

**ATTEMPT TO DEEPEN TERROR IN NORTH KASHMIR**

VOLUME 2 | EDITION 10 | 6 MARCH 2022 | ₹40

KASHMIRCENTRAL.IN

# KASHMIR CENTRAL

A KZINE INITIATIVE



**HOW JAMAAT E ISLAMI,  
HIZB-UL-MUJAHIDEEN  
GRABBED PANDIT  
PROPERTIES IN KASHMIR**

**KASHMIR CENTRAL**  
Volume 2 Edition 10  
6 March 2022

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**OWNED, PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY**  
Bashir Ahmad Bhat  
Registered with the Registrar of Newspapers of India under RNI No:

**PUBLISHED FROM**  
J-24, Jawahar Nagar,  
Srinagar, 190008

**ADDRESS FOR ALL CORRESPONDENCE**  
J-24, Jawahar Nagar  
Srinagar, 190008  
**Email:**  
[editor@kashmircentral.in](mailto:editor@kashmircentral.in)

**PRINTED AT**  
Access Publications  
HMT, Srinagar  
Mobile 6005737819

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All Advertising enquiries, comments and feedback are welcome at [kashmirkzine@gmail.com](mailto:kashmirkzine@gmail.com)

Periodicity: Weekly  
Language: English  
Price: ₹40

The information contained in this magazine has been reviewed for accuracy and is deemed reliable but is not necessarily complete or guaranteed by the Editor. The views expressed in this digest are solely that of the writers and do not necessarily reflect the views of KASHMIR CENTRAL

# THE CHOICE IS YOURS

The human brain can be constructive or destructive. It can be filled with negativity and the world around can seem like a black hole. Or the world can seem a bright and beautiful place full of promises and possibilities. The choice remains always with the individual.

How encouraging and fascinating it is to see Sadia Tariq winning the Wushu World Championship in Moscow. She aspired for a world title in her teenage and achieved it. She has made us all proud. Congratulations have poured in from the Prime Minister and many others for her sterling performance. Sadia chose the path which has brought smiles on the faces of all around her, and laurels to the nation.

My heart cries for those who fall prey to destructive thought processes in their tender youth. They bring tears in the eyes of all those who are closely or distantly related to them.

Who is a hero? Who is a youth icon? Who is the true source of inspiration? The one on the path of destruction, who destroys his or her future and everything that comes in the way? Or the one who inspires you to aspire for a beautiful world full of joy and positivity?

Certainly an icon cannot be the one whose aim is to make the world look ugly, gloomy and dark. Sadia is the role model, the icon for Kashmir's youth. She has proved that if you think positive and aim high, the universe around you shall take you to the heights you aspire for. Her parents are fortunate and I congratulate them.

I cry for the unfortunate parents whose children choose the path of death and destruction. These tender buds could not see and taste a world filled with joy and happiness. The tragic reality is that in large numbers, parents in Kashmir do not realize the dangers of romanticizing the death of militants. They do not realize that their conversations have a lasting impact on the psyche of their own children. The harsh truth is that many parents not only promote negativity in the presence of their vulnerable teenagers. At times, they provoke them to chose a deadly path. Blessed is our journalist friend Tariq and his wife who did not allow the deadly virus of negativity to enter their home. I wish all parents pledge to show their children the right path for a glorious future, which is in the interest of all around them.



**Sadia Tariq**

**Bashir Assad**

razor sharp analysis

INCISIVE REPORTING

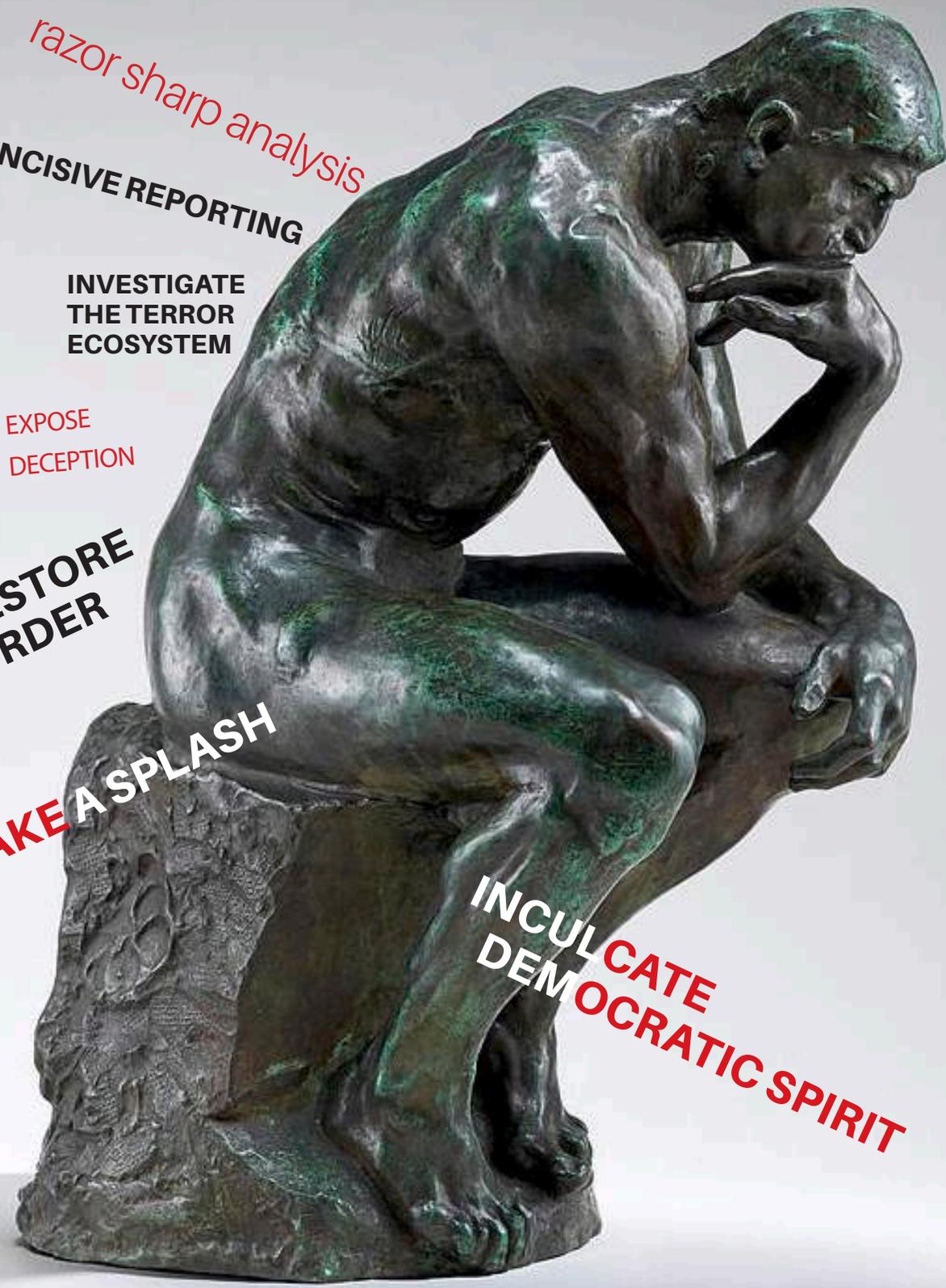
INVESTIGATE THE TERROR ECOSYSTEM

EXPOSE DECEPTION

RESTORE ORDER

MAKE A SPLASH

INCULCATE DEMOCRATIC SPIRIT



**KASHMIR CENTRAL**  
A KZINE INITIATIVE



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EDITION **15** OF  
KASHMIR CENTRAL

**22** EDITIONS OF KZINE

**18** EDITIONS OF MAC LETTER

# WHAT ALL HAVE I BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE?

## A friend's passing comment sets me thinking

by Bashir ASSAD



In November 2020, we took the conscious decision to establish a media outlet in Kashmir to counter and expose the 'single story narratives' being peddled by the media locally, nationally and internationally

Recently a dear friend who holds a senior position in the UT Administration said to me in reference to another dear friend who also holds a position of power: "He did what you could not do". The statement was not harsh or judgmental. It was specific to the context, and I acknowledge the role of the friend for whom it was stated. But the words were such that they continued to resonate in my ears. What all have I done? What all have I achieved – I asked myself.

I looked at the forthcoming edition of KASHMIR CENTRAL, our weekly news magazine. Edition 15.

Plus 22 editions of KZINE, our digital weekly news magazine that came before KASHMIR CENTRAL. Plus 18 editions of MAC LETTER, the news letter that preceded the digital weekly news magazine. What all have I been able to achieve?

### THE JOURNEY THAT BEGAN IN NOVEMBER 2020

Till the last quarter of 2020, media in Kashmir was a one-way traffic. The single story narrative dominated, whether in local, national or international media. There was none to challenge this lies and half-truths.

In November 2020, we took the conscious deci-

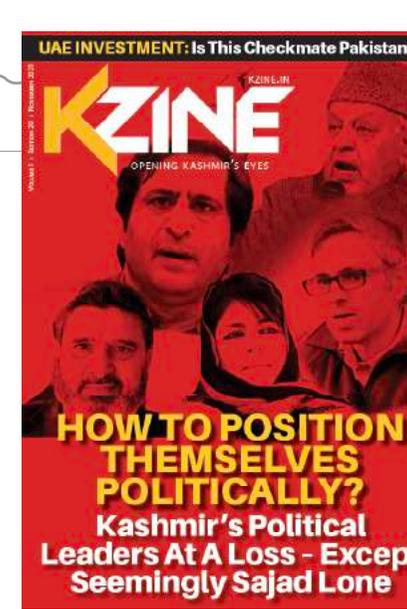
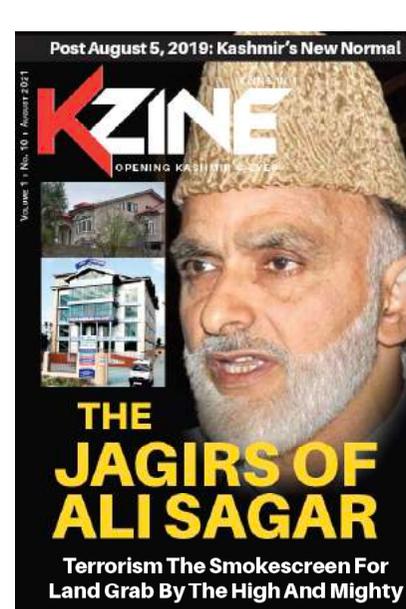
sion to establish a media outlet in Kashmir to counter and expose the 'single story narratives' being peddled by the media locally, nationally and internationally.

The local journo had normalized the peddling of these single story narratives and lies had been normalized in Kashmir. Exceptions to this rule have been some journalists in Kashmir whose integrity and nationalism can never be questioned. Some of them felt that they did not want to risk their life and limb to bell the cat. Facing the real threat of militant attack, they worked within self-imposed restrictions.

Many others remained content with the single story narrative. These lies and half truths were peddled by the local journo for two reasons. One, for security and societal compulsions. Second, for material and monetary benefits. These were the journo who aligned with external forces inimical to peace and stability in the region.

No one – and I repeat no one – had the courage to stand against its one's own people and colleagues. No one had the courage to show them the mirror and counter their oft-repeated, concocted half truth stories of victimhood. These journo had built public opinion nationally and internationally on the basis of these distortions.

I set out with a few trusted team members to take on the organized structure of subterfuge. My team



**Our publications have always been hardcore journalism. Starting from November 2020, people started waiting for MAC Letter, then KZINE, then Kashmir Central on a weekly basis. It created a furore all over Kashmir**

included Miss Bisma Nazir who was practicing law at the Srinagar courts, Ghulam Mohd Mir of Kupwara and Waseem Gul, also a bright young lawyer and some other like-minded team members. We decided to do our bit to set right the media discourse in Kashmir.

**WE WERE TOLD TO OPERATE UNDER PSEUDO NAMES**

When I shared the idea of establishing the media outlet with some senior friends in the UT administration, they advised me that I and my team must operate under pseudo names to hide our identity for security reasons.

I discussed this with my colleagues. I told them that operating under pseudo names would discredit the whole project. Our work is about honesty and about conviction. Using pseudo names seemed to be mocking our conviction.

One needs to be courageous to tell the truth and stand by it. My friends tell me I am known for my straightforward revelation of what I hold as the truth.

Going ahead with this conviction, I and my team decided that we would fearlessly reveal what had been concealed by the journalist fraternity for decades owing to the fear of the militants or for monetary benefits. We were aware that this shall be challenging.

Unfazed by them, we set out on our endeavour and

carved out space for value-based journalism in Kashmir. Our publications have always been hardcore journalism. People started waiting for MAC Letter, then KZINE, then Kashmir Central on a weekly basis. It created a furore all over Kashmir.

Every story in our publications has carried the byline of one team member or another, who worked hard to bring to light all that the terror ecosystem or the corrupt political players wanted to conceal. Looking at the almost explosive content of some of our publications, my friends advised me not to tread on the path I had chosen. They had real concerns.

**MY TEAM AND I HAVE UNDERTAKEN THIS TASK LIVING WITHIN KASHMIR**

The terror ecosystem in Kashmir is so vast and so entrenched that it reaches your doorstep to stop you. Let us acknowledge that that my team and I have undertaken this task living within Kashmir. Let us acknowledge the enormity of what this means for every member of my team.

The Kashmir society is deeply knitted. You start digging out the truth somewhere, and you find imprints next to your door step. You know that you are not directly part of the terror eoc

If you are not directly part of it, you indirectly are. Someone somewhere in your family net-

**The terror ecosystem in Kashmir is so vast and so entrenched that it reaches your doorstep to stop you. Let us acknowledge that that my team and I have undertaken this task living within Kashmir. Let us acknowledge the enormity of what this means for every member of my team**

work is part of that ecosystem. This is extremely difficult to deal with. Facing even this challenge, we moved ahead on our chosen path.

**SETTING THE BENCHMARK FOR BRUTALLY HONEST JOURNALISM**

While holding my head high, I also take the credit for setting a benchmark in Jammu and Kashmir for brutally honest journalism. Some months ago, a senior bureaucrat in the UT Administration told me this upfront. He said the kind of stories we do, the kind of content we publish always opens a window for blackmail and extortion. I am aware of this. Several media houses in the region have used such

**Operating under pseudo names would discredit the project. Our work is about honesty and about conviction. Using pseudo names seemed to be mocking our conviction**

content for their extortionist ways.

The individuals whom we targeted have tried, and still try to approach us. They have offered hefty amounts to bury the truth. Many people, after being named, offered huge amounts to shelve any further investigation. I am proud to state on record that nobody can provide a single instance on where I compromised on integrity and journalistic ethics.

Those people who do not want their misdeeds to be revealed try to build proximity so that you do not write about them in any subsequent edition. They were disappointed to find that they could not influence any of our publication – MAC Letter, KZINE or KASHMIR CENTRAL.

It may be noted that extortion journalism has flourished in Jammu and Kashmir, as elsewhere in the country. Burying news stories based on extraneous considerations has not been our practice. We shall never do so. We take credit for raising the standard of journalism in our region.

**THE COUNTER NARRATIVE MUST BE DRIVEN BY LOCALS**

In conversations, while speaking at conferences and seminars and in my books, I have constantly held that the counter narrative on terrorism and Kashmir's terror ecosystem must be driven by the locals. The political class, the civil society groups

and NGOs together have not been able to build the counter narrative in Kashmir. They limited their scope of work to symbolism and tokenism.

With MAC Letter, with KZINE and now with KASHMIR CENTRAL, we have taken it upon ourselves to expose the terror ecosystem in all its manifestations. We introduced the culture of naming and shaming the constituents of the terror ecosystem.

Earlier, individuals with nationalist credentials were discredited by being labeled as IB or RAW agents. We each publication of ours, we named the Pakistani stooges and discredited them. We provided a platform for alternate views and thought processes. We honestly and sincerely tried to give voice to those who remained unheard while suffering huge losses including that of life and honour at the hands of terrorists and terror apologists.

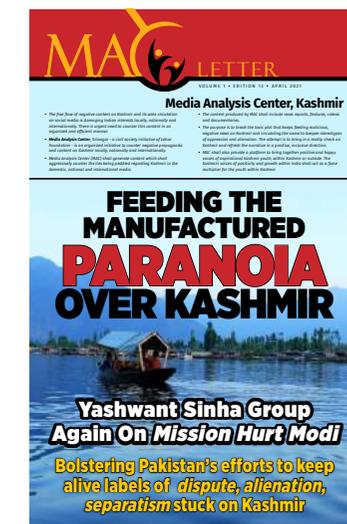
**I am proud to state on record that nobody can provide a single instance on where I compromised on integrity and journalistic ethics**

Last week, a friend from Delhi forwarded me an article published in The Diplomat titled Rape and Silence in Kashmir's Jihad. She commented that for the first time someone has belled the cat. The fact remains that in 2021, we at KZINE wrote about the subject on three occasions. We brought to the fore



**I was warned by some friends in political circles and the eminent civil society groups that do not stand against your own people. This is where I draw the distinction. By naming and shaming those who are part of the clique that caused Kashmir's downslide, I am not standing against my own people. I am standing with the large collective that has suffered immensely and seeks succor**

**In our publications, we exposed politicians and government functionaries who worked against the interest of the state. We exposed their duplicity. Our exposes sent shivers down the spine of those government servants who work for the enemy country**



the plight of the victims of terrorists. We spoke about the silence of the society on rape, molestation, torture and murder of women in Kashmir by terrorists. We wrote about the female moles in terrorist groups.

I was warned by some friends in political circles and the eminent civil society groups that do not stand against your own people. This is where I draw the distinction. By naming and shaming those who are part of the clique that caused Kashmir's downslide, I am not standing against my own people. By doing so, I am standing with my people. I am standing with the large collective that has suffered immensely and seeks succor. We provoke these terror players and terror apologists to introspect rather than point fingers at the state and its institutions.

**EXPOSING STATE FUNCTIONARIES WHO WORK FOR THE ENEMY**

In our publications, we exposed politicians and government functionaries who worked against the inter-

est of the state. We exposed the duplicity of those government functionaries who take perks and privileges from the state and work for the enemy of the state. Our exposes sent shivers down the spine of those government servants who work for the enemy country.

Looking back, I state with humility that we did what no one else could do. We did it without holding any office, position or authority. I wrote three books exposing Kashmir's terror ecosystem and terror apologists. I started out on this path when there was nobody to stand by me. I will continue to tread this path even if there is no one to stand by me.

There is a perception among many quarters from Srinagar to New Delhi that I have some kind of say in decision making in the Union Territory. I have been trying hard to dispel this notion. I often tell my colleagues at KASHMIR CENTRAL that any other person in my shoes would have earned in crores on this notion. But I show the exit to those colleagues about whom I have been suspicious of asking for even petty favours. This is what I could do.

# An OGW Speaks To Kzine Central

## ATTEMPT TO DEEPEN TERROR IN NORTH KASHMIR, DISRUPT NORMAL LIFE Targeted CASOs Important

by Bisma Nazir

There is an attempt by terror players to create turbulence in north Kashmir.

Over the past few weeks, some Pakistani terror operatives have come to Baramulla and adjoining areas of North Kashmir. A cordon and search operation was launched by the security agencies on coming to know of their presence.

These terror operatives are surviving on account of the sleeper groups which arrange for their accommodation and other logistics. According to sources in the OGW network, their purpose is to instill fear and disrupt normal life. If they are not arrested soon, the fear factor will be high this year in towns and cities.

Over the last many months,

the fear graph had come down in north Kashmir significantly. Public events were taking place commonly and the situation was much better as compared to south Kashmir. A peaceful atmosphere has been created. For medical camps and events, there is public support.

If any major terror incident happens, *saari mehnat zaya hogi*. The focus of the terror operatives is that South Kashmir *ki tarah north mein bhi dar kayam rahey*. Pakistan always wants that fear factor should be deep in Kashmir. They want to target the people's bonding with the security forces in the North. With the activities of the terror operatives, individuals identified as nationalists have been told to limit their movement.

**IMPORTANT FOR SECURITY AGENCIES TO TAKE QUICK ACTION**

The first task of the Pakistani terror operatives is to move about and familiarize themselves with the



Participants at the Wular Festival in North Kashmir

area. The Covid protocol of moving about with a mask has made it easy for them to conveniently mingle with the crowd.

Then begins their task of taking updates from their local OGWs. Who all are working with the terror network, which boys are pro-Pakistan and can work with them. Who all are pro-Indians and nationalists. Their purpose is to disturb north Kashmir and introduce the same state of anxiety here that marks south Kashmir.

Once these terror operatives create their roots, they start creating networks of local youth to carry out the terror activities. At times, they give tasks to new entrants like targeting someone or throwing a grenade. They tell the boy that you have to do this activity in order to prove your allegiance. Once the youth gets involved even in a single terror ac-



well. In addition, it is important to do targeted CASOs. You have to identify those who have part of the network of stone pelters, sleeper cells, others associated with terror plots. The security agencies shall get an initial edge if such targeted CASOs are organized.

A normal householder cannot keep Pakistani terror operatives in his house. There are 60-70 per cent chances that those who give

**If any major terror incident happens, *saari mehnat zaya hogi*. The focus of the terror operatives is that South Kashmir *ki tarah north mein bhi dar kayam rahey***

tivity, he gets caught in this daldal. Then it is difficult for him to find an escape route. That is why the boys don't surrender. They think that going back is impossible. It is certainly difficult though it is not impossible. But the youth gets trapped this way.

**TARGETED CORDON AND SEARCH FOR DESIRED RESULT**

Random Cordon and Search Operations alone don't work so

them shelter are OGWs or stone pelters.

Security agencies have to remain proactive. There are symptoms of disturbances in the north already. Some OGWs and others associated with militant activity have been arrested. Obviously they have been provided weapons by militants.

It is evident that the youngster of North Kashmir would not have got his weapon from South Kashmir. He has been provided the weapon locally.

**It is important to do targeted CASOs. You have to identify those who have part of the network of stone pelters, sleeper cells, others associated with terror plots. The security agencies shall get an initial edge if such focused CASOs are organized**

# POST EXODUS

## How Jamaat e Islami, Hizb-ul-Mujahideen Grabbed Pandit Properties in Kashmir

FREE PRESS KASHMIR.NEWS

by GM MIR

**T**he forced exodus of the Pandits from Kashmir. Even today, those of us who lived through it struggle to full deal with the pain of our brothers leaving the Valley. In the years that followed, all of us watched a parallel phenomenon. Jamaat e Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen established themselves as the biggest beneficiaries of the exit of Pandits from Kashmir. They grabbed and occupied plush houses and prime lands belonging to the Pandits.

All this happened in a planned and organized manner. The exodus of the Pandits happened more than 30 years ago. All over Kashmir, there were Pandit houses, Pandit orchards and also agriculture land. The maximum number of buyers of Pandit property are those who were directly or indirectly associated with militancy. Either they themselves or their close relatives were connected with the conflict.

The forced exodus of the Pandits was a convenient strategy for Jamaat e Islami and its militant arm Hizbul Mujahideen to grab the land and property belonging to the Pandits. The land grabbing was done in a crafty way.

### **DECLARING PANDIT PROPERTY AS BAIT-UL-MAAL WAS A HOAX**

JEI and HM declared in 1990 that the property of the Pandits would be regarded as Bait-ul-Maal (Common property for Islamic welfare) after the freedom of Kashmir.

JEI and the militants decreed that because this was Bait-ul-Maal, no one was allowed to purchase any type of property from Kashmiri Pandits. This turned out to be a big hoax.



**Declaring Pandit land and property as Bait-ul-Maal was part of the plan of JEI and HM for land grabbing. In the years that followed, the local units of Hizbul Mujahideen ordered that if anyone wanted to purchase Pandit property, he would have to seek the permission of the local HM commanders beforehand**



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Declaring Pandit land and property as Bait-ul-Maal was part of the plan of JEI and HM for land grabbing. In the years that followed, the local units of Hizbul Mujahideen ordered that if anyone wanted to purchase Pandit property, he would have to seek the permission of the local HM commanders beforehand. For the Kashmiris who were associated directly or indirectly with Jamaat e Islami or Hizbul Mujahideen, it was very easy to seek the permission of the militant commanders to buy Pandit property. Ultimately, the plan implemented and followed was that the ownership of this property should be restricted only to the members and sympathizers of HM and JEI.



Thousands of Kashmiri Pandits still live in refugee camps in Jammu  
Getty/ aljazeera.com

**THE RARE CASE IN HISTORY WHERE THE BUYER DETERMINED THE PRICE**

This was the rare case in history where property exchanged hands not at the price fixed by the seller. The property was sold at the price fixed by the buyer. This happened because in an overwhelming majority of cases, the Pandits did not have any choice regarding their property. Distress sale of Pandit properties was happening all over Kashmir. They knew that if they do not sell their properties, it would be grabbed sooner or later, and they would get nothing for it.

The common Kashmiris had no option but to watch this tamsaha. They were – and they continue to be – helpless before the militants.

JEI and HM members remained busy buying assets of the Pandits and building properties for their children. Those heading the erstwhile state governments remained mute spectators to the gun power wielded by the militants and the close collaboration of JEI and HM in this loot.

During those years, JEI and HM were the real power centers in Kashmir. They ran parallel sarkar in the state and wielded more power than the ministers or bureaucrats.

**MILITANTS STARTED TAKING SHARE IN AGRICULTURAL LAND THAT BELONGED TO PANDITS**

The property left behind by the Pandits was used by the militants to collect money.

It was done in this way. Agricultural land belonging to Pandits was allotted to neighbouring farmers on the understanding of half share in produce and profit. For example, one kanal of land was given to someone and it produced two quintals of rice. Out of this, one quintal was the share of the militant who may have been from the same village or outside.



**JEI and HM members remained busy buying assets of the Pandits and building properties for their children. Those heading the erstwhile state governments remained mute spectators to the gun power wielded by the militants and the close collaboration of JEI and HM in this loot**

# BOHIPORA, KUPWARA

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## Distress Sale Of Pandits' Land

### BUYERS FROM JEI-HM NETWORK

In Kupwara, North Kashmir, there was a Pandit village named Gund Gushi near Bohipora. This was a village of affluent Pandits. They owned highly fertile land in prime prime locations.

The land-grab modus operandi of JEI and HM was implemented here in toto. All the land belonging to the Pandits was grabbed by influential persons in Jamaat e Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen.

The militant commanders of Bohipora carried out a well-thought out plan so that Pandits were compelled to sell their land and other assets for meager amounts. Gund Gushi was a classic example of how Pandits were driven out so that Jamaat e Islami and HM could grab their properties.

Gund Gushi was a classic example of how Pandits were driven out so that Jamaat e Islami and HM could grab their properties



KASHMIR ROOT STOCK



## THE DISTRESS LOOT IN BUMAI, SOPORE

Bumai was a village of rich Pandits about 10 kms from Sopore, the sub-district headquarter. After the Pandits fled in 1990, the maximum property in this village was purchased by people who paid a good amount of money to JEI and Syed Ali Geelani.

Sopore was Geelani's stronghold. In Bumai and other areas in and around Sopore, it was mandatory to get a letter from Peer Sahab (Syed Ali Geelani) and then move to Jammu for the registration of the property.

# STATE GOVT BIASED TOWARDS MILITANTS IN EARLY YEARS OF MILITANCY

## CONSTRUCTED FOOD STORE OVER AHLE-HANOOD LAND OF PANDITS



The food store was constructed by the district administration on Ahle-Hanood land without the permission of the Pandit community

It seems to me that in the early years of militancy, some functionaries of the state government was biased in favour of the militants. These officers used the community land belonging to the Pandits for the construction of buildings which benefited the Muslim population.

Like Ahle-Islam, the religious land of Muslims, the religious land of Pandits is Ahle-Hanood. In Vilgam in Kupwara, the food store was constructed by the district administration on Ahle-Hanood land without the permission of the Pandit community. There are ruins of a temple at a distance of about 10 meters from the food store. I remember that when I was a child, Pandits used to visit this temple for prayers. In the years after their exodus, it fell into neglect and the structure deteriorated.

All of us in Vilgam knew that this is Ahle-Hanood land. We Kashmiris have always prided ourselves on our justice and fairness towards all. Where did this justice and fairness go when officers of the district administration constructed the food store on this land? If they did not want to renovate the temple structure, at least they should have protected the land and constructed a fence around it to show some respect towards Pandit sentiment and property. Instead they encroached upon the area with a government structure.

This also places a question mark over the role of the Kashmir civil society in bridging the gap between these two Kashmiri communities. The Ahle-Hanood land is situated at a distance of about 200 meters from the office of the Tehsildar, and at the distance of about 15 meters from the Sub-District Hospital of Vilgam where more than



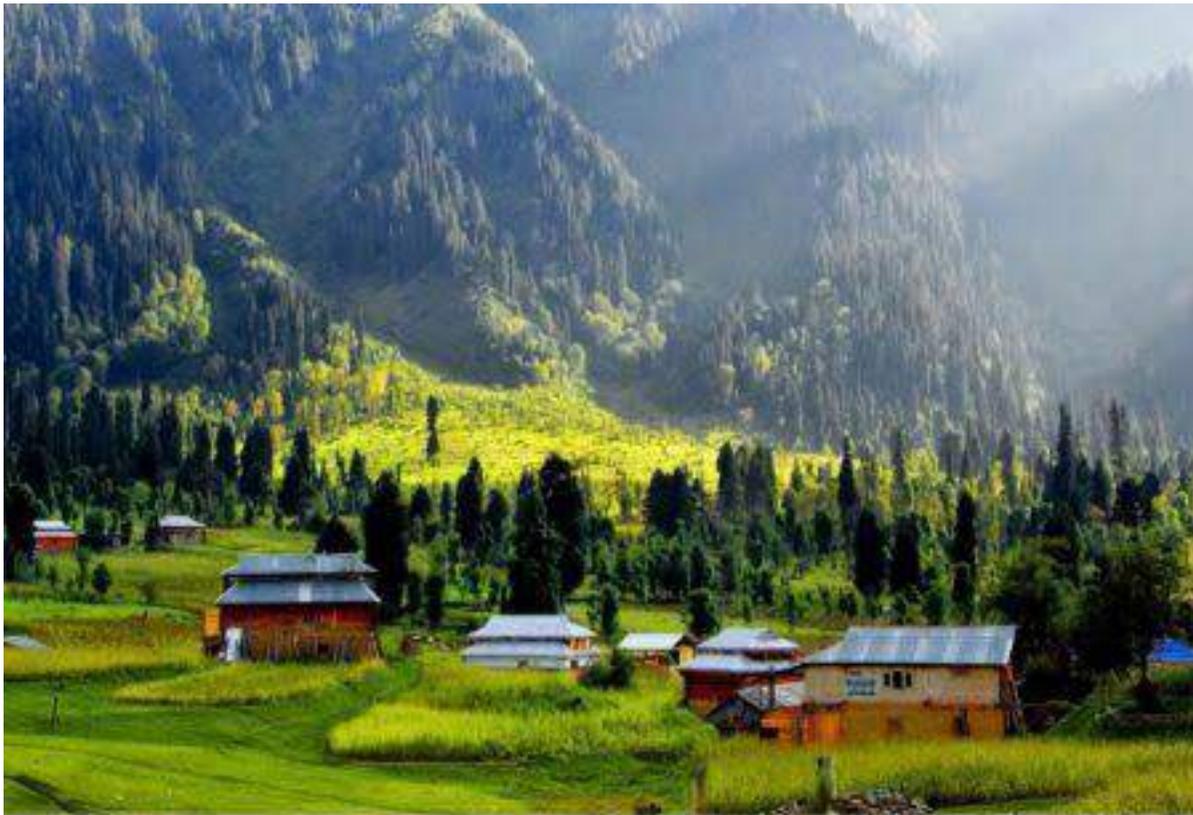
All those who visit the Sub District Hospital here are locals. They know that this land belongs to the Pandits. They know there was a temple here where the Pandits offered prayers daily. Why did they not stop the district administration from constructing a food store here?

100 patients visit daily to attend OPD. All patients are locals who know that this land belongs to the Pandits. They know there was a temple here where the Pandits offered prayers daily. Why did they not stop the district administration from constructing a food store here? At

this moment, I am questioning my own silence. Why did I remain silent all these years when the encroachment was happening? I too was a silent spectator. I spoke to my friends about this unjust conduct of the district administration, but I too allowed it to happen. Sad.

# DUGGER BHAT

## The Enchanting Pandit Village Near Vilgam In Kupwara



THE REAL KASHMIR NEWS



TRAVEL THE HIMALAYAS

## Only Those Closely Associated With Militancy Allowed To Purchase Land Here

**D**ugger Bhat was a village of Pandits near Vilgam, my town. There were 45 houses of Pandits in this village. All the houses were well-furnished. The Pandits who lived here – we called them Dugger Bhats. When they left the village fearing for their lives, they could take only the bare essentials. The houses and all the furnishings were left as such. The Pandits had thought that they would return soon.

Where are those houses now? Everything of value inside them was looted, and the houses were dismantled by anti-social elements.

The beautiful Dugger Bhat was occupied by those who had close links with Jamaat e Islami and Hizbul Mujahideen.

As was the practice in other areas, only those people could purchase Pandit property who got the approval from the JEI leaders. In Dugger Bhat

especially, the purchase of land was restricted to those whose kith and kin were associated with militancy.

One Ghulam Rasool Malik purchased 10 kanals of land from a Pandit. Malik was an active militant and the Jamaat Rukan of the area. Sonullah Mir purchased 15 kanals in Dugger Bhat. His won was a top commander of Al Baraq, a militant outfit.

Asadullah Tantray purchased five kanals here.

He is a senior leader of JEI. Ali Bhat purchased 12 kanals. His two sons were active militants.

Sideeq wani purchased 5 kanals in Dugger Bhat. One of his sons was a militant. Gulam Hassan Bhat purchased 12 kanals. His brother was a militant.

Abdul Rashid Mir purchased 17 kanals of land in Dugger Bhat. His two brothers were militants. Ghulam Rasool Khan purchased 7 kanals here. He himself was a militant.

# DARK SIDE OF INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT OF KASHMIR

## Market Of Freedom Like Vegetable And Grain Market

## Freedom Merchants Have Opened Their Shops Here And There

The vegetable and grain market will be introduced to many friends. There are artiyas in the vegetable and grain markets. Every artiya opens his own shop. In English, such people are called commission agents. These people are basically traders and these people form trade unions regularly.

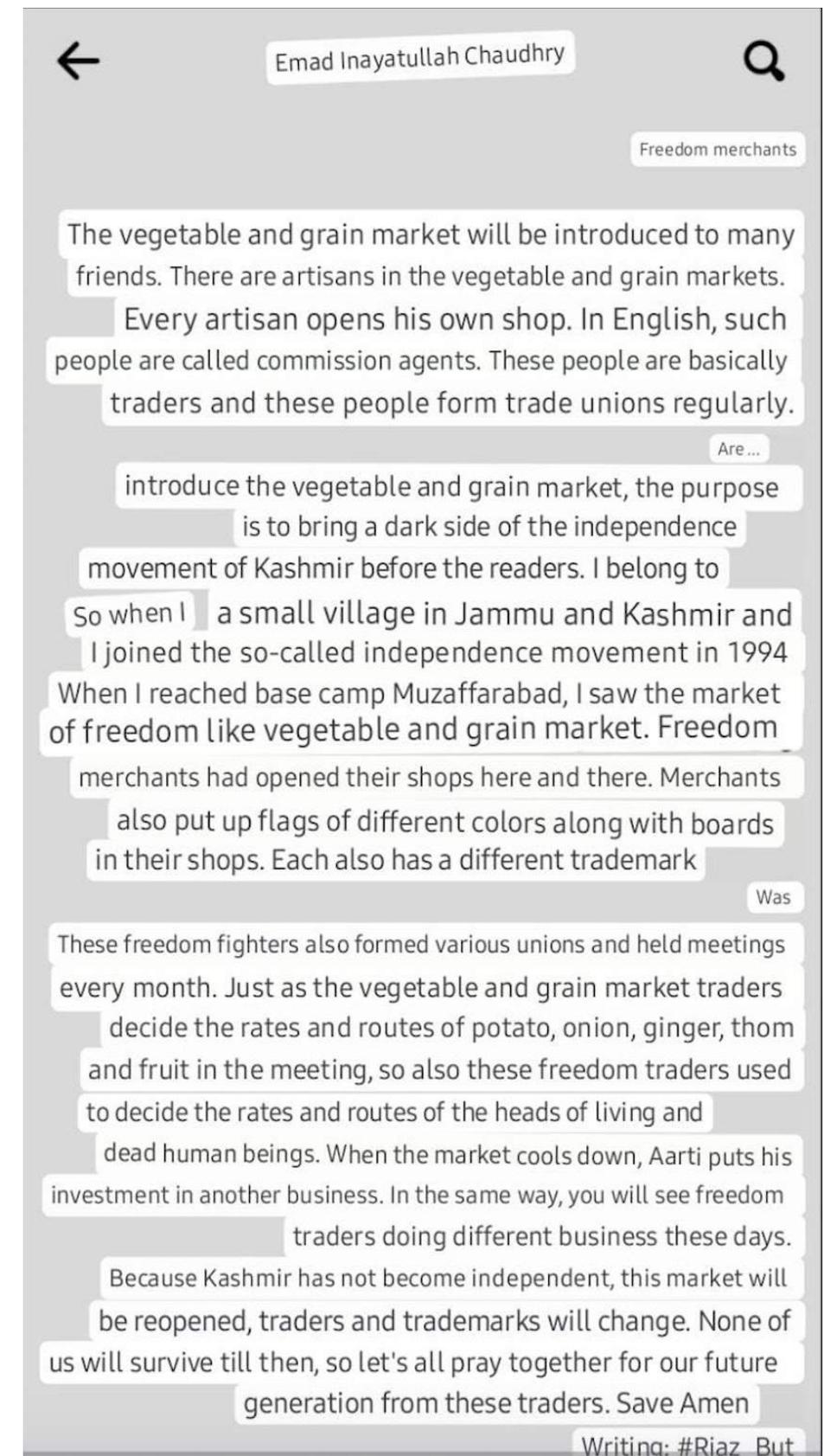
Are ... So when I introduce the vegetable and grain market, the purpose is to bring a dark side of the independence movement of Kashmir before the readers. I belong to a small village in Jammu and Kashmir and I joined the so-called independence movement in 1994. When I reached base camp Muzaffarabad, I saw the market of freedom like vegetable and grain market. Freedom merchants had opened their shops here and there. Merchants also put up flags of different colours along with boards in their shops. Each also has a different trademark.

These freedom fighters also formed various unions and held meetings every month. Just as the vegetable and grain market traders decide the rates and routes of potato, onion, ginger, thom and fruit in the meeting, so also these freedom traders used to decide the rates and routes of the heads of living and dead human beings.

When the market cools down, Aarti puts his investment in another business. In the same way, you will see freedom traders doing different business these days. Because Kashmir has not become independent, this market will be reopened, traders and trademarks will change. None of us will survive till then, so let's all pray together for our future generation from these traders.

Save Amen  
Writing: #Riaz\_But

Emad Inayatullah Chaudhry



# Normalizing Triple Talaq

## Normalizing Multiple Marriages

## Normalizing Domestic Violence

### Pakistani Television Serials

**NEGATIVELY  
IMPACTING  
KASHMIR  
SOCIETY**



Brutality Against Women. Beatings of Women. Torture of Women. Women Crying. Women Wailing. Women Held By Their Neck. Women Pulled By Their Hair. Women Accused. Women Stigmatized. Wife Held Responsible For The Sadistic Behaviour of Her Husband. Wife Chained And Held Like Animals...

This is the gory content that Pakistani television serials beam into Kashmiri homes and into our smart phones every day. Mareaya Fayaz explores how marital violence and dystopian family alliances showcased in Pakistani TV serials is impacting Kashmir

by Mareaya FAYAZ

**A**nalysts of Kashmir's contemporary history write that Pakistan's dictator Gen Zia ul Haq initiated the rigorous project of Kashmir's indoctrination into hardline Islam. Even though Gen Zia ul Haq died in a plane crash in 1988, by the early 90s the radicalization and deep indoctrination of Kashmir was in full swing.

Pakistan pushed Kashmir into insurgency by changing the levers of Kashmir's politics and making it separatist. This was and continues to be a political project for Pakistan.

Through the upheaval of terror and militancy, Kashmir remained

and civilization. Triple talaq was not practiced. Domestic violence was known to take place but the incidence was comparatively low.

Now again, courtesy the influence of Pakistan, Kashmir is in the grip of cross-border social indoctrination. This time, the agency for indoctrination isn't the Pakistani establishment, the ISI or the deep state. It is Pakistan's soft power – its television serials.

The Pakistani television serials, streaming into homes and smart phones across Kashmir have become the agency for indoctrination in Kashmir. Pakistani dramas are increasingly becoming a powerful and compelling medium to influence social shifts in Kashmir. In Edition 15 of Kashmir Central, we are chronicling some of



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moored to its traditional ways. Even though Islam allows a man to have four wives, there was no social sanction for multiple marriages in Kashmir. A second marriage was highly frowned upon in Kashmir society. The incidence was so low that a man's taking a second wife made news within his community and area.

There were other ways in which Kashmir was different as a society

the ways in which Pakistani TV serials are influencing and indoctrinating Kashmir society.

When it comes to depicting nikaah or talaq on screen, both require considerable sensitivity and nuance. Unfortunately, both have been trivialized in Pakistani television serials. Such dystopian scripting is common also in the serials produced and aired in the mainland. But they are not

watched in Kashmir in large numbers, hence their influence is negligible comparatively.

### **PAKISTANI TV CONTENT BECAME A RAGE IN KASHMIR 2014 ONWARDS**

Pakistani serials became a sensation in Kashmir around 2014. A cable TV channel named

Zindagi started airing these serials and found a ready audience within Kashmir – particularly Kashmiri women. These women followed Pakistani bridal fashion. Hum TV and other channels like ARY Zauq and ARY Masala followed. Women followed these channels to learn new recipes. The romance serials and comedy shows became talking points in Kashmir. A number of channels from Pakistan and some from Saudi Arabia were commonly seen by the Kashmiri society. Among these were ARY Zauq, ARY Masala, ARY Zindagi, Hum TV, PTV Sports, Paigam, Karbala TV, Geo News, ARY News Asia, Duniya News and Samna News. These channels generate news and religious content as well as entertainment, sports, satire, comedy and food shows.

The television content flowing into Kashmir from across the border included Peace TV English and Peace TV Urdu. These are owned by Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, who is on the run from the Indian authorities and is under investigation for terror links.

In 2017, 34 television channels being broadcast from abroad were banned in Kashmir, apparently because they have the potential to disturb "peace and order". The banning of the Pakistani channels was seen as an attack towards the people of Kashmir. It was criticized by then chief minister Mehbooba Mufti and also Hurriyat. The move was called as an attempt to "hurt the collective psyche of Kashmiris" through this "cultural aggression and politics of invasion".

The ban did not stop the Paki-

stani serials from flowing into Kashmir. By now, most of the serials were available on YouTube. They continue to remain popular in Kashmir and are easily accessible to anyone interested in watching them.

While discussing the content of the television serials aired from Pakistan, I am reminded of how the serials on Ekta Kapoor were hated for their content. Even though many people admit that the content was ridiculous and corrupted the brains of youngsters, the serials continued to have high rating.

It is the same with many serials aired from Pakistan. The content debases common family relationships. But the major issue of concern is that nobody is talking about the influence of these serials upon Kashmiri society.

# NORMALIZING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Pakistani serials are increasingly emerging as a visual medium to promote domestic violence. Despite having a solid plot, storyline, faultless acting and skilled direction, the themes and content of Pakistani dramas cause more harm than good to Kashmiri community.

The obsession of Kashmiris with Pakistani serials is of another level. Over the years, these serials have gained huge popularity in Kashmir. These serials have a huge audience here, and people watch these dramas for entertainment.

Sadly, there is no discussion in Kashmir on the deeply regressive content of these serials. There is no realization that serials which promote steep male chauvinism may be a bad influence on our society which already discriminates against women.

If we look at television content worldwide, we shall find that it covers a wide range of topics. Television serials cover different genres from politics to science fiction and suspense thrillers.

However, when we look at Pakistani plays, we find that the majority of them feature domestic violence, women as victims, second marriages, extramarital affairs and Triple Talaq. The popularity of this content in Kashmir reveals that it is being appreciated by the people.



Qayamat ranks among the highly popular Pakistan television series in Kashmir. One of the most-watched episodes of this series was the one in which a female character is brutally beaten by her husband. It is unfortunate that the stories of women's physical and emotional abuse attract a lot of attention and generate high revenue for the makers.

But how this TRP game is dam-

aging minds and molding public opinion in Kashmir is something that no one is taking note of. The episode in which a woman was beaten mercilessly by her husband was watched so much that it became the highest rated episode.

We need to observe this carefully. The regressive and deplorable content that should be rejected in disgust is being watched intently

and obsessively. Sadly, such content that has been watched since years is now normalizing domestic violence within Kashmir society. This was already a pain point for the women of our society who have suffered domestic violence. The Pakistani serials are only making the situation worse.

## INFLUENCING SOCIAL ACCEPTANCE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The society's perspective on gender roles and the ramifications of marriage is one of the most powerful variables that determines social acceptance of domestic violence. The commonly perceived and accepted gender roles in a society give sanction to domestic violence.

In many Arab and Asian civilizations, women are regarded to belong to their husband's agnatic group. In these societies, it is a widely held be-

lief that women are the family's property and may be controlled as needed. This is specifically deeply entrenched in the Pakistani society. Such deep-seated patriarchal minds normalize domestic violence in Pakistan.

Unfortunately, the continued impact of regressive television serials is leading to higher incidence of domestic violence in Kashmir. The continued absorption of Pakistani television content has made us consider domestic violence as 'okay', and something that happens or is justifiable.

## THE PROMOTION OF FAMILISM OVER INDIVIDUAL WELL-BEING

Familism. A social pattern in which the family assumes a position of ascendancy over individual interests. There is a tendency in many cultures to respect familism and prioritize the wellbeing of the family over the wellbeing or the choice of the individual.

The matter of concern is that cultures of familism add to the prolonged acceptability of abusive behaviour. Familism is common in collectivist societies. It can help to facilitate and sustain physical and emotional abuse inside families. This happens by effectively deterring victims from seeking outside assistance or even identifying their treatment as abusive.

This is also a very common pattern in Pakistani television serials. A familiar thread in the serials is that the husband abuses and beats the wife after being brainwashed by his mother and sisters. The abused wife continues to believe that she should endure domestic violence as her divine duty.

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# NORMALIZING MULTIPLE MARRIAGES

A study being done on the contribution of mass media towards increase in domestic violence also spoke to various religious leaders. The study established that no religion promotes violence against women or divorce.

So we have a dual play here. We see Pakistan projecting itself as the saviour of Muslims. At the same time, Pakistan is promoting a toxic masculinity which sanctions domestic violence and divorce. The television serials of Pakistan reflect the same pattern. Toxic masculinity, women suffering abuse, domestic violence, divorces. Pakistani television serials are indoctrinating Kashmiri society by promoting the same patterns here.

I don't know if the Pakistani television studios are aware of how Kashmiri society has become a fertile ground for Pakistan to embed the notion of destructive and violent male chauvinism. Socially, multiple marriages have been an anathema in Kashmir. The impact of Pakistani mass media is changing this.

One can observe the shift in Kashmir society. The notion of multiple wives is getting normalized. The instant pronouncement of triple talaq to divorce the wife is getting normalized. The notion of beating the wife is getting normalized. This is the indoctrination we are suffering at the hands of the Pakistan mass media.

Indoctrination – the process of teaching a person or group to accept a set of beliefs uncritically. Why is this shift in Kashmir being regarded as indoctrination? Because though Kashmir and Pakistan follow the same religion – Islam, at a civilizational and social level, we are starkly different communities. Kashmir has civilizationally been known for its liberal, accommodative ethos regarding women's rights.



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This is changing. Our society is incorporating the trends of men opting for multiple marriages, the instant pronouncement of Triple Talaq and wife beating. In social discussions, one can

hear men say that it is okay to beat one's wife if she does not do what the husband expects from her. Astoundingly, one can watch even women express this opinion. In many such discussions,

**Marital rape is wrapped and packaged in ways to make it acceptable. The messaging is that it is okay to rape your wife if she is a little aloof. At the end the man says sorry and his abused, tortured, assaulted wife goes back to him. Each serial encourages its victims to keep suffering**

reference is made to the contemporary Pakistani serials. Pakistani script writers seem to have a horrific agenda at hand – turning the male generation into sadistic husbands and the women into submissive wives. In Kashmir, their script is being given social sanction.

**BAND  
KHIRKIYAN -  
CLOSING THE  
WINDOWS  
OF LIFE**

I was particularly disturbed by one of the serials titled Band Khirkiyan, which translates to closed windows. The male protagonist is shown as an over-protective, over-possessive stalker of a husband. He wants his wife to be around him all the time and seeks her attention every second. When this does not happen he beats her and abuses her constantly.

The 28 episodes of the series are focused on how the husband isolates his wife from her sister and father. All through this, he somehow sets a vibe that this is love –he supposedly loves his wife so much that he only wants to keep her for himself.

The man feeds his wife contraceptives without her knowledge because

he can't share her with a child. This portrayal of love is again so toxic. It seeks to establish that love means to own your wife, and keep her revolving around yourself. By the end of the show, both husband and wife are involved in a car accident. The wife goes into coma and the husband is sad that he "broke his possession". He repents, wife regains consciousness, goes with her husband because "he changed".

Like most Pakistani serials, this series too promotes male chauvinism. The premise is that women are possessions of men. A husband can treat his wife any way he likes, and his sorry will set everything right. The messaging of all serials seems to be the same – that women should endure all pain, and at the end everything will be okay. This is the messaging for men and women alike. Treat your wife as your possession. Beat her, torture her, make her life a living hell because you have got control over her body and her mind. When she is on her death bed, apologize. Then all the trauma that the woman has suffered should supposedly get erased, and both of them can go singing in gardens.

**EACH SERIAL  
ENCOURAGES WOMEN  
TO KEEP SUFFERING**

Marital rape is wrapped and packaged in ways to make it acceptable. The messaging is that it is okay to rape

your wife if she is a little aloof. At the end the man says sorry and his abused, tortured, assaulted wife goes back to him. Each serial encourages its victims to keep suffering. Each abuser receives exactly what she stayed back for. My heart cries for all those women who may be in similar circumstances and may be told to continue suffering in hell. These serials are easily accessible on YouTube. They are popular not just among women but men too. Perhaps they fit well with the male chauvinist outlook.

It is also a matter of concern to see men treating their wife as their property, which can be disposed of according to their needs. Like the protagonists of the series, the men feel that their wives should not be bothered by the constant abusive behaviour of the husbands.

A 32-year-old woman was recently set ablaze by her husband and her parents-in-laws. According to her family, she endured a lot of domestic violence. She endured for long, and finally she was killed. Is this acceptable for a society to lose its daughter this way?

A few months ago a video went viral in Kashmir. The woman was pleading that her husband and parents-in-law are always beating her, and that she is an orphan. It is tragic that women are targeted and victimized despite so many laws for their protection. It is even more tragic that she is victimized by the man who is supposed to be her saviour.

# A Reflection of Pak Society Do We Want To Be The Same?

Marriage is a sacred rite in our culture and religion, establishing a lifelong link between two individuals and their families. Rights relating to marriage and divorce necessitate nuanced and informed debates.

Pakistani serials have trivialized these social realities in order to create cheap thrills in the name of entertainment. In all the years of growing up in Kashmir, I had never heard of Triple Talaq. I read about it only in my law books.

But I now realize that children in Pakistan would be very familiar with this usage right from their childhood. In Pakistani serials, the husband pronounces instant Triple Talaq, and the marriage ends.

The scriptwriters of Pakistani serials have made a joke of a life-changing decision like divorce. In the series Meherposh, the female protagonist is divorced by her husband a few hours after marriage because he suspects her of having an affair before marriage. The message delivered is two-pronged. One, you can divorce a woman on the assumption that she had an affair before marriage. Second, you should divorce a woman if she had a past relationship.

The male protagonist in the serial divorces his wife when his



sister threatens him with suicide if he does not divorce her. The hero divorces his wife in the heat of the moment to please his sister. The female protagonist, unable to bear the situation any longer, commits suicide on the spot.

When the hero reaches out to touch her, he is prevented from doing so because he has now become her namehram since their

divorce.

The impact of this dystopian social exposure is that there is an increasing trend among Kashmiri men of pronouncing instant Triple Talaqs to their wives for the most unfathomed reasons. To an ordinary woman like me, it is very disturbing and hurtful to witness these emerging trends in my society.

## THE REGRESSION WE ARE WITNESSING IN KASHMIR

Kashmir, which was once a highly progressive society, seems to be regressing. The indoctrination by the Pakistani serials is aiding the decline. We are aware that the spouse has the legal and religious right to end a marriage



by divorce. There are specific legal and religious requirements entailed in the entire process that the television serials either ignore or fail to adequately depict.

What the viewers see and hear are the three dreaded words pronounced in quick succession.

In Zebaish, a 55-year-old lawyer divorces his wife while marrying the widow of a former employee. The explanation offered is that the man was irritated that his wife was preoccupied with her profession and didn't provide him with the attention that he desired. He divorces her at the request of his second wife.

Let us analyze what is being

showcased here. It is acceptable for a man to divorce his wife if she is career-oriented. It does not matter that they have been married for 25 to 30 years.

In a society which is already patriarchal, the deepening of such notions can lead to disastrous consequences. For those who are easily influenced, such ideas can have a very negative impact.

In Pakistani serials, happy marriages built on mutual love and respect is a rarity. When casual divorces happen in seconds, we are aware of the messaging to the society – that such conduct is normal and acceptable.

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# PAKISTANI TV SERIALS ARE IMPACTING THE PSYCHE OF WOMEN TOO

**N**umm, a Pakistani series, portrays a woman forced into a marriage with a young boy as a punishment for a crime committed by her male relative. When the boy grows into a man, he is married to a young girl “for having babies”.

The two line explanation of this series says it all. First, a woman is fit to be punished for someone else’s crime. Why? Supposedly because the woman isn’t human. She exists simply for the convenience of men. The second construct here is that a woman is a baby-making machine. That is all there is to her.

There is another representation of the chauvinist culture shown in the series titled Muqaddar. A young woman is kidnapped for purpose of second marriage. And then begins the life of endless struggles for the poor soul.

In a series titled Tera Gum Aur Hum, the man brings home a second wife. She was his former girlfriend and cousin. The examples are many.

The Kashmir society traditionally did not accord social sanction to second marriage. Now the Pakistani serials are embedding the concept of multiple wives. Most Pakistani serials project overtly or covertly that it is acceptable that a man may need two or three wives, because one wife “cannot satisfy the needs of a man”.

Pakistani serials normalize the notion that a man needs multiple wives to fulfill his male ego and give him a sense of superiority. This is one of the ways in which our youth get indoctrinated. They have no idea of the injunctions in Islam regarding multiple wives. But they willy-nilly absorb what is shown in Pakistani

TV serials – that having multiple wives is acceptable.

## IN THE NAME OF ENTERTAINMENT, WOMEN’S RIGHTS ARE BEING ERASED

These serials impact not just the men. They impact the psyche of women too. Their message to women and girls is that you must continue to silently endure the mental and physical pain inflicted upon you. Living in an abusive, loveless marriage is acceptable because your suffering does not matter. The social optics – what the society will think – is projected as the only criteria that matters.

These serials teach women that they must accept all abuse dished to them. They should take all beatings from their parents-in-law or from their husband

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because one day things will supposedly change. When the apology is offered by the offender, all hurtful past must be left behind as if it never happened.

All this and more is being ingrained in the minds of our youth. In the name of entertainment, women’s rights are erased. They may be abused or beaten, but it must be endured for the sake of the husband and the family.

These bizarre ideas must not be taken lightly, especially by

women. Being Muslim women, we all must know that a husband cannot have authority over his wife. A Muslim man is not allowed to beat his wife or any other woman. Islam gives legal rights to women. They do not need to endure emotional or physical pain inflicted upon them by their husbands or parents-in-law. Kashmir needs to boycott such shows. Such negative emotions infiltrate into the minds of young viewers, which can have a disastrous impact.

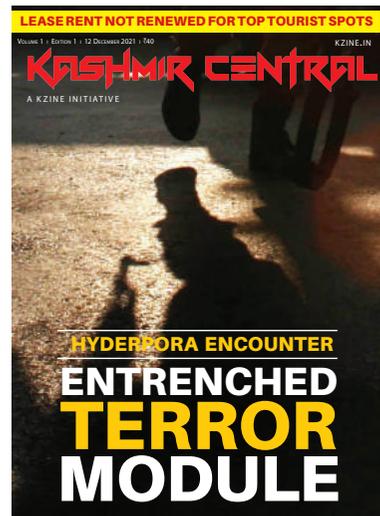
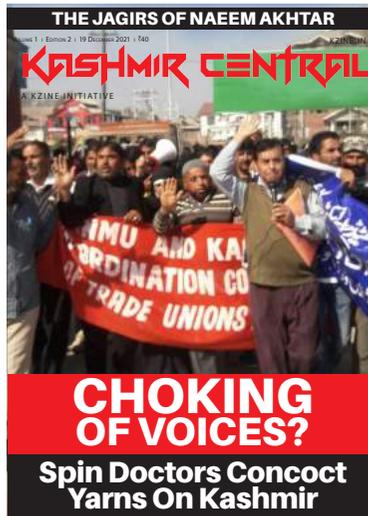
## ALSO IN PAKISTAN: Heavy Criticism Of Regressive Content Of TV Serials

These serials have generated a lot of criticism in Pakistan, mostly by women who know their rights. But such criticism is restricted to the urban pockets of Kashmir. Most Kashmiris tend to absorb what is dished out on television. Families and elders alike turn on their television sets in the evening and absorb the content in big and small ways. They do not give any thought to the consequences of such content on the minds of youngsters. Families watch such content in front of their children, unmindful of how their children are absorbing filth and wrong ideas through television content. Exposure to such regressive content causes lifelong patterns that define our relationships. Such exposure makes young men male chauvinists who believe that women need to be controlled and used for one’s own pleasure.

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