

Kashmir: Paradise or a barricaded valley

Khalil Ahmed Bandy

Department of Education, Govt of Jammu Kashmir, India.

Abstract

If Kashmir is known for its beauty, its hospitality its greenery and scenery and internationally well acclaimed tourist resorts, its lakes, its green lush valleys.

Unfortunately it's also known for most militarized zone, it's also known for unrest and uncertainty, it's also known as a disputed territory, it's a piece of land, people synonymise as paradise, but it's a valley where after consuming the blood of over lakh of human beings, its thirst is still unquenched. It's a valley where one can easily find bunkers and torture camps, it's a valley where civilians most often complain about their human right violation, it's a valley where AFSPA shields killers but not the one killed. It's the valley where thousands of the young ones if once gets disappeared, they never came back, it's a valley where thousands graves are unmarked, it's a valley where blood is cheaper than the water. It's a valley where every household have lost their at least one family member.

It's Kashmir: the barricaded valley.

Keywords: it's also known for unrest and uncertainty, it's also known as a disputed territory

Introduction

God knows Kashmir will get independence or not but from the past 26 years, Kashmir has got funerals, bloodbaths, shillings, cross firing, grenade attacks, curfews and civil curfews, bands and hartals, tortures, human rights violations and above all, an irreparable loss of more than 90,000 killings.

Kashmir is a land of remarkable beauty, blessed by nature with breath taking sceneries and a glorious climate, the Kashmir valley, a fertile well-watered spot, surrounded by high mountains has been described with justification a heaven on earth, a produce rich oasis an area not noted for its abundance (Tabasum 2012) [1]. In the nineteenth century the state of Jammu and Kashmir has acquired a unique geo-political status in the Indian sub-continent. The state has contiguous boundaries with Russia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, China and Tibet that deserve constant vigil and as such it has made the state very important through geographically, politically, economically and from the military point of view (Raina 2002) [4].

In 1991, the historian Alastair Lamb wrote that "it has become apparent that the Indian Republic is faced with, at least in that part of the Vale of Kashmir which it occupies, what can only be described as a terminal colonial situation." Indian-administered Kashmir remains one of the most militarized regions in the world. The history of military violence, disappearances, shootings, extrajudicial killings, torture, arson, and rape has touched virtually every home and family in the valley.

Historians, academicians, philosophers, visitors may have showered praises for the valley but in reality, Kashmir is nothing but mourning valley where one can hardly finds any household where they have not lost their loved ones during the past 26 years and this bloodbath is still continue. Someone has synonymised Kashmir with heaven but if he would have seen what is happening up these days, he would have regret what he said earlier.

Right after 1990, except few prominent figures who have lost their lives; it's the common men losing life's battle

mercilessly. The second generation in the valley is facing extinction, tortures, sexual exploitation and what not. Those students who could have performed brilliantly in their academics are picking up weapons by seeing their dark future because of the third degree torture and committed atrocities.

Whole Kashmir has lost over 90,000 youths and this number will go ahead as there seems no mercy from the state sponsored terrorism. If Kashmir at one side has produced quality civil servants, it has also produced international players; it has also given birth to some talented youth who could have done far better than what others have done so far. In this unending war, Kashmir has lost its Newton and Gavaskar as they are at least lucky as their fellow and relatives are aware of about their whereabouts, but there are thousands of unnamed and unmarked graves in valley about whom, nobody knows who is martyred inside.

This valley has sucked the blood of innumerable youths and its thirst is still unquenched. Mothers have lost their future hopes, sisters have lost their brothers and somewhere sisters been raped in front of brothers. The story itself is disturbing. As per the reports, surveys of various human rights organizations, over one lakh youth have lost their life beside thousands is missing. The numbers of the custodial killings are also in thousands. The properties worth thousands of crores have destroyed and sexual violence is also on the rise.

The armed struggle between militants and security forces increased the violence in the Kashmir valley. The valley of Kashmir became one of the most heavily militarized region and laws like Disturbed Area Act (DAA) 1990, Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) 1990 and Public Safety Act (PSA) 1978 were promulgated (Singh, 2011) [3]. These laws violated the fundamental rights that are enshrined in Article 21 and 22 of the Indian constitution like right to life, liberty, speech, expression, free movement, peaceful assembly and freedom of religion. With the imposition of such laws, death, custodial torture, looting of property, disappearance and extra-judicial killings became the norm (Haq, 2015) [5].

These day most often, because of one reason or the other,

people protests for their rights as this freedom of speech and expression is hallmark of democratic form of government, no one opens fires but in case of Kashmir, security personals starts their action with gunshots only.

Whole of the Haryana was boiling on the issue of Jats reservation, they have looted, destroyed and plundered the national properties worth thousands of crores and on the issue of Patel's reservation in Gujarat, heavy losses are reported but authorities hardly ordered firing on the protestors. It seems there are two yardsticks, one for Kashmiri's and one for the rest of India.

Right from the beginning, when the separatists started their movement, this kind of treatment is met with Kashmiri's more often. Outside Kashmir, they are targeted for being Kashmiris and inside their voices are unheard, their concerns are no concerns for authorities. Indian authorities need to understand that, violence and force have never yielded results, it just escalates the rivalry. For India, as they claim Kashmir is atoot ang, Kashmiris should also be their atoot (Integral) citizens but their actions described something contrary. For the fate of Kashmir, only the governments have changed at centre, nothing else.

The present situation of Kashmir is turning even worse than the before. Initially, Prime Minister Narendar Modi visited Kashmir almost thrice soon after taking oath of office and people were thinking that another Vajpayee is in making, but there perception was wrong and their hopes are dashed. Nothing has changed on the ground and the ongoing bloodbath

in valley is continuous.

The Abhin ang is bleeding and the whole of the nationalist's media is keeping mum as nothing has happened, same media was conducting debates, showing alleged atrocities on non-Kashmiri students in NIT Srinagar and terming the issue as a planned controversy against non-Kashmiri students. This time when the four young lads have lost their lives besides one old lady, no channel is ready to show the news in scroll even. If Kashmir is an integral part of India, then why there are so many things different from the other states of India. None of the state in India is stationed with paramilitary forces in lakhs. Except Kashmir, no state can claim of such use of fierce force and violence just on the basis of military power. No state is as barricaded as Kashmir is, even on a simple movement of a so called VIP; valley is scheduled to be put on high alert. Till few years ago, even text messages on prepaid cell phones were banned.

Apart from few north eastern states, no state is having this draconian law of AFSPA. Not after independence, but only after 1990, its Kashmir only whose bloods is so cheap and over a lakh youth have lost their life. No state can bear the pain and agony of sexual violence, the mass rapes, the tortures as Kashmir have undergone. According to Asian Human Rights Commission 2010, there are 1504 deaths are reported in police custody. According to Asian Watch Report, there are 12 torture centres in valley managed by different paramilitary forces. If someone will start to mention all these mishaps, the lists will be longer and longer.

Table 1

Name of the Interrogation Center	Runners
Old Airport	BSF
Hari Niwas Interrogation Center	CRPF
Papa i	CRPF
Papa ii	BSF
Red 16	BSF
Badami Bagh	Army (RR)
Gogoland	CRPF
Joint Interrogation Center	CRPF and BSF
Bagi Ali Mardan	BSF
Lal Bazaar Police Station	BSF
Hotel Mumta, Dal Lake	BSF
Shiraz Cinema, Khenyar	BSF

Source: Human Rights Watch Report 1993: 108-125.

According to a report, 17,000 people, mostly women, have committed suicide during the last 20 years in the Valley. According to a study by the Medecins Sans Frontieres, "Women in Kashmir have suffered enormously since the separatist struggle became violent in 1989-90. Like the women in other conflict zones, they have been raped, tortured, maimed and killed. A few of them were even jailed for years together. Kashmiri women are among the worst sufferers of sexual violence in the world. 'Sexual violence has been routinely perpetrated on Kashmiri women, with 11.6% of respondents saying they were victims of sexual abuse'".

A state human rights commission inquiry confirmed there are thousands of bullet-ridden bodies buried in unmarked graves in Jammu and Kashmir. Of the 2730 bodies uncovered in 4 of the 14 districts, 574 bodies were identified as missing locals in contrast to the Indian government's insistence that all the graves belong to foreign militants.

In a 1994 report, Human rights watch described summary executions of detainees as a "hallmark" of counter-insurgency operations by Indian security forces in Kashmir. The report further stated that such extrajudicial killings were often administered within hours of arrest, and were carried out not as aberrations but as a "matter of policy". In a 1995 report, Amnesty International stated that hundreds of civilians had been victims of such killings, which were often claimed by officers as occurring during "encounters" or "cross-fire". A 2010 US state department report cited extrajudicial killings by security forces in areas of conflict such as Kashmir as a major human rights problem in India.

On the other hand, the step motherly and biased attitude of paid media, for them mild lathi charge on protesting NIT students is a news to be telecasted at prime time but merciless killings of innocents Kashmiris are having no importance. It's bizarre to say that, on this very issue of Handwara killings

which started from molestation of a girl by security personal, some TV channels even reported that, it's a planned program against the security forces, just to malign the image of paramilitary forces.

Anyway, whether any media channel covers it or not, the number of the innocent killings started from Handwara is now 5. In 2010, Kashmir have also lost more than 180 youth and it's seems, this is routine work and this is unstoppable. The life in valley is paralyzed and the present government is hapless to control the things. And this government will hardly be able to control as this coalition is itself is having conflict of interest. For Kashmir based political party PDP, it may be a loss of human lives in valley, but for BJP, the victims are not Indian sympathisers, so for them it holds no importance. So, no one is losing its place in government circles but Kashmir is losing its glory, its young blood, above all, Kashmir is losing its future.

Conclusion

From Kunan Poshpora incidence to Sopore massacre, from Bijbihara massacre to Saiyalan massacre, from Amarnath land controversy to 2010 Kashmir unrest. One thing is common that, there is mass human rights violation in Jammu and Kashmir. If Kashmir is famous for its beauty in whole of the world, it is now a day's also known as, one of the most militarised and terrorised region of the world. Former American President, George W Bush while keeping Kashmir in mind once said, South Asia could be nuclear flash point. It's no doubt that, Kashmir was and Kashmir is paradise on earth, but the growing hostility between two arch rivals India and Pakistan has made the life of the common man as hell. Naturally, Kashmir is blessed by each and every thing that can increase its charm but the continuous human rights abuse have made this paradise less of a place where civilians resides but a region where armed forces have their number in lakhs and the life for a common man is indescribable. So, one can conclude from above discussion that, Kashmir is no more a paradise.

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