

Understanding Political Violence in Kashmir: A Political Opportunity Perspective

Basharat Ali*

Abstract

On August 5, 2019 the Hindu nationalist BJP removed the semi-autonomous status of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir by de-operationalising the provisions of Indian Constitution's Article 370. Through a Presidential proclamation Article 35A, that granted the state government the power to define the state subjects and also blocked non-state subjects from owning immovable property in the state was also removed. While many in India have called this decision undemocratic and unconstitutional, BJP has, to its credit, fulfilled both a historic promise to its electorate and an ideological commitment. But what does this decision mean for the movement of self-determination (called *tehreek* in local parlance) in Kashmir?

This paper places the decision in the larger framework of political opportunity structure of the social movement theory to argue that it will allow the actors of the Kashmiri *tehreek* mobilise more resources in its favour. The decision has dealt a death-blow to the pro-India political parties in Kashmir and consequently given the argument of the *tehreek* more weight. The paper shows how in the past such opportunities have helped the *tehreek* to mobilise more resources. The paper contends that this opportunity will follow the increase in mobilisation for political violence.

Keywords: Political opportunity, Social Movements, Political Violence, Kashmir, India, BJP.

*Basharat Ali is a Research Scholar at the MMAJ Academy of International Relations in Jamia Millia Islamia. His research focuses on the Understanding of Political Violence in Kashmir.

Introduction:

On August 5, 2019 the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is currently ruling India, decided to break the instrument of accession the country had signed with the Dogra Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir (J & K) in 1947.ⁱ This was done by de-operationalising Article 370 of the Indian Constitution which guaranteed the state of J & K a notional autonomy in the Indian Union, a special status as many called it. BJP government, through a Presidential proclamation, also revoked Article 35A of the Indian Constitution which allowed the J & K government to define state subjects and also barred non-locals from acquiring immovable property in the state. The decision was accompanied by the introduction of a Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act 2019, which led to the division of state of J & K into two Union Territories (UTs), one is called the UT of J & K and the second is the UT of Ladakh. There was effectively little to no opposition to these decisions inside the Indian Parliament given the electoral majority BJP enjoys. Constitutional experts argue that the decision taken by the BJP government is “undemocratic” and “unconstitutional”.ⁱⁱ Some analysts have gone to extend of calling it an annexation of territory and an act of colonialism.ⁱⁱⁱ

But the argument that Indian state is running a colonial occupation in Kashmir did not begin on August 5. Scholars have analysed the practices of Indian states control over Kashmir in past and made visible the coloniality of the (post)colonial India.^{iv} The August 5 decision, however, was justified by the BJP as a necessary step for the progress and development of J

& K and Ladakh –a typical for-the-own-good-of-natives argument. It also said that the removal of Article 370 will lead to an end to the ‘terrorism’ in the region, considered by the BJP to be the biggest impediment to the development of J & K.

Pakistan is often held responsible by India for waging a “proxy war” against its neighbour by sponsoring and supporting ‘terrorism’ in Kashmir and the Kashmiri movement for self-determination (the *tehreek* as it is called in Kashmiri) is framed as a result of that war. The *tehreek* in Kashmir is a classic case of an anti-colonial struggle for national self-determination delegitimised by India by calling it a proxy of Pakistan and at the same time crushed by different repressive tactics including the welfare and warfare strategies of counterinsurgency.^v

For the BJP, the removal of Article 370—brought in the first place in the Constitution by its only rival the Indian National Congress—fulfils its main electoral promise made to the people in India and also its longstanding ideological commitments. The complete integration of the Muslim majority J & K with the Indian Union has been one of the core “nationalist issues” for the BJP, besides issues like the construction of a Ram Temple in Ayodhya, around which much of its politics of Hindutva is constructed.^{vi} For the Congress and the Left in India, August 5 was a dark day for democracy in the country. They argue, besides many other independent observers, that the decision to de-operationalise Article 370 and reorganise the state into two UTS, was undemocratic. But the history of India’s control over Kashmir suggests that this was not the first undemocratic step an Indian government took to fully integrate J & K in the Indian Union, but possibly the last of them all.

The elected governments in Kashmir have been dismissed at the will of New Delhi. Engineering factionalism within the leading pro- India political parties has been a standard

modus operandi of successive governments in New Delhi to side-line leadership which presented any roadblocks to the policies drafted by the Indian governments. Well before making any move on the change in the Constitutional status of J & K, the BJP government placed under detention most of the political leadership.

While many have attributed India's "errors" in Kashmir as a cause for the demands of self-determination and emergence of armed struggle, giving little or no space at all to the *tehrreek* and its imagination, this paper locates these 'errors' in the political opportunity structure exploited by the social movement for resource mobilization. As such, this paper asks: what does the de-operationalisation of Article 370 and abrogation of 35A mean to the *tehrreek* in Kashmir? How will the *tehrreek* respond to and engage with the new political reality in the region? And, more importantly, how will this fresh opportunity inform and influence the political violence in the region?

This paper is divided in three sections. The first section will outline the framework of political opportunity structure in the social movement theory and its relationship with political violence. The second section will highlight a number of such opportunities provided to and exploited by the *tehrreek* in Kashmir in the past. The third section will specifically look the consequences of the August 5 decision on the *tehrreek* in Kashmir and how it will shape the political violence in the disputed region.

Political opportunity Structure and Social Movements:

The study of the political violence or more specifically collective action started with theories which considered acts of collective action, protests, as an unconventional and irrational type of behaviour.^{vii} The classic notion of collective action rested on the relative deprivation thesis

which underlined that “shared grievances and generalized beliefs are determinants of participation”.^{viii} Early studies of collective action, including from the founding father of collective action studies, French psychologist Le Bon, characterised all contentious politics as a theatre of the impatient.^{ix} However, in the 1960s, during the emergence of various students, civil rights, environmental and women’s movements new paradigms were explored to study and explain collective action. It was in this period that the social movement theory took shape. Actions which were earlier explained as a result of deviant behaviour were now thought to be rational.

Two new theoretical approaches in the social movements emerged in the 1970s, categorised as structural and social constructivist. In the structural approach resource mobilization and political process gained traction with time. While the resource mobilization approach looked specifically at the internal dynamics, social networks, and available resources of the movement, the political process approach focussed on the political systems these movements take place against or in relation to. Central to the political process approach is the political opportunity structure which applies “to the world outside a social protest movement”. The basic premise of the political opportunity structure is that “exogenous factors enhance or inhibit prospects for mobilization, for particular sorts of claims to be advanced rather than others, for particular strategies of influence to be exercised, and for movements to affect mainstream institutional politics and policy”.^x Political opportunities are defined as “consistent but not necessarily formal, permanent, or national signals to social or political actors which either encourage or discourage them to use their internal resources to form social movements”.^{xi} For groups participating in the contentious politics these opportunities are “options for collective action, with chances and risks attached to them, which depend on

factors outside the mobilizing group”.^{xii} This approach has been designated to be the dominant paradigm in the study of social movements and contentious politics.^{xiii}

Scholars of social movement theory have underlined four main dimensions of political opportunity. These are: the relative openness or closure of the institutionalized political system; the stability or instability of that broad set of elite alignments that typically undergird a polity; the presence or absence of elite allies; and the state's capacity and propensity for repression.^{xiv} In *From Mobilization to Revolution*, Charles Tilly made a systematic attempt at explaining the role of opportunities for the challengers.^{xv} His model of political opportunities comprises of five elements: interests, organization, mobilization, collective action, and opportunity. All these elements are linked to one another in that they involve a collective – their shared interests, common identity and unifying structure among individuals of the population for organization, their ability to control resources and become active participants in public life, and finally exploit opportunities by acting as a collective.

In the case of J & K, the history of a social movement leading to political mobilisation is old, older than the history of independent India. It began against the autocratic rule of the Dogra Maharaja in the 1800s and has since then continued and transformed in relationship with the governing political structures. For the revolutionary masses of the eighteenth century, the objective of collective action was to take control of the means of production and change the nature of ownership to end the social and economic inequality. ‘Seize the means of production’ became a central tenet in Communism and inspired the working and labour class to reconfigure their relationship with the capitalist class. It was in such a setting that ‘proletarian general strike’ became a popular tool of change for the working class who fought for better pay, less taxation, suitable working conditions etc. In J & K, the Dogra regime had

made the lives of shawl weavers miserable by imposing high taxation. The ownership of land belonged to a few people, mainly Pandits, who enjoyed powerful positions in the Dogra administration. Beginning from individual actions, like desertion of agricultural fields to a collective strike by the shawl weavers in 1865, these ‘weapons of the weak’ gave shape to an insurgent consciousness among Muslim subjects of the Dogra rule.

The regime was finally toppled mainly because of the insurgent rebellion from Muslims in Jammu but not before the last ruler of the dynasty transferred the people and the territory of J & K to the newly independent India in 1947. The logic of partition dictated that J & K should go to Pakistan, but the Maharaja chose India. Sheikh Abdullah, who led the agitation against the Dogra rule, also wanted to be part of India for the country espoused secularism against the advice of a number of important leaders of the time. He had rechristened the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference (MC), the organisation of different groups from various sects and schools of thought in J & K fighting against the Dogra’s, into National Conference (NC). The formation of NC *demobilised* those people who wanted J & K to merge with Pakistan and in the years following accession, they were subjected to repression and exile to Pakistan. The social movement structure that was created over the years ceased to mobilise resources until new opportunities emerged.

Political Opportunities: The struggle for self-determination against India in Kashmir

Our main object of analysis here is to show how the Indian states political structure provided opportunities to different groups to form coalitions and mobilise against the interests of the Indian state in Kashmir by foregrounding their own interests. The process of ‘normal politics’ in Kashmir began in the early 1950s. The Sheikh Abdullah led emergency government did not exist without any political opposition. In Jammu, the Praja Parishad, linked to the Dogra

ruling dynasty and strongly influenced by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sang (RSS) began to call for a complete accession and full integration of J & K with the Indian Union. The call for the abrogation of Article 370 began there. The party was against the 1951 Big Landed Estates Act and it was also against making Urdu the official language of the state. Scholars have argued that “the impact of the Parishad movement's Hindu-overtones on Sheikh Abdullah was undeniable. He openly and publicly began to think about the third option for the state [independence]”.^{xvi} Only a month after he made these remarks, Sheikh Abdullah was dismissed as the Prime Minister of J & K and arrested on August 9, 1953. This was the first opportunity for the people in J & K to begin another social movement. It can be said that rebellion against the Dogra rule was against local issues like taxation, access to education and jobs. However, the same movement structure would be used against India in coming years. The “rising ability of the central authorities to control the periphery, and to the expansion of capitalistic power”, in the formal state structure, “made the extension of collective action to the national level necessary”.^{xvii}

The dismissal of Abdullah in 1953 was an opportunity for a section of leaders within NC and those Kashmiris who were living in exile to present a new case against the Indian state and nationalise the contention. Two groups by the same name, Plebiscite Front (*Mahaz-i-Raishumari*), were formed separated by a decade. One in Srinagar by the followers of Sheikh Abdullah in 1955 and another by Amanullah Khan, Maqbool Bhat and others in 1965 in what is known as the Azad Kashmir, a part of Kashmir which is under Pakistan's control. The dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah thus provided an opportunity to these groups to mobilise support for collective action against India. The Front formed by the followers of Abdullah eventually gave in to the repression it faced –ban and detention of leaders –and merged back

with the NC. The Congress government, who under Jawaharlal Nehru had dismissed him, under Indira Gandhi, allowed Abdullah to return as the chief minister of J & K in 1975.

But the Amanullah Khan and Maqbool Bhat led Front chose a different form of collective action –revolutionary violence – as they planned an Algeria-style liberation struggle against the Indian state and formed an armed wing called the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKNLF) which later became Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front. The Plebiscite Front led by Khan and Bhat was, however, mobilised in part by the dismissal of Abdullah. In 1966 when Maqbool Bhat was arrested and charged with sabotage and murder he defended his actions by saying, “I could not reconcile to the new political set-up brought about in Kashmir after Sheikh Abdullah’s dismissal and arrest in 1953”.^{xviii} However, by this time the front had formed strong networks of association on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and advocated the complete independence of J & K, the same beliefs for which Abdullah was dismissed at the first place. Al-Fatah, Kashmir’s first armed group, considered to be the biggest of all “subversive and espionage groups unearthed in Jammu & Kashmir”,^{xix} was connected to the Front.

The activities of these groups and other opportunities provided by the political structure led more groups to mobilise and participate in public life. In the early 1960s a holy relic (*Moi-e-Muqqadas*) of Prophet’s hair went missing from the Hazratbal shrine in Srinagar which led to a wave of protests and agitations across Kashmir. The pro-Pakistan groups in Kashmir which lay dormant following the repression they had faced from Sheikh Abdullah in the initial years exploited this opportunity and returned back to the public scene. Ghulam Mohiuddin Karra and Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq, both pro-Pakistan leaders of that time, addressed close to a 100 thousand people in Lal Chowk, the heart of Srinagar in Kashmir. In the following days

statements were issued by political leaders in Pakistan as they organised rallies witnessing massive public outrage. Soon, in Kashmir, the rallies saw the presence of more ‘green’ flags than the black –the green signalling the association with Pakistan. The Indian states handling of the crisis was fully exploited by the pro-Pakistan groups who, since then, have dominated the political opposition to the Indian state in Kashmir.^{xx}

One of the major social and political forces to emerge stronger than before in these times of political upheavals in J & K is the Jama’at-e-Islami, a pro-Pakistan group which took the route of education and religious reforms to build its political base. Its gaining momentum led Sheikh Abdullah to ban it during the emergency in India. The efforts of Jama’at to politically challenge Abdullah and NC and also to build a political coalition that could challenge India in Kashmir culminated in 1987 with the rigging of elections. The 1987 Assembly elections were rigged by the then government to favour NC against the Muslim United Front (MUF), which was an amalgam of different social, political, and religious groups with Jama’at as the main constituent.

Immediately after the news of rigging spread there were protests across Kashmir and the Indian state unleashed a wave of repression by arresting contestants and activists of MUF including, Mohammad Yousuf Shah, popularly known as Sallahudin, and Yasin Malik. They both went on to join two ideologically opposite armed groups, Hizb ul Mujahideen and JKLF respectively. This also signals at the diversity of the group which organised together and mobilised people for collective action, first for elections and later for armed militancy.

The rigging of 1987 elections also marked an end for electoral politics for groups who contest the claims of Indian sovereignty over Kashmir. Till then different repertoires of contention – which are defined as a “set of means [a group] has for making claims of different types on

different individuals – such as demonstrations, shutdowns, hijackings, and participation in elections were used by different groups. Repertoires of contention are constrained in both time and space and movements use several forms of confrontation available to them to challenge the government. In the early 50s, the dominant repertoire of contention was demonstrations and the dominant mode of repression was arrests and bans. With the increasing capacity of the states to repress challengers, both through the technologisation of their agents of violence and introduction of new laws, social movements also increased the forms of confrontation and expanded the repertoires of contention. Political violence, mainly in the form of insurgency and terrorism, became the dominant form of response to the increasing repression of movements by the states. Political violence is thus explained as an “outcome of the interactions between social movements and their opponents”.^{xxi} Political violence in Kashmir did not emerge directly out of the lapses in the administration of democracy, as many have concluded. It emerged as a result of interactions of the *tehrreek* with the Indian state, using the political opportunities to mobilise support and using different forms of confrontation, mostly peaceful, in different time periods to challenge the Indian claims over Kashmir. However, since the emergence of insurgency in Kashmir in the early 90s, political violence has attracted more attention than the underlying causes or the earlier repertoires of contention aimed to achieve the same objectives that political violence is set out to achieve.

Political Violence in Kashmir after August 5:

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution defined the relationship between the Indian state and the state of J & K. This relationship was often called special for the historical reasons under which it was established. Also, the privileges it guaranteed the state made the position of J &

K special in the Union in comparison with the other states. J & K was free to have its Constitution, a flag, and its own head of the state. However, many provisions of the Article had been done away with through various Presidential amendments over the years.^{xxii} Yet, the BJP always wanted these provisions to be removed completely. For the BJP, Article 370 presented a roadblock for the complete integration of J & K with the Indian Union. BJP's obsession with the territory of J & K emanates from the demographic nature of the place as it was the only Muslim majority state in the country. The removal of Article 35A and 370 thus provides a chance to the BJP to alter the demographics of this place. Many have argued that it has opened a window for the Indian state to turn into a settler colonial power by establishing Israel-type settlements in Kashmir. These fears are palpable on both the sides of political divide in Kashmir: amongst the actors of *tehreek* and also those groups who have aligned themselves with India in the past.

The political parties in Kashmir which contest elections and believe the relationship of J & K with India is valid have fought these elections on the plank that they will safeguard the provisions of Article 370 and 35A. They were content with the limited autonomy that India offered them. The actors of the *tehreek* have always questioned the accession of J & K with the Indian Union for two specific reasons: The logic of partition dictated that J & K becomes a part of Pakistan; and Dogra Maharaja's locus standi to decide on behalf of people who were already up in arms against his rule. Theoretically, the *tehreek* in Kashmir never really considered the application of Indian Constitution in Kashmir as legitimate and as such the Constitutional rearrangements brought about on August 5, do not directly elicit a response from them. It is the pro-India groups who have to bite a bullet on this one.

However the Indian states repression hasn't only demobilised the actors of the *tehreek* but also the pro-India political parties who were expected to raise hue and cry on the August 5 decision. Their disempowerment through the reorganisation of the state into two UTs is largely of their own making. BJP has almost always had a clear position on the status of Article 370 and yet the two main regional parties in J & K aligned themselves with Hindu nationalist party in the past. NC was a coalition partner in the BJP led National Democratic alliance formed in 1998 by Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

In 2014 general elections, the BJP included the removal of Article 370 and 35A—which gives the state Legislature the power to define the permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir—in its manifesto and won the election. However, in the state of J & K it formed a coalition government with the PDP and agreed to maintain a status quo on these constitutional provisions under what they called “agenda of alliance”. The alliance broke in 2018 and the calls for abrogation of the provisions which granted Kashmir a special status became shriller. In the 2019 general election BJP again brought these provisions to focus. Petitions were filed in India's Supreme Court by a number of groups directly or indirectly associated with the Sangh parivar calling for the abrogation of these provisions. The political parties in Kashmir, mainly the PDP and NC, warned the BJP of dire consequences in case these provisions were removed. They signalled at the outbreak of massive violence. On August 5, when the BJP government de-operationalised 370 and abrogated 35A, there was little the pro-India political parties could do to protest. Most of them, including former chief ministers and members of Indian Parliament, were detained inside their houses. The removal of Article 370 and the detention of these leaders felt like the repeat of history in Kashmir.

That the pro-India political parties are mere clients of the Indian state, dispensable at any time, has long been the argument of the leaders of the *tehrreek* in Kashmir. On August 5, this argument gained more weight. There is an opportunity for the challengers of Indian state in Kashmir to mobilise these groups in its support for a more effective collective action. But the leadership of the *tehrreek*, who could have actually exploited the situation, and their mobilisation networks, are absent. This was a result of meticulous preparations on part of the BJP and concerted state repression on the groups of the *tehrreek* condoned by the groups like NC and PDP. Most of the leadership of groups like the Hurriyat Conference were already placed under arrest, some of them under “lawless law(s)” like the Public Safety Act. Jama’at and JKLF were banned under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). Hundreds of political activists of these groups were sent to different jails in India. The local media and businessmen were targeted by investigation agencies and were forced into submission to the government.

In such a climate of repression, there was no immediate response but the people responded with a general strike. They refused to open shops, send children to schools, and do business. Since the established pro-India parties were also disempowered and dispossessed of the little autonomy they would enjoy when in power, they also decided to stay away from the local body elections. In past, these parties and their governments would be used to repress the *tehrreek* and its leadership.^{xxiii} The change in the Constitutional status offers them and the groups of *tehrreek* an opportunity to align their interests. Political parties like NC and the PDP are unlikely to join the *tehrreek* and may as well participate in the ‘democratic processes’ as soon as the statehood is restored. However, this does open up more space for the *tehrreek* to mobilise more resources in its favour.

In the face of the unprecedented repression it may be difficult for the *tehreek* to exert palpable influence on the streets of Kashmir today and more difficult for the movement to take shape into a different kind of collective action except political violence. The signs of that are already present. All communication channels were shut down on the intervening night of August 4 and 5, after which Kashmir was completely cut off from the world. Not only did it block the communications channels different political groups would use to mobilize people for protests and stopped local media from functioning, it also shut down the intelligence gathering network of the counterinsurgency grid as it lost contact with its sources and informers. In the first six months of this year close to 120 insurgents were killed by the Indian security forces. However, since August 5 only two insurgents have been killed in more than six hundred cordon and search operations. This is a poor record for Indian counterinsurgency grid by all measures in the recent times. “Most of the encounters in the Valley take place because of human intelligence and surveillance of phones. As phones are not working, our sources are not able to pass on the information and we are not able to keep surveillance.”^{xxiv} The only structure of *tehreek* present in Kashmir today is that of insurgency. The information blackout which led to the reduction in counterinsurgency operations allowed the members of different insurgent organisations to regroup, plan new strategies, and move around easily. It was reported from many places across Kashmir that insurgents had spread posters asking people to maintain a civilian curfew.

In the same time number of insurgent sightings increased across Kashmir. In Srinagar alone, the police have recorded at least 40 sightings of the insurgents but could not act on the leads as information did not reach them on time. Even if information would reach them on time, it would not be easy to mobilize troops for the encounter. Although the police have maintained

that there are 200 to 300 active insurgents in Kashmir right now the actual figure cannot be estimated or ascertained as a “sharp rise” in infiltrations is reported.^{xxv} On October 6, a “10 day long gun battle” between Indian forces and insurgents, who have most likely infiltrated from Pakistan, was reported which gives the reports of infiltration more credibility.^{xxvi}

Historically, Pakistan is a party to the dispute over Kashmir with India. Hence, the change in the status quo brought by the decision taken by the Indian government on August 5th also concerns the establishment in Pakistan. Officially, Pakistan has offered political and diplomatic support to the cause of insurgency in Kashmir –which is the fight for the right to self-determination. It is no secret that Pakistan has offered sanctuary, training, and logistic support to the insurgent groups operating in Kashmir. Pakistan’s concerns about the situation in Kashmir today are so serious that Prime Minister Imran Khan dedicated almost all of his time talking and meeting with representatives of different countries at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) recently. In his speech he warned the international community of a repeat of a Pulwama-like attack the blame of which, he said, India will put on Pakistan. He emphasised that the blame for any such eventuality should be put on India for treating 8 million people as “worse than animals”.

He also signalled at a possibility of a nuclear war in case India didn’t stop pushing the people of Kashmir to the wall, leaving them with no option but the resort to violence. Mr. Khan’s speech at the UNGA was a calculated justification for violence of those people who are subjected to a dehumanising treatment and as such was a subtle hint to the global audience that violence in Kashmir is going to witness an increase. His speech was being closely followed by the people in Kashmir. There were reports of firecracker bursting from across

Kashmir immediately after his speech. In fact, people in parts of Kashmir started picking apples –the mainstay of Kashmiri economy –after his speech.

From the 1960s, when the pro-Pakistan groups were first mobilised against the Indian state, to the present both the repression of the state and the means of confrontation to it from the *tehreek* have evolved into more manifest forms of political violence. The evolution of the means of engagement has influenced both the sides. The Indian state has tried to rig elections, install favourable regimes, and brute violence of counterinsurgency to end the *tehreek* in Kashmir. From its end, the actors in the Kashmiri *tehreek* have engaged in different forms of collective action: peaceful demonstrations, even elections, and political violence. With the increasing repression from the Indian state on the social movement structure in Kashmir, only the underground insurgent networks –which are also part of the social movement structure – are in a position to respond to Indian states efforts at establishing settler colonies in J & K. The news coming from Kashmir is that the “battle has reached a decisive phase”.^{xxvii}

Conclusion:

Political opportunity and resource mobilisation processes are not mutually exclusive but inform and influence one another. States are forced to make changes because of the growing ability of social movements to create disturbances in the system. These changes can provide opportunities to the movements to mobilise more resources in their favour. However, the extent of repression from the state will determine the nature of collective action these movements will take. Their future will also depend on their interests and the demands they make. Groups with limited interests can be incorporated in the institutional set-up by offering. The case of the Plebiscite Front formed by the followers of Shiekh Abdullah is a fitting example here. Although they did demand complete independence of J & K at the start,

they finally returned back to the electoral politics after facing some amount of repression and eventually settled with reduced autonomy. However, the constituent groups of the *tehreek* – JKLF, Hurriyat, Jama'at, beside the militant groups like Hizb-ul-Mujahideen among others – continue with the demand of self-determination. The repression of the *tehreek* and its leadership hasn't forced them to give up their demands but has helped them make their cause more mainstream and mobilise more resources.

Notes and References:

ⁱ The instrument of accession is a legal document signed by the two sovereign countries of Jammu and Kashmir and India. J & K was an independent country before it acceded to India through this accession. The terms of accession were later incorporated in the Indian Constitution under Article 370 and India was given direct control over only three areas: Telecommunications, Foreign Affairs, and Defence. Laws passed by the Indian Parliament were not directly applicable to J & K and required the concurrence of the elected government in the state. The document of accession is available here http://jklaw.nic.in/instrument_of_accession_of_jammu_and_kashmir_state.pdf

ⁱⁱ Many Indian commentators and legal expert have called the decision of removing the two Articles as undemocratic and unconstitutional. A. G. Noorani, India's top constitutional expert and an authority on the subject of Article 370 said that the decision was "patently illegal". His views were recorded in an interview. See Akshay Deshmene, 'Scrapping Article 370 "Unconstitutional", "Deceitful" Says Legal Expert A.G. Noorani', *Huffpost* (5 August 2019), available at https://www.huffingtonpost.in/entry/kashmir-article-370-scrapping-constitutional-expert-reacts-noorani_in_5d47e58de4b0aca341206135

ⁱⁱⁱ The Indian control over Kashmir is being called as colonialism by a once colonised even by commentators in India. See for example Indrajit Hazara, 'At last, the once-colonised becomes coloniser', *Economic Times* (5 August 2019), available at

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/blogs/Undertheinfluence/at-last-the-once-colonised-becomes-coloniser/>

^{iv}For an elaborate discussion on the Indian Colonialism in Kashmir see Goldie Osuri, 'Imperialism, colonialism and sovereignty in the (post)colony: India and Kashmir', *Third World Quarterly* (Vol. 38, no. 11, 2017), pp. 2428-2443

^vTo understand how practices of welfare and warfare are combined in the Indian counterinsurgency in Kashmir see, Mona Bhan, *Counterinsurgency, Democracy, and the Politics of Identity in India: From Warfare to Welfare?* (New York, Routledge, 2014)

^{vi}For a detailed history and understanding of the rise of Hindu nationalism in India see, Christophe Jaffrelot eds., *Hindu Nationalism: A Reader* (Delhi, Permanent Black, 2007)

^{vii} Bert Klandermans, *The Social Psychology of Protest* (Oxford, Blackwell Publishers, 1997)

^{viii} Jacqueliën van Stekelenburg and Bert Klandermans. *Social movement theory: Past, present and prospect* in Stephen Ellis and Ineke van Kessel eds, *Movers and Shakers: Social Movements in Africa* (Brill, 2009)

^{ix} N.J. Smelser, *Theory of Collective Behavior* (London, The Free Press, 1962).

^xDavid S. Meyer and Debra C. Minkoff, *Conceptualizing Political Opportunity*, (Vol. 82, no. 4, 2004), pp. 1457-1492

^{xi}Sidney Tarrow, 'States and Opportunities: The Political Structuring of Social Movements', pg. 54. In John D. McCarthy, Doug McAdam and Mayer Zald (eds.), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.41–61

^{xii}Ruud Koopmans, 'Political Opportunity Structure: Some Splitting to Balance the Lumping', pg. 65. In Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (eds.), *Rethinking Social Movements*. (Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2004), pp. 61–73

^{xiii}Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper, 'Caught in a Winding, Snarling Vine: The Structural Bias of Political Process Theory'. In Jeff Goodwin and James M. Jasper (eds.), *Rethinking Social Movements*. (Lanham, Rowman and Littlefield, 2004)

^{xiv}Marco Giugni, *Political Opportunities: From Tilly to Tilly*, (Vol 15, no. 2, 2009), pp. 361-368

^{xv}Charles Tilly, *From Mobilization to Revolution* (Reading, Addison-Wesley, 1978).

^{xvi}Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay, *Nation, identity and the intervening role of the state: A study of the secessionist movement in Kashmir*, pg. 482-83, (Vol. 69, no. 4, 1996), pp. 471-497

^{xvii}Loris Caruso, *Theories of the Political Process, Political Opportunities Structure and Local Mobilizations. The Case of Italy*, (Vol. 9, no. 3, 2015), pg. 4

^{xviii}(Schofield, 2010, pg. 115)

^{xix}A brief summary of Al Fatah is given here: 'Al Fatah is the biggest espionage groups unearthed in Jammu & Kashmir', *India Today* (29 February 1984), available at <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/cover-story/story/19840229-al-fatah-is-biggest-espionage-groups-unearthed-in-jammu-kashmir-802836-1984-02-29>

^{xx}A summary of the events and how they were reported by different media houses is given here: R. S. Gull, 'Hanging By The Relic', *Kashmir Life* (7 July 2014), available at <https://kashmirlife.net/hanging-by-the-relic-issue18-vol06-61615/>

^{xxi}Donatella della Porta, *Clandestine Political Violence*, pg. 15, (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2013)

^{xxii}A. G. Noorani, *Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir*(Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011)

^{xxiii}Consider the banning of Jama'at by Shiekh Abdullah in 1975. The organization was banned again in 1990. The third ban was imposed on it in 2019. It has been observed that on all the three occasions the Indian state has been faced with serious challenges from the *tehreek* in Kashmir. In response to the gains made by the *tehreek*, India has often used repressive measure to put an end to it.

^{xxiv}Akash Hassan, 'Communication Curbs Add Fresh Challenge to Kashmir Counter-insurgency Operations', *News18* (27 September 2019), available at <https://www.news18.com/news/india/communication-curbs-add-fresh-challenge-to-kashmir-counter-insurgency-operations-2324947.html>

^{xxv} Bharti Jain, 'Sharp rise in infiltration bids in J&K since August 5', *Times of India* (12 September 2019) available at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/articleshow/71089136.cms?utm_source=contentofinterest&utm_medium=text&utm_campaign=cppst

^{xxvi} Azaan Javaid, ‘10 days after fierce gun battle began, ‘missing militants’ keep forces on edge in Kashmir’, *ThePrint* (6 October 2019), available at <https://theprint.in/india/fierce-gun-battle-missing-militants-forces-in-kashmir/301966/>

^{xxvii} There has been an increase in the attacks on non-local businessmen in Kashmir. Although the identity of the killers has not been verified yet but the general belief in the government is that these killings are being carried out by the militants. See Sreemoy Talukdar, ‘Targeted killings of apple traders and non-local labourers show Kashmir battle has reached a decisive phase’, *First Post* (17 October 2019), available at <https://www.firstpost.com/india/targeted-killings-of-apple-traders-and-non-local-labourers-show-kashmir-battle-has-reached-a-decisive-phase-7515301.html>