
Impact of terrorism on Jammu & Kashmir's ecology and economy

The world's major conflicts from the years 1950 to 2000, have occurred (or are occurring) in the most biologically diverse and threatened places on earth. A study conducted by a reputed science journal, *'Conservation Biology'*, points out 34 biodiversity regions in the world, *'Kashmir Himalaya'* being one. Sheltering a rich repository of biodiversity, Jammu & Kashmir presently stands highly threatened owing to the ongoing conflict.

The State of Jammu & Kashmir has experienced three wars since 1947, and has been in a "war-like" situation for close to three decades. Besides the loss of human lives the conflict has led to the destruction of the territory's ecological wealth. Due to counter-terrorist strategies, military forces are forced to set up camps in the forest areas disturbing the natural habitat of the wild animals who then stray into human settlements. The unceremonious dumping of arms and ammunition in different ecological zones on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) has also had ill effects on the health of the land leading to soil fertility decline and thereby negatively impacting the agronomic production.

Tourism, one of the biggest employment generators of the State with the potential of making Jammu & Kashmir one of the most prosperous regions, also took a major hit, followed by handicraft and the houseboat- and hotel industry which are directly dependent on tourism. The turmoil has transformed the current society into a lawless one, with more and more lawless situations emerging out of it. The flood plains which used to be natural water absorbers have been encroached upon and residential colonies set up, causing devastating floods.

Forests and Wildlife

The total forest area of Indian Administered Jammu & Kashmir State, as per working plans, is 7,810 sq miles, with region wise distribution as, Kashmir 3,138 sq miles, Jammu 4,659 sq miles and Ladakh 13,8 sq miles. This is besides the 46,660 sq miles which is in Pakistan Administered Jammu & Kashmir. Forests have played an important role in the economy of the State as various independent industries have emerged from it; Eco-tourism, Turpentine and Resin industry, Kashmir Willow industry, Joinery, Ply and other wood based industries and pharmaceuticals. Not long ago, Jammu & Kashmir had the credit of being one of the thickly forested areas of the world, but the ongoing armed conflict, terrorism and counter-terrorism strategies by the State apparatus have had devastating effects on not only forests, but also its wildlife.

Timber-smuggling, though not a new phenomenon, witnessed a spurt from 1989, when terrorism started, owing to the inability of the law enforcement agencies to effectively deal with smugglers because of great danger in and around forests. Owing to the ongoing unrest, the police and forest guards are unable to protect the forests and smugglers continue unabated loot. As per trusted sources, 72 Forest Officers, including a conservator of forests and some junior officers, fell prey to bullets during the insurgency in their attempts to prevent timber-smuggling.

A Forest Protection Group was formed in 1996, but continues to remain unarmed. It is yet to be given arms clearance from security agencies making it difficult for unarmed members of this group to protect the forests against armed smugglers. There have been many cases of vandalization despite the presence of Forest Protection force personnel.

The wildlife that acted as deterrent to timber-smuggling, is rapidly declining throughout the Valley as the smugglers deliberately set fire to destroy evidence of their offence.

Ever since terrorism started in 1989, the Kashmir Valley has lost more than 59 sq miles out of 7,810 sq miles of forest cover, disrobing the land of old grown forest leaves and exposing it to heavy rainfall leading to water rushing down the hills and eroding the loose soil which eventually flows into rivers and lakes. Additionally, deforestation and mismanagement of water resources have also caused soil erosion, which cause frequent flash floods in the State. Around 8% of landmass of the region is prone to floods. In a span of 33 years, from 1973 to 2006, 13 floods were experienced with frequency of occurrence of just 2.5 years and with an average annual damage of more than \$ 15.6 million.



Due to excessive biotic pressure, heavy exploitation for purpose of timber, fuelwood extraction, grazing and other local uses, the forest cover has been reduced to only 4,247 sq miles which we may refer to as 'good forest', out of 7,810 sq miles, and the rest of the forest area has been degraded. Available data reveals that most of the faunal diversity, which is about 66%, lies along the 460 miles long and 15.5 miles wide LoC and a considerable percentage of it has been lost to landmines. In their pursuit to apprehend terrorists, there is also a widespread use of high velocity rifles by security forces and other

methods like electrical fenced, solid steel walls, all-night lighting, multiple-layered vehicle barriers, an immense network of newly bladed roads, a 24-hour flow of patrol vehicles (including ATVs-all terrain vehicles), constant low-level aircraft over fighters, and foot patrols. Although these measures have been designed to counter terrorist activities, they also create barriers to the wildlife movement in the villages and forests surrounding the Himalayan Valley.

In addition, rare species like the Snow Leopard Ibex, Blue Sheep, Urian, Kashmiri Otter, the big horned sheep, and Antelope, are frequently hunted and poached for its precious skin and teeth which are sold in international markets at exorbitant prices.

Barking Deer, Cheetal, Nilgai, Musk Deer, Himalayan Black Bear, Shapu, Ibex, Blue Sheep, Marmot and Lynz may soon become extinct if their unrestricted slaughter is not checked, Crook,1998.

These forests used to be an abode to about 300 species of birds like quills, pheasants, vultures, kites, partridges and eagles, and stand naked today and void of any visible sign of bird life, there being only a variety of ducks, geese, ferns and water-fowls nesting in wetlands, lakes and streams.

Lakes / Waterbodies

There are over a thousand waterbodies in the State of Jammu & Kashmir. Major rivers that flow through the State are Jhelum, Chenab, Indus and Tawi. Other rivers that originate from glaciers in the Himalayan region are the Ganges and the Yamuna. The State has numerous lakes and wetlands at different altitudes, bounded on all sides by Himalayan Mountains. There are about 500 lakes in the Kashmir Valley, Dal Lake and Wular Lake being the most prominent ones. Jammu division has two lakes, Mansar and Surinsar Lake respectively, while Pangong Tso Lake, Tsomoriri Lake and Tsokar Lake are the lakes in Ladakh. There are also around 2,500 glacial lakes in Gilgit Baltistan (Pakistan Administered Kashmir).

With the onset of terrorism in early 1990, the State witnessed deterioration in the law and order situation that continues up till today. In response, numerous military installations have been raised along the banks of major rivers and lakes to keep a vigil on terrorists, yet in the absence of an efficient and effective system to dispose waste, the stay of the military is posing a danger to the ecology of water as the waste is let free into the water bodies leading to increase in the nutrient content in the water and formation of deadly bacteria.

Dal Lake, one of the prominent lakes of the Kashmir Valley, has shrunk to 4,24 sq miles from 36 sq miles that it used to be in 1880, due to the large-scale conversion of water into land. Since there is no fear of punitive action, some have taken advantage of the current situation, and have encroached public land especially in and around the lake. The waste material from the houseboats also pours into the lake. It has been observed that weeds like water moss, azolla and duckweed are flourishing rapidly in water bodies and these proliferating weeds, that have grown over the periphery of Dal Lake, block the



sunlight from reaching the plants living under water, thus depriving the aquatic life and the lake of oxygen. The illegal encroaching of land, farming and setting up small crafts factories and hotel buildings, has acted as a deterrent to projects like *“Dal Lake Cleaning”*, which started in September 2005, and enjoys 100% funding from the Government of India, in view of the Special Status of Jammu & Kashmir, to be executed by the State Government. The cleaning of the Dal Lake would mean rehabilitating 50,000 people of 10,000 families who live in and on the lake and to be settled at a place which is not far away from it, so that they could earn their livelihood, was one of the greatest hurdles in cleaning the lake, as explained by one of the State Government officials.

The fate of Wular Lake is no different. The Wular Lake is one of the largest fresh water lakes of Asia, playing a significant role in the hydrographic system of the Kashmir Valley and acting as a huge absorption basin for the annual flood waters. The lake is fighting a losing battle against illegal encroachment with vegetable gardens, toilets, residential structure and garbage dumping sites. The Wular Lake is an important fish resource, accounting for about 60% of the total fish production in the

State and a source of sustenance for a huge chunk of human population living along its fringes. The lake has been encroached upon from all sides by massive plantation of trees and extension of agriculture fields, killing its aesthetic beauty.

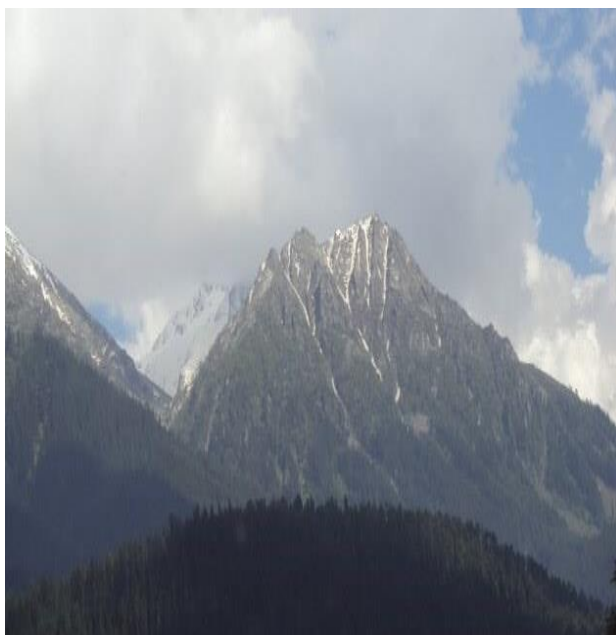
Wular Conservation Management Authority (WUCMA) has been established for the conservation of the lake. According to official sources, the WUCMA roughly releases over \$ 60,000 annually to local municipalities for waste disposal but the funds are allegedly misused and instead, at least 100-ton waste is dumped into the water body on a daily basis.

In addition to garbage which is burnt leading to air pollution, construction debris are also dumped in the lakebeds. One finds it hard to believe that about 20 years back the water of the Wular Lake was used for drinking purposes and in the present times it's so polluted that even the birds that frequented the lake earlier are nowhere to be spotted.

The summer capital city, Srinagar has lost more than 50% of its water bodies from year 1911 till 2004, owing to unplanned urbanization resulting in the fact that excess water from the Jhelum has nowhere to flow; wetlands which were natural sinks have been converted into agricultural fields and residential areas.

Glaciers

The State possesses the highest number of glaciers outside the polar regions amounting to 60% of the Indian Himalayas and 13% of its geographical area, with Siachen Glacier, in the Ladakh region, at an elevation of 3,35 miles with an area of 27,3 sq miles, being the largest. There are 5,000 glaciers and 2,500 glacial lakes in Gilgit Baltistan (Pakistan Administered Kashmir), with a potential of generating power of 52,000 MW. The studies conducted in the last three decades by National Institute of



Hydrology, Roorkee, India revealed that the glaciers in Ladakh, Zaskar and the Great Himalayan ranges of Jammu & Kashmir are generally receding with a glacial volume change between 3.6% to 97% and degradation ranging from 17% to 25%. The Nubra Valley of Jammu & Kashmir has 114 small-sized glaciers varying between less than 3.1 miles and 6.2 miles in length. The glaciers of the Valley have not shown much change in their length and area during the period 1989 till 2001, however, variable decline in the glacial area of the Siachen Glacier has been observed, with a reduction in its area from 384 sq miles in 1969, to 360 sq miles in 1989, and a further change in

area has been observed from 360 sq miles to 359 sq miles during the decade of 1989 till 2001. The reason for this change has been attributed to the continuous shelling at large scale and military activities and the dumping of non-biodegradable waste by the military forces that has become a part

of the snow on Siachen Glacier. The studies reveal that since the year of militarization of the glacier in 1984, about 216,000 tons of load has been transported there, as a consequence of which the Siachen Glacier has become the world's highest battlefield and a garbage dump.

There are nearly 20,000 military personnel deployed at Siachen for whom thousands of tons of food and other supplies are transported every year and about 40% of the non-biodegradable waste that is left behind is plastic and metal. World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of World Conservation Union (IUCN) estimates that, on the Indian side alone, over 1 ton of human waste is dropped daily into crevasses. Siachen is polluted by the remains of crashed helicopters, worn out gun barrels, splinters from gun shelling, empty fuel barrels, burnt shelters, telephone wires, skid boards, parachute dropping boards, edible oil containers, canisters, gunny bags, rotten vegetables, bad meat, expired tinned meat, cartons, wrappers, shoes, clothing and ration items.

The clothing used in warfare is washed at the hot Sulphur springs, the toxic residue flowing into the Nubra River and because of the absence of natural biodegrading agents, waste material like plastic, metals, etc. merge with the glacier taking shape of permanent pollutants and toxins, like cobalt and cadmium, which eventually flows into the Indus river used by millions of people (from India and Pakistan) downstream from Siachen for drinking and irrigation purposes.

Though Siachen does not have any native population owing to its harsh climatic conditions, it has experienced large scale loss of plant and animal biodiversity. Glacial habitats of ibex, brown bears, cranes, snow leopards and few other species are threatened which has led the World Wide Fund of Nature to designate the entire Tibetan Plateau Steppe (one of the largest land-based wilderness areas left in the world having most pristine mountain grassland in Eurasia), which encompasses the Siachen Glacier as one of the 200 areas, "critical to observation".

The Jammu & Kashmir Pollution Control Board is the only government agency charged with the environmental protection of this area but has largely failed. Despite bearing the scars of the military conflicts between India and Pakistan, the glacier and its surroundings remain rich in biodiversity, but it is estimated that more than 30% of the region's rampant flora is threatened from the military presence in the area. The troop movements around strategic locations, firing practice and the military debris, have left behind disturbed wildlife, affecting their breeding, spreading disease and bringing species like the Tibetan Gazelle to the verge of extinction. The environment challenges in the region concern ecologists who have urged both India and Pakistan to reduce their military presence in the regions, and jointly begin the task of regenerating its biodiversity by setting up the peace park, unfortunately with no positive outcome.

Agriculture/ Fertile Land

Agriculture occupies an important place in the economy of the Jammu & Kashmir State owing to the State's agro-climatic conditions best suited for horticulture and floriculture. Horticulture is the mainstay of the rural economy, providing employment to large number of local inhabitants, but the ongoing conflict has effected the fertility of the land.

The impact can be seen on the centuries old nomadic tribes of 'Gujjars' & 'Bakarwals', who constitute more than 20% population of the State. The military agencies and terrorists impose restrictions on these tribal migrations in the border and strategic areas causing dramatic changes in their lifestyle, forcing them to settle in plains. Their fertile lands near the LoC have become barren due to the shelling and laying of landmines, and they are left with no option but to move out of their traditional occupations and suffer equally in terms of man and material.

The ways in which landmines cause land degradation are, loss of biodiversity, micro-relief disruption, chemical contamination, and loss of productivity, irrespective of them being detonated or not. A simple mine costs less than \$ 3, but its clearance requires \$ 300 to \$ 1,000 making de-mining a very costly and slow process. Additionally, low availability of land (access denial), degradation of the soil (micro-relief disruption and chemical contamination), combined with loss of flora and fauna diversity add up to land degradation which leads to reduction in produce of an otherwise productive land.

Tourism

The Kashmir Valley of Jammu & Kashmir State, known for its natural beauty and cultural heritage, surrounded by mountains carpeted by snow is pertinently referred to as "*The Paradise on Earth*".

"From an English point of view the valley contains nearly everything which should make life enjoyable. There is sport varied and excellent, there is scenery for the artist and layman, mountains for the mountaineer, flowers for the botanist, a vast field for the geologist and magnificent ruins for the archaeologist", The Valley of Kashmir (1895), Travel Book by Sir Walter Roper Lawrence.

The land of such strategic location with rare concoction of mountains, lakes, forests, fertile land, tulip gardens, splendid blue skies and rich cultural heritage used to be flocked by tourists from times immemorial till peace of this land of unending glory was disrupted by the terror groups in early 1990s, which led to loss of tourism revenue, creating an economic vacuum in the Valley.

The three decades long armed conflict and geo-political instability has impacted every socio-economic activity in the Kashmir Valley. Besides art and crafts sectors, tourism has been the worst hit of this continuous unrest. Peace, conflict and revenue generating sectors like tourism, arts and crafts and apple orchards (in case of the Valley) anywhere in the world are intertwined and disturbances in any of the three impacts the other two. Regardless of the abundance of scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage, the constant fear of death and continued unrest led to the loss of tourist appetite for this destination.

As per the available data, the tourist arrival was prodigious 0.72 million in 1988, followed by a drastic dip in 1991, when it was reduced to mere 6,287 tourists annually. Ordinarily, a traveler has two questions: "*where*" and "*how*" to travel but when it comes to Jammu & Kashmir, the question changes to "*whether*" to travel or not.

“Unless terrorism is viewed as a crisis by the tourism industry, energy and resources cannot be effectively channeled into its management”, Sevil.F Sonmez (1999), Speaker - University of Central Florida, occupational/leisure/health.

Historical sites and other tourist spots have either been in use by the military or have become hideouts and safe havens for terrorists. The security experts state that they have no other option than to use large number of troops to mitigate challenges thrown by terrorism. From the point of view of tourism, whether or not there should be army troops in large numbers is debatable, as the native population feels presence of security forces and infrastructure raised by them is the primary hindrance for tourist inflow, whereas tourists traveling to the Kashmir Valley feel presence of security forces psychologically motivates them to visit Kashmir and makes them feel safer. The year 1987, pre-terrorism period was the last big revenue generating season for Jammu & Kashmir tourism, and accounted for approximately 10% of the State’s income, while the following 23 years contributed virtually nothing. The international tourists constituted a significant percentage of the tourists visiting Kashmir, who spent large sums on handicraft products, and invested in adventure sports like trekking, skiing and rafting. However, there have been series of headline grabbing incidences, especially the one in 1995, when some foreign tourist trekkers were kidnapped by terrorists, among whom one was be-headed, one escaped and other four untraced, who were later declared as dead, which proved to be a major blow for Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs). As a consequence of this specific incident negative travel advisories to visit Kashmir were issued by foreign nations, adversely affecting the tourist revenue generated by foreign visitors. Attacking international tourists works in favor of terror groups, as it leads to higher media- and international attention and spreads terror among the local community.

Besides foreign nationals, Indian tourists were also targeted. The Srinagar International Airport witnessed three major terror attacks and Srinagar was once declared as the most threatened site in India by the World Monuments Fund (WMF), placing it on the 2008 List of Most Endangered Sites. It is estimated that the State of Jammu & Kashmir lost around 27 million tourists from 1989 till 2002, leading to a tourism revenue loss of \$ 3.6 billion and consequent high unemployment. The owners of hotels, guest houses and houseboats, whose business is completely dependent upon the inflow of tourists suffered major economic losses. Nearly 1,094 houseboats in Dal Lake, Nigeen Lake and River Jhelum and all those people employed in their running were rendered idle, forcing them to look for alternative sources of income. The employability in this sector will continue to be volatile as any terror attack would mean loss of business for tourism industry and impact handicraft, carpet industry, hotel industry which are majorly dependent on tourism. The handicraft industry, providing employment to more than 300,000 people, has witnessed a drastic dip in the production of art work like paper mache items, wooden art-ware and Kashmiri rugs, which are highly appreciated and purchased by (international) tourists.

Impact of Hartals (Shutdowns) and curfews

In today’s age of Internet of Things (IoT) instead of using modern means of communication to put forth their demands and reach out to larger masses, the separatists groups opt to rely upon *hartals* (strikes) and shutdowns, thereby making people abstain from work. The unending era of strikes is as

old as terrorism in the Kashmir Valley, where from an arrest of a militant commander to the killing of a civilian, is followed by week long strikes which gradually decayed the economy of the State. There have also been times when strikes were enforced by separatist and terrorists upon the people of Kashmir because of unrelated incidents happening in the larger Muslim world.

These strikes have failed to attract international attention and lost their relevance nationally, as they remain localized to few localities of Srinagar and other towns in the State. The daily wagers, street vendors, passenger bus drivers, conductors, fruit sellers, who must step out of the house every day to be able to feed themselves and people dependent on them, are the primary and worst casualties of the shutdowns and continue to suffer silently. The curfew which was imposed on 18 July 2016, which started after the unrest in response to the killing of a so-called militant commander, Burhan Wani, of a Pakistani-based terrorist group, Hizbul Mujahideen, was one of the harshest ever curfews which continued for a period of six months across all ten districts of Kashmir. For the initial 51 days of the curfew, people remained confined to the four walls of their houses without a break or what is referred to in Kashmir as “*deal*”. Curfew remained in place strictly during days as well as nights. The Jammu based business claimed to have suffered an estimated loss of \$ 1.5 billion in those 51 days of hartal and curfew as Kashmir receives majority of supplies from edibles to industrial goods from Jammu, where major industries of the State are situated. Most of the multinational companies supplying edibles to the State have stationed their forwarding agents in Jammu, therefore all the supplies that are meant to reach Kashmir are bound to pass through the Jammu region.

The tourist arrival went down from 12,000 tourists to 250 per day with hotel and houseboat occupancy around 3%; The Valley was reduced to just being a stopover destination for tourists visiting Ladakh.

Kashmir is one of the largest producers of apples; 70% of apples that are sold in mainland India are from Kashmir. For fruit growers/farmers/vendors, these hartals meant that daily produce of fruit could not be transported to outside markets and since there is not a single cold storage in Srinagar, the fruits if not sold or transported to outside markets, got rotten effecting the business on a daily basis. It is estimated that due to persistent shutdowns, fruit growers have incurred a loss of \$ 1.24 to \$ 1.4 billion.

Horticulture is the mainstay of Kashmir's economy, with 2,300,000 people associated with this sector. More than 1301,16 sq miles are under fruit cultivation in Jammu & Kashmir, of which 841,70 sq miles of land is under the fruit cultivation in the Valley, of which 65% comprises of apple orchards. Going by conservative estimates, from horticulture to hospitality, a loss of over \$ 9.33 million has been incurred during the 51 days long hartals and curfews.

Others affected by hartals, are people associated with art and craft industry, who find neither transporters nor any buyers for their shawls and artwork. The strikes have had adverse effects on other aspects of life, like education and healthcare. The educational institutions remain shut during hartals with children losing days and sometimes months of their academic calendar and the sick unable to access medical help. It is hard to comprehend why the “*Hartal Strategy*” is never debated by separatist groups or the population as to why it is the preferred strategy to make their presence felt in the valley.

These unnecessary calls for shutdowns have outlived their utility; the only achievement so far has been putting the lives of common man in danger and making survival difficult.

Impact on Education

The education sector in Kashmir has suffered the most irreparable damage due to terrorism, protests, strikes and shutdown calls which have become the order of the day in Kashmir Valley. The continuing disturbed environment has resulted in complete disruption of academic schedules. On an average, schools, colleges, training institutions and universities have remained closed for at least two days every week.

The existing education process in Jammu & Kashmir doesn't expose the learners to cultural values, inter-community relationships, communal harmony, diversity of people, their religions and backgrounds, unlike the students of pre-terrorism era who learnt about their heritage, naturally through common shared spaces like festivals, weddings, educational institutions and public intermingling of different cultural and religious communities. The learners who started their education 1990 onwards have no reference of communal harmony, heritage or diversity of people. Their sole reference being that of existing turmoil, terrorism, anger, aggressiveness, violence and despair. Sadly, even the teachers are detached from the experience of diversity and the teaching remains confined to the academic curriculum, which lacks the strength to develop the emotional, mental, social or intellectual capabilities of learners and teachers.

"Thinking back of my time at school and thereafter up until 1990, the classroom space was a diverse mix of Hindu and Muslim children studying together. Besides school, however, the opportunity for a secular experience for children is limited in the Valley". Neerja Mattoo, Retired School Principal and Educator.

As per the census of 2001, the literacy rate of Jammu & Kashmir stands at 55%, while the national literacy rate in India, was 65.38%. The literacy rate for women stood at a dismal 43% as compared to 66% for males. The current education system in the Valley has transformed into an arrangement where religious teaching is the only source of moral values for students, which has created an opportunity for the exploitation by certain extremist and fundamentalist groups and individuals for political gains, especially targeting young students.

Due to the incidences of violence and frequent strikes, the number of working days have drastically reduced; teachers are more concerned about completing the syllabus rather than imparting knowledge and skills to the students. The education sector in rural Kashmir is in an equally dismal state. As per unofficial estimates, about 35% students studying in primary and secondary stages in the villages, drop-out for reasons directly or indirectly related to terrorism.

"In rural areas, there are less private schools as people just cannot afford it. The students who belong to financially weaker sections are totally dependent on the government for education, but lack of infrastructure and other facilities affects their learning levels as a result of which they lag behind". Naseer Ahmad, a teacher from South Kashmir.

The curriculum followed by Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Education demands revision as the syllabus and content taught is largely outdated and irrelevant, with almost zero focus on art, music and other extra-curricular activities.

Education in the Valley has suffered a silent death, where people gather together in large numbers to protest against the killing of a terrorist, or complain about economic losses and delays in developmental work, but have never held a single protest showing concern for loss of education-days or deprivation of opportunities to attain knowledge.

Impact on the mental health of people

In the last 20 years, there has been a rise in the number of psychological problems like stress, trauma and depression related cases in Srinagar, giving rise to general health conditions like hypertension, cardiac problems and diabetes. The psychological disorder like Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which develops in people who have experienced a shocking, scary, or dangerous event can be directly attributed to terrorism in the State as before the onset of terrorism, disorders of this kind were unheard of. The cure of this mental condition is difficult as the patient needs a peaceful environment to heal which Kashmir cannot provide. There is a manifold increase in cases where people experience dreadful dreams, particularly in case of women who have experienced violent incidents. There are other mental disorders like bipolar disorder, panic, phobia, generalized anxiety and sleep disorders which have shown manifold increase post 1990.

“Every day I treat a good number of patients complaining of sleep disorders. These nightmares are due to underlying distress”. Dr. Mushaq Margoob, Professor & Head, Post Graduate Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College, Srinagar and Director Institute of Mental Health and Neuroscience, Srinagar (J&K).

According to mental health experts, if trauma and stress is neglected it can become a genetic disorder and transmits due to structural change and degeneration in certain areas in the brain, thereafter transferring from one generation to another. Some community surveys reveal that 25% of the people in Kashmir Valley suffer from lifetime depressive disorders, and complain of sleep disorders, headache, heart palpitations, dizziness, etc.

The increase on the mental health issues has also led to suicides. The feeling of insecurity and continuous threat to one’s life has flawed the psychological growth of people.

According to a report on statistics available on the ‘*Accidental Deaths and Suicides in India*’, published by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) of the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, in the year 2011, 287 people in the State of Jammu & Kashmir lost their lives by committing suicide. These suicidal deaths, which include 143 females and 144 males, are higher than 2010, when 259 persons committed suicide, an increase of 10.8% as compared to the National average of 0.7%. The report reveals the highest incidence of suicide in the age group of 15-29 with 127 deaths, which includes 87 females and 40 males, followed by the age group of 30-40 with 92 deaths, which includes 53 males and 39 females. The reasons for suicide attempts witnessed are job unavailability, relationship issues, examination results, depression due to excessive intake of drugs, peer pressure, loss in business and

marital discord. Due to lack of knowledge, many patients never find out the causes behind their falling psychological health and the ones who are aware, generally shy away from the treatment with the fear of being labelled “insane”, owing to the stigma attached to visiting psychiatrists. The people in Kashmir lack peace of mind as some have lost their dear family members and some their sole bread winners which has impacted them in different measures making them emotionally disturbed. Terrorism has contributed to the sudden transformation of the Kashmiri society giving rise to depression among people which in turn has led to an increase in the rate of suicide.

Conclusion

Cross-border terrorism has been rampant in the Kashmir Valley of Jammu & Kashmir State since 1989, leading to massive socio-economic downswing, which will take enormous fund of time to resurrect. It has not only led to a social and economic decline but disturbed the ecological balance as well.

The conflict has affected all important sources of livelihood of local populace such as agriculture, horticulture, tourism and handicraft industry, with many traders having to shift their trading centers from the Valley to other parts of the country and few others forced to look for an alternative source of income to survive the economic crisis.

The forests of Kashmir, which used to be an abode of rare wildlife species, are being exploited by terrorists and timber smugglers equally. They serve as perfect hiding places for terrorists while their presence negatively impacts the forest work making patrols difficult and dangerous which further helps timber smugglers continue unabated loot of forests. The timber smugglers indulge in setting forest to fire to hide their crime after cutting trees from a spot, destroying the natural habitat of wildlife species.

Another reason for the shrinking of forests is illegal encroachments. The forests under encroachment in the Kashmir and Jammu region are 18,8 sq miles and 36,6 sq miles respectively. It has been estimated that a ban on cutting trees and establishing further encroachments of not less than 10-15 years is required to preserve whichever forest cover is left for the coming generations, which will also prevent advances of deserts and give large support to agriculture and animal husbandry.

All major lakes of Jammu & Kashmir, including the famous Dal Lake and Wular Lake, have turned into cesspools. Many constructions have been raised along the banks of lakes and rivers, and in the absence of proper waste disposal systems, it flows in the water which not only contaminates the water but also reduces the fish catches, the primary means of livelihood for fishermen. The government attempted to install Sewage Treatment Plans (STPs) in the houseboats which turned out to be a failure due to operational and monitoring issues and resistance from the houseboat-owners.

The air pollution has aggravated since 1990s, one of the major causes can be attributed to the use of coal heaters (called ‘*Bhukhari*’). Efforts must be taken to replace such conventional approaches with non-conventional heating systems.

Education is yet another equally important casualty of terrorism. Schools shut down for months because of hartals and curfews, leading to loss of class time. Many of the government schools that cater to children who cannot afford private schools, have been burned down by terrorists.

In 2015, the Jammu & Kashmir administration closed 3,000 'surplus' schools, where teachers outnumbered students. In eight districts, including Srinagar, Kargil and Jammu, there were 127 schools with teachers but no student enrolment. Not only is the curriculum followed by the Jammu & Kashmir State Board of Education outdated but it also lacks the strength to expose the learner to threads like communal harmony, religious and cultural diversity. Education is one of the strongest drivers of economic progress and the most powerful and effective tool to reduce poverty; youth demand jobs, but both the education system and educators lack the efficacy to make students "job-ready".

Human resource which is one of the biggest assets of any society, has suffered enormously. Terrorism has been the main reason for the displacement of several non-Muslim communities like the Kashmiri Pandits (Hindus), Sikhs, Buddhists and other minorities. Many Kashmiri Muslims have also started migrating to mainland India and other parts of the world for better job prospects and peaceful environment, depriving the State of its human resource.

With killings, rapes, and other forms of crime becoming the order of the day in the Kashmir Valley, psychiatric disorders have seen a sharp rise post 1989. Several human lives have been lost over the past three decades and the State is in danger of losing its younger generation, majority of which is in the grip of drug hurricane, weakening the morale, physique and character of the youth. The women have become increasingly suicidal resorting to temporary means of comfort like sleeping pills, inhalations and injections. There is an urgent need to understand that mental disorders are not medical conditions but deep-rooted social issues.

Apart from disrupting ecological balance, education, employability, economy, people, culture and heritage, health and hygiene, terrorism has also led to disruption of law and order from the Kashmir Valley providing a fertile ground for corrupt practices. A study by 'Transparency International', a non-government world body in 2005, declared Jammu & Kashmir as the most corrupt State after Bihar (India). In the State of Jammu & Kashmir in general and the Kashmir Valley in particular, gun is not simply used to address the threat of crime, but to negotiate positions. The gun in Kashmir today has become bigger than the law enforcing bodies and the law itself. The person carrying it has the power to buy loyalties, to threaten government officials and have them grant the permission to convert water stream into an agrarian piece of land or to buy examination question papers.

Timber smugglers stripping the forests and yet manoeuvring around without any fear, shrinking of water streams, fake schools and teachers, unabated encroachment of land, illegal hotel constructions, and several other acts of crime are an outcome of terrorism and subsequent lawlessness in the Kashmir Valley.

Prior to the advent of terrorism, a separate budget was allocated towards the infrastructural development of the tourist resorts, which is no more a priority for the authorities responsible as the funds are currently being directed towards counter-terrorism activities.

Cross border terrorism has bred financial and political corruption which can be witnessed in the form of a declining economy, paralyzed education system, burnt school buildings, broken down places of worship and mind boggling looting in the system, and it seems to have become a socially accepted evil. There is a need to build effective and accountable institutions at all levels, where people take ownership and are answerable to the system and promote a sense of belonging. Terrorism has only created a terrorized society losing its very existence due to the ongoing violence under the false pretexts of independence, merger with Pakistan and establishment of a so-called Islamic Caliphate.

Human beings have always tried to battle with nature, ignoring the essential fact that nature can put back an equally tough fight. The people of the State need to realize that a healthy, productive natural ecosystem is essential for economic sustainability, which in essence translates into freedom.



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