INTRODUCTION

This is a sociological study of conflict in Jammu & Kashmir, one of the northern and hilly states of India. The conflict is popularly known as ‘Kashmir conflict. Kashmir conflict is not merely of national importance but it is also of International significance. This is because of the fact that the parties involved in the conflict are not merely Kashmiri nationality especially Muslims and state of India but Pakistan is also a party to the conflict due to historical and geographical factors. Issue of transfer of land to Pakistan or right of principalities to either opt India and Pakistan at the time of Partition of India has brought Pakistan and United Nations organization into this conflict.

Furthermore, India and Pakistan have fought three battles on the issue of conflict and, therefore, superpowers of the world and International organizations have directly or indirectly involved in the conflict in order to maintain peace in the subcontinent. The conflict does not merely involve right of self-determination of people, international law and international relation but also is a product of various socio-historical factors. In short, it is the conflict having multiple factors may aptly be referred as protracted ethnic conflict.

Although the conflict has long history, it has flared up and assumed violent form since 1989. Militant struggle has increased manifold in the Kashmir-Valley. In order to combat growing militancy in the valley, government of India has resorted to the use of extensive military power. In the struggle between militant and military of India life in Kashmir has paralyzed, human rights are violated, children have become orphans, women are raped, number of widows have increased. In nutshell, there are innumerable incidents and stories of human suffering and agony.
It is because of large-scale violence in the state of Jammu & Kashmir since 1989 large number of scholars, Journalists and social activists have written over the causes, consequences and resolution of the Kashmir conflict. Everyday one could find some kind of writings in newspapers and reports on television about the conflict. But most of this literature is either impressionistic or motivated. Very few researches have been conducted to find out the causes and consequences of the conflict and suggest some convenient strategy of its resolution. Moreover available researches are conducted mostly from the perspective of political science. Indeed, no known sociological study of the conflict is available. It is, therefore, we have selected this area for our study.

We have designed this study in a manner as it gives information from macro to micro level. The study is organized into five chapters.

First chapter deals with review of theoretical literature related to conflict and conflict resolution. This chapter consists of two sections. The first section introduces a brief sketch of sociological perspectives for understanding conflict in the social context. These perspectives are dialectical and functional. Scholars belonging to both schools of thought are unanimous in their thinking that conflict is a universal phenomenon and its causes lie in social structure. However, over causes and consequences of conflict differences exist among the sociologists. Apart from perspectives meaning, classification, sources and consequences, of social conflict are other prominent issues of this section. Our aim in this section, thus, remained not only to find out the differences or similarities between the perspectives but also to evolve a theoretical framework for the study.

The second part of the chapter provides a brief account of conflict resolution and approaches related to it. Conflict resolution aims at
addressing and removal of those factors, which cause conflict. This section ends by suggesting the viability of non-governmental approaches like track two diplomacy and multi-track diplomacy for resolving protracted ethnic conflict in Kashmir.

Second chapter also consists of two sections, the first section is concerned with portraying the setting in which the conflict occurs. It depicts briefly the area and location, physiography, population and communities and linguistic distribution of the state. Moreover, it gives brief information related to the history, economy and cultural of the state. The main reason to review this section is to gain familiarity with the setting in which conflict persists. Another reason is to explore the socio-historical roots of the conflict.

The second section of this chapter gives a brief account of research design and stages of the study. It also informs us about the formulation of Interview-schedule, respondents their number, religious and regional affiliations. Problems faced by researcher during fieldwork, aims and relevance of the study has also been discussed under separate headings.

Chapter third deals with review of literature about Kashmir conflict. It shows that in Kashmir conflict both exogenous and endogenous sources are involved. These exogenous factors are related with hostile relationship between India and Pakistan as well as ineffective role of UNO (United nations organization) in mediating the conflict or conducting plebiscite in Kashmir. All these exogenous factors are explained under the broad sub-heading of International dimension or exogenous sources.

There are some internal factors, which appear to be responsible for the emergence and persistence of the conflict. These factors are related with politics in Kashmir since 1947, economic conditions of
people, ethnic diversity of the state and role of religion in fomenting the conflict. These factors are explained separately under the broad sub-heading of national dimension of the conflict or endogenous sources.

Chapter four is concerned with analysis of various factors political, economic, ethnic and religious, which became responsible for promoting and sustaining the conflict. Data related to these factors were collected during the fieldwork. Our main aim in this chapter is to explore the connection between Kashmir conflict and various factors-political economic, religious and ethnic. And also to identify the major factor/s involved in the conflict.

The chapter number five deals with analysis of data related with consequences and resolution of the ongoing conflict in Jammu & Kashmir. The first part of this chapter highlights consequences that Kashmir conflict has thrown over politics, economic prosperity, education, family and marriage organization, Kashmiriyat-syncretic cultural identity which cements religious communities together there, rights and liberties of the people. Our main objective in this section, thus, remained to assess what extent the ongoing conflict in the state has effected/influenced the social structure of various religious communities there. Second part of the chapter describes the design and desirability of various conflict resolution models as suggested by different scholars regarding the peaceful resolution of Jammu & Kashmir conflict. Moreover, various models of conflict resolution (see Q. no. 37-48 in the Interview-schedule) over which we have collected empirical data have been analyzed also. Our aim of analyzing these models is to explore their potential for peaceful resolution of Jammu & Kashmir conflict among the people who belong to various ethno-religious communities in the state.
This is an exploratory study for which we have selected descriptive research design. The research was carried out in three different regions of Jammu & Kashmir—Kashmir valley, Jammu and Ladakh. For securing information from respondents Interview-schedule was used. It contains questions related to causes, consequences and resolution of Jammu & Kashmir conflict. Some case studies have been recorded in order to substantiate the findings derived in the analysis of data.

WE have selected 310 respondents. Out of 310, 170 respondents were selected from Kashmir-region, 110 from Jammu, and 30 from Ladakh, respectively.

Following this, we have focused upon religious communities. That is, in region-Kashmir out of 170, 140 respondents were selected purposively from Muslims, 20 from Hindus and 10 from Sikhs, respectively.

In Jammu-region out of 110, 50 respondents each were selected from Hindus and Muslims. 10 respondents were chosen from Sikh community.

While, in the region of Ladakh out of 30, 15 respondents each were selected from Buddhist and Muslim religious communities.

It is important to mention that for making the selection of respondent’s population of each study region and proportion of religious communities in the regions were taken into consideration.

Being an exploratory study our aim is to explore causes, and consequences of the conflict as well as to find out view of people about the way in which conflict is resolved.
Although we have not formulated any specific hypothesis for the study, it gives information about the factors, which are important for persistence of Kashmir conflict. Moreover, our aim is to find out consequences of the conflict for nation in general and Jammu & Kashmir, especially Muslims, in particular. Since no sociological study on Kashmir conflict is available we hope this study would fill up the gap in sociological literature on the conflict. Because a look at the sociological and anthropological literature on conflict, reveal sociologists in India have largely ignored conflict studies. This is perhaps one of the reasons why conflict tradition could not flourish in Indian sociology. Past few decades too have shown that research interest has got focused on ethnic conflicts in northeastern context than on Kashmir conflict. Moreover, due to paucity of sociological studies on Kashmir conflict various stereotypes related to Kashmir conflict have got wide currency. These stereotypes surrounding the conflict would be certainly demolished by this study. In fact these stereotypes have largely underrated the role of sociological factors and political also in promoting conflict in the state. Its relevance would be generating data related with various aspects of the conflict. These data would certainly be useful for researchers and those who theorize about the conflict without having sufficient empirical data. Moreover, information gained from the study would also be fruitful to persons who are in pursuit of resolving the conflict peacefully.