**Centre for Land Warfare Studies**

RPSO Complex, Parade Road, Delhi Cantt, New Delhi-110010

Phone: 011-25691308; Fax: 011-25692347

email: landwarfare@gmail.com; website: www.claws.in

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## **CAUSES OF PERPETUAL DISTURBANCE IN KASHMIR VALLEY**

The government at Srinagar and Delhi lost vital period of relative calm between 2012 and 2016, due to inaction or lack of a clear vision and understanding how the Kashmir issue can take a serious turn and an opportunity to stabilize Kashmir was lost. The aspirations of the people rose from the BJP-PDP combine that came to power in J&K in 2014 but got derailed due to political squabbling.

Pakistan Army and the ISI, increased cease fire violations and targeted attacks on security forces, as a result casualties of security forces, civilians, and terrorists increased. Relative calm and relative disturbance has now transformed into perpetuated disturbance that is unprecedented in nature. Local youth and women have started interfering with the security forces work and every time a local terrorist is killed, large crowds come out in support and the visible discontent is rising.

The Army did commendable job during the 2014 floods in Kashmir but rehabilitation was poorly executed by the state government that has caused anger and discontentment among the masses.

The political narrative is weak and the ISI has caused a change in the Kashmir valley by converting the proxy terror war as a struggle for Islam instead of political sovereignty/autonomy.

### **Political Mismanagement**

1. The political strategy to deal with the situation in Kashmir, appears to be inconsistent. The friction between the coalition parties in the government has brought the functioning of the government to a halt.
2. Democracy at grass root is being systematically destroyed by threat and coercion. Elimination of Panchayat sarpanches and threat to elected members is a proof of the problem.
3. A perception is being created that the democratic system has failed people; as a result a sense of distrust with the political establishment has successfully been embedded by the proxies of Pakistan.

## **2 KASHMIR: IN SEARCH OF A POLITICAL SOLUTION**

4. Perception has been created that elected members to remain in power have to be on the right side of Delhi, and more specifically as agents of Delhi in Kashmir and not as the representatives of the people.
5. Though Hurriyat has lost relevance and credibility but are used by Pakistan as the face of the struggle for independence of Kashmir.

### **Conflict Between Salafi Islam and Sufi Islam**

1. Systematic erosion of Sufism by imposing Wahabi-Salfi Islam has caused intolerance and the successive governments looked other side when the money and ideology flowed into the valley. There are now separate mosques for Sufi Muslim (that is now in minority) and Wahhabi mosques. A rough estimate suggests that the Wahhabi mosques are three times more in number than the old Sufi mosques.
2. Radicalization of masses started in the early 2000 because this was the most potent tool to cause disaffection with the political system and idea of Kashmir within India. Target of this ideological invasion commenced from schools and education systems. Academies and madrasas mushroomed all over J&K, and systematic radicalization took roots that have reduced the space for reconciliation and integration of Kashmir with the main stream.

### **Humiliation and Defeat of Youth is not a Solution**

Popular perception in Kashmir valley is that India is suppressing the aspirations of people for self-determination. Presence of security forces is being seen as an endeavour to defeat the youth. Imposition of democratic government is seen as humiliation of Kashmiri Awam.

### **Engagement of India With Youth is Through Security Forces**

Pakistan has targeted the children between the age group of 10 and 18 years through teachers and Tabliqi Jamaat who by and large are subverted. Instead of imparting education in the schools, children are being taught hatred and Jihad against India. An

opinion is being created that the Government of India and J&K is engaging with youth through the Army, Central Armed Police Force (CAPF), and State Police instead of skill development, education, economic empowerment, health, sports activities, and people-to-people contact.

### **Social Media and Battle of Narrative**

India is losing the battle of narrative and it remains uncontested. Pakistan is exploiting social media to portray alienation of the population. Issue such as Sainik colonies was portrayed as colonization of Kashmir and beef ban was seen as an infringement in the private life of Kashmiri people.

### **Where is Empathy and Emotional Message?**

The national media is seen as mocking at the Kashmiri Awam, whereas Pakistan is reaching out to the people of Kashmir emotionally and displaying empathy. Pakistan and Arabian cable network is spreading Wahhabi and Jihadi ideology with impunity.

### **Tourism and Yatra is not a Correct Indicator of Peace and Stability in Kashmir**

The Central Government has misread the situation on ground on the basis of flow of tourists and smooth conduct of yatra. It is not an indicator of peace and stability rather it is purely an economic activity and compulsion in the absence of other avenues of employment.

### **Juvenile Detention and Rehabilitation**

A 12-year-old stone pelter is thrown into the jail with hardened separatists. Instead of reforming the juveniles these detention centres have become a breeding ground for Jihadi ideology.

### **Kashmiri Pandit not Internally Displaced People According to the United Nations Definition**

Kashmiri Pandits displaced due to the terrorism in Kashmir have not been granted the status of internally displaced people (IDP). As a result

they have been deprived of the economic and social advantages, and they blame the state and the central governments for their continued sufferings.

## WAY FORWARD

### Capacity for Building Peace Through Political Initiative

There is a need to have a long-term political, economic, and social strategy at national level to deal with the instability in Jammu and Kashmir. The entire conflict needs to be looked at in a holistic manner as under:

1. **Political Strategy.** The parameters of the Kashmir situation should be gauged through the prism of—radicalization, misuse of social media, conflict economy, money trail to support subversive activities, education curriculum, youth engagement, security and sense of overall calm. The situation in Kashmir cannot be outsourced to the security forces and all other organs of the state watching from the sidelines. Political leadership at the centre and state should act expeditiously and should not wait till the next crisis.
2. **Outreach to the People Needs to be Widened.** There is a need to look beyond the Hurriyat which no longer represents the population, especially the youth. Other constituencies such as trader's associations, taxi drivers' associations, hotel owners association, labourer and pony wallah association, and student unions should be engaged.
3. Partisan statements at the state and central leadership should stop.
4. The friction between the coalition parties in the government must halt.
5. Kashmiri sub-nationalism can exist as the Tamil or Maratha sub-nationalism exists without trespassing the other's boundaries. Idea of India does exist in the idea of Kashmiri sub-nationalism and both can co-exist without any contradiction.



6. The agenda of alliance between the coalition partners of the present government in power was an ideal document for the current situation, but there have been little or no implementation. All political parties in Kashmir need to understand that they are representatives and the custodian of the interests of the people.
7. There is a people-centric solution for Kashmir and it is linked to Sufi Islam. Wahhabi Islam has brought instability in Kashmir, the endeavour should be made to link Kashmiri Islam back to its root of Sufi Islam.

### Security Strategy

Peace in Kashmir cannot be visualised without making Pakistan pay for its actions in Kashmir. Terrorism, instability, intifada, and youth unrest is all initiated by Pakistan. Diplomatic rhetoric and media barbs are not enough. Baluchistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) is a tool that needs to be exploited expeditiously. Under the current situation military pressure might be India's best option against Pakistan. An unpredictable force response like the surgical strikes will have definite psychological impact. The following important issues need to be given due importance:

1. Security of installations and denial of exposed flanks.
2. Anti-infiltration grid needs to be strengthened continuously through technology and innovative deployment.
3. Focus on intelligence-based operations to eliminate terrorists.
4. Army should avoid direct contact with civil population during operations. CAPF and JKP should be tasked to manage and prevent interference by civil population during operations by the Army.
5. Avoidance of human rights abuses at all costs.
6. Non-lethal weapons to handle crowds are utmost necessity.

### **Law and Order**

Poor law and order situation is an indicator of eroding authority of the state. State cannot abdicate its responsibility even if it has to take tough measures to maintain law and order.

### **Youth Engagement**

Youth engagement should be through education, skill development, sports, cultural exchange programmes, economic empowerment, societal development, and information technology. More importantly youth needs emotional outreach and not sympathy at this stage to reduce anger and hatred towards India.

### **Battle of Narrative**

Battle of narrative needs national efforts and it cannot be ‘switch-off switch-on mode’. It should be credible, continuous, and comprehensive. It should be based on facts and medium should be carefully chosen so that it reaches every section of the society.

### **Development a Key Platform**

Development within the region is necessary but care should be taken to avoid these being misused politically. Key areas of development should be of course, health, education, electricity, and roads. Development should be visible and should impact all three regions—Kashmir, Jammu, and Ladakh equally. The areas that are relatively peaceful should get maximum attention including areas south of Pir Panjal. One should also recognize that development has its limitations and results will not be forthcoming instantaneously but will have long-term impact. The aspirations of the people and the perceived wrongs will still need to be addressed.

### **Juvenile Detention Centre and Surrender Policy**

There is a need to establish juvenile detention centre that ensures de-radicalisation and rehabilitation of these impressionable youths. They need compassion and not a sense of revenge or punishment.

**Conflict Economy**

Measures to prevent flow of money from across the border through hawala or any other source should be curbed so that conflict economy is curtailed and eliminated to the extent possible. Corrupt politicians and bureaucrats should be investigated for disproportionate assets and misuse of government funds.

**Kashmiri Pundits: An Integral Part of Kashmir**

Kashmiri Pundits cannot be kept out of the model for restoration of the peace and stability. They can also be used as a bridge to start informal dialogue with the Kashmiri society to create space for negotiation and reconciliation. To counter Pakistan propaganda, Kashmiri Pundits must be part of diplomatic offensive to expose the evil design of Pakistan and its establishments to destabilise Kashmir.

**Removal of Outside Preachers and Foreign Funds**

All hate and radical preachers must be removed from the valley and foreign funds should be blocked to ensure that Sufi Islam returns to the valley.

## SEMINAR PROGRAMME

Schedule Time	Event	Speakers
0930 – 1000h	Tea & Registration	
1000 – 1010h	Welcome and Introductory Remarks by the Chair	Dir CLAWS
1010 – 1050h	Causes of Current Instability, Emerging Contours of Destabilisation in Kashmir, Political and Military Steps to Deal with the Situation in Kashmir	Lt Gen DS Hooda
1050 – 1115h	Inadequacy of Current Political Strategy to Create Stable Environment for Durable Peace	Mr David Devadas
1115 – 1140h	Political Ramification of the Instability in Kashmir and Need for Political Consensus	Mr Iftikhar Gilani
1140 – 1150h	Logistic Pause	
1150 – 1215h	Engagement of Youth to Prevent Violence on Streets and Economic Road Map for Kashmir	Mr Waheed-ur-Rehman
1215 – 1240h	Durable solution for IDPs and Measures for Economic Recovery	Col T K Tikoo
1240 – 1305h	Way Forward to Break the Cycle of Instability	Mr Ashok Bhan
1305 - 1330h	Open Forum & Question Answer Session	
1330h	Lunch & Dispersal	