

read was so limited. The growth of publishing made the horizontal circulation of ideas and nationalistic imagination possible.

The boom in publishing also solidified the rival interpretations of history and sharpened the role of the reactionary forces who would try to suppress dissent. Munshi Muhammad Din Fauq attempted to set up a newspaper in 1904, but the Dogra state did not permit him. In 1932, when famous Kashmiri activist Prem Nath Bazaz established the first newspaper, *Vitasta*, it could not last for more than a year owing to the hostility of Pandits. Earlier, Mulk Raj Saraf had tried to establish a newspaper; however, it became an official mouthpiece of the ruling Dogra regime.

Ahmed (2017) records that owing to the absence of local press in 1931, the newspapers from Punjab were also divided into two camps – Hindu Press and Muslim Press – based on the religion practised by their owners and their policies vis-a-vis Kashmir. Newspapers like *Zamindar*, *Inqilab*, *Siyasat*, *Alfaaz* and *Lahore Chronicle* formed the Muslim Press and the cause of the Kashmiri masses. On the other hand, newspapers like *Tribune*, *Prataap*, and *Guru Ganthal* comprised the Hindu Press and took the side of the Hindu Maharaja.

## Psychological Factors

The history of Kashmir is rife with events which, at the outset, appear to drive the religion, but underneath, it's a mix of forces at work. The contestations essentially conflict between the perception of the 'self' and the 'other'. The presence of 'other' reflects transference of power, a radical break, and assumes the privileged position once acquired by the 'self'. If not destroyed by the transcendental other, the self gets completely subsumed, so much so that it loses its entire agency. The ancient Kashmiri history confirms alliances between the ruling elite and Brahmins, providing ideological support for consolidating their polity. However, the social heterodoxy perpetrated by the Brahmins damages the lower classes, which have risen economically and politically by performing mercantile societal functions. This led to a new alliance between Kshatriyas and other lower classes against the Brahminical

heterodoxy. So, when the Buddhist doctrines reached Kashmir during the Mauryan reign, the society was ready to convert to Buddhism. Bazaz (1954) explains that the Mauryan conquest of Kashmir provided a blessing in disguise for Kashmir. Many inhabitants readily accepted the tenets of Buddhism. Mass conversion to Buddhism produced changes in Kashmir's politico-social and cultural sphere. It awakened a spirit of defiance towards social justice.

However, with the end of Kushan rule, Buddhism received a setback in Kashmir as the corrupt practices had crept in. The Buddhist and the Brahminical forces kept on engaging in a long-drawn struggle. However, what looked like a religious battle was a manifestation of status anxiety. Kashmir came under the Muslim Sultans around 1339 A.C. The conditions under which Muslim rule came to be established were very different from the rest of the subcontinent. In Kashmir, a runaway Buddhist prince from Ladakh, Rinchana, came to exert considerable influence in the politics of Kashmir and acceded to the throne. His wide popularity can be gauged by the fact that

Jonraja (2000) calls him a lion among men. After he acceded to the throne, Rinchana expressed his desire to become a Shaivite, but orthodox Brahmins refused entry into the fold. Around the same time, Islam made inroads across Kashmir through the peaceful proselytisation of Sufis from Central Asia. Stein (1900) notes that Islam made its way into Kashmir, not by gradual conversions or conquest. Though Islam became the court religion, the administration was in the hands of Brahmins. However, the social position of Sayeds was threatening the Brahmins now.

The bitterness between the Sayeds and the Brahmins became a class struggle where two elite groups were involved in the battle for power. In contrast, the common masses remained unaware of the persisting situation. In the twentieth century, there were struggles between the interests of business people who had migrated from the neighbouring provinces of Punjab and Delhi and the Kashmiri commercial classes. The status anxiety arises since the self cannot move outside to embrace the otherness fully; it understands the other as always mediated by its own experiences. The self here tried to identify on religious terms; however, more

than religion, prestige, interests, and status marks characterised the situation. Yet again, otherness comes from a difference that leaves the self and the other forever open to change for good or evil.

Later examples, like Kashmir for Kashmiris and Roti Agitation<sup>10</sup>, manifest the same anxiety. However, the 'self' regularly transmutes with the change in the overall situation. In the Kashmir for Kashmiris movement, the threat emanated from the bureaucrats from the neighbouring Punjab as the language of administration was replaced with Persian from Urdu. Bazaz (1954) puts it that armies of outsiders followed the officers from the plains with the intention of exploitation, leaving behind a line of successors to drain resources further.

In this way, the Punjabis and then the Dogra Rajputs began exerting power, which threatened the aboriginal upper classes. For six years, from 1925–1931, educated young Pandits rallied around to demand a due share in the administration of the state at the highest level. During this movement, Kashmiri Pandits worked in unison with Kashmir Muslims, although the stakes were not as high for the Muslims. Yet the bonhomie was short-lived as the Roti Agitation of 1932 was started by the Pandits after Maharaja conceded to opening the door of the Government services for Muslims.

## Intellectual Factors

Understanding Kashmir through the bracketed ethos of 'Kashmiryat' has been the fancied methodological paradigm for most of the scholarship. The valley is imagined as a space where differential communities always lived with unity and harmony till militancy erupted in 1989. The fancied imagination not only presents an ahistorical picture but also denies any

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<sup>10</sup> Glancy Commission recommended series of reforms such as reforms of administrative structure and education, the representation of Muslims in services and minimum freedom for the press and public expression. Maharaja accepted these recommendations, which led to Pandit Yuvak Sabha agitating against these recommendations. (Bose, 2003)