

this association was that it extended beyond the territorial divisions, and representatives from all parts of the undivided Jammu and Kashmir became a part of it. However, to make the Muslim Conference inclusive, the party was converted into a National Conference in 1939. Abdullah (1986) writes that the policy of admitting non-Muslims was neither tactical nor diplomatic. Therefore, a sincere voice opened the doors for all minorities to join the fight against autocracy. This political strategy of transforming the politics of grievances into a successful nationalistic movement draws an analogy in Gellner (1983), who considers that assimilative functions could be performed either through triumphant nationalism or through education. Prem Nath Bazaz, who was Shiekh's companion in this effort, wrote a letter to Mahatma Gandhi, explaining the direction of Kashmir politics to him. Bazaz (1944) wrote that only nationalism could save his country and community because neither the Hindus nor the Muslims could wipe out one or the other from the government. Since Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims did not live in segregated localities, communalism would endanger their lives. It is only nationalism that would save such families. Consequently, members who aligned with the Punjab-based Muslim politics did not become a part of the rechristened National Conference and relaunched Muslim Conference. This splitting of ranks had many ramifications for the state's politics in the years to come, as their vision was more closely aligned with the idea of Pakistan and pro-Pakistan politics in the coming years.

## Educational Factors

In the context of Kashmir, education was intermeshed with the structures and functions of the established hierarchies. The early Dogra state did not intervene in the indigenous educational system, as it was hectic consolidating its dominions. The notion essentially was education was the prerogative of the ruling class, and hence, Kashmiri Muslims would be kept away from education. The Census of India (1911) notes that in 1910, there were only 15 educated Muslim males compared to 453 Hindu

males per thousand of the population; the number grew to 19 for Muslims and 508 for Hindus in the 1921 Census of India.

As the state shirked from providing mass education, the public discourses perpetuated by the absence of schooling shaped the contours of nationalism. Notably, the relegation of the Kashmiri language to the background in all educational and administrative matters became an issue of concern in these discourses. These concerns also became prominent as Punjab-based Muslim organisations had taken to highlight the educational deprivation of Kashmiri Muslims. Some organisations contributed by providing scholarships to talented Kashmiri Muslims who, towards the end of the 1930s, assumed leadership roles to enhance the status of Muslims.

One of the first organisations to be set up for educational and moral reform was *Madrasa Anjuman Nusrat-ul-Islam*, established in 1889. Within a few years of the establishment of this madrasa, institutes of a similar nature started cropping up. The purpose of these institutions was to ensure religious as well as scientific education for Muslims who were educationally deprived and to create a social awakening among the Kashmiri Muslims. This development continuously harked on the glorious Muslim past during the reign of Kashmiri Sultans, and the only way to reclaim the same position was through education.

Bazaz (1954) observes that Muslims had begun to feel their backwardness. They approached the government for intervention in the sphere of education. These requests were not heeded initially, but as the demands grew louder, Kashmir Durbar sought the services of an educational commissioner from British India.

Conversely, the most critical aspect was by the late 1920s, the demands of the Kashmiri Muslim elite had gone beyond the provision of just ensuring educational opportunities for Kashmiri Muslims. The educational platform became a platform for the state to acknowledge the distinct demands of the Kashmiri population. Though educational reforms were introduced in 1926, when primary education was made free and compulsory in the municipal limits of Srinagar, the discourse on education was deeply linked with the more argumentative discourse on political, economic, and social rights.

In retrospect, a significant drawback of these reform organisations working towards education was paying attention to Kashmiri in favour of English and Urdu. The language and education guidelines reflected the biases of the Kashmiri Muslim elite, early looking at segmental interests working in their favour. This predicament takes us to Gellner's (1985) thesis of linking the notion of education to the viable modern high culture. Gellner sees education as an amalgamation of skill sets, which ensures the reformulation of skills. It is a wise skill developed for a non-rigid, adaptable state of mind rather than a single-item list. If a state ensures mass education for all its citizens, it inevitably allows for economic and social mobility and homogeneity. However, in cases where a state has a biased approach towards disseminating education, it may be with the intent of monopolising access to power privilege. This monopolisation debars the filtration of education as it could be a counter-entropic trait.

The advent of education also meant contestations between the high and low definitions of religion. The evolving matrix of social and political realities was spurring the emergence of a politicised religious identity. This led to an intense focus on original definitions of Islam and the perceived advances of the 'other' within the community. It was perhaps the first time the sacrality of religious sites, beliefs, and practices was questioned. The position of shrines came into question, which was otherwise unthinkable in the Kashmiri socio-cultural milieu.<sup>8</sup> Questioning the shrine also meant attacking the position of the Sayeds/Pirs, who had migrated from various parts of central Asia to preach Islam. Shrines were critical sites for rural-urban political and economic exchange and a repository of landed wealth and social capital. The management of

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8 Shrines were a central component of Kashmiri society and Kashmiri Islam in particular. It had an extremely important role in spiritual and temporal life of Kashmiris. For more see Gauhar (1998). Hanafism is one of the four Sunni Islamic schools of jurisprudence. It is named after the scholar Abu Hanifah and has the largest number of followers in Sunni Muslim thought. The sources from where Hanafism derives Islamic law are the Quran and the hadiths of Prophet Muhammad.

shrines would be done by a caretaker, the Pir family, or a couple of families, which would provide these functions for generations together. Contrary to the principles of Islam, the class of Pirs/Syeds emerged as a power group that resorted to social stratification based on one's origin and chance of birth in a particular family. Though the practices of pollution and purity were not observed strictly, there was a visible prejudice towards patronage or matrimonial alliances.

Since their formation, Anjuman-e-Nusratul Islam and the associated madrassas were engrained in Hanafi philosophy; they launched a tirade against the Shrine worship. The shrine supporters accused them of Wahhabism<sup>9</sup>. They would, in turn, call them *Mushriks* (saint-worshippers) who associated partners with Allah. The debates around the sacrality assumed the form of petitions requesting the Darbar to restrict each other's activity. Likewise, Anujuman-e-Ahl-i-Hadith joined the chorus against shrine worship and allied with the local *ulema* with similar ideological leanings. Khan (1999) informs us that Anjuman-e-Ahl-e-Hadis was not liked by the Mullahs and issued fatwas against debarring its members from attending the mosques. Along these lines, education served as a channel for religious modernisation, for holding textual interpretation supreme against Pirs's pronouncements and as a crystalliser of dissent against the Dogra state.

Contact with Punjab and the spread of education encouraged an expansion of the publication market, particularly in Srinagar. Newspaper circulation figures rose noticeably in the 1920s, and the circulation of books in English, Urdu, and Kashmiri also grew. Most of these books and pamphlets were published in Lahore and Amritsar, further cementing the relationship between Punjabi and Kashmiri politics. The progress in the print industry quickly created a reading public and simultaneously mobilised them for socio-political purposes. The role of print became crucial in an age when the production of knowledge and the skill set to

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9 Wahabbism is an Islamic movement founded by Muhammad Ibn Abdul Wahab, advocating veneration of practices like veneration of saints, visiting tombs etc. The movement is considered as ultra-conservative and puritanical.

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 Ganthaal* 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