

VOLUME 29, ISSUES 2, 3 & 4, APRIL - DECEMBER, 2022

ISSN 0972-5563

Journal of Peace Studies



PUBLISHED BY INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR PEACE STUDIES

ISSN 0972-5563

Journal of Peace Studies

VOLUME 29, ISSUES 2, 3 & 4, APRIL - DECEMBER, 2022

Journal of Peace Studies

**FOUNDER EDITOR**

LATE PROF. RIYAZ PUNJABI

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

T. K. OOMMEN
SALEEM KIDWAI
RENÉ WADLOW

EDITORIAL BOARD

G BALACHANDRAN
NOOR A. BABA
AJAY DARSHAN BEHERA

EDITOR (HONY)

ASHOK BEHURIA

CONSULTING EDITOR (HONY)

SMRUTI S. PATTANAIK

ASST. EDITOR

PRATEEK JOSHI

DESIGN

BRINDA DATTA

PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY

SHEIKH KHALID JEHANGIR

International Centre for Peace Studies

Office Address:

157/9, Block 4, Second Floor,
Kishangarh, Vasant Kunj,
New Delhi-1110070

Regd. Address:

C-11 Jangpura Extension
New Delhi – 110 014

Tel: (91-11) 49989230, +91-9810317972

<http://www.icpsnet.org>

Email: cpsndjps@gmail.com;

Printed at:

A.M. Offsetters
Kotla Mubarakpur, New Delhi
PIN- 110 003, TEL: 2463 2395

OVERSEAS OFFICES**UNITED STATES**

7541 N.WESTERN AVENUE
CHICAGO,
IL 60645-1510, USA

UNITED KINGDOM

196 CHURCH ROAD
NORTHOLT, MIDDX
UB5 5AE U.K.
PHONE: 0181-845, 8828

SUBSCRIPTION**In India**

Single Copy:	Rs. 150.00
Annual (Individual)	Rs. 600.00
(Institutional)	Rs. 1200.00

Overseas (Air Mail)

Single Copy:	US\$ 7.50 UK£4.50
Annual:	US\$ 45.00

Journal of Peace Studies

C O N T E N T S

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

South Asian Integration: Need of the Hour	1
--	---

ARTICLES

Rights of Tribal Women and the Indian State: A Human Development Perspective	<i>Niharika Tiwari & Anisur Rahman</i>	3
Jamaat-e-Islami in J&K: How does it survive the bans?	<i>Mehraj Bhatt</i>	30

OPINION

Audio Leaks and their Negative Impact on Pakistani Politics	<i>Syed Eesar Mehdi</i>	46
Symbolic Actions to Curb Terror Financing will not help Pakistan	<i>Nazir Ahmad Mir</i>	52
View from Across the Border: We are our worst enemies	<i>Mohammad Shehzad</i>	57
Xi Jinping's visit to Saudi Arabia: Implications for West Asia	<i>Afroz Khan</i>	63

REVIEW ESSAY

Lives on the Margins: The Contours of Shia Political Disposition in Kashmir	<i>Syed Eesar Mehdi</i>	70
--	-------------------------	----

BOOK REVIEW

Political Conflict in Pakistan by Mohammad Waseem Reivewed by	<i>Afroz Khan</i>	85
--	-------------------	----

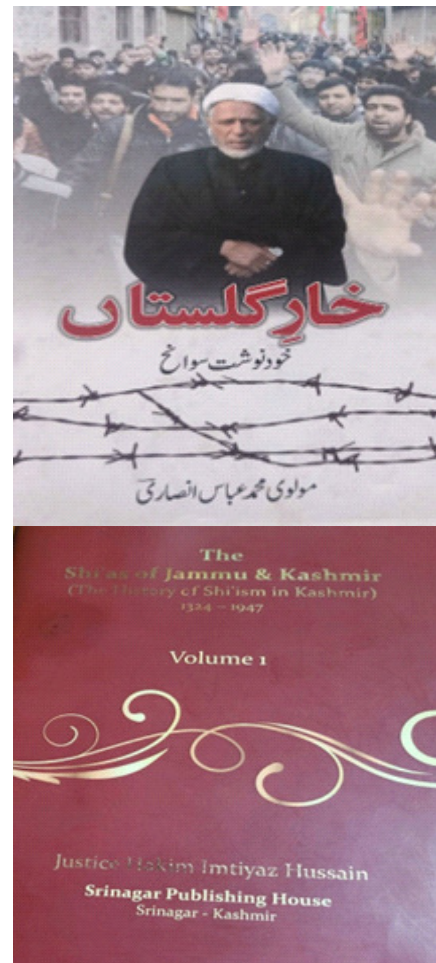
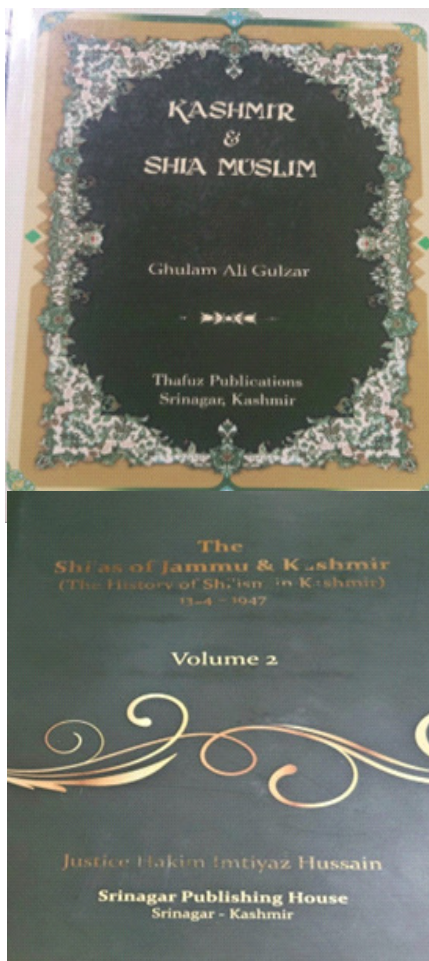
STUBBLE

The Historic Seven Cities of Delhi	<i>Adil Rasheed</i>	89
------------------------------------	---------------------	----

REVIEW ESSAY

Lives on the Margins: The Contours of Shia Political Disposition in Kashmir

Syed Eesar Mehdi*



Syed Eesar Mehdi is Associate Research Fellow at the International Centre for Peace Studies (ICPS), New Delhi.

Ghulam Ali Gulzar, *Kashmir and Shia Muslim*, Srinagar: Thafuz Publications, 2020.

Molvi Mohammad Abbas Ansari, *Khar-e-Gulistan*, Srinagar: Safeena Publications Karan Nagar, 2018.

Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain, *The Shia's of Jammu and Kashmir from 1324 to 1947*, Vols. 1 and 2, Srinagar: Srinagar Publishing House.

Abstract

This essay explores three recently published books on the Shias of Kashmir analyzing the broader contours of their political disposition. The essay reiterates that the Shias have played an important role in the politics of resistance in Kashmir by acting mostly as conscientious resisters. By investigating the division of Shias into the two subsects: Firqa-e-Qadeem (The older sect) and Firqa-e-Jadid (the new sect), the essay demonstrates how this division has been the bane for the community which paved the way for their utter marginalization in Kashmir.

Keywords: Kashmir, Shias, Firqa-e-Qadeem, Firqa-e-Jadid



Introduction

The Shias constitute a significant part of the socio-political life of Kashmir¹. Their role in Kashmiri politics in general and the post-1987 movement for autonomy and the so called 'azadi' has been less acknowledged and has even been typecasted as 'passive resistance'. However, historically, the Shias have acted as conscientious resisters offering sacrifices in the resistance movement from time to time (Ansari 2018, 41-42). It needs to be pointed out here that during the

1940s, the Shias were strongly inclined towards Pakistan; they had even held a historic session of the Muslim Conference at Ali Park, Zadibal in July 1947 to this effect. In this session, a resolution for the accession of the state of Kashmir to Pakistan was passed. This was followed by 'Pakistan Day' celebration with the Muslim Conference on 14 August 1947 (Hussain and Mehdi 2021; *Greater Kashmir* 2015). They remained pro-Pakistan until the late 1970s. However, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution in 1979, Saudi Arabia emerged as a strong opponent

of Iran. The ensuing rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia affected Pakistan which resulted in the upsurge of violence against the Shias in Pakistan. Increase in violence against the Shias had a strong bearing on the Shia community in Kashmir. The Shias drifted away from their pro-Pakistani stance and leaned towards the idea of an independent Kashmir (Pandya 2019).

There approach to politics underwent yet another change in the aftermath of the rise of anti-Shia organizations like *Ahl-i-Hadith* and pan-Islamist outfits that held rabid anti-Shia views in the valley (Habibullah 2011, 2–10). Both *Ahl-i-Hadith* and Wahhabi groups focused on ‘purifying’ religious practices to create a true Muslim community rejecting Shia theology and popular practices (Nasr 2006, 52). The extremist militant groups who were responsible for violent attacks on the Shias in Pakistan came in close contact with the extremist militant outfits in Afghanistan during the 1980s (Sikand 2001, 218-227). When the war in Afghanistan ended, these militant groups were diverted to India to wage the so-called ‘jihad’ in Kashmir. The rising power of anti-Shia groups and their domination in the resistance movement marginalized the Shias of the valley. Moreover, the emergence of militant

groups like *Lashkar-e Tayyaba* (Army of the Pure) in the 1990s (Fair 2019, 10) and the rise of pan-Islamist groups further aggravated the problems of the Shias in Kashmir. This marginalized the Shias in Kashmir, who changed their posture from pro-Pakistani to pro-*azadi*, and it also explains as to why the Shias have been living in enclaves, particularly in Srinagar, which are now increasingly taking the shape of ghettos.

All the three books under review, in their own ways, provide a detailed and thorough analysis of the Shia political thinking in Kashmir. Justice Hakim Imtiyaz Hussain’s book *The Shia’s of Jammu and Kashmir from 1324 to 1947* offers a comprehensive understanding on the role the Shias have played in the ongoing resistance in Kashmir. Hussain delves deep into the history of Kashmir demystifying the false narratives that have been advanced to malign the Shia community in Kashmir. In the two volumes, Hussain sketches out the key reasons that are responsible for the marginalization of the Shia community in Kashmir. According to him, the division of the Kashmiri Shias into the two subsects of *Firqa-e-Qadeem* (The older sect) and *Firqa-e-Jadid* (the new sect) has been the bane for the whole community and the main reason for their

marginalization. Molvi Mohammad Abbas Ansari's book *Khar-e-Gulistan* is an autobiographical account of the Kashmir dispute offering fresh insights into the role of the Shias in different phases of history in Kashmir politics. He provides an exhaustive study of the role played by the Shias against the widely perceived autocratic Dogra rule and in the making of the Plebiscite Front—a political outfit formed in 1955 in Kashmir that called for a popular plebiscite to decide if the state should remain part of India, join Pakistan or become independent. This book offers a first-hand account of the role played by the Shias in All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), particularly since Abbas Ansari occupied an important position in the APHC as its fourth chairperson in July 2003. On the contrary, Ghulam Ali Gulzar's book *Kashmir and Shia Muslim*, offers a comprehensive understanding of the different Shia organizations in Kashmir and their role in the social, political and economic upliftment of the Shias in Kashmir. He also provides a glimpse into the Shia militant outfit *Hizbul Momineen* and expresses the reasons for the closing down of this militant organization (pp. 71-72).

The present essay is divided into four sections. The first section looks

at the historical roots of the Shia identity in Kashmir focusing primarily on Mir Shamsuddin Araki's role in spreading the Shia faith far and wide in Kashmir and the origins of various anti-Shia incidents that induced a sense of vulnerability among the Shias in Kashmir. The second section focuses on the role played by the Shias in the freedom struggle of Kashmir by providing a detailed analysis of the Shia understanding of *azadi* (freedom) and how this position of the Shias has changed with the changing political discourses in Kashmir. The third section gives a thorough investigation of the internal feuds that exist within the Shia community and weakened their political and social life in Kashmir. The fourth section concludes the essay and summarises the main contributions made by the books under review to the vast corpus of literature on the Shia community of Kashmir.

The Historical Baggage

Shia'ism was introduced in the valley of Kashmir by Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki (1440–1515 AD) in the 15th century (Safadar 2014, 70-75; Hussain 2017, 155) during the reign of Sultan Fateh Shah who was one of the kings belonging to the Shah Mir Dynasty. Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki was a learned scholar, a devoted

missionary, and a dedicated Sufi mystic from Arak, Iran (Hassnain 2013, 61-62; 2011, 169). He visited Kashmir twice, first in 1472 AD in the regnal years of Hassan Shah (1472-1484) as an ambassador from the court of Sultan Husain Mirza (reigned 1469-1506) who was then the governor of Khorasan (Zaheen 2015, 74-80) and then after twelve years under the reign of Sultan Fateh Shah. On his second visit, he was accompanied by a good number of disciples. He is credited with having converted many Hindus to Islam, among whom the most notable were Malik Musa Raina and Kaji Chak (Safadar 2014, 71). The conversion of these two is supposed to have played a vital role in spreading Shia faith in Kashmir because of their deep connections to the people in power (Hussain 2017, 458; Mehdi 2020).

Meanwhile, during the early years of Mohammad Shah's reign in the 1480s, the power tussle between the Baihaqi Sayyid clan who considered themselves superior to other sections of the society and the indigenous chieftain groups which consisted of mainly Magrays, Rainas, Chaks, and Dars became intense (Zaheen 2015, 74-80). Though both these groups enjoyed a good degree of influence in the Kashmiri society, Baihaqi Sayyids enjoyed religious superiority and were also more affluent in the

politics of the state. Thus, during Mohammad Shah's reign in the late 1480s, the state of Kashmir was virtually governed by Sayyid Hasan Baihaqi but the local chieftains too had managed to occupy higher administrative positions (Hassnain 2013, 68-69). In such circumstances, chieftains like Baba Ali Nagar, Malik Moosa Raina and the Chak clan became staunch followers of Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki and this provoked the animosity of members of the Sayyid clan, who were followers of Sunni Islam. Eventually, Araki was exiled from Kashmir and he went to Baltistan along with his family. He converted the majority of the people of Baltistan from Buddhist faith to Shia faith in just two months (Hussain 2017, 458-459) and this Shia identity continues to live there even today.

The circumstances changed drastically in Kashmir in the early 1500s when Fateh Shah took control of the state as its king with Musa Raina as his vazir. Since both were disciples of Mir Shams-ud-Din Araki, they invited him to come back to Kashmir (Zaheen 2015, 74-80). On his return to Kashmir in late 1503, Mir started propagating Islam (Shia faith) and owing to his strenuous efforts, most of the non-Muslims were converted to Islam (Banzai 1994, 363-364; Mehdi 2020). He raised

mosques and Khanqahas in Kashmir and because of the speedy conversions, he made many enemies which resulted in his martyrdom in 1525 at his Khanqah in Zadibal (Hussain 2017, 463-464).

Following his assassination, the Chaks came to power in 1554 who were Shias by faith and ruled Kashmir for the next 23 years (Safadar 2014, 83). Under their tutelage, the Shias spread their social, political and economic capital all over Kashmir and rose to glory in many walks of life. But this glory was short-lived because the Mughal Governor Mirza Haider Dughlat of Kashgar invaded Kashmir and let loose a reign of terror on the Shias (Haider 2012). He was a Sunni fanatic who started Shia-Sunni discord and stoked sectarianism in Kashmir. He did everything in his command to eliminate the Shias in the Valley of Kashmir (Hussain 2017, 176-177). The arrival of the Mughals in Kashmir is described by the Shias as *Zulm-e-Behad* (endless oppression). However, during the 18th century, when the Mughal Empire started to decline, a few noble Sunni Kashmiri Muslims requested Ahmed Shah Abdali, the ruler of Afghanistan, to liberate the Kashmir Valley from the repressive Mughal rule. Afghans, like Mughals, accepted the invite and invaded Kashmir in 1752. To

showcase his power, Ahmed Shah Abdali not only double-taxed the bankrupt subjects but persecuted the Shia minority with a fanatical zeal as he, like the Mughals, saw in them a lasting threat for their stubborn beliefs (Hussain 2017, 188-189). Fifty years of Afghan rule in Kashmir was synonymous with untold sufferings of the Kashmiris in general and suppression of the Shias in particular.

It is recorded that ten anti-Shia violent incidents, also known as '*Taraj-e-Shia*' took place in 1548, 1585, 1635, 1686, 1719, 1741, 1762, 1801, 1830 and 1872 during which the Shia places were ruthlessly ransacked, people mercilessly murdered, libraries burnt, and their holy places desecrated (Hassnain 2013, 105-107; 2015, 86-88). All these anti-Shia incidents began with Mirza Haider Dughlat in 1548 under the watch of the Mughals who looted and plundered the sacred places of the Shias in Kashmir and created a deep wedge between the Shias and the Sunnis, which continues even today (Haider 2012). Mirza Dughlat considered the Shias as heretics, who according to him

“.....were strongly attached to apostasy. I brought back, whether they would [like] or not, to the true faith, and many [of them] I slew.....Many of them took refuge

in Sufism but they are not true Sufis, having nothing but the name" (Hollister 1953, 148).

Mirza Dughlat's hatred towards the Shias was so immense that during his rule the Shia community practised *Taqya* (dissimulation) to save their lives and the honour of their womenfolk (Rizvi 1986, 172-173). Such was the sway of terror unleashed by him against the Shia community that village after village inhabited by the Shias disappeared. Many of them either migrated to the hilly areas for safety or adopted the majority Sunni faith. Mirza Dughlat's rein in Kashmir raised sectarian tensions between the communities, which continues to trouble the minority Shias till date (Haider 2012).

The Shia's Quest for 'Azadi'

Azadi in Kashmir was never conceived as one monolithic and unidimensional vision; rather, it had multiple meanings associated with it. The differences within and between the communities and classes add to the complexities of the discourse on *azadi* (Hussain 2018) in Kashmir. The Shia community played a vital role in the struggle for their rights in Kashmir, especially since their brave defiance of the Mughal designs during the reign of the Chaks and

post-Chak Kashmir. This tumultuous period of Kashmir's political history is a starting point in the oral histories of the Kashmiri Shias and their idea of Kashmir as an independent political entity. However, the active political and intellectual resistance of the Shias against the tyranny of their rulers started in the early 1920s. In fact, a committee of eight dignitaries convened by Khwaja Saad-ud-din Shawl having three prominent Shia members including Aga Syed Hussain Jalali, Haji Jafar Khan and Sayyid Hussain Rizvi, arranged to submit a memorandum of grievances against the policy the then Dogra ruler to the visiting British viceroy Lord Reading, who visited the valley in October 1924. Because of this representation, the proprietary land of Aga Syed Hussain Jalali was confiscated and he was dismissed from the office of Zaildar (Hussain 2017, 166-167).

This was followed by setting up a secret committee under Khwaja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai that had the core objective of exposing the biased recruitment policy of the Dogra regime that included Hakim Ghulam Safdar, the sole Muslim employee in the Accountant General's department. He was responsible for taking out the confidential employee list from his department for secret publication in the Muslim print

media of Punjab. The Reading Room Party, a secret confabulation among educated Muslim youths who were denied government jobs that included Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, Hakim Ali and his younger brother Hakim Murtaza who had passed M.Sc. from Aligarh (along with Sheikh Abdullah) made an outstanding contribution in preparing the ground for a massive political campaign and became a precursor to the movement against Dogra rule launched on 21 June 1931. Noted historian Munshi Ghulam Hasan, refers to this public meeting that was held at Khanqah-i-Maula, Srinagar, as “a historical and magnificent meeting after a long period of slavery in which Shia, Hanafi, Ahmadi and Ahle Hadith met for the first time after Chak rule under one banner,” (*Greater Kashmir*, March 14, 2015; Zahir-ud-Din 2018). The movement, launched with the inclusion of all the sects and non-Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir in 1931 against Dogra rule, was brutally suppressed by the state forces. This resulted in the killings of 21 Kashmiris which led to the agitation against the regime. Finally, on 12 November 1931, the Dogra Regime appointed a commission known as the Glancy Commission to look into the grievances of different sections of Muslims in Kashmir. The government asked all the sections of

the Muslim community to represent before the commission. Hakim Mulla Mohammad Ali was nominated to represent the Shias of Kashmir (Hussain 2017, 174). He was an officer in the Sericulture department, represented *Anjuman-i-Imamiya*, a Shia organization and endorsed completely the pleadings of Muslim Conference represented by Khawja Ghulam Ahmad Ashai and Chowdari Ghulam Abbas (Hussain 2017, 174). Not only on the public platform but Shias served this struggle against oppression through their writings as well and a weekly newspaper *Zulfikar* was launched by the Shia community, which was published by Munshi Muhammad Ishaq in 1935, who advocated the policies of the Muslim Conference for which its editor Hakim Ghulam Hussain Makhmoor faced prosecution (Hussain 2017, 175).

An overwhelming majority of the Shia community was a strong votary of the Pakistan movement (Hussain and Mehdi 2020). The community, along with the Muslim conference boycotted the Constituent Assembly elections in 1951 and this explains the underrepresentation of the Shias in mainstream politics during this period. As a consequence, the community was victimized after the accession of the state to India. Zadibal, a Shia locality in Srinagar

was placed under indefinite curfew and Budgam, which is a centrally located Shia majority district, was targeted by the army because tribals who had infiltrated into Kashmir were allegedly being sheltered there. The revered Aga family was compelled to migrate to Mirgund village. Sheikh Abdullah had been fed with an intelligence report that Aga Syed Yousuf Sahib had led *Namaz-i-Jamaat* (congregational prayer) of the tribals and hosted a dinner for them. The government intended to detain him for interrogation but with Munshi Muhammad Ishaq's intervention, the matter was dropped. In keeping with their political aspirations, the community totally boycotted the elections to Constituent Assembly like Muslim Conference (Hussain 2017, 175-176).

Besides this, other prominent Shias included Munshi Muhammad Ishaq who was a founding member of the 'Plebiscite Front' and four times its acting President (Ishaq 2014). In fact, he was the sole founding member who stood by its basic objective till the last and in March 1968 when on the proposal of its founder President Mirza Afzal Beg it was decided to participate in Panchayat elections in contravention of the basic objectives of the Front. Munshi Ishaq spoke against it and walked out of the

meeting in protest foreseeing the wavering mindset of the top leaders of the Front, which finally came to light in 1975. Molvi Abbas Ansari, an important Shia leader, was one of the main founders of the Muslim United Front (MUF) which was an amalgamation of various Islamic Kashmiri political parties that contested the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly election of 1987 (Bose 2003, 48). Such was his influence over the group that it was occasionally referred to as Abbas Ansari Group (Jagmohan 2006, 116). This group was the precursor to the Hurriyat in 1993 in the sense that the latter took a lot of inspiration from MUF (Bose 2003, 52). In reality, Molvi Abbas Ansari played a key role in the formation of Hurriyat by taking different groups with divergent views into confidence.

The Shias actively participated in the high tide of militancy in the 1990s. Hizbul Momineen was an exclusively Shia militant outfit that had a strong recruitment base and a sizeable number of active cadres (Hussain and Mehdi 2021). It was set up in 1991 under the leadership of Shuja Abbas, a 30-year-old graduate from Srinagar and confined its base to Srinagar, Baramulla and Budgam districts. Since this group functioned democratically through consultation, its leader was accountable to a six-

member *Shura-e-Khadmee* (consultative council) in all matters of major decision-making (Noorani 2000). Hizb ul-Momineen played a pivotal role in preventing the armed insurgency in Kashmir from drifting into a gory Shia-Sunni sectarian conflict à la Pakistan (Gulzar 2020, 71-72). It is estimated that around 400 militants of Shia outfits died in different combat operations with the military forces (Ahmad 2016). When Hizbul Momineen was closed down in 1995, some of the militants among them joined other, Sunni-dominated, rebel groups (Gulzar 2020).

After the abrogation of article 370 and 35A in the first week of August 2019, the Kashmiri Shia youth raised their voices and negotiated their own space within Kashmiri politics (Maqbool 2020). A strong majority of the Shia people in the valley believe that this move could drastically alter the demographic composition of Jammu and Kashmir (Mehdi 2020). The fear of demographic change looming large in the minds of the Shia population triggered a fresh wave of anti-Indian protests in Kashmir on 29 August 2019, the 10th day of the holy month of Muharram. On this day, Shia youth raised anti-Indian slogans and placards of famous slain rebel militants of Kashmir (Maqbool 2020).

At present, the Kashmiri Shias are in a position of perpetual doubt. The rising numbers of fundamentalist groups with anti-Shia posture in Kashmir troubles them and, on the other hand, the inertia of standing united as Kashmiris against the alleged brutality of Indian state puts them up against the Indian state. Both these factors have led the Shias to perceptual doubt about the strategy they should adopt to safeguard their interests.

Schism within the Shia Community in Kashmir

The internal schism within the Shia community has hampered its political, social and economic fortunes resulting in their exclusion in Kashmir. The community has been under the profound influence of the two families: Safavi dynasty of Budgam and the Ansari family of Srinagar (Ansari 2018). Such was the devotion towards the two families that Shia community of Kashmir had a vertical split with the community divided between the two new groups which came to be known as *Firqa* or sub-sects. Those following the Ansari family came to be known as *Firqa-e-Qadeem* (The older sect) while those following the Safavi family of Budgam are known as *Firqa-e-Jadid* (the new sect). The dominance of the

two families has affected the Shia community in Kashmir adversely, as successive governments have cultivated the top figures of the two families in order to control the whole community (Haider 2012). This has not only perpetuated the influence of the two families but has also made it near impossible for a common Shia to make the mark on the political stage. The division of Shias of Kashmir into the two major subsets has weakened their stand in politics because the two subsets usually stand diametrically opposite to each other, be it on the issue of separatism or mainstream politics. Additionally, the fear of further splits within subsets has aggravated the problems of the Shias in Kashmir.

Moreover, the older sect was split into the Abbasis and the Iftikharis, with both sides taking up positions opposite to each other in Kashmiri politics. The Iftikharis joined mainstream politics, most notably, Iftikhar Hussain Ansari, who joined National Conference. It is widely believed that Bakhshi Ghulam Muhammad played an important role in Iftikhar's succession (Hussain 2017). Abbasis, on the other hand, leaned towards separatist politics. Molvi Abbas Ansari, a key figure in the Abbasis camp, was the convenor and one of the founders of the MUF which was created to contest the 1987

elections. As has been said earlier, he played an important role in the coming together of various Kashmiri separatist political outfits under one banner, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), in 1993. He went on to become the fourth chairperson of APHC in July 2003, making him the first Shia to hold this position (Hussain and Mehdi 2021). Both groups (Abbasis and Iftikharis) have ever since remained on the opposing sides in Kashmir politics with Abbasis advocating the Right of Self Determination for Kashmiris and Iftikharis toeing a nationalist line (Haider 2012).

The new sect (*Jadidis*) are the descendants of Mir Shamsuddin Araki, who was instrumental in spreading the Shia faith in most parts of Kashmir, notably in Baltistan (Gulzar 2020). The patriarch of the new sect, Agha Syed Yusuf al-Mosavi al Safvi, popularly known as Agha Sahab of Budgam, was known for his speedy delivery of justice (Haider 2012). Following the death of Agha Syed Yusuf, a bitter feud erupted in the Safvi dynasty with his son Agha Fazlulah staking claim on the mantle. The claim was rejected by Yusuf's deputy, cousin and son-in-law, Agha Syed Mustafa, with a majority of followers declaring him as the legitimate leader of the Jadidis. The Congress and the NC both

played a key role in the split with the former backing the Mustafa faction and the National Conference supporting Fazlullah (Hussain 2017). Further divisions soon surfaced in the group after Agha Mustafa's two sons joined opposite political camps, with elder son Agha Syed Hassan becoming part of separatist conglomerate Hurriyat Conference, and the younger son, Agha Syed Mehdi, jumping in the poll bandwagon on the ticket of Congress party in 1996.

Syed Mehdi went on to contest several Assembly and Lok Sabha elections both as a Congress nominee and as an Independent candidate but lost every time. He was killed by militants in a landmine blast in November 2000 near Magam town. The then chief minister, Farooq Abdullah, upon his visit to the family to pay condolences, offered the NC membership to Mehdi's teenage son, Agha Syed Ruhullah, who became a minister in Omar Abdullah cabinet in 2009 (Haider 2012). Fazlullah, who stayed away from electoral politics, left the job to his younger brother, Agha Syed Mehmood who was minister twice in the National Conference government and later joined the PDP. He quit PDP after being denied election ticket, and is now back in the NC fold. The splitting of the Shia community into these

factions has resulted in the weakening of the influence of the Shias in Kashmir politics, paving the way for their marginalization.

Conclusion

The books under review demystify the broader contours of Shia political discourse in Kashmir and showcase the role played by the Shias in various progressive political movements in Kashmir. The literature written so far on the Shias of Kashmir gives a comprehensive historical understanding of the community without delving deeper into the different factors that are responsible for the current political disposition of Shias in Kashmir. The books under review thoroughly investigate this issue.

Overall, Abbas Ansari's book *Khar-e-Gulistan* shows the role played by the Shias against the autocratic Dogra rule during the 1930s and 1940s. Ansari also reflects on the contributions made by the Shias in the Kashmir movement in this book. Gulzar's monograph *Kashmir and Shia Muslim* offers a thorough investigation into the Shia organizations in Kashmir showcasing their role in the upliftment of the community. In the same vein, Hussain's book *The Shia's of Jammu and Kashmir from 1324 to 1947* elucidates the

history of the Shias in Kashmir and explains the phases of violence that the Shias have faced in Kashmir in the last almost six centuries. All in all, the three books under review underline the fact that the Shias have played an important role in the politics of Kashmir and have perpetually seen the grim side of life under different rulers in Kashmir. ■

Bibliography

Bose, Sumantra. 2009. *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*. London: Harvard University Press.

Fair, C. Christine. 2019. *In Their Own Words: Understanding Lashkar-e-Tayyaba*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

Greater Kashmir. 2015. "Shias and Kashmir's Quest for Freedom." March 14. <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/news/gk-magazine/shias-and-kashmirs-quest-for-freedom/>.

Habibullah, Wajahat. 2011. *My Kashmir: The Dying of the Light*. New Delhi: Penguin Books.

Haider, Sajjid. 2012. "Shias of Kashmir: Socio-Political Dilemmas." *Kashmir Observer*, November 28. <https://kashmirobsvr.net/2012/11/28/shias-of-kashmir-socio-political-dilemmas/>.

Hamdani, Hakim Ghulam Safadar. 2014. *Tarikh-i-Shiyan-i-Kashmir*. Srinagar: Imam Hussain Research & Publishing Centre.

Hasnain, Fida Muhammad Khan. 2013. *Advent of Islam in Kashmir*. Srinagar: Gulshan Books.

Hollister, J. N. 1953. *The Shi'a of India*. London: Luzac and Co.

Hussain, Shahla. 2018. "Kashmiri Visions of Freedom: The Past and the Present." In *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation*, edited by Chitralekha Zutshi. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Hussain, Syed Jaleel, and Syed Eesar Mehdi. 2021. "Insecurity, Identity and Resistance: Contours of Shia Political Discourse in Kashmir." *Economic & Political Weekly* LVI (3): 51-55.

Ishaq, Munshi Mohammad. 2014. *Nida-e-Haq*. Edited by Munshi Ghulam Hassan. Srinagar: Markaz-e-Ishaat.

Jagmohan. 2006. *My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir* (7th Ed.). New Delhi: Allied Publishers.

Maqbool, Raashid. 2020. "Why the Indian state is now scared of the Kashmiri Shia." *Aljazeera*, September 20. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2020/9/20/why-the-indian-state-is-now-scared-of-the-kashmiri-shia>.

Mehdi, Syed Eesar. 2020. "Religious Harmony and Islam in India: A study of Pluralist Islam in Kashmir." *Social Action* 70 (02): 101-110.

Mehdi, Syed Eesar. 2020. "Serving the Militant's Cause: The Role of Indo-Pak State Policies in Sustaining Militancy in Kashmir." *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* 7 (2): 244-255.

Nasr, Vali. 2006. *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future*. New York, London: W. W. Norton & Company.

Noorani, A. G. 2000. "Contours of Militancy." *Frontline*, September 30. <https://frontline.thehindu.com/cover-story/article30255099.ece>.

Pandya, Abhinav. 2019. "Iran and Saudi Arabia's Proxy Wars Have a New Battlefield: Indian Controlled Kashmir." *Haaretz*, July 21. <https://www.haaretz.com/world-news/.premium-india-kashmir-pakistan-iran-saudi-proxy-war-trump-1.7537867>.

Rieck, Andreas T. 2015. *The Shias of Pakistan: An Assertive and Beleaguered Minority*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rizvi, Saiyid Athar Abbas. 1986. *A Socio-Intellectual History of Isna Ashari Shi'is in India*. Vol. 1. Canberra: Mar'ifat Publishing House.

Safdar, Hakim Ghulam. 2014. *Tarikh-i-Shiyan-i-Kashmir*. Srinagar: Imam Hussain Research & Publishing Centre.

Sikand, Yoginder. 2001. "Changing Course of Kashmiri Struggle." *Economic and Political Weekly* 36 (3): 218-227.

Zaheen. 2015. "Shi'ism in Kashmir, 1477-1885." *International Research Journal of Social Sciences* 4 (4): 74-80.

Zahir-ud-Din. 2018. "Book Review: Busting Myths." *Kashmir Ink*, April 9. <http://www.kashmirink.in/news/artliterature/book-review-busting-myths/598.html>.

Footnotes

1. Shia population in the valley in the year 2011 was approximately 7 lakh. This figure is based on the local census conducted by Sayyid Afzal Rizvi, Hagerpore (Hussain 2017, 193). Before this census, *Tanzeem-ul-Makatib*, the Shia religious organization in Kashmir, conducted a census in 1988 concluding that Shias constitute about 12% to 15% of the total population of Kashmir.

Note for readers and subscribers

We are happy to inform you that from January 2009 we have introduced the system of peer review of articles to ensure quality of publications and improve the scholarly value of our journal. We have a renowned group of scholars and academicians associated with our Centre and they are helping us in this process. We are grateful to them for their kind support and cooperation.

We would request our readers and subscribers to take note of these changes and we would, as ever, encourage them to send in research articles for publication to us. The manuscripts of research papers submitted for publication should be neatly typed in double space and the length of the papers should be ideally between 3,000-5000 words including the footnotes. They should contain an abstract and a short introduction of the author. The authors should use Harvard style for their references. The articles can be sent to us in an electronic format, (Ms Word 2003 format) also. For detailed guidelines they may send their queries to us in the following address.

**Journal of Peace Studies
Research Section
C-11 Jangpura Extension
New Delhi -110 014
India
Email: cpsndjps@gmail.com**