

Chapter II

Kashmir: A Historical Background

The valley of Kashmir, eulogised as ‘the paradise on Earth’, is surrounded by mountains. The people of Kashmir consider these mountains as their guardian and protector, who allowed various religions and cultures to come into the valley and settle down there. One after the other, Kashmir became the home for the Buddhists, the dwelling for the teaching of Vedanta and the centre for mystic Islam. However, Kashmir does not have a single past. After the Buddhist and Hindu Rajas, Kashmir was ruled by the Sultans, Moguls, Afghans, Sikhs and the Dogras. Different dynasties brought different cultures and religions to Kashmir. The simple and peaceful people of Kashmir accommodated with the diverse dominant trends without much resentment. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam together made a significant impact on the life of Kashmiris. This coexistence signified Kashmir as a melting pot of multiple communities synchronised in harmony for centuries. The people of Kashmir call the valley as *Pirwaer* and *Rishwaer*, the abode of *Sufis* and *Rishis*. The coexistence of *Sufism* and *Rishism* suggests that the valley was tolerant and peaceful, where great saints had inspired the people to transcend their religious boundaries to move towards one destination that belongs to all irrespective of their religious affiliation.

This chapter briefly traces the early history of Kashmir and delineates the genesis of the conflict since the formation of the state in 1846, and various land mark events that shaped the socio-political history of Kashmir, including the revolt against the Dogra monarchs in 1931, the accession of the state into Indian union in 1948, and the insurgency of 1989. It shows how ‘The Happy Valley’, once known for its peace and tolerance is now known for ethno-nationalist assertion, political struggle and violence. The collective consciousness of being Kashmiri Muslims or being Kashmiri Pandits, rather than being Kashmiris now overrides the Kashmiri society in different sphere of life.

Early History of Kashmir

According to Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* and *Nilamatpurana*,¹ the valley of Kashmir was once a big lake called Satisar, the lake of *Sati* (Hindu goddess Durga). There was a ferocious demon by name Jalodbhava (or Jaldeo or Jaludhar) who lived in that lake and misused his power to terrorise his

¹ There are different versions in Hindu mythology about Kashmir (see Bamzai 1994: 121-50)

surroundings. The great sage Kashyapa, to ward off this devil, practised penance for a long time. Feeling compassion for Kashyapa, the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva drained the water from the lake and goddess Sharika dropped a pebble on the evil demon which immediately became a hillock and the demon was crushed under it and died. Thus, the land that emerged out of the lake came to be known as Kashyapa mar (the abode of Kashyapa), later as Kashmir and now as Kashmir (Koul 1972).

In Hindu mythology, Kashmir has a firm place that goes beyond Mahabarata, and Hindu rulers and culture played a significant role in the history of Kashmir. From fifth century to about twelfth century, Kashmir was characterised by Hindu civilisation and Shaivite culture. During the period of Korkotas, Kashmir developed a humanistic philosophy of its own known as Kashmir Shaivism. The ruins of marvelous Martanda temple (dedicated to the sun god) point to the remarkable ancient Hindu architecture in the Valley. This temple was constructed by the Hindu King Lalitaditya (699-736 CE) who was extremely tolerant towards other religious beliefs. Though himself a follower of Hindu religion, he showed due respect to Buddhism and built many Buddhist monasteries and Stupas.

Asoka conquered Kashmir in about 250 BCE and with him Buddhism got established in Kashmir. Buddhist philosophy attracted the Brahmins of Kashmir and they became great admirers of Buddhism. Some became its missionaries to preach the new faith to the people. Buddhism stayed in Kashmir for about nine centuries. Shaivism and Buddhism together brought art, culture and knowledge to Kashmir. Shaivism, Buddhism and Trika philosophy were on the peak in Kashmir until Islam came to Kashmir (Koul 1972; Bamzai 1994; Hussain 2009).

Islamic culture came to Kashmir gradually. A notable change in the religious demography of Kashmir took place especially during thirteenth century when Islam became the dominant religious trend in Kashmir. However, there were reasons behind the rapid and mass conversion to Islam such as (a) animosity and internal corruption in the Brahmanical and Buddhist traditions, (b) severe socio-economic and political deterioration of Kashmir in the last years of Hindu rule, (c) continued efforts of immigrant Sufi masters to spread their faith, (d) emergence of an eclectic and easily reached folk version of Islam and (e) severe intolerance of some of the early Muslim kings (Madan 2006: 181).

It is said that Renchen Shah (1325-27 CE) adopted Islam in Kashmir. Renchan Shah was from Ladakh, but unfavourable political conditions drove him to Kashmir. He used to take part in religious discussions and even as a king he spent sleepless nights to know the truth. Inspiration behind his conversion was Bulbul Shah, a *Sayed* from Turkistan. Renchen Shah assumed the title of Sultan Sadar-ud-Din after conversion, the first of Kashmir's Muslim ruler. After the conversion of Renchen Shah several others adopted the new faith of Islam. Renchen Shah also built Bulbul Lanker (residence of *Sayed* Bulbul Shah) and the first mosque in Kashmir. The pace of

conversion to Islam picked up as time moved. Further, the arrival of *Sufis* and Sayeds from Central Asia encouraged the people to convert to Islam (Koul 1972; Sufi 1979; Bhattacharjea 1994; Khan 1997).

One of the prominent Sayeds was Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani.² He came from Hamadan in Persia and played an important role in the mass conversions to Islam. Before coming to Kashmir he collected information about the socio-economic and religious position in Kashmir. Around seven hundred Sayeds came to the Valley with him, among them there were craftsmen and artisans also. They were experts in various fields such as carpet weaving, paper mashie, etc., and they introduced these arts to the people of Kashmir to improve their economic condition. Thus, Shah-i-Hamdan brought economic resources to Kashmir with Islam. That may be also one among the reasons that in a short period of time around 37,000 people got converted to Islam. Islam became the religion of masses in Kashmir with his efforts (Gull 2003: vii)

Later, Sheikh Nur-ud-din/Nund Rishi,³ who was also converted to Islam, gave indigenous zest and smoothed the path of Islam by steady and systematic conversion. He is a significant figure in the history of Kashmir and is known as great saint in the Valley who wrote the Kashmiri Quran. He established the indigenous mystic order of the Muslim *Rishis* (Khan 2008), which is admired alike by both the Kashmiri Pandits and the Kashmiri Muslims. His contribution to the synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religious thoughts further accelerated the conversion. He is acknowledged as the maker of *Kashmiriyat* (Kashmiri secular identity).⁴

However, the spread of Islam in Kashmir was not always very peaceful. For example, Sultan Sikander, the iconoclast (1389-1413), also known as *Butshikan* (who broke the idols), was against idol worship. He persecuted many Hindus of the valley. He wanted to eliminate all traces of the Hindu religion and convert its followers to Islam. During his period thousands of Hindus left the Valley, some were massacred. However, his Muslim successors did not fully share his iconoclastic fervor (Koul 1972; Sufi 1979; Bhattacharjea 1994).

Sultan Sikander's son Shahi Khan, who was famous for his religious tolerance and took the title of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin (1423-1474), was much loved in the Valley and was also fondly known as '*Bud Shah*' (Great King) or *Batta Shah* (the Brahmins King or Kashmiri Pandits' King). During his reign, many Kashmiri Pandits, who had earlier left the Valley for fear of conversion, came back. He convinced many to return and rebuild their temples; he visited their shrines and participated in their festivals. During his reign, art, culture, and science flourished in Kashmir.

² There is a shrine in the city of Srinagar, popularly known as *Khanqah-I-Mualla*, dedicated to him

³ For details on Nund Rishi and his contribution to Kashmiri identity, see Chapter 3

⁴ The concept of *Kashmiriyat* is discussed in Chapter 3.

Many public structures in Kashmir were built after his name. He ruled on Kashmir peacefully for a period of fifty years (Koul 1972; Bamzai 1994; Bhattacharjea 1994).

The last pre-Mughal ruler was Yusuf Shah. Subsequently, Kashmir was ruled by Chaks, then Moguls. After Zain-ul-Abdin, Akbar (1555-1605) restored peace to Kashmir. He built many structures, including the famous Hari Parbat Fort. He abolished taxes imposed by the Muslim monarchs upon their Hindu subjects and awarded high post to Hindus. Moguls had fine sense of aesthetics and they laid out various gardens in Kashmir. After Mughals, Kashmir was ruled by Afghans (1753), who were known for harassment and persecution. Afghan occupation led to the emigration of Kashmiri Pandits to northern India once again. When the oppression became unbearable, the Pandits sought the help of Sikhs in 1819. Subsequently, Kashmir came under the Sikh rulers and it was later sold to the Dogras by the British (Koul 1972; Wiltzel 1991). During the Dogra the period, the state of Jammu and Kashmir came into existence.

The Construction of the State and the Formation of Dogra Rule

The state of Jammu and Kashmir comprises a number of ethnic and cultural regions: the Hindu majority Jammu province, the primarily Buddhist Ladakh province, and the Muslim majority Kashmir province. The state came into existence in the year 1846 with the Treaty of Amritsar through which the British transferred the Kashmir Valley and its adjoining regions to the Dogra King Maharaja Gulab Singh. In return, the Dogra King agreed to pay a substantial sum of money to the British (Wani 1993; Verma 1994; Thomas 2000). The agreement was exclusively between the then British government of India and Maharaja of Jammu, Gulab Singh; the interest of the people was not at all taken into consideration. In the words of Christopher Thomas (2000:17), “the people never asked for it, never wanted it, and never loved it”.

The Dogra period began with distress. Favouritism towards the Hindus developed the feeling of discontent among the Kashmiri Muslims, who had no say in the administration, which was conducted by the Kashmiri Pandits. “Under the rule of the Dogra Maharajas, the Pandits fared well and held many responsible posts in government and administration” (Witzel 1991: 3; 2008: 39). The majority of Muslim population led a life of poverty, subjugation and exploitation:

The poverty of the Muslim masses is appalling. Dressed in rags and barefoot, a Muslim peasant presents the appearance of a starving beggar... most are landless labourers, working as serfs for absentee landlords... almost the whole brunt of official corruption has been borne by the Muslim masses... rural indebtedness is staggering (Premnath Bazaz 1987 252-253, cited in Sumantra Bose 1997: 24).

The socio-economic disparity between the two communities implanted the seeds of mounting importance of religion as a major component of identity.

The early Dogra period is critical for an understanding of the development of identities in the Kashmir Valley, since it set the stage for a transformation within the public discourse of the Valley, from an emphasis on regional identities to a privileging of the religious component of identities (Zutshi 2003: 16).

The constant lack of concern about the interests of majority population led to the formation of ethno-religious identity consciousness among the Muslim masses. Thus, during the Dogra period, religious element of identities started taking its ground in Kashmir and that gave rise to a mass uprising in 1931.

Uprising of 1931: Kashmiri Nationalism and Emergence of Political Identity

In the politics of Kashmir, nationalism was not a dynamic aspect until 1930. One of the fundamental changes that took place in the Valley after 1931 was the rise of a massive nationalist movement. The movement was against the Dogra rule in the context of feudal bondage. As Mohammad Ishaq Khan describes, “13th July 1931, was a historic day in the annals of Srinagar. “The dumb-driven cattle”⁵ raised the standard of revolt” (see Sumantra Bose 2003: 19). It was an endeavour by the oppressed masses against the oppressive regime to assert their identity and aspirations.

However, following this revolt, Maharaja Hari Singh, the last ruler of the Dogra dynasty appointed a commission under the chairmanship of Sir B.J. Glancy, an official of the Foreign and Political department of the British government of India on 12 November 1931 to look into the reasons of unrest and to address the grievances of Muslims. The Glancy Commission recommended a series of reforms, such as reforms of an administrative structure and education, the representation of Muslim in the services and minimum freedom of the press and public expression. The Maharaja accepted these recommendations (Sumantra Bose 2003). The Kashmiri Pandits initiated the Roti agitation against these recommendations. This agitation led by Kashmiri Pandit Yuvak Sabah was suppressed but, “the Pandits succeeded in warding off reservation of employment on a communal basis. The religious dimension of both group identities had clearly acquired a cutting edge. ... Kashmiri Pandits movement soon lost its momentum and ceased to be an independent political movement” (Behera 2000: 46)

In 1931, the educated Kashmiri Muslim youth felt the need for a formal political organisation which could work for the concerns of Muslims and represent their hopes and interests. This consciousness led to the formation of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932, a

⁵ Sir Albion Banerji, Foreign and Political Minister of Maharaja Hari Singh, had described the Kashmiri Muslim population as “dumb-driven cattle” (Khan 2002: 32)

movement for democratic government and social justice, marking the beginning of Kashmiri nationalism. This organisation did not have exclusive communal objectives; rather it aimed to attend to the problems of peasants, artisans and the working class groaning beneath the burden of oppressive taxes (Khan 2002; Widmalm 2002; Bose 2003).

However, the initial outburst of the Conference seems to have given communal colour to the movement, encouraging the formation of communal parties like Kashmiri Pandit Conference and the Hindu Sabha in the state. Sheikh Abdullah, who had been elevated to the status of *Sher-i-Kashmir* or 'Lion of Kashmir', appealed for a non-communal struggle that would aim to put an end to the miseries of all communities and secure a responsible government. He also criticised the Muslim press of Punjab for giving a communal colour to the Kashmir movement. He tried to explain that the movement was in response to the feudal bondage and a demand to end the *Jagirdari* (land-ownership) system (Wani 1993; Khan 2002; Singh 2002; Zutshi 2003).

As early as October 1932, while addressing the Muslim Conference as its first President, Sheikh Abdullah said, "Our country's progress is impossible so long as we do not establish amicable relations [with] different communities" (see Verma 1994: 19). In 1935, in an appeal to all the people of Kashmir irrespective of caste, creed or religion, Sheikh Abdullah said "Let us all rise above petty communal bickering and work jointly for welfare of the masses. I appeal to all Hindu brethren not to entertain imaginary fears and doubts. Let us assure them that their rights shall not be jeopardised if they join hands with their Mussalmans" (ibid.: 19-20). He tried to secularise his organisation to gain mass support by reconstituting All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference as National Conference (NC) in 1939 (Ganguly 1997; Singh 2002). According to Bhupinder Singh, "the Naya Kashmir manifesto of the party spelt out demands under sections headed 'peasants charter', 'workers charter', 'women charter', etc"., suggesting thereby that even the Kashmiri Pandits were prone to disparity by the Dogra autocracy (2002: 117). The secular credential of All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference was based on the consciousness of *Kashmiriyat*, that is, a heritage of Kashmiri history, language, culture and identity (ibid. 2002). The change of nomenclature reflected the shift to secular political consideration and with this secular fervour Sheikh Abdullah started the Quit Kashmir movement against the Dogra monarch.

The Quit Kashmir Movement

In May-June 1946, the National Conference launched the 'Quit Kashmir movement' against the Dogra rule, a landmark in the history of political mobilisation in Kashmir. Sheikh Abdullah explained that National Conference had accepted the principle of self-determination not only in respect of creed, but also within the framework of culture (Behera 2000; Sumantra Bose 2003).

This was the phase of political awakening and an assertion of political and cultural identity among the people of Kashmir. The Quit Kashmir movement was similarly based on the Quit India movement against the British rule. And Sheikh Abdullah had full support of Nehru and Gandhi (Akbar 1985). While explaining the demand of self-determination, he said “The time has come to tear up the Treaty of Amritsar and Quit Kashmir. Sovereignty is not the birthright of Maharaja Hari Singh. ‘Quit Kashmir’ is not a question of revolt. It is a matter of right” (Akbar 1985: 227-28). On the eve of his arrest Sheikh Abdullah said:

When we raise the slogan of Quit Kashmir we naturally visualise that the princes and Nawabs should quit all the states... The rulers of the Indian States who possess one-fourth of Indian have always played traitors to the cause of Indian freedom. The demand that the princely order should quit is a logical extension of the policy of Quit India (see Verma 1994: 28)

The Quit Kashmir movement was a struggle against the Dogra oligarchy, which had denied the basic rights of the majority Muslims. The movement was squarely based on the demand to set up a democratic government system in the state with power vested in the hands of the people. However, the leaders of the earlier Muslim Conference such as Chowdhary Abbas, Hamidullah, Allah Rakha Sagar and Abdul Majid Qureshi from Jammu and Maulvi Yusuf Shah, Qureshi Mohammad Yousaf, Mohi-ud-Din Rahabar and Abdul Salam Dalal from Kashmir, who got separated from the National Conference in 1941, “condemned the Quit Kashmir movement and charged National Conference with dividing Muslims in collusion with the congress in order to perpetuate Hindu hegemony in the state” (Behera 2000: 56-57).

Accession to India

In 1947, the British partitioned India into India and Pakistan and granted both independence. Jammu and Kashmir was given an option like other princely states of choosing to accede to either India or Pakistan. In October 1947, Pakistan sent Afghan invaders and irregular soldiers of the Pakistani army to the state. Maharaja Hari Singh sought help from India, and the Jammu and Kashmir acceded to secular India in return for her military support. The Indian government responded by dispatching troops to drive out the invaders. Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference at that point of time upheld the spirits among the people and mobilised them till the Indian army arrived. Srinagar echoed with the slogans of National Conference: “*Sher-i-Kashmir ka kya Irshad, Hindu-Muslim Sikh Ittehad and Hamlaawar Khabardar, Ham Kashmiri Hain Taiyar; Hamlaawar Khabardar, National Fauj Hai Taiyar*”(see Raina 1990: 63) Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs were completely united. This was the golden chapter in the history of Kashmir. People were expressing their full faith in the National Conference and pleading for accession to India (ibid.). Sheikh Abdullah, while addressing the people in Kashmir, stated:

Today the raiders from Pakistan are a few miles from Srinagar. They are raising slogan of Islam. It is open to you to be with them or to be with me. If you opt to be with me you must know that you have to live for all times on the Principles that Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are brothers. If that is the language of a 'Kafir' you should raise your sword first against me. If you want to raid or rape Kafirs I am the first Kafir and you must start from my place my family (as cited in Verma 1994: 34-35).

During the period between 1939 and 1947, the course of political development in Kashmir remained free from communal and parochial tendencies (Verma 1994). In his speeches and appeal to the people, Abdullah affirmed that

In Kashmir we want a people's Government. We want a government which will give equal opportunities to all men, irrespective of caste and creed. The Kashmir Government will not be the government of any one community. It will be a joint government of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. That is what I am fighting for (cited in Verma 1994: 35).

The ceasefire between India and Pakistan came into effect by January 1949. The ceasefire line reset the boundaries of the state. India retained control over almost two-thirds of Jammu and Kashmir, almost the entire Valley, most of Ladhak and most of Jammu region. These areas became Indian Jammu and Kashmir/Indian Administered Kashmir. Pakistan were left with the large portion of western Jammu and Poonch, Sakadru of Ladakh area as well as Gilgit and Baltistan – the area that they called Azad Kashmir or Pakistan Administered Kashmir. However, unlike in the case of other princely states, in the case of Jammu and Kashmir it was “accession” not “merger” (Tremblay 1997; Sumantra Bose 1997; 2003). Pakistan's attack became closure for the Maharaja's decision of being independent state and he was left with no option except accede to India. Both the National Conference and the Maharaja accepted the accession.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru promised to confirm the accession of Jammu and Kashmir into India by referendum under international auspices like the United Nation. He also explained why Kashmir was ideologically a part of India:

Srinagar was in peril and the invader was almost at its doorstep. There was no administration left there, no troops, no police. Light and power had failed ... and yet Srinagar functioned without obvious 'panic and the shops were open and people went about the streets. To what was this miracle due? Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues of National conference and their unarmed volunteers, Muslim and Hindu and Sikh, took charge of the situation, kept order and prevented panic. It was wonderful piece of work that they did at a moment when the nerves of most people might have failed them. They did so because of the strength of their organisation. (see Akbar 1985: 239).

Mahatma Gandhi also said that Kashmir is the test of secularism in India (Behera 2000). The accession of the state was kept open with room to accommodate the issue of autonomy through public will and Sheikh Abdullah was also in favour of plebiscite. But plebiscite has never taken place, primarily because Pakistan's forces did not evacuate the part of Jammu and Kashmir that

was under the control of Pakistan, as it was a pre-condition for plebiscite according to the UN resolution. Second, the instrument of accession was signed by the state's 'lawful' ruler and ratified by the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly confirming the validity of the accession. And third the participation of people of Jammu and Kashmir in democratic elections came to be considered as a sign of people's desire to remain within India (Raina 1990; Verma 1994; Sumantra Bose 1997; 2003).

Jammu and Kashmir since 1947

Political developments in the state since 1947 started drifting away from the secular, progressive and nationalist framework. Initially, the communal consciousness first manifested in the Jammu region. The reason was the increasing hold of the Kashmiri Muslims. On the one side, Sheikh Abdullah was craving for autonomy or special status for Jammu and Kashmir, and on the other side, Praja Parishad was against it and wanted complete merger with India; its fear perhaps related to the dominance of Kashmiri Nationalist Identity (Verma 1994). There was a continuous struggle for power between the former Maharaja Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah. Pandit Nerhu supported Sheikh Abdullah and slammed the Praja Parishad movement in order to suppress its communal leadership so that it does not weaken Sheikh Abdullah's secular support base and incapacitate Indian interest in Kashmir. Both Pandit Nerhu and Sheikh Abdullah condemned the Praja Parishad agitation as 'objectionable, antisocial, reactionary and subversive' (Behera 2000: 76). Sheikh Abdullah first headed the emergency administration in the state and later a constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was formed through an election. He became the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir state (Tremblay 1997; Singh 2002). In 1952, Jammu and Kashmir state was given special protection under Article 370 of the Constitution of India so that the people of the state can protect their culture and identity. "The state would have its own flag, but the national flag would have a distinctive place" (Singh 2002: 122).

In 1952, there was a popular agitation launched by Praja Parishad, against the provision of Article 370, and it was supported by the Baratiya Jan Sangh, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Ram Rajya Parishad, the Punjab Arya Samaj and some Akali leaders. According to the Praja Parishad, this Article granted excessive autonomy including the special status to the Jammu and Kashmir state. The movement became aggressive under the slogan of "*Ek Pradhan, Ek Vidhan, Ek Nishan*" (one president, one constitution and one flag). Praja Parishad demanded the revoking of Article 370 and the full integration of the state into the Indian Union. The Praja Parishad leaders were against the title/nomenclature "Sadr-i-Riyasat" and Prime Minister; they wanted full application of the Indian constitution, removal of the present distinction between 'state-subjects' and Indian citizens, complete jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, removal of customs barriers between

Kashmir and India, fresh elections to the Kashmir Constituent Assembly, and investigation of corruption in the state administration by an impartial tribunal (Varshney 1991: 1010; Verma 1994: 41; Behera 2000: 85-86). Sheikh Abdullah's motives were also objected by pointing to the contradictions in his logic:

If sheikh Abdullah hated the two-nation theory and his principles were the same as those of the Indian polity, then where was the ground for not accepting a full accession? Where was the need for a state constitution as distinction from national constitution? Why should Sheikh Abdullah retain the title of prime minister from the royal dynasty—if he had fought the Princely system and already unseated the Maharaja, if the title of Prime Minister was reserved only for the head of the national government in New Delhi? What was the rationale for having a separate state flag (as in princely times) instead of a national flag that all other Indian States had? Why should an Article 370 exist, giving the state a special status, even though other princely states had acceded fully without any constitutionally sanctioned special provision? (see Varshney 1991: 1009).

Prominent leaders of the Praja Parishad were arrested and they were released only when the centre intervened. Sheikh Abdullah dismissed the agitation as an effort of communal elements and revolt of few handful feudal landlords. While Pandit Nehru appreciated the grievances of the Jammu people, he also criticised the movement. Perhaps Pandit Nehru was convinced that the approach of Praja Parishad was communal and that it would in the long run harm the larger interests of India. Sheikh Abdullah sought limited central interference and expected maximum political autonomy for the state. The relationship between the Jammu and Kashmir state and the centre was smooth until the Sheikh Abdullah's expectations of an autonomous status were met. But, when state was declared as an integral part of India and the option of plebiscite was withdrawn, the relationship was ruptured (Verma 1994; Behera 2000).

Different expectations and differing views within the state led to the complexity of the situation. Sheikh Abdullah believed that Kashmir's aspirations could not be met within the Indian Union. On the other hand, Jammu and Ladakh claimed for complete merger with India. These developments led to the fundamental changes not only in the relationship between Kashmir and India, but also caused the emergence of Kashmiri identity vis-à-vis the Indian state. Sheikh Abdullah's secular credentials started taking a turn and he began to differentiate between 'Muslims and non-Muslims of the state' for first time since 1947 (Behera 2000). He stated that:

It is the Muslims who have to decide accession with India and not the non-Muslims as the latter have no place in Pakistan and because their only choice is India... My main concern and effort has not been to convince the Hindus and Sikhs that their future lay in India but the Muslims who form the majority. It was Muslims who were forced to ponder whether they could rely on the Indian promises and stay within the Indian Union (ibid.: 94).

In the course of these developments, both Kashmir and India lost trust in each other. After seeing the changing nature of Sheikh Abdullah's inconsistent approach, the centre was not certain about his strategies. On his part, Sheikh Abdullah started looking at the Indian government with doubt

whether Kashmir would be secure beneath the dominance of the Indian identity. Government of India shocked the people of Kashmir by dismissing and arresting Sheikh Abdullah in August 1953. It believed that his agenda revolved around an independent Kashmir. Bakshi Gulam Mohammed became a new centrally approved state Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir. Bakshi Gulam Mohammad tried to rebuild Kashmir's relationship with India. He disapproved Sheikh Abdullah's chasing for independence. Subsequently, after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, the President of India issued the constitutional order extending the jurisdiction of the centre from the original three subjects of defence, foreign affairs and communications to all subjects on the Union list (Verma 1994; Sumantra Bose 1997). "This was the beginning of the end of Article 370" (Sumantra Bose 1997: 33). The order put restraints on fundamental liberties, whereby freedom of speech, assembly and association in the state could now be suspended at any time on 'grounds of security'. Economically, the state became an integral part of India by removing customs barriers (Sumantra Bose 1997). Sheikh Abdullah's arrest was followed by various protests. It was a major gust to the sentiment and aspirations of people of Kashmir that led to the growing feeling of suspicion towards India.

In 1957, the Jammu and Kashmir government adopted the State Constitution on the ground that state is and shall be an integral part of the Union of India. Eventually, Article 312 brought the Jammu and Kashmir administration under the purview of the All-India Services from 1958 onwards. In 1960, the Supreme Court was empowered to entertain "special leave to appeal" against decisions of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court. The supervisory role of the Election Commission was allowed, however, elections continued to be held under the state laws (Bose 1997).

On 26 December 1963, the holy relic (hair of the Prophet Mohammed) was found stolen from the Hazratbal shrine. The entire Valley erupted with violence and there were demonstrations for a week. People were on the streets, the "noteworthy feature was complete unity of the state's geographical constituents and communal amity as Hindu, Muslims and Sikhs combine together and the valley reverberated with 'Har-Har Mahadev,' 'Allah-o-Akabar' And 'Sat-Sri-Akal'" (as cited in Behera 2000: 115). People mainly accused Bakshi Gulam Mohammad for the theft and this marked the end of his period. A week later, the relic mysteriously reappeared. The event led to the immediate release of Sheikh Abdullah and the arrest of Bakshi Gulam Mohammed, who was sent to the same prison in Jammu where Sheikh Abdullah had been imprisoned eleven years before (Haskar and Navlakha 1996; Sumantra Bose 1997; Akbar 1985).

Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq replaced Bakshi Gulam Mohammad. That was evident development of patronage politics that has been used in the state to suppress political opposition. Under Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq, the process of coercive homogenisation and assimilation reached its peak. In 1964-65, Article 356 empowered the central government to impose the

President's rule of the Indian Constitution and Article 357 empowered Parliament to confer upon the President the power of the state legislature. Furthermore, Article 249 empowered the central government to legislate even on the state subjects on the provincial list (see Sumantra Bose 1997; Tremblay 1997). In 1965, the state assembly approved the bill changing the designation of Sardar-i-Riyasat and Prime Minister to Governor and Chief Minister (Verma 1994; Sumantra Bose 1997; Singh 2002) In this way, any trace of substantive autonomy was eradicated from Kashmir without reference to the wishes of the people (Sumantra Bose 1997).

In 1965, Pakistan once again infiltrated forces and tried to invade Kashmir forcefully. But the situation was grossly misjudged by the Pakistan. The Muslims of the Valley did not extend help to Pakistan; rather there were negative responses to Pakistani infiltrators from the people in the Valley. Despite their resentment against India, Kashmiri Muslims from the Valley were less enthusiastic to embrace Pakistan (Verma 1994).

The 1971 Indo-Pak war had serious repercussions for Kashmir. In this war Pakistan lost its eastern wing, namely, East Pakistan and Bangladesh was born. Post-war Pakistan asserted that Kashmir was a "bilateral" dispute (Sumantra Bose 1997: 40). In 1972, the Simla Agreement between Indira Gandhi and Zulfikar Ali Butto concluded that, in Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of 17 December 1971 shall be respected by both sides. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both sides further consented to refrain from threat or the use of force in violation of this line and the issue of final settlement was to be settled bilaterally with no outside guarantors or mediators (Sumantra Bose 1997; Behera 2000; Singh 2002; Chari et al. 2003).

After the defeat of Pakistan, it was clear that Kashmir could no longer be used as a bargaining card. New Delhi and Kashmiris prepared to accept the certainty of accession. In 1972, Sheikh Abdullah declared that the dispute with the Government of India was not about accession but on the degree of autonomy. The two-decade-long tussle finally ended and facilitated the settlement between Kashmir and the Indian State (Varshney 1991; Puri 2002). Sheikh Abdullah received overwhelming welcome when he returned to Kashmir. After the fair election of 1977, he became the Chief Minister of the state and he signed an accord with Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, which among others included his acceptance of the state as a part of India. He faced no serious challenge in signing the accord. He remained as the state's Chief Minister and a popular leader of Kashmir till his death. Farooq Abdullah succeeded his father as the Chief Minister. He followed the policy of his father. Farooq Abdullah won a convincing victory in the Valley against the Congress in 1983. The people of Kashmir again affirmed their confidence in Indian democracy (Puri 2002; Singh 2002).

In the mean time, Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, began to plan to destabilise Farooq Abdullah, apparently provoked by his defiance. Eventually, the centre dismissed Farooq

Abdullah on grounds of his inability to prove majority and an allegation that he was covertly supporting anti-Indian elements in the Valley. Because of this step, the centre missed the opportunity to work out accommodation with the Kashmiri ethno-national sentiments (Puri 2002; Singh 2002). Although, the people of Kashmir were angry, they did not protest against Farooq Abdullah's dismissal in 1984. "[They] believed that the clock had been put back by three decades" (Singh 2002: 127).

Farooq Abdullah was replaced by Gul Mohammed Shah, whose tenure lasted only two years from 1984 to 1986 (Singh 2002). Farooq Abdullah eventually returned to power in 1986, when he paradoxically negotiated and agreed to align his National Conference with the Rajiv Gandhi's Congress. It was the third historic accord relating to the state's relations with the Indian Union, the first two were signed in 1952 and in 1975 respectively. The Rajiv-Farooq accord disillusioned the people of Kashmir and led to the feeling that their trust had been betrayed. The fundamentalist forces that had been curbed by Sheikh Abdullah became quite assertive. The same year was followed by the communal riots in Kashmir. A new political group, Muslim United Front (MUF), gradually became active and started mobilizing Kashmiri Muslim identity and aspirations. (Chari et al. 2003; Sumantra Bose 2003; Verma 1994).

The formation of the MUF acquired motivation from various fundamentalist groups. It was formally launched to safeguard the interests of the Kashmiri Muslim community. The major groups which came together under the banner of the MUF were *Jamaat-i-Islami*, *Umaat-i-Islami*, *Anjumane Ittehad-ul-Musalmeen*, and other elements such as Islamic Study Circle, Muslim Educated Trust, Muslim Welfare Society, The Islamic *Jamaat-ul-Tulba*, *Majlis Tahafazul-Islami*, *Jamiat-ul-Hadis*, *Shia Rabita* Committee, and *Idara TahquiquatIslami*, all these groups come under one umbrella of Jamaat have had common interest to revive the pure Islam. The traditional shrine culture of Kashmir was unfavourable to its doctrine. Secular politics was not in favour with the Front. The Front and its affiliates began Islamizing Kashmir politics. Their main focus was Islamic solidarity and the restoration of religious and political rights of Kashmiri Muslims (Verma 1994).

The Muslim United Front fought the election of 1987 on the agenda of Kashmiri identity, Muslim brotherhood and ideology of an Islamic state. But the election lacked legitimacy, as the rival groups believed that it was rigged by the National Conference and Congress alliance. The Muslim United Front believed that it got the maximum number of votes, but the National Conference was announced the winner. The declaration of result was followed by strikes and violence (Wani 1993; Verma 1994). It was a final blow to the psychologically alienated Kashmiri Muslims, whose experience with Indian democracy left them unpleasant. People lost their hope and faith in the Indian state.

Uprising in Kashmir and the Rise of Ethno-Religious Nationalism

The policies of the Indian state were mostly responsible for Kashmiri Muslims' alienation. The above mentioned developments in the Kashmir politics since 1953 – whether it was Sheikh Abdullah's arrest, patronage politics, abrogation of Article 370, missing of relic, and playing with autonomy – were all responsible for causing tensions and loosening of faith in the central government. These further led to insurgency in Kashmir. The insurgency led the people of Kashmir on the path of violence; it represents the discontent of an entire community which suffers from perceived discrimination and deprivation and it comes to believe that its identity is threatened. The politics of ethno-nationalism is based on linkages between political movement and ethnic identity. National consciousness arises from the perception of having enemies, invaders, intruders or the perception of oppression (see Tremblay 1997). "Ethnic groups are born and arise because of the perception of oppression; if there were no perception of oppression, real or imagined, there would be no ethnic self-determination" (Ronan 1979 as cited in Tremblay 1997: 475). Therefore, the perception of oppression marked the beginning of uprising in Kashmir.

In 1988, several secessionist leaders crossed the border to the Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir, received training and weapons and returned to the Valley and prepared for political insurgency (Verma 1994; Tremblay 2001; Chari et al. 2003). Majority of the Kashmiri youth who crossed over to Pakistan following the rigged elections were actually supporters of the Muslim United Front (Wani 1994). Since people started losing faith in democracy, they became more tolerant towards extremists. The journey was supposed to begin from the ballot box but unfortunately they were left with only one option, that is, of bullet. Subsequently, the Valley was overtaken by militancy, bomb blasts, firing, strikes etc. The first militant organisation to start the secessionist movement in the Valley was secular Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), which wants an independent Kashmir on the ground of ethnicity. Its chief is Yasin Malik. The JKLF first struck on 31 July 1988 by exploding a bomb in Srinagar. It was the first secessionist group to provide momentum to the movement. It was like the whole Valley was in euphoria of *azadi* (Varshney 1991; Behera 2000; Dhar 1998).

It was an unbelievable sight. It appeared as if the population of Srinagar had come out to join the procession. The State Transport [Authority] buses had also been commandeered in addition to other means of transport for taking the processionist to the shrine. Many were sitting on top of the buses, unmindful of the cold, rain and sleet. There were women and children and everyone was shouting *azadi* slogans and showing the 'V' sign (see Chari et al. 2003: 51)

Navnita Chadha Behera, in her work *State Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh* (2000), has delineated the five different phases of Kashmiri self-determination. The first Phase (1988-1990), led by JKLF, represents the secular credential of the movement and it was

based on Kashmiri identity in a similar manner as the 'Quit Kashmir' movement that was initiated by Sheikh Abdullah of National Conference against the feudalism, to gain mass support. During this first phase of the uprising, there was underground militancy and mass political movement. It is believed that prominent leaders of JKLF were involved in the kidnapping of Dr Rubaiya Sayed, the then Indian home minister's daughter. Her release, in exchange for JKLF prisoners turned into break point for militant activity (Chari et al. 2003; Behera 2000).

By 1990, the movement was at its peak. The situation in Kashmir took a violent turn; violence manifested in senseless killing, abduction and arson. Mercenaries like Hizbul Mujahidin, were increasing their hold with the strength of around 20,000 militants in different parts of the state (Behera 2000), "backed by various agencies and interest – some of them critically backed by Pakistan" (Hewitt 2003: 89). This marks the second phase of the movement and shift of the movement towards hard-core Islam. The Hizbul's agenda was different from that of the JKLF's secular ideology. The Hizbul introduced the expression '*jihad*' to justify the political violence in the name of Islam. Islam became the religious instrument to influence the ethno-religious sentiments of the people and that left an indelible mark on the Kashmiri society.

The ethno-religious sentiments provided the emotional edge that makes people ready to die or kill in the name of religion. This was squarely the hijacking of the secular component of the Kashmiri identity. The minority Kashmiri Pandit community was targeted and the militants created a terrifying atmosphere in the Valley. The Kashmiri Pandits were forced to leave their homes. Many secessionists groups called upon the Pandits to agree to live under Islamic laws (Nizam-i-Mustafa) or go away (Behera 2000). Slogans like "*Kashmir Me Rehna Hoga, Allah Akbar Kahna Hoga*" (cited in Thomas 2000: 244) psychologically shattered the minority Kashmiri Pandit community. Islamisation of the movement resulted in selective killing of Pandits and eventuated into their mass exodus in 1990 (Behera 2000). This development endorsed the religious turn of the movement that the whole struggle was exclusively of the Muslims, by the Muslims and for the Muslims.

The third phase of militancy started from 1993. It began with the entry of Pakistani infiltrators and Afghani terrorists. Groups such as *Harkat ul Ansar*, *Harkat ul Jihad Islami*, *Harkat ul Mujahideen*, *Jamial ul Mujahideen* and *Lashkar-i-Taiba* came under one blanket called *Jihadi Islam*. This phase marked a negative impression on the masses about the process, specifically when the militants entered the Hajratbal shrine in Srinagar and later surrendered to army. The "Militants lost face and people felt angry for having undergone severe hardships for nothing" (Behera 2000: 183). This was the beginning of a turnaround. Participation of the people in the movement started coming down. One reason for the decline of the movement was the shift from Kashmiri Islamic identity to *Jihadi Islam* (Behera 2000). The second reason may be the involvement of foreign terrorists who identified with Kashmiris Muslims as Muslims and not as

Kashmiris. In the mean time, the objective with which the movement began also faded away because of the pan-Islamic agenda.

Behera highlights the fourth and fifth phases as turning points of the militant movement. The fourth (1994-95) and fifth (1995-96) phases were marked by popular *résistance* towards militancy and exploring political avenues for negotiation, and effort to regain Kashmiri control over the movement. In 1994, the All Party Hurriyat Conference came into existence to launch a political struggle for the freedom of Kashmir. These kinds of pro-independence political parties have mass support in Kashmir (Puri 2002: 158). Yasin Malik of JKLF was released from *jail* in May 1994 and Shabir Shah of People's League in November 1994. The JKLF announced a unilateral ceasefire in 1994 to facilitate dialogue to recapture Kashmiri control over the movement, because outsider's domination had given an adverse turn to the movement. In April 1995, the militants destroyed Kashmir's most revered saint Nund Rishi/Sheikh Noor-ud-Din's shrine *Charar-i-Sharif*. This disillusioned the people and developed inertia among the masses. The major highlights of the fifth phase that led to continuing decline of the militant movement were 'specially the Kashmiri component', 'voluntary surrender of militants', 'peace with honour', restoring of the political process, and redefining Kashmiri identity (Behera 2000: 187-205)

Thus, the roots of the Kashmiri uprising are complex; they are driven by multiple intersecting sources that include policy failures of New Delhi, political and social circumstances in Kashmir, and meddling by Pakistan (Wrising 1995). There was corruption and nepotism in Kashmir politics and lack of socio-economic development of Muslims leading to widespread estrangement of the population as a whole. "Islamic Identity moved into fills the vacuum created by failed elite" (Hewitt 2003: 83). The lack of development opportunities, unemployment, poverty, series of political mishandlings – all these combined issues led to the revolt in 1989. Since 1989 the problem in Kashmir revolved around the ruptured relationship between Kashmiri-speaking-Muslim population and the Indian Union (A.C. Bose 2003).

However, in 1996, the state assembly elections held in Jammu and Kashmir raised the hopes of return to normalcy in Jammu and Kashmir. Farooq Abdullah of the National Conference won the election. The elections in Kashmir were held under the massive presence of the army and were boycotted by the separatist groups. Farooq Abdullah as the Chief Minister of the state had not done much to restore the trust of the people in the democratic process. There was no effort on his part to communicate with the separatist groups such as the All Party Hurriyat Conference and other independent leaders to re-establish peace in the state. However, the level of violence was comparatively low, but the situation again worsened when, on 25 January 1998, the day before the Indian Republic day, 23 Kashmiri Pandits were assassinated in *Wandhama*. It was clear that both the state government and the central government had failed to control the Kashmir situation (Widmalm 2002).

In 1999, Pakistan sent infiltrators in Kargil area to increase the volatility in Kashmir and threaten peace in the region. The Indian army initiated steps to recapture the areas seized by the Pakistani troops and infiltrators. The battle of Kargil was not similar to previous three wars but the situation worsened to such an extent that it was referred as the fourth war between Pakistan and India. Pakistan was highly criticised at the international forums and a separatist group in Kashmir was miffed by Pakistan's this act. The chief of All Party Hurriyat Conference said that it is only Pakistan's weak policy that the Kashmir issue has been reduced to the border dispute from international issue (Behera 2000; Widmalm 2002; Akbar 1999). However, the course of electoral process continued with the threat of militancy and politics of separatism. Since 1996 the state has had three legislative assembly elections – in 1996, 2002, and the most successful one in 2008. Increasing participation of Kashmiri Muslims in the electoral process and the comparatively peaceful situation in Kashmir seemed to suggest that the aspiration of *azadi* among Kashmiri Muslims was on the decline.

In the summer of 2008, Jammu and Kashmir government decided to transfer 99 acres of land in Kashmir to the governing board of the Hindu Amarnath shrine. The decision, once again after several years of relative peace, ignited the Kashmiri ethno-nationalist movement. The Amarnath land controversy led to demonstrations in the Valley (Tremblay 2009). The Valley once again echoed with slogans of *azadi*: “*Hum Kya Chahtey? Azadi!* (We want freedom.) And, it has to be said, in equal numbers and with equal intensity: *Jeevey jeevey Pakistan* (Long live Pakistan). ... Surrounded by a sea of green flags, it was impossible to doubt or ignore the deeply Islamic fervour of the uprising taking place” (Roy 2008: Guardian World News). After eighteen years, Kashmir was boiling again, the government's decision to transfer land to the Hindu shrine was perceived as a step to generate Hindu domination in the region and as a threat to Muslim majority Kashmir region. The cancellation of land-transfer decision led to the disturbances in the Jammu region. The Hindu population of Jammu strongly opposed the decision and protested against the politicisation of Amarnath issue (Tremblay 2009). The Amarnath agitation resulted the widening of the gap between two regions on the basis of religious identities and once again gave reason to the people of the Valley to demand *azadi*. “Ethnonationalist leaders and groups are most successful in mobilizing sentiments for *azadi* when Kashmiri Muslims perceive that the state is no longer acting in their economic interests or sufficiently protecting their distinct religious identity” (Tremblay 2009: 925).

On 11 June 2010, a fresh spurt of mass agitation took place and violence erupted all over the Valley. Stones became the main weapon of the youth, and young stone-pelters, the tools of separatist leaders. People also made use of technology as a new instrument to scream for *azadi*. Internet sites like Facebook and Twitter are new additions to facilitate the agitation. The hard-line

leadership motivates the women and children to lead some of these demonstrations. Women were running community kitchens and pelting stones. According to one of these women,

All these years, Kashmir's women have suffered silently. We have always protested peacefully. But this time the situation is different. Our children are being killed. That's why we don't hesitate from pelting stones. ... They (government) have left us with no option. When we protest peacefully, they open fire on us (*The Indian Express*, Mumbai, 6 August 2010: 6).

The symbols of government authority were the target. Continuous strikes and *bandhs* called by separatist leaders paralysed the Valley. More than 100 people died, many of them were young children. Balraj Puri compared these to the events in Israel or Kosovo: "the model which seems to inspire them is that of the intifada in Palestine, and the Albanian teenagers in Kosovo, who also used stones as their main weapon of revolt." (*The Indian Express*, Mumbai, 12 August 2010: 11). "Hurriyat Conference leader Sayed Ali Shah Geelani called to stone pelting comrades to celebrate August 14 and observe August 15 as Black Day" (Wajihuddin 2010: 4). However, New Delhi took eight weeks to rise from the siesta after a first death on June 11 in the Valley and then again offer "boring clichés as balm" (Akbar 2010: 20).

According to Wajihuddin (2010: 4), "Hawks [Geelani] have sold a rosy dream: Pak-acceded Kashmir will be a haven of peace where they can freely practise Islam and preserve their culture. But the scholars rebut this, calling it nothing but a chimera which will lead to the already bleeding Valley's destruction". He further mentioned about the experience of noted Islamic scholar Maulana Wahiduddin Khan with two young Kashmiri boys and their approach towards the *azadi* of Kashmir:

Khan writes that in the early 1990s two educated Kashmiri youth who were not militants, but condoned acts of militancy against India, met him at his New Delhi home. Khan tried to convince them that their struggle was neither Islamic nor would it bring any freedom. The boys, recalls Khan, insisted they were on the verge of achieving a spectacular success soon. A shocked Khan offered the boys his diary to write it. The boys wrote: The Kashmir which will be created after separation from India will be an Islamic Kashmir, Insha Allah (2010: 4).

The continuous violence and killing of people again ignited the anger among the people. People had lost the faith in mainstream leaders, but, according to Balraj Puri (*The Indian Express*, Mumbai, 12 August 2010: 11), "young people, with their faces covered, told the media that they were [dis]illusioned with the current separatist leadership. It seems the mutual rivalries between groups, and the attitude of the Pakistan government that patronised one group after the other, has eroded their support."

Summary

This chapter has briefly outlined the early period of Kashmir from Hindu civilisation to Buddhist period and to the advent of Islam. Various cultures and religious beliefs have enriched the people of Kashmir over time. The historical context helps us to understand the current socio-political events in Kashmir. The origin of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in 1846 was one of the decisive episodes in the Kashmir's history. Jammu and Kashmir is a Muslim majority state, which, in the pre-independence days was ruled by the Hindu Dogra rulers. During the Dogra rule there was religious discrimination against Muslims. Discrimination and deprivation of basic socio-economic rights of Muslims led to discontentment in the majority population and provoked the ethno-religious consciousness among the Muslim masses. As a result, there was an uprising in 1931 that was initiated by educated Muslims youth and which was later on secularised to make people from all different sects and religious backgrounds to take part in the movement against feudalism.

Post independence, political mishandlings of New Delhi and perceived deprivation led to the insurgency of 1989. Since then, for more than twenty years, the Kashmir Valley seems sometime peaceful and sometimes experiences outburst of demonstrations and protests. The situation in Kashmir explains that the explicit sense of alienation among the youth is still prevailing as it was in 1990. First, they lost faith in mainstream leadership; now the people do not want to embroil their yearning in the rivalries of the separatists groups either. After the successful last assembly election in the state and relatively peaceful atmosphere in the Valley, government possibly has not made the most of the stability of recent years to provide the people with economic opportunities, political reconciliation and regain the trust of Kashmiri Muslims. As a result, the Valley is turning towards violence again and again for the fulfilment of the people's aspirations.

At the societal level, insurgency has led to the transformation of relationships among the Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits. The exodus of the minority community Kashmiri Pandits affected the composite culture and Kashmiri ethnic identity that evolved over the centuries. The migration of Kashmiri Pandits has led to the fracturing of *Kashmiriyat*, that represents the brethren relationships among the people living over there. However, the notion of *Kashmiriyat* has itself become a topic of debate, question marked, and came under scrutiny after the turmoil. The next chapter will deal with the concept of *Kashmiriyat*.
