

RADICALISATION OF YOUTH IN KASHMIR : **STUDY OF INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST** **RECRUITMENT**

A Dissertation submitted to the Punjab University, Chandigarh in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences

By

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CERTIFICATE

I have the pleasure to certify that Brig Roopesh Mehta, SM has pursued his research work and prepared the present dissertation titled “**Radicalisation of youth in Kashmir: Study of increased local recruitment**” under my guidance and supervision. The dissertation is the result of his own research and to the best of my knowledge, no part of it has earlier comprised any other monograph, dissertation or book. This is being submitted to the Punjab University, Chandigarh for the degree of **Master of Philosophy in Social Sciences** based on curriculum of **Advance Professional Programme in Public Administration (APPPA)** of **Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA)**, New Delhi.

I recommend that the dissertation of **Brig Roopesh Mehta, SM** is worthy of consideration for the award of **M.Phil degree of Punjab University, Chandigarh**.

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APPPA - 45

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SELF-DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation titled “**Radicalisation of youth in Kashmir: A study of increased local terrorist recruitment**” for the award of Master of Philosophy Degree in Social Sciences of Punjab University, Chandigarh is original work and that this work or a part of has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma of either this or any other University.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

| ABBREVIATION | FULL FORM |
|---------------------|---|
| AFSPA | ARMED FORCES SPECIAL POWERS ACT |
| AGUH | ANSAR GAZWA UL HIND |
| ANEs | ANTI NATIONAL ELEMENTS |
| CM | CHIEF MINISTER |
| CM | CHIEF MINISTER |
| FT | FOREIGN TERRORIST (MOSTLY PAKISTANI) |
| HM | HIZBUL MUJAHIDEEN |
| IA | INDIAN ARMY |
| IB | INTERNATIONAL BORDER |
| ISI | INTER SERVICES INTELLIGENCE OF PAKISTAN |
| ISIS | ISLAMIC STATE OF IRAQ AND SYRIA |
| ISJK | ISLAMIC STATE OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR |
| Jel | JAMAAT I ISLAMI |
| JeM | JAISH E MOHAMMED |
| LC | LINE OF CONTROL |
| LeT | LASHKAR E TAYYIBA |
| LT | LOCAL TERRORIST |
| OGW | OVER GROUND WORKER |
| PoK | PAKISTAN OCCUPIED KASHMIR |
| SATP | SOUTH ASIAN TERRORISM PORTAL |
| SATP | SOUTH ASIAN TERRORISM PORTAL |
| SF | SECURITY FORCES |
| TANZEEM | URDU WORD FOR ORGANISATION |
| UJC | UNITED JIHAD COUNCIL |

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Methodology

“The purpose of terrorism lies not just in the violent act. It is in producing terror. It sets out to inflame, to divide, to produce consequences which they then use to justify further terror.”

- Tony Blair

Terrorism flowing out of radicalization of societies, and youth, in particular, is the primary security challenge for nation states. Indian internal security challenges are numerous but none as immediate and worrying as the State and now a Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. Separatism, which got a fillip in 1989, has seen the state engulfed in violence for the last three decades. The terror tanzeems of varying politico-social ideologies have operated in Jammu and Kashmir with varying impact. Lately, post the conflicts and violence in the Middle East and Afghanistan, religious radicalization has added another worrying dimension to violence in Kashmir. The legislative action of 05 Aug 2019 has added worries of more Kashmiri youth being vulnerable to radical thought and action.

Radicalisation is defined as a process wherein a person comes to accept the use of violence for self believed goals or ideals. The notion of ‘radicalisation’ is generally used (by some states) to convey the idea of a process through which an individual adopts an increasingly extremist set of beliefs and aspirations. This may include, but is not defined by, the willingness to condone, support, facilitate or use violence to further political, ideological, religious or other goals. (UN HRC Report para 19)

Kashmir’s troubled past goes beyond the 1947 accession and probably spans nearly six to eight centuries. It is a state where almost every sect, class or religion has been at the end of exploitation at various times of history. The first distinct phase was in the 14th century under the Sultans (1339 -1413), with the period 1389-1413 especially brutal against the local Brahmins(Grover, 1995) The Second phase was under the Mughals from 1540 to 1707, with mostly benevolent rule till persecution by Aurangzeb which lead to the Kashmiri Pandits approaching Sri Guru Teg Bahadur for help, subsequently leading to his martyrdom. Invasion of Ahmed Shah Abdali in 1753, led to a period upto 1819 of oppression, persecution and

plunder except for a brief period under Sukhjiwan Mal. In 1819 Maharaja Ranjit Singh defeated the Afghans and established a Sikh rule which ended with a loss to British in Anglo-Sikh war in 1846. The British transferred the state to Maharaja Hari Singh in 1846 which established a Dogra rule till 1947, a period the muslims of Kashmir faced religious discrimination. Anti Dogra agitations started in the 1930s which continued till 1947 and the signing of the instrument of accession. The millenea of Muslim and Dogra rules saw the Kahmiri Pandits at receiving the end of persecution under various Muslim rulers and later appointment on clerical posts under the Dogras, the Pandits gained economic status under the Dogra rule. In the post Independence era, the land reforms of Sheikh Abdullah corrected the economic disparity to a large extent. The pundits were sidelined from the power centre and control shifted to Kashmir based Muslims. The final blow as far as the pandits were concerned was delivered in 1989, leading to the mass exodus.

Kashmir maintained a cordial communal atmosphere in 1947 despite the trauma of partition affecting most of Punjab and Jammu, the period probably the best depiction of the famed spirit of *Kashmiriyat*. National Conference and Sheilh Abdullah had a huge role in this phase. It reflected the impact of secular ideals of Kashmir's popular leader Sheikh Mohd Abdullah. 1950 to 80s saw a period of un-stability with political machinations at the state and centre level leading to the unrest starting in 1989.

The current generations of young Kashmiris have been brought up under an environment of political strife and violence between terrorists and the state forces. The mental health of persons affected by people affecttted by years of living in a conflict zone needs urgent attention (MSF,2016). Kashmir is experiencing a youth bulge with these vulnerable youth growing in an era of violence and poor governance. Even among the youth the experiences and hence the beliefs vary for those who saw the early 1990s, from those who were born after 1995 or the millennials. It may be wrong to treat the entire 15-30 age group of Kashmiris as one generation or those with similar belief structure. These need to be explored as separate population subsets.

Social media and internet have provided access to both education and propaganda, they are tough to distinguish for anyone, especially a young vulnerable mind. The narratives or beliefs are changing faster than earlier. The influence of the old leadership including the state parties, the hurriyat and the terror tazeems are all facing challenges very few understand. There is no tall or mass leader who convincingly holds the imagination or trust of the young

Kashmiri population. An insight into the minds of these youth will provide entry points to explore methods to prevent radicalization.

Problem Statement

1. Kashmir has been a battle ground for ideas and influence for a few centuries now. Social media has made access to outside influence easier. The trend post 2013 is of an increasing number of local youth joining the terror tanzeems despite knowing the short shelf life of a jihadi. The reported figures for yearly local recruitment from 2013-17 were progressively increasing on a yearly basis numbering 6,53,66,88 and finally 126 in 2017("Local Recruitment". 2018). There is a need for research to get insight into the minds of these youth to understand their motivations and method of recruitment. Such a study would give inputs for policy planners and execution agencies on measures to reduce instances of Kashmiri youth picking up weapons.
2. The spread of Al Qaeda in the 90s, followed by ISIS in 2014 has focused the world's attention on radicalization that has fed these global terror organizations. The tentacles have spread across the globe with varying but violent effects. Disparate terror groups have aligned to these global terror organisations; some connections are organizational but equally dangerous links are in ideology. The influence of these more violent or radical streams of Islamic terror organisations are visible in parts of J&K, and there is a distinct risk of it having affected more individuals and areas. There is a need for a study to identify the reasons and method of spread of extreme radical thought in order to develop counter measures to negate the same. The western academic world and security establishment have carried out focused studies on the phenomenon of radicalization with a broad canvass which include white supremacists and Islamic jihadists in the research. There are terror focused research centers and NGOs working in the field for understanding radicalization, building strategies and executing counter radicalization strategies. These studies provide a framework for understanding radicalization process which can be updated for cultural differences. There is a need to have a primary study to explore and understand the radicalization methods used in Kashmir.
3. Indian counter terrorism strategy in Kashmir rests on eliminating terror threat in Kashmir. This strategy leads to good success on annual basis. However, while the terrorist is killed terrorism finds ways to sustain by recruiting new terrorists. The two options used are infiltration of trained terrorists from Pakistan and the local

recruitment from Kashmir. Infiltration from Pakistan is largely controlled by improved LC management helped by construction of the LC fence. Increased local recruitment is proving to be the Achilles' heel of Indian counter terror strategy with the trend of increased terror recruitment.

4. The Indian response to the weakness has to be on two fronts. One, build counter narratives and counter engage Kashmiri youth by an upgraded perceptions management strategy. Two, an effective recruitment prevention strategy at an operational level. This study shall focus on recruitment prevention strategy and plan in Kashmir.

Methodology

Justification for the Study

The increase in terror recruitment in Kashmir is a combination of societal, political and religious causes. There is an increased influence of religious indoctrination which is feeding into a narrative of victimhood. The security strategy in Kashmir is on three basic pillars. One, neutralize terrorists to remove the threat of violence from Kashmiri society. Two, prevent terrorist infiltration from Pakistan by better LC domination including routes from IB sector. Three, prevent local recruitment in terrorist tanzeems. The third pillar of prevention of local terror recruitment has been in last few years leading to increased local recruitment. The study is to analyze the third pillar and bring forward recommendations to improve it.

Research Gaps

There are substantial studies available on radicalization in the world. However, the literature on Kashmir with a primary study focused on terrorists is very limited. Interactions with research scholars reveal that lack of availability of data from government sources and the security concerns for primary study in Kashmir combine to prevent Kashmir terror focused studies. The following research gaps have been identified after study of the available literature. The literature review is covered later in this chapter.

1. The narratives leading to radicalization are likely to be a mix of social, political and religious origin. There is a need for more accurate identification of the narrative that leads to radicalization of youth leading to picking a weapon.

2. Government sponsored research has been focused on larger issues of Kashmir society and their political, social, economic, governance aspirations. There is a shortfall in a focused primary study on radicalization leading to recruitment in terror tanzeems.

Research Objectives

The following research objective(s) for the study had to be tempered based on the feasibility in terms of access/ability to carry out primary research and time available. The broad defined objectives were

1. To identify the narrative and motivations leading to youth in Kashmir picking weapon against the state.
2. To understand the process and role of various players leading to the radicalization of Kashmiri youth leading to picking of weapons against the state.
3. To identify the process to identify youth vulnerable to picking a weapon and extreme violent ideologies.
4. To develop a strategy to prevent the recruitment of youth in Kashmir valley.

Research Questions

What factors are the predominant causes for terrorist recruitment in Kashmir? What can be done to reverse the trend of increased local recruitment? The specific strands to explore include:-

1. What are the prime reasons for the success of terror tanzeems increase in local recruitment? What is the impact of economic and educational background? What is the ideological motivation of these new recruits? Do the recruits fall into a specific profile that makes a person more vulnerable to terror indoctrination?
2. Combination of status, identity, revenge and adventure are known reasons or motivations behind most terrorist recruits.
3. What is the role of Kashmiri society and family in the radicalization of the youth in J&K?
4. What is the process of recruitment into terror tanzeems in Kashmir?

5. What is the risk of extreme violent terror ideologies finding roots in Kashmir valley?
6. What recruitment prevention strategy can be applied in Kashmir valley?

Research Methodology

The research methodology chosen was a combination of qualitative and quantitative approach. In the quantitative part both exploratory and descriptive designs have been used. The steps were:-

Qualitative Research. This phase was based on review of existing literature on the subject of terrorist recruitment at global level and then more specifically in Kashmir. The research involved a detailed literature review and compilation of the chapter on the Understanding Terrorist Recruitment: The International Experience. This phase had detailed inputs from academic studies mostly focused on Al Qaeda and ISIS or their affiliates. This phase also included the analysis of existing research on terrorist recruitment in Kashmir. The overall inputs were used for a more focused quantitative research.

Quantitative Research. This phase involved interviews and discussions with experts to build basic understanding and preparation of two questionnaires. The first designed to get inputs of experts; these were a combination of inputs received face to face filling of questionnaires, with value addition in discussions on various facets as the expert responded to the questions. The second was a questionnaire designed for Kashmiri youth. The second faced a challenge of access due to the security situation and lack of means to visit Kashmir for sufficient period. The internet curbs led to nearly all inputs being received in person. The inputs are a mix of those received first hand in Kashmir, group interviews and form inputs from Kashmiri students in Jammu and Delhi.

Literature Review

It is planned to limit the literature review to the last 15 years to have inputs that are current. Some of the literature reviewed is of western publications due to the absence of a similar document in the Indian context; these are specific to Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Identifying Entry Points of Action in Counter Radicalisation(Cozzen, 2006).

The paper by Jeffrey B Cozzens for Danish Institute of International Studies (DIIS) was commissioned by the Danish ministry of Foreign Affairs as a policy study on how to counter radicalization through development works. “The paper introduces a simple model of a ‘continuum’ of Salafi-Jihadi radicalization – a system spanning from an individual’s initial embrace of the Salafi-Jihadi radicalization-a system spanning from an individual’s initial embrace of the salafi-Jihadi ideology worldview to the commissioning of violence and its subsequent legitimization” (Cozzens, 2006). The author postulates that ideology works in tandem with social processes and other grievances, however, “causality cannot be wholly ascribed to structural deficiencies like poverty, politics or discrimination” (Cozzens, 2006). The paper elaborates on Michael Tramby’s phases of radicalization based on the study of the Hambur cells. The phases are individual alienation and marginalization, spiritual quest, the process of radicalization, meeting and associating with like-minded people(socialization), gradual seclusion and cell formation, acceptance of violence, connection with gate keeper(a militant connected to a terrorist network) and finally going operational. Sageman later postulated a interpret/prescribe, separate, obligate, activate and finally defend cycle of Salafi-jihadi radicalization process. A jihadi hopes to “secure salvation for themselves, their families and the wider ummah” (Cozzens, 2006, pg 12).

Insight from a Database of LeT and HM Militants(Fair, 2014). Journal of Strategic Studies Studies paper of 2014 was based on a Christine Fair led to study at West Point which included a study of 918 LeT and 707 HM biographies, 1994 to 2007. It was based on biographies published by the terror tanzeems to honor the killed cadres. This data includes data of both Indian and Pakistani terrorists operating in Kashmir. The biographies provided data on the militant’s birthplace, education, recruitment, and training. The analysis challenged many common myths about militants in these organizations and hence the error in mitigation attempts. A terrorist on a mission has to go through multiple selections – recruitment, selection for advanced training, lobbying for selection for a mission, infiltration and then execution of a mission. Some were personally selected by Hafiz Saeed for a mission. For Kashmiri origin terrorists there is an additional phase of exfiltration. The median recruitment age of LeT was 16.5 years compared to 17.3 years of HM. The median death age was 21 for LeT and 23.5 for HM. Typically LeT had more Punjabi Pakistanis upto 89%, 5% from Sindh, 1% were PoK Kashmiris, 3% from KPK and 1% from J&K. In comparison HM had 17% Punjabis, 17% PoK, 5% KPK, 3% Sindhis and 49% from J&K. There were a few

others as well. The majority were from hinterland with only about 2% hailing from places near the Line of Control. Despite the differences in origin and training the place of death in a terror act was overlapping indicating similarity in targets and modus operandi. As far as the terrorists' profile is concerned the study found no evidence of lesser education or economic profile. An average terrorist was of a better education than the median age of the resource pool. This confirms the hypothesis that the tanzeem leader had a resource pool to choose from and hence chose the more effective and capable.

Kashmir: Path to Peace (Bradnock, 2010). Robert W Bradnock steered a survey commissioned by Dr Saif al Islam Qadhafi in May 2009. It was the first poll to be conducted on both sides of the Line of Control(LC). There were 3774 interviews with 2374 from J&K and 1400 from PoK. Certain districts including Neelum, GB, Kupwara, Doda and Pulwama were not included. The study was commissioned to find options for lasting peace in Kashmir. The main findings were as below

1. 44% population in PoK and 43% population in J&K favoured Azadi. Kashmir valley voted 74 to 95% for independence while the figure was 0% in Jammu and 20-30 % in Ladakh. "These results support the already widespread view that the plebiscite options are likely to offer no solution to the dispute. Nor is there evidence that an independence option could offer a straightforward alternative" (Bradnock, Page 30). Looking at plebiscite would give an unclear mandate since only five of the 18 districts polled had majority opting for Independence. The fact that Independence is not an option in the UN resolution also makes the option unfeasible.
2. The option for retaining LoC in present form had low acceptability in Kashmir valley ranging from 1 to 11%, while south of Pir Panjal Range the acceptance was from 44 to 93%. In PoK the acceptance was between 4 and 38%. A liberalized LoC had higher acceptance overall ranging from 66 to 98%. This was probably the option with maximum chances of success if Indian and Pakistani leadership can build a model.
3. Votes to join India were low in Kashmir valley and Punch-Rajouri while higher in Jammu and Ladakh region. In Kashmir valley the figures were from 2 to 22%, going upto 73% in parts of Jammu and 80% in parts of Ladakh. In PoK, the figures were from 0 to 3%.
4. Vote to join Pakistan was low in Kashmir ranging from 2 to 7%, it was zero in Jammu and Ladakh. In PoK, it varied from 39 to 64%. Indicating that the option

driven by separatists and terror groups like LeT, HM and JeM don't find favor with most Kashmiris.

5. On the aspect of main problems, unemployment was a common thread in most of J&K with figures from 48% to 98%. Government corruption was a common issue but more pronounced south of Pir Panjal Range. Human rights abuses were a common concern but higher in Kashmir valley ranging from 55 to 88% while Jammu was limited to 2 to 8%. Lack of progress was a higher concern in Jammu ranging from 38 to 65% while Kashmir was low between 13 and 43%.

Why Youth Join Al Qaeda (Venhaus,2010). A USIP Report study by Col John M Venhaus included a sample of 2032 Al Qaeda fighters who had travelled to other countries to fight for Al Qaeda were studied. Interviews, captured documents and personal histories were studied to identify the motivation and recruitment process. It showed four principal needs that made an individual a seeker, namely revenge, identity, status and adventure. Al Qaeda was an inspirational brand for such seekers and choose from the volunteer pool. The study also debunked a few myths about terror recruits. It ends with some recommendations to prevent radicalization and framework for policy makers.

Course in the Art of Recruiting (2010). Anonymous last downloaded on 14 Mar 2015. 'Course in the Art of Recruiting', claimed to be compiled by Abu Amru Al Qa'idi, probably a pseudo name, the publication claims to be a graded practical program of individual Da'wa. The edition referenced accessed was marked as the 5th edition of this Al Qaeda booklet. It has a dedication to the internet Mujhids and the media jihadi knights. Individual Da'wa is explained to be beyond jihadi cassettes and motivational lectures. It is designed to help convert a person with rage into an effective terrorist. The book is a guide for individual Da'wa. The foreward explains that collective Da'wa will not produce persons ready for action, even if they are motivated they are unlikely to be security conscious and capable of effective action. The booklet outlines a program that has 5 stages from recruiting to being an effective jihadi.

Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram? (Onuoha, 2014). The USIP study focused on Boko Haram in Nigeria. Surveys, interviews and group discussions were conducted in 2013 to identify trends and reasons for youth joining Boko Haram. The findings suggested that "poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family structures make or contribute to making young men vulnerable to radicalization. Itinerant preachers capitalize on the situation by

preaching an extreme version of religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt” (Onuoha, 2014,1). The study comes out with recommended counter radicalization strategies for the government.

Perception of Kashmiri Youth: Security Implications by Vivek Chadha (2012).

The paper is based on a study done on behalf of the Ministry of Home Affairs to identify the mood of the youth in six districts of Kashmir valley. The Study was conducted by the Institute for Research on India and International Studies (IRIIS). The paper analyses the inputs with a security perspective. “As part of the analysis, the five facets considered critical have been highlighted. These are: (i) the nature and extent of radicalisation in the Valley; (ii) the local separatist demand of azadi and its connotations; (iii) shift in the pattern of protests; (iv) disillusionment with Pakistan; and (v) employment of new media as a tool of communication” (Chadha,2012). The survey brought to fore the disillusionment with Pakistan, 16% listened to Pakistani news and only 20% think Pakistan understands Kashmiris. The paper highlighted the increased impact of new media that includes social media.

How Al Qaeda Innovates, (Moghadam, 2013). The study published by the International Institute for Counter Terrorism on 01 Aug 2013 was a seminal work by Assaf Moghadam. It postulates that “theoretically, the findings suggest that the conventional wisdom of the predominance of top down innovation in terrorism is dependent on a problematic assumption, namely that terrorist groups are centralized, hierarchical, and localized entities. As more terrorist groups adopt decentralized structures, they are increasingly likely to display multi-directional processes of innovation”(Moghadam, 2013, pg 467). He goes on to state “ Innovative terrorist attacks are not just memorable often particularly consequential. Catching their targets off guard in terms of the timings and nature of the assault, innovative attacks most often come as a strategic surprise to the enemies” (Moghadam, 2013). The paper deals with what and who drives innovation in terror organizations. The paper argues for five key drivers that may stimulate innovation; it includes “innovation spurred by problem solving, particularly in the face of government pressures and/or defensive government reactions” (Moghadam, 2013, pg 472). This may have relevance in the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir. States targeted by terrorism need to locate the centre of gravity of a terror organization, in order to correctly align the counter terror policies. In most international cases of high level innovation has mostly been attributed to top leadership. Axiomatically neutralizing top leadership should seriously dent terror

organizations effectiveness. However, in addition, to top down, even bottoms up innovation is known to produce results in military organizations. The study focused on 9/11 attackers, who displayed a high amount of innovation. In this case, Al Qaeda desire to hit the US at home ground was so obsessive that it lead to the innovation of multiple aircraft hijack and crashing into buildings. The original idea for 9/11 was not of Al Qaeda leadership but of Khalid Shiekh Mohammed who came to Al Qaeda with the plan and joined Al Qaeda only after the leadership accepted his proposal in March or April 1999, he might have attempted the same attacks even if some other organization would have provided the material and organizational support. In India, the parliament attacks could have followed the same path with the original idea being supported by JeM. The same openness to ideas had enabled Al Qaeda to execute attacks like USS Cole and maybe later attempt to take over PNS Mehran by TTP and Al Qaeda in 2011 was another such attempt. Al Qaeda built a system of free lance entrepreneur bringing terror act proposals, which were then vetted by central Al Qaeda leadership, rewarding the best with financial, material and organisational support. Al Qaeda formalized the 'centralisation of leadership and decentralization of execution'. In a way, the method was an integration of bottoms up and top down approach, very similar to military tactics of Auftragstaktik of German Army or US Army 'mission command' (Moghadam, 2013, 490). The Al Qaeda leadership would invest in vetting in leadership and even the team for a mission but delegate a large part of the delegation to the designated leader. In 9/11 Khalid Sheikh had the liberty to change dates and even veto the Osama desire to include White House among the targets, since Khalid believed that to be unfeasible. Terror organizations of old have meta-morphed from earlier hierarchy driven structure to more flat structures riding on the internet driven communication platform, they are now probably more of networks than organizations. These networks still require structure but avoid the rigidity of hierarchy. This calls for a middle order structure that enables the network to function. This middle order avoids surveillance while the counter terror organizations focus on the leadership and the executor of the final terror operation, the terrorist. Counter terrorism specialists in India need to understand this in a local context in order to ensure better effectiveness of the overall counter terrorist operation. Exposing the Pulwama attack enablers or the invisible middle order over ground worker, beyond the gun wielding terrorists would form part of this effort.

Kashmir Mental Health Survey Report(2015). A study by Medicinis Sans Frontieres alongwith University of Kashmir and Institute of Mental Health and

Neurosciences (IMHANS), Srinagar was carried out in the entire Kashmir valley covering 5428 households in 400 villages. The median age of respondents was 39 including 65% women. The survey showed the impact of long drawn stay in a conflict zone affected by terrorism and violence. “Nearly 45% of the adult population was assessed to have symptoms of mental distress, with 41% depicting probable depression, 26% probable anxiety and 19% probable PTSD” (MSF, 2015). While there is no evidence of correlation between mental health issues and choice of picking a weapon against the state, the issue merits attention to identify linkages, if any. The study indicated that an average Kashmiri adult experienced 7.7 traumatic events during his/her lifetime, these included natural disasters, death of loved one; conflict related incident had been experienced by 93% individuals.

Figure 3.16: Traumatic events experienced or witnessed by respondents over a lifetime, KMHS 2015

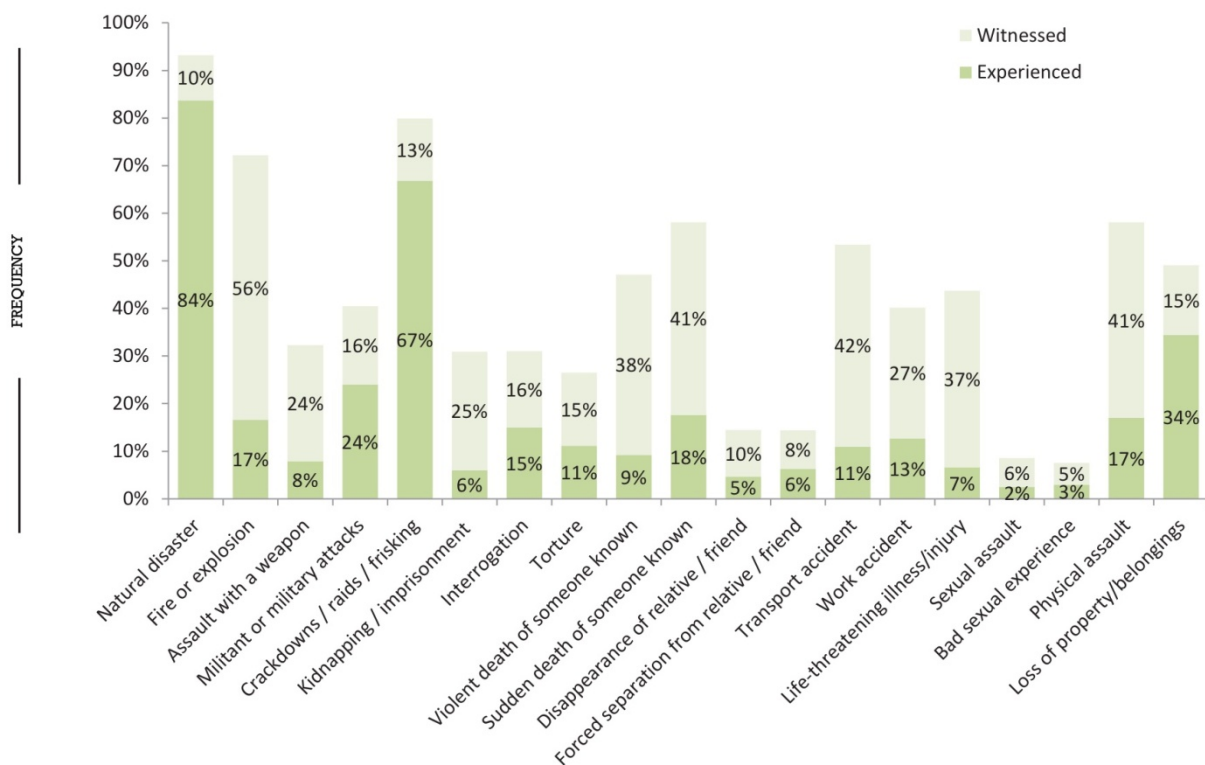


Fig 1.1 KASHMIR MENTAL HEALTH STUDY, 2015. MSF. Page 31

27% houses reported a family history of mental illness. The depression and PTSD rates observed were highest in Badgam and Baramulla, followed by Shupiyan and Kulgam; the areas of Srinagar and Pulwama had the lowest figures. “10% adults in Kashmir Valley are

suffering from severe depression and 6% are suffering from severe PTSD” (MSF, 2015).

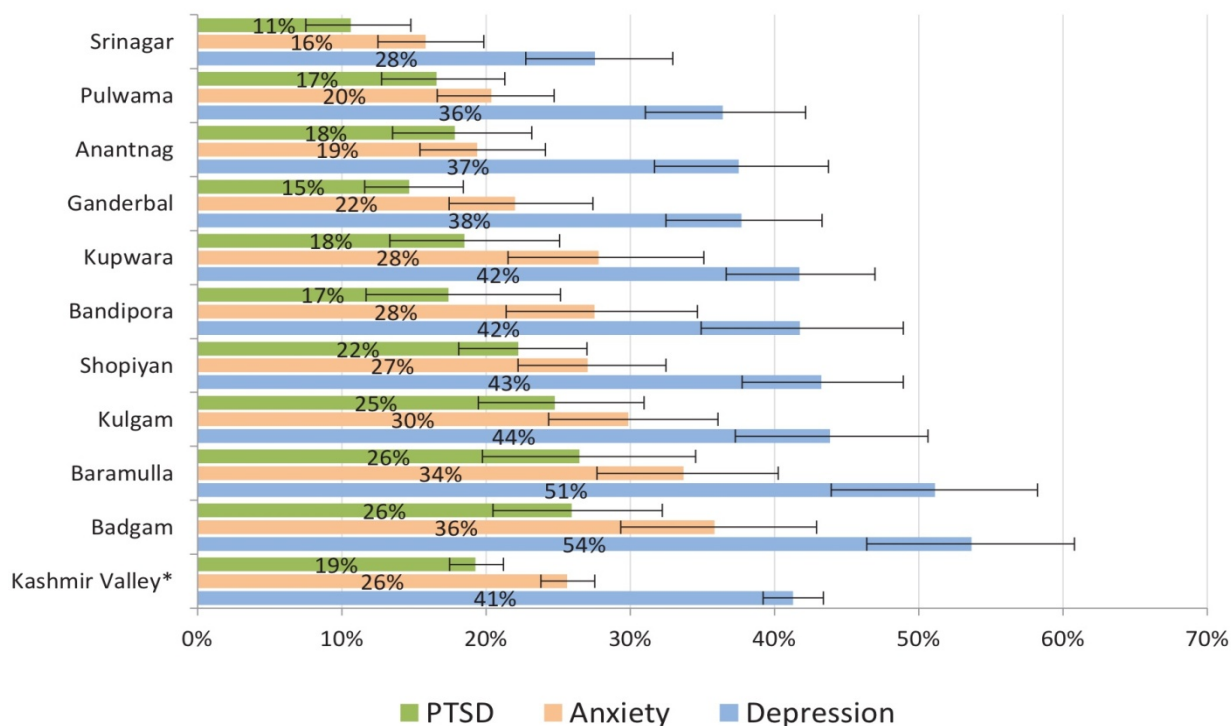


Fig 1.2 KASHMIR MENTAL HEALTH STUDY, 2015. MSF. Page 33

Common problems of daily life experienced by Kashmiri adults included financial and family issues, poor physical health, unemployment and tension. The poor mental health was higher in persons with lesser education. Women had higher incidence of mental health issues. Overall the older had more mental health issues. The coping strategies for stress were identified to be prayer, talking to family member/friend and keeping busy. 29% reported to use of tobacco with 20% calling it a coping strategy.

Figure 3.8: Weighted proportion of problems of daily life identified by adults in the KMHS, 2015

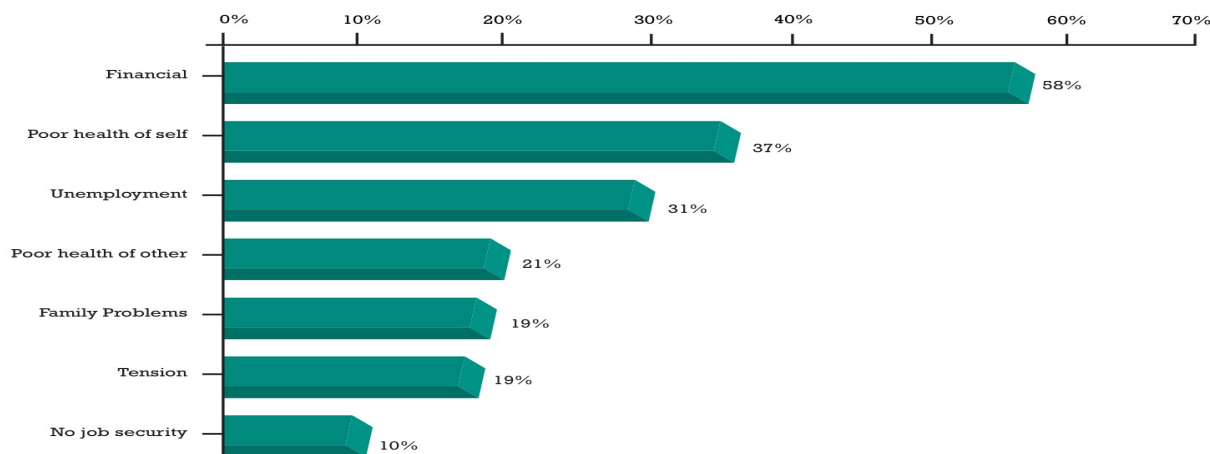


Fig 1.3 KASHMIR MENTAL HEALTH STUDY, 2015. MSF. Page 37

K Files by Bashir Assad(2019). The book released in Aug 2019 was penned before the legislative action and conveys a sense of despondence of a Kashmiri insider. The book deals with slow but steady weakening of the social fabric of Kashmir under the onslaught of religion driven ideology of Jamaat e Islami. The author conveys the macabre situation in a society which has internalized celebration of death. He reveals the plots and machinations of the political, economic and religious elite who steered the Kashmir movement to its present state of religious radicalization.

“We have a whole generation of indoctrinated youngsters who have gone crazy, and are yearning to embrace death ‘in the glory of Islam”.

- Bashir Assad

The ISIS Phenomenon: South Asia and Beyond(Taneja, 2018). ORF monograph by Kabir Taneja is in three parts. Part one dealing with ISIS structure, organization, leadership and plan of operations. The second part deals with ISIS influence in South Asian countries. The third part of the monograph is titled ‘Uncovering the Influence of ISIS in India’. The paper looks at ISIS influence in India through individual case studies. The paper uses primary research data to map 80 pro-ISIS cases across India. There were an estimated 112 cases ISIS cases investigated in India, while some estimates mention 250-300 Indians including the diasporas may have migrated for fighting along with ISIS. This study gives insight into the impact and use of the internet and social media, the recruitment methodology and future threats for India including J&K.

Kashmir Conflict Tracker: ORF(2018). In Oct 2018 ORF announced a ‘Kashmir Conflict Tracker’ with the first report being put online. It had carried out an analysis of terror recruits profiles from online sources. It included study of the geographical spread of home locations and encounter sites, age and education profiling. It summarized that ‘none of them was Madrassa educated, in fact, educated youth had a greater propensity towards militancy, and included youth from modern school and university system. The study reviewed the age profile of recruits between Jan 17 and Jul 2018, the studies revealed about 30% of recruits were over 25 years of age.

Seminar Report: Mapping Perceptions in J&K (CLAWS, 2018). The subject report is based on an expert discussion organized by CLAWS in 2018. It included a presentation of findings of a primary survey done in the Kashmir Valley by Prof Sujata

Sriram. The document covers the gambit of the current assessment of social, political and security situation and challenges in Kashmir and the ‘whole of nation’ measures recommended by the experts. The survey sample was 324 young men and 179 women in the age group 18 to 30, from Kashmir. The focus was on mapping perceptions with respect to social challenges and views on the security situation. The seminar included an analysis of the human development parameters to identify any underlying trend that could be the root cause of terrorism and separatism. The Kashmir problem was classified as ‘unstructured’ indicating a lack of consensus on the part of Kashmiris in terms of the desired end state. It’s a multiplicity in stakeholders and consequent complexities demand a need for a soft system methodology involving lateral approaches as opposed to linear solutions. The 7-30 years of age are exposed to various phases of terror support activity from stone pelt to OGW to an active terrorist.

Research Design

The research design executed is descriptive, causal and exploratory. These included review of existing literature, in depth interviews, focus group interviews and field surveys. The primary survey target population and objectives were as under:-

Kashmiri Youth. Inputs were taken from mix of age groups till 30, variety of education and economic profiles were attempted. Attempts were made for minimum 20% female inputs to get both gender views. The objectives were to explore belief system, level and process of radicalization, identify the popular narrative, explore impact of internet and social media, and views on remedial measures.

Experts. It was decided to contact experts from varied fields to get a wider perspective. The respondents included civil society academicians, journalists, professionals and security forces personnel who have operated in Kashmir. Most involved one to one interactions, while a few were obtained online. Security forces experts were obtained through personal contact. The questionnaire explored understanding of state of radicalization, reasons for radicalization, method of radicalization and recommended measures.

Organisation of the Dissertation

The dissertation is organized in five chapters.

1. Chapter 1 – Introduction and Methodology
2. Chapter 2 – Understanding Terror Recruitment: The International Experience, based on the secondary study.
3. Chapter 3 – Kashmir : Understanding Terror Recruitment based on the secondary study and discussions with experts.
4. Chapter 4 – Kashmir Terror Recruitment: Primary Study Inputs. An analysis of the two questionnaires and merging with the secondary study.
5. Chapter 5 – Summary of findings and recommendations.

CHAPTER 2

Understanding Terrorist Recruitment

The International Experience

*“If you **know** the **enemy** and **know** yourself, you need not fear the result of a hundred battles. If you **know** yourself but not the **enemy**, for every victory gained you will also suffer a defeat. If you **know** neither the **enemy** nor yourself, you will succumb in every battle.”*

-Sun Tzu

Introduction

In the post cold war era terrorism has evolved into a dimension of being the principle threat to national security. This is especially true for the militarily and technologically strong western powers. Effectiveness of counter terror operational planning is largely dependent on the ability of the security establishment to understand the motivations, ideology, organization structure, internal processes, communication methods, funding, recruiting and training processes of the terror organizations; in short knowing your enemy. This chapter covers an exploration of western experience and understanding of various aspects of terror before moving to Kashmir specific chapter on terror recruitment. Similarities or correlation is being indicated where feasible.

Normally kinetic operations against the terror ‘foot soldiers’ or the gun wielding violence focused cadre of the terror organisation is the focus of the security apparatus. A person with a clear tell tale sign of holding a weapon or capability to cause violence is easier to identify and neutralize compared to the network which lives just below the illegal activity line. The profiles of such Over Ground Workers (OGWs) are multi-faceted and thus need synergy among the various arms of the government to achieve any success to identify and neutralize by legal measures.

Correct knowledge of the current status of all layers of a terrorist organization and ability to predict future trends among terrorist organizations is a pre-requisite for better

identification of an effective counter terrorism strategy. It is a battle of denial of space for anti-national activity, and meant for those with a long term perspective.

Terror recruitment has evolved variedly in different parts of the world with a few common strands; there is no single strategy which can explain the processes universally. Safe haven in neighbouring countries fuelling the proxy war in the cold world era provided opportunities to collaborate and refine the methods; in fact state support of some state was normally necessary for any form of insurgency or terrorism to exist. Global terrorism or terrorist organizations fighting beyond their own geographical limits is a comparatively recent phenomenon. In last few decades, especially after 9/11, 'war on terror' and 'global jihad' have become common terminologies in security affairs primarily because of the increased synergy and impact of national and transnational terror networks. Post the defeat of USSR at the hands of the jihadis armed and trained by Pakistan and US, Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan, during the Taliban rule became the mother nursery for the fighters who had joined the fight from all over the world, they used the period to collaborate and refine. The transnational networks adapted processes in different geographical zones or conflicts and evolved into more potent or lethal organizations. The organizations were degraded and disrupted post the allied attacks in Afghanistan and as per estimates 70-80% of the Al Qaeda transnational jihadis were neutralized. Going by historical trends, the new situation will seek fresh attempts by the radical mind to generate fresh options. It is intended in this chapter to understand the international experience before focusing on Kashmir, which had a phase in 1990s, where jihadis diverted from Afghanistan caused the most violent phase of counter terror operations. The clearest correlation can be seen from the fact that the peak of total casualties in Kashmir as per SATP data was 4177 in 2001.

This chapter is focused on secondary study and discussions with experts to understand terrorist recruitment in various part of the world, with special focus on Al Qaeda and IS. The western studies are being used to understand what drives terrorist recruitment in order to identify similar strands in Kashmir. The academic studies provided framework to understand the terrorist motivation/radicalization process and the terrorist organizations internal processes for executing fresh recruitment. The knowledge gained was used to build the questionnaires for the primary study focused on Kashmir. The chapter covers the following

1. Basic ideology of Al Qaeda and ISIS.
2. Role and importance of Ideologies.

3. Reasons/motivations for terrorist Recruits.
4. Selection process for a terrorist recruit.
5. Terrorist organizations architecture and internal processes as relevant to terrorist recruitment.
6. Innovation as a basic characteristic of terrorist organizations and its impact on terrorist recruitment.

Al Qaeda and ISIS

Al Qaeda was among the first modern transnational terror organizations that evolved from direct action in Afghanistan to a shadowy world terror organization. It built processes and evolved plans in the safe havens under the Taliban rule in the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. Osama Bin Laden became the principal benefactor with ideologues like Abdul Azzam, Ayaman Al Zawihiri and Abu Mus'ab Al Suri becoming the brain behind the rapid growth. ISIS a later avatar was the breakaway faction in Iraq and Syria which started with a more territorial ambition and a more broad based violent creed, but slowly came back to the roots of Al Qaeda methods with some basic differences at ideological level. The three pillars of ISIS propaganda or belief was Tawheed al Haakimiyyah – promotion of undisputed idea that Allah and his judgment and legislation(sharia) is supreme. Kufr bin Takhud – complete rejection of 'false gods', which includes idols, elected democracy, parents if they stop you from joining a higher cause, and so on. Al-wallah-al-Burrah – complete loyalty to Muslims and only Muslims(Taneja,2018). The methods of both the organizations are now so similar that at places both claimed the same terror attack, Usman Khanⁱ who slashed and killed two people in London bridge was one such example. Al Qaeda networked relationships with many jihadi groups and individuals, some who had trained earlier in camps in Afghanistan and other parts of the world, both organizations also built a system of affiliates across the globe. This network enabled increased reach to a resource pool and even ideas for the Al Qaeda franchise.

The next section is devoted to understanding the ideology, motivation and recruitment method of Al Qaeda and ISIS.

The Role and Importance of Ideologues. Al Qaeda ideology, organizational structure and execution methodologies were refined over years of fighting in Afghanistan, a situation where Arab-Afghan fighters came together and slowly attracted jihadis from all trouble spots of the world, it become the melting pot of jihadi ideology. Post USSR

withdrawal, the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan under the Taliban provided the safe haven for these groups where Osama Bin Laden the Saudi billionaire shaped global jihad and built Al Qaeda. In this chapter three Al Qaeda ideologues Anwar al Awlaki, Abu Mus'ab Al Suri and Maulana Asim Umar are being explored as case studies.

“After having participated in the founding of Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan in 1988, Abu Mus'ab al-Suri, whose real name is Mustafa Sethmariam Nasar, trained a whole generation of young jihadis at his camps in Afghanistan”ⁱⁱⁱ.

- Lia(2009). The Architect of Global Jihad

In 1991, Abu Mus'ab advocated a global terrorist campaign against the West that would rely on diffused, decentralized and non-hierarchical network, which till then relied almost exclusively on secret hierarchical regional organizations. He believed that such units had proved to be largely ineffective and instead suggested the creation of *phantom organizations*, consisting of self sufficient cells acting independently of any central command (Lia, 2009. Page 14).

The safe havens in Afghanistan in late 90s were used to train jihadi volunteers from across the world with an aim to create a transnational structure. Audios and videos of Abu Mus'ab classes of these global jihadis, from all parts of the world at Afghanistan reappeared online in 2010, the videos taught Abu Mus'ab's recommended plans for global cells on a singular cause. The videos were later removed as part of western efforts to control Jihadi propaganda and are probably still available on the dark web.

Around 1999, Al Suri reportedly had differences with Osama on the strategy of conduct of global jihad after the US missile strikes on terror camps in Afghanistan in 1999, he felt the training camps were vulnerable. However he probably got overruled. In 2000, in an interview with Al Jazeera Abu Mus'ab said “Over the past few years I have been present in the jihad or Islamic movement as a writer, researcher, thinker, and theorizer or ideologist ... I do not enjoy any party or org capacity. I belong neither to the Al Qaeda or any other org. I back their ideas and ... so on. However, from an organisation point of view, I am not a member of the Al Qaeda group” (Lia, 2009, 306). He is known to have been a facilitator for western press to meet Osama prior to 9/11 attacks.

Post 9/11 terror attacks, the US operations in Afghanistan resulted in serious losses to the combatant strength and the hierarchical control among the jihadis fleeing the Afghan

battlefield. It may be correct to assume a lot of what the world is facing today in terms of Islamic terrorism was in some way aided by the ones who managed to escape from Afghanistan. The Osama created and trained cells of jihadi fighters had created had to quickly evolve into more diffused command and control, just as Al Suri had sought since 1999. In 2002, from his hiding, Al Suri again published an article advocating what is commonly accepted as 4th Generation Warfare (4GW), he borrowed the same from a western paper of late 80s. At this stage the influence of Abu Mus'ab as an Al Qaeda ideologue and strategist was mostly unknown; however this was to rapidly change following the investigation of the Madrid bombings, where Abu Mus'ab is believed to be principal instigator and maybe with a role in execution.

By 2004, Abu Musab Al Suri compiled and released his 1,600 page manual, 'The Global Islamic Resistance Call'; it outlined a broad strategy for the coming generation of Al-Qaeda and global jihad in general. The work displayed a keen eye for the practical implementation of jihadi guerrilla warfare theories. His ideas of how to maximise the political impact of jihadi violence and how to build autonomous cells for 'individualised terrorism' have inspired many jihadi militants for last fifteen years (Lia, 2009). He was arrested at Quetta, Pakistan on 31 Oct 2005. Until then he was little known outside the Islamist circles. A parallel be can Zakir Naik in India, who was a popular TV personality, until the revelation of his role in radicalizing youth responsible for 2016 terror attacks in Bangladesh, made him a fugitive from India.

A book 'Architect of Global Jihad' by a Belgian author Brynjar Lia was the first English coverage of the role and influence of Al Suri on global jihad. Later extracts of the book were used by Al Qaeda in multiple editions of its online publication 'Inspire'ⁱⁱⁱ, from 2010 to 12. It is an appropriate example of where a strategist and ideologue has a far reaching impact on the strategic direction of a terror organization.

Second case is of Anwar al-Awlaki the Yemeni-American cleric who is believed to have radicalized a substantial percentage of the western worlds Al Qaeda recruits. The radical propaganda of such ideologues works on the border of religious freedom and illegality. Anwar found his claim to fame post 9/11 as a popular American cleric talking about Islam and how the terrorist attacks did not meet Koranic instructions. Mixing Arabic and English he was popular among American muslims and the western media who like his ability to mix western speaking ability with knowledge of the Koranic concepts. His efforts included a 53

CD series on the life of Prophet Muhammad. However he was under FBI watch who were not sure of his intent. Concurrent to the public religious pious Anwar was a radical who made videos explaining why you should never trust a non muslim, why it is duty of every muslim to kill Americans and so on. Anwar had a dark second life, series of encounters with prostitutes; revealing which would have been a more effective counter to reduce reach of his message. By 2004 Anwar got information that FBI had inputs about his escapades with prostitutes and shifted base to Yemen (Shane, 2015).

As imam at a mosque in Falls Church, Virginia (2001–02), al-Awlaki spoke with and preached to three of the 9/11 hijackers, who were al-Qaeda members^{iv}. In 2001, he presided at the funeral of the mother of Nidal Malik Hasan, an Army psychiatrist, who later e-mailed him extensively, in 2008–09 before carrying out the Fort Hood shootings. Initial reaction of Anwar to the killings was ““what he did was an heroic act call upon anyone who belongs to Islam ... serving in US army to follow footsteps of Nidal Hasan”. Later when investigations revealed that Nidal was in contact with Anwar and had in fact asked in an email ‘if killing fellow American soldiers will be considered Jihad?’. Anwar back tracked and said “Hasan arrived at his own conclusions regarding the acceptability of violence in Islam”.

Anwar was believed to be the man behind the Al Qaeda online magazine Inspire launched in 2010, his role as an ideologue and strategist coming to fore. Anwar was killed in a drone attack in Yemen in Sept 2011 but his influence in the form of the videos and audios continues to influence Islamic radicals the world over, numerous terrorists in recent times have been found to be in possession or were known to have watched Anwar’s videos in period preceding the terror attack. The Boston Marathon attacker, Dzhokhar Trsarnaev, weeks before the attack in 2013 tweeted “Listen to Anwar al-Awlaki’s... here after series, you will gain an unbelievable amount of knowledge”.

The counter to such ideologues is a subject of debate; it was only in 2017 that international systems took actions to limit reach of Anwar’s message. In 2017, 70,000 YouTube search resulted 70,000 videos of Anwar^v, this dropped to 17000 after the new video finger printing technology speeded up identification and flagging of radicalizing videos.

The American killing of Anwar has probably resulted in greater reach of his message; he may be more dangerous dead than any other method which could have been used to defang his radical narrative. A legal provision to enable a ‘soft kill’, where the message is effectively countered is a tougher but probably more effective measure.

“It is very clear, at least to me, that if you’re trying to fight a martyrdom culture, you don’t go making martyrs”

- Mohamed Elibary, Security consultant, 2015

A parallel in an Indian case was the impact of Masood Azhar, the JeM chief who was released post the IC 814 hijacking to Kandahar in 1999. Post release, Masood raised the JeM (Jaish e Mohammed) and guided the organization for major attacks on Indian soil.

Another case with relevance to India is of Sanaul Haq @ Maulana Asim Umar^{vi}, the first declared head of AQIS. Umar belonging to Sambhal in India had studied in Deoband, and later in 2005 ran away to Pakistan to join HuM. It was only in 2009 that the family came to know about his whereabouts. As per reports Umar was among the first from a group from Sambhal who convinced by HuM/ISI to travel to Kashmir and then PoK. He attended training at Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and switched to Tehreek e Taliban Pakistan and then Al Qaeda. His stint at Jamia Uloom-e-Islamia in Karachi^{vii} and Darul Uloom Haqqania in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, helped him cement his connection with senior leaders of Taliban, Al-Qaeda, TTP, JeM and other groups. Through online videos, he motivated many Indian and Kashmiri youth to join terror. The NIA in a charge sheet filed early this year claimed Umar’s radical sermons were used to motivate the youth. Such videos were seized during NIA’s search in Amroha in 2019.

Interviews with militant^{viii} and intelligence sources reveal that Umar, thought to be in his mid-forties, has a reputation as an Islamist ideologue rather than a fighter, and is known in South and Central Asian Islamist circles as an intellectual and excellent orator. He is said to have authored four books on jihad. One of the books, about U.S. private security firm Blackwater, is titled “The Army of Anti-Christ”. Celebrated for his exceptional language skills, Umar translated his books into several languages including Pashto, Uzbek and Arabic. “He is a jolly fellow, not the Al Qaeda type,” according to Moazzam, who was friend with Asim Umar at Jamia Uloom Ul-Islamia. “He was known for his very strong views against democracy and in favor of jihad. He could be described as a Pakistani version of Anwar Alwaki, who was good in indoctrination too.”^{ix} Umar with his theological background and convictions was useful to translate the Arabic messages of Al Qaeda into urdu, the impact would be substantial though tough to quantify, as is true for most ideologues.

In 2014, Anwar ul Zawihiri issued the video announcing creation of AQIS and announced Asim Umar as its head, initially it was thought that Umar was a Pakistani by origin. In the video there is a Urdu voice over probably by Umar. Umar was designated as Global terrorist by US in 2016. Later, Umar then made a direct appeal to Indian Muslims to “follow the example of lone wolves in Europe and kill administrative and police officers in India”. His 15-minute speech in Urdu, ‘No to the Slogan of Disbelief’, was dubbed in Arabic, Bengali and English. To provoke and motivate Muslims, Umar alleged Hindus imposed their faith on Muslims in India and tried to break the foundations of Islam by emphasising that the country was worthy of worship. “Your numbers are large^x in India and your geographical spread wide. Indian Muslims should pick up swords and daggers to kill Hindu rioters and officers who back them. Start killing IAS and IPS officers and you will see how Hindus bow before you,” said Umar. He was reportedly killed in Afghanistan in 2019. He like others was identified long after having done the damage of indoctrinating youth towards jihad.

Reasons/Motivations for Terror Recruits. The world experience in terror in last few decades has seen two strands of terror recruitment. The first being metamorphoses of the earlier insurgents or militants fighting for local causes into local terrorists and the second global terrorists who would leave their comfort zone and travel to fight for a cause not directly linked to immediate social circle. Usman Khan the London Bridge attacker in Dec 2019 was a British citizen of Pakistani origin. In 2010^{xi} he had plans to travel to Kashmir and organize training for jihad! In this section studies on Al Qaeda and Boko Haram are explored.

A USIP Report study (Venhaus,2010) by Col John M Venhaus was carried out to identify why youth join Al Qaeda, the study included a sample of 2032 fighters who had travelled to other countries to fight for Al Qaeda. Interviews, captured documents and personal histories were studied to identify the motivation and recruitment process.. The study summed up the Al Qaeda narrative and methods into the following

1. The terror acts are driven by the theme that a psychological impact is more important than physical impact of a terror strike. This belief system drives selection of targets and methods. The attacks on US Embassies, USS Cole and 9/11 attacks reflected the execution of this belief system. Later, varying attempts at air hijacking; shoe-bomber, underwear-bomber, attacks on US naval assets, bus ramming into crowds etc were all inspired by the desire to shock and terrorise.

2. The Al Qaeda propaganda worked to elevate death to a heroic and holy act. An act on the path to heaven – terrorists often talk of achieving death or shahdat. In fact, some of the captured terrorists were disappointed on being prevented from killing themselves. Such recruits were seemingly ignorant or not very mindful of the extent of damage achieved. They rather focused on the desire for the act of martyrdom. For the more radical mind who added a politico-religious context to the action, the impact of the terror act was equally important.

3. Al Qaeda optimized the use of modern media including the internet to spread the message and to reach out to a larger audience. In earlier days recruits were given CDs/cassettes with sermons and propaganda, now the internet has made it easier to reach to the global audience. 2010 saw the release of internet magazines like Inspire in languages based on where Al Qaeda was looking to expand influence. The propaganda material included release of motivational, terror act videos and eulogies online.

4. Al Qaeda first creates a feeling of being humiliated on the basis of political or religious persecution. It then proceeds to convert humiliation to shame and guilt of inaction. At this stage, the terror organization offers an option to regain dignity and honor on a path of religious or god ordained duty. Motivation came from the fact that the act leads to a higher status in society and in an improved self esteem. (Venhaus, 2010)

The first step for a potential recruit is self indoctrination wherein the individual becomes a seeker. The motivations vary. The study identified four types of seekers that can be used to categorise nearly all terrorists we encounter the world over; seekers of revenge, identity, status and thrill. Most would show more than one kind of need which he or she seeks to fulfill. The triggers or tipping points vary. The process is influenced by the environment realities of the society where the individual grows. The western world has experienced a higher incidence of terror recruitment among recent migrants, converts, poor and broken families. The potential recruit has an unfulfilled need, which is then fulfilled by the Al Qaeda.

1. **Revenge Seeker.** Revenge is a strong emotion that is believed to be a trigger for an individual to choose terrorism, anecdotal stories about such cases get lot of coverage. However, only a few cases are about personal revenge stories linked to the societal cause, and cannot really be bracketed as terrorism but rather as a criminal action. To join a terror network an individual takes a personal insult/anger and

combines it with a larger cause, inflates sense of self worth – joins to set the world right.

2. **Status Seeker.** Reported to be common in migrants from the Middle East and Northern Africa to the West. High up in the hierarchy in his/her own country, the migrant though enjoys perks of living in a developed society but feels belittled in the host country. A second class citizen in the host developed nation compared to the privileged class in his own country. They still have money but lower status – Al Qaeda restores status.

3. **Identity Seeker.** The human need to be part of something is exploited. A lower than average economic or social profile leads to a feeling of low self worth and identity. Discarded by family and society the seeker needs inclusivity - Al Qaeda is the best club to get an identity that meets the need. It is exclusive; it is secretive and provides the feeling of self worth and power and a feeling of belonging to something larger. The individual gets an identity that grants respect in own social circle. Even if it is a cult of violence, societal acceptance becomes a motivator. Thus even if a SAS Geelani in Kashmir praises Osama and organizes prayers on his death, it builds societal acceptance.

4. **Thrill Seeker.** This person is generally from the privileged class; bored and unchallenged, being from well to do background. Anything works for a David Headley or a Umar Farouk from a privileged background. Machoism of being the bad man, guns, surviving a daring act, make believe world of video games, fancy tales of valour, fighting cat and mouse game with the security agencies, use of high technology or innovation to shock and surprise – anything that attracts or distracts this recruit. 5% of the sample of the study met this need by joining Al Qaeda (Vanhaus,2010). Kashmir too has had fair share of such youth falling to the allure of the adventure of supporting terrorists and then later joining the ranks.

The second step in recruitment is crossing the threshold where the individual seeker seeks to connect with a mentor or guide; this could be in physical life areas or online. Once a potential recruit is identified, a process of selection and vetting is carried out before physical contact is established. The vetting is diligent to ensure the best available is chosen and then the potential recruit is isolated. The recruit seeks and Al Qaeda chooses.

The third step is terror indoctrination. The basic theme of propaganda is that Islam and Muslims are under siege, pan-muslim identity with defiant underdog narrative; reject

pluralism/democracy as western conspiracies and heroic narrative of idealized Jihad. Once an individual accepts to be part of jihad, there is a need to immune him from the natural instincts of compassion and discomfort in inflicting pain on others. The individual has to accept to kill a human being, and then to kill in a gruesome manner believing it to be on path of a higher cause, all steps in fanatical radicalization. The individual has to be indoctrinated to treat the act of killing as a ritual on a higher path or guidance, something that has societal acceptance and in fact adulation. Videos, posters, street plays, killed jihadi's parents' interviews and last messages; all justify acts of violence perpetrated by the individual. Killings are glorified and immunization to human morality achieved. Studies indicate that persons from religious backgrounds are lesser vulnerable to this kind of indoctrination compared to recent converts or those from lesser religious knowledge, the more confused or ignorant the easier to indoctrinate. Once indoctrinated the individual is now deaf to counter measures; he or she believes to be on a higher cause, anyone trying to convince otherwise is treated as someone who does not understand due to lack of correct thinking or knowledge. He is on the 'self actualization' stage of Maslow's hierarchy of needs.

A 2014 USIP study 'Why Do Youth Join Boko Haram' focused on Boko Haram in Nigeria. It was conducted by Freedom C Onuoha a research fellow at Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, Nigeria National Defence College, Abuja.

Boko Haram literally means 'western education is prohibited. Typically the main recruit pool is from the poor and disadvantaged and a smaller input from the educated and financial stable background. The motivation(s) of each recruit studied were identified in order to build a more real awareness of the root issues that need to be addressed. The study involved a review of media inputs, interviews and focused group discussion. Surveys, interviews and group discussions were conducted in 2013 to identify trends and reasons for youth joining Boko Haram and what the government can do to prevent it.

"Poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, and weak family structures make or contribute to making young men vulnerable to radicalization. Itinerant preachers capitalize on the situation by preaching an extreme version of religious teachings and conveying a narrative of the government as weak and corrupt"

- Freedom C Onuoha, 2014

Motivation or reasons for joining Boko Haram were explored. Ignorance of religious teachings against violence was found to have the highest incidence as high as 81%, religious

knowledge was based on single person/preacher knowledge than any primary or self study of the Holy Scriptures. High unemployment (23.9%) and acute poverty (60.9%) contributed to the situation of creating a ‘mercenary with a cause’. Individuals with experience of privation and frustration were more likely to become a suicide bomber.

“Boko Haram paid young suspects 5000 naira (US 30\$) to set schools on fire and spy on soldiers.... Children who ranged from 10 t 15 years in age, have also helped ... traffic weapons, carry stolen items, and hide their guns after attack. The children’s alienation from home and society provides the cognitive opening that extremist ideologues exploit in the process of recruitment and radicalization”. (Onuoha, 2014, 6)

“.... Government’s high rate of corruption and neglect of citizen’s welfare also feeds extremist narrative. In Sokoto state 70% percent of participants cited this as an important factor.” (Onuoha, 2014, 7).

Children with troubled upbringing including broken homes and orphans were more vulnerable, illiteracy increased the vulnerability. Widespread corruption was high on the reason for radicalization. Despite the negative reputation of Nigerian security forces, excesses by security forces were low on the reason for radicalization. The recommended solution included the creation of religious affairs regulatory and monitoring commission, jobs creation, program for destitute children, enhancing education, peace education promoting peaceful coexistence and an anti corruption campaign.

Internet Based Radicalisation. Internet based radicalization is a phenomenon that has shown distinct capability which was used in a very impactful manner by IS, resulting in thousands from all over the world migrating to Iraq and Syria to fight for a fanatical caliph. The reach of the radical messaging and the ideologue has multiplied to areas much beyond physical contact, even beyond the reach of CDs and audio tapes. “A study in 2008 indicated that analysis of most highly viewed videos on YouTube demonstrated that 50% jihadist videos contained ‘martyr hailing’ content or praise of martyrdom...30%ontained footage of suicide bombings. Another significant percentage contained educational content about Islam and the call to martyrdom”, (Conway, Maura &Mclerney, Lisa Jihadi videos and auto radicalization : Evidence from an Exploratory YouTube Study, Dec 2008 quoted in Hussain & Saltman, 2013). 85 % of posting and consumption was in the age group of 18 and 34. A single radical ideologue Anjem Choudhary, co-founder of Islamist group al-Mohuajiroun, in 2014 had multiple accounts in his name had nearly 8000 tweets in Jan 2014 alone (Quillian,

2013, page 48). In 2015, Mehdi Masroor Biswas a techie from Bangalore was arrested in 2014 for suspected links with IS. Mehdi's twitter account had 17,700 followers with 2 million hits in a month. 60-70% of foreign jihadi fighters in Iraq and Syria followed his tweets about progress of battle. He was reported to have motivated and facilitated some foreigners to migrate to IS territories to fight for IS. "Though not a formal member of the ISIS because Biswas never had any face-to-face meetings with any of the representatives of the terror organization, his actions were no less than that of an active member. This prompted the police to identify him as a "representative" of the ISIS, acting on their behalf, recruiting foreign nationals, especially from Europe and the United Kingdom for jihadi activities in Syria and Iraq.... He has acted as a guide for youths willing to join them (ISIS)."^{xii} On being caught Biswas, who had done no act against the Indian state is reported to have said " I am a soldier and I have no regrets". In last few years under UNCTED guidance the world has collaborated with technology and social media companies to hinder and limit the spread of propaganda designed to instigate violence, limited success in the same is visible. Technology of digital fingerprinting is one such enabler to control spread of radical propaganda. However the terrorists find new innovative means to spread their propaganda and hence it has to be a continuous effort. Overall exploring online radicalization is a whole separate subject and hence not discussed further.

Selection Process. Terror organisations by nature are secretive with huge risks of subversion by persons who infiltrate the organization on behalf of the security forces. While anecdotes of people joining terror organizations due to response to a real or perceived slight are often quoted in media, the fact remains the terror organizations are bound to have a rigid method of identifying, vetting and then inducting cadres. The process will vary organization to organization and even among the different conflict zones. Any terror recruitment prevention program must understand the process in its area.

An insight into Al Qaeda methods is obtained from an anonymous publication that I first downloaded in Mar 2015. 'Course in the Art of Recruiting', claimed to be compiled by Abu Amru Al Qa'idy, probably a pseudo name, the publication claims to be a graded practical program of individual Da'wa or invitation or guidance. As per some assessments the author is likely to be a student or associate of Abu Mus'ab. The edition referenced was marked as the 5th edition of this Al Qaeda booklet. It has a dedication to the 'Internet Mujhids and the Media Jihadi Knights.'

The book starts with an explanation of the need for the manual. It explains why random motivation of muslim youth may make angry young men, it will not make effective jihadis. Need for individual Da'wa is explained to be beyond jihadi cassettes and motivational lectures. It is designed to help convert a person with rage into an effective terrorist. Collective Da'wa which aims at the society as a whole will not produce persons ready for action; even if they are motivated they are unlikely to be security conscious and capable of distinctive action.

The booklet outlines a recruitment program that has 5 stages.

1. ***Acquaintance and Selection.*** Abu Amr recommendations for selection make an interesting list. Avoid religious persons including salafists/Muslim Brotherhood/memorizers of Quran etc, because they are already taught; watch out for five signs coward/talkative/ stingy/ loner/ personal hostile attitude to jihadis. Irreligious people are ideal, secularists and liberals are well suited. Thereafter the individuals are graded and assessed on multiple defined parameters. The best 2-3 are selected for the next stage.
2. ***Building Relationship*** (3 weeks). This includes a guide on a daily and weekly activity profile. Build a relationship, talk of 'deen' and 'iman', but do not touch the topic of jihad. Maintain a log. Come to know the potential recruits 24h daily schedule. At end of three weeks all potential recruits are again assessed on given parameters and graded. Grade him and decide to discard, continue with some more effort with borderline cases and move to next stage for those who. A concurrent test at this stage is a security audit. A potential recruit who fails this test is automatically immediately rejected, indicating the primacy placed on security.
3. ***Awakening of Emaan***(45-60 days). This phase has two sub phases 'At Targheeb' or building vision and desire for heaven. Once desire for heaven and the ways to get there by living a life of 'eman' as per the Koran is taught. The next concept ie 'At Tarheeb' or fear of hell is created. At this stage if the youth in confusion of teenage years starts wondering if he is capable of living a pure life fit for heaven. He seeks help of the new found guide who introduces the next concept or shortcut to heaven – jihad.
4. Next phase is about planting the concept of Jihad or introduction of Jihad as an option to achieve heaven.

5. The final stage is establishment of cells and going operational. It was also the stage a recruit was considered fit to understand the ‘Call to Global Jihad’ by Abu Mus’ab Al Suri. (Lia,2009)

Organisation and Processes. Any organization’s success, efficiency and effectiveness is predicated on the organizational structure and its internal processes. Successful organizations are agile and innovative to beat competitors or in this case the government agencies. These organizations being secretive in nature, it is tough to investigate and expose the organization structure and internal processes. This understanding is critical for a successful conduct of counter terror operations. In this section we explore the structures and processes of Al Qaeda and ISIS.

Abu Mus’ab’s evolution of the ideas on stratagem on conduct of jihad took initial form in 1990-91 after his experiences in Syria and Algeria. He was scholarly in his approach to jihad and did detailed studies of regional conduct of Jihad in various parts of the world. Later he used Afghanistan as a testing and propagating ground of his ideas on conduct of jihad. In ‘Call to Global Jihad’ released from hiding in 2004, he divided the world jihad efforts since 1960s into three subsets based on organizational structures and internal processes (Lia, 2009).

1. The school of secret military organizations(regional-secret-hierarchical).
2. The school of open fronts and overt confrontations.
3. The school of individual jihad and small cell terrorism.

School of Secret Military Organisations. Such organizations “adopted the jihadi ideology and conducted organizational work on the regional level, through a secret system and hierarchical network. The main goal was to topple the existing governments and systems, and to establish the Islamic system through armed jihad^{xiii}” (Lia,2009. Page 350). In Al Suri’s assessment all such organizations ultimately face military and security failure due to inherent weaknesses in front of a state force with a good intelligence network and weapon systems in era of advanced technologies. The school of secret military organizations is probably more accurately applicable to J&K for last few decades with phases of open confrontation in isolated pockets called free zone at various times in last few decades. The method fits well with Kashmir centric organizations which sold a tale of Islamic jihad for emancipation of the Kashmiri people, while actually funded and controlled by the Pakistan military establishment. For the on ground Pakistani jihadi, he was on religious duty to help fellow Muslims; while

for a Kashmiri terrorist he was fighting for a fantasy azadi or freedom that Pakistan did not support, in most case he was simply fighting the Indian state with no particular aim n mind. These organizations survived as long there was availability of transnational support for resources and safe havens of ISI. Improved LC management by the Indian Army has reduced Pakistan's ability to influence J&K hinterland which reflects in the decline in terrorist strength in the valley. While the terrorist organization seem to be largely on a backfoot, the Kashmir jihadis have evolved into agitation format achieved through 'education' or indoctrination of larger population by the over ground structure. It is in this propaganda war or war of ideas that the challenge remains.

School of Open Front. The school of open fronts and overt confrontations was name given to some form of earlier insurgencies with territorial controls which later metamorphed into terror organizations, examples were cited from Algeria to Chechenya to Afghanistan. Later IS clearly followed this school with success in Iraq and Syria, however these organizations ambitions beyond its territorial control lead to it facing overwhelming odds and ultimately loss of territorial areas. Most returned to insurgency or terrorism after losing to state forces. Abu Mus'ab considered these as aspirational since they provided best avenue for political activity focusing on spreading the ideology.

School of Individual Jihad. The school of individual jihad and small cell terrorism had greater chances of success as per Abu Mus'ab. It may be considered as an innovation after 9/11 and then 2014 when many motivated jihadis were arrested or lost when they try to move to a conflict site like Syria, Chechenya or Afghanistan. The success of electronic monitoring and global collaboration specially after 9/11 has empowered intelligence and security agencies to identify and disrupt terror command and control structures. Al Qaeda used the online magazines like Inspire to convey the idea and means to execute lone wolf attacks. There was a brief period where ISIS with physical territory continued to seek 'hijra' or move to ISIS territory to fight along with ISIS jihadis. However, post the start of the alliance air attacks on ISIS positions and resultant losses, ISIS too started using terror through online executions of western citizens and later seeking lone wolf attacks. However fact remain's that absence of institutional support in terms of guidance and resources make these efforts less effective, in most cases the cells have institutional network that enables perpetrators of terror strike to execute a 'spectacular' terror act. It is here Abu Mus'ab in a way fails to differentiate from genuine individual cells as compared to the interdependence as seen in Al Qaeda or IS. It is possible wrongly influenced by the events under 'Global War on

Terror’ after 9/11 till 2004, when ‘Call to Global Jihad’ was released Abu Mus’ab, wrongly assumed that individual jihad and small cell terrorism can be considered a strategic option. He quotes historical events where targeted political killings have caused policy changes and thus need to be seen in a separate context as such killings are unlikely to have impact if decision making does not have a higher purpose. Some like killer of Governor Salman Taseer in Pakistan in Jan 2004 get community support and even adulation for using their position at work or society to carry out a high profile terror task; it has desired impact as it deterred any further opposition to the unjust Blasphemy Law in Pakistan. The school was widely advocated by Al Qaeda and the propaganda magazine Inspire carried a series of articles with guidance for individual jihad in home countries.

“On Dec. 15, 2010, Khan was overheard discussing AQAP’s Inspire magazine and, specifically, the “pipe bomb recipe” in its first issue. The British court noted that Khan “appeared to have memorized” the pipe bomb recipe and discussed the “possibility of using the device to attack the English Defence League,” a far-right organization in the UK. Khan also “explained how Inspire could be obtained from the internet.”^{xxiv}

- From ‘Long War Journal’, 02 Dec 2019

The spurt of such incidents post 2011 indicate that the strategy had worked just as Abu Mus’ab had thought of. Very few of the attacks in recent past have been truly ‘Lone Wolf’. Such an attack is normally poorly organized with limited scale. Since a lone wolf in most cases is a self radicalized individual or cell, something like the Mathura cell (2017) of ISIS in India, it shows limited coordination and technical expertise.

Along with success in military or terror operations Abu Musab stressed on four additional parameters to judge a strategy.

1. Security. Success or ability of the organization to survive by ensuring security of of the cadre and the organization. Most terror organizations lost the battle to state forces once the ranks were breached by the intelligence agencies. Abu Mus’ab reasoned the school of individual jihad or cells did well in this parameter as “spontaneous operations performed by individuals and cells here and there over the whole world, without connection between them, have put the local and international intelligence apparatus in a state of confusion, as arresting the (members) of the aborted

cells does not influence the operational activities of others who are not connected to them” (Lia, 2009. *The Architect of Global Jihad*, page 366)

2. Influence on the Population. Agitation success was rated well if the acts had influence to affect more part of the affected population. The School of Secret Military Organisations failed in this unless it had a concurrent OGW network to carry out indoctrination activities. Kashmir has both strands working concurrently; the loss of teeth in the militant wing was made up by increasing the agitation dynamics in last one decade.

3. Political Perspective. The loose command and control prevents alignment with a political narrative. A strategy can be said to succeed only if it meets or is in synergy with the political objectives.

4. Education or Ideological and Tactical Training. High knowledge base and technical skills of workers at all levels is desirable for the jihadi cadre, as it improves their effectiveness and survivability. In this parameter, in Kashmir we have seen the drop in capability of the terrorists after denial of freedom of training under Pakistan’s ISI apparatus of training camps of various terror organizations. Even the ideological base is less uniform and in a way fractured. It is in ideological base that Kashmir finds multiple strands competing and collaborating at the same time. Some strands specially pro-pakistan can be inferred to having being weakened while some strands including pro independence or religious fanaticism are the risk of finding increased support base.

Terror organizations of old have meta-morphed from earlier hierarchy driven structure to more flat structures riding on the internet driven communication platform, they are now probably more of networks than organizations. This is synch with the recommendations of Al Suri that seemed to have been forced by ground realities post 9/11. These networks still require structure but avoid the rigidity of hierarchy. This calls for a middle order structure that enables the network to function. This middle order avoids surveillance while the counter terror organizations focus on the leadership and the executor of the final terror operation, the terrorist. US Army General McChrystal said his experience in COIN taught him that “you take the middle of the network – experienced professionals- you attack them, you capture, you kill and you turn as many as you can, and you cause the network to collapse on itself” (Moghdam 2013, page 23). During a study ordered by the European Union in 2018^{xv}, after detailed study the researchers decided to use the terms “radical” to qualify both pietist

Salafists (who are non-violent) and “jihadists” (who are violent) because it was inferred that some processes are common to both movements

Counter terrorism specialists in India need to understand this in a local context in order to ensure better effectiveness of the overall counter terrorist operation. Exposing the Pulwama attack enablers or the invisible middle order OGW, beyond the gun wielding terrorists would form part of this effort. This OGW network would have facilitated reconnaissance, arranging explosives and the vehicle, place for rigging up the IED, safe houses prior to execution, recording of last message by the suicide bomber, transmission of the same to the handlers in Pakistan etc. While the terrorists involved have reportedly been killed the OGW network would probably largely survive undiscovered, available for any future misadventure.

Innovation in Terrorist Organisations

Terror organizations survive in a high-risk environment opposed by the manpower and technological resources of the state forces. They have been continuously innovating to keep ahead of the security forces. The global interconnected world has led to some sharing of these innovations.

International Institute for Counter Terrorism published ‘How Al Qaeda Innovates’ on 01 Aug 2013, a seminal work by Assaf Moghadam. The study explores the issue by studying the 9/11 attacks. It postulates that “theoretically, the findings suggest that the conventional wisdom of the predominance of top down innovation in terrorism is dependent on a problematic assumption, namely that terrorist groups are centralized, hierarchical, and localized entities. As more terrorist groups adopt decentralized structures, they are increasingly likely to display multi-directional processes of innovation”(Moghadam, 2013, pg 467). He goes on to state “Innovative terrorist attacks are not just memorableoften particularly consequential. Catching their targets off guard in terms of the timings and nature of the assault, innovative attacks most often come as a strategic surprise to the enemies”(Moghadam, 2013).

The paper deals with what and who drives innovation in terror organizations. The paper argues for five key drivers that may stimulate innovation.

1. Innovation in order to obtain the capability to match the level of violence associated with the respective ideological and strategic preferences.

2. Innovation driven by personal rivalries between groups colocated geographically. This is true in Kashmir where in the past various groups fought for influence.
3. Innovation spurred by problem solving, particularly in the face of government pressures and/or defensive government reactions”(Moghadam, 2013, pg 472).
4. Taking benefit if new human or material resource is made available. In Kashmir in recent years it has been terms of IED experts or the JeM sniper in 2018.
5. Innovation driven by adoption of modern technology.

States targeted by terrorism need to locate the centre of gravity of a terror organization, in order to correctly align the counter terror policies. In most international cases of high level innovation is attributed to top leadership. Axiomatically neutralizing top leadership should seriously dent terror organizations effectiveness. However, in addition, to top down, even bottoms up innovation is known to produce results in terror organizations.

The study focused on 9/11 attackers, who as is well known displayed a high amount of innovation. In this case, Al Qaeda desires to hit the US at home ground was so obsessive that it lead to the innovation of multiple aircraft hijack and crashing into buildings. The original idea for 9/11 was not of Al Qaeda leadership but of Khalid Shiekh Mohammed who came to Al Qaeda with the plan and joined Al Qaeda only after the leadership accepted his proposal in March or April 1999, he might have attempted the same attacks even if some other organization would have provided the material and organizational support. In India, the parliament attacks could have followed the same path with the original idea of a local stringer probably from J&K, being supported by JeM, though in this case the idea was probably JeM or ISI driven.

The same openness to ideas had enabled Al Qaeda to execute attacks like USS Cole and maybe later attempt to take over PNS Zulfiquar by AQIS in 2014, at Karachi Port. The attempt by serving Navy personal had plans to use the ships armaments including the missiles against US ships in Indian Ocean. Al Qaeda built a system of free lance entrepreneur bringing terror act proposals to the leadership, which were then vetted; the organization rewarded the best with financial, material and organizational support. Al Qaeda formalized the ‘centralization of leadership and decentralization of execution’, principle. In a way, the method was an integration of bottoms up and top down approach, very similar to military

tactics of Auftragstaktik of German Army or US Army ‘mission command’ (Moghadam, 2013, pg 490).

The Al Qaeda leadership would invest in choosing the leadership and the team for a mission, but delegate a large part of the mission planning and execution to the designated leader. In 9/11 Khalid Sheikh had the liberty to change dates and even veto the Osama desire to include White House among the targets, since Khalid believed that to be unfeasible.

“A growing number of terrorist entrepreneurs will likely adopt the model of KSM, RamziYossef, Ilayas Kashmiri and other top terrorists to whom strict organizational affiliation mattered less than opportunity to wreak havoc. Terrorist entrepreneurs are not necessarily a new phenomenon – Carlos the Jackal, perhaps the quintessential terrorist freelancer, was active in 1970s and 1980s – but their numbers are likely to rise in the future” (Moghadam, 2013, page 32). This has shown signs in India with youth and even families going to fight with IS and Taliban in Iraq and Afghanistan. These people were radicalized enough to seek participation in terror activities but chose to travel looking for an organization seeking such volunteers. Lack of open front options like ISIS controlled territories may make such volunteers look for options on Indian mainland.

Looking at India, the spurt in fidayeen attacks around year 2000, 2008 Mumbai attacks, sniping in 2018 are all examples of innovation. In this case most can be attributed to the control in PoK. Similar innovations have been seen in improved versions of IEDs in Kashmir. With every cycle as Indian security forces drills and technological devices improved to counter IEDs, the IEDs used by the terrorists evolved to beat the counter measures including detection and jamming devices; these again were obviously driven by an organization with access to technology - ISI. Innovations take time fructify, from ideas to execution. It is at that phase that intelligence inputs are at the risk of being ignored as probably happened in case of inputs regarding the Mumbai^{xvi} attacks in 2008 and again in Sri Lanka^{xvii} attacks in 2019. A case in point could be the current increased JeM^{xviii} interest in sea bound operations.

This chapter explored the international understanding of ideology, ideologues, recruitment process, organization and internal processes of terror organizations. This knowledge was used while exploring the same facets specific to terrorist organisations in Kashmir. It was also used to build a questionnaire to explore terrorist recruitment in Kashmir.

The questionnaire evolved over Kashmir specific studies and discussions with various experts. The primary study followed the secondary study.

Understanding Terrorist Recruitment:

Kashmir

Having explored the international experience in various facets of terrorism, this chapter will discuss various facets of terror recruitment in Kashmir based on secondary resources and some relevant key inputs from a primary study. The detailed analysis for the primary study will be covered in the next chapter.

Studies of the recruitment trends in Kashmir are very few in the open domain. The data availability is primarily on the South Asian Terrorism^{xix} (SATP) portal and a few articles with data limited to a time zone like the “Kashmir Tracker by ORF”. International sites like trackingterrorism.org of Terrorism Research and Analysis Consortium (TRAC) have collation of worldwide papers and analysis; however they have limited coverage of Kashmir and do not provide any data that is required by scholars. SATP site initiative of KPS Gill, is frequently used by academicians and government agencies, it has data primarily on casualties and incidents related to terrorism. Official records of terrorists killed, arrested or surrendered are not available to research scholars. Even interrogation reports which are seen to be a source of data for research done in western nations is largely absent from public domain as there is currently no formal system to de-classify these documents. Interviews of suspects or convicts can be a rich source of focused studies on terrorism, however they can happen only in a state sponsored or supported study. Overall the absence or difficulty of access to authentic data creates challenges for any research, this needs rectification to enable data based decision making in a live conflict zone like Kashmir.

Kashmir has seen parallel strands of local and foreign terrorists which have different dynamics, though they operate in synergy as part of nearly all tanzeems or organisations. There is a known distinction in recruitment process, role and capability of Foreign Terrorists (FTs) and Local Terrorists (LTs). This chapter will cover both with ultimate focus on the LT. The chapter is covered under the following heads

1. The premise of the study into recruitment into terrorism in Kashmir.

2. Politico-social realities in Kashmir that impact terrorist recruitment.
3. Changes in last decade that influence the current generation of terrorist recruits.
4. The backend of terrorists in Kashmir, the over ground workers network.
5. The terrorist recruitment process in Kashmir.
6. Analysis of personality profiles of recent terrorist recruits.
7. Motivation of the recent terrorists recruits.
8. ISJK and AGUH in Kashmir

Knowledge of Terror Recruitment Process. A key challenge for the study is to define the terror recruitment process in Kashmir. The process is naturally secretive and largely under researched; there are very few studies available in open domain. As part of the primary study that is being covered in the next chapter, the experts were asked to grade their own knowledge terror recruitment process. The expert inputs indicated that only 56% graded their knowledge of terror recruitment process in Kashmir as good or very good.

How do you rate your understanding/knowledge of the process of indoctrination and terror recruitment in the valley

86 responses

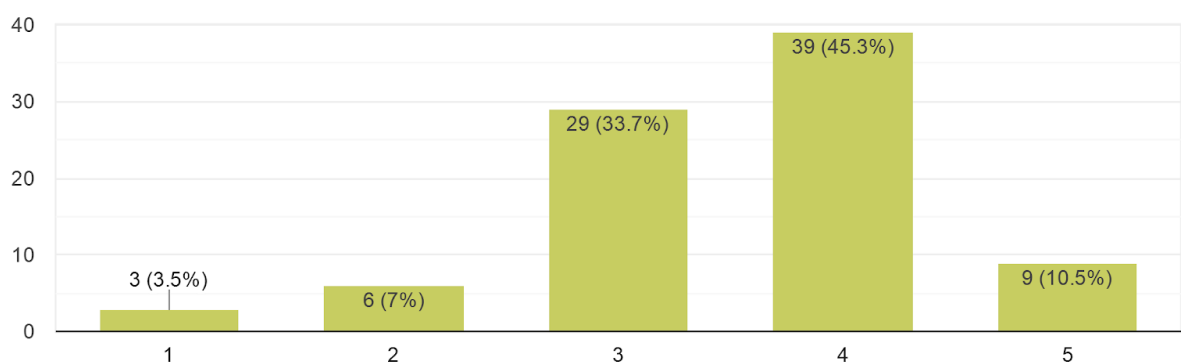


Fig 3.1

It was even lower 29 % grading themselves good or very good for knowledge of their of recruitment process of transnational terror organizations like Al Qaeda or ISIS. Considering that this is the self assessment of experts it indicated that there is need for further investigation and study of the subject with focus on ground realities of Kashmir.

How do you rate your knowledge of the process of indoctrination and recruitment in Al Qaeda and ISIS?

86 responses

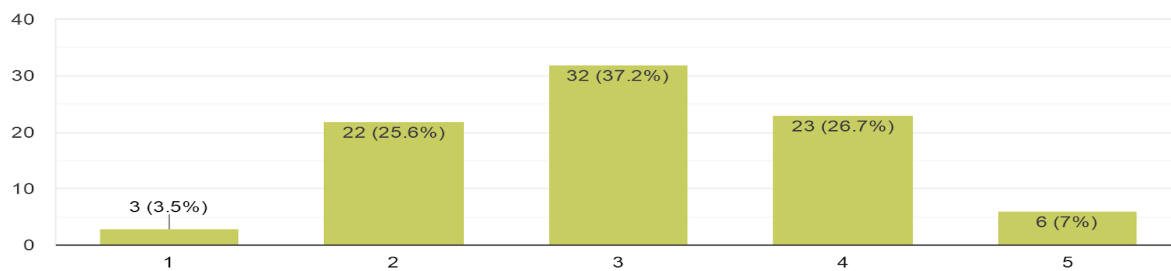


Fig 3.2

Premise

“One morning in Apr 2004, an old man appeared at the gate of my post in South Kashmir. He sought help as his son was insisting that he wanted to join the terrorists. I, the company commander called the duo in and interacted with the youth for next few days. However, despite best efforts two months later the old man was back, alone, the son had gone missing. Looking back I wonder what could I have done to bring prevent the boy from joining the terror tanzeem, I had no formal training or even knowledge to deal with the situation. We need to create SOPs to deal with such cases. Prevention is better than having to kill such youth as a terrorist, after he joins the terror tanzeem.”

- A Security Forces Officer, 2019

It is postulated that while there is angst in any society like Kashmir for variety of reasons, it is a very small percentage that is vulnerable to take a drastic step to pick a weapon against the state. Last decade has witnessed low estimates of 250-350 terrorists in entire J&K. It can be assumed that maybe a few thousand Over Ground Workers (OGW) support this network in various ways. It can be also assumed that there is a pool of indoctrinated and motivated enough youth, who can be considered as vulnerable to taking the step to joining as an active terrorist. Experts had varying estimates ranging from 1000 to 5000 or even more youth who may be vulnerable and close to the decision to picking a weapon. These would include some who are part of the OGW network and some those who are having personal experiences leading to alienation and maybe indoctrination. With the assumption that we presently don't have any proven method to identify these youth, the study is working on a premise that efforts can reveal at least 50% of these vulnerable youth.

Similar situations are faced by parents, friends and family members when they can sense a youth going astray but have no expert help available, expert help which is compassionate avoids harassment and stigma for the youth and family, concerned. For such a situation Maharashtra Police^{xx} model for de-radicalisation for youth affected by ISIS ideology has had success; details will be covered later in the paper.

Prevention strategies are always less attractive since results are not quantifiable. Even if these 50%, as stated above don't join a terror tanzim, the rest 50% will continue to contribute to terror ranks. Even from these 50% who undergo a de-radicalisation effort a few may still join, which can be termed as a failure. It has to be appreciated that positive focused dealing with the identified vulnerable/radicalized/agitated youth enables positively affecting that many radicalised minds and thereby that many families and social circles. The impact though not strictly quantifiable would in the long term contribute to national effort to control terror in J&K. The study will explore what methods can be used to identify these 50%. Once identified the next step would be bring forward options for government and civil society to bring back these youth from the brink of picking a weapon.

The chapter will explore the feasibility of identifying the vulnerable youth and the process of recruitment. The de-radicalisation process will be covered in the next chapter based on primary inputs.

Recruitment and Training in Pakistan/PoK. One of the documents covering aspects of long term trends of terrorists in Kashmir is the Journal of Strategic Studies paper 'Insight from a Database of LeT and HM Militants(Fair, 2014)'. It was based on a Christine Fair led study at West Point which included a review of 918 LeT and 707 HM biographies, those who were killed between 1994 and 2007. It was based on biographies published by the terror tanzims to honor the killed cadres. The study highlighted that a terrorist launched on a mission in J&K has to go through multiple selection layers including recruitment, selection for advanced training, lobbying for selection for a mission, infiltration and then execution of a mission. For important or bigger missions the selection was at the very top, eg Ajmal Kasab was probably personally selected by Hafiz Saeed for a mission. For Kashmiri origin terrorists there is an additional phase of exfiltration, this too required vetting before being sent to PoK for training. Overall it substantiates that recruitment involves diligent vetting and selection by the terror organization.

It is well documented that the initial decades of terror was orchestrated and controlled by Pakistani proxies. The recruitment and training in Pakistani tanzeems, with LeT and JeM probably with the largest cadre base have been well exposed in multiple platforms. It had distinct recruitment drives from Madrassas and then training which is done in batches. The training upgrades are in phases, with recruits identified to be with potential being moved to higher phases. Most of the camps were well known to international and Indian intelligence agencies, Balakote being one of them. The three basic phases of training are Daura-e-Aam, Daura-e-Khas and Daura-e-Sufa.

“In Daura-e-Aam, the cadres of the terror outfit are given basic training in small arms and grenade-throwing for 21 days which is followed by a three-month specialised training, known as Daura-e-Khas in which they are taught handling of AK rifles, rocket launchers, making of Improvised Explosive Devices and LMGs. The third kind of training, known as Daura-e-Sufa, involves motivating and brainwashing youth for terror acts” (PTI, 2018).

It is well known that ISI refined its training methodology for jihadis during the Afghanistan decade, when it was formally in charge without worrying about niceties of deniability; and that has continued as such since then. The specialist training and upgrades are on case to case and need basis. There have been smaller special groups and individuals given advanced training by Pak Army like the 26 Nov 2008^{xxi} attackers in Mumbai. With time strategic direction is managed by ISI while micro management and basic training has been left to the tanzeems.

Interrogation of Ajmal Kasab gave an insight into the recruitment and training format of ISI controlled terrorist organizations. In Kasab’s case, he was a third child of a poor family who after being forsaken by family^{xxii} and society, and decided to try his hand at crime. He and his friends saw the terror recruiters of Jamaat ul Dawa, a front of LeT, distributing pamphlets in Lahore and decided that joining seemed to be a good option to get access to arms and training. At this stage religious motivation was missing. It was later in the training camps that he got indoctrinated and chose to become part of a large cause, suddenly an outcast was a respectable man in family and society. The indoctrination involved showing images and videos of purported atrocities of Muslims in Kashmir, Chechnya, Palestine and other parts of the world. In the camps he also got a feel of being part of a social structure that he so longed for. He later graduated to Daura e Am, then Daura e Khas and the final phase of marine commando training and navigation training given to fidayeens selected for Mumbai.

The Pak military or ISI and the terror organization collaboration in motivating, selecting, recruiting and training were truly on display.

In 2017, training videos were captured from a terrorist group near LC. The videos probably made with ISI help covered a mock drill of making a breach in the LC fence and ambushing an Indian Army patrol. The level of indoctrination can be gauged from the fact that the mock drill included the slitting of throats of the killed soldiers.

Politico-social Realities in Kashmir

It is accepted that in Kashmir valley a percentage of the population has dissent and angst against the state, for varying reasons. Any person with angst looks for ways to counter the same. Till recently there was a sort of a graduated bouquet of options to choose based on individual level and reason for dissent. A major portion, the ones who took part in state elections looked at NC, Congress, BJP and the PDP as political options to address their concerns. Some became supporter of the smaller political groupings of Engineer Rashid, Shabir Shah or Sajjad Lone. The status quo or rotation of power between NC and PDP did not seem to assuage the alienation of the common man.

Post 2014, as per Omar Abdullah in Kashmir “The PDP with its slogan^{xxiii} of self-rule filled a gap that existed between the NC and the separatists but after they tied up with the ultra-nationalist BJP, the space has shrunk even for the youngsters, who have gravitated towards militancy.” His father Farooq Abdullah had a candid admission when he said “Everyone is feeling choked because the political system has failed to deliver. The youth are looking at the nation very carefully and because they are educated, they first become militant in their minds.” There have been efforts at mustering of new alternates like Shah Faesal and the new breed of leaders who chose to fight the Panchayat elections, the prognosis of current situation is open to debate.

The more radical or people with more serious dissent have the choice to follow and support the Hurriyat with the moderate Mirwaiz group or the more pro-pakistan and rabid Geelani group. Ironically despite the common slogan for ‘azadi’ or independence, Yasin Malik the only pro-independence separatist was popular among a small section. The OGW layer mixed among most of the bureaucratic, business and political layers. Picking up weapon or joining terror was the final layer for the radical or angry mind. Even among the terrorist you could choose HM, if you were more local issues inclined. LeT, JeM, Al Badr and so on

were the options in case you believe in Pakistan or its stooges, or at times simply because they seem to have better access to resources. There is little evidence to show that the terror recruits choose which tanzeem to join, it is probably a matter of access.

Post 2010 or maybe 2013, the year of minimum local recruitment the trend changed. The new terrorists challenged the existing power structure. They were no longer comfortable in being a tool of the larger players; they showed no deference to the old hawks. They did not obey the secrecy and anonymity code. Burhan Wani and his friends embraced social media. They made their names and faces known, their message cut barriers. The youth lapped up the videos, photos and messages of these new role models – leading to a spike in local recruitment. The fact that the valley is going through a youth bulge, with more than 60% population^{xxiv} under 30 and the quick spread of internet and mobile internet, only added to the challenge for the state to provide alternate narratives and role models.

“The wielding of social media in 2015 showed a drastically different modus operandi from that of the old militancy in Kashmir. Until those pictures came out, there was little public discourse about local militancy. In the past, militants remained in hiding and away from the limelight, either for the lack of access to media or to avoid being caught by security forces. The new crop of militants, however—armed with the power of instant fame through social media—seems more eager to make a public display of their involvement in armed jihad^{xxv}”

- Khalid Shah, 2019

The conventional models of control by the Pakistani establishment have also weakened. When a Burhan Wani speaks to Hafiz Saed, the Hafiz is as thankful as the young Wani for a chance for the conversation. For Hafiz the connection with the upstart was important to remain relevant. Burhan was an upstart who had gained prominence following a path independent and unmindful of the cross LC masters. Geelani quietly rued his loss of control and kept a straight face while the new breed of local terrorists refused to listen. There was this anecdotal conversation with a senior JeI leader, on being told that social media was radicalizing the youth, he replied ‘social media made these youth go out of our control’.

It goes worse when Zakir Musa arrived, he took over Wani’s mantle and started asking uncomfortable questions to these old separatists who believed they run the ideological battle. He not only cut the controls but threatened to severe necks of these old masters. HM and UJC leadership were aghast and disowned him and his small group. He asked if an

Islamic Nation in Kashmir was not the goal, then why did they use the mosque to rally the youth? He ended up being part of the uncomfortable AGUH, even ISJK made an unnoticeable entry. Probably, a new OGW network was getting established. The need to avoid Al Qaeda and ISIS presence in the valley was urgent for Pakistan and the separatists. The names ran the risk of getting negative reaction from the world community and would not be amenable to Pakistani controls.

AGUH and ISJK did not have numbers or resources to really make a mark. However a small but real OGW network made them survive. Zakir Musa video messages improved in quality of technical work and more importantly in the radical messages, it was obvious better script writers were available. Even the delivery changed to in a manner to ape the Al Qaeda leadership tapes and videos. They did not last long due to lack of resources, indicating that ISI controls by tempering resource availability mattered for any terror tanzeem to survive and have an influence in Kashmir. However, the idea found resonance with the social media fed youth. The reaction on the death of Zakir Musa surprised both the separatists and the security establishment. A Kashmiri youth shared that the ideology of Al Qaeda and ISIS has more following in the urban college going youth, probably due to the impact of social media based propaganda.

At this stage it is necessary to see the gap between aspirations of the Kashmiris and the goals of the terror tanzeems in Kashmir. While it is a fact that all terror tanzeems that exist and survive in Kashmir fight for J&K accession with Pakistan or PoK. Even the powerful separatists like Geelani are strongly pro-Pakistan. Pro-azadi terror tanzeems like JKLF had ceased to exist long back and pro independence leaders like Yasin Malik are tolerated only as a small power group. While it is not tough to consider the fact that last few decades of socio-political environment and economic state of Pakistan does not present accession with Pakistan as a preferable option, for most Kashmiris. The last international survey in Kashmir done by Chatham House indicated that even in Kashmir valley only 2 to 7% favoured accession to Pakistan as a political solution! (Bradnock, 2010)

Changes in last Decade

Keeping view of the major changes in trends in Kashmir terror content since the early 90s to 2004 and then again from 2010 to date, it may be prudent to focus on profile and trends in last one decade. Post 9/11 and the ‘war on terror’, the dynamics of Pakistan controlled terror changed or adjusted to the new ground realities. The construction of the LC fence improved LC domination and created a barrier between the controllers and the valley. The terror recruits movement to and fro between valley and Pakistan had got seriously limited; leading to increased share of home recruited and trained Kashmiri militant. In the current phase of better LC domination by IA, the option for training in PoK or Pakistan is getting rarer. There have been attempts at innovations to get youth to Pakistan^{xxvi} via legal routes with visa for training, but the number remains small. The result is that the local recruit has not undergone the formal indoctrination and training in ISI sponsored camps. The local recruit has comparatively poorer combat capabilities.

In case of Ahmed Dar, the Pulwama attacker training was reportedly done by a JeM IED expert and trainer Ghazi Rashid^{xxvii} who had infiltrated into India in Dec 2018. The training method and extent is still not clear but open to interpretation, his final act needed more of indoctrination than any weapon training. There was no need to teach IED making to a man tasked to blow himself, so Rashid’s role may have been to assemble the IED and maybe contribute to indoctrination and preparation of Adil Dar. What can surely be inferred is that major indoctrination would have happened locally before selection to execute the attack. The level of training can be gauged from the fact that as per reports due to Dar’s poor driving skills, OGW Shakir Bashir Magrey^{xxviii} drove the attack vehicle as close as 500m from the blast site before handing over to Dar. It could also have been to cater for any change of mind or stress that Dar may have displayed at the last stage. Magrey’s role seems to include reconnaissance for the attack, buying components online and sheltering the terrorists while the plan was being executed. While key decisions, directions and provision of key resources including RDX and the IED expert may have been facilitated by Pakistan based terror groups, the fact remains that indoctrination and detailed planning and execution happened within Kashmir. The OGW structure for this indoctrination and execution largely outlives killing or busting of a terror module.

In 2010, the number of local terrorists was low and most of the active terrorists were Pakistanis. Local recruitment was at its lowest in 2013 – the year Burhan Wani became a

commander of HM. The pattern of recruitment was to change with peak local recruitment being 191 in 2018. It is well debated that whether the ideological motivation of the youth joining terrorism in last one decade is different from the earlier decades. The millennials have not seen the peak of militancy in Kashmir which ran through the nineties and until 2004-05. They grew when terror signature in daily lives reduced but the security force signature continued to be nearly the same. The new mass agitation based strategy of the separatists implemented in 2008-2010, probably borrowed in some manner from the Palestine Intifida combined with the onset of the new info age of social media created a new generation of jihadis or terrorists in the valley. They fed on agitation momentum where every death fueled another protest till another death. Social media propaganda was being used to ingrain the sense of victimhood. The restrained security forces were caught unaware of how to control the mob tactics without inflicting undesirable casualties, this fed a sense of false bravado in the youth taking part in stone pelting and other mob activities. The Arab Spring in 2010 fed the continuation of the trend post 2010, a period the counter terrorist strategy probably could not keep pace with the changed ANE strategy till it blew back in the period 2014-2018.

The Resource Crunch. The process of recruit selection as in any other organization gets linked to the volunteer pool and the number of vacancies. In Kashmir some experts believe that the current number of terrorists is dictated by the number of weapons available; if more weapons were available – it is possible that more youth would have joined a terror tanzeem. The effectiveness of the LC grid has made it difficult for the terrorists to smuggle new weapons into the valley. In 2018, a terrorist group was killed while infiltrating from Jammu region, the group of three was intercepted while being transported by a truck. The recoveries showed that the terrorists were carrying an extra AK 47 among other recoveries. Same trend of carrying extra weapons has been noticed in new infiltrating groups in Kashmir. The spurt of weapon snatching incidents from isolated guards or in some cases indoctrinated cops joining terrorists after absconding with a few rifles, in last few years also indicate a shortage of weapons with the terrorist organizations in Kashmir valley. This is a change from an era where weapon availability was not a worry in the valley and large recoveries were a norm. This needs further verification as some experts still believe that arms caches exist in the valley.

There are many anecdotal beliefs of youth joining a terror organization on a whim based on a bad experience with the security force or due to emotional response based on an event like attending a funeral of a slain terrorist, in some cases a relative or an acquaintance.

Even Burhan Wani is supposed to have joined HM^{xxix} after a bad experience at a CRPF or police check post. These anecdotes shield the process of recruitment that ANEs use for terrorist selection and recruitment.

The Backend of Terror : The OGW Network

‘On the very first day of the upsurge, the day after militant commander Burhan Wani was killed, mobs in different places right across the Valley attacked police stations and paramilitary camps — at several of these places, they tried to set fire. Either people in different places just happened to get the same idea simultaneously, or the strategy was recommended to the prime movers of mobs across the Valley^{xxx}’. The backend remains just out of the view of the security apparatus. The intelligence network has to unmask this layer. Who does the surveillance, evaluating, maybe indoctrination and training of the new recruit? Who modulates the numbers? Who ensures coordination among various tanzeems? Who enables control of cross border handlers of ISI and UJC? Who holds the keys?

Interactions with experts reveal the lack of information in this secretive OGW network and process. Certain issues that can be reasonably inferred are that the terrorist leaders themselves do not have the liberty to mingle with the population to identify suitable recruits and to carry out motivation or indoctrination. The process has to be done by someone who can interact with the larger population without the threat of being exposed. It is only at a later stage that the terror leaders would be involved in the decision to allow a volunteer to join.

At a gathering at the house of Faizan Ahmad Bhat, killed at an encounter in 2015, young boys including Faizan’s friends sat in one corner of a room as a man in his 40s addressed the mourners and exhorted them to “fight the oppressor till Kashmir achieves aazadi”^{xxxi}. The 40 year old man and more like him continue to manage to avoid security forces focus and probably form the OGW network working at brainwashing and recruiting more vulnerable youth.

According to David Devadas, these teenage boys often had handlers teaching them how to take control of the streets “One, teenagers are not only extremely well organized and resourceful, the fact that they have adopted similar tactics across different parts of the valley indicates that things are being minutely coordinated – that tactics have been recommended by

‘handlers’ in different places, and in turn they are doing an efficient job of teaching the boys they coordinate^{xxxii}.

It is irrational to expect that any angry youth that gets emotional will have access and be welcomed by a terror organisation where secrecy and risks of getting compromised have very high costs. Leaving aside a few aberrations like Faizan Bhat^{xxxiii}, any terror organization will seek stable, intelligent and capable cadres; angry yes but not emotionally unstable. The terror organization will ideally have phases of selection, indoctrination, vetting and training before becoming an active cadre, aberrations, if any will be few and far between. It is reasonable to infer that this process cannot be done by the active terrorists due to the security threats and need to remain undiscovered. The active terrorists cannot be involved in recruit scouting. It is the shadowy OGW that can do this task. Even among the OGWs nearly 80% would be the workers who complete errands that meet the intelligence and logistical needs of the terrorists, and furthering the spread of the radical narrative; this layer has very less information beyond their immediate contacts and hence do not reveal much if arrested. It is the top or creamy layer (say 20%) that would have the decision making powers, access and control to resources including money and weapons, communication links to handlers and ideologues in Pakistan etc. They would be tougher to identify because of use of layers between them and the terrorist, they would be the well healed business man with hawala links, a respected banker, the double playing policeman, the quiet intellectual or political ideologue who plays the levers without been seen as influencing, a fanatic cleric like Azhar Masood or maybe a Zakir Naik and so on.

The levers are played majorly by controlling resources both in terms of funds and weapons or equipment. In some cases this is used to modulate the scale of violence and even specifics spikes at desired times by instructions for a terror act like Wandhama or Pulwama or Uri. Terror attacks in valley whenever a US dignitary visits India are anecdotally quoted to show how the handlers have ability to modulate violence in Kashmir.

It is known that ISI nurtured multiple terror tanzeems in Kashmir to prevent any single organization from having the capability to have an independent worldview or agenda; this was based on lessons learnt in Afghanistan. Kashmir terrorism is different from other terror organizations in India in a way that Kashmir terror did not require much of local contribution to sustain, even HM and UJC survived on material and morale support and implicit approval of ISI. Not only weapons, little local funds were required to sustain the

terror tanzeems as Pakistan bankrolled most separatist activities. Kashmiris rich and powerful flourished financially despite a crippling economic environment, a rare example of a state doing comparatively well financially despite weakened economic activity for three decades. The tanzeems were loosely coordinated and their influence increased or waned or some tanzeems even vanished, at various times based on the Pakistani strategic need at the time. Some like Al Badr reappearing after years is one such example. All played by simple control of resources, the ultimate levers of control are played by the handlers in Pakistan.

The Kashmir based separatists normally have very weak direct links with the terrorists to avoid getting caught by the security or intelligence agencies; they work as the propaganda machines with their own direct links with the handlers in Pakistan. There was an intentional gap between the political wing and the militant wing; they survive as two parallel bodies linked to the mother source in Pakistan. The latest NIA^{xxxiv} investigations have started uncovering the money flow to the OGW network. Multiple channels are explored for the flow of money^{xxxv}. The LC trade, the hotel industry and drugs all were being exploited for hawala transactions to fund terror related activities. The stories of free flow of cash direct from Pakistan High Commission to Hurriyat leaders are well reported. In addition, legitimate businesses created from terror/ Pak funding may be generating resources for terror activities (Swami,2006). The Hurriyat leaders^{xxxvi} were ostensibly using the money for supporting the families of active terrorists, who died during encounters, by arranging for funds for next of kin including funding the higher studies of their wards in Pakistan, thereby motivating more youth of Kashmir to get actively involved in the efforts to wage war against India.

“You have an obligation to look after and help those who have been adversely affected due to the ongoing movement, particularly the youth, the prisoners, the widows, the wounded and the handicapped. Those engaged in the battle field must always remain in your prayers and you must remember that we all are the trustees of martyrs and you have to guard this trust.”^{xxxvii}

- Point 10 of Geelani 10 Point Agenda issued in Dec 2019

In order to understand the role and impact of the OGW backend, at this point it may be appropriate to revisit Abu Mu’sab Al Suri’s comment to Al Jazeera in 2000 “Over the past few years I have been present in the jihad or Islamic movement as a writer, researcher, thinker, and theorizer or ideologist I do not enjoy any party or organisational capacity. I belong neither to the Al Qaeda or any other organisations. I back their ideas and

However, from an org point of view, I am not a member of the Al Qaeda group” (Lia, 2009. *The Architect of Global Jihad*, pg 306). It was only by 2004 that the world realized the importance of this strategist and ideologue that the US put a 5\$ million bounty on his name. In Kashmir such role is handled largely by Pakistan based proxies like Azhar Masood and Hafiz Saeed, India based such OGWs remain behind the anonymity screen.

The Recruitment Process in Kashmir

In this section, I present an assessment of the recruitment process. The assessment is based on interviews with experts and looking for lessons in international experience as covered in the previous chapter.

The top or creamy OGW layer acts as the eyes to the organizations scouting for suitable recruits. This surveillance would be at public places and events including protests, stone pelting, at mosques, at schools or colleges etc to identify a potential recruit. A Kashmiri youth shared how these eyes would watch you at every place. They watch the stone pelters to identify who was more active and maybe radicalized and angry enough to be of use. They watch at religious places or political agitations to identify suitable recruits. They watch at education centers looking for suitable candidates and so on. The potential recruit must be self indoctrinated enough to seek to join a terror organization – at times the start is by being a part of the OGW network, where he could be a stone pelter or help in logistic sustenance of the existing terror network. In some cases existing family or social links with current terrorists or even slain terrorists works to get access and acceptance of the decision makers, this is borne true by trends of same family or same village recruitment spikes at various time spans. A surviving long term local terrorist acts as a good motivator and enabler for local recruitment.

Once a potential recruit is identified the next phase is socialization where the OGW network connects with the youth. In this phase the recruiter build a relationship where the youth’s views, inclinations and capabilities are explored. It also involves evaluation for security consciousness. Concurrently, sharing of political or ideological propaganda to further radicalize the youth is carried out. Some, who join with criminal intent, find the opportunity for access to resources and organizational support enticing. In addition it gives the youth an avenue to link to a seemingly higher or bigger cause, which serves as a good motivator.

At this stage the recruit is vetted and ready for acceptance as an active terrorist, the final step maybe initiated by variety of triggers. The detailed process as to who takes the final

call is not clear and likely to be delegated to local OGW in Kashmir, a consultation with the local tanzeem commander would seal the decision. It is this volunteer that is anecdotally said to be sort of ready and waiting to pick a weapon in the valley. They may be used for logistics and intelligence work in this wait in period. It is this group that if timely identified and engaged, can probably be prevented from taking the step to pick a weapon.

Personality Profiles Analysis. Terror recruitment is possible from all types of personality profiles, economic or social backgrounds. While studies of terror recruits have revealed trends and profile sets more vulnerable to recruitment, however, there is no clear distinction which can make a person immune to terror influence. Thus, the data analysis can provide no fool proof method of identification of a potential recruit. However data based studies disproved many myths about a terror recruit. A better understanding of the vulnerable profiles based on profile analysis of existing terrorists may aid security forces in executing a more effective prevention of terror recruitment drive. In this section it will be an endeavor to study the trends in personality profile of terror recruits in Kashmir.

Age. It is understood that the youth remains vulnerable to radicalisation, they struggle with questions of identity and their place in the world, and the future; they are more inclined to take risks and to challenge the status quo. Teenagers have additional challenges of handling hormonal changes that lead to a rebellious attitude. Personal trauma or experience dramatically increases an individual's susceptibility to rash decisions.

1. The first input is from Christine Fair lead study at West Point(Fair, 2014). It studied terrorist profiles of killed HM and LeT terrorists in the period 1994 to 2007. The study found median age of LeT recruit at 16.5 years and that of HM at 17.3 years. It proved the point that most recruits were juvenile and the terror tanzeems relied on 'child soldiers', being impressionable and easy to indoctrinate.
2. The next data point is of police study in 2017 on terror recruits from 2010 to 2015, the study indicated that 21% of recruits were over 25 years in age. The median age is higher than in the 90s.
3. The last decade has seen underage kids being accepted by the terrorists and used as cannon fodder. On 05 Mar 2015^{xxxviii}, a group of youth started pelting stones on the security forces to enable the terrorists at the encounter site to escape. In the chaos a security forces personnel dropped his rifle, 15 year old Faizan Ahmad Bhat

picked the weapon and disappeared to later join HM, he was killed few days later in an encounter. This case of recruitment maybe circumstantial and indicates the willingness of the HM leadership to accept a 15 year old in their ranks. In this case probably the act of picking a security force weapon propped his case.

4. In Oct 2018 ORF (ORF,2018) issued its first report as part of Kashmir Tracker. The report covering recruits from 2017 to 2018 showed that 30% of youth were more than 25% of age.

5. CLAWS study in 2018 indicated three stages of recruitment or entrapment.

(a) 7-13 years children are used for stone pelting, some booked under PSA and gets more radicalized staying with fundamentalists in jail. Videos of such pre-teenage children throwing stones and shouting slogans on catchy beats are popular on social media.

(b) 3-17 years is the period he is influenced to become an OGW, once old enough he is used for logistic support to the terrorists. This is also the age where the adrenalin rush makes a youth relish experiences like stone pelting, posting a photo on Facebook while stone pelting, passing security forces information to terrorists or even blocking security forces during operations. The mind is getting numb to the adrenalin rush and it seeks more and more despite the risks involved. Some move up the ladder and become active terrorists much before they reach adulthood.

(c) 18-32 years is the resilient, motivated youth joining active terrorist profile.

6. While a bulk of available recruits remains the vulnerable teenager, the trend has shifted to higher age group and indicates a need to analyze the reason and impact. An independent study in 2014 had indicated that older recruits had more rigid ideological or personal reasons for joining terror tanzeems and more likely to take part in terror acts immediately on picking a weapon compared to a teenage whose identity and status needs are met by joining a terror tanzeem.

Education. Anecdotally poor education makes a youth more vulnerable to indoctrination. However it is seen that the terror tanzeems choose the best from the volunteer

pool available. Hence, what makes the more educated and maybe even well employed to seek to join terror needs investigation. In many cases the motivation to join terrorism is not clear, hence indicating need for a dedicated study.

Mohd Rafi Bhat was awarded a PhD in 2017^{xxxix}. Hailing from a wealthy family Rafi was allowed by family to choose his next step, offers from many places including University of Hyderabad. He was a religious man whose Facebook profile stated ‘Human being first and then a Muslim’. On 06 May 2018, he rang his father that he was trapped with a group of militants in Shopian. Despite police efforts seeking surrender, Rafi died within 40hours of joining terrorism. (The Week, 08 May 2018)

1. In a study of LeT and HM biographies (Fair, 2014) the majority of recruits(1994-2007) were matric and above, it was 60% for LeT and 64% for HM. At the target age group this education percentage was higher than Pakistan national average or the Kashmiri mean education profile, indicating a choice and success by the terror tanzeems to prefer literate recruits. The study states “It is entirely possible that, all else being equal, Pakistanis who are less educated may, on average, seek to join a militant organization more often than those who are better educated. After all, persons with low ability or little education and thus fewer lucrative economic opportunities may be more likely to volunteer to join a terrorist organization than those persons with greater aptitude/education and better economic opportunities, because the opportunity costs of militant participation are lower for the first group. But, provided that there are individuals with better skills and/or aptitude, the organization need not accept the least qualified among its pool of potential recruits. In other words, as long as the supply of willing candidates exceeds the organization’s recruitment needs, the group can impose some measure of quality constraints.” (Fair, 2014. Page 25)

2. In police study in 2017 it was found that out of the terror recruits in period from 2010 to 2015, 19 % were graduates, 6 % from private schools and 74% had never visited a Madrassa. There is no evidence to indicate role of madrassa education in radicalization, similarity there is no data available for impact of JeI influenced schools. There is a new trend of tuition for Islamic studies and Arabic, the impact needs to be seen. Religious indoctrination seems to contribute to a robust OGW

network but not necessarily make terrorists. In fact in studies it has been found that ‘correct religious education’ is the right way to prevent radicalization.

3. In Oct 2018 ORF announced a ‘Kashmir Conflict Tracker’ with the first report being put online. It studied terror recruitment in 2018 and summarized that ‘none of them was Madrassa educated; in fact, educated youth had a greater propensity towards militancy, and included youth from modern school and university system’. At this stage it is relevant to revisit the guidance in the Al Qaeda manual ‘The art of recruiting’, the author guides the recruiter “Avoid religious persons including salafists/Muslim Brotherhood/ memorizers of Quran etc, because they are already taught; watch out for five signs coward/talkative/ stingy/ loner/ personal hostile attitude to jihadis. Irreligious people are ideal, secularists and liberals are well suited”(Anonymous/ Abu Umar Al Qaeda, 2007).

4. As per police data in 2018 out of 172 recruit profiles 20% were confirmed to be graduates and above. While in 2019 out of the 104 identified 21 were known to be graduate and above.

5. Professor David Devadas at a seminar in CLAWS quoted a 2011 survey which was conducted in 6000 plus schools of Kashmir valley, it was found that the most economically backward sections seemed to be least alienated. The ones whose parents were in influential positions seemed to most radical in their language. This may have changed in the stone pelting phase. (CLAWS,2019. Page 72)

6. The survey by TISS in 2017-18 indicated that 58% identified higher education as ‘very important’ thing in life and 56.9 identified getting a job as ‘very important. (CLAWS,2018).

7. It is inferred that while more poor maybe volunteers to join but most would probably be used at lower end of OGW work and only those showing intelligence and capability to the recruiting network would be able to join as a terrorist. Hence the acceptance from the higher education group maybe higher.

8. There have been no cases of terror recruitment from Army Goodwill Schools in the valley; however there have been many cases from the modern private schools, including the rabid Masarat Alam.

Economic and Employment Profile. The economic profile and employment status has direct impact on the volunteer pool. Poor economic activity and employment options leads to more from the better strata being available as a volunteer.

1. Police study of 2017 indicated that among the terror recruits between 2010 and 2015, 65% belonged to families with income less than Rs 20,000 per month. 92% were unemployed. (JK Police Study, 2017). Omar Abdullah is perhaps right – and he knows from experience – that “you cannot throw money at the problem. If you think Modi will come here and announce a package and people will forget Burhan, that’s not going to happen...^{xl}”

“the process and reasons behind radicalization is too complex to be solved by alleviating poverty and providing employment. In most cases, educated men from well to-do families have become foot soldiers of global jihadism” (Routray, 2019)

2. A survey by TISS in 2017-18 indicated that 25 % felt that better education and employment can bring a change in Kashmir. (CLAWS,2018)

3. There is repeated insinuation of negative impact of JeI affiliated teachers in education system of Kashmir (CLAWS,2018). This is in addition to JeI run schools. There is no data set available that JeI has influenced more youth to join terror organizations, however their role in promoting separatism is well documented. Some experts shared inputs that beyond the curriculum at many FAT run schools there are weekly or periodic lectures by special speakers, beyond the syllabus. These influenced the children at a very vulnerable age making them less amenable to secular thinking. Among the Kashmiri youth polled majority felt that FAT run schools have positive contribution to Kashmiri society; in fact some were openly annoyed at the question being asked. The Mar 2019 ban on JeI is likely to be unpopular.

“Jamaat-e-Islami is a movement that spreads the light of education. Today’s youth who barely has any connection with this organization is forced to think about India’s designs.^{xli}”

- Azam Inqalabi on 01 Mar 2019.

4. The impact of religious education that inhibits secular thoughts in children on society as a whole is tougher to quantify but undeniable. Society driven audit and

monitoring of primary and secondary level education is required for developing moral and secular citizens.

Contact with Existing Terrorist/ Family History of Terror Participation. The experts contacted during the research shared insight on influence of existing terror network in an area or village; it is known to act as a catalyst for increased terror recruitment. The existing terrorist can influence young minds and motivate them for the final step to joining a terror tanzem. The presence also provides options to interact, build rapport by tasking or doing routine support tasks; all that upgrades the youth to an OGW. The interaction allows the terrorist network including the OGWs to identify, vet and choose suitable recruits. A village will have a spell of a few years of increased recruitment as long as the network and maybe a key terrorist leader survives. The police study of 2017 indicated that 82% of terror recruits from 2010 to 2015 had peer influence of active local terrorist. Whether it is the existence/survival of the terrorist or the ability of the OGW network to preserve and sustain the terrorist despite SF pressure that is the critical factor, is a matter of debate and conjecture. The long survival establishes the OGW networks resilience and effectiveness, and thus motivates and enthralls more recruits. Media reports at times indicate that some of the youth decided to join terrorism after a ‘trigger’ incident like a bad experience with security forces or the killing of a terrorist leader. In some cases, a grand funeral of a terrorist are reported to have motivated some more to take the step to pick up weapons. The actual fact is that such events only act a tipping point for the final step of a longer recruitment process. The intervention to prevent recruitment needs to happen earlier. In addition to HUMINT efforts link analysis of slain or existing terrorists of an area, recent terror recruits and their family and social circles may help identify the vulnerable youth.

“16 year old Fardeen Ahmad Khanday attacked a paramilitary camp with two Pakistani JeM terrorists as part of a suicide attack on 31 Dec 2017. A 10th grade student with good academic credentials, his plunge into terror took family and friends by surprise as there was no visible trigger. His interactions with a commander of JeM are believed to have been an important influencer”. (Khalid, 2019. Page 6)

Jail Experience. Conflict zones face the challenge of segregating the minor criminals from radicals housed in a jail. Jails have proven to be indoctrinating zones in Kashmir as well. Stone pelters who don’t respond to counseling, at times end up with being jailed under PSA. Jail experience this hardly deterred further violent actions and at times ended up

hardening beliefs, as in case of LeT terrorist Nisar Ahmed Dar^{xlii} arrested in Jan 2020. Booking under PSA blocks future options and reduces options away from the radical path. A police analysis of terror recruitment from 2010 to 2015 found that 19% terror recruits had jail experience. Presently, the system does not provide the policemen with any soft options beyond counseling and approaching parents to rein in the unruly wards. Many security experts opine that there is a need to create soft options to de-radicalise the angry youth before he opts to join the terror tanzeems. In 2016, around 7,000 youth were detained^{xliii} and arrested by the J&K police, many of them minors. Only some of them were booked in a juvenile home, others being detained in police stations, in violation^{xliv} of the law. In some cases, minors are booked^{xlv} under the PSA Act. The DIG of police, South Kashmir, till a couple of years ago, vented his frustration when he said that all he could do was put teenage stone pelters in jails and they came out as hardened militants^{xlvi}.

In Dec 2018, Mudasir aged 14 years was killed in an encounter with security forces. He was probably influenced by the local LeT commanders. Mudasir was involved in stone pelting and other forms of protest and was detained by the security forces at the age of 12. Despite being a minor, he was reportedly kept in a jail. “Though they did not beat him up or file an FIR, it affected him a lot”^{xlvii}, a relative told a news reporter. The scale of the problem can be gauged from the fact that while scores of minor offenders were detained in the past few years^{xlviii}, there is only one juvenile observation home in the entire Valley – a facility with a maximum capacity of only 50 at Harwan in Srinagar.

Motivation of a Terrorist Recruit

Motivations of the terror recruits in Kashmir are a cocktail of many real and perceived grievances. Every individual will have his own set of motivations in which there maybe varying shades of collaborative reasons, though one or two may be the primary triggers. Parameters as extrapolated from western studies covered in Chapter 2 and discussion with experts were used to identify the two strands for motivational analysis specific to Kashmir. First strand based on individual characteristics of a seeker seeking identity, status, revenge or adventure. Second strand based on social, political or religious reasons. Both strands overlap but deserve independent study and are being discussed in detail in this section. The same have also been explored in the primary study, details of the findings are in the next chapter.

Stone Pelter to Terror Path. A common view shared by experts is that most recent recruits have followed the path of stone pelter- OGW – Terrorist. Stone pelting emerged in

Kashmir during the 2008 protests; by 2010 Masarat Alam's effect was visible. Stone pelting had a David versus Goliath appeal for the grassroots and had the ability to grab eyeballs. "He was not just the brain behind the 2010 protests; he instigated the youth to pelt stones. He has a network of workers who would initiate stone throwing at a place and draw in other youth. He would ensure he had workers in every part of Srinagar who kept the city boiling^{xlix}," says a top police officer who was posted in the city during the unrest. He devised the slogans, the 'ragda', the stomping, issued and coordinated the protests – all so popular with the youth. While stone pelting became a rage nearly 100 youth died in the protests. This suited the separatists as they wanted to build more rage against the security forces and the state. "There are a large number of instances of unprovoked stone-pelting by hostile mobs on CRPF that has left 1500 jawans injured and close to 400 vehicles damaged in the last one-and-a-half year," Special Director General of CRPF (J&K) N K Tripathi in Feb 2010. It was the period when pellet guns were introduced in Kashmir, to supplement the non lethal use of tear gas and water cannon. However, stone pelting continues unabated despite high injuries including blinding due to pellet gun injuries.

The chain needs to be broken at the first two stages of self indoctrination, and that's where the state needs to focus. Police have limited resources and options in dealing with aggressive stone pelters. Use of videos and photos of stone pelting site is used to identify the key or aggressive stone pelters and even the ring leaders. Once identified police detain the individual for counseling in which ideally family members are co-opted. The youth should ideally be free after the counseling except in case of repeat offenders who are then detained and produced in court. The challenge is shortage of police manpower, once a youth's name is included in the list he ends up being called for hazri, which implies just reporting and no counseling. Once a name is added it may take too long for a review for it to be taken off! Harassment of the already agitated youth becomes a norm. Detention of the stone pelter under PSA is largely a weak solution and at times cause further alienation. Srinagar with a single juvenile home does not have infrastructure to deal with the increased numbers of underage stone pelters. As per Bashir Manzar, "The state has no mechanism to deal with child protestors or child militants. We have, just for namesake, one juvenile home in Srinagar. It lacks everything. These homes are meant to counsel the kids so that they are given a positive and constructive direction. Nothing of the sort happens there. Besides the children are treated as adult criminals, handcuffed, and tortured. Once in police custody, these children graduate, from stone pelting, to militancy." (Khalid, 2019) The state and civil

society needs to evolve more options for dealing with such cases to negate the chances of moving to the next level in terror recruitment.

Bashir Ahmed Turay told NDTV that his son Zubair Turay a wanted stone thrower was forced to join terrorism due to police brutality. Zubair was chronic stone pelter who first booked under the Arms Act in 2004, probably ferrying arms for the militants. After 2009 he was repeatedly in and out of jail under PSA¹ and has 30 FIRs against him, including murder after joining terrorism. His mother claims he was picked up since he was in class 7th. A local business man told Quint that Zubair used to mobilize youth for pelting stones. The locality was peaceful when he was arrested. Zubair escaped from police custody in May 2017 and joined terrorism. Another local claimed^{li} “Zubair has been a victim of police and state cruelty so far. But he has become a hero now. He is a household name here. People of Shopian know him personally. They know he is a religious and kind man. He had spent his money for the treatment of youth injured during protests against India. Now he has picked up arms and of course people will now respect him even more.” A data base of terror recruits from South Kashmir in 2018 shows that there were at least 21 confirmed cases of youth having stone pelting history before picking up weapons. This probably is an apt case where the state and civil society have to come together to build ways to bring back youth like Zubair while they are still young and impressionable.

Glorification of Killed Terrorists as Martyrs. Till 2008-10, the funeral of a known terrorist was a quiet and small affair. Death of a local terrorist would get a few hundred mourners while those of an FT(Foreign Terrorist) in most cases was a formality executed by the police. Experts agree that in last 8-10 years the janaza and funeral became the place used by anti-national elements to rouse emotions and build a charged societal gathering. The glorification of terrorists especially on social media and the elaborate ‘janaza’ or funeral procession in the last decade created an aura of respectability and acceptance in the Kashmiri narrative. The gun salute, the anti-Indian slogans and increasing numbers in the funerals slowly fed and motivated the younger recruit. The social prestige and financial support accorded to the slain terrorist family increased family acceptance of ‘one son for jihad’ narrative. The Indian state probably wrongly failed to read the slow creeping influence of such events which were considered as personal space of the terrorist’s family. Absentee funeral prayer, known as Salat al-Gha’ib is another innovation that has been used to create events at places away from the actual site. This though not accepted as an Islamic practice^{lii} continues to be used for emotional and propaganda purposes, separatist leader Geelani has

used this tool frequently. In 2011 Geelani^{liii} organized prayer meet for Osama Bin Laden! Social media has been effectively used by terrorists and sympathizers to create online content to further the propaganda. Songs, videos, rap-songs, articles, social media posts etc all are in use with the active involvement of ISI and DGISPR. There are focused IT teams working to create content to share on social media. Large crowds, wailing women, mother feeding milk to her dead son, terrorists making an appearance to pay respect to a killed colleague – later even gun salutes; all with a profound impact on the young impressionable minds of the vulnerable youth. Sections of Kashmir society was internalizing acceptance of its youth picking a weapon, the spurt in local recruitment numbers. A data of recruitment in South Kashmir in 2018, showed that at least 19 of the new recruits had been in influence of an active terrorist. The cover line of Bashir Assad’s book K File rightly says ‘when death is celebrated by a society, it needs deep analysis.

At this stage it may be appropriate to revisit the international experience. “A study in 2008 indicated that analysis of most highly viewed on YouTube demonstrated that 50% jihadist videos contained ‘martyr hailing’ content or praise of martyrdom..... 30% contained footage of suicide bombings. Another significant percentage contained educational content about Islam and the call to martyrdom”, (Conway, Maura & Mclerney, Lisa Jihadi videos and auto radicalization : Evidence from an Exploratory YouTube Study, Dec 2008 quoted in Hussain & Saltman, 2013).

Parental and Societal Sanction. The glorification of killed terrorists and the associated respect for the family has become a new source of motivation for youth to join terrorism. A NDTV report in April 2019 showed an interview where a group of parents of new recruits conveyed their acceptance and support for their terrorist son. The reasons for the same could be due to being given a fait accompli by the son’s action or due to ideological agreement of the act to join terror. This could be a one off case or more widespread. There has been a limited success of police in motivating and facilitating return of young recruits, as per police claims nearly all are with help of the families. Police hierarchy seems convinced of their role in helping a youth get back to society, the old worry of joining a terror tanzeem as a one way street is no longer applicable and many have been reported to have returned and are being rehabilitated. If the families start showing acceptance of the act of joining terror, the challenges increase. Gen DS Hooda (Retd) felt a good amnesty and rehabilitation^{liv} policy is needed, a policy that helps integrate the youth back into society. He also wanted a larger civil society role as the youth picking up guns is a social issue and needs an effort beyond pure

government effort. The role of women is normally under appreciated. The recent trend showed the women coming out in protest, first it was for the missing persons and more recently in the last rites or funerals of the killed terrorists. Images of mother and other women in grief with the body of the slain terrorist were very influential^{lv} in conveying the social sanction to the youth watching the proceedings.

Victimhood or Experience of Excesses by Security Forces. Victimhood is a common radicalization trigger in any conflict zone. In Kashmir the presence of security forces for three decades has created a social environment that deepens the personal victimhood narrative.

1. The primary study found large number of inputs suggesting need to improve the conduct of security forces during normal checking and even during operations. Collateral damage has low acceptance despite the restraint shown by security forces. Tales of security forces excesses, the anti AFSPA protests, the daily experience of heavy presence of security forces in all aspects of life - all contribute to a feeling of victimhood. Even those with no direct experiences grow on stories of others. Anecdotes of second or third hand experience years earlier are quoted to represent the common experience of Kashmiris. The Hurriyat fed this narrative by issuing hartal calendars to ensure that memory of every incident like hanging of Azal Guru is used to revisit the narrative and harden the feeling of victimhood.
2. Security forces contention of extreme restraint and minimum use of force despite costs to the security forces is a narrative not accepted by a population that compares experiences in rest of India. Comparison with much more stringent 'rules of business' for conduct of counter insurgency in other countries including Pakistan are not part of the common narrative. The police study of 2017 found that 41% of the recruits from 2010 to 2015 had stories of experiences to justify victimhood. Those who don't have personal experience have extreme anecdotal experience of others to justify the feeling of victimhood. Social media with images or videos of harsh conduct can influence minds years after the incident.
3. The mental health study by MSF in 2015 sought data on those with experience of or witnessing a traumatic event. The data reveals high incidence(67%) of personal experiences of raid, crackdown or frisking. 24% had been a witness to a terrorist or military action. 15% had experienced interrogation and 11% to torture.

Figure 3.16: Traumatic events experienced or witnessed by respondents over a lifetime, KMHS 2015

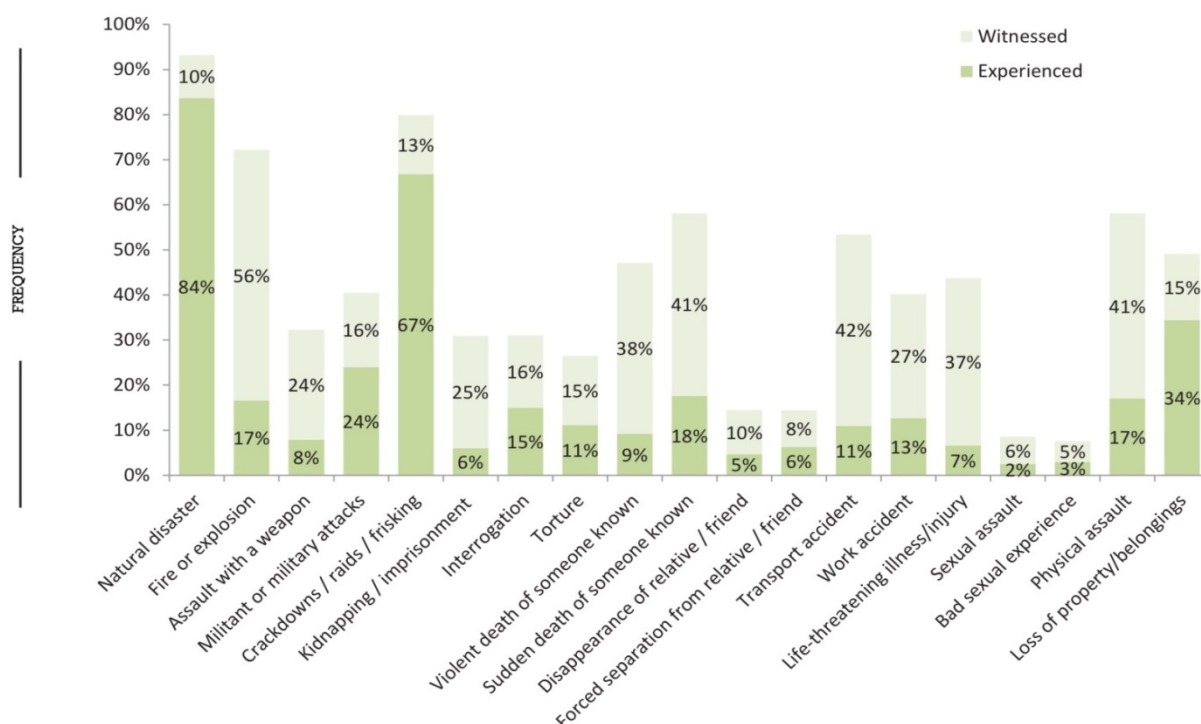


Fig 3.4 Muntazar, Mental Health Survey Report 2015, MSF. Page 45

Mainland Returnee. The prolonged conflict in the valley has affected availability of quality education in the valley. This has resulted in Kashmiri students going to education hubs all over India. There have been instances of these youth being targeted for their ethnicity or political views. The reasons are mostly anecdotal, many are those who are weak academically and find it tough to survive in the competitive world of today’s youth. The few stories of youth like Zakir Musa , an Engineering dropout from Chandigarh^{lvi} get media attention and hence have a propaganda effect, he had reportedly failed in his exams. In another case, Etishan Bilal from Kahnyar, Srinagar had joined Sharda University as a first year student sometime in Aug 2018. A few days later on 04 Oct 18^{lvii}, reportedly he was beaten up mistaken as an Afghan student. As per media report On 28th Oct he went missing only to resurface in a social media audio with a photo with weapons and ISIS logo announcing that he had joined ISJK. “This is a message to all who consider Jihad is a way of fighting,” he had reportedly said in the audio^{lviii}. “Our blood is not white, we will give you tears of blood. I was looking into the eyes of those kufaar (non-Muslims) when they attacked me in groups like dogs; I felt I had delayed to be part of Jihad for long, but not anymore.” Later he after appeals by his family it is reported that the youth had joined the mainstream

duly supported by JK Police. On the face of it victimhood is apparent. On digging history, it was found that Bilal had earlier been seen in a stone pelting video and counseled by the police. Media reports are rightly supportive of a victim, however, as in this case a mistaken identity may not be the only cause of the incident at the university. Truth may never be clear except by investigation in each case. In a zone where truth is the first casualty Omar Abdullah, the ex CM wrote on his Twitter handle, “If this is genuine it’s hugely worrying^{lix}. Sometimes seemingly small actions have huge consequences. If what happened to him at #Sharda University has lead him to choose such a destructive path it’s even more tragic. One more life on the path to ruin & one more family in turmoil”. Whatever maybe the truth his story gets added to tales told to feed the victimhood of more Kashmiri youth.

Religious Motivation. Religious indoctrination is like the proverbial ‘elephant in the room’ in most discussions on the situation in Kashmir. It is almost if religious indoctrination is acknowledged then Kashmiri muslims will be seen in poor light. This is a sensitive subject where genuine religious teaching needs to be separated from the section which feeds on the victimhood and extra-national allegiance to the muslim ummah. Lack of sensitivity can feed further alienation. It needs to be clearly highlighted that the discussion is not about devout muslims, it is about those with the belief on religion as a base for supporting Pakistan or demand of cessation or ‘azadi’. During the study it was found that a percentage of the respondents were very sensitive to any query with respect to religion or the clergy having a role in radicalization, for some even the use of the word jihadi for a terrorist was objectionable.

1. J&K special situation in 1947 notwithstanding, for Pakistan it remains the unfinished agenda of partition. A hoarding on Pakistani side of Kaman bridge near Uri says ‘Pakistan se kya Rishta? La Ilah-e- Illalah’ or ‘ Islam defines our relationship with Pakistan’. Geelani has been vocal on the religious reasons for favouring Pakistan, mosques have been used for indoctrination and raising emotions against the Indian state. This combined with online propaganda of ISIS and Al Qaeda makes a deadly combination for the Kashmiri youth. Actions or rabid comments of right wing leaders in mainland India add to the alienation. Migration of Kashmiri pundits has resulted in a situation that the current generation of youth has largely grown without being exposed to other religions. In all while religion maynot be the primary driver it is used to show solidarity and connect the terror acts to religious duty. All local terror leaders from Burhan to Musa to Riyaq use religion to seek strength and justify their acts. In an

interview Abdul Ahmed Wagey^{lx} f/o terrorist Wasim Ahmed told NDTV in Apr 2019, that he will have no regrets if his son is killed, since it will be a death of respect; there is no better death than dying on the path of the ‘deen’ or religion. Even if a person is not religious he freely uses religious terminology to justify his acts of joining or supporting terror.

2. There is a myth that orthodox Islamic studies contribute to terror, what is probably truer that radical ideologues are effectively able to generate a narrative for the uninitiated to create an illusion of higher path that demands violent jihad. Interactions with Kashmiri diasporas indicate that almost all respondents were of the view that Madrassa education only helps a student become a better muslim and does not lead to a person picking a weapon. A study of recruits in 2018-19 also indicates low numbers of Madrassa students joining terror tanzeems.

3. The police study of 2017 indicated that no clear religious background or experience could be attributed to terror recruits from 2010 to 2015.

4. An Institute for Research on India and International Studies (IRIIS) study in 2012 studied trends in six districts of Kashmir and found that 16% of the youth were listening to religious sermons on the audio/MPs player. 25% listened to jihadi speeches. 6% of those who believed in concept of azadi were beginning to identify it with promulgation of Islamic Rule.

5. Dec 17 suicide attacker Fardeen Khanday in a suicide video released after the attack is heard saying “By the time the video is released, I will already be a new guest in heaven. My friends and I have listened to the call of the Quran and plunged into battlefield of jihad... This will continue until the last occupying soldier is present in Kashmir.... Even after repeated claims of Indian security forces and agencies, JeM has not been wiped out from the valley. It is impossible to stop Jaish e Mohammed... we are roaring^{lxii}”. The script is clearly one dictated to the 17 year old by the JeM ideologues trying to use Khanday to motivate and recruit more youth. It was also used to snook a message to the security forces about the revival of JeM in Kashmir. It is known that Jaish commander Noor Mohd Tantray was probably tasked and responsible for brainwashing of Khanday. Tantray a long surviving local Jaish recruiter^{lxiii} and motivator was finally killed in Dec 2017. What has largely remained hidden is the OGW network that enabled the brainwashing, recruitment, the recording of the last message and the attack.

6. Statements of terror leaders in social media releases, a new internet age phenomenon shows these young confused minds mouthing scripts seemingly beyond their capability and in a manner aping the Al Qaeda or ISIS tapes and videos. Burhan Wani, Zakir Musa and others with no known religious leaning or background were seen trying to get a special status by staking claim that they are driven by religion. Most of these terrorists had shown no religious leanings or knowledge before joining terrorism. The selective use of Koranic verses to justify the path is most probably from scripts handed over by the handlers.

7. There is a need to make a distinction between the gun wielding terrorist who is more likely to be a victim of slick propaganda and the ones who make the propaganda. A common data quoted is the near absence of the family members of top separatists in J&K and even family of Syed Ali Shah Geelaini, the Hurriyat mascot and Syed Sallauddin, the Chairman of United Jihad Council in PoK from active terrorist list. It is this network that uses religion for its propaganda goals. The OGW network which actually creates, sustains and controls the terror network has theology experts as part of their ranks. They work on the soft indoctrination which creates an 'us vs them' narrative and introduction of 'defensive jihad' as an alibi to justify violent jihad. This group works in the grey zone of society and hence tough to identify, gain evidence against or convict in a court of law, even if convicted it would be of charges much milder than being a terrorist. Soon he will be out and active again. They outlive the terrorists who in Kashmir are known to have low survivability or shelf life.

8. To counter these OGWs nation states are exploring legislation to make it tougher for the OGWs to have it easy. A case in point is the UK Home Office proposal to legislate a new criminal offence relating to the 'possession of the most serious material glorifying or encouraging terrorism', this followed the suggestion made by the Chief Coroner after the London Bridge terror attack in 2017. It was felt that 'lack of such an offence may sometimes prevent counter terror police taking disruptive action against terror suspects, even when the extremist propaganda they possess is of the most offensive and shocking character' (Thompson, 2020).

ISJK and AGUH in Kashmir

Islamist terrorism outside Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) has been contained to a large extent. Pakistan-backed Islamist terror formations^{lxiii}, as well as Islamic State and Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS), the last two of which have been attempting to make inroads since 2014, have failed comprehensively in their ambitions (al Qaeda has, in fact, trying to create a network in India at least since 1996, and established AQIS, dedicated to the South Asian region, in 2014). There was just one Islamist terrorist attack in India, outside J&K, through 2018. In comparison, in 2008, Islamist terror formations operating out of Pakistan had carried out 10 attacks in India, outside J&K, resulting in 352 fatalities, the largest number recorded in a single year since 2000, when the SATP database commenced tracking such incidents. There is, of course, little room for complacency, particularly in view of the intermittent 'lone wolf attacks' by *ISIS*-inspired individuals across the globe, and the continuous stream of IS-linked conspiracies and arrests over the past years. According to the SATP database, a total of 167 *ISIS* sympathizers/recruits have been arrested and another 73 persons have been detained, counseled and released, in India (data till April 21, 2019). Another 98 Indians were believed to have travelled to Syria, Iraq and Afghanistan to join IS – microscopic numbers in terms of the country's huge Muslim population.

In Kashmir, the first IS flags appeared concurrent to the rise of the IS in the Middle East. The ideology was alien to Kashmir and opposed by the separatists who were worried about getting linked to global terror groups. It is a fact that during the height of *ISIS* phenomenon in 2014-16, Kashmir did not have any cases of direct move of youth to Syria/Iraq. Security agencies and analysts treated the display of flags more as an effort to irk the Indian state rather than any understanding of belief in IS ideology. Though not overtly anti-Pakistan, Burhan Wani's messages tended to be towards seeking an Islamic Nation and never about merger with Pakistan, the ideological shift was happening. The discontent of the youth with Pakistan was palpable and that also reduced the clout of separatists like Geelani. Later, Burhan's associate and later HM chief^{lxiv} in South Kashmir Zakir Musa Bhat aired his views more clearly and forcefully causing a rift.

At global level, Sept 2014, saw the effort by Al Qaeda to regain space vs IS, Ayman al Zawahiri in a video targeting Indian sub continent announced Al Qaeda^{lxv} in the Indian Subcontinent. Asim Umar^{lxvi} of Indian origin was declared as the chief. AQIS seems to have had some influence including terror attacks in Pakistan and later in Bangladesh. Asim Umar

was reportedly killed in Afghanistan in 2019. The April 19, Sri Lankan terror attacks investigations have not revealed any direct planning, control or support by AQIS.

Kashmir has in the last few years seen small splinter groups called AGUH (Ansar Gazwat ul Hind) and ISJK (Islamic State in J&K) moving independent of Pakistan establishment, in fact they consider Pakistan Army as an enemy. AGUH an Al Qaeda offshoot named Zakir Musa as its first head in July 2017.

In Kashmir around 2016-18, Zakir Musa of HM seemed to have represented the disillusionment of the youth with the Pakistan centric terror organizations. He first targeted the Separatists and declared that his motivation as a terrorist leader was to aim to fight for the Islamic State of Kashmir and not some democratic state. He was quickly disowned by the UJC(United Jihad Council) and HM.

His initial videos focused on threats to the Hurriyat and other opposition to the idea of Islamic Kashmir. There was a phase towards end of 2016 where IS affiliated terrorists in Kashmir sought collaboration or pledging of allegiance by Musa and his group. After the first video in Apr-May 2016, which helped the security forces track the place of recording, Musa moved on to images with sound overlay, the audio content was more refined and the delivery more measured indicating access to an organization which was helping with the script, recording and probably propagation. In post 2017 phase HM publically declared Musa a government agent that needs to be killed. It is apparent that at this stage the seeker got some connect with Al Qaeda. In Jul 2017, Qaida's online propaganda channel, the Global Islamic Media Front, had said^{lxvii}, "After the heroic martyrdom of mujahid Burhan Wani, the jihad in Kashmir has entered a stage of awakening, as the Muslim Nation of Kashmir is committed to carry the flag of jihad... for this goal, a new movement of jihad has been founded by the companions of martyr Burhan Wani under the leadership of mujahid Zakir Musa." At the same time some Kashmir terrorists pledged allegiance to ISIS leading to creation of ISJK. In Dec 2017, there were efforts to make AGUH pledge allegiance to ISIS or collaborate with the ISJK.

This coincided with black ISIS shrouds replacing Pakistani green flags which had been used as coverings to wrap slain terrorists in their funerals. "At one point, the tussle became so intense that the green shroud of a slain terrorist was removed and replaced by the black, right at the funeral procession," said an official^{lxviii}.

Musa's group mostly had a quiet existence except for view videos including call for Lone Wolf attacks in India in 2018. Zakir Musa got killed in May 19, Al Qaeda issued a video in Jul 19 focusing on Kashmir. The message of Ayaman Zawahiri did not talk of Musa though his image was flashed when Kashmir was being talked about, indicating the comparative low influence or importance of Musa, Al Qaeda is still looking for a more deserving symbol or leader in Kashmir. The network that supported Musa and his group ensured his survival for three years after being disowned by Pakistan centric tanzeems, the network would in all probability survive the elimination of Musa's small group, waiting for the next suitable recruit.

Hari Mushtaq, a BA Kashmiri graduate from Jamia Millia University and was undergoing a MA in international affairs joined terror in 2017. In Nov 2019, he was arrested along with three associates of ISJK. As per NIA^{lxix} "Investigation unearthed a larger conspiracy of these terrorist elements propagating pan-Islamic ideology of ISIS by recruiting and radicalising Kashmiri youth towards Jihad and targeting security forces".

In Jan 20, a report from First Post reported then Indian Widows in Afghan jails that included Rukhsana Ahangar^{lxx} of Kashmir, who saw her daughters married to Jihadists and her son die fighting for the Islamic State. Rukhsana is daughter of founder of Tehreek ul Majuhideen in early 90s. Married to Aijaz Ahangar, an Ahal-e-Hadith follower, the couple moved to Pakistan on a false passport. Frustrated with Pakistan establishment which he believed had betrayed Kashmir jihad, Ahangar moved to Afghanistan to set up Islamic State in Khorasan province. The son and husbands of both daughters of the couple died fighting in Afghanistan. The link to Kashmir though tenuous, the attraction to ideologically driven is obvious.

JKP police in Oct 2019^{lxxi} had claimed, "AGUH group has been wiped out for now, but then they have OGW network from whom some people emerge to become terrorists." A OGW network of ISJK was reportedly busted at Budgam^{lxxii} in early Feb 2020. The five men were reportedly involved in indoctrination and logistics for ISJK. Similar efforts by AQIS OGW network would be happening concurrently.

Despite many voices against the threat of ISIS or Al Qaeda in Kashmir the threat remains real. Especially in view of the situation post 05 Aug legislative action, wherein Pakistan has been further discredited and made largely irrelevant and ineffective. In such a

situation a youth with angst or dissent can look for organizations and ideologies like ISJK and AGUH.

Kashmir as a trouble spot with muslim victimization has long been part of jihadi propaganda, the inclusion in Al Qaeda propaganda has raised the stakes. As far back as in December 2010, according to a summary prepared by a British court, Khan, the London bridge attacker in Dec 2019, conversations with other would-be offenders were recorded. In one such conversation, in which he attempted to “radicalize another male,” Khan explained it was his intention to leave for a madrassa in Kashmir that would be used for training for jihad. “The Stoke group were to fund the camp and recruit men for it,” with Khan expecting “only victory, martyrdom or imprisonment,” according to the court summary.^{lxxiii}

The concurrent risk of Kashmir diaspora being vulnerable to ISIS or Al Qaeda ideology and propaganda has been played down by most experts approached during the course of the study. This is contrary to the inputs from western experience and environment realities of Kashmir and rest of India in 2020. On 08 Mar 20 a Kashmir couple was arrested in Delhi on suspicion of links with ISJK and efforts to fuel anti CAA protests. The accused Sami is suspected to have helped compile the Feb 20^{lxxiv} edition of IS magazine Sawt ul Hind (Voice of India) The linkages are something that should be anticipated and considered for security planning.

Lone Wolf. The Lone Wolf phenomenon was probably initiated by Syrian Abu Mus’ab Al Suri. Very few of the attacks in recent past have been truly ‘Lone Wolf’. Such an attack is typically poorly organized. Since a lone wolf in most cases is a self radicalized individual or cell, something like the Mathura cell of ISIS in India, it shows limited coordination and technical expertise. It is the connection from such a seeker to the OGW structure of the terror tanzeems that needs to be prevented by effective Intelligence and Counter Terror efforts. Concurrent effort has to be to identify such vulnerable individuals and efforts to change the seeker to a conscientious citizen, in a way similar to the effort of Maharashtra Police^{lxxv} in 2019. Kashmir with a host of terror tanzeems and a OGW network in place does not create a situation where an individual or group has to take individual call. It can be a risk if a group or individual tries to plan a strike in rest of India. Experts view the risk of the Kashmiri Diasporas getting involved in terrorism as low. In Mar 2020 a Kashmir couple^{lxxvi} was arrested for links with ISJK, details are still not clear. The couple had recently moved to Delhi due to internet curbs in Kashmir. The threat will need to be watched.

Having analyzed terror recruitment and prognosis of what next in Kashmir from secondary sources, in the next chapter primary inputs will be analyzed before moving to recommendations.

CHAPTER 4

Kashmir Terror Recruitment: Primary Study

Inputs

This chapter will build on the secondary study so far, which helped build a framework for the primary study on terrorist recruitment in Kashmir. The primary study aimed to validate the inputs of secondary study with inputs from the affected youth of Kashmir. The natural initial choice for the study was to have a primary input from affected youth, ideally in a few more affected districts of Kashmir. However, due to lack of feasibility, both due to security concerns and the logistics required for a single researcher, a middle path was decided. Two instruments were designed. The first questionnaire was designed to get views of Kashmir experts which included views of Kashmiri intellectuals, journalists, academics and security forces experts. The second instrument was for Kashmiri youth to get first-hand inputs of the affected youth. This chapter will bring forth the analysis of the inputs and lead to the final recommendations in the last chapter.

The study involved interviews and discussion with experts from various fields including an opportunity to present secondary study findings to research scholars at CLAWS. The process helped evolve a thought process on what all needs to be explored to understand terror recruitment in Kashmir.

A key challenge was to identify the experts who had a ground experience of Kashmir. The experience looking for experts showed the gap between the Delhi based think tanks and people who had base or roots in Kashmir. The wide variety of experts from diverse fields' data was supplemented by data from security experts currently operating in the Kashmir valley. The data analysis has layers to explore if one decides to find variation between various contributors to the inputs. The same has been attempted in this chapter.

While discussing it with the experts, it was found that at times people would feel constrained to give views on issues that they probably did not have a first hand or considered knowledge. To reduce chances of a forced estimate nearly all questions were kept optional. This was also probably used at times as a pretext for not answering questions which may be uncomfortable to answer.

The contact with Kashmiri youth was tougher. The best experiences were small groups who took time to open up and then just let go. Their views were very valuable in getting a real feel of what drives this group. They differed with the experts on many issues and I wish there were more interviews and survey questionnaires.

The research questions that shaped the questionnaires included the following

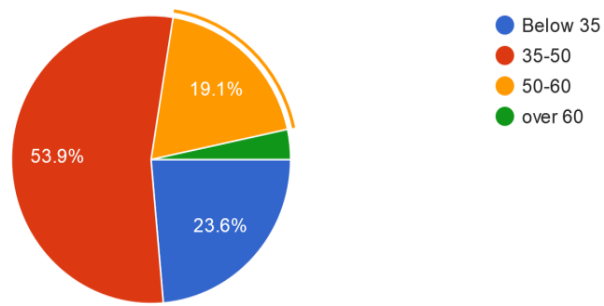
1. What are the reasons that motivate youth in Kashmir to join terrorism? What is the predominant ideological base for such a step? What is the narrative that leads to such a decision?
2. What is the role, if any, of religion in radicalization in Kashmir? What is the influence of ISIS or Al Qaeda and their ideologies?
3. What is the process of terror recruitment in the Kashmir valley?
4. How effective is the current government effort at preventing local recruitment?
5. Is it possible to identify the youth who are getting radicalized and maybe close to picking a weapon? If yes, how?
6. If a youth is identified as vulnerable to joining terror, what counter or preventive measures can be taken to avoid the same?

Basic Data: Survey

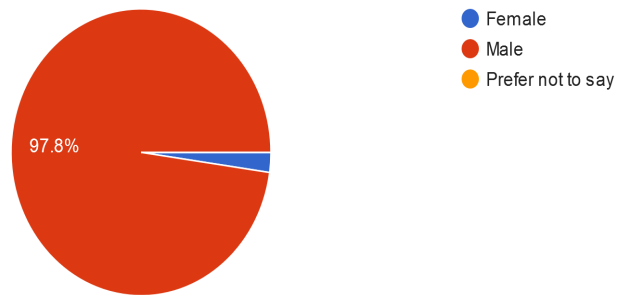
The basic data sets were collected with the view to identify any distinct difference in views based on professional or ethnic difference. It was seen that views were at times coloured by perceptions and emotions or maybe exposed the gap in perceptions, both are important considerations for policymakers. The internet curbs limited max Kashmiri inputs to physical inputs wherever access was feasible. Gender bias in the inputs remained as inputs from females was very limited, this must be rectified in any larger primary survey.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

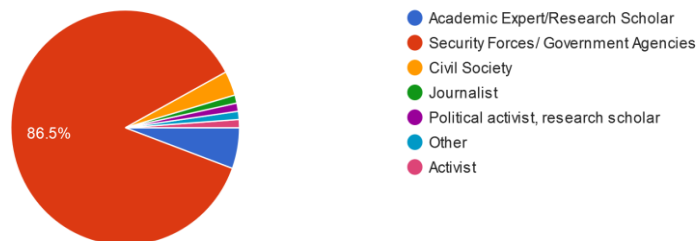
Age
89 responses



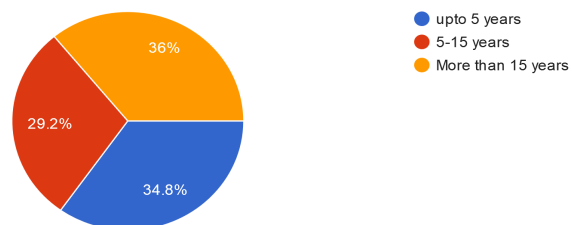
Sex
89 responses



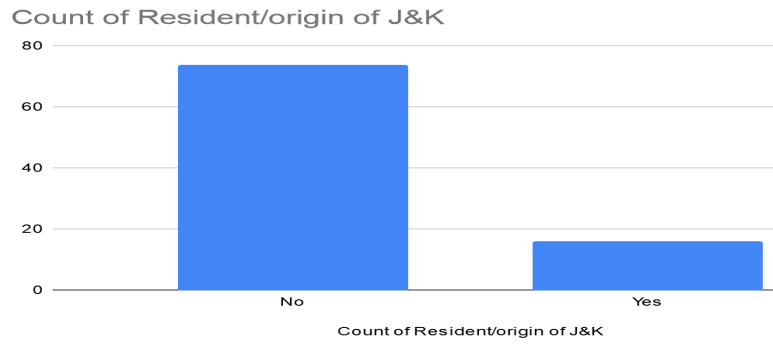
Expertise
89 responses



Years of experience of working in and knowing Kashmir?
89 responses

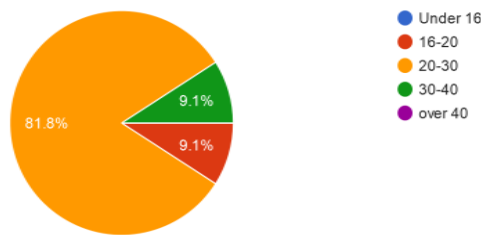


INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

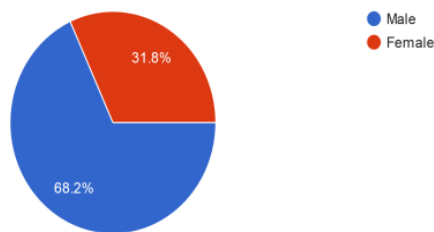


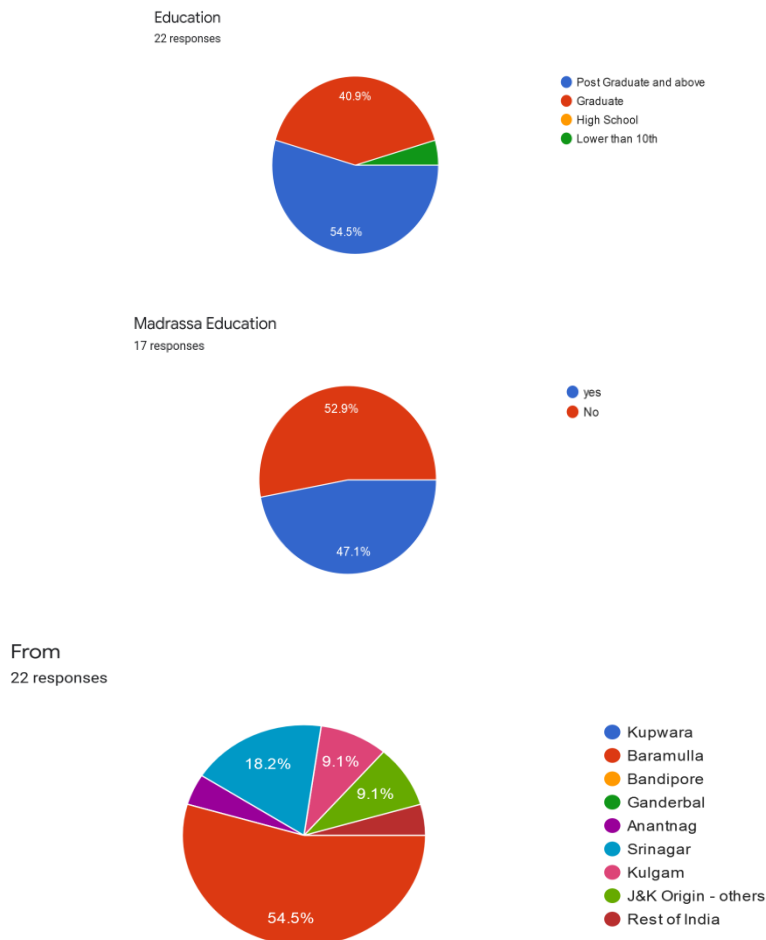
Basic Data: Kashmiri Youth. The questionnaire for Kashmiri youth was more exploratory to get a sense of the ground narrative and concerns. This data set is very limited due to access challenges. It is random in a location within Kashmir, with a bias of higher Baramulla inputs. Since terrorist recruits profile has moved into the 30s, persons of 30-40 age group have also been included despite being conscious of the different mindset of the millennial. A larger survey would have enabled a comparison between the two. Any future survey would need more inputs from youth under 20.

Age
22 responses



Sex
22 responses





Recruitment Analysis

The first section of the experts questionnaire dealt with an analysis of the increased recruitment pattern since 2013. Later it addressed the issue of motivation, profiles and queries of how to counter the trend. Similarly, the youth questionnaire asked the above questions but also explored the current narrative. The responses are being merged and presented in a sequence suitable for scholars and policymakers.

Socio-Economic Challenges and Their Impact. Any conflict area has a history of socio-economic challenges that drive the insurgencies or terror organizations.

Economic Stagnation and Employment. Discussions with experts revealed that a lot of focus was placed on economic packages and development activity as a means to counter dissent and thus prevent terrorist recruitment. It is felt that while such an effort is the hub of the national effort of Kashmiri integration with India, at the micro-level it alone may not suffice. The experts and the youth were asked to state their views on the relative impact of

various causative factors. A high percentage of experts agreed to this contributing factor, however, some believed it was not as relevant as Kashmir has comparatively lesser economic challenges than many other parts of India or the world. It was felt that economic growth by itself may not cater for other causative factors. It is pertinent to note that the views of Kashmir origin experts and even the youth were more ambivalent on the issue. 45.5% of the youth were emphatic that economic factors are not the reason for the youth joining terrorism. Data for terrorist recruitment in 2018 showed that about 25% were unemployed at the time of joining terrorism.

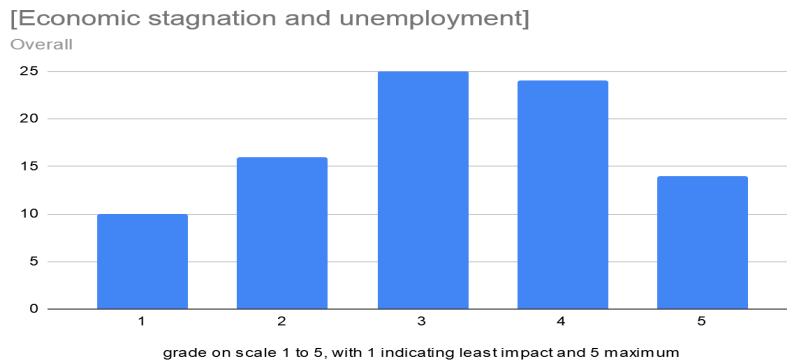


Fig 4.1

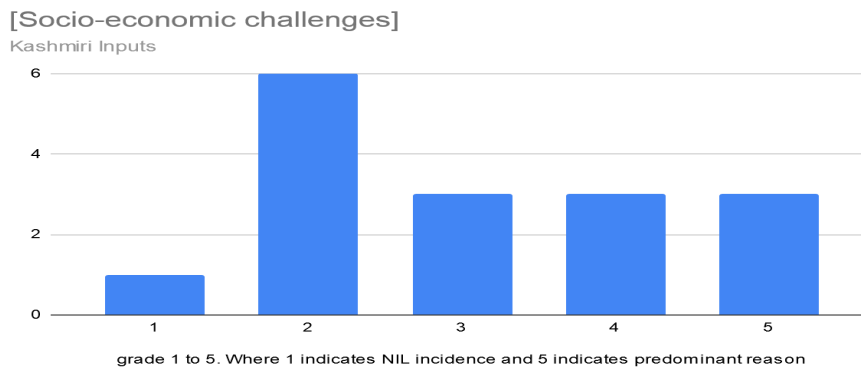


Fig 4.2

[Lack of job opportunities and poverty lead more number poor youth to choose joining terrorists]

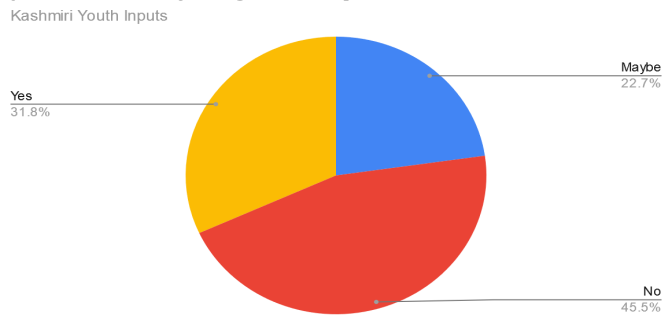


Fig 4.3

Education Including Role of Madrassas. Illiterate persons are believed to be more susceptible to indoctrination and terror recruitment. The experts feel a high role of education system leading to increased terror recruitment. Improvement in education will lead to better societal growth and thus lower resentment.

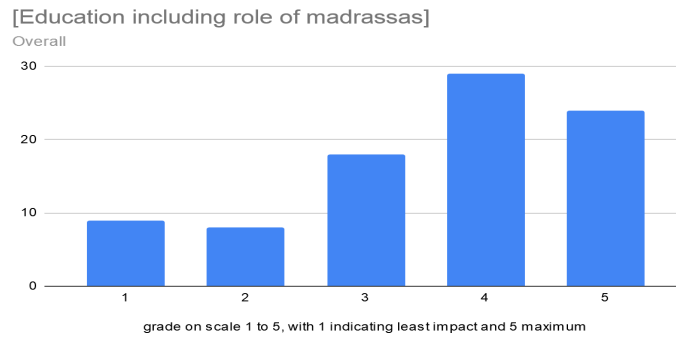


Fig 4.4

Kashmiri origin experts also confirm the role of education in terror recruitment but on a scale lower than experts pan India. Education in madrassa is at times believed to cause religious radicalization, though as covered in the earlier chapter the data of recent recruits does not indicate any distinct pattern of recruitment of students of madrassas. It was the Kashmir youth including a few madrassa educated individuals do not believe that JeI affiliated schools and madrassas have any contributory factor towards radicalization. A few were visibly upset for being asked the question. They were not really satisfied with the quality of education and exposure at a Madrassa but still supportive of the schools. A few remarked that these schools were the best available. The youth assessment of the low impact of madrassa education on radicalization is given below.

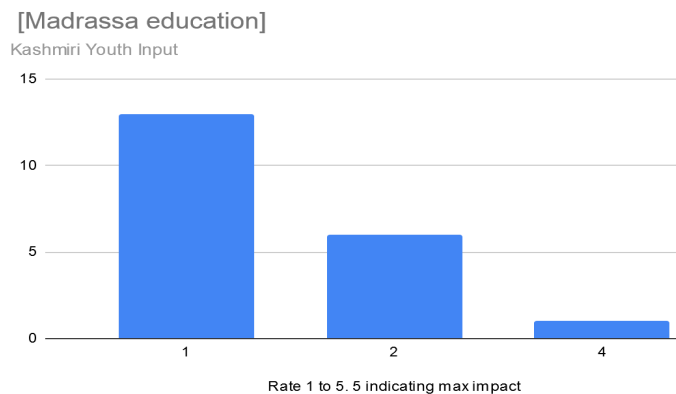


Fig 4.5

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

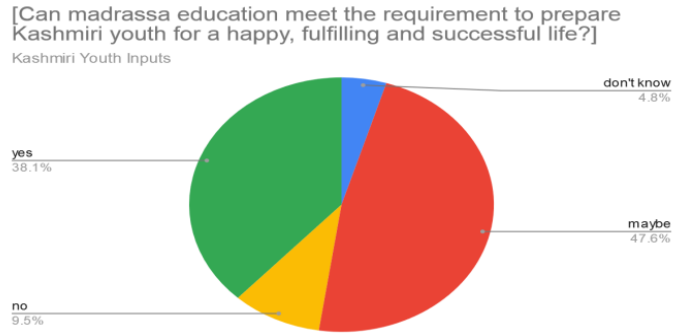


Fig 4.6

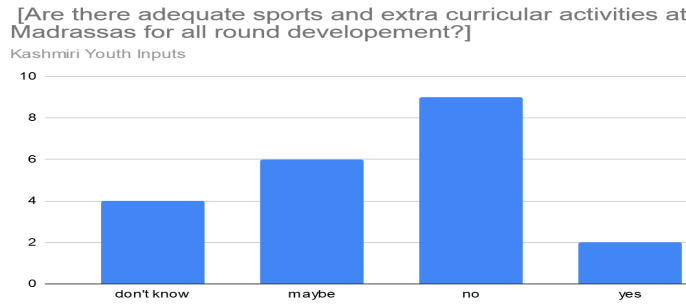


Fig 4.7

Most Kashmiri youths acknowledge the contribution of the convent or missionary schools in Kashmir.

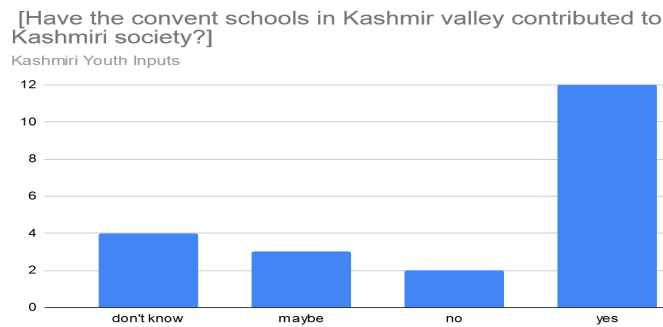


Fig 4.8

The endorsement of Army Goodwill Schools was comparatively less emphatic.

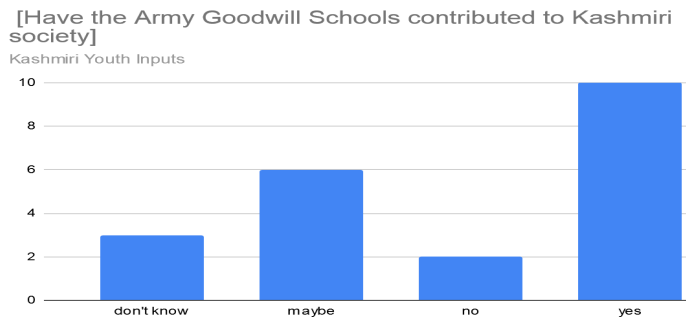


Fig 4.9

Individual Needs and Aspirations. As per studies, the youth seeks 'identity-Status-Revenge-Adventure' or a mix of the four leading to the decision to pick a weapon. In some

cases, religious radicalization is a concurrent activity which serves the individual need for seeking social sanction for his actions.

1. Seeking Personal Identity. Youth by nature seeks identity. Lack of education and employment adds to the situation of a lost identity. This need is stronger from the weaker class where youth may face challenges or indifference both in family and social space. Association with any group that accepts the youth gives identity. In some cases, even among the affluent are affected. Joining a terror group gives identity.

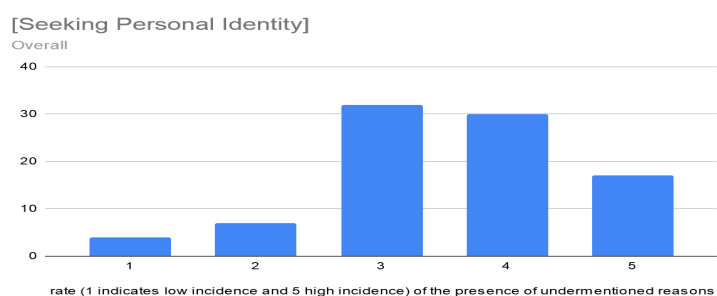


Fig 4.10

2. Seeking Status. Status is linked to identity but is a more individualistic need. It is required in all strata of life. Some affluent and privileged may feel status lowered due to security curbs etc. Joining a terror organization suddenly bestows or restores status and maybe respect. This is aspirational for the vulnerable youth.

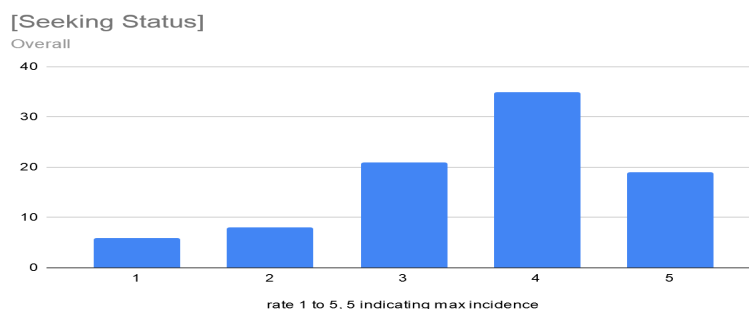


Fig 4.11

3. Seeking Revenge. Atrocities and revenge-seeking are anecdotally quoted as a reason for recruitment. Experts were mostly ambivalent on the impact of revenge as a motivating factor. Kashmiri experts gave even lower weightage to revenge as a cause.

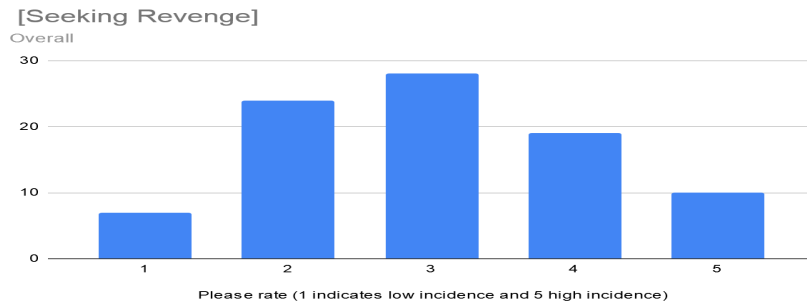


Fig 4.12

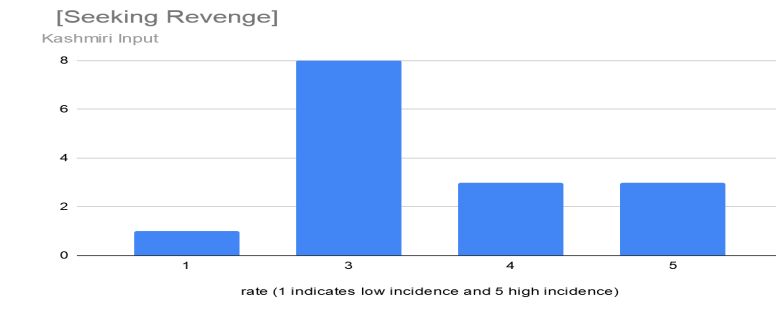


Fig 4.12

4. Seeking Adventure. The youth seeks adventure and are driven by a flow of adrenalin. Playing with dangerous situations has a psychological attraction for the well to do and comfortable. Internationally 5-10% is believed to be motivated by this cause. Popular case quoted with respect to India is David Headley. Playing risky games with security forces is on top of such youth seeking adventure. It may start by being couriers or acting as a warning system for approaching SF or even the acts of stone pelting to interfere with SF operations, heady stuff for an adrenalin driven teenager.

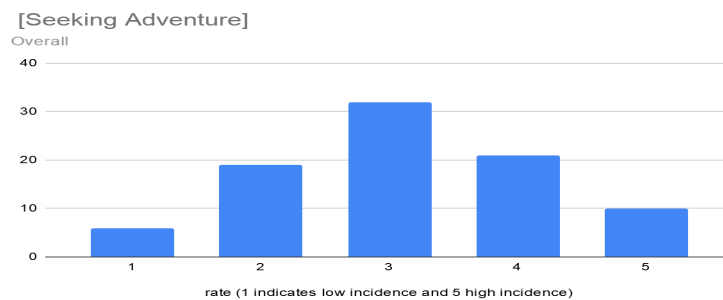


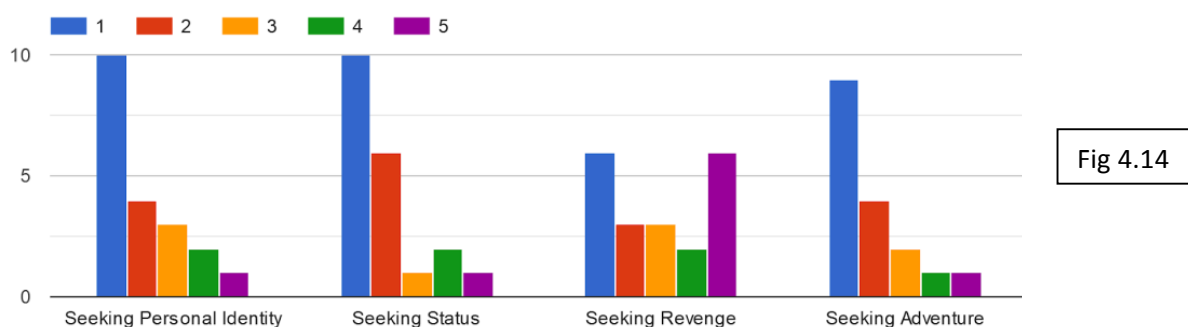
Fig 4.13

The youth on being asked the same question were less in agreement with the concept of personal needs leading to recruitment except for maybe revenge as a motivation. This may be a factor where the youth have not considered the issue beyond the self-convinced politico-social reason for any youth joining terrorism; it meets the need to keep it glamorously based on societal needs rather than the individual. This reveals the need to share profiles and details of individual terrorists to take out the sheen of a larger cause. In western counter-terror

efforts, statements and writings by ‘the formers’ are effectively used to defang the glamour narrative goading youth to join terrorism, India needs to explore this avenue in a more diligent manner.

“A robust counter radicalization policy may factor in the need to use the services of those who were part of the terror movements and have renounced the same for variety of reasons”

- Dr Bibhu Prasad Routray



This needs to be seen as an impression that can only be confirmed by interviews and profile analysis of existing or surrendered terrorists. Data trends and the readings of profiles done during the study indicate status and identity have a strong role in the decision to join terror. This analysis would need a psychologist’s collaboration to explore further.

Radicalisation Spaces. The youth were asked to identify places where radicalization can take place. Jail and online took top places. They are known as vulnerable areas. The internet curbs have limited influence of online propaganda but that is only a temporary measure and known not to be effective in the long term. The jails and most importantly the juvenile detention camps in Kashmir need to be revamped to prevent becoming places leading to further radicalization. Toxic and radical inmates must be shifted to other jails where they have minimum or no contact with Kashmiri youth.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

What are the places where a person can be radicalised or be exposed to extreme ideologies?
(Choose most likely place)

15 responses

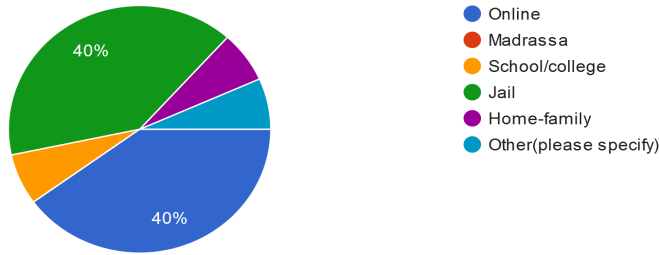


Fig 4.15

Politico-Military Factors

Unresolved Political Status of J&K. The genesis of the Kashmir terrorism is the unresolved political issue since 1947. The 05 Aug legislative action is maybe a step looking for resolution. How much does political ambiguity feed terror recruitment is an issue that merits consideration. How many youths join terrorism looking to work for the resolution of political ambiguity? The experts largely felt there was a substantial role of the political instability in terror recruitment.

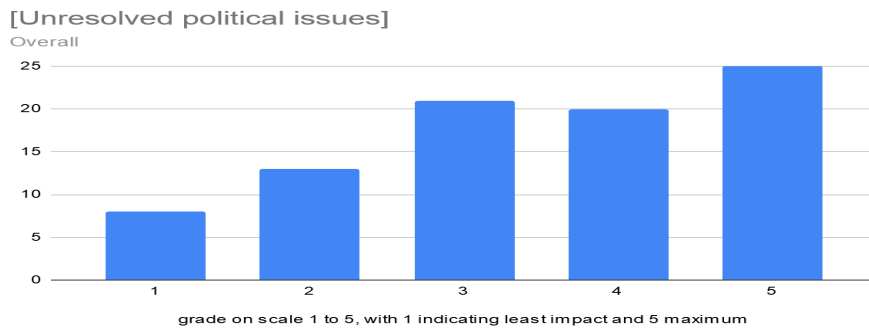


Fig 4.16

While the experts identified the political issue as a major challenge, the youth indicated that the lack of resolution of the political issue was the major concern. The same youth did not feel that personal needs are responsible for the choice to pick a weapon; they are focused on the issue of political resolution.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

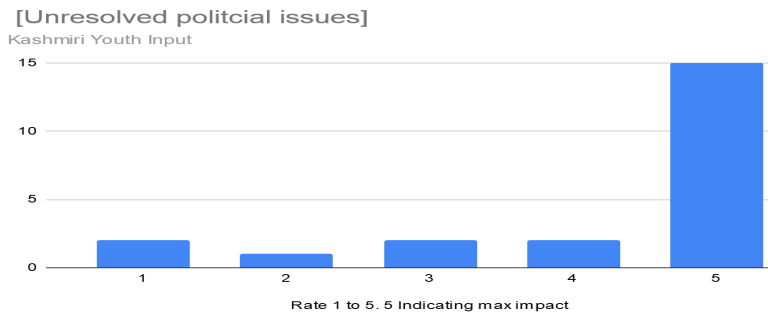


Fig 4.17

However, when it came to exploring the political awareness or views on the recent political past of Kashmir, the youth displayed ambivalence to any internal Kashmiri political struggle.

Internal power struggle or at times nexus between NC, PDP and others including Jamiatis has contributed to the current scenario in Kashmir.
17 responses

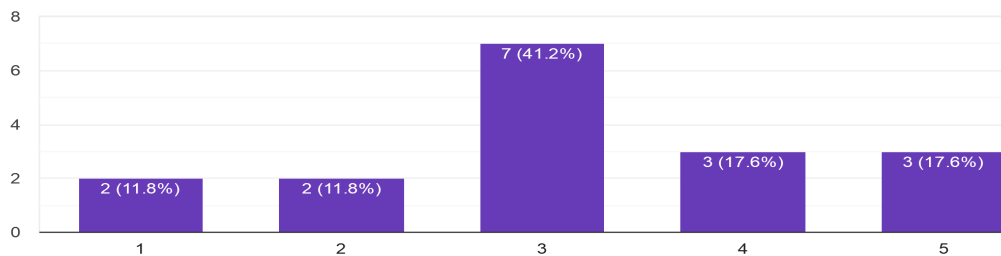


Fig 4.18

A question on the detention of leaders post had a mixed response, indicating the low faith in local politics.

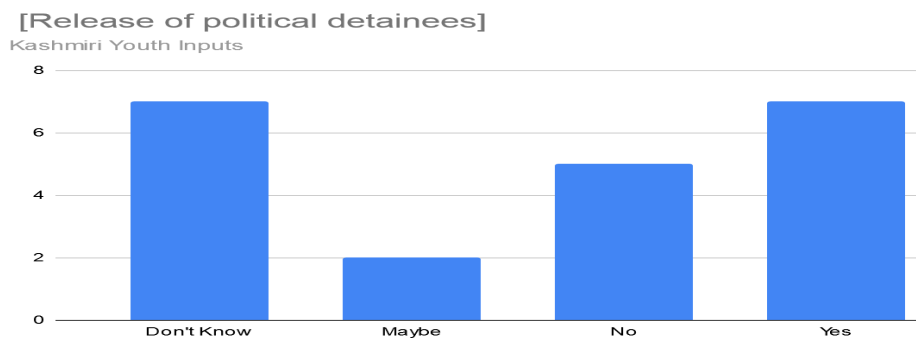
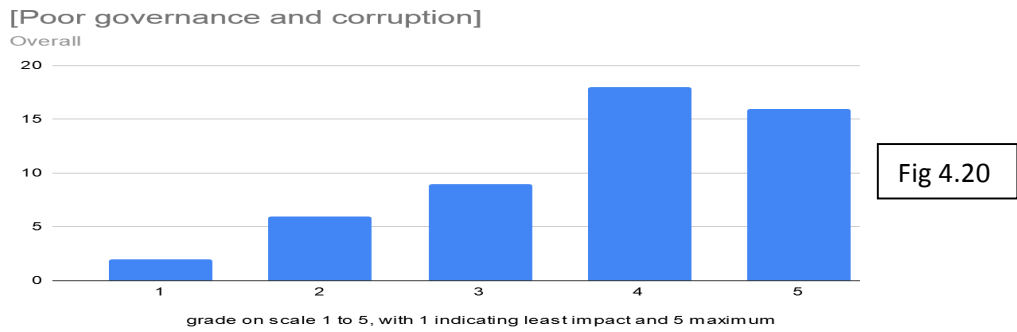


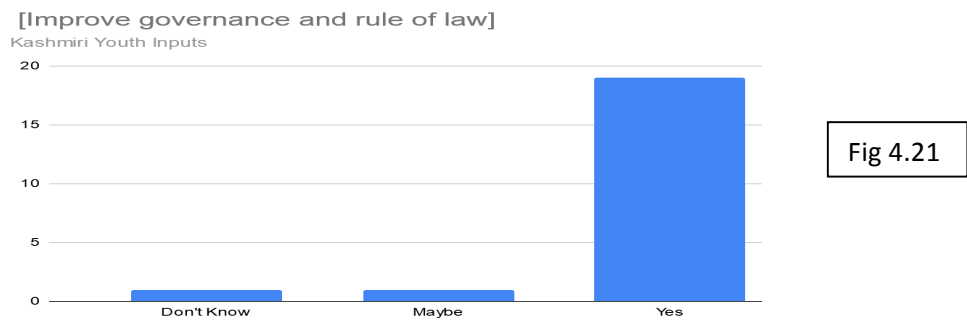
Fig 4.19

The youth focus seemingly is on the larger political relation with the Indian state. Post 05 Aug 19 legislative action, the view and conversations among the Kashmiri youth need to be explored.

Poor Governance and Corruption. Experts agreed that poor governance and corruption faced in routine daily life contributed as a reason leading to terror recruitment. Youth may choose to pick a weapon if he experiences discrimination or unfair conduct with the civil authorities. In such case personal angst is mixed with a larger cause to get an inflated sense of self-worth.



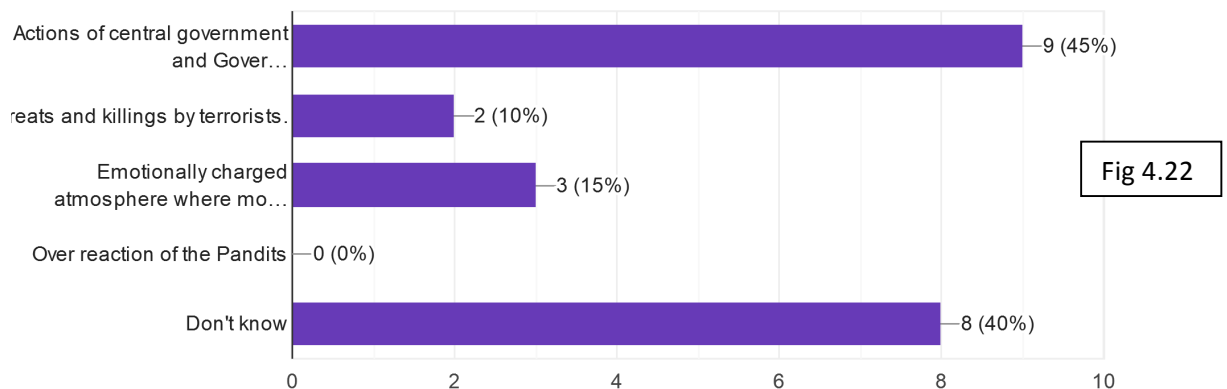
The issue governance and rule of law found resonance with the youth and has been part of conversations at various levels in the last few years. The focus on pure better delivery of governance and fair law and order situation will aid arresting dissent.



The Pandit Dilemma. The Kashmiri muslim has the Pandit dilemma, the Pandits past and future is an intrinsic part of the Kashmiri political problem. The issue is largely skirted in Kashmir internal discussions. The youth were asked some questions concerning the Pandits. One young man frankly summed the sentiment ‘we want them – no. They come back – we have no issue’. On being asked the reason for Pandit migration in 1990, 45% blamed in on ‘actions of the central government and Governor Jagmohan, another 40% choose ‘don’t know’. Only 25% accepted the role of the volatile local environment in Kashmir.

What was responsible for the mass flight of Pandits from the valley?

20 responses



On the question of moral right of Pandits return to Kashmir valley, 75% agreed, 25% of the youth were ambivalent. Only 30% were confident that any efforts for Pandits to return to the valley will succeed. During interactions most supported their return but as part of existing societies and not as separate colonies. Some rationalised that many pandits have continued to stay without being attacked or discriminated and hence those returning can get back to old societies.

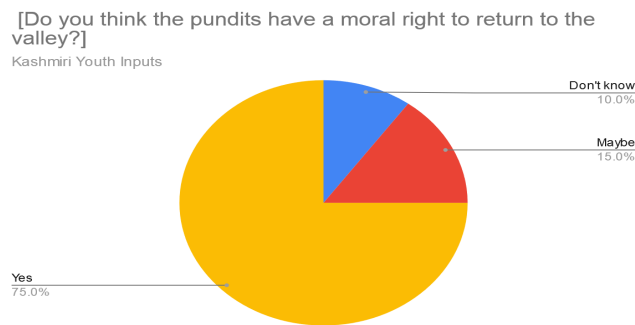


Fig 4.23

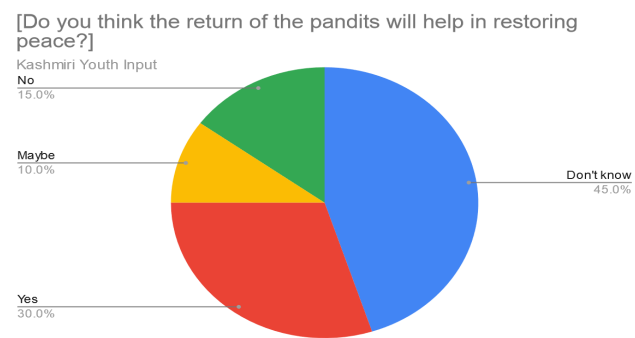


Fig 4.24

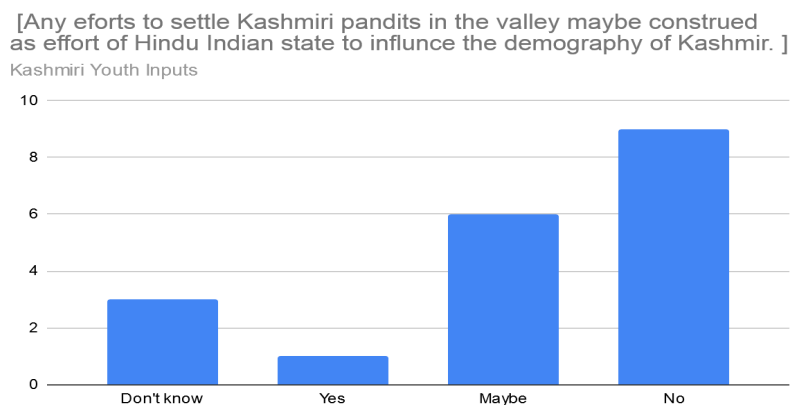


Fig 4.25

Narrative among the Terror Recruits

What is the predominant political narrative or ideology of a new terror recruit is a question that has multiple answers in Kashmir, it reflects the complexity of Kashmir. Two recruits may join the same tanzeem despite having different political aims and in many cases no

political aim except seeking a change. Views on some strands of popular narrative similar to Chatham House Study of 2009 were asked from the experts.

Pro-Pakistan. The last international survey by Chatham House in 2009 showed that very few Kashmiris aspire for a merger with Pakistan. The social and economic status of Pakistan as a nation does not make it aspirational for an educated mind. It is probably for this reason pro-Pakistan leaders like Geelani lost hold over the new recruits. However, despite the views gleaned from secondary studies a large share of experts felt that Pro-Pakistan sentiment was a strong causal factor for terror recruitment. This needs investigation by a primary study among the Kashmiri youth and the terror recruits brought back into the mainstream.

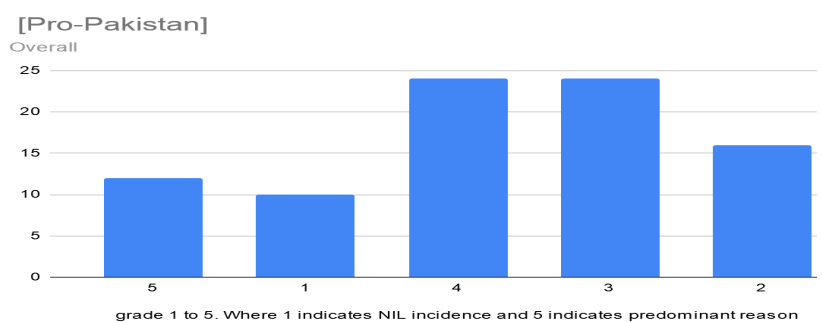


Fig 4.26

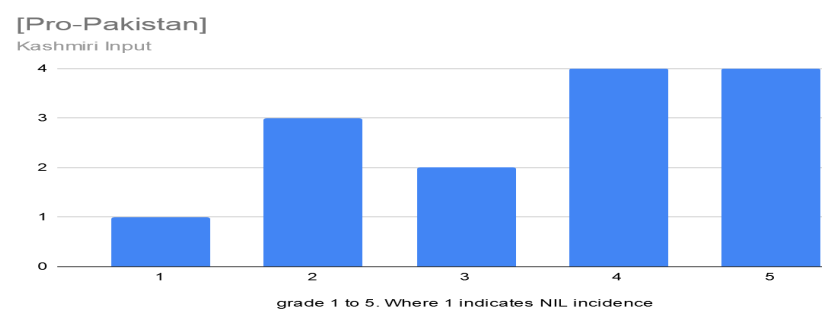


Fig 4.27

Azadi of Kashmir Valley. Azadi is a word that resounds in J&K for a few centuries, the last local ruler was in the 13th century. It is a popular slogan that has now found a way even into mainland India, a symbol of rebel attitude against the ones in government. There is no common definition of what ‘Azadi’, even among the Kashmiris. The Chatham House Study in 2009 explored this question and revealed the amorphous nature of this demand and slogan. Adding catchy beats and slogans has made it common even among pre-teen kids, who just learn what they hear. YouTube videos of such youth and kids are common. The fact that the slogan has reached places like Shaheen Bagh, no one definition is any longer possible. Experts mostly believe that ‘Pro-Azadi’ is a major driver for recruitment. Kashmiri experts were more explicit in this parameter.

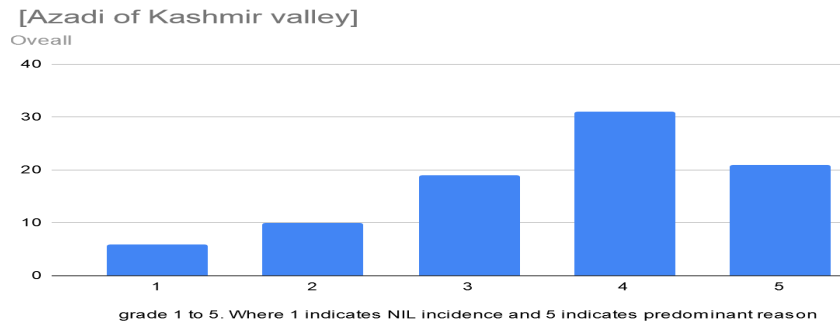


Fig 4.28

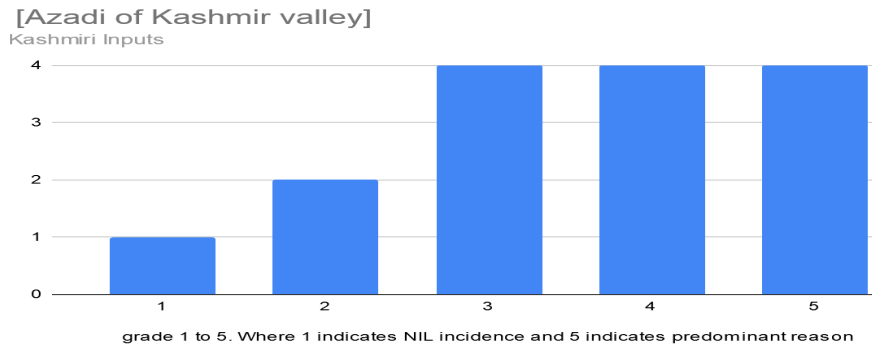


Fig 4.29

Anti-India. The anti-India sentiment among some radical youth leads to events like the use of initial ISIS flags to irk the Indian State. The sentiment can be major drivers for recruitment since the security forces are seen as symbols of the Indian state. This factor was supported by most experts as a causal factor for recruitment. Kashmiri experts were more explicit in naming this as a key driver.

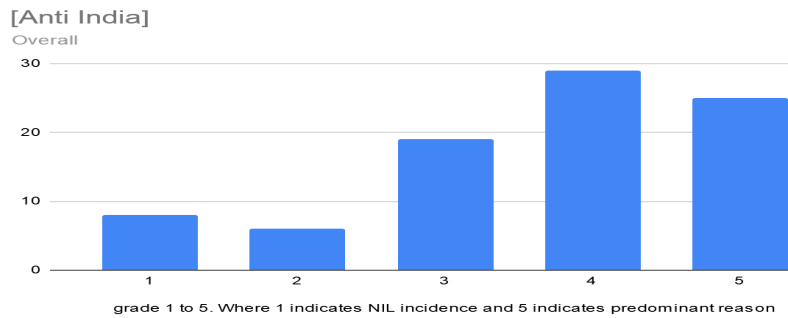


Fig 4.30

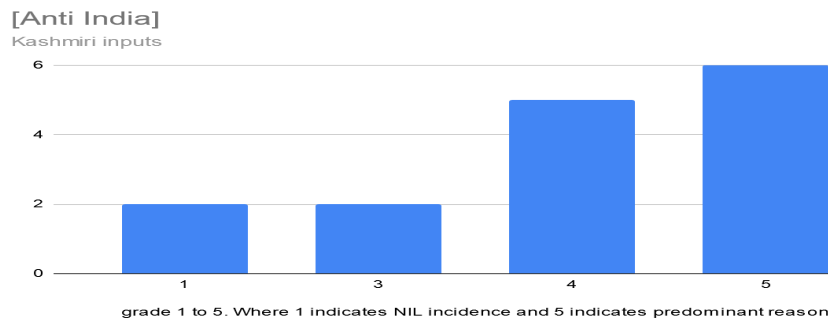


Fig 4.31

Excesses by Security Forces. During interviews with academics and Kashmiri youth, some youth got very agitated once this issue is discussed. Most Kashmiris have anecdote(s) of SF excesses to share, some primary experience and some narrating other people experiences. There was no attempt to correlate with timelines or number of incidents over a decade that may be quoted. Academics in Delhi too have little appreciation of the work environment and challenges of security forces in Kashmir; they too are convinced of the more than necessary security forces hard approach in Kashmir. Few have visited Kashmir for short trips and recall the security forces bunkers and the intrusive security checks. The issue seems to feed victimhood in a major manner. The experts rated this lower in the overall context but Kashmiri experts rated them higher than the others. The inputs from the youth were probably coloured since a security forces officer was collecting the data and could be on the higher side than reflected. The primary data of the youth and experience in interviews where the respondent felt comfortable to open up indicates this is an important area of work both in execution methodology and the perception battle. A conversation between the youth and security forces to bridge the gap in perceptions is a need of the times, probably in newer areas than ones already being addressed by the SF.

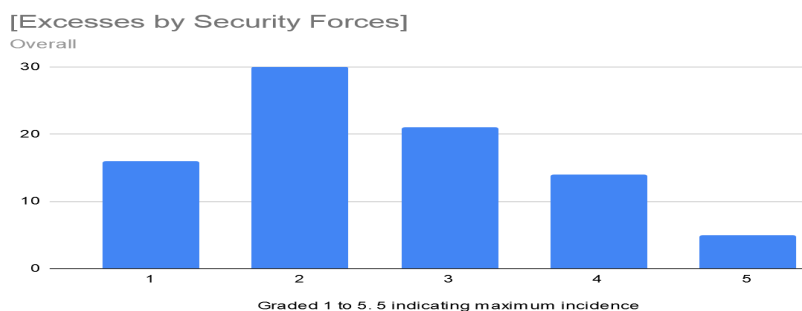


Fig 4.32

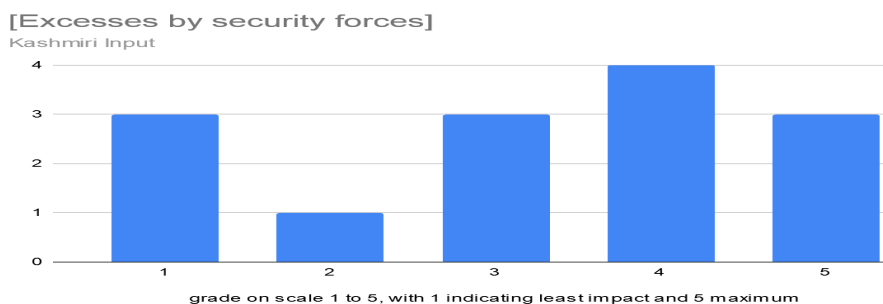


Fig 4.33

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

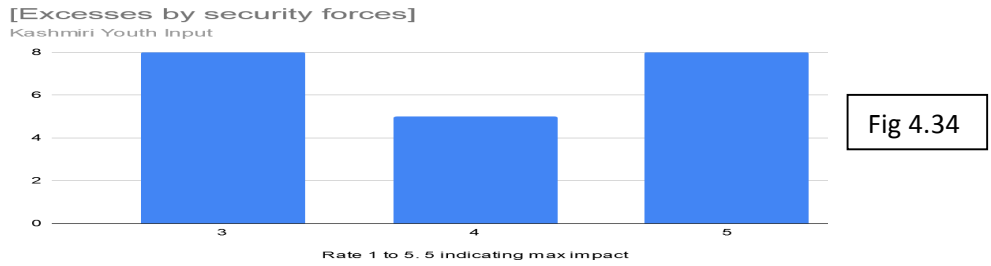


Fig 4.34

25% of the youth polled confirmed personal experiences which made them feel victimized due to action of security forces, some interestingly chose ‘maybe’ as an option. Nearly, 50% of respondents chose not to respond! The question needs to be asked more often to take place of anecdotal tales which rule the current narrative. One senior SF officer pointed out the need for more balanced movies like ‘Hamid’ to build empathy on both sides.

Do you have a personal experience of unreasonable experience with the security forces in Kashmir valley.
12 responses

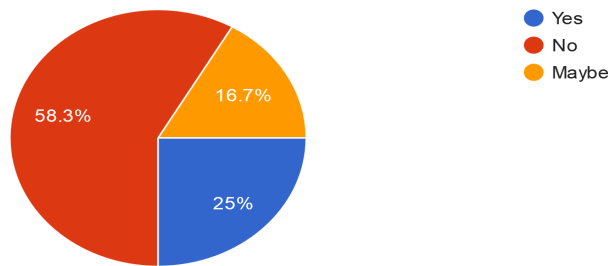


Fig 4.35

The issue of a large security forces footprint compared to a much reduced strength of terrorists is a common subject raised at many forums. The rationale that the grid requirement remains nearly the same even for lesser number of terrorists is hardly understood. The last phase of any counter terror operation is always critical to avoid removing pressure before the movement is defeated, giving it a chance of revival. This has to be balanced with the negative sentiment of excessive security checks a common complaint against the security forces. Currently, among the same data set of Kashmiri youth, the views were tilted in favor of option of reducing security forces in the valley. A percentage still acknowledged the need for continued SF deployment. The rationale for security force deployment has to be part of any security forces perception strategy.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

There is a need to reduce security forces in Kashmir valley even if it may result in increased freedom to terrorists
17 responses

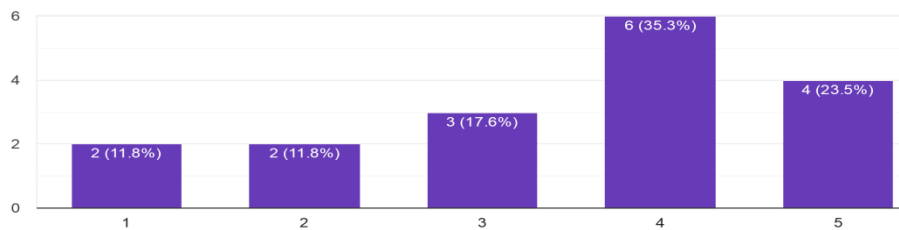


Fig 4.36

A study in 2018 by TISS had 47% Kashmiris indicating faith in the institution of the Army. Nearly 20% had withdrawal of Army from Kashmir as a top recommendation to bring about change in Kashmir. (CLAWS, 2018)

Stone Pelting vs Pellet Guns. Stone pelting and pellet guns have a strong visual and psychological impact in Kashmir, and even in international circles. The issue was broached with the youth. The first question discussed the rationale of using pellet guns against stone-pelters, the views were split three ways with probably more sentiment against the pellet guns than stone-pelting. Stone pelting was justified by a large number as a spontaneous action of dissatisfied youth, though most also agreed that Kashmiris need to find other more peaceful methods of protest. The sentiment for security forces to find an alternative to pellet guns was strong. The issue needs to be part of the SF perception strategy in Kashmir.

[Stone pelting does not qualify as peaceful protest and hence SF force response with non lethal weapons like pellet guns is expected, which can lead to serious injuries.]

Kashmiri Youth Input

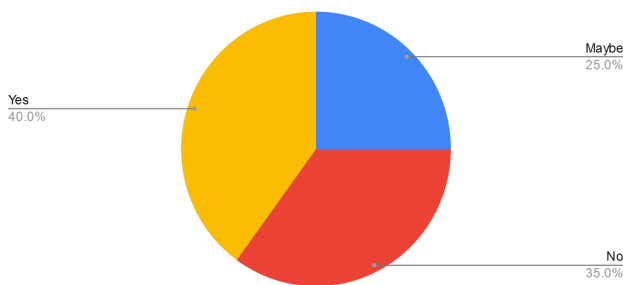


Fig 4.37

[Stone pelting is spontaneous or at times planned action of dissatisfied youth]

Kashmiri Youth Inputs

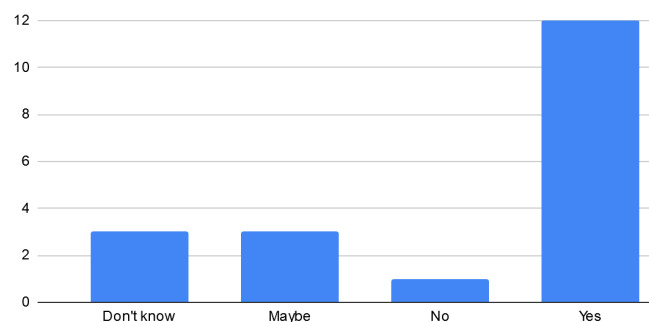


Fig 4.38

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

[There is a need for Kashmiris to get back to peaceful agitation and stop the youth from stone pelting]
Kashmiri Youth Input

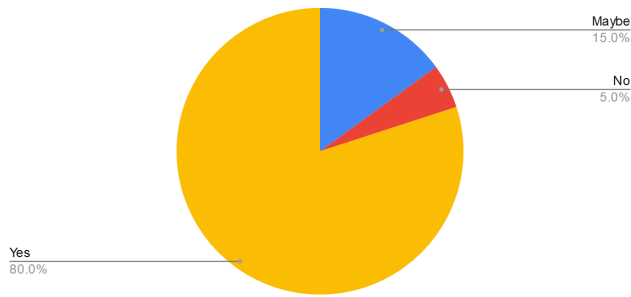


Fig 4.39

[It is the onus of Security Forces to find other less damagaing options for crowd control. Pellet guns dont qualify as non leth...

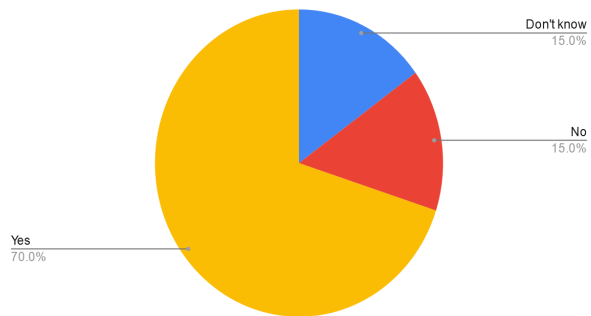


Fig 4.40

Motivation Due to Glorification of Terrorists. In last one decade, the glorification of killed terrorists and the elaborate janazas are known to have impacted young minds on the social acceptance and respect associated with picking a weapon against the state. The experts agreed on this aspect. Security forces experts were especially strong on the contributing factor of this issue.

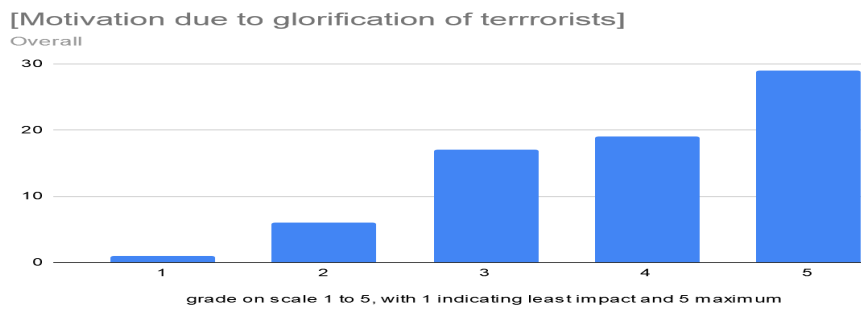


Fig 4.41

Kashmiri experts and youth though agreeing on the causal factor but were comparatively less emphatic compared to the overall trend. The issue has been on SF leadership focus for long and recent actions have limited the propaganda role of a terrorist janaza.

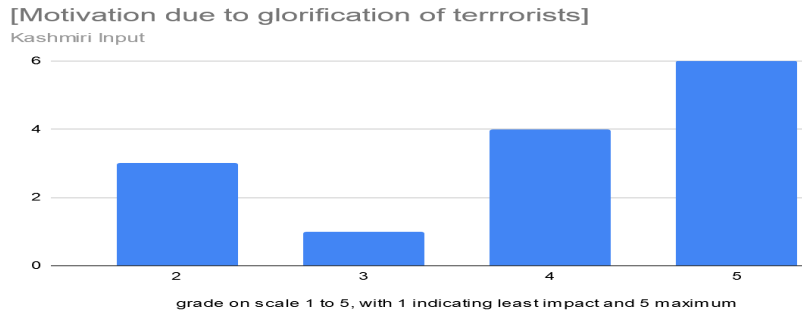


Fig 4.42

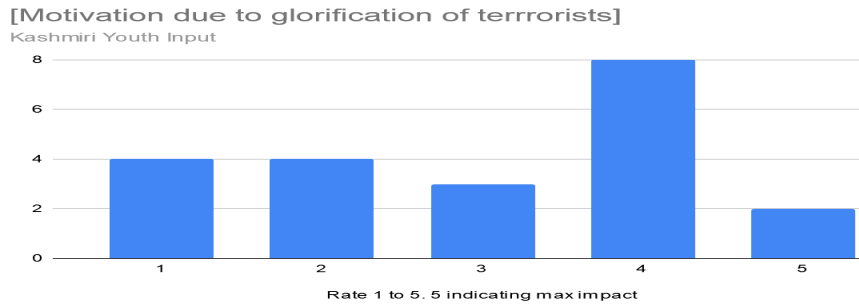


Fig 4.43

Religion and Terror Recruit

A major issue of discussion in many forums is to define the Kashmir problem in terms of political sub-nationalism or religious separatism. Religion and the terror recruitment is a politically sensitive subject. One respondent conveyed ‘hurt feelings’, since the questionnaire asked questions linking terror to Islam, even the use of word ‘jihadi’ for a terrorist was considered objectionable. He said “In the first page of your document you have written regarding the Jihad and mentioned the term jihadi in a very rude way. I am sure you don't have silly idea regarding what jihad is. You can't use the holy word jihad with terrorism. Please go through our religious scriptures for that.”

The fact that the study was about terror recruits and not a common man did not seem to alleviate the angst. The fact that every terrorist in Kashmir calls himself a jihadi is also probably ignored. The youth polled had about 50% who believed that politics and religion can be dealt with individually, about 35% were either a no or a maybe.

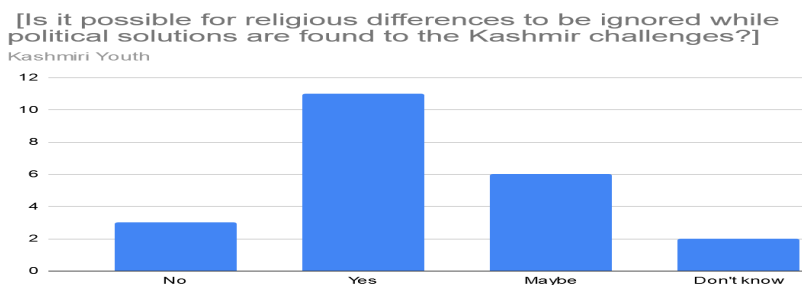


Fig 4.44

However, when the experts were asked how many Kashmiri youths the political issue has become a subset of the religious narrative, majority agreed that religion has become a major driver for most terrorism recruitments in Kashmir. The question obviously needs to be explored with a larger primary survey or data check of existing terrorists.

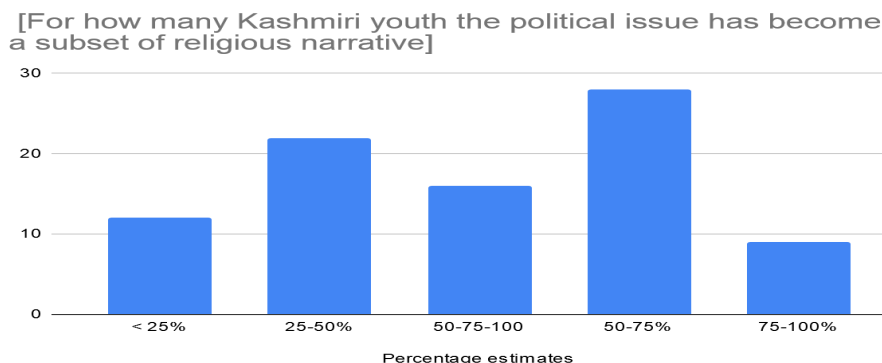


Fig 4.45

Experts largely felt that the clergy and activities from or at mosques have contributed to radical thought among the youth.

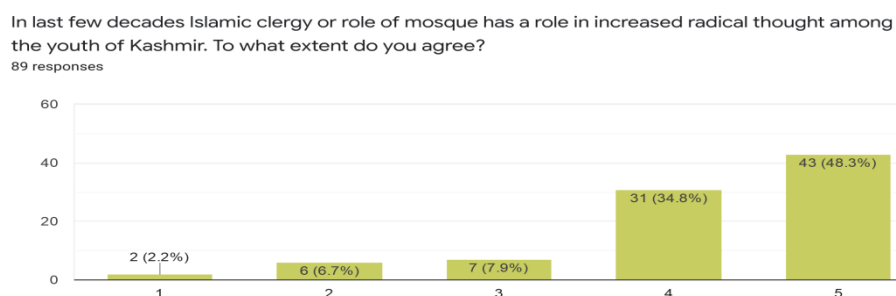


Fig 4.46

The youth were strongly against any notion of any involvement of the Islamic clergy in the radicalization of the society. This view needs to be validated by a larger survey and factored in any perception strategy.

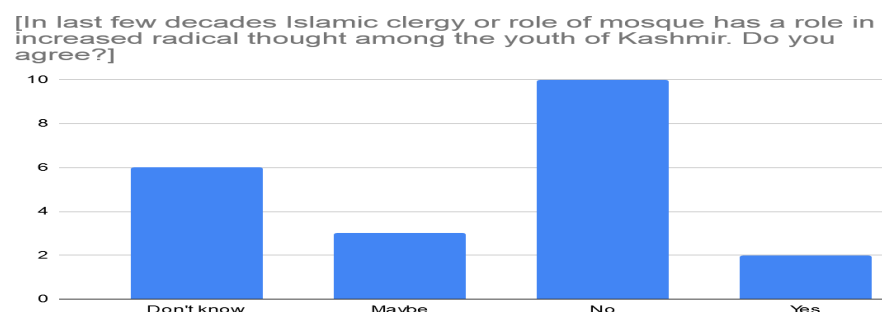


Fig 4.47

The youth were mostly convinced on the positive role of correct religious education in countering radicalization.

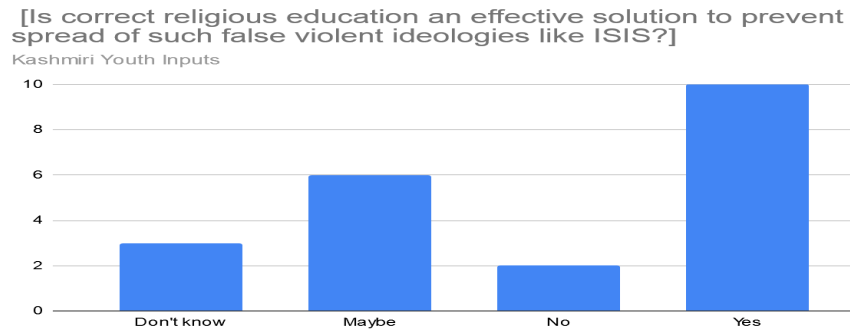


Fig 4.48

Post the global impact of religion motivated terrorism; Kashmir has been an object of study and worry. Pakistan based radicalization and terror infiltration have been based purely on religion, the infiltrating Pakistani terrorists have all been found to have come motivated for jihad. On the other hand separatists like Geelani have been double-talking, while they use religion to drum support for Pakistan and anti-India activities they worked hard to avoid being clubbed with the global Islamic terrorist movements. The dichotomy continues to confuse the youth. Zakir Musa probably brought this dichotomy to the fore.

Most experts acknowledge the seriousness of the impact of religion on the new terror recruits.

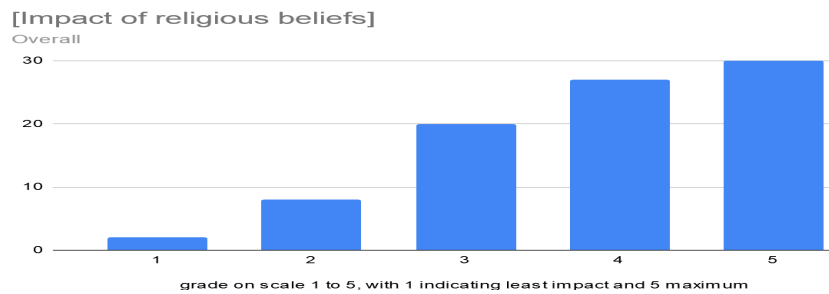


Fig 4.49

However, the Kashmiri experts were less explicit on the role of religious radicalization among the new terror recruits.

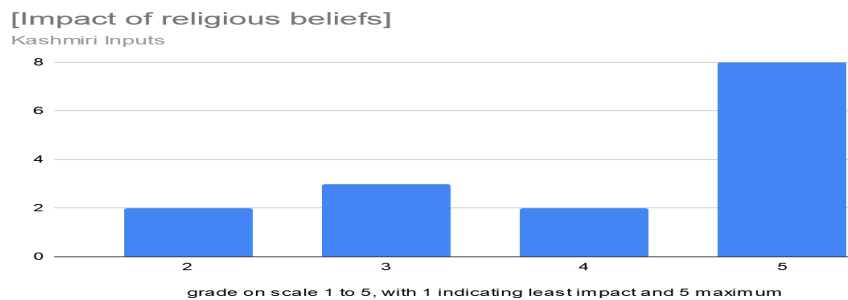


Fig 4.50

There is a worry that by long term use of religion as a motivator, the separatists have probably unleashed the devil without any controls over it. This has the potential to provide a

breeding ground for ISIS or Al Qaeda ideology. Though there is a lack of consensus on the extent of influence of the religious fanatics. Even a percentage with fanatical leanings could prove dangerous and take the Kashmiri society on the path of more violence.

A linked issue is the influence of JeI. Many experts shared their concern on the impact of the increased impact of JeI in Kashmiri education through the school system. The youth did not agree. There was a good percentage of youth who did not see JeI activity in a negative light. Concurrently the activities of Right-Wing Hindu organizations were touched upon as a reason for radicalization. A respondent was angry at the questions; he stated “I personally am a student of Jamaat Islami School. I have learned regarding each and every aspect of life there. If you really want to explore quality education here in Kashmir, you will find no where other than these Jamaat Schools. I am an aspirant of CDS (Combined Defence Services). I am from a Army family. My cousin brother is an Army officer. We all are products of Jamaat Schools they have never asked us why are you guys joining Army.”

A question equating Right-Wing Hindu organisations and JeI establishment was opposed by the majority of the youth polled though a few equated the two. A survey of the students of JeI run educational establishments is probably the best way to identify the impact on the belief system.

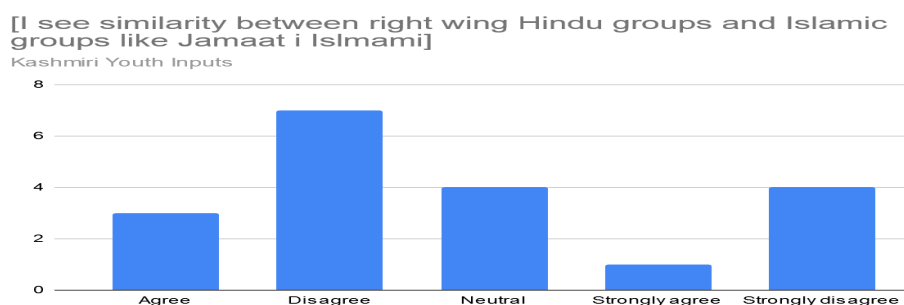


Fig 4.51

The youth were asked to comment on the role of religion in society and the need for monitoring or audit. The majority agreed with the suggestion that ‘state should remain away from religious affairs and let the civil society make wise choices. There was support for monitoring of madrassa education by a body of Kashmiri Muslim educationists. As regards the JeI affiliated institutions the response was mixed, this has to be viewed with the fact that nearly 47% of the respondents had undergone madrassa education.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

Religion is a major reason for fissures between regions of Jammu and Kashmir. Relation between religion and state is a delicate matter. In your view what needs to be followed in J&K.

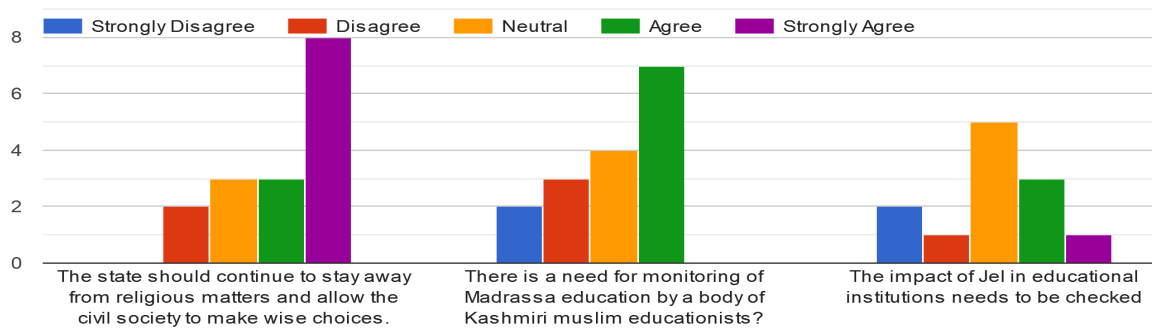


Fig 4.52

On the question that how many new terror recruits carry ideology or motivation of an Islamic Kashmir, the majority of the experts concurred that this was happening. It can be that while the initial drivers or reasons may vary, the process to prepare for taking the final step involves joining with a religious cause to help in societal approval or to simply get identified with a higher cause. This factor is likely to be different for various age groups and thus require deeper primary study of terrorists in the last decade.

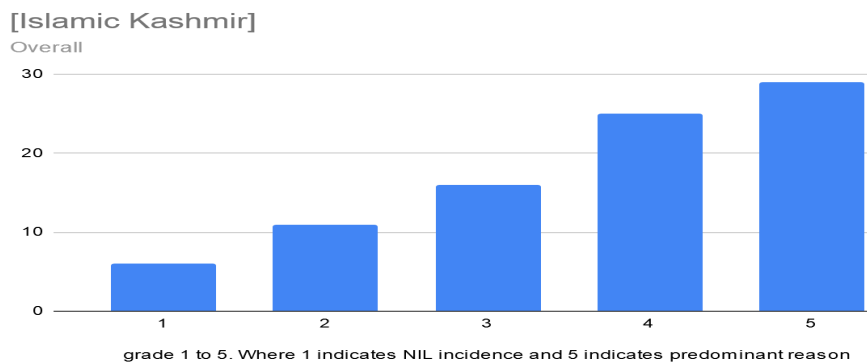


Fig 4.53

Some direct questions on impact and spread of Al Qaeda and ISIS in J&K were asked from the youth. Some claimed lack of knowledge of Al Qaeda or ISIS ideology and avoided answering the questions. The first one about the narrow interpretation of scriptures behind the ISIS and Al Qaeda propaganda, only 24% agreed. 47% were in ‘don’t know’ category.

[Do you think ISIS Al Qaeda focus on narrow interpretation of Islamic scriptures?]
Kashmiri Youth Input

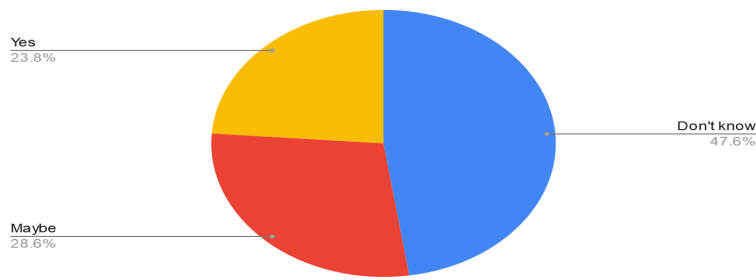


Fig 4.54

On the question of being exposed to Al Qaeda or ISIS propaganda only one respondent said yes, this is unlikely in a highly internet-connected world of Kashmir and beyond. A large number choose do not know, which was probably response by an individual avoiding a lie of saying No or maybe. The same respondents acknowledged the presence of online radicalization at a higher level.

[Have you been exposed to ISIS or Al Qaeda propaganda?]
Kashmiri Youth Input

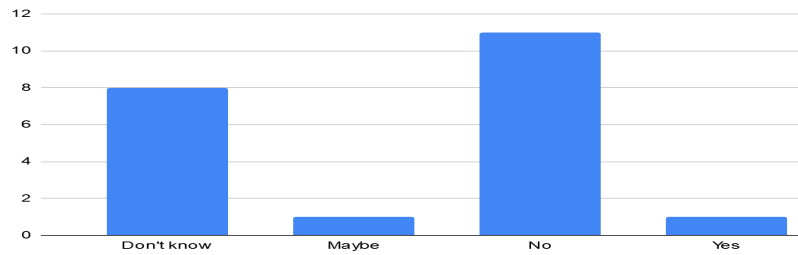


Fig 4.55

[Online activity in Kashmir valley has significant radical content which can lead to acceptance of violent ideologies]
Kashmiri Youth Inputs

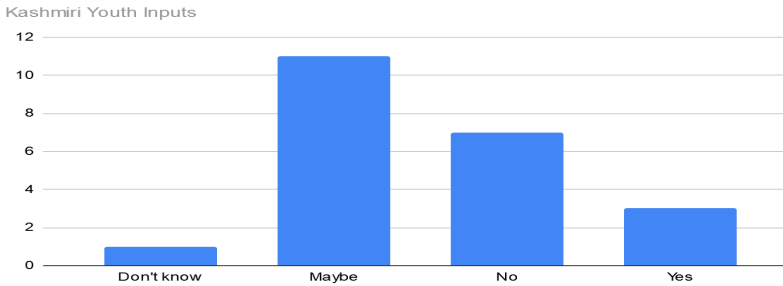


Fig 4.56

[Have you been in contact with anyone who seemed convinced of the ISIS or Al Qaeda ideology?]
Kashmiri Youth Input

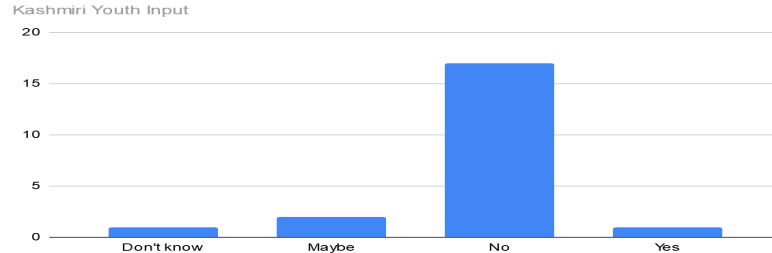


Fig 4.57

The Islamic State of Kashmir

The appearance of AGUH and ISJK has raised worries about the popularity of a more fanatical ideology seeking a state based on religion. The worry is serious; however, there is still a belief that the risk of ISIS or Al Qaeda in Kashmir is not very widespread. This fails to match with ground indicators and an analysis of the world situation.

Extreme violent ideologies of ISIS and Al Qaeda have been looking at Kashmir to gain influence. The impact has been minimal with Zakir Musa phenomenon controlled with his elimination. Post legislative action on 05 Aug 19, what is the current risk of spread of these extreme ideologies in Kashmir valley? The experts and the youth share the concern. Nearly 45% of the youth did not think it is a worry.

Extreme violent ideologies of ISIS and Al Qaeda have been looking at Kashmir to gain influence. The impact has been minimal with Zakir Musa pheno...f these extreme organizations in Kashmir valley?
88 responses

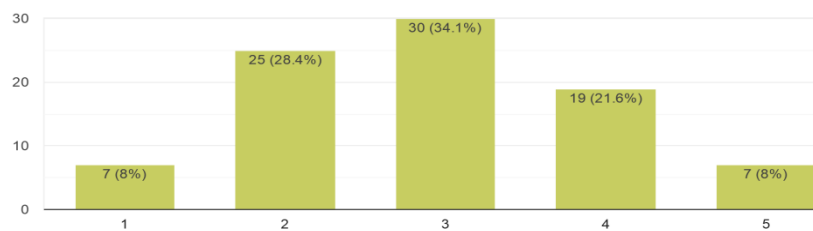
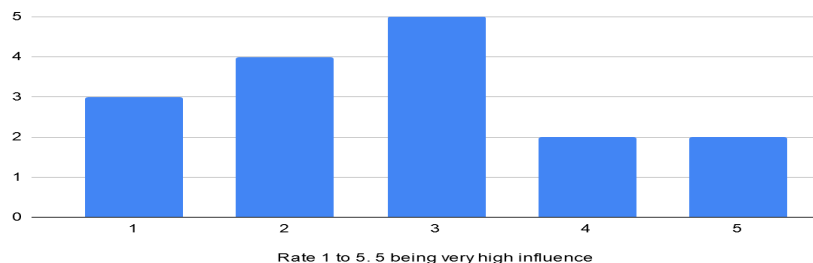


Fig 4.58

What is the extent of influence of extreme violent ideologies of ISIS and Al Qaeda in Kashmir in Kashmir?

Kashmiri inputs



Rate 1 to 5. 5 being very high influence

Fig 4.59

[The killing of Zakir Musa lead to large scale agitation by the youth. Does this indicate that extreme ideology as professed by Musa is increasing its hold among Kashmiri youth?]

Kashmiri Youth Input

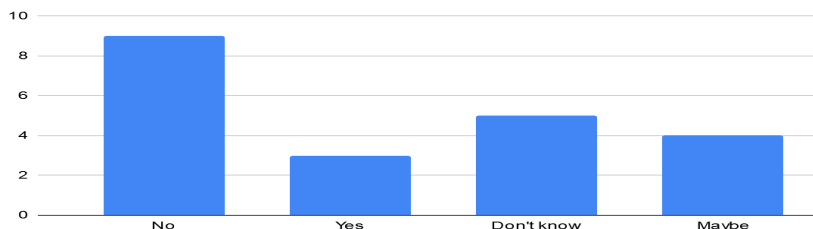


Fig 4.60

ISIS and Al Qaeda have perfected the method to identify seekers in the internet-connected world. The risk is real for Kashmiri youth experiencing personal challenges. Some are at times being sent by wards to colleges in rest of India to be away from the influence of local

radicals, they can end up facing cases of violence or harassment in the mainland, as has happened in a few cases.

While internet curbs in J&K may limit the influence of the internet-based propaganda, the mainland diasporas continue to be vulnerable. The experts continued to underplay the risk as probably the vulnerable numbers are less. It needs to be appreciated that success by a small group can have a disproportionate impact and hence needs concern of security agencies. This aspect needs to be handled proactively in consultation with technology companies who have built collaborative methods to counter the spread of anything that instigates violence.

The Kashmiri Diaspora in India and abroad is at risk of being exposed to radical extremism, what is the risk of spread of Al Qaeda or ISIS using this population group
88 responses

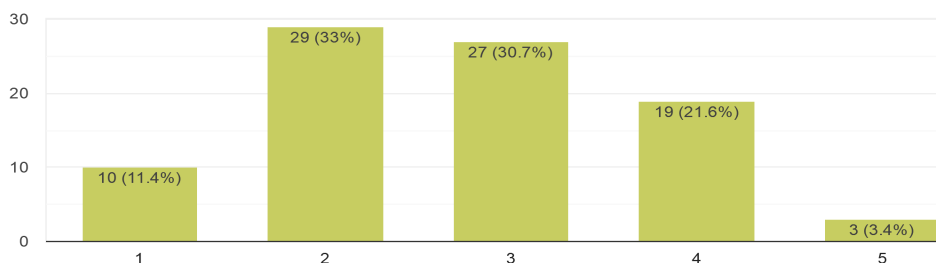


Fig 4.61

Exploring Terror Recruits Individual Needs

The youth joining terror can be broadly divided into two streams. One that has achieved his individual needs by joining a terror tanzem, he is content being a respected and maybe feared jihadi. The second is the one who is ideologically driven and would seek terror acts to further the cause. Some questions were asked to identify which stream is more common. The terror activity profile in Kashmir indicates that the first variety is more common, the second variety is though lesser in number but more dangerous.

The majority of the experts agreed that most recruits were content being part of a tanzem, they could bide their time before their first terror act, unless it was one to establish credentials in the group. Weapon snatching or grenade lobbing are common tasks for a recruit.

[How many youth picking up weapons have a plan or vision or ideology beyond just joining a tanzeem?]

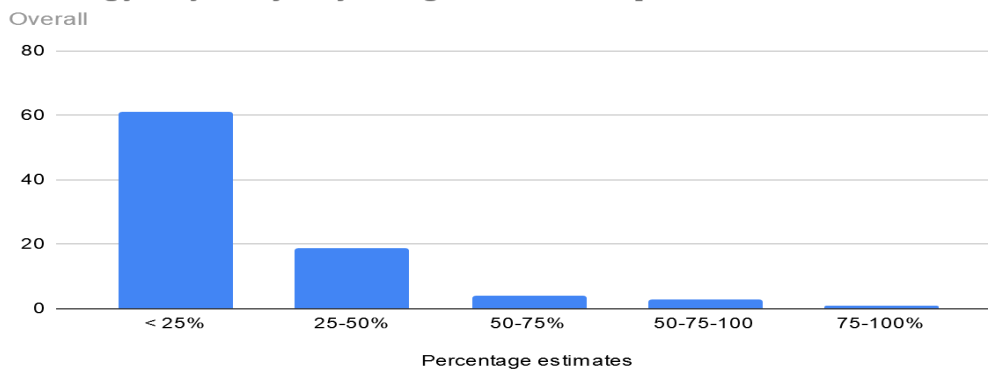


Fig 4.62

[How many are likely/keen to take part in an attack soon after joining?]

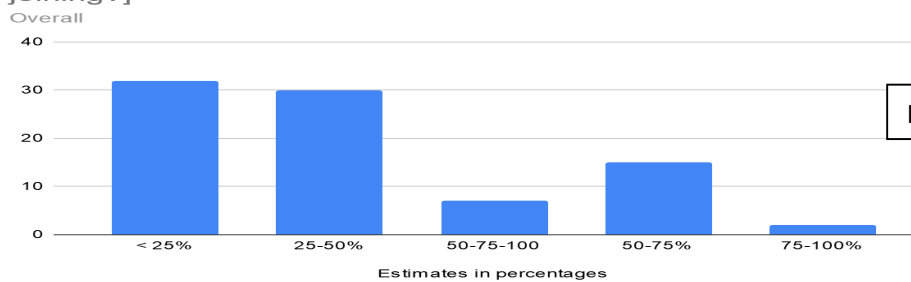


Fig 4.63

The recent media coverages' have highlighted the trend of the more educated and financially having joined terror. The experts believe the majority continues to be comparatively uneducated and economically weaker. This inference is unnecessary as public data should reveal the factual position to scholars and policymakers alike. As per police data in 2018 out of 172 recruit profiles 20% were confirmed to be graduates and above. While in 2019 out of the 104 identified 21 were known to be graduate and above.

[How many new recruit are likely to be well read , with exposure to modern education and financial stability]

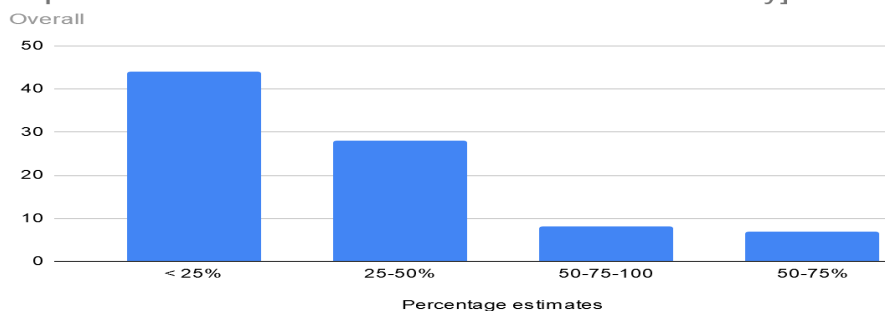


Fig 4.64

Stone pelters the visible face of the angry Kashmiri youth is assumed to be the first step before getting ready to join a terror tanzeem. Experts tended to agree with the narrative. Scholars and policymakers should not have to assess this part of the narrative. Databases should be available for the same for informed decision making. As per data available for terrorist recruitments in 2018, only about 10-15% of the recruits had a stone-pelting history.

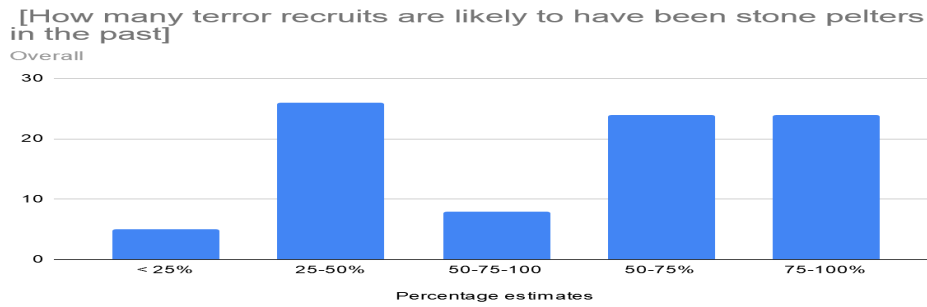


Fig 4.65

Experts also believed that unemployment has a major role in terror recruitment.



Fig 4.66

Role of religious background in the youth is again not documented. The experts had a mixed view. Data does not show any trend except the new age terror leaders learn to talk Islam once they have a mic and a video or audio to record. Only a few seemed to have joined after some kind of exposure to religious education.

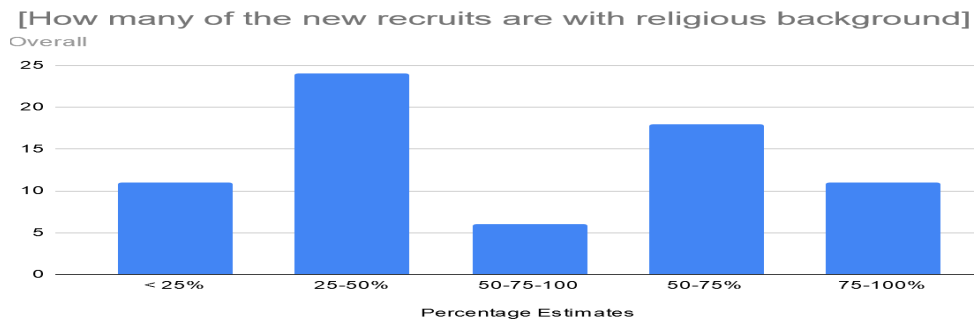


Fig 4.67

Understanding Kashmiri Youth Narrative

While the terror recruit is the outlier who may have more radical ideas, he still is a product of society. His basic values and belief system starts along with the rest. Since any counter-radicalization effort will involve a conversation with the youth. This section explores some layers of this belief system. Some questions were designed to identify how Kashmiri youth seek and get information.

Exploring the impact of religion on a personal level the youth were asked for the role of religion in their lives. The result showed that religion played a positive role in lives of about 50% of those polled.

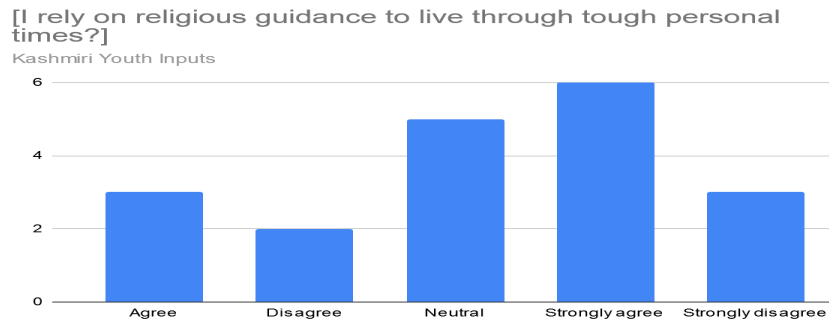


Fig 4.68

The youth did not feel that the religious differences were a challenge in finding a solution to the political challenges in Kashmir. The question of the influence of fanatical interpretation of Wahhabis or Salafis was strongly objected or ignored.

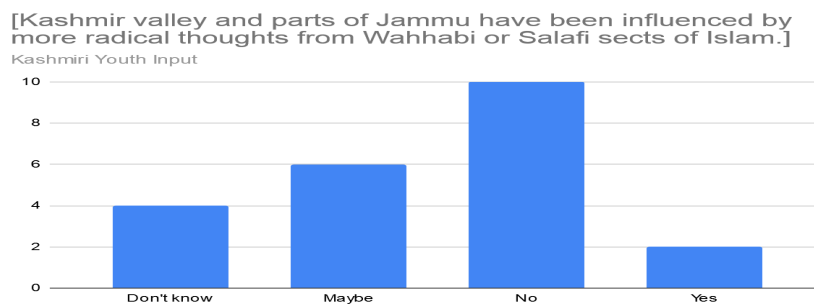


Fig 4.69

Concurrently, the question on Sufi sects mostly got a blank. One Kashmiri youth explained that the old mosques or dargahs are probably the haunts of the older generation. The youth opt for the swanky new ones. Sects are not important when he is making a choice. The No's of the Kashmiri youth to the Sufi sects were emphatic; a larger survey will be needed to confirm if the change in religious practices among the youth is so widespread.

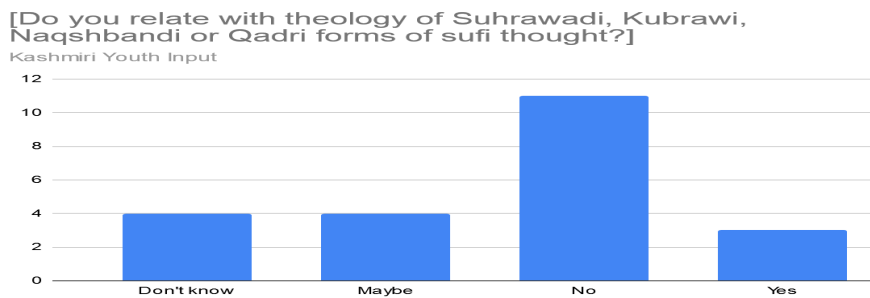


Fig 4.70

A good percentage of youth see the possibility of positive contribution by religious leaders.

A

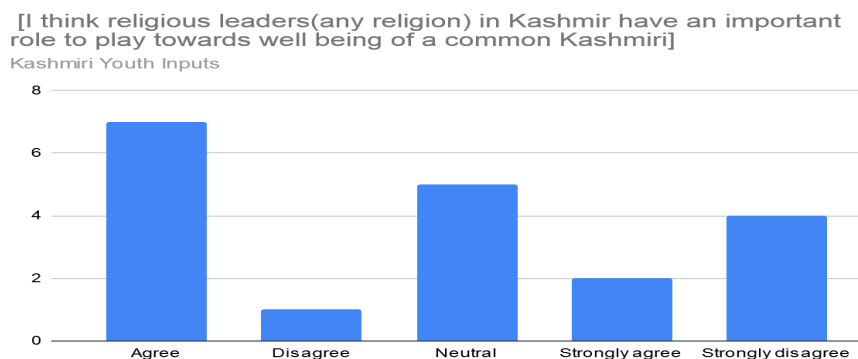


Fig 4.71

conversation with youth about Arabisation of Kashmiri society led to him explaining that it was not Arabisation, it was moving to purer Islam. He went on to explain how the internet had empowered him by providing access to important commentaries in Islam which earlier were very expensive for access to a common Muslim. He felt he was a better follower of his faith. He elaborated that at many times in his interactions with his friends he was able to counter the aberrations and propaganda by his study. A percentage of the youth did agree that the Kashmiri society was being influenced by Arabic traditions.

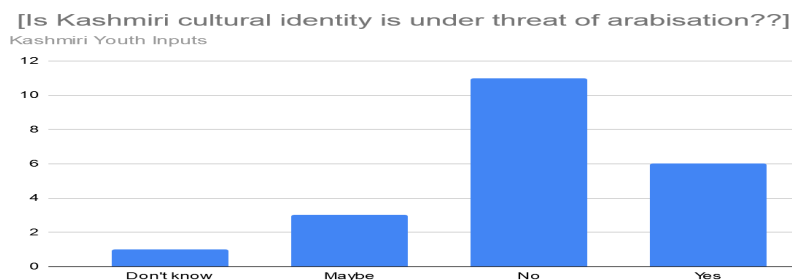


Fig 4.72

Freedom of Speech. Freedom of speech is a common subject of discussion in any conflict zone, both the state and the ANEs are accused of denying freedom of speech to the common man. A few questions were asked on the same. Surprisingly, most youths avoided answering, some left it blank and others simply marked not sure. Some during interaction commented that the question made them think, which probably should be an aim of such questionnaires. Of the few who chose the answer nearly equal number felt it was possible to freely speak pro-Pak or to speak pro-India.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

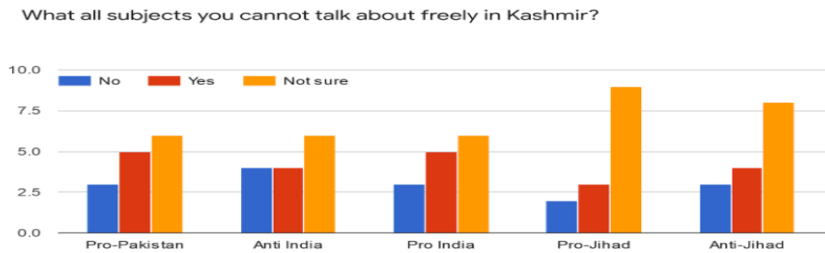


Fig 4.73

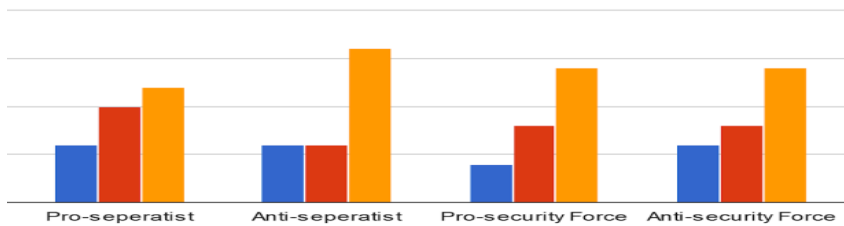


Fig 4.74

A linked question was about the killings of leading Kashmiri leaders and intellectuals in the last few decades. These killings included Maulvi Mirwaiz Farooq, Qazi Nissar Ahmed, Ghulam Qadir Wani, Abdul Ghani Lone and recently Shujat Bukhari. When asked who they thought had ordered the killings. Nearly 78% claimed ‘cannot say’, while 11% believed that Indian Security and Intelligence agencies were responsible. ISI was a poor third position, same as the separatists. Interesting input was that none of the youth believed that such a decision could have been taken by local terrorist leaders or even UJC. This question needs to be revisited in conversations with radicalized Kashmiri youth.

In the past important Kashmiris intellectuals and leaders have been killed of airing views not liked by the killers. These include Maulvi Mirwaiz Farooq,...ho do you think gave directions for such killings?
18 responses

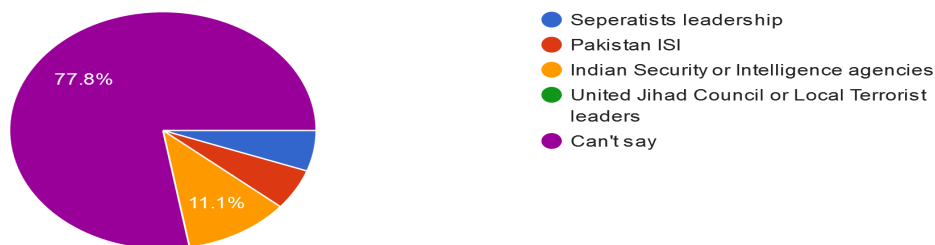


Fig 4.75

The youth were asked to give their impression of the impact or influence of Pakistan in the valley. 10.5% believed that going against ISI or separatist dictate can lead to a security threat for the individual.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

It is true that anyone not doing things as per the seperarists or ISI dictats will soon receive a threat or a bullet?
19 responses

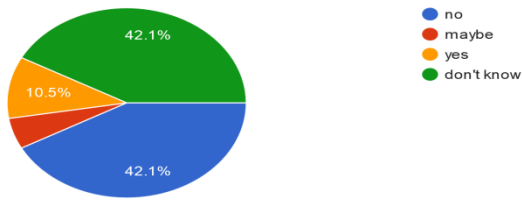


Fig 4.76

Sports, prayer and reading were the top preferred activity. What the Kashmiri youth is reading may be known from the local booksellers and maybe internet sellers, it is a lead worth exploring. Since internet curbs Kashmiri youth would have had to adjust to new realities, it is tough in an era where youth consumes both information and entertainment on the internet.

Living in a conflict zone continues to affect a common Kashmiri youth. An individual requires outlets that give him/her happiness and release fro...activities or outlet is your most preferred option?
21 responses

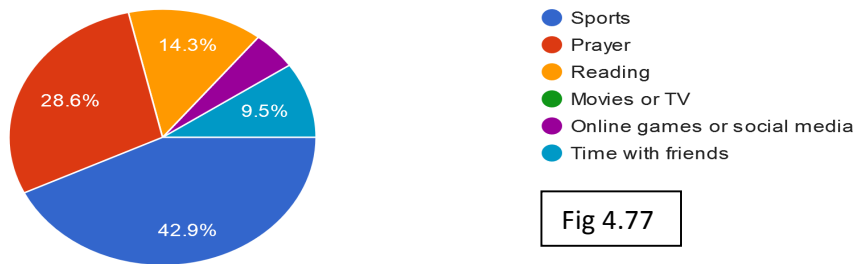


Fig 4.77

The electronic media via the satellite channels is the current option to devour news in the valley. The coverage of national news channels including the high passion debates impact the valley probably more than the print media. International media had a high viewing. The ones polled had limited interest in Urdu media, a more rural input may have had different input. Sales data of Urdu publications in the last decade may give supporting data.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

How much time do you spend on the following for entertainment or information?

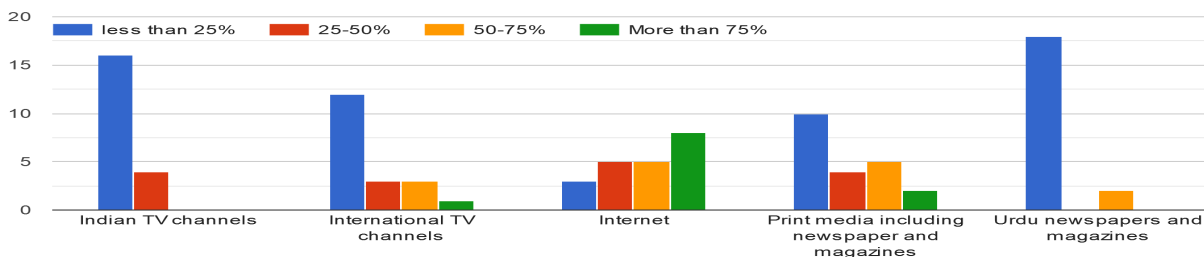


Fig 4.78

What is your preferred source of getting news?

22 responses

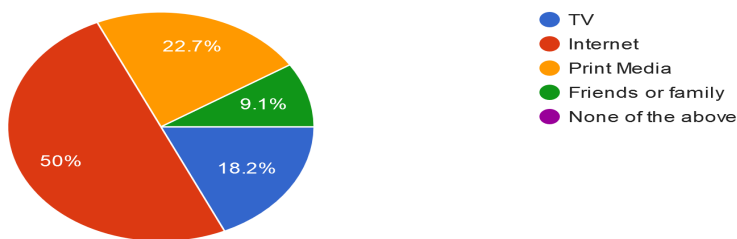


Fig 4.79

Nearly all youth indicated deep resentment and discomfort at the internet ban but a sizeable number displayed understanding on the need of the ban.

[Stopping of internet was an inconvenient but probably necessary to prevent mass mobilisation for agitations leading to violence and civilian casualties]
Kashmiri Youth Inputs

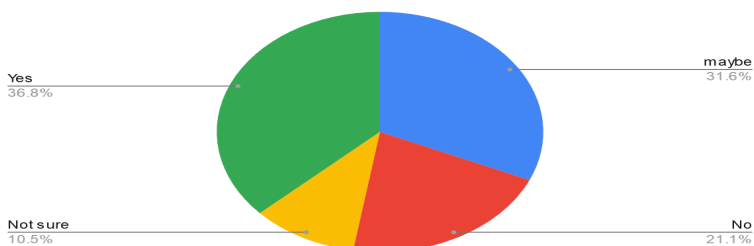


Fig 4.80

Strategic Communication. The strategic communication in Kashmir has to consider the reality of how and what media is consumed by the Kashmiri youth. The government narratives have to reach the youth on his/her preferred format and platform. The youth narrative is the battle ground where Pakistan’s ISPR is operating and has a visible capability and intent. The necessity of internet and social media curbs in Kashmir since 05 Aug 19, are reflective of the comparative weakness of Indian government agencies to dominate the narrative on various internet based media platforms. India needs a civil society –academics - government collaboration to have effective strategic communication capability.

“Conflict theory states that conflict is dynamic, and at a particular time, hard power has to start getting displaced by soft power. Perception is nothing but soft operations. The new terminology is “strategic communication” and India is struggling with soft power.”

- Gen Syed Ata Husnain (CLAWS,2018)

Prevention of Recruitment Into Terror Organisations

This section explores expert views on measures for the prevention of terror recruitment. The start point is the assessment of current government efforts at recruitment prevention. Most experts opined that a much better effort in recruitment prevention is required.

Prevention of fresh recruitment into terror organizations has to be part of the security strategy. How do you rate the governmental effort on the same.
89 responses

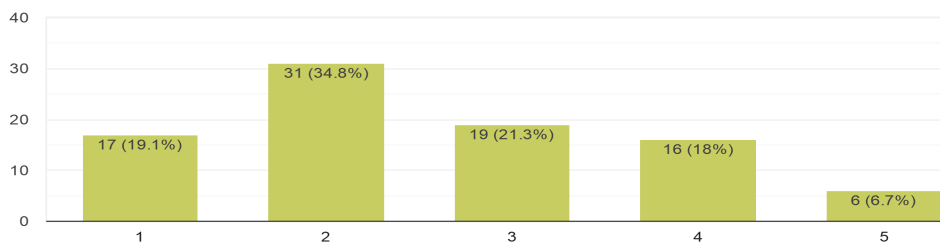


Fig 4.81

The Kashmiri experts were more critical of the government efforts.

How do you rate the governmental effort on prevention of terror recruitment?
Kashmiri Inputs

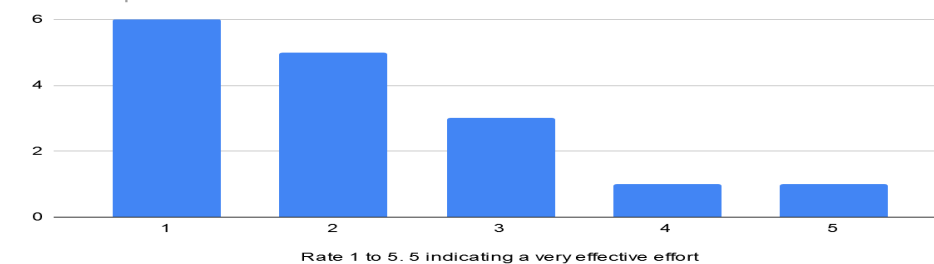


Fig 4.82

The youth on being quizzed on the effectiveness of the government’s prevention of recruitment effort was having responses on both sides, with some expressing satisfaction at government efforts.

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

Recently there have been cases of young kashmiris returning home after joining terror tanzems , is there an adequate government or civil society ...to wean and help the youth away from terror path?
15 responses

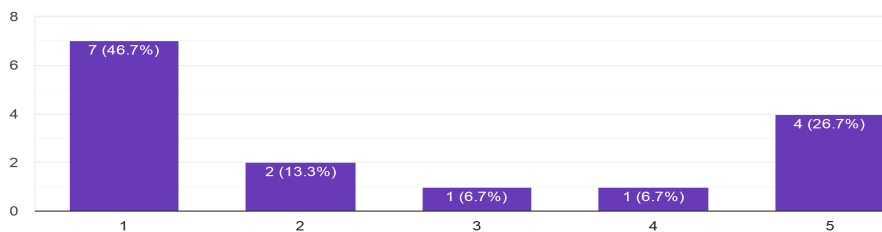


Fig 4.83

At this point it is pertinent to look at the Maharashtra Police Model for de-radicalisation of youth affected by ISIS propaganda. The program details were shared in the media^{lxxvii} in a series of articles claiming success at influencing 120 young men and women who had been influenced by the radical ideology, mostly through internet. The program was based on a Singapore model. It was an intervention at the individual level that relied on family support. At the ATS office, there was no lock-up, just a lot of questions, conversations, and long counseling sessions over the multiple days the youth was asked to visit. Confidentiality was sacred to the programme. “Even today our neighbours are not aware that my son went through a counseling session for a month. It was that secret,” said a youth’s father^{lxxviii}. It was executed by a nominated team which operated in plain clothes and avoided any stigma for the youth undergoing the process. Surveillance may have to continue for longer periods to avoid the risk of a relapse.

A question was designed as sort of a self-test on expert’s efforts to try and understand terror recruitment. The results displayed that most experts graded themselves 3 or 4 in their understanding of the recruitment process in Kashmir. The knowledge of ISIS and Al Qaeda methods had even lesser confidence among the experts. The result shows that experts believe there is a greater need to understand the process to build solutions to prevent recruitment.

How do you rate your understanding/knowledge of the process of indoctrination and terror recruitment in the valley
89 responses

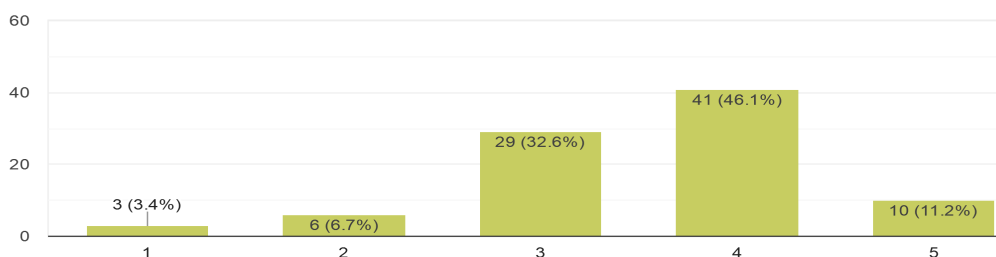
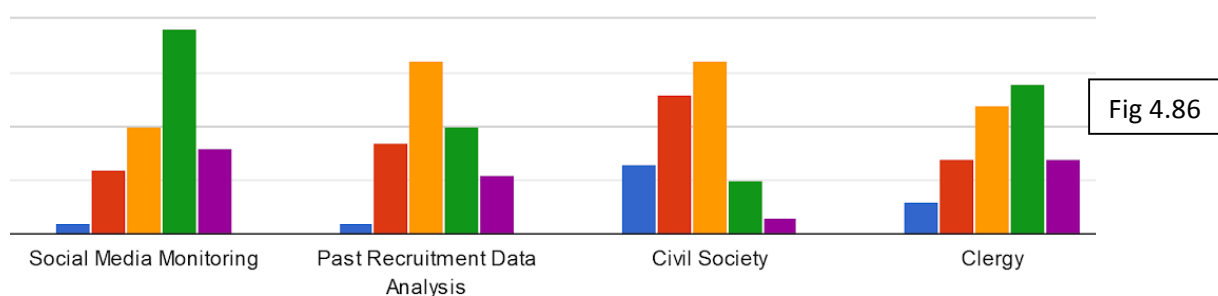
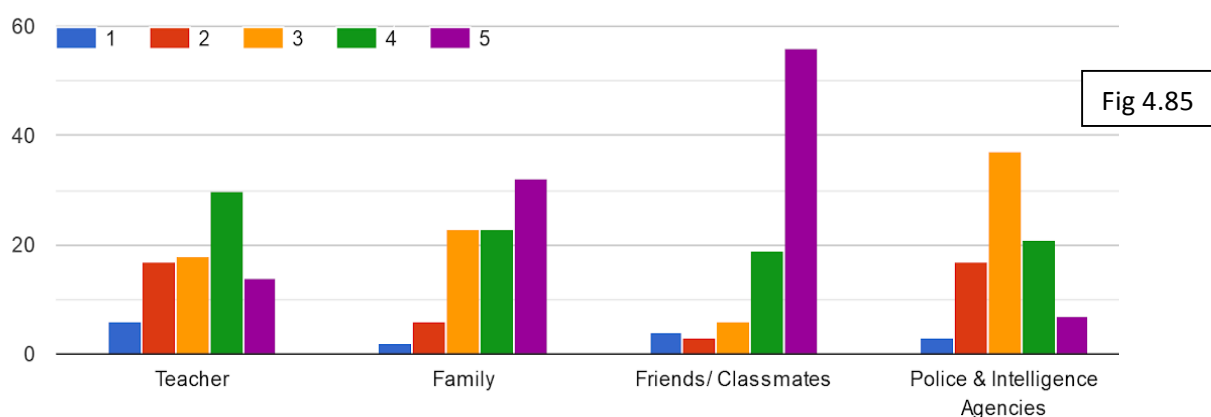


Fig 4.84

Identification of Vulnerable Youth. For any focused counter-radicalization effort, identification of the vulnerable youth is a challenge for the security forces. Experts were asked to rate various sources that can be used to identify the vulnerable youth. Among all options, friends/classmates and family were highest rated to have a chance in the identification of vulnerable youth. Ground experience shows that at times even families get surprised on a decision by a youth; indicating a need to help well-wishers identify a vulnerable youth by collating and sharing the common behaviour patterns that should alert others about youth under the stress of taking a plunge. One common behaviour change of a recruit before joining terror has been a withdrawal from friends and family circle. A concerted effort by identifying the traits based on primary interviews of acquaintances of recent recruits may help build a guidance checklist which should then be shared with the society through media and social media. Social media monitoring, teachers and clergy were next in effectiveness in the list of enablers for identification of vulnerable youth.



The experts have not shown much faith in past recruitment data analysis, probably indicating an environment that does not understand the power of data analytics. Research scholars do not have access to data to present the effectiveness of data analytics and build faith in data-based decision making. This needs build-up of an action plan at the government level.

Kashmiri experts placed their bet on family, friends and social media in identifying the vulnerable youth.

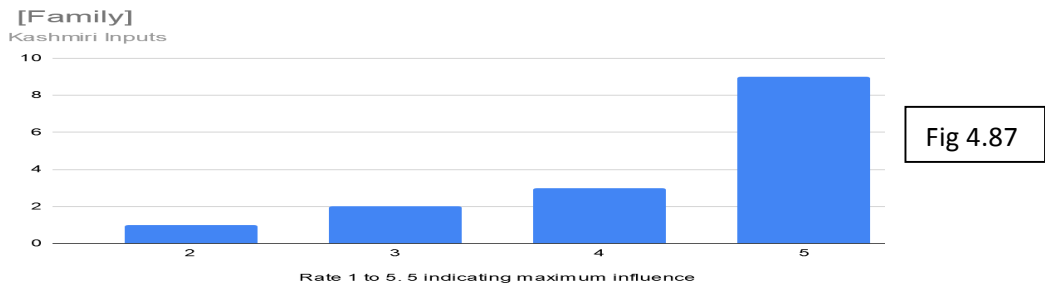


Fig 4.87

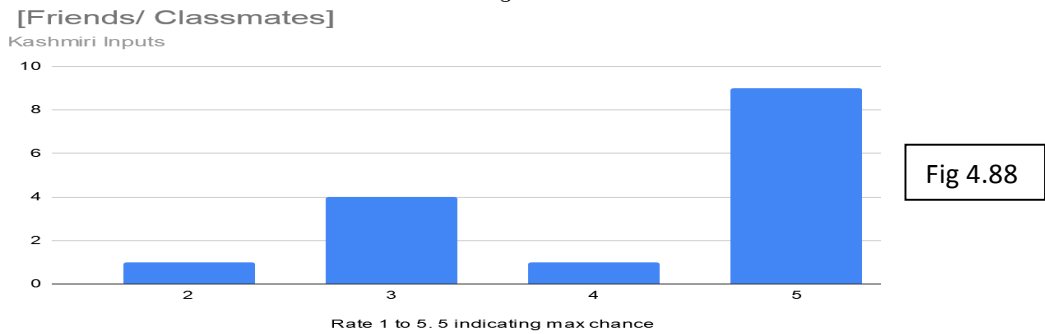


Fig 4.88

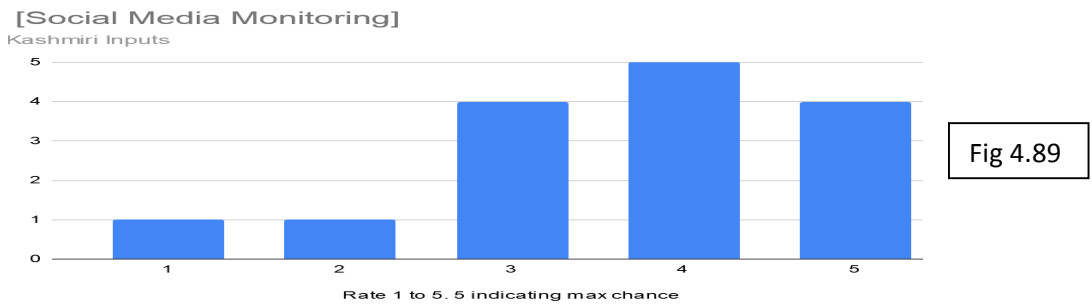


Fig 4.89

OGW Network. The OGW network of a terror tanzeem is its lifeline that builds and sustains a terror organization. Government efforts to expose and neutralize this network are tougher, and probably have received lesser focus till recently. Experts were asked to rate the effectiveness of various suggested methods to neutralize this network. Experts agreed on the effectiveness of the suggested options including through interrogation reports, call data analysis, social media monitoring, financial system monitoring, civil society collaboration and involving families of terrorists.

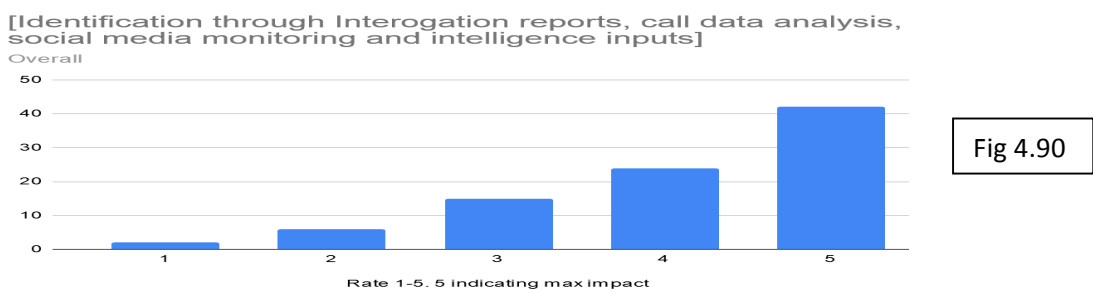


Fig 4.90

INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

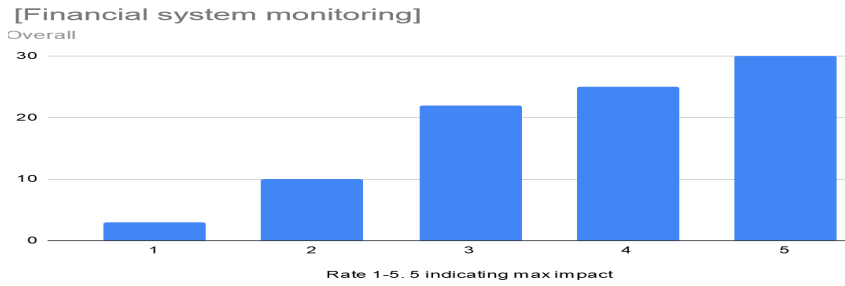


Fig 4.91

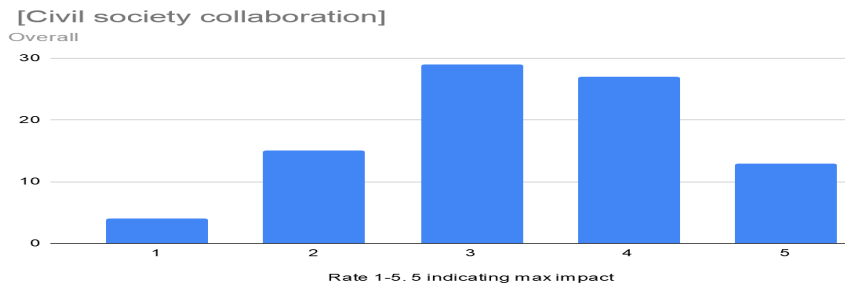


Fig 4.92

The Kashmiri experts placed a high value on the role of civil society, religious teachers' and involvement of terrorist families collaboration in identifying the OGW network than the overall trend. This indicates that the societal involvement beyond pure intelligence efforts would prove important in efforts to neutralize the OGW network.

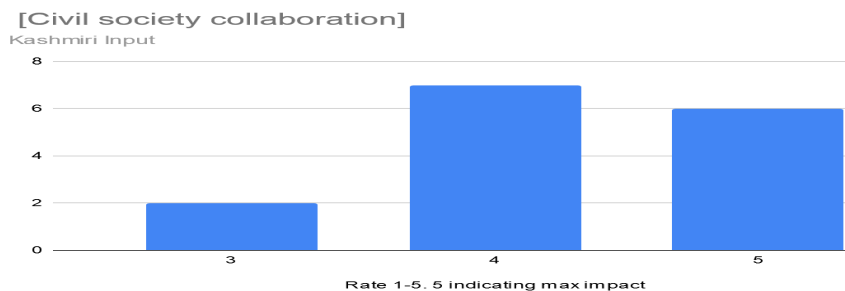


Fig 4.93

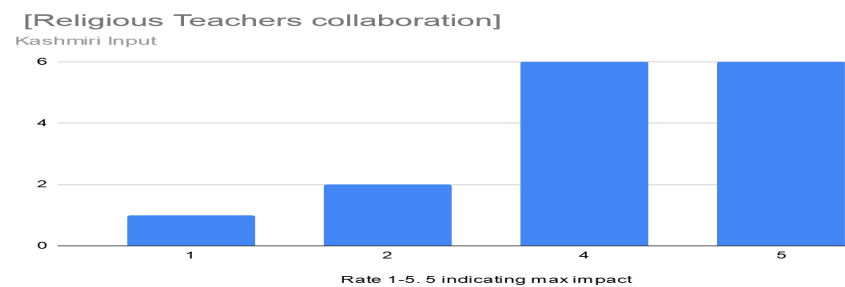


Fig 4.94

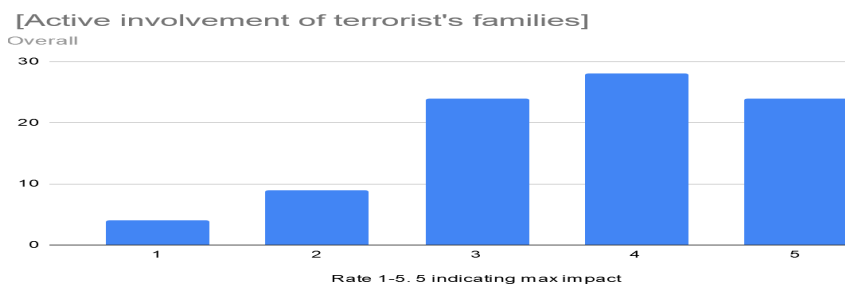


Fig 4.95

De-Radicalisation Teams

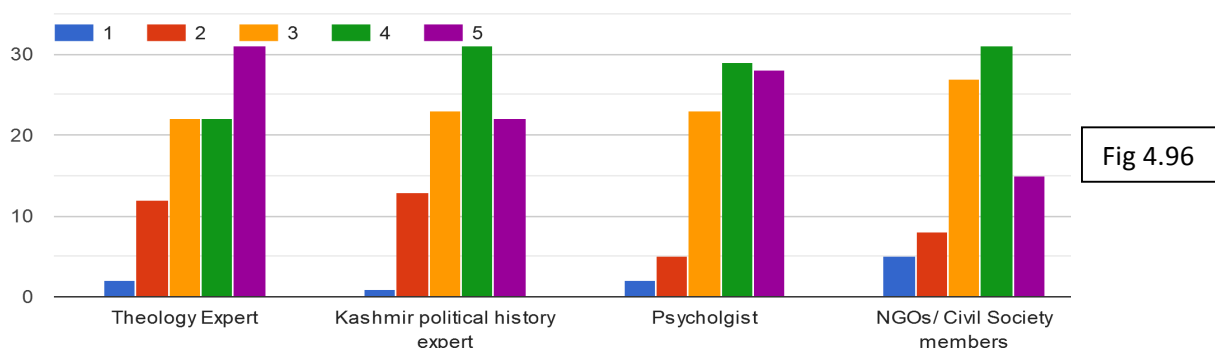
The next set of questions explored the composition of an ideal de-radicalisation team.

Once a vulnerable youth is identified the next step is an interaction that can pull back the youth from the radical mental state. This needs a conversation, a conversation to first identify the youth’s motivation to join terror. Once the narrative of the youth is identified, it needs an expert expert to counter the radical narrative. The counter-radicalization team would require persons with expertise in psychology, theology, political history and maybe from civil society.

Theology and psychologist topped the experts' recommendations acknowledging the primacy of mental health and religious radicalization concerns.

Need for a political history expert in the counter-radicalization team was rated higher by Kashmiri experts, indicating a lesser appreciation of the political narrative in other than Kashmiri experts. This has to be seen along with the youth inputs who did give a high primacy to the political situation. The challenge with Kashmir political history is selective amnesia based on the side of the divide an individual grows. What is not palatable or convenient is easily passed off as a conspiracy in the conflict zone. Conversation on political history with the millennial generation is likely to yield inputs on gaps that need to be filled.

The role of NGOs and civil society in de-radicalisation had moderate support among the experts. However, Kashmiri experts rated high role for these organizations, probably indicating the need for a fresh assessment of the effectiveness and role of these organizations in Kashmiri society. A societal change needs civil society support.



INCREASED LOCAL TERRORIST RECRUITMENT IN KASHMIR

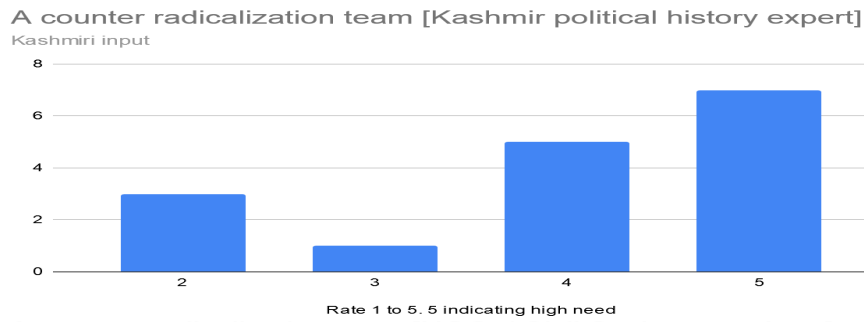


Fig 4.97

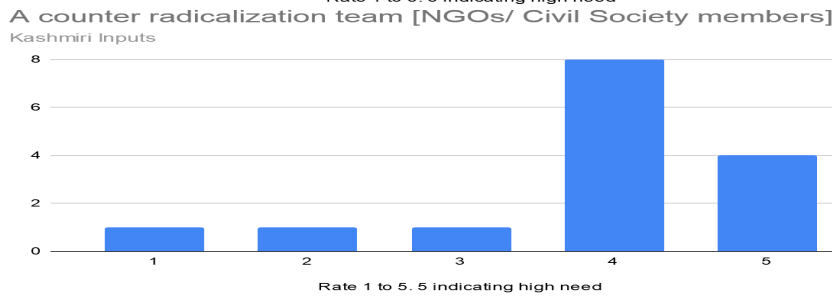


Fig 4.98



Fig 4.99

This chapter explored terror recruitment in Kashmir by taking expert and Kashmiri youth inputs. It helped to identify the key focus areas, which were used to build the recommendations in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5

Summary of Findings and Recommendations

The entire thesis has been an effort to look at ways to reduce terrorist recruitment in Kashmir as an important part of the national counter-terrorism strategy. This chapter is to summarize the findings of the three steps; exploring western literature on terror recruitment, a secondary study of terror recruitment in Kashmir and primary study on terror recruitment and way ahead in Kashmir. This was done with the aim.

The process of collation of material for the thesis gave me an opportunity to read and meet many experts on terror recruitment and on the situation-specific to Kashmir. The understanding of the complex dynamics in Kashmir evolved over interaction with experts of varied specialities. I realised that the subject is vast and multiple studies need to be done to reach a comprehensive understanding. Only then a plan can be evolved to prevent terrorist recruitment in Kashmir. The interactions with journalists, academics and the Kashmiri youth made me realize how at times a purely academic outlook can lead to a loss of touch with the sentiment on the ground, in case of studies on Kashmir. The discussions with persons who had spent time in Kashmir and the Kashmiri origin experts allowed me to compare and see where the narratives and impressions differ. However, it was the limited interactions with the youth of Kashmir that was most enlightening, since the youth probably spoke more freely.

I am conscious of the fact that while the experts' interactions and inputs were probably adequate for the research, the sample of Kashmiri youth was too small and dispersed. It would also be affected by the fact that the questions were being asked by someone from the security forces, though I found that the youth who chose to respond were unapologetic about their views. A similar survey by a civil researcher may do even better to reveal the youth narrative. At some places, some animated discussions helped me gain better empathy and insight into the minds of this troubled generation.

The findings are broadly covered in six heads.

1. The Research and Process Environment - shortcomings and challenges that need to be addressed.

2. A review of the Security Policy and Processes Framework in Kashmir and what can be done to improve effectiveness.
3. Counter Radicalisation and de-radicalisation basic framework, as assessed by the study.
4. OGWs and their Networks in Kashmir, and their critical role in sustaining terrorism in Kashmir.
5. An insight into Terrorist Recruitment and youth narrative in Kashmir. This phase confirmed the need for further studies to reveal the Kashmiri youth narratives.
6. Recommendations of the Study.
7. A proposal for De-radicalisation project in Kashmir.
8. Additional measures that must be undertaken by SF to deter local terror recruitment.

Research and Process Environment

Academic Research Challenges. Before moving into the arena of findings, some of the weak areas or challenges that I recognized during the research are given below.

1. Kashmir is the most important Internal Security Challenge facing India, with the added complexity of the persistent Pakistani hand. However, there are hardly any centres or desks focusing on Kashmir in most universities. Even the think tanks have very few specialists available. Pakistani universities seem to produce more papers on Kashmir!
2. Adequate Indian academic literature on Kashmir insurgency is not available. There are very few counter-insurgency operations centric studies available despite the history of three decades of conflict.
3. There are few research scholars whose focus area is security-strategy with respect to Kashmir. Most held the Kashmir charter as a subset of the overall profile as a security analyst and most of the do not operate from J&K. A large percentage of experts speak from intuitive knowledge based on a few visits and secondary source inputs.
4. Kashmiri students have been studying political science, international relations and sociology from top Indian universities. Very few of them have a channel of communication with the government and hardly any get groomed to study further based

on/ to consider the Indian perspective. Some of them go on to foreign universities and even become journalists writing against Indian interests. Facilitating conversation and promoting critical thinking about the situation amongst these youth during the student phase could bring the possibility of them becoming assets in the overall counter-insurgency operations.

5. There is a Kashmiri Pandit intellectual grouping which is fighting its own battle for getting justice for the 1990 exodus. Their action is with limited contribution to the overall perception strategy and the battle of narratives. Secondly, there is little effort to make people with differing viewpoints sit together to build a consensus; especially between Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims.

SF/Government and Academia Collaboration. During my research while looking for literature on various aspects of Kashmir, I was surprised that on the internet I would normally get a higher percentage of papers written by Pakistani academics or academics supported by Pakistan writing in western universities or publications. The Pakistani universities seem to be facilitating publication of more papers by their students on Kashmir. Pakistan has been able to produce such mass because of the known Pakistan military focus on Kashmir. Since Pakistan military is the de facto government of Pakistan, it can drum financial support and access for suitably inclined academia. The result is wider availability and reach of such writings. A few like Christine Fair, the American Political analyst may have seen through the propaganda effort and exposed the Pakistan Army, but most became the Pakistani propaganda tools in the international environment.

In contrast, the Indian scholars I interacted with as a part of the study face the challenge of access and then finance for any study on Kashmir. An individual scholar may find Kashmir interesting to do a sociological or anthropological study but would soon find the challenge of access and security too daunting and choose an easier topic or area. Even finance for field trips for such studies remains a challenge. India in any case offers multiple alternate subjects for such study due to the diverse population and large land mass, which are equally important and easier to execute. Some young scholars showed interest in exploring the Kashmir related subjects I was touching based on my study but were bereft of any funding. Even thinktanks like CLAWS, IDSA and USI have very little primary studies in collaboration with SF in Kashmir. In contrast there are examples like the US Minerva Project^{lxxix} funded by the Pentagon for social science studies to aid COIN operations. The goal of the project was

“to improve DoD’s basic understanding of the social, cultural, behavioral, and political forces that shape regions of the world of strategic importance to the U.S.”. Counter Insurgency operations need such inputs for the SF, ideally done by outside experts – implying civil researchers with various domain specialities. One example is the behavioural analysis of Kashmiri youth done by TISS in 2018, the study involved nearly 500 youth all over Kashmir and gave valid inputs for government agencies and research scholars; however the final report is still not available in open domain (CLAWS, 2018. Page 35). Even health and other studies done in Kashmir avoid contact with SF, since any such contact can make the person vulnerable to terrorist threat, and hence it leads to a view that does not have the SF perspective. Not surprisingly, there was little understanding among academics of the environment challenges faced by the SF in Kashmir, this leaves a huge gap in the Indian states ability to convey the national narrative.

India has a few think tanks which are doing independent and even government-driven studies. IDSA and USI are probably the oldest created to enable research on defence issues. Interestingly, both do more MHA or MEA driven studies than driven by MoD. Indian defense forces limit themselves to seeking limited studies, mostly by serving or retired officers, done as part of the HDMC/HCC/NDC courses and by officers choosing to take study leave and working with IDSA, VIF, USI, CLAWS and others.

Civil academia too does not have many options. During this study, the two good studies focused on Kashmir came to notice were both done by foreign thinktanks. The first was a 2010 report titled ‘Kashmir: Paths to Peace’ done by Robert W Bradnock for Chatham House. The second, a Christine Fair driven study ‘Insight from Database of LeT and HM Militants’, done at WestPoint. This situation of limited Indian studies on Kashmir needs to change especially in the domain of counter-insurgency operations which are well beyond kinetic military operations. Cultural intelligence or mapping is intrinsic to effective counter-insurgency operations and civil academia can prove very beneficial in this field. Kashmir has had mental health surveys done by MSF in 2005 and 2015. Through active collaboration and support, these should be treated as an opportunity to get inputs as needed by various government bodies.

Some studies that can be carried out include

1. Study of terror recruitment to identify motivation and ideology in Kashmir

2. Study of the terror recruitment process in Kashmir
3. Study on signs to watch to identify youth susceptible to join terrorism
4. Study of the role and structure of the OGW network in Kashmir
5. Study to identify the ideology of youth attracted to terrorism in Kashmir.
6. Study on the reality of religious radicalization in Kashmir, both via social media and the contact domain.
7. Identifying Kashmiri youth narrative post 05 Aug legislative action
8. Identifying the impact of JeI on education in Kashmir
9. Role of social media in influencing narratives in Kashmir from 2010 to 2019
10. Identifying the Kashmiri women's narrative
11. Sociological assessment of role and effectiveness of NGOs in Kashmir
12. Social assessment of surrendered terrorists and their families in the last decade
13. Study on role of the soldier and his impact on the Kashmiri society

Knowledge of Terror Recruitment Process. The expert inputs indicated that understanding of radicalization and terror recruitment in Kashmir and globally in ISIS/Al Qaeda is something that needs additional effort. Kashmir specific studies to assess local recruitment are nearly absent from the open domain. Even security experts operating in the valley have to largely rely on own experiences and gut feeling on how or why a youth joins terrorism. Own experience can be both educative and limiting since context and environment realities change, and they have especially changed in the last decade. Academic studies are inhibited due to lack of access to government data, security concerns and lack of synergy between academia and the security forces/ government.

The principal sources of information for an assessment of terror recruitment are terrorist interrogation reports, interviews of jailed and surrendered terrorists/OGWs and interviews of families of terrorists. All these are currently not feasible for a research scholar due to security and access challenges. The seeker, i.e. the SF and the government, needs to

facilitate these to get better-researched inputs leading to improved conduct of counter-terror operations.

So far counter-terrorism training focus has largely been on intelligence gathering and tactical operations to neutralize active terrorists. Improved understanding will enable support measures to prevent or reduce recruitment into terrorist organizations. The SF soldiers and officers at the contact level need to be educated on the sociological dimension of the operations in Kashmir. Collaboration with academia will bring about new thought and perspectives. This could be used to upgrade training and SOP for the SFs at all levels. The upgrade would be from 'targeting the terrorist' to 'targeting terrorism'. Presently, for the Army, these are incorporated in pre-induction training at the Corps Battle Schools. A periodic external review may help improve content and delivery.

Security Policy and Process Framework in Kashmir

Policy framework and the role of legislation in fighting terrorism have been seemingly underplayed in the Indian government system. This makes the task of SF more challenging. Even existing legislations like AFSPA are under sustained attacks by vested interests, turning it into an ANE propaganda tool. The western nations have been nimbler in exploring fresh legislation to combat terror. Legislative support for countering terror is a continuous effort, especially given new avenues used by terrorists and their support network. This needs a team of security and legal experts to jointly bring forward proposals for the parliament. This aspect needs an institutional review.

Security Coordination Processes. The security establishment in Kashmir is a loosely coordinated security matrix that rides the twin horses of the Defense Ministry and Home Ministry. The rules of business and the mandates of various agencies, working under the two ministries overlap. While Lower level functional coordination for tactical operations is fully effective and there is functional coordination at the apex level, which operated under the CM and presently under the Lieutenant Governor. The middle level mostly operates in the respective silos with personality-based lateral coordination. Counter-insurgency operations transcend the limits of combat operations into the social domain and hence are multidisciplinary. Three decades of counter-insurgency operations have seen some efforts with success to explore fresh joint structures that improve efficiency in the conduct of the counter-insurgency operation. This in a way caters for the bureaucratic walls between various ministries in Delhi and their representatives working in Kashmir. In the present scenario, the

Lieutenant Governor's office may be expected to coordinate the various verticals to a common policy direction. A structural review may aid better synergy between various government agencies.

Data-Based Decision Making. Challenge of access to data as a research scholar despite being from a government agency made me realize how there are no processes to de-classify terrorist data for use by research scholars. A government-supported open database will aid both academic research and data-based decision making for various agencies operating in Kashmir. SATP database is a success story in this field.

In an era of data analytics and data-based decision making, a lack of availability of data in Kashmir is a key weakness which inhibits data-based decision making. There are databases which are maintained by an individual arm of the government; specific for a purpose with little scope of lateral access. Limited computer networks are in place but the software's and databases are largely episodic and limited. There is no central coordination of the data collection and collation. Lateral sharing of information and data is very limited and mostly manual. Analysis sharing is limited to joint meetings and influenced by personalities. Multiple organizations are working towards a common task in virtually independent workspaces. There is no apex structure that can create databases for improved synergy and effectiveness.

A central database of terrorists and history-sheets including OGWs will help security agencies counter all these in a much more effective manner. The recent advances in technology including ease of biometric authentication, face recognition and other such technologies, can be effectively used to enable better monitoring of the ANEs. Access to long term data is a basic requirement for law enforcement agencies.

There is a need for a task force based effort to build joint network and databases. These should largely be open domain to allow access to academicians and some which have security implication may be limited to government networks. It needs to be appreciated that most data on terrorism or terrorists can be unclassified or maximum restricted. Best practices from western nations which allow data access in the open domain may be studied and implemented. Think-tanks like CLAWS or USI or IDSA can be co-opted for the creation and to maintain the databases.

Counter Radicalization and De-Radicalisation: Basic Framework

It is pertinent to clarify the distinction between counter-radicalization and de-radicalization. While the former is preventive, the latter is focused on measures post the event. Western scholars have studied the issue of radicalization to decode the process that leads to radicalization. Broadly the steps of radicalization as per these studies are

1. Self-radicalization which is a personal experience and environment based process. Here the individual internalizes life experiences, social experiences and even media content of various forms. He feels and feeds a sense of victimhood for the self, the society and the ethnic or the religious group. He becomes a seeker looking for a closure to this sense of victimhood.
2. This seeker then goes on social circles and/or in the digital age onto social media circles and the internet for answers. The social set up and internet are geared for creating echo chambers. An individual becomes a part of groups that echo his views, he leaves or is excluded from groups with differing views. Even search engine algorithms work to give results based on the choice profile – an effective digital echo chamber. He gets further self-radicalized unless exposed to counter views or narratives.
3. The seeker comes in contact with a recruiter. This contact could be online or in real life. The contact follows a protocol to evaluate and get close to the seeker. The contact listens to the seeker and builds a relationship. He then further feeds the victimhood narrative with larger dataset designed to create doubt about all other sources of information. At an appropriate stage, the seeker is isolated from counter-messaging in the name of security. This is the start of the radicalization based on the ideology of the recruiting terrorist group - the formal radicalization.
4. At an appropriate stage, religion may be inserted, initially to give solace to the troubled seeker and then to guide for action, namely jihad or any other chosen form. This process ends at a stage where the individual is convinced of life beyond individual victimhood. He becomes a mercenary with a cause, graduating to a larger cause for community or religion or even God himself.
5. At the final stage, he is an active member. At this stage, he is in what is called the ‘self-actualization stage’ of Maslow’s hierarchy^{lxxx} of needs. He feels he has found the life’s path that gives a feeling of fulfilment. Here, he may be beyond de-radicalisation. De-radicalisation has to be attempted with the seeker much before. When and how is the

subject of research, being covered later. At this stage, he is earmarked for terrorist activity or the organizational roles like ideologues or logistics including training of new cadre.

Counter Radicalisation. Counter radicalization is broad-based and targets a societal group and not an individual. It is the process where the individuals' social space and digital space is interacted with. The environment has content, narratives and answers to the questions of the seeker. His/her interaction in the physical sphere and the digital space must reduce his/her angst and the feeling of victimhood. It is at this stage he/she has to be prevented from accessing or reaching more radical views and ideas. Counter messaging and counter engaging are subjects of strategic communication or Information warfare. At this stage, the stress of strategic communication at times tends to be on counter-messaging. Counter-messaging by nature is limited in effect as it focuses on defeating the terrorist narrative. In contrast, counter engaging that is a definite effort at messaging own narrative and increased efforts to engage with the youth in the physical domain^{lxxxii}, is more likely to succeed. An effort at sharing a positive narrative based on truth and delivered in a form that it reaches and is ingested by the desired audience has much larger chances of success. The basic theme is to sell your story – your narrative in a manner that the vulnerable youth consumes it before he is affected by the radical narrative. Various youth engagement activities contribute to this effort.

Counter messaging is also about creating alternate spaces for interaction with the vulnerable youth both in physical space and the digital space. If the government provides avenues for interaction, the chances of falling into the radical toxic space are avoided, thus preventing further radicalization or even de-radicalise and individual.

Having a process that encourages critical thinking and provides spaces for rival alternatives to converse and debate can be an effective antidote to a radical mindset. De-radicalisation due to religious propaganda has a large volume of online resources available; created by the western nations to combat ISIS/Al Qaeda, this can be tapped into rather than having to create fresh content.

De-Radicalisation. De-radicalisation is focused on an individual or a small group; and based on the premise that a vulnerable youth has been identified. It is a process where the youth is expected to be brought back to believe in the mainstream. It has to normally happen before he has reached the 'self-actualization stage' mentioned above. At the self-actualization stage, the youth is deaf to counter-messaging and is convinced that he or she is on a higher

path. He is the Indian Mehdi Biswas- “I am a soldier, I have no regrets” or an American Nidal Hassan – “I am a soldier and messenger of Allah, I have no regrets of what I have done”. He is now only a toxic source of radical beliefs, maybe too late to reverse. Same may be true for a Masarat Alam or Azhar Mahmood or Hafiz Saeed. The de-radicalisation has better chances of success if the vulnerable person is identified early.

Deradicalisation works best when both terror movement and radicalization effort lose concurrently. (Stern, 2010)

The de-radicalisation process would typically need experts in psychology (a trained counselor) and experts in the fields that feed the individuals victimhood. In the case of Kashmir, it could be a political issue or religious radicalization.

The steps in the process are

1. Listen. the process where the team converses with the youth to reveal his narrative. To understand the reasons for him becoming a seeker. At times the conversation itself may help the individual self-correct by internal dialogue.
2. Converse. The process where the expert team interacts with the youth. It is an effort to converse on the narratives. Conversation brings back hopes and positivity in human conduct. If the team is armed with sufficient facts and knowledge it will be able to update or modify the youth’s narrative. Slow incremental change is the aim; rapid transformation is unlikely and may not be reliable. The conversation may act as a pressure release for the pressure created by the echo chamber that the radical ideologue and recruiter try and fill.
3. Monitor. The conversations are monitored as they happen to assess the progress. The conversations are periodic and continuous. It is never complete, the periodicity may reduce as positive results are seen, there is no set protocol. It is the de-radicalisation team protocol that should drive the conversation, maybe a group call of the experts with the psychologist having a lead.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). Any SOP on de-radicalisation must be ever evolving based on ground conditions and driven by a nominated task force. Some guidelines for the SOP based on secondary studies and interviews of experts are shared here. The de-radicalisation action should preferably be before police ‘law and order’ action. In such cases of preventive proactive action, all measures to respect privacy must be taken^{lxxxii}. Measures to

ensure security of the database and avoiding any stigma to the individual must be ensured. Measures to aid rehabilitation must be taken, as applicable and feasible. The entire process should be done by a team distinct from SF involved in kinetic counter-insurgency operations.

It is important to start any such process with the premise that no de-radicalisation effort can be foolproof. The efforts to make it foolproof may make it constrictive for the de-radicalisation team. It must make allowance for risks to be taken to allow the youth to get back to routine life without being stuck with an uncomfortable situation for too long.

The youth that is touched by a positive de-radicalisation effort will become catalysts to carry the national or government narrative back to societal spaces that need it. They will initiate and be part of conversations – conversations that will influence other vulnerable minds – a positive contagion.

The simple fact that makes de-radicalisation strategy critical is that in its absence, the vulnerable youth is the angry stone pelted or the OGW that create challenges for the security forces. Efforts to deal with these youth distract or divert the SF resources from the kinetic operations to kill or neutralise terrorists. Even successful killing or neutralization of the terrorists does not lead to a resolution of the conflict, as a volunteer pool is readily available for replacing the attrition in terrorists' ranks.

Overground Workers of Terror Networks

Recruitment prevention needs maximum contact points with the population and hence needs to be a joint effort of all stakeholders. It will have to be fought on two fronts, the vulnerable youth and the OGW network. The recent focus on the OGW network, already late, needs to be sustained until the network is made ineffective.

US General McChrystal said his experience in COIN taught him that “you take the middle of the network – experienced professionals- you attack them, you capture, you kill and you turn as many as you can, and you cause the network to collapse on itself” (Moghdam 2013, page 23).

In Kashmir, the OGW network has survived three decades of violence due to the SF focus on the weapon-wielding terrorist, and not the support network. The umbilical cord - the OGW survived due to the lack of investigative and legislative collaboration to deal with those who lived their lives bordering on the illegal. Even if caught they could either not be

convicted due to poor investigation or simply linger in the legal process. The few convictions would lead to weak sentences that did little to deter the white-collar OGWs. In the absence of legislative support, the government agencies relied on using the much-maligned PSA (Public Security Act 1980). The anti-nationals have been ahead of the legislative curve, exploiting gaps in legal means available to the state. India needs to periodically revamp the legislative measures to keep up with the loopholes being exploited by the ANEs.

“So far counter terrorism training for security forces focus has largely been on intelligence gathering and tactical operations to neutralize active terrorists. With the reduced terrorist footprint there is a need to recalibrate the focus to include recruitment prevention. There is a need to inform the cutting edge; the soldiers and junior leaders of the security forces - the radicalization and recruitment methods of the terrorist organizations. They need to understand the OGW network and their methods. Improved understanding will enable effective measures to prevent or reduce recruitment as also neutralize the OGW network.”

- Brig A Pendarkar

The biggest challenge for intelligence agencies is to unravel the OGW network. The cells are small and resilient. The information of the hierarchy is rarely known to the lower rungs that may get caught. The higher rung largely avoids getting directly involved in activities that are against the law of the land, and hence lives in relative safety from police action. There is an overlap with criminal webs of hawala, smuggling and drugs. Different verticals deal with separate functions to include logistics, finance, equipment provisioning, communication with the active terrorists, handling of media/social media and propaganda, handling of legal cases of those caught, handling of support activities of families of killed terrorists^{lxxxiii}, handling of academic pressure groups and so on.

One of the primary safety measures taken by the OGW is to lie low when the heat of SF or investigative agencies is on the individual. He could be warned by moles in the government system and the OGW has the option to cease anti-national activity till he is off the surveillance.

The study sought views on methods to unravel the OGW network. Most agreed on the feasibility of using social media monitoring, financial systems monitoring, interrogation reports and other intelligence activities to reveal the network. Kashmiri experts placed a high

value on the role of civil society, religious leaders and terrorist families to unravel the secret OGW structure.

Data Analytics. With so many diverse inputs a probable solution to this complex web is data analytics. There is a need for a comprehensive citizen and criminal database where such activities and investigations, if any, are recorded. This will enable continuity in the investigation if the individual gets active again after a period of hibernation. The same database would allow the use of intelligent software to do link analysis to reveal the web of networks. It will help identify the main drivers in the network – in military terms the centre of gravity. In this case these are the centers of gravities of an evolving cellular structure that defines modern 4GW methodology of terror organisations. Experts in data analytics must be involved in creating the database architectures.

“Big data is lacking. Though we have been fighting this war for more than 30 years, there has not been a single study aimed at understanding the political economy of the conflict. We have only conjectures and no empirical data on which social and political class the youth is coming from.”

- Prof Navnita Behera, TISS

Insight into Terror Recruitment in Kashmir

Terror recruitment in Kashmir is cloaked in secrecy and has more anecdotal evidence than a professional study. Most of the inputs were received from experts who shared personal experiences. The process is deeper than the anger at some harassment by SF leading to joining terror sequence. Tales of the educated and the financially well off joining terrorism typically appear on the media reports, these too are far and few.

Last one decade has seen increased local terror recruitment that drove its path independent of the Pakistan controls. The improved LC domination made it was no longer feasible to send the youth to Pakistan for training. There have been instances where youth have moved to Pakistan on a valid visa or via Nepal to get training. In addition, the route of infiltration along the IB sector is also being explored, for Kashmiri and Pakistani recruits. There is evidence of Pakistan establishment efforts at special contact with Kashmiris travelling to Pakistan or the Middle East on valid Visa, including Haj pilgrims. All aimed at radicalizing the mind against the Indian state and maintaining leverages in the Kashmir.

Terrorist recruitment is assessed to be the responsibility of a specific OGW layer. They operate in conjunction with and as eyes and ears of the active terrorists. This OGW network has the responsibility to identify and evaluate youth that may be available for recruitment. This network is watching the youth at public places and identifying the ones who show dissent against the Indian state and display capability which can make a youth suitable for use by the terrorist network. The youth is normally the seeker who is looking for a contact or an avenue for a more active role. In recent years stone-pelters have been a target group from which a few stone pelters have moved up the chain to be terrorists. Some experts believe this percentage to be large but that is not borne true by available data.

Once identified, the next phase is social interaction to build linkages which enable conversation and assessment of the youth. The phase is also used to isolate the youth and carryout further radicalization. He may initially be used for low-end OGW work and may be considered for recruitment at an appropriate time. These are the anecdotal 1000 waiting to join. Very few cases of terrorist recruitment are seen to be triggered by an event, they are the result of a deliberate process in which contact with the terrorist network is critical.

There is presently a lack of ideology-driven recruitment; it is mostly whatever option is available to act against the state. The youth does not have the luxury to choose a tanzeem based on ideological convictions. There is a gap between the youth's aspirations which are not pro-Pakistan and the Pakistan centric terror tanzeems like LeT, JeM and HM. Terror organizations have areas of influence based on existing active terrorists which probably is tempered by the OGW network. As per interactions with experts operating in Kashmir the youth normally joins the tanzeem effective in his area. In recent times the walls between tanzeems have got blurred to the extent that in some cases terrorists of different tanzeems have been killed in a single encounter. This process needs further investigation to remain abreast with the latest conditions.

Recruits into organizations like AGUH and ISJK maybe more ideologically driven than the rest, since they are choosing to join tanzeems with limited resources and OGW support network. In fact, these started with clear opposition from UJC and the separatists. As per the primary study, these groups' ideologies resonate more with the urban or semi-urban college-going youth, in part influenced by social media.

Recruit Profile. Some basic inputs about the profile of recent terrorist recruits based on profile studies and expert inputs are given below. The details of the relevant inputs have already been covered in Chapters 3 and 4.

1. **Age.** Despite the low age of terrorist recruit focus on media reports, the overall trend since the 90s is that the terrorist recruit is now of higher average age. Some of the recruits are even in the 30s. These must be analyzed separately to identify a trend and probable countermeasures. The trend of underage terrorists is limited in numbers.
2. **Socio-Economic Background.** Despite the increased pool of volunteers available from the weaker socio-economic strata, the numbers show that socio-economic or unemployment profile do not show any distinct trend. As per the Kashmiri youth and Kashmiri experts who took part in this research, socio-economic causes are not major drivers. Only about 25-30% of terrorist recruits were unemployed before recruitment.
3. **Education.** Terrorist recruit in the last two years is mostly with lower education levels though there is an increased percentage of graduates and above. There is no data to show that madrassa education can lead to greater vulnerability to radicalization.
4. **Religious Indoctrination.** The youth were explicit in opposing any role of religious organizations or clergy in causing radicalization. The experts felt that religious radicalization is an important enabler for terrorist recruitment. Increased focus on religious education has increased the scope for the radicals to spread the exclusivity and victimhood agenda. Data of terrorist recruits in recent years does not provide data sets to explore this facet. It needs additional focused study including interviews of recently surrendered terrorists.
5. Few cases of recruitment on return from an educational institute in mainland India have been mainly driven by poor academic performance.
6. 10-15% of the terrorist recruits are influenced by contact with an existing terrorist in the area.
7. About 10-15% of the terrorist recruits have a known history of stone-pelting.

Motivation and Ideology. Inferences and interpretations based on Motivation and ideology of the Kashmiri local terrorist recruits as assessed by the study are enumerated below.

1. Seeking identity and status may be a prime driver for the recruits who belong to weaker sections of the Kashmiri society. The youth with poor education and employment options seek identity and status. Joining a terror tanzeem gives both. For the well to do its more a matter of status. Even bigger names like Burhan Wani did not articulate any coherent ideology. While the experts agreed to the view, a major percentage of the Kashmiri youth in the survey did not support this contention. The youth probably is influenced by the propaganda of the terrorists through the use of social media in recent years. There have been very limited major perception management actions to expose the ideological hollowness of these terrorists who mastered the effective use of social media. While the view of the Kashmiri youth may be biased and erroneous but his/her perception matters. It is an issue worth validating by additional research and included in any perception management strategy.

2. As per the primary study, very few of the terrorist recruits were likely to seek and participate in a terror act immediately on joining. Only a few, motivated by revenge or a strong ideology, seek early participation in a terror act. A majority is content with the step of having joined a terrorist tanzeem.

3. Revenge as a primary motivation is true for a small percentage of the terror recruits. Some of these few seek action for revenge immediately on joining a terror tanzeem. Studies show that in many cases, it is only a self-delusion or deceit to convert an internal feeling of victimhood or inadequacy in the modern competitive world into a larger societal issue.

4. A small percentage from the middle or higher-income families has adventure as a motivator. The high-risk games with the security forces are a source of adrenalin for this breed of terrorist.

5. The unresolved political issue runs highest as the reason for joining terror tanzeems. This is agreed both by experts and the youth. Concurrently in the primary study, the youth showed ambivalence to the detention of the Kashmiri political leaders. Seemingly, the larger question of relation with Indian state is more in focus.

6. The political beliefs of the terrorist recruits are mostly unknown in absence of deliberate primary research. The beliefs are believed to be ranging from 'various versions of Azadi' to merger with Pakistan to an Islamic Pakistan. Anti India and Anti SF

sentiment run high in the assessment of basic beliefs of new terrorist recruits. Studies have shown that pro-Pakistan sentiment is lesser but present. Azadi remains a popular slogan and a confused belief system exists where the definition of the term has varying connotations for different people. It remains a prime motivating factor.

7. Impact of belief system seeking an Islamic Kashmir is high among the new terror recruits. Religion has been used to galvanise support for the agitation by the separatists and many times by the clergy, glorifying killed terrorists using religious platforms is common. It has reached a level where for many youths the political issue has become a subset of the religious divide. In the primary study, experts felt the impact of this factor was high, while the youth mostly had a mixed view.

The Youth Narrative. Certain layers of the Kashmiri youth narrative that have been revealed in the study are given below-

1. About 50% of the youth are conscious of the positive impact of religion in their lives; they rely on religious guidance during personal tough times. Prayer forms an important part of life routine of this section.
2. The youth do not agree to the suggestion that change is happening in Islamic religious traditions in the Kashmir valley but are mostly uninterested in the Sufi thoughts, unlike their elders. They do not agree that the change to purer Islam is at cost of Kashmiri tradition or can be termed as Arabisation of the valley.
3. Kashmiri identity is important and a source of pride for a common Kashmiri. 83 % believed they faced discrimination due to their Kashmiri identity, while only 5.3% felt discrimination was due to religion. (CLAWS, 2018. Page 45)
4. The youth feels the resolution of the political issue of Kashmir is the main concern. However, there is an acceptance that religion has become a large influencer. The youth sees the role of Hindu Right Wing actions leading to increased radicalization. The youth does not see many similarities between the Hindu Right and JeI. The youth do not see any major role of clergy in radicalization.
5. The Kashmiri Pandit issue is largely out of focus of the Kashmiri youth. He does not feel any responsibility for the exodus. As per his belief, mostly the Indian government and Governor Jagmohan were responsible for the exodus. He is okay with

the return of the Pandits as long as it is back as part of common colonies and not separate new colonies as being recommended by some.

6. Majority of the youth is not much interested in history, but focused on what is happening currently on the ground. He seeks information from all available resources to understand the current situation.

7. Poor governance and corruption are at top of the concerns of the youth and the Kashmiri experts.

8. Stone pelting is largely accepted as a form of protest, though the youth agree Kashmiris need to find new avenues of peaceful protest.

9. SF behavior with the common man and collateral damage during operations is high on the complaints of the youth. Most youths have anecdotes of SF high handedness or misbehavior to share. These anecdotes run common though many don't have any personal experiences to share. AFSPA is barely understood except as a symbol of impunity to security forces.

10. Pellet guns are a sore issue. The youth do not feel pellet guns use is justified against the stone- pelters. They feel SF needs to find an alternative to pellet guns.

11. Interactions with youth revealed a lack of understanding of trying conditions for soldiers in a counter-insurgency role. There is a feeling among the youth that reducing SF footprint in the valley will aid the resolution of the security challenges, however, some don't agree to such a belief.

12. The glorification of terrorists especially during the funerals is accepted to have had an impact on the increase in terror recruitment. It has also resulted in greater social acceptability for the act of joining terrorism.

13. The youth claims to have partial information on ideology and propaganda of terrorist organizations like ISIS and Al Qaeda. They accept social media has a major role in spreading radical content. A small percentage shared the feeling that the extremist ideology is finding greater hold among Kashmiri youth. They accept that there is a higher risk of elements from Kashmiri Diasporas being vulnerable to the ISIS/Al Qaeda propaganda.

14. Youth believes that the state should stay away from religion and let society make wise choices. The youth mostly agreed to the monitoring of education in madrassa by a team of Kashmiri Muslim educationists.

15. On 'freedom of speech', most feel free to speak on most topics. Speaking pro India is tougher than speaking pro separatists or Pro Pakistan. Speaking anti-India is easier than speaking against the separatists.

16. The youth during interactions advised the need to improve understanding of the Indian constitution and the freedoms that it enshrines, among the Kashmiri youth. The few who had been exposed felt that such an understanding will help understand the kind of 'Azadi' that is available under the Indian constitution.

17. On killings of popular Kashmiri leaders like Maulvi Mirwaiz, Abdul Ghani Lone and Shujat Bukhari majority of the youth were not sure as to who could have done it. The question lingers in their conversations but they have no clear answers. The only fact of which they seemed confident was that local terrorists and UJC probably have no real control over such decisions.

18. There is little pro-Pakistan sentiment among the youth. It is a mostly anti-India sentiment that is displayed by shouting pro-Pakistan slogans.

19. Association of a Kashmiri with the Army can lead to a silent social boycott. Pro India statements need to be defended and can come at a social cost. Anyone branded an informer can face severe social boycott.

20. The youth listen to and read international media for news. Urdu print media has limited readership among the youth. Post internet curbs fresh reading habits may need to be checked.

21. Internet was widely used for accessing news and entertainment. There is dissent and anger at the internet curbs. A small percentage understands that internet curbs were probably necessary to prevent violence. They are hopeful for a lifting of the curbs. The youth also rated jails and online space as the most likely space where youth may get radicalized.

22. Social media had a huge role in communication among youth. It had a distinct role in the spread of radical propaganda. It needs to be noted that there is evidence that a major part of this propaganda material is generated in and spread by Pakistan.

Recommendations

Recommendations based on the study are given below.

1. There is a need to progressively move towards data based decision-making. To enable the same, steps need to be initiated to create more databases of various aspects on Kashmir. These databases can then be accessed by government agencies and academics, as per requirement. This would need a multiagency and multidisciplinary expert task force for execution. To begin with, security agencies need access to a global database of terrorists and OGWs.
2. Steps should be taken to create an improved research environment for multidisciplinary studies on Kashmir to give inputs to various government agencies including police, army, civil administration and to the civil society in Kashmir. These steps would include making more data available for research, addressing security concerns of research scholars, incentivizing additional research on subjects of interest to state agencies, increased government consultation and collaboration with Kashmiri academics, and increased collaboration with universities and colleges specially dealing with social sciences.
3. Commission primary studies for detailed sociological assessment of Kashmir society with focus on the youth. Correct knowledge of the youth narrative is critical for the government policy direction in Kashmir. The present study could form basis for a wider study with better samples and analysis to get inputs on the youth narrative in Kashmir. This could provide important inputs for policy and for strategic perception management planning.
4. Studies focused on analysis of terrorist recruitment, motivation, terrorist organizations' processes and OGW network based on primary research, should be commissioned. These may include interviews of jailed/surrendered terrorists, analysis of interrogation reports and families of terrorists. Such a study is possible only if facilitated and supported by the state. The outcomes will provide important insight into terrorist organizations and methods for the government agencies.

5. Strategic Communication or Information Warfare in Kashmir needs to be upgraded to dominate and counter Pakistan's ISPR effort. The state level structures, processes and capability need to be reviewed, synergised and upgraded for desirable impact. Even within IA greater synergy and direction is imperative. An important component of strategic communication in Kashmir has to be the conversation between the soldier and the Kashmiri youth. A lot is being done but the study showed need to increase reach and to explore new methods. The soldier and the Kashmiri youth have to understand each other better, this step maybe prove to be most potent to reduce local terrorist recruitment.
6. Realign focus of intelligence and SF on the OGW network and the terror ideologues. They have to be identified, exposed and neutralized to effectively remove terrorism from Kashmiri soil.
7. Initiate steps to increase arrests and invigorate surrender, for local terrorists. This includes fresh look at the surrender and rehabilitation policy.
8. Commission a 'de-radicalisation project' for youth identified to be vulnerable to terrorist recruitment. The broad outline based on this study is covered in detail in the next section.

De-Radicalisation in Kashmir: Proposal

The study has brought out that the government counter-terrorism strategy has a missing link – de-radicalisation. While there are efforts at counter-radicalisation by intervention in various forms of media, there is no structure and process for de-radicalisation of vulnerable or radicalized youth. This is required both for the arrested or surrendered and the vulnerable population affected by radical propaganda, both need to be handled separately.

The government effort in recruitment prevention needs a major push as per views of the experts and the Kashmiri youth.

A major gap is the lack of options with the SF/police to address youth who are involved in actions like stone pelting or other forms of violent agitation. The acute shortage of juvenile homes and the poor management of the teenagers booked for stone-pelting ends up with jail experience or the 'repeated hazari' harassment for the youth. This leads to reinforcing the loop for further radicalization. As per inputs from the youth, jails are the top likely place where youth may get radicalized.

The recommended process has two basic steps – identification and then the de-radicalisation process.

How to Identify Vulnerable Youth? The first fact that international secondary studies in Chapter 2 confirmed was that while it is possible to identify a vulnerable person based on a set of parameters, no parameter can be perfect as terrorist recruits come from all kinds of personality profiles. Any effort will identify a few but a few others will get left out. The basic premise is to work on the ones you can identify.

Based on the secondary study, a matrix of options for identification of a vulnerable youth was created; it was corroborated and updated based on inputs of experts and the Kashmiri youth.

The lowest hanging fruit is the few cases reported directly by family or friend circles who get worried when a youth shows signs of desire or intent to join terrorism. This was also an avenue used by Maharashtra Police in the counter-ISIS model. This can be strengthened by a formal process that shows empathy to the concerns of the family and friends. Such a plan should be advertised so that more families/friends feel confident in approaching the authorities for help.

A study by social sciences experts to identify the signs of a youth who is in a vulnerable state of mind is recommended. Once the signs are identified they must be shared with the Kashmiri society and the SF. There is a need to share these on social, print or electronic media, which help families/friends pick signs of radicalization and then are guided how to seek help.

Clergy and teachers are also believed to be in a position to spot a youth who may be picking radical ideas and intent. Societal collaboration and faith in the government system can make these sources of information more willing to share concerns. A de-radicalisation program that has civil society collaboration may aid building such a rapport.

Intelligence agencies and SF who have a huge footprint in the Kashmir valley can provide inputs for identifying vulnerable youth. There are reports of technologies like face recognition being used in incidents like stone pelting or other violent protests; these can be used to identify the pattern of angry or radicalized youth.

Police need an additional soft option to deal with the violent teenager who is not listening to normal counseling. At this stage, the vulnerable youth's details should be handed over by the police or SF to the nominated de-radicalisation team.

Social media monitoring is another method that has succeeded in identifying vulnerable youth influenced by ISIS propaganda. Kashmir has lesser reliance on social media for radicalization, compared to ISIS; however, primary study confirms that it had a huge contributory role. Currently, the internet and then social media curbs since 05 Aug 20 is likely to limit this mode.

Use of data analytics has been attempted in a limited manner in Kashmir. It is known that terror recruitment has a pattern where persons from the same village or societal group and at times families are vulnerable to join terrorism. The social and family linkages create motivation in conversations at home/society and it also enables access to the terror network. Hence, they can lead to more recruitment. These linkages can only be used for link analysis by modern tools after a robust database is available. There are commercial softwares like IBM I2 which can be used for the analysis. SF in Kashmir may explore this avenue for identifying the vulnerable youth and the OGW network, the start point is a robust database.

A central nominated body must receive data of the vulnerable youth to enable corrective action.

De-Radicalisation Processes. De-radicalisation is attempted for groups, in nations where there is a larger mass of surrendered terrorists or radicals including families eg ISIS affected areas and even parts of Pakistan, while others like Singapore have focused on individual de-radicalisation.

Kashmir has a small percentage of the population that needs such an effort on an individual level. This process is designed to focus on prevention of fresh local terrorist recruitment from Kashmir. The effort should start with the creation of de-radicalisation teams(s) that should be led by a nominated SF officer for coordination with other arms of the government. There may be a sub-team in each district or at any other appropriate level, working under a state-level coordination framework. The team(s) should have experts in psychology, Kashmir's political history and theology. These could be drawn from civil society. Civil society including NGO involvement or academia collaboration may be sought for specific aspects. In this section, the recommended process for de-radicalisation and the procedure for each case has been covered.

Process. The recommended de-radicalisation process at the state level is given below.

1. An individual should ideally reach the de-radicalisation team before any police action is taken against him. Though a police case does not bar an individual from being sent to the team. A surrendered or arrested terrorist de-radicalization program should be distinct from the program for vulnerable youth. Their mixing should be prohibited. Reformed formers maybe used in the process.
2. There should be a state-level coordination team. The team must evolve a protocol or procedure for the de-radicalisation effort.
3. Sub teams be created at each district or each Rashtriya Rifles Sector. Ideally led by a nominated SF officer. Each team will have to be a multi-agency composition.
4. The team should be at a level not directly involved in kinetic counter-insurgency operations. Overlap with kinetic operations in daily functioning is not desirable.
5. The team(s) should avoid overt signs of being part of the SF, as far as feasible.
6. There would be a high premium on confidentiality and need to avoid any stigma or impact on future employment options for the reported youth.
7. As a start, no detention should be planned unless necessary for logistical or security reasons.
8. Infrastructure for each de-radicalisation team/centre must be specified for provisioning before the start of the project. The team will require infrastructure which permits a single person at a time interacting with others watching and listening in. Modern technological aids including a video recording of proceedings, use of audiovisual facilities etc must be provided. Specific audiovisual resources based on the radical narrative must be made available to the teams. A suitable administrative support system must be ensured.
9. The team must get a profile or dossier of the individual from the agency reporting the vulnerable youth. This will prove as a start point for the team.
10. A dossier of each youth must be maintained by the team for monitoring during the process and for long term research inputs, which will help in future refinement of

the project. The dossier must have reports of each of the experts involved. Formats will have to be evolved.

11. The de-radicalisation effort aims to bring back the youth from the decision of joining terrorism. His overall belief system is not in focus and should not delay his removal from the de-radicalisation effort. It can never be a 100% new belief system; a protocol must enable the youth to get timely downgraded in the list as any undue delay can be counterproductive.

12. There must be efforts to identify some surrendered terrorists who can interact with these vulnerable youth. Their ground experience will enable better conversation and hence the possibility to de-radicalise.

13. The protocol for grading each vulnerable youth needs to be established. The grading system will help decide periodicity of meetings required and a final stage when the individual is back in society with local administration keeping a tab.

14. The team must submit a periodic quarterly or six-monthly report on trends and the radical narrative as gleaned from the youth interactions. These must be shared with concerned government departments including those dealing with perception strategy. These can also be shared with NGOs and research scholars.

15. There must be a specified protocol of dealing with failures, if any, in case a youth joins a terrorist tanzim while undergoing process or after it. Such failures should be analyzed to improve protocols.

16. Procedure for de-radicalisation must be reviewed every six months, based on expert inputs. A six-monthly external review by a civil academic social scientist will enable value addition and improvement.

Procedure. The recommended procedure to be followed once a name is handed over to the de-radicalisation team is as given below.

1. Once a youth is identified and informed by any of the channels discussed above – the de-radicalisation team begins its action based on the established protocol. This includes a dossier of the youth with information/inputs collected so far that led to his identification as a vulnerable youth.

2. Each individual case will be earmarked to an individual case handling officer. The initial contact with the family and individual will be by the nominated officer based on a specified protocol.
3. The officer will be responsible for the coordination of all interactions with the youth and the family. He/she will also be responsible to keep the family updated.
4. The team will adhere to all the confidentiality protocols specified for the program.
5. The case handling officer will maintain a dossier of the vulnerable youth.
6. The process would start with 'identifying the youth's narrative'. For this, the team with an initial lead by the psychologist would first 'listen'. It must use infrastructure which facilitates one person interaction where other experts listen in. The effort may require a conversation with a variety of experts.
7. Once the narrative is obtained. The next phase is 'converse' where alternatives to the youth's narrative are inserted by conversation by the concerned expert. Use of audiovisuals and even internet searches may be explored in the interactions.
8. The initial phase may involve daily interaction for a few days which could taper to weekly and then monthly interactions.
9. Group interaction with the youth of differing narratives may be explored as a method of conversation and de-radicalisation.
10. The team must review and grade the status of each individual periodically. The periodicity of interactions would be dependent on the periodicity.
11. Visits to national universities and Army Goodwill Schools may be explored, where applicable.
12. Collaboration with psychological experts from the Department of Psychology, Kashmir University and Institute of Mental health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Srinagar, and others must be explored.

Strategic Communication Measures. The most effective action to deter terrorist recruitment is effective counter terror operations, Indian SF have excelled in the same as is apparent from

the low shelf life of a terrorist in Kashmir. To reduce local terrorist recruitment, in addition to the de-radicalisation effort as specified above, additional measures by SF that can address the cause of the radicalization are enumerated below. It is reiterated that only actions that are SF actions aimed at preventing local terrorist recruitment are included.

1. Harassment by SF is a predominant narrative that needs to be addressed by disseminating the reality of restraint shown by Indian SF. Media effort and increased interactions with the youth will enable empathy for SF soldiers. Movies like Hamid are a readily available resource that tell the tale in a balanced manner.
2. SF rules of engagement must be periodically updated and promulgated based on the ground requirement. This conveys SF intent and process to the Kashmiri youth, and also explains the incidents as and when they happen.
3. Upgrade SF training by sharing the version of the Kashmiri youth to build empathy within the SF soldiers. SF soldiers need to be part of the strategic perception management effort.
4. Azadi is an amorphous but popular term for the Kashmiri youth. Conversation on modern Indian state, the Indian Constitution must form part of the strategic perception plan. The evolution of the compact between the state and the citizen needs to be discussed. Explaining the Indian Constitution and what it assures a citizen and what it seeks should be an important part of the perception strategy. Some Kashmiri youth who had been exposed to the Indian constitution believed that the sharing of the highlights of the constitution can allay most of the misgivings of a common Kashmiri youth.
5. Collateral damage, especially property during operations is a visible and high effect source of angst and dissent. It needs two front actions. One, SF should keep the rules of engagement updated to minimize collateral damage without extra risk to the lives of soldiers. Messaging with the public must include the rationale for the unavoidable damage. Collaboration with civil society should be sought to reduce collateral damage. Government procedure for compensation must be updated to ensure it is timely/time-bound and fair. Such acts must be disseminated through media. Post operations briefing need a review. An expert commented giving figures is not what people seek; the briefing protocol needs an upgrade to say the complete story. The

message of the challenge and restraint of the SF as they work in a tough environment must be shared. Details of terrorists should reveal the truth of his real self and not an unnecessary title of the kind of a commander of a group of 5 or 10.

On Saturday evening, security forces cordoned off Mujgund on the outskirts of Srinagar and launched a search operation. An 18-hour-long gunfight would soon follow, killing three Lashkar-e-Taiba militants, including Saqib and Mudasir. The gunfight would also leave seven houses destroyed and five security personnel injured^{lxxxiv}.

- A Media Report, 11 Dec 18

The media coverage leaves a feeling of use of excessive force, the casualties to the SF is ignored by the Kashmiri awam. It needs to be reinforced with details that indicate why the collateral damage became necessary to avoid more casualties to the soldiers. Five security personnel injured information is given scant attention by public or media in most cases, that's why it is in the end of the report.

6. Review the use of pellet guns. It must be the weapon of last use before opening with bullets. Convey the review as part of messaging while pellet guns may be retained where operationally justified and necessary to avoid SF and civilian casualties. Messaging of SF concerns and protocols that convey restraint must be ensured.

7. Share positive case studies of SF action through all forms of media. Involve civil society by providing access to information, messaging works better if the content is prepared by civil society.

8. Monitor and identify radical ideologues. They must be proactively booked legally and prevented from spreading narratives of hate, violence and sedition. Legislative measures may be taken to empower the SF and intelligence agencies against such OGWs. This needs a task force action.

9. Engage – youth needs action-oriented engagement. Various efforts at youth engagement in sports, culture and education facilitated or conducted by SF have been well received and continue to impact the youth. These efforts need to be continued with collaboration with NGOs and colleges for wider reach.

10. Encourage inter-school activities of Army Goodwill Schools with other schools to enable cross-feeding of experiences and narratives.

11. Surrender is not a popular option in Kashmir, the positive news in the last few months is the healthy increase in arrest and surrenders. This trend has to be strengthened. The youth who gets back has seen the terror tanzeems interior working process. He is invaluable if he collaborates with the security forces or is used to share his tale in strategic communication. Some of these may be used in the de-radicalisation program. The Ikhwan movement though discredited due to corruption in the later phase and by vested propaganda was instrumental in control of terror activities in the 90s. The TA(Home and Hearth) Battalions have done good work. However, post surrender the youth is under threat of targeting by the terrorists and even societal elements. The state has to work at rehabilitation to encourage surrender.

Conclusion

The paper has dealt with various facets of local terrorist recruitment in Kashmir and culminated with the recommendation for a counter-radicalization plan designed for Kashmir. The effort if considered at an appropriate level in GOI will need a Task Force Implementation, with executive powers and budget to execute the program in a time-bound manner. 6 months should be adequate to have a robust program in place.

The additional measures that need to be undertaken by the security forces have been given. These include a review of the 'rules of engagement' for SF, upgrade to strategic communication effort and increased conversation platforms with the youth of Kashmir.

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