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Comparative Conflict Analysis of Kashmir and Bosnia-Herzegovina

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Abstract:

This paper intends to study the conflict in Kashmir and Bosnia- Herzegovina. There has been much study about different conflicts throughout the world, but there is dearth of literature in the area of ‘comparative conflict analyses. Studying different conflicts in different parts of the world and to compare them might help us in drawing some important parallels which could have been common to these conflicts. We can also bring out differences (ideological, social, regional, economic), role of actors, ethno-guarantors, Diasporas, and the state itself. The conflicts that have been chosen for study are distinctive in their geographical, historical contexts. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has been the bone of contention between India and Pakistan for more than half a century. It has been the world’s highest militarized zone and is surrounded by three powerful nuclear states. On the other hand Bosnia Herzegovina is a place which is situated in the Balkan Peninsula. It was previously part of Former Yugoslavia, and after its (Yugoslavia) disintegration, It also became a battlefield between Serbs, Bosnian Muslims, and Croats. The Serbs were fighting for united Yugoslavia, while Croats and Bosnians were fighting for separate homelands. The main focus of this paper is to look at the context dimension of both these conflicts and to delve deep into role played by different actors. It will also look into mapping actors which have been marginalized in the mainstream discourse.

Keywords: Conflict Analysis, Peace, Kashmir, Bosnia, Actor Analysis.

Kashmir conflict

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, which has been the bone of contention between India and Pakistan, is situated in the north of Indian Subcontinent (South Asia). It is comprised of (1) Ladakh, Jammu and the Kashmir Valley (Indian-Controlled Kashmir); (2) Azad Kashmir (Pakistan administered Kashmir); (3) the Northern Area, administered by Pakistan; and (4) Aksai Chin, controlled by China. (Hussain 1007)

For most people in Kashmir the problem is “rooted in certain identifiable, historical, objective causes, in its internal dimensions and also in relation to India and Pakistan” (Baba 67). Victoria Schofield, using data from different government and non-governmental sources suggests the population in following ratio. She states, “In Jammu approximately two-thirds of the population is Hindu, one-third Muslims, who live primarily in the Doda and Rajauri areas

bordering Pakistani-administered AJK. Ladakh is sparsely populated. Over half its population is Buddhist, less than half are Shia Muslim with a small percentage of Hindus.⁵ Schofield xiii. In the north-east, China lays claim to a section of uninhabited land, the Aksai Chin, through which it constructed a road linking Tibet to Sinkiang (Xinjiang)” (Schofield xii).

The Kashmir dispute has its origins in the partition itself. Stephan Cohen, one of the well-known indologist and a celebrated expert on South Asian Politics suggests that the origins of the India-Pakistan conflict could be traced to different sources; “particularly the struggle for control over Kashmir; Kashmir’s importance to the national identities of both states, and the greed or personal shortsightedness of leaders on both sides of the border—in particular, Nehru’s romance with Kashmir and his Brahminical arrogance (the Pakistani interpretation), or Mohammed Ali Jinnah’s vanity, shortsightedness, and religious zeal (the Indian interpretation)”. (Cohen 2). Alastair Lamb argues, “Had British annexation taken place in the 1880s, of course, as several British statesmen had rather favored at the time, there would never have been a Kashmir dispute: the whole State (with the possible exception of parts of Jammu and Ladakh) would have gone to Pakistan under the terms of Partition in 1947” (Lamb 14).

The turbulent phase through which the subcontinent went through in those days, The State of Jammu and Kashmir couldn’t keep itself aloof. The partition was planned on communal lines; Pakistan was established as an Islamic republic, While India declared itself secular. There were more than 500 hundred princely states and they were given the choice to join either of the two unions. The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir was initially “reluctant to join either of the unions” (Ganguly, 1995, p. 170). The ruler of Kashmir; “despite Mountbatten’s explicit injunction harbored visions of independence” Accordingly, as Summit Ganguly argues, “despite entreaties from both Indian and Pakistani representatives, he kept temporizing on the issue of accession. During the first week of October 1947, a tribal rebellion broke out in the region of Poonch. The Maharaja found himself in awkward situation. First he got support from Sheikh Abdullah, and then he requested help from Indian union. It was sheikh Abdullah, who insisted Maharaja on signing the instrument of accession with India”. (Ganguly 170). In the Hindu-Muslim paradigm usually applied to the Kashmir dispute, “India’s secular credentials were at stake on one side and Pakistan’s founding two-nation principle on the other” (Schofield 1).

Alastair Lamb suggests that on certain grounds;

The State of Jammu and Kashmir was a region with an overwhelming Muslim majority contiguous to the Muslim majority region of the Punjab which became part of Pakistan. Second: the economy of the State Jammu and Kashmir was bound up with what was to become Pakistan. Its best communication with the outside world lay through Pakistan, and this was the route taken by the bulk of its exports. Third: the waters of the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, all of which flowed through Jammu and Kashmir territory, were essential for the prosperity of the agricultural life of Pakistan. From a strictly rational point of view, based on a study of the culture and the economy of the region, there can be



little doubt that a scheme for the partition of the Indian subcontinent such as was devised in 1947 should have awarded the greater part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan (Lamb 2)

After accession, it was India which took Kashmir issue to the United Nations. Nehru promised that the future of Kashmir will be decided by the Kashmiris under the auspices of International organization. In case of Kashmir, “Nehru was skeptical about having plebiscite unless Sheikh Abdullah, Kashmiris powerful leader was on his side”. (Schofield 32). The anti-maharaja faction that was fighting before independence included Mirwaiz Yousuf Shah, and Shia Leader of Poonch, Ghulam Abbas. They belonged to Muslim conference, of which Sheikh Abdullah was initially part, and they favored to accede with Pakistan. They were forced out of valley, and sheikh Abdullah became the sole power in Kashmir.

Nehru pursued the constitutional route to grant Kashmir special status under Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which otherwise had no provisions applicable to the state except Article 1 (bringing it under the territorial jurisdiction of India). In accordance with the Instrument of Accession, “the Indian Parliament had legislative power only in matters of defense, foreign affairs, and communications, with residual powers vested in the state, a situation unique to Jammu and Kashmir in the Indian union” (Schofield 38). Moreover, “Kashmir was allowed to retain important cultural symbols such as its own flag and political titles such as *wazir-i-azam* instead of chief minister for the elected head of the government, and *sadar-i-riyasat* instead of governor for the head of state” (Schofield 38).

The accession didn't go well. The promises made were never met. There was a sense of betrayal at the hands of Indian leaders. Thereafter, sheikh Abdullah was jailed and puppet Governments were installed in Kashmir. During this period, there was a full-fledged war between India and Pakistan in 1965. There was growing dissent against the Indian establishment, but it never crossed the limit until few Kashmiris started militant campaign in and outside India began to attack Indian interests both inside and outside India.

The JKLF was built on Kashmiri sub-nationalism and had an ethno-cultural basis. However, after the Iranian revolution of 1979 the political process in Kashmir began to witness a new breed of nationalism that fused Islam and Kashmiri nationalism. Gradually “the rise of organisations such as the Students Islamic Federation or *Jamaate-Islami* not only sharpened the religious component within Kashmiri nationalism, but also reinforced the links between Kashmir and Muslim countries such as Afghanistan that were swept by the tide of Islamic fundamentalism” (Harshe). After 1992, some of the prominent Muslim groupings like *Hizbul Mujahideen* began to openly characterize the Kashmiri struggle for self-determination as *jihad*.

Decisive moment in the transformation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir into the disaster area that it is today was the trial by an Indian Court in New Delhi of Maqbool Butt. He had been arrested in 1976 for an offence committed in 1966. On 9 February 1984 the President

of India turned down his final appeal; and on 11 February 1984 he was “duly hanged in Tihar Prison in New Delhi” (Lamb 335).

In the 1987 elections, the Kashmiri Muslim identity was mobilized by a broad coalition of Islamic groups called the Muslim United Front (MUF), comprising mainly the Jamaat-i-Islami, the Ummat-e-Islami led by Qazi Nissar, and Maulvi Abbas Ansari's Anjuman-e-Ittehad-ul-Musalmeen. Youth formed the bulk of its cadre, many of them from rich peasant or orchard-owning classes and prosperous business groups. Victoria Schofield argues that the “rigging of the 1987 elections and abandonment of constitutional processes proved to be the nail in the coffin and persuaded the young heroes that “the bullet will deliver where the ballot had failed.” It was in the police control rooms and Kashmiri jails that the first generation of Kashmiri militants was born. They declared that, ‘We were left with no option but to pick up the gun’”. (Schofield 47). Alastair Lamb states that the strategy that militants followed after that included monopolizing the instruments of violence, “by attacking police stations in Srinagar and killing police officers in barbaric manner. These killings played havoc with the morale of the police force. Its members now became stigmatized as ‘traitors’, were ostracized by society. Attacks on the Central Reserve Police Force and on intelligence officials followed. The militants were clearly targeting the institutions responsible for the state’s internal security”. (Lamb 336).

This was followed by what is known as the biggest misfortune that the history has played with Kashmir and Kashmiris. There was a cycle of violence, which engulfed all ethnicities who had coexisted for centuries. The Kashmiri Pandits, who were the core of Kashmiriyat were forced to flee the valley, and the valley became the showcase of killings. The Indian forced unleashed deadly anti insurgency operations in valley, which has turned valley virtually into a large grave yard, and a large garrison, with more than 800000 soldiers on the either side of the border.

What seems from outside, and what popular discourses suggest, the case is different. As mentioned earlier, Jammu and Kashmir is a multi-ethnic entity, where people of different religions, different languages reside. Within a particular religion, there are sub-religious groups that have different elegances. The question that I am problematizing is, ‘Does entire Jammu and Kashmir want independence? How many groups are represented through the Pro-Indian or pro-independence groups? Are all the regions represented..?’

In order to find the missing links, I am going for an actor analysis, where I will divide the actors on following basis:



Actors involved in Kashmir conflict internationally acknowledged	India and Pakistan	
Actor including Kashmir	India, Pakistan and Kashmir	
Actors region wise in Indian side of kashmir	Jammu, Kahmir Ladakh	
Actors in Pakistan administered kashmir	Pakistan kashmir, Gilgit, Baltistan	
Actors within Kashmir	Pro indian political parties, Pro Independence/Pakistan parties	
ProIndian parties stand on kashmir.	Indian nationalistic	BJP, Panthers Party, Indian National Congrss
	Regional parties	PDP, NC, FDF, CPIM, AIP. Peoples Conference
Pro Independence/Pakistan parties	Hurriyat Confrence	
Hurriyat Factions	Tehrreek I hurriyat, Peoples League, Awami Action Committee, Jammu Kashmir Itehaad ul Muslimeen. Ummati Islami, JKLF	
Armed Groups	Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar I toiba, Jaesh e Mohammad, Harkat ul mujahideen. Al Bader	

With too many ethnicities and diversity of opinion involved in only Kashmiri, let alone the other areas, it is difficult to find out a feasible solution. However if effective mediation is done, the possibility of settlement does not look bleak. In 2010, after outrageous summer, the government of India sent an interlocutor's team to Kashmir, who were to talk to different sections there. They also talked to Hurriyat leaders. The Hurriyat leaders remained hard on their stance. The first condition Hurriyat made was the acceptance of Kashmiris as a party to the dispute. This was not

acceptable to the Indian government. However, the interlocutors came up with a report, which in its first place suggested the removal of AFSPA. The above recommendation has not been acted upon by the GOI, and there are no chances of situation getting better. Infarct the new generation is again venturing into the armed struggle. (Haq)

Bosnia Conflict

Bosnia and Herzegovina are located in the geographic center of the Balkan Peninsula. Bordered by Croatia to the north, west and south, Serbia to the east, and Montenegro to the south, Bosnia and Herzegovina is almost landlocked. This area has been particularly known for its scenic beauties and tourism. It has a rich history. Bosnia fell to the Ottomans in the year 1527. This conquest marked a new era in the country's history and had far-reaching effects on its politics and culture. The Ottomans allowed the “preservation of Bosnia's identity by integrating it as a province of the Ottoman Empire without changing its historical name and territorial integrity” (Pinson 8).

The factor that makes this country unique; both politically and socially, is the absence of a single ethnic majority that could be capable of state building. Instead, “there are three constituent populates, Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Croats and Serbs, share political power. According to the last pre-war census 1991, Bosniaks constituted 43.47%, Serbs 31.21%, Croats 17.38%, Yugoslavs 5.54% and Others 2.38 % of the country’s population” (Kostic 18) As no community had an absolute demographic dominance, the period before WWII was marked by power struggles for the control over Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, during WWII the Croat fascists, “Ustasha, including many Bosnian Muslims in their ranks, committed a number of atrocities against the Serb population in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia in order to make these territories ethnically pure” (Kostic 19). The policies of the Ustashes had several repercussions. It resulted in thousands of Bosnian Serbs joining the various resistance movements. One of the “prominent movements at the time was the Serb Nationalist Movement, the Chetniks which envisaged the inclusion of large parts of Croatia and Bosnia Herzegovina into a future Serbian state” (Kostic 19). Accordingly, “Bosnia was to be ‘purified’ of its Muslim and Croat inhabitants. The implementation of the policy was evident particularly during 1942-43 in eastern Bosnia where, it is said that Chetniks killed or expelled almost half of the Bosnian Muslim population” (Pinson)

Bosnia after the end of World War II became the part of ‘communist Yugoslavia’, and due to its geographic and strategic importance, it became the center for developing military base. It had very good economy and the social structure. The frills and fissions in the society on ethnic lines had developed earlier and after the fall of Communism, and the disintegration of Yugoslavia, the ethnic division came to the forefront. Hence it escalated into what came to be known as Bosnian war.



The elections of November 1990, which were fought on Multi-party basis, the communist party power was replaced by the coalition of three ethnic parties. Croatia and Slovenia declared independence. The question that became the basis of war followed the declaration of independence by these two states. The split within Bosnia developed on the question of, whether to remain with Yugoslavia, or to seek independence. The “independence formula was favored by Bosniaks and the Croats, while as the Serbs favored to stay with Yugoslavian federation” (Hakim Muhammad Ahsan 20).

On 18 November 1991, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) proclaimed the existence of a separate party of Croatian Social, and Political organization. The Bosnian government didn't accept it, and the rift between the two widened further. The conflict in Bosnia was initially a territorial conflict between the Serb Forces organized mainly between the VRS (Serb Army) and the ARBiH (Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina). The Croats aimed at securing parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and creating Croatia.

On 25 September 1991, the UNSC passed a Resolution imposing an arms embargo on all of the former-Yugoslavia territories. The embargo hurt Bosnian army the most because Serbia had inherited the major share of the Yugoslav Army's resources and the Croatian Army was in a position to smuggle weapons through its coast. “Over 55% of the arsenals and garrisons of the former Yugoslavia were located in Bosnia owing to its mountainous terrain, in anticipation of a guerrilla war, but most of these were under Serbian control. Just before the war began, Radovan Karadzic created a renegade army with the support from Belgrade” (Bose). In 1992, Serbs began the policy of ‘ethnic cleansing’. The Bosnian Serbs, on April 06, 1992 laid their siege on Sarajevo. The Bosnians, (who were mainly Muslims and Croats, with few Serbs as well) who opposed the idea of Greater Serbia were cut off from the food, utilities and communication. For three years, Food was scarce. It is estimated that about “12000 residents of Sarajevo were killed. Throughout Bosnia, Ethnic cleansing was started by Bosnian Serbs and JNA. Rape was used as a military tactic to destroy the bonds of families. The international arms embargo prevented the Bosnian government to buy heavy artillery which could be used to fight” (Bose).

Various warring factions were created besides the regular armies. These were paramilitary groups who fought alongside the standing army. From the Serb side, It were; The White Eagles, Arkan Tigers. For Bosnians, it was, Patriotic League, Green Berets. And for Croatians it was Croatian Defense Forces. The Serb and the Croat paramilitaries were supported by Nationalist Parties in those countries.

The war remained as brutal as it could get, until in 1995, under the Dayton Accord, Peace was initiated. The actors since then involved in the Governance of Bosnia and Herzegovina are analyzed under the following table.

Party Name	Ideology
Social Democratic Party of Bosnia	Social Democracy,
Alliance of Independent Social Democrats	Serbian Nationalism and Social Democracy
Party of Democratic Action	Bosniak Nationalism, Islamic Democracy
Serbian Democratic Party	Serbian Nationalism
Union for Better Future of BiH	Bosniak Nationalism
Croatian Democratic union of BiH	Croatian Nationalism
Croatian Party of Rights BiH	Croatian Nationalism, decentralization
Democratic People's Alliance	Serbian Nationalism
Party of Democratic Progress	Conservatism

Conclusion

The two conflicts that have been discussed in this paper have many similarities and dissimilarities. One (Bosnia) has been successfully solved and the other one is yet to see any change, even though there have been phases when parties talked of nurturing the formidable peace. Religion has played its role in both the conflicts. Kashmir has its ethno-guarantor in the form of Pakistan, while as the Bosnian Serbs had their ethno-guarantors as well. The Bosnian Muslims as such had no ethno-guarantor, but OIC did fill that gap, particularly Pakistan played an important role in assisting the Fighters there.

The point of difference lies in the nature of the very two conflicts. Kashmir is a contentious issue between two Nuclear powers, and both have been claiming it; One (Pakistan); in order to justify its Islamic State nature, and other (India); to justify its Secular nature. Bosnia has fairly been a conflict of ethnicities trying to assert their dominance. Kashmir conflict is totally different. There are too many players, who as of now have not been identified.

The international involvement in Bosnian Conflict was intense, but in case of Kashmir it is different. Initially India took the matter to the UN, but after Shimla Agreement, it has been reduced to a Bilateral Issue, without Kashmiris being part of it. The trends that could be applied



to both the conflicts is, the respective role of India and Serbia. India has been terming Kashmir as the crown of the country, while Serbs had more or less same attachment with Bosnia. Is it the case of Indian Nationalism and Serb Nationalism? Talking of homogenization, which had been in vogue in Serb Discourse, and is now a developing trend in India, and in relation with Kashmir they have been using it earlier as well. Is it the case of Nationalism or Fascism?

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