Uneasy Alliance: SAD-BJP Coalition in Punjab and Economic Development

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Roots of Insurgency in Indian Jammu and Kashmir- a Review

by

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ROOTS OF INSURGENCY IN INDIAN JAMMU AND KASHMIR- A REVIEW

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Abstract

Essay 1: "Uneasy Alliance: SAD-BJP Coalition in Punjab and Economic Development" explores the ironic coalition of Punjab's regional party, the Shiromani Akali Dal, a representative of the state's Sikh population and the Bharatiya Janata Party, a right wing Hindu nationalist party. It explains the electoral compulsions and other incentives which brought the two ideologically divergent parties into a winning coalition. The essay concludes with an evaluation of the coalition's performance with regards to economic development in the state.

Keywords: Punjab Politics; SAD BJP Coalition; Economic Development in Punjab

Essay 2: "Roots of Insurgency in Indian Jammu and Kashmir: a Review" attempts to outline the various factors that culminated in a mass movement for *Azadi* (freedom) in the Indian part of Jammu and Kashmir in the year 1989. In explaining the insurgency movement, the essay attributes agency to two entities- the Indian state and the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Insurgency in Kashmir; Azadi Movement; Secession in Kashmir

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ESSAY 1

UNEASY ALLIANCE: SAD-BJP COALITION IN PUNJAB AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

Punjabi society is an amalgamation of diverse groups divided along the lines of religion, caste, class, political ideology and rural vs. urban habitation. Cleavages along all these factors have affected electoral outcomes and political strategies in the state. In the year 1997, a coalition of Punjab's regional party, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and right wing Hindu nationalist party, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) swept the state assembly polls and formed a government defeating the Indian National Congress (INC, also referred to as the Congress) and its allies.

Some immediate questions come to surface. Why was SAD, a party that is the premier representative of the Sikhs prepared to give support to the leading Hindu nationalist party? There is something fundamentally irreconcilable between SAD's support for Khalistan, a separate country for the Sikhs and BJP's call for Hindutva, a movement for Hindu nationalism. Yet, the two parties have formed a winning coalition three times in the recent political history of Punjab. This essay will explore the unlikely pact between BJP and SAD in Punjab and the incentives faced by the two parties that compels them to forge this alliance. Secondly, the paper will discuss issues of economic development under the SAD-BJP governments in Punjab.

The essay argues that SAD and BJP were brought together in an unlikely coalition primarily due to electoral compulsion. Since the SAD evolved as a party of Sikh rural farmers, it had a limited appeal amongst the state's large urban Hindu minority. As such, it was compelled to seek allies even after the reorganization of Punjab as a Sikh-majority state in 1966. A partnership with the BJP allowed the coalition to tap into a broader support base and successfully oppose the Congress in the state. For the BJP, SAD was an important regional ally that could support the national party in New Delhi and increase BJP candidates' chances of winning in Punjab.

However, their contradictory ideologies and separate vote banks makes policy consensus an issue of contention. This has had serious implications for the state's economy which is slowly decelerating from its green revolution success days. Rather than implementing policies for revenue generation, the two parties have been squabbling over distribution of the state's resources to their respective electorates in the form of subsidies and concessions, undermining development projects in the process. It is the poorer sections of society, especially the Scheduled Castes (SC) population that has suffered the most as development schemes are abandoned or withdrawn due to lack of funds.

The essay is broadly divided into four sections. The first section explores a brief history and evolution of the SAD. It outlines the reasons for SAD's failure to gain majority in state elections. The second section discusses compulsions faced by BJP that encourage the party to form coalitions with regional parties such as SAD. The third section describes the electoral performance of the two parties as a coalition. The final section reviews the economic promises made by the SAD-BJP coalition while in power, the extent of their implementation and the threats to the coalition owing to differences in economic policy.

1. SAD'S Dilemma: Region or Religion?

As the following discussion will elucidate, SAD is a party stuck at crossroads of region and religion (Kumar, 2004). While portraying itself as a party of the Jat-Sikhs (Sikh agricultural caste), it has had to consider the large Hindu minority in the state that has not traditionally voted for the SAD. Hence, to understand SAD's need to seek coalition partners, one has to take into consideration both the changing social demographics within the Punjabi society as well as the historical context of evolution of SAD as a political party of the Jat-Sikhs.

1.1. Evolution of the SAD

The SAD is one of the oldest political parties in India. It participated in the Indian struggle for freedom from British colonial rule and later became the representative of a distinct Punjabi language and culture in post-independence India. SAD has long championed the grievances of Sikhs in India- from the reorganization of Punjab in 1966, calling for greater autonomy under the Anandpur Sahib Resolution (ASR) to supporting secession from India to form a separate Sikh nation of Khalistan. In the process, non-Sikh and specifically, non-Jat Sikh segments of the Punjabi society have gradually been convinced to challenge the SAD at the polls.

1.1.1. Organization of Society in Pre-Partition Punjab

Pre-partition Punjab was characterized by overlapping of regionalism, religion, class and the rural-urban divide. Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims formed the three main religious groups. While there was no absolute concentration of the three religious communities in specific regions, the Sikhs were numerically strong in the central areas of Punjab , Muslims numerically dominated in the western districts of pre-partition Punjab and Hindus formed the majority in the Southeastern districts of Haryana (Kumar, 2005). With regards to class groups, Sikhs and Muslims formed the landed peasantry whereas

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the Hindus were primarily identified as traders and money lenders. Accordingly, city dwelling Hindus formed a minority in rural Punjab relative to the Muslim and Sikh populations whereas Muslims and Sikhs were primarily identified as rural (Kumar, 2005: 112).

1.1.2.   Founding of SAD and Early Years

The Shiromani Akali Dal was established on 14 December, 1920 as a religious-political party and the principal representative of Sikhs. It began as a political extension of the Akal movement for the reform of Sikh places of worship during the early 1920s which had also established the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC- the supreme body for management of *gurdwaras*- Sikh places of worship) (Singh, 1984). In its early years, SAD was active in organizing *morchas* or protest movements for control of and reform in *gurdwara* management. Its objectives were achieved with the enactment of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925 and the legalization of SAD and SGPC. SAD thereafter became an independent political party, which, instead of functioning under the SGPC sought to control it through the electoral process (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012).

SAD participated in the Indian freedom struggle alongside the Congress with the hope that a secular and democratic India will safeguard the rights of the Sikh minority. However, in the period following independence, rifts developed between Congress and SAD with regards to the language issue.

1.1.3.   The Punjabi Suba Movement

Following partition, a new kind of identity politics began to take shape in Punjab. With a large-scale cross migration of Hindus, Muslim and Sikhs across the India-Pakistan border, the Indian state of Punjab was left with a 61 per cent Hindu majority and a 35 per cent Sikh minority, as per the 1951 census (Kumar, 2005). A movement supporting Punjabi as the official language and medium of instruction in all government schools began to develop in this period. Concentration of Sikhs in central Punjab, abolition of reservation of seats for religious minorities in 1949 and reorganization of other Indian states on linguistic grounds led the SAD to conceptualise a Sikh majority state, thus launching the Punjabi Suba Movement.

SAD's demand for a Punjabi speaking province was, however, rejected by the States Reorganization Commission in 1956 on grounds that Punjabi was not spatially or grammatically different from Hindi and that the movement was not supported by the state's Hindus. Punjabi Hindus were apprehensive about a Sikh-majority state and went as far as denying Punjabi as their mother tongue and declaring themselves as Hindi-speaking both in 1951 and 1961 census (Kumar, 2005). The 'betrayal' of Hindus aggravated the Akali leadership's concern for preserving an independent Sikh identity. The agitation for a Punjabi Suba Movement continued under Master Tara Singh and later under Sant Fateh Singh until 1966 when Punjab Re-organization Bill was finally introduced in the Parliament on September 3rd (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012).

Even though the Punjabi Suba Movement was launched on linguistic basis, it essentially became a religious issue creating a Hindu-Sikh divide evident in the "conflicting assertions about the status of Punjabi as a dialect or a distinct language and also about what should be its script" (Kumar, 2005: 114). Akali leaders such as Master Tara Singh raised emotive questions such as "the Hindus got Hindustan, the Muslims got Pakistan; what did the Sikhs get" (As quoted in Kumar, 2005: 114). In the process, SAD came to be identified as a party of the Sikhs rather than a regional party, a transformation that had long-term repercussions for SAD and contributed to the estrangement of the state's Hindu population.

1.1.4.   Reorganization of Punjab

In 1966, post-partition Indian Punjab was further trifurcated under the Punjab Reorganization Bill. The new state of Haryana comprising of 35.8% of the territory and 37.37% of the population was created from the southern Hindi speaking districts while the northern hilly districts were merged with Himachal Pradesh that received 23% of the territory and 7% of the population (Kumar, 2005). Sikhs now became a majority in what remained of Punjab comprising 63.7% of the population while Hindus formed a 35% minority lending hope to SAD of an electoral victory (Wallace, 1985).

1.1.5.   The Khalistan Movement

The manner in which Punjab was reorganized left many issues unresolved that had the unfortunate consequence of imbibing a sense of injustice among the Sikhs in

Punjab. The state was one of the last to be reorganized along linguistic lines after 'fast unto death' campaigns by prominent Akali leaders. Chandigarh became a union territory and a shared capital between Haryana and Punjab instead of being transferred to Punjab. Neighbouring states of Haryana and Rajasthan were given a favourable treatment in water agreements. The centre retained a large degree of control over agricultural policy and industry licensing- factors perceived as discrimination against the state (Van Dyke, 2009). These grievances were articulated in the Anandpur Sahib Resolution of 1973 whereby the SAD asked for transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab, an increased quota for Sikhs in the armed forces and decentralized federalism allowing more autonomy to state governments among other demands (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012). These grievances were molded in the rhetoric of identity politics by leaders such as Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale who began advocating for a separate Sikh state. While SAD always had an uneasy relationship with Bhindranwale, they could not "disown him completely because he appeared to be working for the *panth* (Sikh community)" (Van Dyke, 2009: 985). SAD's sponsorship to Bhindranwale and the resulting communal riots in Punjab throughout the 1980s during the peak of the Khalistan movement resulted in further alienation of the Hindu community. SAD was branded as a religious party of the Sikhs, further adding to the challenges of gaining an electoral victory as a single party.

1.2. Narrow Social Support Base and the Need for an Ally

In the 1960s, the structure and composition of SAD underwent a significant transformation owing to the rise of the Jat-Sikh peasantry in Punjab's politics. SAD essentially became a party of the Jat-Sikhs. During the fifteen years of the Punjabi Suba Movement, SAD had mobilized a large section of rural Sikh population to participate in various agitations and *morchas* resulting in a process of democratic deepening. Additionally, gains from the Green Revolution led to the economic empowerment of the Jat-Sikh peasantry that came to have a vested interest in politics and representation. Whereas before 1966, SAD's leadership had come from the upper caste middle class urban segments of society, since the Punjabi Suba Movement, Sikh and Akali politics came to be dominated by Jat Sikhs (Kumar, 2005). As such, SAD's appeal among other sections of society spontaneously declined as its popularity among the rural peasantry

increased. The following dynamics contributed to the narrowing of SAD's support base and the consequent need for seeking coalition partners.

1.2.1.   Caste Divides

Caste politics in Punjab has a strong association with changes that the Punjabi society went through during Green Revolution. Nowhere else in India was the Green Revolution as successful as in Punjab. Within a few years of its introduction, Punjab gained the title of 'the granary of India' and 'the bread basket of the country' as wheat and rice productions soared. Of all the states, Punjab's agricultural growth rate was the highest from the 1960s to the middle of 1980s (Jodhka, 2006). Along with the technical and institutional innovations of Green Revolution, credit was also given to the enterprising and hardworking farmers of Punjab who belonged to the agriculturalist caste of Jats- "Their love for land and the high value they attached to the practice of self-cultivation (*'khudkasht')* played an important role in making the Green Revolution a success story in the region, much before it spread to other parts of India" (Jodhka, 2006). The economic success of the farming class rapidly brought the Jat-Sikhs to the center stage of politics in Punjab.

As mentioned above, Jat Sikhs have formed the primary social support base of SAD. However, the Sikh population in Punjab consists of many caste groups besides the Jat-Sikhs who account for only one-third of the total Sikh population. The Scheduled Caste *Mazhabi* Sikhs constitute another 20 per cent of the Sikh population and have traditionally opposed the Jat-Sikhs who are seen as elite landlords by this group. Other groups include the merchant castes such as Khattris, Aroras, Suds and other non-Jat groups such as *Ramghariyas* (Wallace, 1985). Since the SAD has evolved as a party of the Jat-Sikhs representing rural agricultural interests, the non-Jat sections of Sikh population have voted for parties other than SAD such as the Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and the Communist Party of India. SAD is therefore limited in its appeal to a wide cross-section of Punjabi society.

1.2.2.   Rural-Urban Divide

SAD has had a strong following among the rural farming sections of Punjabi society. Its reach has been limited in the urban areas which have traditionally voted for

the Congress. Also, the Sikhs form a majority in the rural areas and the Hindus in urban areas. As Paul Wallace (1985: 367) has stated: "There is a curious demographic feature of Punjab which results not only in strong Sikh rural majorities, but in almost equally strong Hindu urban majorities." While the SAD has been successful in capturing the upper layers of the wealthy Jat-Sikh peasantry in rural areas, in urban areas, it derives little support from the upper layers of the Hindu and Sikh mercantile groups or the lower layers of craftsmen and wage-earners (Corsi, 2006). Majority rural Jat-Sikh votes for SAD are therefore balanced or even undermined by majority urban non-Jat Sikh votes for other parties such as the Congress.

1.2.3. *Political Competition*

Punjabi society is also divided along political orientations. A significant segment of Sikhs, including Jat-Sikhs have traditionally been voting for the Congress which has a wider social support base than SAD- "the cross-communal base of Congress was evidenced in the fact that Congress succeeded in getting elected more Sikh candidates than the Akali Dal in the first general assembly elections after the reorganisation of Punjab" (Kumar, 2004: 1518). Furthermore, between 1967 and 1992, the Jat Sikhs averaged 37.47 per cent among the Congress MLAs elected (Kumar, 2004). A small minority of Sikhs also supports the Communist Party of India. Even as a party of the Jat-Sikhs, SAD has been unable to avoid Jat-Sikh votes going to other parties due to ideological and political competition that transcends religious and caste divisions.

1.2.4. *Factions within SAD*

From time to time, SAD has suffered from factionalism and dissent within the party which compounds its problem of gaining electoral majority as a single party. In 1967 when SAD-Jan Sangh-CPI government was in power in the state, 19 MLAs led by Harcharan Singh Hudiara and Lachhman Singh Gill rebelled against the SAD and announced the formation of a separate Akali Dal reducing the joint front led by Gurnam Singh to a minority (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012). In the wake of secessionist demands in the 1980s, the SAD was divided along a spectrum of positions- moderates led by Prakash Singh Badal and hard-liners led by Talwandi and Tohra (Chima, 2002). Each faction tried to use the other for its own political advantage which resulted in an

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extremely factionalized Akali leadership. During the 1999 parliamentary elections, candidates from other Akali Dal (AD) factions such as AD (Amritsar), AD (Panthic) and AD (Democratic) joined hands with the Sarb Hind Shiromani Akali Dal (SHSAD) led by Tohra to compete against SAD-BJP and the Congress. While this coalition of Akali factions only registered victory in one constituency, it was successful in siphoning Sikh votes that led to AD (Badal) losses in at least three other constituencies (Chima, 2002). Internal dissent and factionalism has therefore been a curse of Akali politics, severely compromising its chances of an electoral victory.

1.2.5.   Failure of SAD coalitions with other parties

SAD was drawn to BJP as a potential coalition partner due to a failure of coalitions with other parties in Punjab. Before the April 1996 parliamentary elections, SAD attempted to join hands with Kanshi Ram's Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). Punjab has the highest population of SCs in India. SCs formed as high as 28.31 per cent of the state's population in 1997 (Verma, 1999). It was believed that a partnership between SAD which had a following among rural Jat-Sikhs and the BSP with its SC electoral base would be beneficial for both parties. However, the SC section of the Punjabi population that mainly comprised of masons, construction workers, landless peasants or agricultural labourers held deep resentment against the wealthy Jat-sikh peasants (Verma, 1999). This partnership therefore did not go a long way and SAD was compelled to look for a new ally (Wallace, 1997).

1.2.6.   Identity Politics runs out of currency

The 1997 elections marked a divergence from the communal stance that Akalis have traditionally maintained (such as through Punjab's reorganization, ASR and support for the Khalistan movement). Recognizing that a large majority of the population was no longer interested in autonomy or secession, SAD was compelled to abandon its *panthic* (religious) politics and embark on a platform of peace and harmony with an emphasis on economic and developmental issues. In order to best demonstrate its commitment to communal peace and harmony, BJP was perhaps the best coalition candidate that the Akalis could seek.

All these factors have led to the identification of SAD with a narrow social base. It was already identified as a party of Sikhs but owing to a change in its leadership and demographic shifts brought about the Green Revolution, it essentially became a party of agriculturalists or Jat-Sikhs who resided in rural Punjab. Political competition from the main opposition party, the Congress as well as other parties such as BSP has led to an even smaller share loyal to SAD. To compound things further, the various rifts and factions within SAD have only served to make it weaker. By the 1997 elections, it was clear that the SAD needed something other than its slogan of 'the *panth* is in danger' to win votes. The realization that SAD will always find it difficult to come to power on its own led the party to reach out to the roughly 40 per cent Hindu minority in the form of an electoral coalition with the BJP which has a support base among urban upper caste Hindus (Heath, 1999).

2.   BJP Reaches Out to Punjab

In line with its latest political strategy, the BJP has been expanding to states other than the Hindi-heartland. Recognizing that it needed regional support to overthrow the hegemony of Congress at the centre, BJP began a process of forming coalitions with state governments to establish its support base in the periphery states. This section discusses the circumstances under which BJP was compelled to seek regional allies such as the SAD in Punjab.

2.1. 'Sikhism is a Hindu Sect'

"While claiming full respect for the political and civil rights of all citizens, the BJP has, in its political practice throughout the years, demonstrated that its version of Hindu nationalism often clashes with generally acknowledged features of Indian democracy, especially minority rights" (Berglund, 2004: 1064).

Given BJP's stance on minority issues, it is ironic that the Hindu nationalist party forged a partnership with the SAD, a party representing the Sikh minority in India. For a party that has so strongly spoken against 'pampering of minorities' and has so vociferously opposed the special provisions made to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370, to join hands with SAD which only a few years ago had supported secessionism, certainly raises a question mark. How is the orientation of Sikhs explained in BJP's *Hindutva* discourse of India as a land of Hindus?

According to Gurharpal Singh (1997: 274), "for the BJP and its sister organisations, Sikhism is essentially a militant Hindu sect, a 'martial face' of Hinduism." At the height of the troubles in 1984, a BJP resolution declared 'The Sikh *Panth* was born to protect Hinduism and the venerable Gurus sacrificed themselves and their dear children to protect Hindu honour. The Sikh contribution to the strength and prosperity of India is magnificent, and the nation is truly grateful' (As quoted in Singh, 1997: 274). Thus, as opposed to Islam and Christianity which are inherently 'foreign' to India,

Sikhism has scope of belonging, albeit as a 'Hindu sect'. According to BJP's logic, the birthplace of Sikhism has been within the India and as such it is very much a part of the Hindu nation. Thus, as far as the nationalistic ideology of BJP goes, Sikhs are a 'preferable minority'. The ideological hurdle of forming an alliance with SAD is therefore easily overcome.

2.2. New Era of Coalition Politics

BJP's ascendance in Indian politics has run parallel to the demise of Congress' hegemony. The 1989 parliamentary elections brought true multi-party competition to surface and ushered an era of coalition politics at the centre. Compared to only one coalition government before 1989, 6 out of 7 governments at the centre since 1989 have been coalition governments composed of various national and state parties. Most of these parties have developed innovative ways of expanding their bases, largely through coalition arrangements with other national and state parties (Sridharan, 2003).

With regards to the BJP, although it emerged as a strong challenge to Congress in the mid 1990s, it was unable to secure a majority at the centre. It therefore embraced coalition politics based on a 'seat adjustment' process with its allies, whereby the two parties agree not to contest certain seats against each other. BJP had experimented with coalition politics during the 1989 parliamentary elections when it negotiated with the Janata Dal on seat adjustments and the two parties together won 144 seats with BJP winning 55 of its 86 seats (Shridharan, 2003). By extending the same practise to state assembly elections of February 1990, BJP formed a government on its own in Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh and in coalition in Rajasthan and Gujarat (Shridharan, 2003). SAD-BJP alliance in Punjab was a further logical expansion of BJP's coalition practice in other states.

2.3. Increasing Importance of Regional Parties

As the last two decades have shown, the role of regional parties in forming coalitions at the centre with national parties has become increasingly important. In the

1998 and 1999 parliamentary elections, the BJP won 180 and 182 seats alone with its alliance partners adding another 87 and 117 seats respectively (Chima, 2002). Paul Wallace has described this new role of the regional political parties as "the tail that wags the elephant" instead of vice versa (Wallace, 1999).

Akali Dal has been an important partner in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition governments at the center since 1998 (Table 1).

TABLE 1: Lok Sabha (Lower House) Election Seats won by SAD and BJP in Punjab

Lok Sabha Election Year	Seats won by SAD (won/contested)	Seats won by BJP (won/contested)
1998	8/8	3/3
1999	2/9	1/3
2004	8/10	3/3
2009	4/10	1/4

SOURCE: Election Commission of India

On the other hand, BJP has done considerably well in Punjab in an alliance with SAD (see Table 2). Furthermore, in the April 1996 parliamentary polls, BJP while contesting alone failed to win a single seat out of the six that it contested in Punjab, its poll percentage being 6.46 per cent. In contrast, in alliance with SAD in the February 1998 parliamentary elections, "BJP's poll percentage increased to 10.95 per cent only in three Lok Sabha seats which the party successfully contested" (Verma, 1999). It is thus understandable that BJP has been laying an increasing emphasis on cultivating such regional pacts which it believes will construct its road to national power.

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TABLE 2: Punjab State Assembly Election Seats won by SAD and BJP in coalition

Punjab State Assembly Election Year	Seats won by BJP (won/contested)	Seats won by SAD (won/contested)	Incumbent Party/Parties
1997	18/22	75/92	SAD-BJP
2002	3/23	41/92	INC-CPI
2007	19/23	48/93	SAD-BJP
2012	12/23	56/94	SAD-BJP

SOURCE: Election Commission of India

2.4. BJP compelled to become moderate

In the 1991 parliamentary elections, BJP had decided to contest on its own without any 'seat adjustments,' which eventually led to the party being unable to gain a majority (Shridharan, 2003). There can be two possible reasons for BJP making this bold move. The first relates to events surrounding the Babri-Masjid/Ayodhya Mandir controversy which the BJP conveniently used to launch a strategic mass movement to 'liberate' the birthplace of Lord Ram, adopting a stark communal platform in the process. Secondly, the party hoped to capitalize on the upper caste backlash against the previous government's implementation of the Mandal Commission Report that would guarantee a 27 per cent reservation to SCs and Scheduled Tribes (STs) as well as to Other Backward Classes (OBCs) (Shridharan, 2003).

BJP's communal strategy made it the second largest party in the Lok Sabha where it won 120 of 543 seats and its vote share increased to 20 percent (Shridharan, 2003). However, by the 1996 elections, BJP was "trying to reconcile its hard Hindutva line with the exigencies of coalition politics, simply because it had failed to win any ally in the aftermath of 1996 general election" (Chandhoke & Priyadarshi, 2006: 816). Even though BJP emerged as the largest party in Parliament, it failed to win a vote of confidence and had to renege power to the United Front.

By the 1998 Lok Sabha elections, recognizing the limits of its polarized communal ideology, BJP embarked on a new strategy designed to muster a majority

coalition under its leadership. If it was to become a powerful force in national politics, it had to expand geographically as well as ideologically reaching out to the regional parties, to OBCs, SCs, STs and to poorer sections of society instead of remaining confined to upper caste Hindus. BJP had to eschew its fundamentalist stance which would not have been acceptable to its coalition partners. It therefore dropped its Hindutva platform from the National Agenda for Governance (Shridharan, 2003). It is this moderating influence that encouraged BJP to seek regional allies such as SAD in order to win votes in state as well as national elections.

The fact that the Akali Dal sought BJP as an ally, a political party known for its Hindutva agenda, points towards the strategic compulsion faced by the Akali Dal where defeating the Congress gained precedence above all else. Political power in post-1966 Punjab had alternated between SAD and the Congress. Akalis found in BJP a promising ally capable of challenging the hegemony of Congress rule by virtue of its status as a national party and its ascending power at the center. Similarly, Congress forms the largest opposition party to BJP at the center. BJP hoped that coalition arrangements with regional parties such as SAD in Punjab will bring it closer to forming a majority government in New Delhi.

The two parties also converge in their mutually compatible strategies for expansion. SAD in Punjab found a coalition partner capable of attracting upper caste Hindu votes which have traditionally been outside of the Akali purview. BJP was gaining popularity among urban Hindu voters in Punjab who had been voting for the Congress. SAD being a rural regional party had considerable following among the landed peasantry but lacked an electoral base in the cities which could be provided by the BJP. Similarly, BJP's parliamentary candidates have met with considerable success in Punjab receiving votes not only from its Hindu population but also from Jat-Sikh peasants in rural areas who, for instance, voted in BJP's favour in the 1998 parliamentary polls due to its alliance with SAD (Verma, 1999). There was a general feeling that "whereas the Akali Dal represented the Sikhs, the BJP represented the Hindus and that they together would ensure peace, unity and prosperity in Punjab" (Verma, 1999: 3519). SAD-BJP coalition seemed perfectly complementary considering the Hindu-Sikh polarized political dynamics in Punjab.

Even the differences in the ideologies of the two parties may work for their mutual advantage. By BJP's labelling of Sikhism as just another form of Hinduism, the Sikh community is saved from the hostile treatment that BJP extends to other religious minorities in India. On the other hand, aligning with the BJP may actually provide SAD with the best hope of maintaining a distinct Sikh identity. According to Gurharpal Singh (1997: 275), SAD explains the ideological baggage of the BJP in the language of the 'older brother'- "Whereas the SAD's alliance with the BJP seems to pose the greatest threat to a distinct Sikh identity since the late 19th century with its potential for assimilation into Hinduism, political realists within the SAD seem to have calculated that their mutual co-operation provides the maximum scope for preserving Sikh identity and, indeed, advancing the agenda for political autonomy." By cooperating with the BJP, SAD has created for itself a safe haven where it can continue to represent Sikhs without an outright threat from the Hindu nationalist party.

The two parties have also found common ground on a platform of 'religiosity'. In emotional rhetoric, the two parties agree that Punjab is a holy land of gurus and shrines and as such only religious parties have a right to govern the state. On several occasions since the formation of the alliance, Badal has "promised to the people of Punjab both 'Ramrajya' and governance on the line of the Sikh king Ranjit Singh rolled into one" (Chandoke & Priyadarshi, 2006, 816). In an attempt to complement its coalition partner and in order to appeal to Punjab's Hindu population, SAD has declared that the party will work for the' Panth, Punjab, Punjabi and Punjabiyat ', the last term intended to communicate a message of inclusion (Chandhoke & Priyadarshi, 2006: 817).

A cursory glance at the SAD-BJP coalition politics may seem ironic at first but as the above discussion has illuminated, the two parties have several practical incentives to forge an alliance that contributes to the political health of both parties. The next section reviews SAD-BJP electoral politics in action.

3. SAD-BJP Electoral Politics

As discussed earlier, SAD rose to political prominence in reorganized Punjab and became the primary competitor to the INC in electoral politics. However, even after the reorganization of Punjab, SAD found it difficult to form a majority government on its own given its narrow support base which was largely concentrated in the Jat-Sikh peasantry. Hence, coalition politics was introduced to Punjab as early as 1967 when Akali Dal succeeded in forming a coalition government with the earlier reincarnation of the BJP-Jan Sangh and the Communist Party under the Chief Minister-ship of Sardar Gurnam Singh (Kumar, 2005).

The coalition government was successful in implementing some of the Akali demands such as the establishment of the three language policy in 1969 that gave Punjabi the status of first compulsory language and medium of instruction in all government schools (Kumar, 2004). However, the government soon fell owing to internal dissention and the state was placed under President's Rule necessitating a mid-term poll won by the Congress (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012). In 1977, after emerging as a strong opposition party against Congress' Emergency Rule, Prakash Singh Badal formed a coalition government with the Janata Party and CPM. Together the alliance won 91 seats against 17 of the Congress (Shiromani Akali Dal, 2012).

The SAD-BJP association began in 1993 when moderate Akalis encouraged Sikh voters in Delhi to vote for the BJP in the Delhi Assembly elections. Upon winning in Delhi, the new BJP government reciprocated Akali support by declaring Punjabi as a second language and launching cases against the anti-Sikh rioters (mainly Congressmen) of 1984, thus consolidating friendship between the two parties (Singh, 1997).

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3.1. 1997 Assembly Elections

In 1997 assembly elections, the Akali Dal entered into a formal alliance with the BJP in order to gain support from the Hindu and urban segments of the state, despite securing a majority on its own (Wallace, 1997). The SAD-BJP alliance won 93 of the 117 seats (Akalis 75, BJP 18) securing the highest ever tally of seats in the state legislature (Wallace, 1997). BJP won twice as many seats as its earlier avatar Jan Sangh in 1967 making it a promising electoral ally to the Akalis (Verma, 1999). Compared to a low voter turnout of 22 % in the 1992 elections due to a boycott from all Akali factions, the 1997 elections saw an impressive 68.7% turnout (Jodhka, 2005).

The road to achieving a successful coalition, however, was filled with hurdles. Reaching consensus required negotiation on a number of issues. SAD's election manifesto, while emphasizing Hindu-Sikh peace, also reasserted ASR demands. BJP's manifesto on the other hand, remained opposed to the ASR demands but instead proposed to implement the Sarkaria Commission's recommendations of " increasing state powers and ending the misuse of Article 356 which had perpetuated the 'Congress Raj'" (Singh, 1997). In an effort to smooth away differences, BJP leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee "insisted that this main policy disagreement between the two parties was not a major stumbling block; the AD(B) had, after all, committed itself to guaranteeing peace, national integrity and communal harmony" (Singh, 1997). The coalition was thus able to overcome any outright conflict as a result of pacifying efforts of the leaders of both parties.

Another point of interest regarding the 1997 assembly elections was that for the first time since the last few decades, the ethno-linguistic rhetoric of identity politics prevalent in Punjabi politics was replaced by economic-political issues and Hindu-Sikh harmony. The first theme of the new SAD-BJP combine revolved around the issue of corruption of the previous Congress government. In an attempt to curb violence and militancy prevalent in Punjab until the mid-1990s, the Congress government in power since 1992 elections spent a large portion of the budget on security apparatus with no accountability. Hence, 'Freedom from corruption' became the resounding slogan of the alliance on the basis of which it sought to mobilize the Punjabi public. SAD-BJP

promised to "set up a Lokpal, which would bring the chief minister under its purview, and which would deliver the state from corruption" (Chandhoke & Priyadarshi, 2006: 816).

The SAD-BJP alliance continued and further consolidated in the 1998 parliamentary elections. The SAD-BJP combine won all the eleven parliamentary seats that it contested in Punjab (Verma, 1999). Their partnership in this election actually went beyond mere electoral strategy. Diverging from the identity politics of yester years, the Akali Dal tried to project a more compliant image acceptable to its senior partner in national politics promising 'cooperative federalism' over 'confrontational regionalism' (Jodhka, 2005). The 1998 Manifesto of the Akali Dal released before the parliamentary elections underlined:

> "The Akali-BJP government has opened a new chapter in centre- state relations, ushering in the age of cooperative federalism in the country. The era of confrontations has been effectively ended and replaced with forward-looking thrust on working together for the over-all good of the state and the nations" (As quoted in Jodhka, 2005: 227).

The SAD-BJP coalition was further consolidated in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections where the two parties entered the election fray jointly. Akali leader Prakash Singh Badal eschewed local issues and focused instead on India's military victory in Kargil under Vajpayee and the latter's authentic credentials as the "Swadeshi" (from one's country) as opposed to Sonia Gandhi as the "Videshi" (foreigner) as the Prime Minister. In a speech in Dhudike village, the birth place of Lala Lajpat Rai, Badal declared-"Electing a videshi would amount to negating the sacrifices made by the great martyrs, Singh, Raj Guru, Sukhdev, and Lala Lajpat Rai." Hence, SAD "equally matched the nationalist streak of its ruling coalition partner" (Verma, 1999: 3527).

3.2. 2002 Assembly Elections

In the 2002 Assembly elections, Congress returned to power in Punjab. The performance of the first SAD-BJP coalition in government was not impressive as the combine failed to deliver on the populist promises it made in 1997 and was threatened by internal squabbling between the two parties (Verma, 1999). Akali hardliners opposed BJP's stance on the Sikh-majority district of Udham Singh Nagar being merged with

Uttaranchal since Sikh land ownership would have been adversely affected by the lower land ceiling in the newly created state of Uttaranchal. They also took issue with BJP's Hindutva agenda and objected to the inclusion of 'Saraswati Vandana' (Hindu prayer) and 'Vande Matram' in educational institutions (Verma, 1999: 3524). Certain factions within the SAD reverted to religious agenda and raised the slogan of *panthic* unity.

It was due to these failures that Congress and its allies were the winning coalition in 2002 elections –

> "The BJP disillusioned the Hindu voters who perceived that it played a second fiddle to Akalis. Some BJP functionaries in the state attributed the party's defeat to factors such as Akali Dal's inability to address the urban concerns of BJP vote bank, internal quibbling within the BJP, lack of coordination between coalition partners and inadequate media management" (Verma, 2002: 2283).

The 2002 assembly elections saw a sharp polarization of votes between the Congress and SAD alone as their allies were not as successful in winning seats (Verma, 2002). CPI, Congress' ally won only one out of the 11 seats it contested whereas BJP contested 23 seats but only won three. Hence, the assumption that the SAD-BJP combine would keep the Congress (I) away from power proved untenable (Verma, 2002).

3.3. 2007 Assembly Elections

By the 2007 state elections, the SAD was trying to penetrate deeper into Punjab's urban and Hindu segments. In order to attack the traditional Congress support base, SAD encouraged Hindu leadership within the SAD by giving tickets to seven Hindu candidates (Singh, 2007). SAD's efforts seemed to be fruitful as the SAD-BJP coalition won 68 seats out of a 117. SAD won 48 seats in 2007 compared to 41 in the 2002 state elections while BJP gained an all-time high of 19 seats compared to a mere three seats in 2002. 2007 elections therefore saw an increase in BJP's vote share giving the SAD-BJP a chance against the failures of the previous Congress led government.

3.4. 2012 Assembly Elections

Since the reorganization of Punjab in 1966, voters have not allowed the same party or coalition to return to power for a consecutive term. However, the 2012 Assembly elections marked the first instance of the same party/coalition coming to power for a second consecutive term. SAD-BJP registered a second victory by winning 68 seats together against Congress' 46. SAD won 56 of the 94 seats it contested while the BJP won 12 out of 23 contested. Compared to the 2007 elections, SAD's vote share increased while that of BJP decreased (Table 2).

Consolidating its efforts from the 1997 and 2002 elections, SAD's election manifesto steered clear of any controversial communal issues and focussed instead on development and Hindu-Sikh unity. Notably, 9 of the 12 Hindus, who for the first time found a place in SAD's candidates list, won their elections (Sahgal, 2012). Meanwhile, prior to the Assembly elections, BJP emphasized the development achievements of the SAD-BJP coalition in building six-lane highways, improving bus service and ambulance facilities as well as improving educational opportunities to girls by offering free education up to the 12th grade in government schools (Sharma, 2012). SAD-BJP partnership was certainly proving durable as the coalition created history by forming a government again in 2012.

4. SAD-BJP Coalition and Economic Development in Punjab

Punjab has had a remarkable record of growth compared to most other Indian states. The State had the highest per capita income in the country up to 2003-04. Other development indicators in Punjab have also been quite impressive. The poverty ratio in the State has always been far lower than the all India figures of population below the poverty line- " In 1973-74 when the population below the poverty line (BPL) in India was 54.93 percent, it was only 28.08 percent in Punjab; in 1999-2000 the figures for the country and Punjab were 26.10 and 6.16 percent respectively and in 2004-05 the same was 21.80 at the All-India level and Punjab accounted for only 5.20 percent of the BPL population" (Sawhney, 2012: 52). However, since the 1990s, there has been a gradual deceleration in Punjab's economy (See Table 3).

TABLE 3: Average Annual compound Growth Rate of Gross State/National Income

Time Period	Punjab				India			
	P	S	T	O	P	S	T	O
1960-61 to 1965-66	2.4	6.0	4.5	3.6	-0.9	6.9	5.6	2.7
1965-66 to 1968-69	9.9	6.7	6.8	8.4	4.5	2.9	3.9	4.0
1970-71 to 1975-76	2.86	5.87	5.95	4.21	0.5	3.9	4.5	2.5
1974-75 to 1978-79	5.74	8.70	7.93	6.87	3.62	6.39	6.49	5.14
1980-81 to 1984-85	5.37	5.04	5.14	5.23	5.63	6.05	5.42	5.66
1985-86 to 1989-90	5.24	8.65	5.22	5.98	3.58	6.49	7.41	5.79
1992-93 to 1996-97	3.08	7.10	5.78	4.81	3.85	8.28	7.87	6.76
1997-98 to 2001-02 (Prov.)	1.84	6.20	5.38	4.08	2.21	4.52	7.77	5.34

SOURCE: Adapted from Human Development Report, 2004, Planning Commission of India.

Note: P- Primary Sector; S- Secondary Sector; T- Tertiary Sector; O- Overall growth rate

There are many reasons that can explain Punjab's sluggish growth rate. The state was engulfed in violence and political unrest throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s. Economic processes, in these circumstances could not proceed normally and there was massive capital flight. Successive governments since the 1990s have been following populist policies that lead to fiscal profligacy. Agriculture, which has been the mainstay of the Punjab economy, is no longer as profitable. Soil fertility and water table levels have suffered due to decades of intensive agriculture during the Green Revolution phase leading to lower productivity levels. The pace of industrial development has been slow in Punjab. Moreover, the government has done little to meet the developmental needs of the state over the last two decades. The question to be explored here is how much of this change can be attributed to policy and governance under SAD-BJP rule? What effect does a coalition between these two parties have on the growth and development of Punjab?

One of the most controversial promises made by the SAD-BJP government in 1997 was the provision of free canal water for irrigation and free power for operating tube wells to the farmers. The farmer's lobby in Punjab has always been active in seeking agricultural subsidies from the government given their clout in the SAD. However, now that SAD was in coalition with the BJP, the issue of free water and power became a bone of contention between the two partners. BJP accused the SAD of favouring its traditional vote bank and diverting resources from the industrial sector and urban areas, alienating the non-agricultural Hindu population in the process (Verma, 1999). Irked by the inflated electricity bills, the general perception among urban dwellers was that "industry, trade and commerce in the cities are being used by the government for cross-subsidisation of the farm sector" (Verma, 1999: 3521). BJP also expressed strong resentment against the continuation of octroi and a hike in sales tax.

Moreover, promising free water and power to the farmers added to the state's indebtedness. Free distribution of vital resources only added to fiscal deficit prevalent in the state since the mid-1990s. At the end of March 1996, Punjab's debt of special outstanding loans to the centre was nearly 60,000 million Rupees which made the fiscal debt rate nearly 30% (Singh, 1997). Against this high rate of indebtedness, instead of introducing revenue increasing policies, the government was emptying the state exchequers, which the BJP was clearly unhappy about.

One of the other promises of the government had been to improve procurement processes and marketing facilities to farmers. During the paddy procurement season in 2000, farmers were forced to sell their crops at a much lower rate than what is set as the minimum support price by the central government due to claims by procurement agents that the paddy was of inferior quality (Jodhka, 2006). There was no space for storage of grains brought to the *mandis* (marketing centres) and gunny bags full of rice could be seen lying around on roads, in schools or in any empty space. Many indebted small and marginal farmers who were unable to sell their crops resorted to extreme steps of committing suicide (Jodhka, 2006).

The government had also promised to construct houses for the SC and those living below poverty line in every village which went down as another failed scheme. Rs. 60 crores was set aside in the 1997-98 budget for the construction of 12,000 houses in all the 17 districts of the state. However, due to budgetary constraints, the target was reduced to 8,800 houses, out of which by 1999, only 4,124 houses were allotted (Verma, 1999). Subsequently the government withdrew the scheme altogether. On this the CPI MLA "accused the Punjab government of withdrawing the pro- scheduled caste policies and schemes one by one" (Verma, 1999: 3521).

By subsidizing water and power, abolishing octroi and keeping sales taxes low, the SAD-BJP government was openly following populist policies promising everything to everyone. According to Sawhney, (2012: 58) "Populism undermines the capacity of the government to raise resources and improve the productivity of revenue and ultimately, these concessions result in fewer resources left for social development programs and a decline in investment on health, education and other social services." This strategy has only served to harm the long term economic well-being of the people in Punjab.

In 2010, a major crack developed between the two parties when BJP accused SAD of strengthening its own electoral base at the cost of its alliance partner. BJP alleged that "Badal took a unilateral decision to divert Rs 733 crores meant for urban infrastructure development to 35 municipal bodies that form BJP's vote bank" (Garewal, 2010). According to the BJP, the revenue was generated by imposing taxes in urban areas with a BJP vote bank, but the amount was instead being used to allure the vote bank of SAD (Garewal, 2010). These disagreements over economic policy and blatant

use of state resources to satisfy party vote banks demonstrate the vulnerability of the alliance that have the potential of severely threatening the durability of the coalition in future.

On the whole, Punjab was in a state of economic crisis during the SAD-BJP's term in office. Revenue expenditure due to subsidies to farmers far exceeded revenue collection as taxes were kept low. Lofty development schemes to help the weaker sections of the population met an unfortunate fate and as mentioned above, were even withdrawn. Lack of coordination between the two parties and their internal struggles to allocate concessions to their own electorates led to emptying of state coffers. Interestingly enough, "some Akali ministers blamed the traders for economic crisis as they did not pay the sales tax whereas the BJP leaders attributed it mainly to free power and water to the farmers" (Verma, 1999: 3521).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to explore the relationship between SAD and BJP in forming electoral coalitions in the state of Punjab. A common opposition against the Congress and a mutual desire to create a wider electoral base in order to come to power has forced the two ideologically opposed parties to form a three times winning coalition. SAD-BJP combine also became the first coalition to form a government twice in succession in Punjab. However, some have described the coalition as a 'bad marriage' owing to the periodic rifts and tensions that have erupted between the two parties. The paper posed the question if this coalition has been good for economic development in Punjab. The literature reviewed for the purpose of this paper points to a 'no'. The government has been following populist policies maintaining farmers' subsidies and keeping taxes low which has only led to an increasing fiscal deficit. Moreover, the government does not have an impressive record in delivering on developmental schemes meant to support weaker sections of Punjabi society. Despite these shortcomings, the coalition seems to have done well, politically in steering the Congress away from office.

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ESSAY 2

ROOTS OF INSURGENCY IN INDIAN JAMMU AND KASHMIR- A REVIEW

Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has been the bone of contention between India and Pakistan since the establishment of the two independent states in 1947. The two countries have gone to war three times over Kashmir- in 1947, 1965 and 1999- highlighting the importance of the issue in their bilateral relations. The world has subsequently come to know the Kashmir dispute as a territorial conflict between India and Pakistan, both claiming the beautiful landscape popularly described by the Mughal ruler Akbar as 'heaven on earth'. India and Pakistan each claim J&K to be an indispensable unit of their respective unions. Pakistan calls J&K its *shah rag* (jugular vein) while India describes it as its *atoot ang* (integral part) (Bose, 2003: 171). From the time of the state's accession to the Indian union in October 1947 to the present, there is little that has not been hotly debated. However, in the larger battle between the now nuclear states of India and Pakistan, the stories of the diverse people of J&K themselves often remained untold. The simmering discontent among people due to forced integration with India and undemocratic rule finally erupted in a mass movement for *azadi* (freedom) in the year 1989.

The aim of this essay is to explain the reasons leading up to the *Azadi* Movement that broke out in Indian J&K in 1989. It will review studies on J&K to locate the causes of the widely supported insurgency. The essay suggests that reasons for azadi can be attributed to two broad and overlapping factors. The first and the most commonly advanced explanation is that the insurgency movement broke out due to oppressive and unjust actions of the Indian state in J&K. Forced integration of J&K into the Indian union, erosion of the autonomous status of the state, rigging of elections, misgovernance and lack of economic development, and political patronage are some of the reasons that hold the Indian state culpable for the present state of affairs.

The second explanation diverts from this "who did what to whom" type of scenario and grants agency to the people of Kashmir themselves. Resurgence of the Kashmiri identity due to a new found awareness resulting from exposure, literacy and

limited development encouraged the mobilization of Kashmiris around the issue of their unique identity, distinct from 'Kashmir as a part of Pakistan or India'. This view addresses factors inherent within the people and history of Kashmir and distinguishes its heterogeneity and a dynamic evolving nature, providing valuable insights into the insurgency movement. Once this realization of a distinct identity was achieved, and due to Indian efforts to suppress Kashmiri nationhood coercively, the insurgency movement was a natural consequence.

The paper begins with a background introducing the ethnic and ideological diversity that characterises the state of J&K. It is followed by a discussion of the *Azadi* Movement when it was in full momentum and goes on to describe some of the main militant groups involved. The paper then discusses the two factors explaining insurgency- actions of the Indian state and characteristics innate to Kashmiris and their history. The paper ends with a brief conclusion describing some of the insights gained from a review of the literature on roots of insurgency in Kashmir.

Background

Geographically, the territory of Indian J&K can be divided into three parts-the Kashmir Valley, Jammu and Ladakh. The Kashmir Valley, consisting of about 5 million Kashmiri-speaking residents, is overwhelmingly Muslim (primarily Sunni with a sizeable Shia minority). The southern region of Jammu has a population of about 4.5 million people scattered over plains and low lying hills. The plains are populated primarily by Hindus and a small minority of Sikhs while Muslims, making up one-third of Jammu's population, form a majority in the three most mountainous of its six districts. Muslims from these Jammu districts belong to ethnic and linguistic groups that are different from the Muslims in the Valley, namely the Gujjars and Bakerwals (herdsmen and pastoralists) who speak Gojri and Pahari instead of Kashmiri (Bose, 2003). The third region of Ladakh is sparsely populated and has two main etho-religious communities. Tibetan Buddhists form a majority in Leh district while Shia Muslims form a majority in Kargil district.

Politically speaking, the people of J&K are divided along varying allegiances to India (pro-India), Pakistan (pro-Pakistan) and an autonomous and independent J&K (pro-independence). Pro-independence finds voice predominantly in the Valley where Kashmiri nationalism has developed to a greater extent than in Jammu or Ladakh. However, the small Hindu minority in the Valley- the Kashmiri pundits- share ethnic traits with the Muslims of the Valley but are strongly opposed to the pro-independence sentiment and prefer integration with India. Political orientations in Jammu are more ambiguous but it can be assumed that the non-Muslim minority in J&K (forming a majority in Jammu) is primarily pro-India while the border Muslim districts are pro-Pakistan. Buddhists in Ladakh are opposed to integration with Pakistan or an independent J&K and prefer alignment with India (Bose, 2003). There are, therefore, no clear geographical demarcations that separate one political ideology from the other. Support for each of the three political orientations can be found in each of the three geographical entities making territorial partition virtually impossible. The following

section discusses the pro-independence movement that took shape primarily in the Valley.

1.   Azadi Movement Erupts

On July 31st 1988, bombs exploded outside Srinagar's central telegraph office and at the Srinagar Club; the militant group Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) assumed responsibility for the attack (Bose, 2003: 95). Over the next few years, Srinagar was engulfed in violent outbreaks, assassinations, kidnappings and mass protests leading to a complete breakdown of law and order and an effective paralysis of the state's administrative and governmental machinery. A small guerilla movement against the Indian state had succeeded in mobilizing a large section of the population in Kashmir Valley to raise their voices against Indian rule. In response, the Government of India stationed close to half a million paramilitary and other troops to control the insurgency in the state. According to official Indian estimates, 40,000 civilians, militants and Indian security personnel died in J&K between 1989 and 2002. The Hurriyat Conference (a coalition of pro-independence and pro-Pakistani groups) claims this figure to be 80,000 (Bose, 2003: 4).

The Azadi movement itself was a dynamic expression of the distinct demands made by J&K's many communities. The movement had aspects of secession (attempt to withdraw the territory of J&K from Indian authority by Kashmiris who consider J&K to be their homeland) as well as irredentism (a movement by Kashmiris to withdraw the J&K territory under India and unite it with Pakistan) as some groups such as JKLF stood for an independent state of J&K while others like Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM) supported unification with Pakistan. There was also a segment of the population, primarily composed of the Hindus in Jammu and the Buddhists in Ladakh, which has traditionally advocated for a complete integration with India. The conflict in J&K is a complex one involving multiple layers of external as well as internal unresolved issues. Sumantra Bose (2003: 63) has aptly described the state's society and politics as having characteristics of a matryoshka doll. The following section will discuss the varying aims and objectives of the militant groups involved to highlight the ideological diversity within the movement.

2.   Militant Groups Involved

2.1. Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF)

JKLF was initially formed as a militant group of young Kashmiris. Their stated objective was to unite Indian and Pakistani Kashmir in order to achieve an independent J&K state restored to its pre-1947 borders. JKLF was largely Muslim but proposed secularity and claimed that an independent and united J&K will be home to all religious communities indigenous to the state. These young militants would cross into Azad Kashmir (a narrow strip of eastern J&K territory under Pakistani administration) where they received training and weapons, some with the support of the Pakistani military. In 1988-1989 the group launched a guerilla revolt against in the Indian government and received unexpected mass support from the people of the Kashmir Valley (Bose, 2003: 3)

2.2. Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM)

HM (Party of Holy Warriors) was formed in 1989 but by 1992-93 emerged as a moderate Islamist guerilla group that challenged JKLF's dominance in the valley (Bose, 2003: 3; Tremblay, 2009: 934). HM is an irredentist group seeking unification of Indian J&K with Pakistan. HM relies on ideological and material support from Jammat-i-Islami, a political party that operates across South Asia (Evans: 2000: 70).

2.3. Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT)

LeT meaning 'the army of the pure' is the militant wing of a Pakistani Punjabi religious organisation, Markaz Dawa-ul-Irshad which is based in Lahore in Pakistani Punjab with economic interests in garments and cement. LeT's membership is basically

comprised of Punjabi militants who are recruited from schools run by the Markaz. Besides seeking 'liberation' of Kashmir from India and its subsequent unification with Pakistan, its objective is also to impose a strict Islamic code in Kashmir. LeT receives funding from backers in Pakistan and is currently the leading militant organisation operating in Kashmir (Evans, 2000:71).

2.4. Harkat-ul-Ansar, also known as Harkat-ul-Mujahadeen (HuA/HuM)

HuA, formed in 1993 is involved in conflicts in Kashmir, Chechnya, Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Linked to the Pakistani religious organisation, the Jamaat-e-Ulema-e-Islam, it derives most of its ideology from the 'Deobandi-Wahhabi faith' and consists of members from Afghanistan, Pakistan and the wider Muslim world, and includes some Kashmiri members (Evans, 2000). It receives most of its funding from donations from the wider Muslim community, particularly from the wealthy radicals in the Middle East (Evans, 2000).

The above description conveys the diversity that the militant groups have come to characterize. They draw membership from Kashmir as well as from other countries and lie on a spectrum from extremist to moderate to secular ideologies. They have varying visions of what Kashmir should or should not be. The point to be noted is that the insurgency crisis in Kashmir is quite fragmented and hence defies an easy solution. The diversity in the militant groups represents the differences in Kashmiri society that have supported them, some more than others. However, before analyzing the movement, it is important to trace its evolution and explore the reasons that led to the prominence of the above mentioned groups.

The following section outlines the various causes that have emerged from research on the conflict as possible triggers that eventually led to a mass movement for independence from Indian rule in Kashmir. As mentioned above, these are divided into two parts giving agency to the Indian state and to the Kashmiris respectively.

3.   Agency to the Indian State: State Imposed Factors

3.1. India Reneges on Plebiscite

At the time of independence, 565 princely states that were under indirect British rule had the option to join either India or Pakistan depending on their territorial proximity to the newly created sovereign countries as well as the religion of their majority population. Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) had unique features not shared by other princely states. It had a Muslim majority population and was ruled by a Hindu ruler- Maharaja Hari Singh. It was also geographically contiguous to both India and Pakistan. By August 15th 1947, J&K had not signed the Instrument of Accession, a legal document designed to enable each of the rulers of the princely states under British suzerainty to join one of the new dominions of India or Pakistan. Hari Singh was entertaining notions of remaining independent, an option which at the time was not considered viable by any of the parties involved.

On August 15th 1947, Hari Singh signed a standstill agreement with India and Pakistan while remaining independent, a status it would retain for the next 73 days. However, political manoeuvring was taking place on all sides. Both Pakistan and India were actively trying to make attempts to convince Kashmir to accede to their respective Dominions by maintaining communication links with Hari Singh (Schofield, 2010). On October 22nd 1947, the law and order situation deteriorated when a group of Pashtun tribesmen from the North-West Frontier of Pakistan invaded Kashmir and began to occupy territory along the western boundary of the state.

On October 24th, Hari Singh made an urgent appeal for help to the Government of India. Under the counsel of Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru agreed to send Indian troops to Kashmir but only under the condition that the Maharaja must first sign the Instrument of Accession in favour of

India. On October 26th, 1947, the state of Jammu and Kashmir acceded to the Dominion of India when Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession which was later accepted by Lord Mountbatten "*subject to the provision that a plebiscite would be held in the state when the law and order situation allowed*" [emphasis added] (Mountbatten quoted in Ferraro, 2010). Prime Minister Nehru welcomed the idea of a plebiscite as he was confident of an Indian victory given the pro-India inclinations of his close friend and immensely popular Kashmiri leader, Mohammad Sheikh Abdullah.

Soon after, on October 27th, Indian troops were airlifted to Srinagar and the first Indo-Pak war ensued. The matter was referred to the UN and a subsequent ceasefire was enforced on January 1, 1949. When the fighting stopped, India was in control of two-thirds of the entire territory of the State of J&K, including the prized Kashmir Valley. Pakistan gained control of Azad Kashmir and three provinces in the north-west which together made up one-third of the State (Rahman, 1996).

The proposed plebiscite that was to determine the 'question of accession in accordance with the wishes of the people' never took place (Hewitt, 1997: 62). In the United Nations Security Council deliberations, India refused to discuss the plebiscite unless all Pakistani forces withdrew from the entire territory of J&K, a condition that was never met. Furthermore, the Indian view was that the accession was complete since the Maharaja had signed the Instrument of Accession and there was no legal requirement in the document which called for a plebiscite.

What caused this shift in India's stance regarding the plebiscite? After all, only a few months before, Nehru had confidently declared that a referendum would take place given the disputed status of the state's accession to India. The answer lies in Nehru's faith in Abdullah's pro-India affiliations. Sheikh Abdullah, leader of the National Conference that formed the emergency government as the Maharaja fled leaving Kashmir in turmoil, was more in sympathy with the secular and socialist ideals of India than the feudal and communal overtones displayed by Pakistan. However, by 1953, Abdullah had started to rethink J&K's relationship with India and publicly supported the third option of independence. Sheikh Abdullah was arrested on charges of treason in August 1953 (Tremblay 1996-1997: 483).

India's failure to conduct the promised plebiscite and the unconstitutional arrest of Kashmir's beloved leader is seen by Kashmiris as the first of many betrayals to come. India reneged on its solemn pledge made to the people of Kashmir and the world and took away the opportunity for the people of J&K to have a hand in the crafting of their own future. This denial is evident in the formation of a political party in 1955 named the Plebiscite Front (PF) demanding the implementation of the impending plebiscite. Furthermore, sacking and imprisonment of those who dared to raise the slogan of a free Kashmir became a routine affair in the decades to come. In the following years, India's political strategy in the state has been that of integration, slowly but steadily abrogating the autonomous status granted to the state through Article 370 of the Constitution.

3.2. Gradual Erosion of Article 370

Due to the unique circumstances surrounding J&K's accession to India, it has had an asymmetric constitutional relationship with the centre on the basis of Article 370, a status not shared by other Indian states. According to the provisions made under Article 370, the Indian parliament's jurisdiction was limited to defense, foreign affairs, currency and communications while the residual powers were vested within the state legislatures. Additionally, J&K was the only Indian state that had its own flag and where the Chief Minister and Governor were called *Wazir-i-Azam* and *Sadar-i-Riyasat* respectively (Behera, 2006: 38). This asymmetric relationship was further consolidated by the Delhi Agreement of 1952 which "abolished hereditary rulership, vested residuary powers in the state, continued special citizenship rights for 'state subjects', permitted the state to fly a separate flag alongside the national flag, and, subject to certain restrictions and limitations, extended to Kashmir provisions of India's constitution regarding fundamental rights, emergency powers of the President and jurisdiction of the Supreme Court" (Behera, 2006: 38).

However, with the passage of time, the autonomous status of J&K was gradually revoked in defense of the integrity of the Indian union. Nationalist forces in J&K have often accused India of disregarding the autonomy contract made in the earlier years and progressively bringing J&K in line with other Indian states. For instance, in 1965, the cultural titles of *Sadar-i-Riyasat* and *Wazir-i-Azam* were changed back to Governor and

Chief Minister respectively. In the year 1967, 'the Jammu and Kashmir Representation of the People's Act was brought into conformity with the central law, enabling the Election Commission to appoint retired judges of the High Courts of other states as members of the Election Tribunal' (Tremblay, 1995: 89). However, the question remains- why has article 370 and the question of J&K's autonomy been so controversial in India-Kashmir relations?

The explanation advanced by Navnita Chadha Behera (2006: 40), is that leadership in Sri Nagar and New Delhi diverged considerably in their understanding of the autonomous status. As per the Indian interpretation, the special status was an expression of sensitivity towards the unique identity of J&K but the state was nevertheless a part of India and Kashmiris were a subset of its diverse population. Conversely, the Kashmiri leadership viewed the autonomy arrangement from the position of a 'co-equal' and thus objected to India's increasing federal integration. Consequently, Abdullah and Nehru came into conflict with each other on various issues ranging from the merger of J&K's forces with the Indian Army to the state's independent constitution. This rift in an understanding of the autonomy issue was sustained and so was the popular feeling that India encroached upon its own promised autonomy to J&K.

According to Sumantra Bose (2003: 60-66), the controversy surrounding Article 370 was to do with the nature of power politics at play during those deciding times. Abdullah's decision to side with India in matters of accession was nothing but a strategic move that would secure his own political position. Once that objective was achieved, Abdullah began to act on his 'subliminal attachment to the idea of a sovereign Kashmir' (Bose, 2003:60). However, by the summer of 1953, a rift appeared in the NC leadership and Abdullah and his loyalists were outnumbered by two Jammu Hindus and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who favoured integration with India. This power struggle had a considerable impact on Srinagar-New Delhi relations and internal politics within J&K for the next four decades.

Abdullah was imprisoned in August 1953 and replaced by a more compliant and pro-integration Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, a 'quality' that was required of all future Chief Ministers of the state. This move is widely regarded as an undemocratic coup conducted under the auspices of the Indian government in New Delhi. From August

1953 onwards, "any defiance of New Delhi's absolute supremacy in the relationship guaranteed not only a swift passage to political oblivion but criminalization as an enemy of the state" (Bose, 2003: 67).

Subsequently, under the Chief Ministership of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, J&K's accession to India was formally ratified, much to the satisfaction of the Indian government. In the next few years, Article 370 was amended several times and many provisions of the Indian constitution were made applicable to J&K including Articles 356 and 357 which allowed for the imposition of the President's Rule (Tremblay, 2009: 931). Under these amendments, fundamental rights of citizens were extended to J&K but under one crucial stipulation. These rights could be suspended at any time under threats to India's 'security' without any judicial review. This important condition had a significant contribution in eventually making J&K a 'draconian police state' (Bose, 2003: 69).

It was as a result of these events- undemocratic imprisonment of Sheikh Abdullah, appointment of New Delhi sponsored Chief Minsters, deliberate integration of the state into the Indian union and a gradual erosion of its special status that the people of J&K felt looted of their dignity and political freedoms. As has been succinctly described by Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay (2009: 931), "the Indian state imposed itself on the Kashmiri "nation" through legal integrationist measures by gradually, but ineluctably, abrogating the legal and political space in which the Kashmiri community had previously come to define itself."

3.3. Intervention and Imposition of the Indian Nation

While discussing ways in which an intervening state attempts to co-opt an ethnic nation, Tremblay (1996-1997: 480) asserts that the state sponsors the proliferation of a 'formal nationalism' by using political and legal means in order to shape its future state and civil society. The intervening state deliberately selects and highlights those historical and symbolic characteristics of the ethnic group that conform most closely to its own nationalistic values. In the case of Kashmir, these aiding mechanisms for the

Indian state have been the concept of *Kashmiriyat* and the 'New Kashmir' manifesto designed by Sheikh Abdullah, outlining a socialist vision for J&K.

Kashmiriyat is a "secular ethnic concept expounded by the 14th-century Muslim ruler Zain-ul-Abdeen that had served to define the cordial relationship between the Valley's Hindu and Muslim communities in the past" (Tremblay, 2009: 927). Sheikh Abdullah effectively capitalized on this concept in the struggle against the feudal rule of the Dogras (the ruling dynasty of Kashmir to which Hari Singh belonged). In the years preceding independence, Indian leaders were already using the concept of *kashmiriyat* and comparing it to the tolerant and secular character of the future Indian state as envisioned by leaders such as Nehru in order to highlight similarities between the two entities. Similarly, the New Kashmir manifesto was made to bear significant similarities with the socialist and democratic ideals of the Indian state in order to encourage Kashmiris to identify with India. The intervening Indian state therefore justified Kashmir's association with India by emphatically celebrating these two concepts so as to make other differences seem irrelevant.

In due time, with the creation of an independent India and the commencement of its nation-building process, J&K was subjected to what Tremblay calls 'official nationalism' which she contrasts with an 'unofficial nationalism' (Tremblay, 1996-1997: 480). In the wake of abrogation of the special status guaranteed by Article 370 and political leadership subject to scrutiny by the Indian government, official nationalism, symbolized, for instance, by celebration of events related to Indian nationhood-Independence Day, Republic Day etc. - became increasingly irrelevant to the majority of Kashmiris and was replaced by a form of popular or unofficial nationalism through which the Kashmiri Muslim population asserted itself such as the 'Friday noon prayers and *dedar* (showing) of the holy relic (a hair from Prophet Mohammed's beard) at the Hazarat Bal Mosque' (Tremblay, 1996-1997: 490).

Evidence of defiance of India's imposed official nationalism is also related by Wahajat Habibullah, an Indian Administrative Services official who served in various districts of Kashmir throughout the 1970s and 80s. Habibullah (2008: 27) recounts personal experiences of a dull celebration of India's Independence Day (with a meagre audience of 15 people) where 'enthusiasm was to be demonstrated but never felt.' By

contrast, August 9 was observed as Black Flag Day in J&K to protest against the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in 1953 and a *hartal* (mass protest) on this day organized in 1970 was so complete that 'not even a hawker was to be seen'(Habibullah, 2008: 28).

Sheikh Abdullah's death in 1982 and the ensuing events provide evidence of India's direct intervention in J&K. Farooq Abdullah, the Sheikh's son who replaced him as Chief Minister began to rally opposition against Indira Gandhi and her Congress party. By 1984, a faction of NC leadership withdrew support from Farooq's government as a result of a rift created by the Congress party. Farooq was replaced by his brother-in-law G.M. Shah who was a 'better friend' of the Congress party in power in New Delhi. However, in 1987, Farooq was brought back in power in the aftermath of the Farooq-Rajiv Gandhi Accord and accompanied by massive rigging of elections (Tremblay, 2009: 935).

3.4.   Institutional Politics Contrained

Post-partition politics in J&K was dominated by a single party- the National Conference. As long as the NC's leadership did not raise the issue of independence, the central government in New Delhi allowed the party immense leeway and turned a blind eye to its corrupt practices and electoral malfeasance (Ganguly, 1996: 82). Opposition political parties, if formed, were simply outlawed or absorbed within the ruling party. For instance, G.N. Sadiq, an NC leader, left the ruling National Conference in 1958 to form his own leftist party- the Democratic National Conference party. However, under pressure of Indian leadership, the two parties united in 1961 (Tremblay, 1996-1997: 494). In another surprising development in 1965, the symbol of Kashmir's unique identity and leader of its historical political movement, the NC, was dissolved and merged with the Indian National Congress (Bose, 2003: 82).

Opposition parties that represented secessionist demands such as the Plebiscite Front formed by Mirza Afzal Beg (a close associate of Sheikh Abdullah) to rally support for a plebiscite, or religious groups such as Jamait-i-Islami that opposed J&K's integration with India were constantly barred from participating in state elections (Tremblay, 1996-1997: 490). Between 1955 and 1956, four consecutive presidents of

the PF were arrested while prior to the 1972 elections, the party was simply declared an 'unlawful organization under India's Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act' (Bose, 2003: 73- 87). Similarly, in mid-70s, a young activist called Shabbir Ahmad Shah formed the People's League to 'keep the quest for self-determination alive, and paid for it by spending most of the next twenty years in Indian jails' (Bose, 2003: 89). Since these parties threaten the Indian union, the government at the center has consistently and coercively crushed their participation in institutional politics. The fact remains that if opposition parties were allowed to contest elections supposedly conducted in a transparent and democratic fashion then "the majority of seats will be captured by those unfriendly to India", a situation which India was willing to avoid at any cost (Bose, 2003: 85).

India has justified its frequent interference on grounds of maintaining the unity and integrity of the Indian state. India's national interests in J&K have been protected at the cost of democracy itself. This policy has led to the rule of unpopular leaders who lack a social support base and are not obligated to provide any accountability to the people they are supposedly meant to serve. Institutional channels for dissenting groups were constantly blocked by the central Indian leadership. It is no surprise then that pro-independence groups that enjoyed tremendous support from the discontent masses, resorted to violence in 1989 leading to a full blown insurgency movement.

3.5. Political Unfreedom

In *Development as Freedom,* Amartya Sen (1999: 4) explains that in some cases, "violation of freedom results directly from a denial of political and civil liberties by authoritarian regimes and from imposed restrictions on the freedom to participate in the social, political and economic life of the community." This essay argues that people of J&K have lived in a political environment where their representative parties have been barred from competing in formal elections, political leaders imprisoned or placed under house arrest, censorship has been a common tool to limit political dialogue and people have been forced to vote for certain candidates or kept from voting altogether.

Political unfreedom has been imposed on the state since the beginning of the India-Pakistan conflict. Neither the two countries, nor the UN offered a third option of independence in their propositions of a plebiscite that, ironically, was introduced to give Kashmiris a say regarding their future. The Indian government officially closed the chapter on plebiscite following the Shimla Agreement of 1972 where India Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto decided to deal with the Kashmir dispute bilaterally. Pakistan has continued to champion the cause of the plebiscite, but one where only the two choices of joining either India or Pakistan are available to the people of J&K. Even the UN Security Council, in all its resolutions did not call for a plebiscite where J&K had the option to remain independent.

Similarly, Kashmiris were not party to the Shimla Agreement between India and Pakistan even though the accord was ratified in the J&K Assembly in Srinagar (Hewitt, 1997). Vernon Hewitt (1997: 62) argues that "the agreement and the subsequent *de facto* partition of the state, goes against a growing assertion of a Kashmiri identity against both the Indian and Pakistani presence." In fact, it was only in 2005 that Kashmiris were finally invited to the table when Dr. Manmohan Singh initiated a series of round table talks with all concerned parties of varying ideological orientations in an effort to seek consensus on the Kashmir issue (Idurthy & Haque, 2010: 20-21).

Nowhere is political unfreedom more starkly exhibited than in elections in J&K. An Indian newsmagazine covered the 1987 State Assembly elections in J&K and revealed eye witness accounts of gross violations of citizens' right to vote. Its reports speak of "a pattern of rigging and strong-arm tactics all over the valley, massive booth capturing (forcible takeover of polling stations) by gangs, entire ballot boxes pre-stamped in favour of NC, of numerous citizens simply not being allowed to vote, government nominated supervisors stopping the counting as soon as they saw opposition candidates taking a lead while the bureaucrats and clerks administering the process worked blatantly in favour of NC-Congress alliance and the police refused to listen to any complaint" (as quoted in Bose, 2003: 49).

3.6. Meaningless Elections

The utter worthlessness of elections is described by Sumantra Bose (2003) in the context of 1987 legislative assembly elections in J&K. Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah from the NC and Mohammad Yusuf Shah representing the Muslim United Front (MUF) were competing for a seat in the Amirakadal district of Srinagar city. MUF was formed as a broad coalition of anti-establishment groups that stood for a responsible government, better administration and economic development. It had managed to garner considerable support in the valley as people rallied behind the party in an expression of anger against the Abdullah family. There was hope that if democracy truly functioned in J&K then the party supported by the people would be the one to come to power. In the aftermath of a substantial turnout, as counting began, it was clear that the MUF candidate was winning by a big margin. However, it was Ghulam Mohiuddin Shah, the NC candidate, who was declared a winner by the presiding officials. As people turned to protests, the MUF candidate and his supporters were immediately arrested and "imprisoned until the end of 1987, without any formal charge or court appearance, let alone a trial" (Bose, 2003: 49). Similar incidents were repeated in other districts in the valley where only NC candidates were allowed to win. In an unexpected turn of events, MUF was 'able' to secure only 4 seats out of 76 and the NC-Congress alliance 'won' an overwhelming majority of 62 seats and thus formed the government (Bose, 2003: 49). Yusuf Shah went on to become the Commander in Chief of HM and adopted a pro-Pakistan stance as, in his own words, "Slaves have no vote in the so-called democratic set-up of India" (as quoted in Bose, 2003: 50). These incidents of blatant election rigging and an obvious NC bias offer a compelling justification of why Kashmir descended into violence in 1989.

3.7. Misgovernance and Lack of Economic Development

As soon as democracy was defeated in J&K following the appointment of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed as Chief Minister, any measure of responsibility and transparency was simultaneously abandoned. Bakshi's rule for almost a decade was marked by rampant corruption and 'mafia-style authoritarianism' where any opposition was met with brutish force of either the police or professionally hired thugs (Bose, 2003: 72). The

Indian government attempted to buy off people's discontent at the unconstitutional appointment of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed by advancing a loan of $14.9 million to the state government. Ghulam Mohammed, himself from a business family with forest and military business dealings, siphoned off state resources by granting forest leases and transport and tourist associated licenses to create a support base for himself against Sheikh Abdullah's popularity, setting up an unhealthy trend in the process.

Similarly, Farooq Abdullah's two terms have been described as a disaster and a 'virtual abdication of governance' (Bose, 2003: 95). He earned the reputation of the 'disco Chief Minister' given his regular appearances in parties across India. At other instances, he was seen playing golf or vacationing abroad while corruption rose to new heights and ministers in his government emptied the state exchequers. Meanwhile, the state economy stagnated. In such a context, 'the richest source of income became the threat and use of violence' (Habibullah, 2004: 7).

By proliferating a system of patronage politics, the state machinery created an elite administrative class that came to grow dissatisfied with the slow pace of economic development in the state. At the same time, the government expanded the health and social sectors in order to gain some degree of legitimacy and public support. However, the primary beneficiaries of these services were the urban upper or middle classes, and this increased the gap between rich and poor. The appeal of the insurgency movement lay in its potential to address the grievances of all social classes in the state (Tremblay, 1996-1997).

Tremblay (1996-1997) has observed that in Indian politics, the state, which is in possession of a large portion of economic resources, becomes a sphere for competition among the various political groups. The sole aim of those in power becomes to accumulate material wealth and the proliferation of widespread corruption and mismanagement ensues. In Kashmir, a virtual absence of true multi-party competition and the resultant lack of accountability of those in power have led to a distorted economic strategy designed to serve the interests of the political elite in the government, culminating in a crisis of governability. According to Tremblay (1996-1997: 477-478), "this crisis quickly degenerated into challenges to the political viability of Kashmir's association with India, revolving around the issue of Kashmir's distinctness and

consequent past political claims of self- determination." Over the years, alienated by economic mismanagement and political nepotism and devoid of employment and other economic opportunities, the youth turned to militancy as a way out of what in effect grew to be a 'failed' state (Prakash, 2000).

3.8. India's Response to Insurgency

As the situation in J&K became increasingly uncontrollable, the Indian government brought numerous squads of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF) to the state. The military rule imposed by India was accompanied with human rights violations on an unprecedented scale. CRPF and BSF, known as 'paramilitary forces' shot down some 300 unarmed protestors in just three days in January 1990 (Bose, 2003: 109). During another mass rally in support of self-determination, about 60 pro-independence marchers were massacred in May 1990. In February 1991, 800 soldiers of the Fifth Rajputana Rifles allegedly gang-raped over 60 women and children in a border village called Kunan Poshpora on the night of February 22-23 (Hans, 2000). According to one study, more than 5000 rapes were reported to have been committed by Indian security forces in the state since the inception of the secessionist/nationalist movement in 1990 (Khan, 2007).

In the year 1993, Amnesty International (which was refused entry to Kashmir), presented a report which critically stated that "the violations of human rights included hundreds of extra-judicial executions, some of them in the form of staged 'encounters', routine torture, rape and the detention of thousands of political prisoners" (as quoted in Evans, 1995: 180).

The legal backing came with the imposition of martial law between July and September 1990 and a host of draconian laws in the form of Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Disturbed Areas Act and the Terrorism and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (Bose, 2003). However, the forces deployed in Kashmir had immense discretion and absolute authority in dealing with secessionist forces, outside the purview of any legal framework.

A major tool of Indian repression in the state was the phenomenon of 'crackdowns'. A troop of paramilitary soldiers usually marches into any village or town at midnight, seals the area and rounds up all able-bodied men to be identified by 'Cats', an acronym for Concealed Apprehension Technique (Evans, 1995: 180). Mask wearing 'Cats' identify suspects from the villages who are then loaded into military vehicles, never to be seen again. House-to-house searches are also commonly conducted to locate arms and explosives. There have been reports of theft, vandalism and molestation of women and girls by soldiers who conduct these searches (Bose, 2003).

A major J&K newspaper has estimated that over 3,500 men taken into custody are reportedly 'missing' (as quoted in Bose, 2003: 114). It is commonly assumed that these men who 'disappear' overnight are detained at various interrogation centers where they are tortured or even killed due to their alleged links with separatist militant organizations (Evans, 1995: 180).

For the hundreds of thousands of mostly non-Muslim soldiers stationed in J&K, Kashmiris (ironically) were no longer perceived as citizens of India (a right the Indian state had been forcibly attempting to grant for the last four decades) but were seen as ungrateful traitors aligning their loyalties with the enemy across the border. A Muslim, in their eyes, was equated to a Pakistani, an 'enemy India was born with.' For the non-Kashmiri forces that lacked an in-depth understanding of Kashmir's history and the complexity of their grievances, "the face of the Kashmiri has dissolved into a blurred, featureless mask. He has become a secessionist-terrorist-fundamentalist traitor" (Bose, 2003: 113).

The repressive regime unleashed by the Indian government on civilians and militants alike had the effects of "radicalizing public opinion and of convincing thousands of Kashmiri youth to take up arms to fight the Indian state" (Bose, 2003: 116). Hence, it was the experience of unjustified cruelty against the people of J&K that further fuelled the insurgency movement.

The discussion above has highlighted the role and agency of the Indian state in shaping the circumstances that led to the rise of insurgency in J&K. The next section

explores aspects related to the history and dynamism of the Kashmiri society in explaining Kashmiri nationalism.

4.   Agency to Kashmiris: Inherent Factors

Can Kashmiris be described in Donald Horowitz's category of 'reluctant secessionists' (Bose, 2003: 84)? Was it that they never actually wanted to secede but were left with no choice faced with a brutal suppression of their democratic rights and civil liberties? Were Kashmiris 'brought to insurgency' due to actions of the Indian state alone? According to Cockell (2000: 324-326), "most studies of the Kashmiri conflict have interpreted the conflict as an outcome of Indian mismanagement of political institutions and curtailment of democratic rights. However, such a treatment effectively denies the Kashmiri community an independent political agency outside of that defined by the state institutions." In this section, the paper turns to critical studies of Kashmir that have emerged in the recent times. They offer a new perspective of analyzing the issue by catering to Kashmiri factors rather than those of India or Pakistan.

4.1. A Revised Kashmiri Identity

In an article titled *Never Ending Stories: Recent Trends in the Historiography of Jammu and Kashmir,* Vernon Hewitt (2007) argues that any discussion on Kashmir has been conducted in the context of Indian and Pakistani histories or events such as partition and accession. He suggests that a study of events in Kashmir must move "away from the artifice of the '1947 divide' and be relocated within South Asian history as a whole" (Hewitt, 2007: 288). Hewitt asserts that somewhere in the 1970s, Kashmiris found a voice in the historiography on J&K- "not just as either pro-Pakistan or pro-Indian pawns, but as a growing set of critiques of both Indian and Pakistan policies on either side of the boundary" (Hewitt: 2007: 291). Contrary to the Indian truth or the Pakistani truth, this new trend brought the stories and concerns of the Kashmiri people to surface, drawing attention to the internal aspect of the conflict so far forgotten. In the process, it sought to modify misguided concepts and shattered many myths that passed for facts.

In a revised analysis of Kashmir focussing on culture and identity, the celebrated concept of *kashmiriyat* came into critical review. It was felt that the concept was not as universal as claimed. As a term denoting socio-cultural identity, it was very much limited to the Kashmir Valley, the stronghold of Abdullah who contributed significantly to its popularity. Part of Jammu and Ladakh as well as border areas along the Line of Control (LOC) - the border between India and Pakistan did not relate as successfully to the secular ideals promoted by *kashmiriyat.* Even within the valley, it had competition from strong religious identities (Hewitt, 1997: 292). The social cleavages that *kashmiryat* superficially sought to fill only expanded with time. The varying ideological positioning of the insurgent groups that all seem to have a different plan for Kashmir's future is indicative of the extent to which society in J&K is fragmented and not united as the concept of *kashmiriyat* suggests.

As the above point illustrates, Kashmiri identity has undergone changes and has evolved in the last sixty five years. The outlook and demands of its various groups are not the same as they were in 1947 or even in 1989. Hewitt (1997: 293) reminds that throughout the 1980s, the religious identity in Kashmir, usually considered *sufi* and thus tolerant (which facilitated *kashmiriyat*), was being 'influenced by Islamic Sunni movements emanating from the larger Islamic world, including Pakistan.' An indication of this change in reflected in events surrounding the execution of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in 1979. In Kashmir, a wave of disdain rose against Jamaat-i-Islami, the orthodox Islamic political voice in Pakistan responsible of Bhutto's death. Believing that the charges and trial were rigged, crowds in Srinagar attacked 'businesses of Jamaat members and even men merely sporting beards' (Habibullah, 2008: 43). However, by mid 1990s, pro-Pakistan HM, which was the sword arm of Jamaat, had succeeded in garnering enough support to challenge the secular JKLF. Hence, the pro-Pakistan section of the insurgency movement demands merger with Pakistan due to changes taking place in the state, notably a rising religious identity which sees Kashmiri Muslims' future with Pakistan. Naturally, this orientation has been in direct opposition to the still secular or pro-India sections of Kashmiri society, thwarting the commonly held misconception of J&K as a homogenous state.

The facade that Kashmir cannot be divided fell apart in 2008 when a renewed movement for *azadi* erupted in the aftermath of the Amarnath land controversy that

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essentially pitted the valley's Muslim population seeking independence or unification with Pakistan against Jammu's Hindus who support complete integration with India (Tremblay: 2009). This outright confrontation between the state's two main communities sheds light on the delusional fiction of treating the state as a whole. J&K consists of Hindus and Sikhs in Jammu, Sunni Muslims in the Valley and Buddhists and Shia Muslims in Ladakh who are all in turn divided amongst themselves based on ideology with regards to an independent J&K. The state is, therefore, divided on every known social and political cleavage, contrary to its popular treatment as a whole unit.

Moreover, solutions to the insurgency issue have been transfixed on 'boundaries' and what can be done inside them, when it can be argued that boundaries are no longer relevant in the increasingly globalized modern states of today. The state cannot be treated in isolation where specific solutions or policies can be applied as people are far more aware of the larger world outside J&K. Others have argued that the crisis is due to the emergence of the modern state itself- "Away from its historical western heartlands, and given the sheer degree of social plurality in South Asia, the state was the problem. Kashmir was a pathology of the modern state, it was not a pathology the state could overcome" (Jalal quoted in Hewitt, 1997: 294). The crisis in Kashmir has been marked by a fluidity of identities which India has failed to address given its rigid stance on autonomy issues in the state.

It can be argued that the Indian state has sought to smooth away such pluralities, such as through reorganization of states on linguistic lines, but Kashmir did not qualify for such negotiations or compromise given its strategic importance to India. With increasing media exposure and a rise in literacy levels, a gradual knowledge of how things operate in other Indian states and its stark contrast with the Kashmiri experience dawned on the population leading them towards a more proactive path of political mobilization (Ganguly, 1996). Between 1971 and 1981, literacy rose by 43% in J&K while the number of newspapers published grew by 500% between 1970 and 1984 (Ganguly, 1996). It was as a result of these developments that a new generation of Kasmiris grew to become far more aware of its political rights and far less likely to tolerate political skullduggery, even if it meant resorting to violence.

Relevant to the discussion is an article by John Cockell (2000) about subaltern political process in Kashmir. By subalterns, Cockell (2000, 321) means "those subordinate social groups below the political elite which assert an autonomous insurgent consciousness." Cockell argues that political marginalization and religious nationalism only explain one aspect of the *Azadi* movement. A parallel mobilization, devoid of 'high politics' has also played an important role, especially in the earlier years of the movement that invited hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris to participate in a revolt against the state- "If one examines the development of extra-systemic forms of political mobilisation in Kashmir after 1947, it becomes apparent that Kashmiri political development has proceeded along alternative and often underground avenues of mobilisation" (Cockell, 2000: 325). It can be argued that subaltern politics was facilitated by an assertion of unofficial nationalism as described by Tremblay (1996-1997) which came to occupy a more dominant role than state-imposed official nationalism. Cockell (2000: 326) argues that the underpinnings of the solidarity in the *azadi* movement is defined by two factors- "a strong socio-cultural identity, and the shared historical memories of four centuries of imperial domination, from Mughal (1586-1757) and Afghan (1757-1819) to Sikh (1819-46) and Dogra (1846- 1947)." A collective experience of subordination and alienation by various historical dynasties has evolved an insurgent aspiration to self-rule as a core value of Kashmiri ethnicity. Cockell draws heavily from *kashmiriyat* in his explanation of a unifying socio-cultural identity. If kashmiriyat is still valid after a mass exodus of Kashmiri pundits from the valley and the Amarnath confrontation of 2008, remains to be seen.

Conclusion

This essay has sought to summarize some of the arguments exploring the roots of the insurgency movement that took shape in the late 1980s-early 1990s in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. A review of some of the literature on Kashmir reveals that factors explaining the insurgency can broadly be divided into schools- one that gives agency to the Indian state and its (failed) institutions while the other explores factors innate to the historical experiences and changing identities of Kashmiri people themselves, inculcating in them a new sense of political awareness that led to a demand for independence from Indian rule. The exercise has revealed that while a movement *against* India has definitely taken place, there is no consensus on what the movement is *for.* J&K is being pulled by secessionist, irredentist and integrationist forces from all sides. In the recent years, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) in India has attempted to initiate discussions with these forces and has even promised a degree of autonomy and eventual demilitarization. However, India's own political stability can be greatly affected by events in Kashmir as the main opposition party, the Bhartiya Janata Party has maintained a strong opposition against Kashmir's special status under Article 370. Meanwhile, in Kashmir, peace remains a challenge.

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