

Kashmir: From AK-47 To Stone Pelting Changing trends in freedom movement of Kashmir

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Abstract

The beautiful valley of Kashmir in contemporary times draw news, headlines very frequently for militancy related violence and civil unrest. In this article an attempt has been made to show why insurgency erupted in early 1990s and the many changes taking place in the political canvas, civilian protest mostly of educated youth preferred non violent methods.

Keywords: Accession, AK-47, mingled nature, insurgency, outsiders, violence.

Introduction

Kashmir from the very beginning of temporary accession with India became a tense and hot area of bloodshed and violence .People of valley right from the temporary accession are fighting for their own cause and for freedom, using both violent and non violent methods to achieve this objective. All sections of society had and are taking part in the freedom struggle of Kashmir which passed through different fluctuations. However the freedom struggle gained its strength only in late 80's when some malpractices were done in state legislative assembly elections, leading to insurgency in Jammu and Kashmir. This article attempts to show the various outcomes of freedom struggle the changing trends in the said struggle and the mingled nature of Kashmir people which have a greater impact on their freedom struggle.

Objectives:-

1. To highlight the cause of insurgency of 1989.
2. To analyze the ideological difference of various insurgent groups.
3. To examine the various changes that occurred in freedom struggle from past 20 years.
4. To highlight and compare the major differences of insurgents and stone pelters.
5. To highlight the mingled nature of Kashmir people.

Methodology:-Both published and unpublished secondary data has been utilized for the purpose of study. The data on Kashmir from AK47 To Stone pelting were also analyzed. The data is collected from various journals of political science, news papers and from internet.

Discussion:-The beautiful valley of Kashmir which is known as the paradise on earth and is called the Switzerland of Asia, marked with territorial conflict between India, Pakistan and China. Before 1947, Indian occupied Kashmir saw the tyranny of Dogra rule which wretched the people of valley. At that time, popular leader of Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah shout and launched the "Quit Kashmir Movement "against the Dogra rule in which he was succeeded but ultimately became the representative of Hari Singh(ruler of the Kashmir) to sign the instrument of accession with India. Kashmir right from then became a place of insurgency but it only gained its momentum in late 80s.

1987 witnessed a huge malpractice in the state legislative assembly elections which became a catalyst for the insurgency. The Muslim United Front which had won several seats in this election were declared ultimately as looser, was a collation of parties including Jam mat-I-Islami who rejected the accession and the Ummat-I-Islami which demanded more democratic rights for the people. After the malpractices in the elections, some state legislative members formed armed insurgents and as a result, a series of demonstrations, strikes and attacks on the Indian govt. began the Kashmir insurgency. The people of Kashmir valley started protesting against the illegal occupation of Kashmir by Indian forces and start demanding complete freedom. However many youth of Kashmir valley took violent methods for achieving independence. According to the estimate by govt. of India, by 1989 about 10,000 Kashmir youth had gone to Pakistan to undergo training. In fact up to 1991, the Kashmir valley was in a grip of full-fledged insurrection. Thousands of young men of Kashmir between the age group of 25 to 35 comprising mostly of illiterate section of society roamed the streets of valley with arms like grenades and Kalashnikovs. The gunfire battles between Indian army and militants was chanted with slogans of "Azadi"(freedom) in which people of all strata of valley took part to protest against the Indian rule.

The ongoing freedom movement in this period was lead by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front(JKLF) and Hzb-Ul-Mujahedeen(HM).Both these insurgent groups had different ideologies-while the former believed that Kashmir will be sovereign and the later convicted that Kashmir will become Pakistan. Controversy arise between the two ideologies and they start fighting with each other which not only weakened their freedom struggle but also saw the outcome of Ikhwan-Ul-Muslemeen(Indian aided militants composed mostly of surrendered militant).This militant group not only counter attack the insurgents but also make a huge loss to humanity by killing thousands of innocent people including the Ex Mla's of Muslim United Front, raped the

women, tortured the youth to suppress the ongoing freedom movement. The security forces with the help of these aided militants used every tactic to crush the struggle which Kashmir people were striving for and to achieve independence. But the fact is that from the very beginning, the local population of Kashmir valley considered the paramilitary forces as outsiders and supported the freedom movement.

To achieve the objective of freedom in the valley, separatists and some of the top insurgents united and formed the "All Parties Hurriyat Conference"(APHC) in 1993 with a view to get freedom from India. But the organization of Hurriyat did not last long and it splits into two groups namely Hurriyat Conference (G) by Syed Ali Shah Gellani and the Hurriyat Conference (U) lead by Mrwaiz Umar Farooq.

Kashmir valley witnessed a radical change in the freedom movement during the last few years-from armed resistance to embracing the tactics of non-violence to achieve independence. These tactics mostly include strikes, protests, hartals, bandhs and the significant one-Stone pelting.

Stone Pelting:-After witnessing a short period of calmer environment and short lived peace for about five years i.e. from 2003 to early 2008, Kashmir valley again became a tense and hot area when three youths had been killed in a fake encounter in Mach ill and the death of school boy Tufail Matoo in tear gas shelling by Indian army, clashes over the transfer of land to the Amaranth Shrine Board set the valley on fire as mass protesters erupted all over. The valley again became the ground of bloodshed, disturbed and even violent place.

Stone pelting has become a routine feature of street protesters in valley. Stone palters were well organized, mostly of educated teen age boys and young men between the age group of 15 to 25 years of age used internet based social media to organize who showed whole hatred anger against the Indian govt. and army. These young age boys feel that stone pelting is only a tool of resistance against repression as was used in 2010 & 2012 summer unrest.

Controversial nature of Kashmir people:-Kashmiri people are fighting for freedom from past six to seven decades but they are not getting success in this regard because of their mingled nature i.e. they vote- they shot. Which means that they demand freedom but at the same time they cost their votes strengthening the Indian democracy? Considering the Indian democracy as myth makes the decentralization successful which is the objective of directive principles of state policy by taking a huge part in panchayat elections as held in 2012. When separatist leaders addresses the rally, lakhs of people join them but when mainstream parties comes on front, they turn their faces towards them. This is a routine feature of people valley from 1947. Shiek Abdullah also witnessed such incidents in his freedom struggle both against the Dogra and Indian rule in Kashmir.

People of Kashmir do not have a particular objective in their mind to achieve the pace of independence. They have double objectives and are double minded, "two fishes in one hand-never possible". All parties Hurriyat conference from 1990s called Kashmir's to boycott the polls as these elections have never full filled the aspirations of people. But what these people do after getting advice from their leaders, ofcoursely they act against them. When in summer unrest of 2008, freedom movement was touching the sky and was at its peak but failed. Lakhs of people gathered at Eidgah Srinagar in august 2008 to protest against the India and demanded freedom. Separatists urged the people not to take part in the forth coming election which were held in December 2008, but people rejected this notion and openly take part. The polling percentage which was 43% in 2003 was raised to 60%. Again in summer unrest of 2010 and 2012, a huge loss to property, development and humanity, people of valley striked more than three months demanding freedom but as previously forgot the freedom objective and in recently held elections of November 2014, people raised the polling percentage from 60% to 66% which is the highest record of the polling percentage from last twenty five years. Some people without actively taking part in these elections supported it outside. Most of the Kashmir do not know why we vote and to whom we vote because of their illiteracy or lack of political consciousness.

Conclusion:

From the above discussion, a conclusion can be made that the freedom movement of Kashmir gained strength when some mal practices were done in state assembly elections in 1987. People showed anger in the form of protests and strikes and even some use violent means. In early 1990s some youth mostly comprised of illiterate people crossed the border to get training in Pakistan and came back with weapons kike AK47. After a long terrible and destructive violence, valley again came on plate form of peace and calmer environment for few years in the new millennium. But unfortunately again in 2008 violence erupted on the question of land transfer to Shrine Board(HINDU Religious Group) in which people of all sections of valley took part, comprised mostly of educated teen age and young man. They do not have AK47 in hand but a stone

The people of Kashmir valley do not have clear cut aims and objectives towards freedom. They at the same time protest shot slogans for freedom but also cast their votes. either the people of Kashmir want Pakistan, or to be with India or independent soveirgn Kashmir? these are the questions which are not easy to answer because of the very complex nature of Kashmiri people.

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