

Haqqani (2005) writes that the Hizbul Mujahideen carried out a series of campaigns to disarm other militant groups. It also marked a consistent smear campaign against the JKLF. Pamphlets were distributed calling JKLF a secular, atheist party with limited vision. Some pamphlets explained how JKLF worked for a small territory while Hizbul Mujahideen worked for a more significant Islamic cause. The famous slogans of “*Hum Kya Chahtay, Aazadi*” were added with a qualifier- “*Aazadi ka matlab kia-La ilahaha Illallah*” (What does freedom mean? There is no God but Allah), “*Yahaan Kya Chalega, Nizam e Mustafa*” (Which System will be allowed to function here, only the system of Prophet Muhammad) “*Pakistan say rishta kya, La ilaha Illah*” (What is our relationship with Pakistan, there is no God but Allah).

This new campaign was more ruthless as the political rivals, mainly from the JKLF, were eliminated. According to JKLF figures, Hizbul Mujahideen eliminated more members than the state military apparatus. Civil society efforts at negotiation between the two also failed to yield any results. Staniland (2016) writes that the Hizbul Mujahideen marginalised the JKLF by executing and threatening its members. Street battles in Srinagar, assassinations of JKLF fighters, and public denouncement of militant nationalism were indicators of the fragile social infrastructure Hizbul Mujahideen was building.

Disappointed with the target assassinations and political differences, Hizbul Mujahideen's founding commander, Ahsan Dar, resigned from the organisation. Given his popularity, the resignation caused widespread resentment in the organisation and massive defections towards the new Muslim Mujahideen. Fair (2014) notes that in the entire history of Hizbul Mujahideen, one can observe political differences within the organisation to the level that target assassinations of fellow commanders were also done.

Strategies of Hizbul Mujahideen

Hizbul Mujahideen was intensely owned by Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan. Since the Jamaat-

e-Islami of Kashmir was under tight scrutiny by security agencies, the party could not publically endorse the politics of Hizbul Mujahideen. They ended up playing both sides, disavowing a connection publically but clandestinely supporting it.

The most crucial reason for Hizbul Mujahideen to emerge as a robust organisation was its access to the networks of Jamaat-e-Islami. The central processes were built around the horizontal ties Jamaat had cultivated over the years. Ahsan Dar, the first chief commander of the organisation, pronounced the organisation the “sword arm of the Jamaat”.³⁶ The administrative control was built around Jamaat’s shura control, and the preexisting social ties were used to form a militancy grid.

The first strategic goal that Hizbul Mujahideen followed was to cleanse its membership of affiliates who did not subscribe to Jamaat ideology. To accomplish the task, constitutional changes were made. The offices of secretary general and patron were annulled for creating the position of chief patron. A permanent *Majlis-i-Shura* was also established as a twelve-member command council. The command council was to be elected by the *Majlis-i-Numaindgaan* (council of representatives), consisting of two senior commanders from each district in Jammu and Kashmir. At the top of the ladder would be the supreme commander, followed by the deputy supreme commander (one or more than one person could be put at this post), followed by the field operation commander, who would be in control of three officiating chief operation commanders: the first one being field spokesperson, logistics and military advisor and the financial chief. Divisional, district, battalion, company, and section commanders would follow the field operation commanders. This was followed by a strong network of overground workers (OGWs) and underground workers (UGWs). The overground workers were primarily members of the Jamaat and were the primary contact links between the militants.

36 <http://www.risingkashmir.com/news/pak-backed-jklf-hm-my-creation> [Accessed 5 September 2018]. Interview with Abbas Masoodi, political analyst, dated 10 June 2017.

The organisation's straightforward decision-making process and internal security provided direction and controlled the group, sharply contrasting with JKLF. There was a clear distinction between military and administrative functions, with the administrative wing being the decision-maker.

Likewise, geographically, the valley was divided into units: Budgam, Ganderbal, Kangan was the first one; Baramullah, Kupwara, Bandipore was the second one; Anantnag, Kangan, Shopian, Pulwama was the third one; Poonch, Rajori was the fourth one; Udhampur, Doda, Kishtawar, Bhaderwah was the fifth one.³⁷

Hizbul Mujahideen could also mobilise Jamaat-linked social networks in parts of Doda and Bhaderwah. Prominent Jamaatis would identify young men, some having been educated at Jamaat-run Falah ul Aam schools. They would persuade young men to join the ranks using moral and religious authority and established social linkages. This setup also ensured control of finances and weapons. The Jamaat members and the sympathisers were the crucial connections that linked local mobilisation with the organisation's overall structure. Behera (2007) writes that the organisational network of the Hizbul Mujahideen spanned the divisional and district levels in the valley. The Jamaat-e-Islami recruited the Hizbul Mujahideen cadre. In totality, the social resources of Jamaat contributed to the decisive ascendancy of Hizbul Mujahideen as a dominant militant group. In addition, the Hizbul Mujahideen cadre was trained initially mostly at the Hizb-e-Islami camps, which had better combat strategies. So, the cadre was better equipped militarily and strategically than JKLF and other fringe organisations. It had access to wireless technology, which was unthinkable for any other militant organisation then.

With the closure of the Afghan war, the Hizbul Mujahideen also started to get fighters who participated in the Afghan war, and this gave a boost to their position. However, with time, the presence of foreign militants led to socio-institutional compromises.³⁸ The foremost com-

37 Ibid.

38 Interview with Gayoor Dar, columnist, dated 25 December 2016.

promise was with the political intentionality and the politics of control. Often, the foreign militants had wrong notions of the political context and ended up creating a landscape of their own that was beyond any power of control. And so, there was no longer any control over the outcomes. With this argument, political intentionality becomes impossible because it cannot separate the domestic causes from the global ones, disintegrating causality.

The cadre was encouraged to read about Islamic Theology and Islamic history, particularly books written by Abu Ala Maududi, the founder of Jamaat-e-Islami. The value of martyrdom in Islam was repeatedly espoused. “We had a problem with JKLF’s perspective. We were not ready to die in the name of secularism”, informed a former recruit.³⁹

One of the significant challenges that Mujahideen faced was maintaining effective communication networks. The foremost challenge was finding a reliable way to communicate between the fighters on two sides of the line of control. Usually, couriers were used to communicating, but with the security crackdown, they were arrested before they could speak. In the 1990s, ISI moved to assist the militant cadre in using the communication system. It intended for the trainees to handle a wide range of information, which included sending the trainees to Al-Jihad University of Technology in Peshawar to learn telegraphic and radio communication methods to streamline its operational functions.⁴⁰

In the aftermath of 9/11, the space for militant activities constricted immensely and strategically; there was a significant shift in terms of how the militant organisations functioned. In the new course of action, militants were told to avoid media attention and refrain from making inflammatory statements. Most militant offices were moved from city centres to remote areas. The signboards were removed from the offices, and fighters were strictly asked to abstain from wearing military fatigues and stop adopting *Kunyat*, the Arabic style of the nickname. Words like *Lashkar*, *jaish*, and *sipah* were avoided at all conversation levels. Miller and Gelleny (2010) note that there were also significant changes in militant

39 Anonymous interviewee, dated 10 June 2017.

40 Ibid.

tactics. The fighters were now sent in smaller groups. Militant organisations like *Al-Jehad*, *Al Umer*, and *Lashkar-e-Toiba* were asked to work as one group. Another strategy was to create new fronts like Freedom Fighters for Kashmir and the Kashmir Resistance Force to camouflage Pakistani fighters behind Kashmiri organisations.⁴¹

Conclusion

Since the consciousness of political and cultural difference from ‘others’ constantly needs a referent ‘them’ vs. ‘us’, 1989 provided significant context to the complex interplay of clashing valuational identities. Firstly, it laid bare the state’s role in sponsoring formal nationalism and simultaneously intervening through legal and constitutional structures to suppress the presence of local nationalism. Individual and collective identity formation processes are accelerated by intervention through legal and constitutional institutions. Over time, the historical references and symbols the state used created a divergence between the state-national and ethno-national identities. Despite the state’s overarching presence in the larger socio-political environment, the underlying sentiments of independent existence existed on social, political, cultural, and economic lines.

Throughout the political history of Jammu and Kashmir post-1947, an extensive political patronage system has been maintained. The result of this institutionalisation of patronage politics and the constant stifling of democratic opposition was the strengthening of alternate spheres of representation that were not completely invisible in the political domain. The alternate mobilisation was pursued through several political processes. The purpose here is to recognise what Guha (1983) calls statist discourses of nationalism, which include autonomous subjectivity of the collective identity. Nationalist movements are often denied recognition as frequent subjects of history by the statist discourses, while the nationalist movements pursue their political designs.

41 Interview with Tariq Rahman, village level social worker, dated 3 June 2017.

The post-colonial states imposed control through a pronounced focus on centralisation and hegemonic power, and the entire engagement was restricted through official processes. Any alternate mobilisation was confronted with coercion and placed outside the confines of legality. Thus, an institutional-specific definition of nationalism was churned out and implemented using the political elite. Since the demotic affiliations of self-legitimising political agency were underpinned, it led to the complete repudiation of the state-created institutions. In a way, two mutually incompatible vocabularies –institutional and valuational- were operating without a viable dialogue. As the state resorted to coercion as the only way out, the autonomous political agency often established non-state communication channels, making militancy with popular support inevitable. The advent of militant nationalism altered the development of nationalist ideology in many ways, with the strength of a particular militant group enforcing the domination of a specific group ideology.

