I. Personal as Political in Peer's *Curfewed Night*

This project tries to analyze Basharat Peer's non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* critically from the perspective of new historicism. It is based on the close study of the 1990s Kashmiri issue introduced in *Curfewed Night*. Explaining the 1990s Kashmiri conflict backed by the explosion of 1989's separatist movement, this research throws light on why the Kashmiri history has been a part of unresolved dispute and war since the genesis of the India-Pakistan partition in 1947. It explores how India and Pakistan's separation after the British withdrawal from the subcontinent brought Kashmir into a hostile environment. This research also attempts to interrogate the official history of Kashmir, India and Pakistan linking it with the ground causes of the 1990s conflict in Kashmir. In the text, Peer talks about how Kashmir's voice for autonomy, peace and self-respect has been silenced due to the interplay of political discourse and military power between the two countries, India and Pakistan, and also the rise of indigenous militants in Kashmir itself. Because of India and Pakistan's territorial dispute over Kashmir, Peer writes, Kashmir has been ravaged politically, socially and culturally. Violence, mass killing, loot, rape, abduction, arrest, crackdown, interrogations by militants and military forces, all these have been like a daily routine of life in the 1990s Kashmir, writes Peer. That is why, the research aims at exploring the power relations between the two countries, India and Pakistan, in relation to Kashmir issue and its impact upon the Kashmiri people and their wish for socio-cultural harmony.

Curfewed Night opens with Basharat Peer's happy childhood life in the lap of peaceful Kashmir; later, it threads the story of ruined Kashmir caused by the outbreak of 1989's separatist movement which climaxes in the 1990s. Because of the unfair state election conducted by India in Kashmir in 1987, it further provoked anti-Indian sentiment among the Kashmiri Muslims. This fact initiated the seed of insurgency in

Kashmir making the life of Kashmiri people very much problematic. As Peer pens, the tussle between Pakistan sponsored militancy in Kashmir and Indian military force during the 1990s brought many problems in the life of Kashmiri people like violence of history, displacement, massacre, abduction, rape, the incurable inner fear, killings and many others. In the text, most of the members become the victims of the insurgency. Peer artistically captures the tempo of the 1990s insurgency event in the text as he himself is the sole witness and experiencer of it. Peer's voice for free and autonomous Kashmir in the text also abides the common will of the Kashmiri people in general.

Curfewed Night (2009) is the portrayal of the 1990s Kashmir history, of the ordinary lives of Kashmiris and their quest for peace, normality and independency. Focusing on the ongoing realities of the then Kashmir, Basharat Peer writes down the ills and sufferings of the Kashmiri people in a broad manner. While exposing the dreadful history in the non-fictional text, Peer succinctly addresses the historical background of India-Pakistan partition in 1947. He writes that Kashmir was a princely state under British rule in India before 1947. A predominantly Muslim state, Kashmir was ruled by a Hindu *Maharaja*, Hari Singh. After the British withdrawal from the subcontinent which led to the violent partition of India and Pakistan, Kashmir became a volatile issue of disputed territory. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Kashmir's popular leader, and Hari Singh thought to join India after tribesmen from the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan invaded Kashmir in October 1947. Peer further writes, the fighting ceased in January 1949 after the United Nation's intervention and the Line of Control which divides Kashmir into Pakistan-controlled and India-controlled parts was created. But when India jailed Sheikh Abdullah in 1953, the autonomy in Kashmir disappeared gradually.

In 1987, Indian government rigged state election, arresting opposition candidates and terrorizing their supporters. Consequently, the insurgent groups like Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front, Hizbul Mujahideen, and many others were formed and conflict broke out in Kashmir. This is one of the crucial reasons behind the explosion of the 1989 and 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir, adds Peer. Inclusion of the 1989 and 1990s conflict victims' individual stories like that of a mother who watches her son forced to hold an exploding bomb, of a poet who finds religion when his entire family is killed, of a woman who is raped by Indian soldiers within hours of her marriage, exemplifies Peer's bold attempt of giving a realistic touch to the text. What Peer critically observes in the text is that the political turmoil and the social, cultural and economical instabilities in Kashmir is the cause of India and Pakistan's passions of rival ethnic, religious and partisan interests on the one hand and the vested interest of certain people who hold the politics of Kashmir on the other. The power politics of powerful community in and outside Kashmir created religious disparity between Muslims and Hindus, marginalized Kashmiris' rights and advanced war economy leading to the explosion of wars like that of the 1990s insurgency movement.

Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night* is an autobiographical text which depicts the trouble torn Kashmir of 1989 and 1990s. Born in Kashmir in 1977, Peer studied political science at Aligarh Muslim University and journalism at Columbia Univeristy. Peer, a Kashmiri journalist, worked as a reporter at Rediff and Tehelka and wrote for various publications including *The Guardian, Financial Times, New Statesman* and *Foreign Affairs*, where he was an assistant editor.

Basharat Peer's fascination towards the Azadi Movement against Indian rule and its military oppression during his teenage shattered when his family objected to his idea of joining the insurgents. The crackdowns and atrocities by Indian security

forces in Kashmir questions the value of human rights and it becomes a prime reason behind Peer's sending off to Aligarh Muslim University, Delhi. Later, Peer becomes a Delhi based journalist and often ventures back into Kashmir to report. However, he does not find any solace the way he has been trying to take the stories of Kashmir to the world arena. What makes him more panic and shameful is the absence of Kashmiri experience in the form of book as there are many stories from every conflict zone like Palestine, Israel, Africa, Tibet and others. Internalization of this fact overwhelmed Peer and his heart voted for his war ravaged homeland, Kashmir. Basharat Peer prompted to write about the people and places of Kashmir that have haunted him for years. In fact, he wants to preserve the memories and stories of Kashmir in the form of words.

The text *Curfewed Night* is an autobiographical text where Peer as a creative writer explores the serene Kashmir of his childhood and the havoc of the1990s from the lens of his own personal experience. By covering the misery of hapless Kashmiris who had been scapegoats of the 1990s Kashmir conflict, Peer alludes to the fact that Kashmir has become the pretext of terrorism since the history of partition rivalry between India and Pakistan. As Peer writes, peace and autonomy which Kashmiri people longed for decades, has been a feeding source of discourse in the realm of Kashmiri politics backed by the intervention of both India and Pakistan. His active effort to expose the hidden reality of Kashmir dispute in the text proves his genuine literary craftsmanship. Pankaj Mishra says, "Describing the ruin of Kashmir, *Curfewed Night* doesn't only shock; it challenges our most cherished beliefs-in democracy, secularism, the rule of law, and the power of individual conscience" (cover page). Mishra's view proves how honestly Peer tries to depict the reality of Kashmir in the text.

The contemporary social world of violence-stained lives in Kashmir, their palpable condition due to the series of explosions, gunfires, curfews, massacres, their incurable wound caused by the 1990s riot and the struggle to survive in their own homeland, all these facts remain at the heart of the text. Peer's active effort to bring this reality in the text is appreciated by Khushwant Singh who says, "If you want to know why Kashmiri Muslims who opted to stay with secular India rather than join Muslim Pakistan in 1947 now hate us and want us to get out of the Valley, you cannot do better than read *Curfewed Night*. It is beautifully written, brutally honest and deeply hurtful" (cover page). The Kashmir before 1989 and 1990s conflict, a beautiful and tranquil land of Kashmiris where Peer like many Kashmiri youths spent their childhood, and the 1990s phase of Kashmir which caused so many lives and barren their homes, honestly explored by Peer in the non-fictional text. Peer's artistic talence can also be found in Ahmed Rashid's words: "The story of Kashmir has never been told before so evocatively and profoundly. Peer writes with the skill of a novelist, the insight of a journalist and the evocative power of a poet" (cover page).

The text *Curfewed Night* exhibits the brutal history of 1989 and 1990s Kashmir and the agony and protest of its subject against the tyrannical clutch of the Indian military force, of the Pakistani militants and the savagery of the indigenous militants of Kashmir. It speaks of anarchy, cruelty and exploitation done by the power holder community over the innocent Kashmiri people. It is a vivid representation of how the everyday life of common people in Kashmir has been forever altered by the 1990s insurgency movement. The text questions Kashmiri people's wish for their freedom, their hope for peace, self-determination and human rights. Basharat Peer's plea for justice, peace, harmony, brotherhood, and normality in Kashmir binds the whole thematic aspect of the text.

The text *Curfewed Night* consists of fifteen chapters. The first half of the text is about writer's early life upto the period of his successful career and the second half is centered on the exploration of the different facets of Kashmir history which borrows the critical lens of what the writer himself experienced, saw and listened from people of Kashmir of all walks of life. The text depicts Basharat Peer's childhood through his teenage and romance of the Azadi Movement in Kashmir. Peer's blissful childhood with his parents and friends, his schooling with genuine curiosity that he shows about the green mountains, meadows and farmlands unearths the fact how people in Kashmir have a peaceful and harmonious lifestyle before the outbreak of militancy. But when the insurgency movement was exploded in late 1989, Kashmir became more a place of violence, loot, rape, bloodshed, crackdown, curfew and bombing. Peer writes that because of India's act of eroding the legal status of Kashmiri autonomy and ignoring the democratic rights of Kashmiris, the resentment against Indian rule and the treatment of Kashmiris erupted like a volcano. Consequently, the young guerrillas and the pro-independence Kashmiri protesters got mobilized in Kashmir joining the hand of thousands of Kashmiris whose slogans would carry the common theme of freedom from India. To demolish the unity of protestors, the Indian government imposed curfew and opened fire that caused hundreds of lives. With this suffering of war ravaged homeland, Peer also encounters the war of his adolescence. This is why, Peer mentions that, the Kashmiri youths like Peer wished to join in a protest march, to be a militant who armed and trained across the Line of Control and would return as heroes.

The political mayhem with the 1990s conflict in Kashmir devastated the socio-cultural harmony of Kashmir, writes Peer. In Kashmir, thousands of Hindu Pandits migrated to other parts of India because of the threat and fear of the local militants. At the same time Muslims had been inhumanly tortured by the Indian military force. This

kind of bleak and chaotic environment ruined Kashmir very desperately. Peer's emotional breakdown as he walked in a half-empty classroom with the memory of his friends belonging to Hindu community, he scares as he hears the cries of the prisoners being tortured by Indian military force at the school hostel, and tears roll down from his cheek when he sees his playfields and fruit orchards covered with the nameless tombstones of Kashmiri people, all these unforgettable facts of the 1990s riot comprehend the incurable wound of Kashmiri people in the text.

After leaving behind the job of journalism in Delhi, Peer returns to Kashmir to write about its dreadful history which haunted him time and again. Peer writes that the armed conflict in Kashmir is closely linked with India-Pakistan bilateral relations. In the text, Peer raises a voice why Kashmir is not being addressed as what Kashmir really is rather it has been a part of discourse of disputed territory since 1947. Peer acknowledges the fact that neither India nor Pakistan shows any responsibility towards the death, misery, loss, hazards and human rights of Kashmiri people and the idea of an independent Kashmir remained ever indigestible and marginalized. Pakistan claims that Kashmir belongs to its territory because the majority of people in Kashmir are Muslims, whereas India's saying is based on the 1947 historical treaty of Kashmir accession. Because of these different versions of history which underpinned the issue of Kashmir, Peer critically argues, the undeniable rights of Kashmiri people have been questioned. Therefore, Peer pens that the people in Kashmir live through endless 'curfewed nights,' whose temples, mosques, schools and farmlands have transformed into the military camps or sandbag bunkers, whose culture and religion created a line of distance between themselves, and who have to wear identity cards in their own homeland to survive.

Peer writes that the politics of Kashmir does not act in accord with the will of Kashmiris rather the armed militancy dominates its framework. If not then, why are

Kashmiris dying daily in war? questions Peer. Maybe a mutual talk between Indian government, Pakistan government and the political leaders of Kashmir could have mitigated the thousands of deaths in Kashmir but it only happened in a verbal discourse. Some attempts have been made without any positive accomplishment. With this bitter realization, Peer writes, firing on protesters, arrests, disappearances, custodial killings, kidnappings, assassinations, and atrocities ruled Kashmir. Also, the United Nations resolutions on Kashmir, recommending a plebiscite, lived as hollow quotations in books and journals. In the non-fictional text, Peer also talks about Papa-2, the most infamous torture center run by the Indian forces in Kashmir. It is a very place where the suspected Kashmiris including local militants once taken in would never return. After the division of Kashmir in 1947, the divided Kashmiri families have started living with the help of haunted memories and erased family love. This has brought very negative psychological impact upon their daily life style.

Though there lies a sparkling hope of Kashmir peace with the open bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffaabad, the streets of Kashmir still follow terror, violence, crackdown, and killings. Peer points out that Kashmir harbours yet bitterly so many bizarre events like that of a horrific rape case in the northern Kupwara district where the Indian army raped more than twenty women in the 1990s and that became later a haunting memory. This is why, the Kashmiri people have to carry curfew pass to survive. This is why, they have to change their ancestral customs, traditions and beliefs the way their rulers demand and wish. A proof is that an evening tradition of marriage ceremony in Kashmir is halted as when a woman is being raped by Indian military force within some hours of her marriage. The non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* exposes all these bitter facts of Kashmir and highlights the writer's hope for peace and normality in Kashmir.

Curfewed Night speaks of Kashmir's political instability, its socio-cultural decay, and the shattered dreams and hopes of all Kashmiris. Peer's depiction of the 1990s Kashmir reality and its grave impact upon Kashmiri people, and the future hope for the peaceful solution of Kashmir conflict issue in the text demonstrates his genuine contribution towards his homeland, Kashmir.

Basharat Peer is concerned about the people who have been displaced, disappeared, handicapped, tortured, raped, burnt alive and killed in Kashmir. Profoundly enough, Peer attempts to redraw the boundaries of the causes and othered aspects of India-Pakistan partition which has transformed peaceful Kashmir into a land of war and terror. As the book encompasses the issue of the 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir very strikingly, it has got many critical responses from different critics around the world. Salma Malik, a critic, who asserts her idea about *Curfewed Night* in IPRI journal:

> *Curfewed Night* despite being a personal narrative is the voice of every Kashmiri who has grown under the shadow of occupation and militancy. . .In the rest of India, too, they are treated as not "Indian enough." They are under constant surveillance and a general sense of being the "other," enhances their sense of alienation and displacement. Returning to his homeland after more than a decade, he found it a land of "brutalized, exhausted and uncertain people," where conflict might leave the streets but it might not leave the soul. (145)

In these lines, Malik analyzes how conflict in Kashmir hammered Kashmiris daily life and made them other in their own homeland. They have been brutalized, alienated and their life is rife with uncertainty. However, Malik does not talk about the root cause of Kashmir dispute in detail. Therefore, to excavating the causes and consequences of Kashmir conflict is what the central objective of this thesis.

Najeeb Mubarki, asserts his idea about the deplorable situation of Kashmir, its socio-cultural heritage and its people. He has analyzed this idea of the text in *The Ecnomics Times* of India:

> [T]his is a book about the accounts that never make it out of Kashmir, it is also a journalist's reportage of his travels in Kashmir, of his seeking out the 'truth' behind the conflicting and layered narratives that enclose almost every single event. . .It is also a narrative of a young man seeking the past, that of his land's history-be it in a now-deserted Hindu temple, the ancient archaeological ruins of the Buddhist past of Kashmir, now thoroughly forgotten, of the avid young Kashmiri travelling to far-off Bihar to find the featureless grave of the last independent Kashmiri king. (2)

In this extract, Mubarki focuses on Basharat Peer's bold attempt in discovering his war-ravaged homeland, Kashmir. Mubarki's emphasis lies on Kashmir's fragile socio-cultural beauty caused by ceaseless violence and war, however, he does not comprehend the issue of 1990s riot which cost thousands of lives putting Kashmir's question of sovereignty ever ambiguous.

Another critic, Javeria Khurshid, critically analyzes *Curfewed Night* in *Galaxy International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*:

> Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night*is a cry, on behalf of the people of Kashmir valley who have been caught for nearly two decades in the crossfire between Pakistan-backed militants, indigenous as well as foreign, on one hand and the security forces of India on the other. . . Since1989, when the separatist movement exploded, more than seventy thousand people have been killed in the battle between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Born and raised in the war-torn region,

> Basharat peer brings, this little-known part of the world to life in lingering, vivid detail. (3)

Khurshid opines that Peer's *Curfewed Night* chronicles the story of Kashmiri people who have been the innocent victims of the tussle between the indigenous as well as foreign militants supported by Pakistani and the Indian military forces. He focuses on the explosion of the 1989's separatist movement and argues critically that the thousands of people have been killed because of the battle between India and Pakistan over their desire of claiming Kashmir to complete themselves. But the critic simply remains silent towards the historical fact of Kashmir dates back to 1947 India-Pakistan partition which fueled the issue of Kashmir violently.

Another critic of the text, Charles H.Middlebough analyzes *Curfewed Night* and says:

> In *Curfewed Night*, however, I have been exposed to the terrible reality of life for a Kashmiri Muslim under Indian rule, and find myself haunted by the story that it tells and the sensitivity and understatement with which its author tells it. . .But *Curfewed Night* is not just a grim read; it also speaks of family and clan solidarity, of love and loyalty, and of the strong sense of commitment to a land arbitrarily divided between India and Pakistan in 1947. (1)

In the given lines, Middlebough explains that *Curfewed Night* is about a terrible life of Kashmiri Muslim and their love and family tie troubled by the Kashmir division in 1947. But the critic does not give emphasis on the history of 1947 India-Pakistan partition which is one of the major causes of 1990s war in Kashmir.

To expose the barren side of Kashmir's socio-cultural heritage, Arup Kumar Sen, a critic, analyzes the text *Curfewed Night* in this way:

> The 1990s was the decade of "disappearance" in Kashmir and the Bhards and their plays disappeared as well the intense violence of 1990s, left no space for folk theatre. But a new generation is preparing itself to tell the story of the last few decade of Kashmir and brings to the world's novel, memoirs and reportage that have been shaped in the hard crucible of Kashmiri politics. (82)

Sen's critical lens on Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Night* centers on the loss and disappearance of folk theatre, Bhards and their plays which are the cultural aspects of Kashmir. Because of the 1990s riot, the cultural identity of Kashmir is erased, affirms Sen. But Sen does not give any image of how the war politics between Indian government and Pakistan supported militants, and their own version of discourse has seized Kashmiri people's love for peace, autonomy, self-respect and culture. Sen only justifies how war in Kashmir crumbled its cultural aspects but he remains silent to the burning question of Kashmir sovereignty and Kashmiris' unfaltering hope for peace and justice.

In the non-fictional text *Curfewed Night*, Basharat Peer's memoir takes readers on a journey exploring the hopes and frustrations of the Kashmiris. Peer's words crystallize the incurable physical and psychological condition of Kashmiri people, their oppressed identity and the political instability of Kashmir. Without being superfluous, Peer tells the gut-wrenching accounts of the 1990s explosion in Kashmir and its severe impact upon the whole Kashmiris. Because of the curfews, crackdowns, frisking, caused by the atrocities of Indian military forces and the militants and also the power politics in Kashmiri government itself, Peer says, Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus have become prey of injustice, repression, brutality, identity crisis and the historic-cultural trauma. Tanka Nath Subedi, in his M.A. thesis, asserts his idea in this way and writes:

> Basharat Peer's non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* deals with the historico-cultural trauma and its negative impacts upon Kashmiri people. . .Kashmiri people suffer from various trauma related problems like hallucinations, chronic stress, haunts of memory that was caused by the historic-cultural trauma, artistically present in the text. (Abstract)

Subedi postulates an idea that *Curfewed Night* is a product of historico-cultural trauma, which affected the life of Kashmiri people bringing the problems like hallucination, identity crisis, haunts of memory and many others. Subedi only analyzes the text from the perspective of trauma theory but not from the perspective of new historicism. He argues that because of the negative impacts of the historico-cultural trauma, Kashmiri people have suffered bitterly. But he does not pinpoint in detail the root cause of Kashmir conflict linking it with the history of 1947 partition which has caused war in Kashmir like that of 1990s insurgency movement.

Basharat Peer's non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* is the compendium of different issues prevalent before and after the explosion of 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir. Describing the dreadful history of Kashmir, Peer gives voice to the decades long lurking hope of Kashmiri people, hope for their justice, peace, normality, harmony and freedom. Peer's *Curfewed Night* has been analyzed critically by different critics. Most of the critics have praised the genuine literary skill and creativity of Basharat Peer. Some critics have emphasized on the physical as well as psychological illness of Kashmiri people caused by ceaseless violence and conflict in Kashmir. And some other critics have addressed the issue of socio-cultural aspects of Kashmir ruined by 1989 and 1990's riot in Kashmir. Their conscious effort to analyze the wound of Kashmiri people and the devastation of Kahmir's social harmony is very much noteworthy. However, all these critics view Kashmir as a land of terrorism and

violence and left no room for the discussion of its historical causes. They only emphasize on the fact that Kashmir's cry for peace, normality and autonomy should be considered by India and Pakistan primarily and also by the world society at large. What their criticism fails to unearth is why Kashmir is written or perceived as a disputed territory in the history of 1947 India-Pakistan partition. The fundamental reasons behind the explosion of 1989 and 1990's insurgency movement in Kashmir have not been talked much by the critics as well. Therefore, this research gives emphasis on the issue of a disputed history of Kashmir that dates back to 1947 and it also highlights the core reasons of the Kashmir's 1990s conflict from the perspective of new historicism. This project explores the history and reality of Kashmiri people in a critical way.

New historicism is a contextual theory developed in the late 1970s in response to New Criticism and other textual theories which tended to ignore importance of historical context of work of art. According to Lois Tyson, a critic and a genuine author, "New historicism, which emerged in the late 1970s, rejects both traditional historicism's marginalization of the literary text in a timeless dimension beyond history" (291). New historicism in the realm of literary criticism and literary theory is based on the premise that history and literature are inter-connected. New historicism throws a light on the fact that any piece of a literary work and the historical situation from which it took birth are equally important because literary texts are framed by their historical contexts.

With the initial work of the critic Stephen Greenblatt, new historicism got its momentum and widespread influence in the 1980s and beyond. It is Stephen Greenblatt who first of all introduced new historicism to the study of Renaissance period works. Greenblatt's view that "the contours of art and literature are socially and historically configured" (398) is addressed by another prominent critic, Louis

Montrose. While defining new historicism, Montrose opines, ". . .[W]riting and reading are always historically and socially situated events, performed in the world and upon the world by ideologically situated individual and collective human agents" (415). Montrose's central idea in the given lines is the subject matter of every text, a collection of historically and socially situated events, is always based on the social, historical, or material reality of the world. But as the writing is done from the perspective of writer, it is guided by writer's ideology and situatedness. Montrose further suggests the analysis of a text is also influenced by one's historically, socially and institutionally shaped vantage points.

The embarkation of new historicism also gives much credit to the work of a renowned French philosopher, critic and historian, Michel Foucault. A pioneer of new historicism, Foucault opines that any sort of a literary text is the product of or reaction to the power-structures of the society. Foucault has developed his thought over power, truth, knowledge, discourse, and language. According to Foucault, power "[T]raverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse. It needs to be considered as a productive network which runs through the whole social body. . ." (61).What Foucault asserts in the given lines is that the power is pervasive in all social bodies. By the same token of argument, Foucault views power as not the domination by one to others rather it is a productive network functioning horizontally in a society. Foucault further opines power is "intelligible in terms of the techniques through which it is exercised" (65). Foucault's central point here is that power determines the truth and it changes as per the change in system of power. Foucault believes that "effects of truth are produced within discourses which in themselves are neither true nor false" (60). Hence, truth in Foucauldian light is just a construction which has origin and function in society.

Michel Foucault opines that system functions in every society which carries some knowledge. And by using this knowledge, people produce and represent discourse in the form of books, articles, speeches, documents and other sources. Hence, discourse for Foucault is interrelated with power, truth, and representation. It is the language in relation to society. According to Foucault, discourse designates "not merely knowledges and disciplines, but also transformable units of history" (53). Foucault further argues that "discourses are practices linked to certain conditions, obedient to certain rules, and susceptible to certain transformations" (54). In the given line, Foucault says that discourse is a practice which has certain conditions, rules and is influenced by certain transformations. Foucault asserts that along with power resistance is necessary. And change in power, truth, knowledge and social life itself is bound to resistance.

New historicism, a theoretical tool, primarily talks about the voices of the marginalized, suppressed, dominated, disabled, and backwarded people of a society. It highlights their issues and brings it out to the fore. New historicism goes against the origin of a documented history focusing on a wider historical context of a literary work and of the critic or author who writes it. In this light, new historicism is a theory of margin. Michel Foucault's idea on genealogy refers to the theoretical lens of new historicism. According to Foucault, "Genealogy is a gray, meticulous, and patiently documentary. It operates on a field of entangled and confused parchments, on documents that have been scratched over and recopied many times" (76). In the given lines, Foucault is of the view that genealogy incorporates diverse range of ideas and issues of the society existing in multiple forms and perspectives. It does not go after final and absolute truth and knowledge of the society. Instead, it depends on details, errors and fragments. This is why, Foucault strongly asserts that genealogical history is oriented towards the study of individual issues.

Among many new historicists, Harold Aram Vesser defines new historicism as a theoretical tool which is more specifically concerned with questions of politics, power, culture and all matters that deeply affect people's practical lives. According to Vesser, new historicism "[S]crutinizes the barbaric acts that sometimes underwrite high cultural purposes and asks that we not blink away our complicity. . .it encourages us to admire the sheer intricacy and unavoidability of exchanges between culture and power" (Introduction xi). In these lines, Vesser opines that new historicism not only examines the barbaric acts loaded with high cultural purposes in the society but it also makes people conscious that culture and power share close interrelation.

New historicism goes against traditional concept of objective truth and monolithic history and focuses on multiple subjective and heterogeneous histories. It rejects the autonomy of text emphasizing on the fact that diverse voices are always there in a text.

Regarding the outline of this thesis, the researcher attempts to show the representation of the 1990s Kashmir in *Curfewed Night*. At the same time this present thesis tries to expose different issues related to partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 and its impact upon the peace and normality of ordinary Kashmiri people. To show this, the thesis discusses the ideas of different new historicists like Foucault, Montrose, Greenblatt, Gallagher and others. Personal as political in Peer's Curfewed Night is the introductory part of the thesis. The first introductory section provides a brief historical background of the 1990's insurgency movement in Kashmir, purpose of study, literature review, and general concepts of new historicism. The second part of the thesis embraces a micro level analysis and critical interpretation of the text from the perspective of new historicim. Moreover, the background of Kashmiri history is critically interpreted as well. Merging of textual evidences and theoretical concepts to show why Kashmir is taken as a disputed territory between India and

Pakistan since the partition of Indian sub-continent in 1947 and the representation of fragile politico-economic and socio-cultural harmony of Kashmiri people caused by the outbreak of the 1990s strife in Kashmir envelops the general framework of the second part. While doing so, it shows how the common Kashmiri people, the guerrillas, the Indian security force, the pro-independence Kashmiri protestors, and both Indian and Pakistani government are represented in this non-fiction. Related as well as important ideas from other useful texts and sources to exemplify the dominant issue of the text *Curfewed Night*, that is, people's voice for harmony, peace, normality and autonomy, is also done in this chapter. The thesis further discusses the position of the author. A key conclusion, that is, Kashmiri people's voice is marginalized because of the India-Pakistan's power politics and the corrupted nature of Kashmiri politicians, is rendered in the third chapter. Moreover, this chapter also incorporates additional findings as well as the main points and concerns of the overall research project.

II. Representation of the 1990s Kashmir in Peer's *Curfewed Night*

Historicity of Kashmir Dispute

In order to gain a better understanding of why the insurgency of 1987-1990 took place in Kashmir, the critical examination of the origins and developments of Kashmir dispute is very much crucial. What was the position of Kashmiri people in Kashmir before 1947 and how have their rights and identity been questioned ever after the partition? Is it Kashmir's politics alone or the ongoing power politics between India and Pakistan over Kashmir territory is a core factor of common people's suffering and trouble? Who is responsible for death, abduction, killing, rape, violence, uncertainty of life in Kashmir? If so then why the stakeholders of conflict in Kashmir have not effectively approached the path of peace building and thereby helping the real wish of people? The wish is all about peace and freedom, about self-determination and autonomy, about harmony and brotherhood, about justice and normality of life, which Peer elaborates with the horror of the 1990s militancy in Kashmir in *Curfewed Night*.

Kashmir, once a relatively peaceful land of Kashmiri people, got geographically divided into two parts, during partition era. 'Azad Kashmir' incorporates particularly Muslim community and is administered by Pakistan, whereas 'Jammu and Kashmir' which is known for its Muslims majority followed by Hindus and other religions is controlled by India. Moreover, it is this bitter fact of the partition history that Kashmir, a melting pot of diverse religions, forcedly divided in the line of 'two-nation theory' that India represents Hindus and Pakistan is of Muslims, leaving thousands of Kashmiri families in shock and incurable trauma. To the misfortune of ordinary Kashmiri people, the spark of religious fanaticism backed up by the power holders' politics ravaged Kashmir culturally, socially, economically and politically. Now and then, both Pakistan and India claim over 'Jammu and

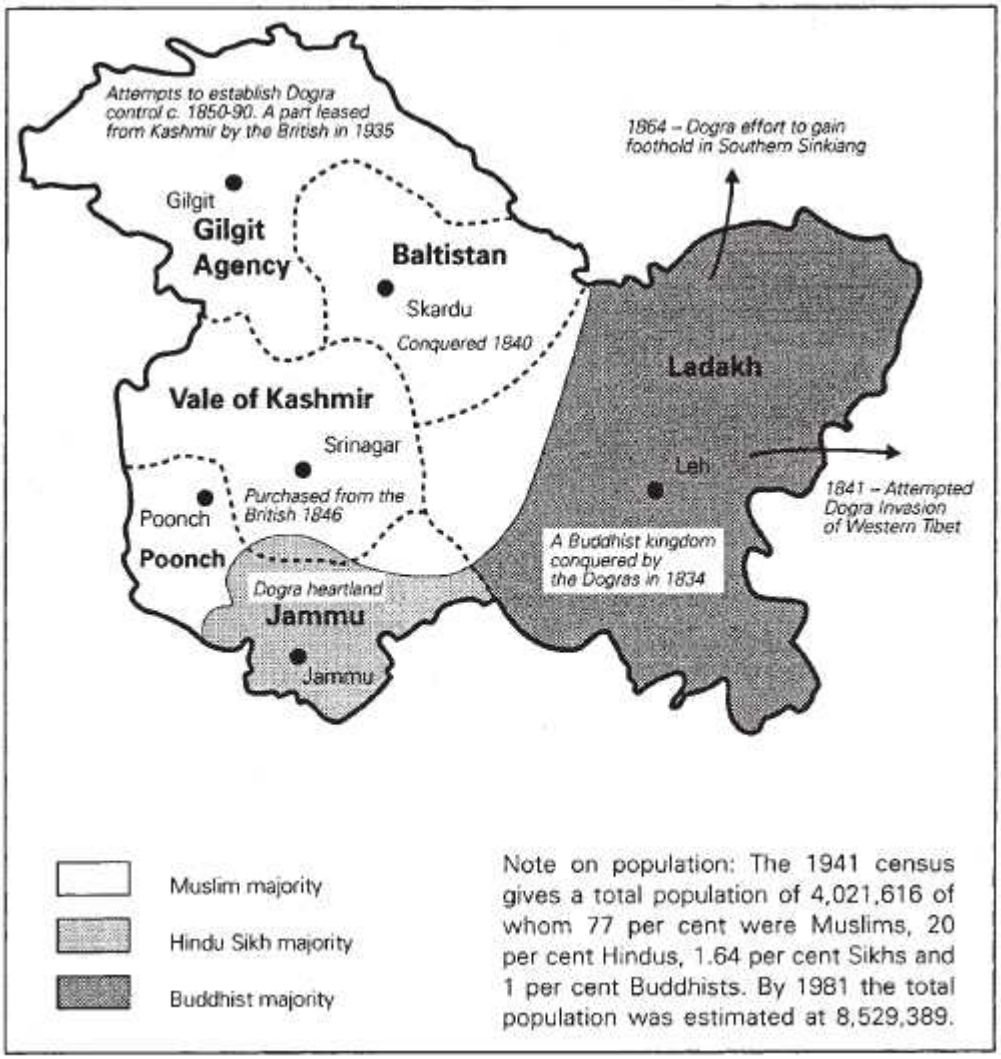
Kashmir' territory with their rival versions of discourses and truths. It is Basharat Peer who tries to ink this issue in the non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* linking it with the tears and turmoil of Kashmiri people. While doing so, Peer has become able to show the war-wounded image of Kashmir very vividly to the world society. By historicizing the 1990s militancy issue of Kashmir, Peer exposes the hard times of common people in their own homeland. Finally, in epilogue, Peer comments on the status of developing peace process between India and Pakistan regarding Kashmir issue which guides the readers ponder over future solution of Kashmir. In a way, Peer's masterpiece *Curfewed Night* exposes the past and present socio-political status of Kashmir in a genuine way. In this regard, Louis Montrose in his essay "New Historicisms", argues, it is "necessary to historicize the present as well as the past, and to historicize the dialectic between them-those pressures by which the past has shaped the present and the present reshapes the past" (415).

Along with a brief historical background of 1947's Kashmir, Peer's image of Kashmir in *Curfewed Night* amalgamates his "fairytale childhood of the eighties and of the horror of the nineties" (114). The text, in fact, is a manifestation of Kashmir's history, its geographical beauty, its socio-cultural heritage and the inner grief of its subject. "But Kashmir is older than our memory, older than the memories we have inherited" (114), writes Peer.

Maps of Kashmir

The following maps show how the people in Kashmir have been divided with the border line drawn between India and Pakistan since the history of partition.

Source: 26 November 2014, South Asia, BBC News



2. The Creation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir with Communal Groupings

Source: Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict*, London, 2003

Legendary conception of Kashmir

The mythical existence of Kashmir in its history is an integral aspect of its cultural heritage. Culture in any society reflects the way of life of people, their behaviours, morality, customs and traditions. In *Curfewed Night*, Peer asserts Kashmiri people do preserve every aspect of Kashmiri cultural values including myth and what many others there might be. In the chapter nine, Peer puts light on the creation of Kashmir described in its legendary form in this way:

> I found myself thinking of Hari Parbat, a hill that towers over central Srinagar and is associated with the legend of the creation of Kashmir. In prehistoric times there was a vast lake known as Satisar, after Shiva's wife Parvati, also called Sati. In the lake lived a demon who laid waste the whole country around Satisar. Kashyapa, the sage, witnessed this destruction and prayed to the Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to rid the place of the demon. . .The Vishnu assumed the form of a boar and struck the mountains surrounding the lake. When he struck, a pass opened and water drained out. The demon escaped to lower ground near central Srinagar. Shiva's wife, Parvati, assumed the form of a mynah and dropped a pebble on him. The pebble became a mountain and killed the demon. Kashmiris believe that mountain is Hari Parbat. (134)

Here, Peer simply accounts how the creation of Kashmir is preserved in its legendary form. By this he means to suggest the cultural beauty of Kashmir in general. In the article "Kashmir-The Crown of India," Prof. L. N. Dhar of Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari, also writes on the mythological conception of Kashmir that differs from what Peer foregrounds in *Curfewed Night*. Dhar says:

> The mythological traditions supported fully by the research of geologists confirm that the valley originally was a huge lake called

> "Satisar". . .According to the oldest extant book on Kashmir, "NilmatPuran," in the Satisar lived a demon called JalodBowa, who tortured and devoured the people, who lived near mountain slopes. Hearing the suffering of the people, a great saint of our country, Kashyap by name, came to the rescue of the people here. After performing penance for a long time, the saint was blessed, and he was able to cut the mountain. . .The lake was drained, the land appeared, and the demon was killed. The saint encouraged people from India to settle in the valley. . .The name Kashmir also implies land desiccated form water: "ka" (the water) and shimeera (to desiccate). (1-2)

Dhar opines the present Kashmir was a huge lake called 'Satisar' in the ancient time, and with the divine help of Kashyap that the lake was drained out, demon was killed and Indian people came in the valley and finally got settled down.

Like Dhar, another prominent writer Lt. Gen. M. L. Chibber in his book *Pakistan's Criminal Folly in Kashmir* writes, "Legend has it that Kashmir valley was originally a vast lake known as the Satisar (lake of Sati, the consort of Shiva). . .The Aryans who moved across Central Asia into India are the first people who can be traced to reside in Kashmir" (33). It shows there exist multiple versions of 'truth' in the mythical view of Kashmir, and this is what Michel Foucault calls the nature of 'truth' in the world. Why Peer brings the mythical image of peaceful Kashmir in the text is meaningful in the sense the 1990s militancy damaged Kashmir totally and only the skeletons of Masjids and Temples have remained elsewhere in the streets. For example, "Six hundred years of history were destroyed in a day" (199) when the shrine in Chrar town, in Kashmir, burnt down in the battle between the Pakistani militants and the Indian army, writes Peer. For the sake of God, like Peer, all common

Kashmiri people wish for peace and normality of life in Kashmir pursuing solace in the mythical version of peaceful Kashmir.

The Rise and Fall of Empires in Kashmiri Politics: Pre-1947 History Timeline

Because of deteriorating relationship between India and Pakistan over the question of Kashmir's autonomy, ordinary Kashmiri people have been innocent victims of war, violence, curfews, crackdowns, frisking, killings, rapes, abductions and many others. Thousands of Kashmiri Pandits have been displaced whereas Kashmiri Muslims in a greater number became victims on the similar ground. It is one of the bitter realities of the 1990s Kashmiri society. In one way or other, the outbreak of the 1990s militancy in Kashmir is related with subjugation and pain experienced by Kashmir people during the state's empirical regime that later became a cause of religious tension. Hence, answering how was Kashmir being ruled by the empires constitutes a base of this research. Like Basharat Peer, many other prolific writers like Ajit Bhattacharjea, Victoria Schofield, Paul Staniland, Prem Shankar Jha, Lt. Gen. M. L. Chibber, have written on the early phase of Kashmir of 1947 whose varied arguments finally come up with a meeting point that Kashmiri people had struggled for their independence even before the partition of the Indian sub-continent in 1947. In the chapter nine in *Curfewed Night*, Peer puts the clock back to the early history of Kashmir, the history of empirical rule in Kashmir, and writes:

> Kashmir had various foreign rulers after she lost her independence to the Mughal emperors of Delhi in the late sixteenth century. In the mid eighteenth century, the Mughals lost Kashmir to the armies of an Afghan warrior, Ahmad Shah Abdali. In the early nineteenth century, the Sikhs, led by Ranjit Singh, defeated the Afghans and took Kashmir. . . .The British declared war on the Sikhs in 1846. . .Gulab Singh promised to help the British and stayed away from battle in 1846. The

> Sikhs lost. . .The British sold Kashmir to him for seventy five lakh rupees. To recover the price he had paid the British, Gulab Singh pounced on every penny he found, and promoted begaar, forced labour. A few sympathetic voices were heard against the sale of Kashmir and the plight of its people under the rule of Gulab Singh and his descendants. (129)

The politics of Kashmir changed a lot through war conspiracy and with that, the fate of Kashmiri people. Kashmir lost its independency when the Mugal emperors invaded its territorial domain. Thereafter, various foreign rulers like Afghans, Sikhs, Hindus ruled over Kashmir. In 1846, the British sold the Kashmir to Gulab Singh. It is under Singh's regime and his descendants Kashmiri people went through a lot of hurdles, argues Peer.

But *Curfewed Night* does not comprehend the historical event of Kashmir that dates back to the period of 1846 to the background of 1947 partition in detail and therefore, it is important to know why the Indian sub-continent partitioned which ultimately framed one of the reasons behind the outbreak of militancy in Kashmir. So, the errors and fragments of Kashmir's history are equally valuable as that of its documented history. In this regard, Michel Foucault in his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," argues that genealogical history is always questioning in nature, it believes in gaps and silences. For Foucault, "The origin lies at a place of inevitable loss. . ." (79), it is always fleeting. Instead of seeking origin, Foucault opines, genealogy opposes "itself to the search for origins" (77) and so, it depends on details, accidents and errors. Hence, genealogical history highlights the marginal issues. Foucault further writes, "The purpose of history, guided by genealogy, is not to commit itself to its dissipation. It does not seek to define our unique threshold of emergence, the homeland to which metaphysicians promise to return; it seeks to make

visible all of those discontinuities that cross us" (95). This means genealogical history does not go after final and absolute truth and knowledge of a society rather it attempts to bring out the hidden discontinuities of a time to limelight. So, it is simply a process of looking at the past. Therefore, Foucault's concept of 'genealogical history' should be taken as a critical lens to focus on the marginalized history of Kashmir. For this, as the theory of new historicism suggests, interdisciplinary study is equally important.

The heart-touching lines about Kashmir in the opening pages of the book *KASHMIR: The Wounded Valley* by Ajit Bhattacharjea echo the dark history of Kashmir, its empire phase, which makes the world people stir. Kashmir has, Bhattacharjea writes, "known cruel despots, religious zealots and pleasure-seeking sensualists under whom the people often starved, were persecuted and forced to survival outside" (19). Bhattacharjea further addresses the wounded image of Kashmir in this way, "It has been sundered by cruel religious and sectarian conflicts. For long periods, extending up to recent times, the ordinary people were so exploited and oppressed that their harsh, brutish existence contrasted sharply and unhappily with the beauty of their environment" (19). The natural beauty of Kashmir contrasted with the life of Kashmiri people because of brutality of the rulers, their vested interests that broke out religious and sectarian conflicts, says Bhattacharjea. This is why,common Kashmiri people had never tested the true sense of their fundamental rights and position.

Bhattacharjea in the chapter entitled "Dogra Rule" writes that the Dogra ruler, Raja Gulab Singh, of Jammu and the British East India company signed the 'Treaty of Amritsar' on 16 March, 1846 which transferred Kashmir to Gulab Singh "for the absurd sum of seventy-five lakhs of rupees" (54). Consequently, the Dogra acquisition of the valley, Kashmir, led to the creation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. But the aspiration of Kashmiri people was ignored which the writer writes,

"For the people of Kashmir, who had not been consulted in any way, the deal meant another century of exploitation by alien rulers" (34). Bhattacharjea means to say that Kashmiri people had no right of enjoying their true sense of freedom and they, time and again, became the subject of exploitation and domination by alien rulers like Gulab Singh. A British traveler, G.T. Vigne's description on Gulab Singh's barbarity and personal cupidity is brought in the text as a reference which goes in this way:

> Prisoners were flayed alive, their skins filled with straw and planted by the wayside for the instruction of all who passed by. . .Economically, too, the Kashmiri was cruelly mulcted by and array of taxes. Surviving under such pressures became an exercise in adjustment. The Kashmiri became known for docility and timidity. (5-6)

This is why, Bhattacharjea remarks the cruelty of Gulab Singh over Kashmiri people saying, "He was as autocratic as any of his predecessors and his methods of imposing authority no less barbarous" (56).

Neither the regime period of Ranbir Singh in Kashmir gave proper justice to the rights of Kashmiri people nor was the latter succession of Pratap Singh being praised well. The point here is Kashmiri people's birthright of independence and freedom had never been acknowledged by the rulers. Their wishes were bitterly marred during the Dogra imperialism. The rulers had not shown any sort of sympathy towards the people's wants and grievances.

According to Bhattacharjea's critical study on Kashmir's historical framework, the last *Maharaja* who ruled Kashmir was Hari Singh, nephew of Pratap Singh. As Hari Singh succeeded to the throne, the degree of discrimination over Kashmiris mounted and they "felt even more victimized" (63). In this context, in the text, Bhattacharjea brings Sir Albion Bannerji's criticism on Hari Singh's misrule in Kashmir which reveals that, "Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many

disadvantages. . .labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people" (63). It shows how common Kashmiri people would struggle hard to survive during Dogra rules in Kashmir.

"Poverty, very high taxes, trade depression and widespread unemployment made the people of the state discontented" (41) during Hari Singh's governance in Kashmir, writes another writer Lt. Gen. M. L. Chibber in the book, *Pakistan's Criminal Folly in Kashmir*. In the same way,Victoria Schofield in *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* highlights the contemporary issue of Kashmir writing, "The alienation of the Kashmiris to Hari Singh was heightened by the continuing presence of 'outsiders' in government service, which led to a movement known as 'Kashmir for the Kashmiris,' sponsored by the more educated Kashmiri Pandits" (34). To fight against Hari Singh's oppression and autocratic rule, "[A] campaign. . .was orchestrated by both the Hindus and Muslims" (34). In course of time, however, the growing flourishment of Dogra Rajputs from Jammu and Kashmiri Pandits "aggravated the Muslims still further" (34). Consequently, with the aim of improving the condition of Muslims in the state, different Muslim associations were came into light in 1929 like 'Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu' and 'Reading Room Party.' This is why, as Schofield's account of the issue falls in the line of Bhattacharjea's argument, Bhattacharjea writes, "The dawn of political awakening in Kashmir can be traced bake to the 1930s. For the first time in its long history, the people began to realise their rights and put pressure on the regime" (65). And the first organized rebellion against Dogra rule was carried out on 13 July, 1931, adds Bhattacharjea.

According to Schofield, what alarmed much to Sheikh Abdullah, a rising political activist, during 1930s was the theme of secularism when the political

instability in Kashmir was already beginning. The decade of the 1930s did not only see Abdullah in the line of favouring the ideology of secularism but also other emerging political leaders like Ghulam Abbas, a Muslim from Jammu, and Yusuf Shah, who jointly established a political party named 'Muslim Conference' in 1931. Acquiring such a political platform, their struggle challenged the imperial rule of Hari Singh. In 1938, again, under a common umbrella of interest, Kashmiri political leaders protested "against unemployment, high taxes, revenue demands and lack of medical facilities" (37).

The political scenario of Kashmir during 1939 did not remain calm, however. The 'Muslim Conference' was replaced by a new name called 'National Conference' to show how all Muslims, Hindus, and Sikhs have united together in a protest for a common cause, independence. As the struggle for independence against the Dogra rule in Kashmir was changing its political colours each day, so as the case with the rising Congress Party in British India led by Jawaharlal Nehru, writes Schofield. In British India too, Nehru had been following the theme of secular and socialist India against the British rule. The time when the World War II erupted "between Britain and Germany and. . .there was a state of 'war emergency' in India" (21), any progress regarding the independence fervour came to a sudden halt. "The divergent responses of the Congress Party and the Muslim League to the war demonstrated the growing rift between them" (38). The ground reason behind this rift was that the Congress Party objected to fighting a war without prior consulting with their representatives whereas the Muslim League, highlighting Muslim community's opinion, agreed to support war demanding greater representation of the Muslims in India. In this context, Schofield remarks how the seed cause of partition got initiated saying:

> Nehru's response to Britain's war effort coincided with a dramatic change in the Muslim League's strategy to secure the interests of the

> Muslims of the sub-continent. On 23 March 1940 the Muslim League adopted its 'Pakistan resolution' at Lahore, which declared 'that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the north-western and eastern zones of India, should be grouped to constitute "Independent States" in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign. As President of the Muslim League, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, endorsed the resolution: 'To yoke together two such nations (as the Hindus and Muslims) under a single state, one as a numerical minority and the other as a majority, must lead to growing discontent". (38)

What becomes crystal clear here is the Muslim League first stepped towards the demand for partition on the basis of the idea that Hindus and Muslims constitute separate nations, which opposed the Congress Party's commitment to unity. Jinnah seen the possibility of remaining Hindus and Muslims together under a single state far remote and this cause worked as stepping a stone to the partition of the sub-continent, writes Schofield.

According to Schofield, it is Chaudhuri Rahmat Ali, a student in Cambridge, who first proposed the idea in 1933 that "the Muslims living in Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (Afghan Province) Kashmir, Sindh and Balochistan should be recognised as a distinct nation, PAKSTAN, later called 'Pakistan'" (38). This scheme which supports the inclusion of the predominantly Muslim state of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan was an early indication that "there was already a body of opinion which believed that the princely state should become part of Pakistan, if and when it could be achieved" (38).

Schofield asserts that the communal agitation between the Hindus and the Muslims seemed inevitable as Ghulam Abbas broke away with Abdullah because of

latter's close affinity with Nehru. Not only this, internal tension regarding the objective of secularism among and between the leaders of National Conference was another side of the dispute. Hence, Abbas' subsequent efforts to reviving the Muslim Conference in turn worked on behalf of the movement for Pakistan that affected the state of Jammu and Kashmir's politics directly. Such a rising tension caused by varied ideologies of both the Congress Party and the Muslim League towards the future status of princely states made it more clear that the two parties would not coexist in a nation together.

Schofield further writes in 1946 the Congress Party supported 'The Cabinet Mission Plan' of drafting the constitution of a self-governing but united India, a proposal forwarded by the then British Government. On the contrary, the Muslim League boycotted the proposal which helped Nehru to get full control over the interim government. In the same year, the Congress Party set up a States ministry when the "decision was taken to partition the sub-continent" (40). Schofield says, the specific task of the interim government "was to encourage the princely states to join India or the new dominion of Pakistan either by acts of accession or 'standstill' agreements" (40-41). But Shekih Abdullah rose against to leaving the decision to the *Maharaja*, Hari Singh, and launched a "Quit Kashmir Movement" mirroring "Gandhi's Quit India movement in 1942" (41). This movement in Kashmir was based on the politics of "describing how 'the tyranny of the Dogras' had lacerated" (41) Kashmiri People's souls. Later, Sheikh Abdullah was caught in his attempt to visit Nehru in Delhi and so as the case with the other leaders of the Muslim League in 1946 when they "led a 'campaign of action' similar to Jinnah's in British India" (41). But when the main political leaders of the state, Abdullah and Abbas, were in jail, Hari Singh called for fresh elections. The National Conference did not participate in the elections that resulted as a boon for the Muslim Conference to get an uncontested victory.

To whatever end, the *Maharaja*, Hari Singh, tried to implement his rule in the state but his position was weakening. Here, Schofield addresses Karan Singh's view and writes:

> In the months preceding independence, Hari Singh appeared as a helpless figure caught up in a changing world. . .He was hostile to the Congress Party, dominated by Gandhi, Nehru and Patel, partly because of Nehru's close friendship with Abdullah. He was not able either to come to terms with the National Conference, because of the threat it posed to the Dogra dynasty. Although the Muslim League supported the rulers' right to determine the future of their states, Hari Singh opposed the communalism inherent in the League's two-nation theory. (42)

On the basis of what Karan Singh, the son of *Maharaja*, argued on the contemporary condition of Hari Singh, Schofield opines, for *Maharaja* joining Pakistan "[W]ould leave a substantial number of Hindus in Jammu as a minority, as well as Buddhists in Ladakh; joining India would be contrary to the advice given by the British that due consideration should be given to numerical majority and geographical contiguity" (42). As the assurance of independence of the sub-continent in 1947 got its solid ground, "The concept of Pakistan, the dream, the chimera, the students' scheme, was to become reality" (42), writes Schofield.

The political atmosphere in British India before the partition changed a lot with the arrival of Lord Louis Mountbatten as a new Viceroy. Seeing that a potential conflict might erupt during partition, Mountbatten showed his favour for holding referendum but since the "North-West Frontier Province, with its strong Congress lobby, led by Khan Abdual Ghaffar Khan, opposed partition and favoured India" (45); the decision was put to the people in a referendum. Also, the Congress Party

boycotted the referendum which led to the victory of Muslim League. According to Foucault, the practice and regulation of idea in a society is always influenced by different forms of discourse. In the same way, Schofield's research shows the existence of different discourses about Mountbatten's relationship with *Maharaja*, with Nehru, in the contemporary time. Schofield argues:

> Although Pakistani accounts suggest that. . .Mountbatten favoured Kashmir's accession to India, in view of his close association with Nehru, Mountbatten contended that he just wanted the maharaja to make up his mind. 'My chief concern was to persuade the Maharaja that he should decide which dominion Kashmir should join, after consulting the wishes of his people and without undue pressure from either side, especially the Congress Leaders. (46-47)

Furthermore, Nehru and Gandhi were not in favour of Maharaja "making any declaration of independence" and the "Congress leaders' interest in Kashmir evidently disturbed the future leaders of Pakistan" (49), writes Schofield.

As Schofield argues, the writers Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Bushra Asif, and Cyrus Samii in *Kashmir: New Voices, New Approaches*, write that in 1947:

> The Indian subcontinent became independent from British rule and was partitioned into two states, Pakistan and India, on 14 and 15 August respectively. Rulers of the princely states, which included the state of Jammu and Kashmir, were given the option to accede to either country. In an effort to remain independent, the maharaja proposed to enter into standstill agreements with both India and Pakistan on 12 August. (251)

These lines on Kashmir's historical account show Hari Singh, despite having people's aversion, wished to rule Kashmir as an independent state. Singh did not want to merge

Kashmir with either Dominion, India or Pakistan. In this regard, the BBC News reports, “The territory of Kashmir was hotly contested even before India and Pakistan won their independence from Britain in August 1947. Under the partition plan provided by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, Kashmir was free to accede to India or Pakistan. The *Maharaja*, Hari Singh, wanted to stay independent. . .” (1). It is also evident in Lt. Gen. M. L. Chibber’s *Pakistan’s Criminal Folly in Kashmir* as Chibber writes, “On 17 June, 1947, the Indian Independence Act was passed stating that on 15 August, 1947, the British would relinquish their authority in India which was to become an independent country” (42), and the future of “princely states in India was left completely in the hands of their rulers. They could join India or Pakistan or stay independent” (49).

Regarding the issue of standstill, Schofield opines that after the partition of the sub-continent, “for seventy-three days” (57), the state of Jammu and Kashmir remained independent. In course of time, Hari Singh made a ‘standstill’ agreement with Pakistan hoping to ensure the services of trade, travel and communication which had been in practice with British India earlier. But the independent India did not sign a standstill agreement saying, “it had no time to think of Kashmir” (57). This created suspicion amongst Pakistanis that the Indian government was already engaged in hatching certain conspiracy for Kashmir’s future and hence did not consider a standstill agreement seriously. Similarly, the revolt in Poonch was another burning issue of the time. In Poonch and also in Jammu and Kashmir, people became victims of the “organized units of the Maharaja’s army and police” (60). In this context, Schofield brings the reference of Horace Alexander, the British Quaker, who describes the atrocities of Hari Singh saying: “If the Maharaja’s government chastised the people of the Kashmir valley with whips, the Poonchis were chastised with

scorpions" (58). Hari Singh's administration in Poonch since 1940 was not favoured by the local people because "there was a tax on every hearth and every window" (58).

In 1947, in Poonch, the Muslims who were in majority carried out 'no-tax' campaign against *Maharaja*'s rule. So, the *Maharaja* took Sikhs and Hindus of Poonchon his side and ordered the Muslims to hand over their weapons. What made the Muslim community more tensed was the possession of weapons by Hindus and Sikhs, and this brought a communal tension. To have a weaponry access, the Muslim community went after the help of the tribes of the North-West Frontier. "Unrest in Poonch had turned into an organised revolt against the Dogras" (59), writes Schofield. Gradually, the grim atmosphere with series of massacre, loot and rape engulfed Kashmir too. Following the partition, the *Maharaja*'s Government used its Dogra troops to threat many Muslim villages in the neighborhood of Jammu. The then *Maharaja*'s government viewed that the tribal support to the Muslim community in Poonch was a developed strategy of Pakistan. On the contrary, Pakistani government held an opinion that the uprising in Poonch was a legitimate rebellion against the *Maharaja*'s rule.

With the increasing armed raids and a blockade in the border, the Kashmir state became "the chessboard of politics" (63), argues Schofield. Pursuing different diplomatic channels with the *Maharaja* and his government, both "Pakistan and India were actively trying to determine events so that Kashmir would accede to their respective Dominions" (60). Sometimes, Pakistan alleged India for violating the standstill agreement and the equal degree of anxiety eat up the Indian leaders' mind seeing the Pakistani moves like that of its armed raids into the state and disturbances in Poonch. Since the freedom of Kashmiri people was already in question, the hope for peace and harmony slowly got melted away with the development of communal violence. For example, in Kashmir, Sikhs and Hindus attacked Muslims and vice-

versa. Such a troubled situation in Kashmir worked as a stimulating force to Pakistan to neglect its standstill agreement with the *Maharaja*. And the sudden attack of raiders from the tribal territory of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province in Kashmir took a historical turning point in 1947. Here, Schofield addresses the view of Faiz Ahmed Faiz, chief editor of *The Pakistan Times*, who says, "There ended the opportunity of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan" (64).

In the realm of Kashmiri history, there may have been competing stories of historians or writers on a particular subject matter or event. One's idea or account of historical incidents may collide with others but, Lois Tyson argues, ". . .[N]ew historicism views historical accounts as narratives, as stories, that are inevitably biases according to the point of view, conscious or unconscious, of those who write them" (286). Therefore, Schofield's account on Kashmiri history, like that of many other writers, is one of the stories of the contemporary time.

Accession: Multiple Versions of History

In 1947, claims and counterclaims regarding the independency of Jammu and Kashmir went viral in the mainstream of both India and Pakistan's politics. In fact, seeing Kashmir independent was neither of their choice. While Pakistan was having its unwelcome relationship with the state of Jammu and Kashmir in terms of law, order and negotiation, India helped, a hidden politics it might be, *Maharaja* both morally and financially to uplift the state's condition. Here, Schofield writes, "The invasion of large numbers of tribesmen from the North-West Frontier of Pakistan into Kashmir forced a decision on him. In order to receive military assistance from India, Hari Singh was obliged to accede to the Indian Dominion" (66). On the same ground of argument, it is Prof. L. N. Dhar who writes:

> The Pakistan Government invaded the state, and encouraged the Tribal people and other titanic hordes of medieval barbarism to carry loot,

> plunder, death and destruction into the hearths and homes of innocent Kashmiris in general and among Hindus in particular. Pakistan wanted to grab Kashmir, even though its ruler in the terms of Independence Act, had acceded to India, and signed the instrument of Accession as required under the said Act. (19)

What Schofield and Dhar write on the issue of Kashmir's accession to India shows the *Maharaja*'s act of accession was caused by Pakistan's invasion into Kashmir. However, the Pakistani Government denied they had given any legitimate support to the tribesmen's act. Instead, Schofield writes, ". . .[T]he Pakistanis insisted that there was an indigenous rebellion within the state which was an extension of the political opposition to the maharaja which had been going on since the 1930s. Predictably, the discontented Poonchis had crossed the border to Pakistan for help" (66). They believed that "the tribesmen were incited to a 'holy war' " (67).

Another writer, Prem Shankar Jha, in *Kashmir 1947*, analyzes two different books, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy (1846-1990)* and *Birth of a Tragedy: Kashmir, 1947*, written by a British commentator on South Asian affairs, Alastair Lamb, and shows the Pakistan's version of history in this way:

> The Government of Pakistan cannot accept the version of the circumstances in which Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union. . .There is conclusive evidence. . .that Kashmir troops were used first to attack Moslems in Jammu and even attack Moslem villages in Pakistan near the border. . .Early in October, women and children from Poonch sought refuge in Pakistan and there are at present about 1,00,000 Moslem refugees in West Punjab from Jammu. . .The attack on Poonch and massacres in Jammu further added to and inflamed all the more Pathan feelings and made the raid on Kashmir inevitable. . .The

> sending of Indian troops to Kashmir further intensified and inflamed the feeling of the tribes. . .in the opinion of the Government of Pakistan the accession of Kashmir is based on fraud and violence and as such cannot be accepted. (3-4)

In the above extract, Jha revisits Pakistan's version of history on the issue of Kashmir accession. Harold Aram Vesser in his book *The New Historicism* argues that new historicism is a critical practice, "an operation upon a text" (144). Vesser further writes, it is "a gargantuan gloss which almost "disappears" the text. . .When New Historicism plays with history to enhance the text, its enhancement is like the colorizing of old movies for present consumption" (144-45). And the new historicists should have to acknowledge this idea because for them "the historical context is the "cultural system" " (268), asserts Vesser. In this regard, whatever the writers have written on the history of Kashmir should be taken into the light of Vesser's argument. Jha's account on Pakistan's version of history contradicts with the Indian one. And it is Jha himself who criticizes Pakistan's standpoint saying "[T]he Pathan raiders came spontaneously to the aid of their suffering Muslim brethren; that Pakistan did everything short of engaging them militarily to prevent them" (34), is hard to believe and hence, belied. Jha argues, "Pakistan was guilty of a deep-seated conspiracy to seize Kashmir" (26). But which of the version, either that of Indian or Pakistani, is more inclined to the sidelined voice of Kashmiri people, is the question here.

The critical research on Kashmiri history by Schofield shows the tribal invasion in Kashmir was "undertaken with the knowledge of the Pakistani leaders in order to enhance the efforts of the local Kashmiris" (68). The bloodshed in Kashmir increased and the panic *Maharaja* asked for help to the Government of India on October 24, 1947. In spite of *Maharaja*'s urgent appeal, the then governor-general of India, Lord Mountbatten, urged for the legal formalities of the temporary accession of

Kashmir to India prior to " a referendum, plebiscite, election, or even, if these methods were impracticable, by representative public meetings" (70). Mountbatten was of the view that sending Indian troops in Kashmir without such formality could invite a war with Pakistan. Schofield writes, "The sequence of events from the moment the Maharaja requested help from the Government of India on 24 October to the time when Indian troops arrived on 27 October has been a subject of debate ever since" (70).

The Instrument of Accession

Because of unchecked tribal invasion in Kashmir on the one hand and Mountbatten's insistence on accession on the other, Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession. More than the tempo of the then conflict context, Hari Singh, instead of acceding Kashmir to either Dominion, India or Pakistan, had wanted earlier to build up cordial relations with both. But that sort of his plan did not work. Shekih Abdullah who had already released from jail in September was in the line of Nehru's political network and hence got provision "in the *maharaja*'s government" (70) during accession. This is why, Abdullah was granted all responsibilities for setting up an interim government proposed by Hari Singh. Finally, as Schofield writes, on the part of Indian government, "[I]t was decided that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir should be accepted, subject to the provision that a plebiscite would be held in the state when the law and order situation allowed" (73). It was V.P. Menon, the then Constitutional Adviser to Mountbatten, who convinced *Maharaja* the terms and conditions of accession in Srinagar on 25 October and then took along the approved letter and the Instrument of Accession to Mountbatten in Delhi. Once again, Mountbatten proposed a view that "the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State" (73), however, that did not materialize.

The history of Kashmir, particularly, regarding the issue of the Instrument of Accession, has been much questioned and criticized by different commentators ever since it came to the existence. The Indian version of documents support that "Menon first reached Jammu on 26 October" (73) but Alastair Lamb, among other commentators, writes, "it is at this point that the hitherto established narrative diverges dramatically from the facts" (73). The *Maharaja* already had left Srinagar for Jammu on 26 October before Menon's arrival. "But Menon states that on the evening of 26 October he was back in Delhi meeting with the Defence Committee. When, therefore, could he have met the maharaja on 26 October?" (73), questions Schofield.

To make this context more clear, Schofield mentions Mahajan's words who, the then Prime Minister of the State, says, "[A]round dinner time' on the evening of 26 October Nehru sent a message that the following day 'with V.P. Menon, I should fly to Jammu to inform the Maharaja' of the decision of the Cabinet meeting that military aid was to be given" (74). This shows Menon's plan to visit *Maharaja* on 27 October was in the process and the Instrument of Accession had already signed in Kashmir. Schofield writes, "If the Instrument of Accession had been signed before the maharaja left Srinagar, why was it necessary for Menon to relate that it was signed the following day when he returned to Jammu?" (74). In a defense of this documented history, the Indian Government mentioned in its account that the Instrument of Accession was signed on 26 October; that "the maharaja acceded to India before Indian troops were sent to Srinagar" (75). Here, Schofield tries to make the readers' mind more open and critical arguing, "But the absence of a signed Instrument of Accession prior to the official arrival of Indian troops on 27 October would have reduced the strength of the Indian claim to be assisting a state which had acceded to

India. Accession before intervention gave the Indians the legal rights to be in Kashmir. . .” (75).

Like Schofield, it is Lamb who doubts the authenticity and transparency of the Instrument “dated and signed by both maharaja and Mountbatten” (75). Of the Instrument of Accession, another surprising and hidden fact is why Hari Singh never spoke of whether he had not signed an Instrument of Accession before Indian troops landed in Srinagar or he did in the presence of Menon? Or had he never signed one? Such historical facts of Kashmir’s accession have been ambiguously written and interpreted in the official history. Such errors, such filtered truths, of Kashmiri history have no proper explanation, hence, the written history is scanty. And it is one of the major drawbacks of Kashmiri history.

Apart from this point, since there is no alternative, what could the readers around the world presume is Hari Singh had signed the instrument and therefore, “Despite Pakistan’s protestations, India maintained that from 26 October 1947 the state of Jammu and Kashmir was a part of Indian territory, and therefore that their action in sending in troops to assist in the defence of the state against the Pathan raiders was legitimate” (75).

Similarly, Prem Shankar Jha, India-based writer and thinker, blames Pakistan for engineering the raiders to annex the Jammu and Kashmir state in his book *Kashmir 1947*. In the chapter entitled “Accession Under Duress?,” Jha addresses one of the points being written in the India Office Records which says, “There is conclusive evidence that, far from anyone in India having plotted to seize Kashmir, in was *Maharaja* who first decided, on his own, sometime in September that he had no option but to accede to India, and Nehru who rebuffed him” (37). For Jha, the accession of Kashmir to India resulted from *Maharaja*’s inability to remain independent and his dislike to acceding to Pakistan.

Likewise, another writer Lt. Gen. M. L. Chibber in *Pakistan's Criminal Folly in Kashmir* talks about Kashmir's history which parallels with Jha's line of argument. In the chapter entitled "The Drama of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India," Chibber criticizes the saying of the organisers of the 'Tribal Invasion' as they argue, "Indians fraudulently conspired to force the ruler to sign the instrument of accession when the Muslim population of Kashmir revolted against him and that the tribesmen had merely rushed to Kashmir to assist their Muslim brothers being butchered by the Maharaja's forces" (58). Chibber regards such blame against India as a groundless argument claiming because of Pakistan's violation of the standstill agreement and its support in tribal invasion in the state forced *Maharaja* to sign the Instrument of Accession. Therefore, tribal invasion, as said by Chibber, was a criminal folly of Pakistan which sealed the fate of Kashmir.

In the same vine of argument, Chibber also criticizes Alastair Lamb's book *Kashmir, Disputed Legacy*. Chibber writes, Lamb in the book opines that Kashmir's accession to India was a conspiracy and fraud because the Muslims of Kashmir revolted against the *Maharaja* and the *Maharaja* ran away to Jammu. "The Indians sent their Army to crush the revolt, while doing so, they either forced the *Maharaja* to sign the instrument of accession or forged it" (59). Chibber counters Lamb's this line of view arguing it is only a 'myth.' However, Schofield's findings counter both Jha and Chibber's claim as she writes, "Pakistan's position was that the accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to India was based on 'fraud and violence' and therefore was not '*bona fide*' " (78). But it does not mean that Schofield favours Pakistan's standpoint rather it shows what she has simply found in her research.

While focusing on the issue of Kashmir's accession, a prolific writer Sumit Ganguly mentions the Indian version of 'The Instrument of Accession of Jammu and Kashmir State (October 26, 1947)' in appendix section of his book *The Crisis in*

Kashmir. Among other points which contain terms and conditions of accession, the point number eight, written by *Maharaja*, tells, "Nothing in this Instrument affects the continuance of my sovereignty in and over this State, or, save as provided by or under this Instrument, the exercise of any powers, authority and rights now enjoyed by me as Ruler of this State or the validity of any law at present in force in this Sate" (158-59). This clearly shows that the *Maharaja* was more concerned about his absolute ruling power of the State, his State's privilege, than the interest and wish of his people. If not then why he never thought of common people's opinion regarding the accession of Kashmir and acted as if he was the sole rescuer of the then Kashmir's problem? Hence, he failed to acknowledge the voice of Kashmiri people at a time of emergency.

The piles of arguments given in the line of Indian version of history and that of Pakistan do not represent what exactly had happened in the then Kashmir. And this is why, the history of Kashmir's accession is as mysterious at present as it was there in 1947. To this point of the present research of Kashmiri history, the researcher has come across multiple questions which have no thematic answer as such like: Would Hari Singh have eventually signed the accession? Was it wise to Hari Singh, who had the unquestionable legal rights to accede to either dominion, to accede to India, because he was no longer in control of his state? Under what circumstances might he have acceded to Pakistan? Could he have ever remained independent? Why was no appeal made to the United Nations for assistance at the time of accession? Why did no one suggest getting in touch with the Pakistani government for consultation? "Was the 'holy war' into Kashmir instigated by Pakistan or was it an extension of the internal troubles already existing in the *Maharaja*'s State?" (66) Would the Indian presence in Kashmir become temporary if there had been no accession? In addition, why India would find it convincing to accept accession from a state, where three-quarters of the

population were Muslims, without first knowing the wishes of common people? In this regard, Vesser asserts, “The writing of history is all a matter of the construction of more or less plausible plots” (145). So, the different versions of India and Pakistan’s history bear more or less plausible plots that silences Kashmir’s history.

The Role of UNO (United Nations Organization)

To investigate the very background reasons of Kashmir dispute, since the restoration of peace and order in the state was a prime concern, the UNO actively engaged in the Kashmir issue since 1948 with the establishment of a commission called the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). On the question of the accession of the state to India or Pakistan, holding a plebiscite in the state in a peaceful political environment was the only option which the UNO offered to both India and Pakistan. For this, the UNCIP requested Pakistan to withdraw tribesmen and Pakistani nationals from the State of Jammu and Kashmir whereas the Government of India was called to reduce its military forces to the minimum level. The UNCIP’s central objective was, as Schofield writes, that “[A] final decision on the future status of the Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people. . .through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite” (86). In *Curfewed Night*, Peer also writes, “The UN endorsed a plebiscite for Kashmiris to determine which country they wanted to belong” (13) and imposed a ceasefire line on 1 January, 1949. This line divides Kashmir into Pakistan-controlled and India-controlled parts.

After a critical research in the sub-continent, the UNCIP came up with a finding that both India and Pakistan equally claim over Kashmir on the basis of their own created line of ‘truth.’ For Michel Foucault, creation and recreation of ‘truth’ is always affected by the power networks, and it survives in the form of discourse. Hence, truth changes as per the change in system of power. In the same way, both

Pakistan and India's 'truths' over Kashmir territory survive and operate according to their respective power politics.

According to UNCIP, the Indian government considered itself "[T]o be in legal possession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir by virtue of the Instrument of Accession of October 1947 signed by the *Maharaja* and the then governor general, Lord Mountbatten" (87), writes Schofield. The Pakistan's assistance to the tribesmen was a hostile act and India was fully responsible for the security of the state. India controlled the defence, communications and external affairs of the state in accord with the Instrument and therefore keeping troops in Kashmir was its right. The report of UNCIP Commission shows:

> From an Indian perspective, the Plebiscite, to which Nehru had agreed, would be to confirm the accession which was, in all respects, already complete. . .the cardinal feature of India's position is her contention that she is in Kashmir by right, and that Pakistan cannot aspire to equal footing with India in the contest. (88)

However, the report of UNCIP on Pakistan's position shows something different which questions Indian's one. Schofield puts light on UNCIP's report further saying, "Pakistan maintained that the *Maharaja* of Jammu and Kashmir had no authority left to execute an Instrument of Accession on 26 October, 1947 because the people had successfully revolted, had overthrown his government and had compelled him to flee from Srinagar, the capital" (88). Hence, the accession of the State to India was illegal, brought about by violence and fraud and so, invalid. Similarly, a Standstill Agreement with Pakistan did not allow the State to make any kind of negotiation or argument with any other country. Another line of Pakistani government's dissatisfaction over Kashmir's accession issue is linked with the condition of the Instrument of Accession. The Pakistani government argued, "The

Maharaja's offer to accession was accepted by. . .Lord Mountbatten on the condition that as soon as law and order had been restored, the question of the accession of the state would be decided by a reference to the people" (88). Also, Pakistan blamed Indian forces saying it invaded Kashmir and in order to protect its territory the Pakistani force entered into Kashmir.

Not only this, the repression and ill conduct of the *Maharaja*'s government invited the 'Azad movement' which, in fact, was "indigenous and spontaneous" (88), believed Pakistan. On behalf of the Muslim people of Kashmir and East Panjab who suffered of the atrocities, the tribal incursions were emerged spontaneously. Regarding all these different views of Pakistan, the UNCIP reported that:

> It is Pakistan's opinion that her action in lending assistance to the people of Kashmir is far less open to criticism than was India's intervention at the request of an autocratic ruler. Pakistan considers herself as having equal status with the Government of India and entitled as a party to the dispute, to equal rights and considerations'. (89)

It shows both Dominions had not acted in favour of holding a plebiscite and therefore, are equally responsible for the marginalization of Kashmir people's voice and rights. The UNCIP recommended for the plebiscite in the state which India and Pakistan simply gave up blaming each other's side. But what about Kashmir's independence then? None of the Dominions ever really tried to address Kashmiri people's rights, reports the UNCIP. It clarifies both India and Pakistan reject the option of Kashmir becoming an independent state. This is why Schofield, writes:

> It was anticipated that the accession would be confirmed by reference to the people, under the auspices of the United Nations…The will of the people, however, was never ascertained in a such a manner as to

> make them feel that the issue was finalised. The history of what happened to the state's 'special status' partially explains events in the present day. (90)

Therefore, the 1947 partition history followed by the *Maharaja*'s accession of Kashmir othered ordinary Kashmiri people's status.

Unrest in Kashmir: 1950s-1987

Since Sheikh Abdullah, the 'Lion of Kashmir,' became Prime Minister in the state of Jammu and Kashmir, the relation between *Maharaja* and Abdullah worsened gradually. What Abdullah did on the part of Kashmiri people, particularly those of peasants, was his 'land reforms' movement that questioned *Maharaja*'s "special rights and privileges" (91), writes Schofield. At the same time Abdullah initiated the program called the 'New Kashmir,' representing the will of common people. Therefore, his such act of socialism was "welcomed by both Hindus and Muslims" (94) in the state. Schofield writes, making Kashmir independent state was in the mind of Abdullah though his familiarity with Nehru's government in Delhi was developing side by side. Meanwhile, as "New Delhi had no right to extend its jurisdiction in Kashmir beyond the three areas agreed in the Instrument of Accession, namely, foreign affairs, defence and communications" (95), this status of the Instrument of Accession was termed as 'Article 307' in the Indian constitution.

Basically, the 'Article 307' illustrates, "Kashmir was to be allowed its own flag, but the Indian flag would be supreme. . ." (97). In *Curfewed Night*, Peer also writes that the earlier phase of accession "gave Kashmir great autonomy. . .Kashmir had its own constitution and flag" (13). But had that autonomy lasted in Kashmir? According to Schofield, Abdullah's downfall in 1953 shadowed down Kashmir's relative autonomy too. Though Abdullah got a great victory in the first post-independence election held in Kashmir in 1951, his latter political career had been a

bitter objection to Nehru in Delhi. Because of Abdullah's relation with the leaders of 'Azad Kashmir,' and that of his intention of making Kashmir independent state promised by the Instrument of Accession alarmed India. Consequently, Abdullah got imprisoned and so as the wish of common people. It clearly justifies that Nehru who had wished Abdullah's role in Kashmir's interim government at the time of accession, now, himself thought better to imprison Abdullah in 1953 because he suspected over Abdullah's efforts of making Kashmir independent. In this regard, Paul Staniland in *Asian Survey* writes, "The erosion of J and K's autonomy onward from 1953 concerned many Kashmiris" (934).

In the following years after Abdullah's arrest, dictatorship, corruption, nepotism increased in the state. With that, holding a plebiscite seemed far-fetched. In 1957, Schofield writes, "the state of Jammu and Kashmir approved its own Constitution, modeled along the lines of the Indian Constitution" (111), however, that did not represent the will of Kashmiri people either. What people had envisaged of peaceful and democratic Kashmir never got the impartial attention of the then political leaders. When Abdullah was released in 1958 and called into state politics, once again, he raised a voice for plebiscite and the right to self-determination. Abdullah also criticized the contemporary Bakshi's government of the sate blaming it "was composed of 'goondas, opportunists and thieves' " (112). Why Abdullah was welcomed back into the state politics after his release from jail? Staniland writes, "Allowing Sheikh Abdullah back into politics was the strategy for trying to consolidate Indian control" (934). Moreover, Abdullah's latter reinforcement for the state's independency itself became a sole cause for his second time imprisonment.

According to Schofield, the late 1950s socio-political atmosphere in Kashmir remained tensed with the monopoly of Bakshi's government. The government turned out to be tyrannical that it excessively exploited Kashmiri people. "The government

agents forced hot potatoes into the mouths of their opponents, put heavy stones on their chest; and branded them with red hot irons. Various newspapers critical of the government were burned, including the *Voice of Kashmir*" (113). In *Curfewed Night*, Peer also describes the then suffering of Kashmiri people arguing Sheikh Abdullah was jailed because "he implemented a radical land reform and gave a speech suggesting the possibility of an independent Kashmir" (13). Peer writes, the downfall of Abdullah's political career in the state paved a clear way to India's misrule in Kashmir. "Sheikh remained in jail for around twenty years; when he was released, he signed a compromise with the Indian government where he gave up the demand for the plebiscite that the UN had recommended" (13). Is silencing people's voice means freedom? questions Peer.

In *Kashmir in Conflict*, Schofield further pens that the dispute over Kashmir between two politically powerful giants, India and Pakistan, had not been resolved to the decade of 1960s, and their bilateral talks would resemble like "badminton." Even the first round of talks over the issue of the state between India and Pakistan in 1962 appeared to be fruitless. The status quo continued in Kashmir's politics whereas China's threatening in 'Aksai-Chin' area, between India and China's border line, added further tension in Kashmir. In 1965, the continuing hostilities between India and Pakistan over Kashmir turned into a bloody war, the second one, in which thousands of common Kashmiri people became innocent victims. However, in 1972, in order to establish a friendly and harmonious relationship between India and Pakistan, both countries agreed to sign the term paper known as 'The Shimla Agreement.'

In the appendix section of the book *The Crisis in Kahmir*, Sumit Gangauly mentions the body part of 'Simla Agreement' in which one of the points says, "In Jammu and Kashmir, the Line of Control resulting from the ceasefire of December

17,1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side" (167-68). This line of progress between Pakistan and India helped, though little, Kashmiri people live in a peaceful environment. In Kashmir, apart from the wish of getting autonomy, option for joining either Pakistan or India knocked the aspiration of both Hindus and Muslims. They wished so because they did not want to live in a war; the failed plebiscite might be another cause. In this context, Schofield writes, "The failure of the 1965 war. . .Pakistan's defeat and the emergence of independent Bangladesh in 1971 left those Kashmiris who would have preferred the state to be joined to Pakistan with little hope for the future" (138). However, the time was not ripe for following the need because any act against the Indian government force would invite a fatal cause in the state.

India in between, the West Pakistan and the East Pakistan, initially termed East Bengal, was the actual Dominion of Pakistan after the partition of British India. It was in 1971 that the very Dominion went through the volatile political climate as the governed election turned out to be in favour of East Pakistan leaving the West's political power in question. But, to show its power and domination over the East, the West Pakistan ignored that victory installing its military force against the current demand and wish of the people, that is, autonomy. Consequently, this led to the disintegration of Pakistan and the birth of Bangladesh. During the civil war in Pakistan, India stood behind the East Pakistan as a backing force which resulted into India-Pakistan war, the third one. On the issue of 1971 war, the BBC News writes, "Pakistan descended into civil war after East Pakistan demanded autonomy and later independence. India invaded East Pakistan in support of its people after millions of civilians fled to India. At the end of 1971, Bangladesh was created out of East Pakistan" (1). Similarly, in *Kashmir in Conflict*, Schofield writes that "The Pakistani army's severe repression of the secessionist movement caused a reaction in India. .

.but many Indians also saw in the heart-rending situation an opportunity to cut Pakistan down to size. Indira Gandhi's role in the creation of Bangladesh is a matter of pride for Indian citizens and hatred for Pakistanis" (134). Schofield further pens that "On 16 December 1971, in what was a humiliating defeat for Pakistan, the Pakistani army surrendered to India at Dacca race course. India retained 94,000 prisoners of war, mainly Pakistani soldiers" (134). Posted on 13 December 2011, BBC News says, "The defeat of the Pakistani army. . .For Pakistan, it was perhaps the darkest moment in its history and the ultimate humiliation" (1).

It is Sumit Ganguly who in *The Crisis in Kashmir* writes that "[t]he outcome of the 1971 war had significant consequences for the Kashmir dispute. After the war, India emerged as the dominant power on the subcontinent. . ." (60). Ganguly further writes that "[t]he changed environment on the subcontinent had four important consequences for Pakistan's interest in Kashmir" (60). The four inevitable consequences that Pakistan faced were: first, "its ethnoreligious claim to Kashmir appeared all the more dubious after the 1971 civil war" (60); second, "Even though Pakistan was relieved of its previous responsibility of defending East Pakistan, the loss of its eastern wing dealt enormous symbolic, psychological, and material blows to the Pakistani state. Pakistan lacked both the military strength and the political inclination to stir up trouble in Kashmir" (60-61); third, "there was little or no opportunity for Pakistan to exploit the situation in Kashmir. . .Even if any discontent had existed in the valley, it did not redound to Pakistan's advantage" (61); and finally, "[t]he Simla Agreement's explicit recognition of the principle of bilateralism in Indo-Pakistani relations was widely construed in Indian policy-making circles as a major diplomatic victory" (62). These were the things that came to light which directly affected the Kashmir issue.

The role of Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in the history of Kashmir, before and after the partition of the Indian-subcontinent, cannot be simply overlooked. Having the ancestral root in Kashmir, Nehru always wanted to merge Kashmir into India and that became reality right after the partition. As Nehru became the first prime minister of independent India, he "played a critical role in nurturing democratic political institutions and practices" (23), writes Ganguly. In a way, Nehru's political career would often come into question whenever he made any promises or declarations regarding the issue of Kashmir. To this date, there remain some historical mysteries which were also there during Nehru's time and it, of course, places Nehru's past role in the determination of Kashmir's future more open to question. In the book *Kashmir: The Case for Freedom,* Arundhati Roy, in the chapter entitled "Seditious Nehru," questions Nehru's role writing:

> In his broadcast to the nation over All India Radio on 2 November 1947, Pandit Nehru said, 'We are anxious not to finalize anything in a moment of crisis and without the fullest opportunity to be given to the people of Kashmir to have their say. It is for them ultimately to decide. And let me make it clear that it has been our policy that where there is a dispute about the accession of a state to either Dominion, the accession must be made by the people of the state. It is in accordance with this policy that we have added a proviso to the Instrument of Accession of Kashmir. (126)

This kind of promise came to the failure as Nehru simply ignored his words on behalf of Kashmiris, writes Roy.

Similarly, Victoria Schofield writes that as Nehru addressed the issue of Kashmir to the UN in 1947, he wrote that ". . .[T]he Government of India wants to make it very clear that as soon as the raiders are driven out and normalcy is restored,

the people of the state will freely decide their fate and that decision will be taken according to the universally accepted democratic means of plebiscite or referendum" (85). However, that promise of holding a fair election in the line of Kashmiris' wish never took place.

Another line of Nehru's commitment which did not materialize was his report to the All Indian Congress Committee on 6 July 1951, writes Arundhati Roy. In that report, "Nehru said, 'Kashmir has been wrongly looked upon as a prize for India or Pakistan. People seem to forge that Kashmir is not a commodity for sale or to be bartered. It has an individual existence and its people must be the final arbiters of their future' " (128). There were so many other declarations which Nehru made, proposed or wrote, but neither of them, in totality, came to support the ordinary Kashmiri people's aspiration. Finally, Nehru died at the age of seventy four and Schofield writes, "In one of the mysteries of history, the Indian prime minister left unfinished whatever he might have been able to do for Kashmir in the last days of his life" (122).

For the first time in the history of Kashmir, during Indira Gandhi's government in India, "Kashmir saw a wonderful decade of freedom and peace" (140), writes Schofield. India's 'six-point accord' of 1975 worked, somehow, on behalf of Kashmiri people's suffering. Since the accord was based on the constitutional framework of the state, peace prevailed in Jammu and Kashmir. And this development in the state was seen as a great achievement on the side of Indian government because Schofield writes, "From an Indian standpoint, the movement for self-determination virtually came to an end with the 1975 accord" (140). Soon the accord came into light, however, the Pakistani government vociferously opposed it. The Pakistani government argued that the accord "had violated the terms of Shimla and the UN requirements for a plebiscite" (140).

With changing time in Kashmir, the educated Kashmiri youths' spirit for 'Kashmiriyat' was taking its speedy course. The youths believed "the accord is not the resolution of the Kashmir dispute" (142). Similarly, the common people, particularly Muslim community, became conscious of their status and raised up their voice arguing, "Our youth awoke and realised that we can't any longer be the slaves of India. . .We Muslims feel we have been deprived of something. . .We haven't been allowed to join India or Pakistan of our own free will. Rather we have been forced to be with India" (142). This shows the Muslim community was not given what they wanted to have, that is, freedom and justice. Hence, they were not contended with the then Indian government.

Schofield further writes, the people in Kashmir carried out a movement representing the fundamentals of their respective religions, their cultural identity, which ultimately questioned the theme of secularism that the "Indian government had espoused since independence" (142). Unlike such a gloomy political image of the contemporary Kashmiri society, on the other hand, the decade of 1980s saw a drastic change in the state's economic status with the improvement in its trade and tourism sectors.

The death of Sheikh Abdullah in 1982 put Kashmir in coma. Remembering that Abdullah "had symbolized Kashmir's identity" (146), all people honoured his death. But that lingering grief of Abdullah's loss was further intensified by the then state's corrupt power politics. The selfish nature of political leaders of the state government in the backing line of the Indian government angst Kashmiri people and that, Schofield writes, "[C]hanged the course of events and renewed the demand not so much for Kashmiriyat or union with Pakistan, but for *azadi*, freedom-for the people of the 'valley from what they perceived to be not secular, but Hindu-dominated, India" (146).

The common people's wish rose high in the 1987 election, however, that election too became a mere puppet of political drama. The rigging of 1987 election, as "there were widespread charges of rigging" (154), the Kashmiri people ". . .[G]ot disgusted and disappointed and disillusioned. Educated but unemployed, their grievances were fuelled by events" of rebellion and protest "both within and outside the Valley" (155). Rebellion against Indian rule found its way to the arms struggle that directly affected Kashmiri people's lives. To dispatch the rebellion force, the Indian government implemented military force which brought curfews, crackdowns, friskings, and excessive exploitation in the state. The Kashmiri youths began to get arms training from Pakistan's controlled part of Kashmir, *Azad* Kashmir, some were locally trained, and anti-Indian "feeling within the valley was mirrored by a surge of support for Pakistan" (157).

This line of critical research on Kashmiri history by Schofield makes it clear to argue that Kashmiri people have never been represented in a true light in its official history. Their rights to freedom and justice have never been emphasized wisely in the constitution. Therefore, as new historicism speaks of, their voice is the voice of margin which has to be taken into consideration.

1987: The Election and its Aftermath

In April 1987, the Indian government rigged state elections that threatened day to day life of Kashmiri people. Of course, the political instability engulfed Kashmir with lesser amount of future peace and solution. Instead of tackling the situation in a peaceful manner, the government used its military power to arrest the opposing candidates. So, people's frustration and fear mounted high resulting into the series of protests and strikes against Indian rule. Sumit Ganguly in *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*, addresses the view of Abdul Ghani Lone, a former leader of the opposition, which represents the contemporary sense of frustration of

many Kashmiris: “This simply deepens people’s feelings against the Government of India. If people are not allowed to cast their votes where will their venom go except into expressions of anti-national feelings?” (99).

While describing the 1987s hostile political environment of Kashmir, Peer in *Curfewed Night* writes, the polling agents arrested and tortured many opposing candidates including Yasin Malik “who led the militants of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front” (14). To the misfortune of Kashmir, Kashmiri people became the victims of the then government’s ill treatment, its military domination and exploitation. On the one hand, Kashmiri people roared up their slogans for peace and freedom, on the other, both Pakistani militants and local ones challenged Indian force through arms fighting. The arms struggle heightened and the situation became even worst when the Indian troops fired on pro-independence Kashmiri rebellions. In the year of 1988, the extent of violence widened with the sporadic bursts of riots and strikes. In this regard, Ganguly writes, “The Kashmir insurgency in an incipient form, had begun. And such weakening politics gave rise to the religious fanaticism, unchecked violence and instability in the valley became endemic in 1988” (102).

The Kashmir conflict entailed a greater degree of human as well as material loss since 1947. Since the *Maharaja*, Hari Singh,“[D]ecided to accede to India, signing over key powers to the Indian government in return for military aid and a promised referendum. . .the territory has been the flashpoint for two of the three India-Pakistan war: the first in 1947-8, the second in 1965” (1), writes BBC News. These two wars were based on strictly bilateral issue. And that brought socio-economic and politico-cultural disruption in Kashmir. Ganguly pens, the wars were fought as “[T]he source of discord stemmed from India’s formal claim to the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir and from Pakistan’s irredentist claim to the Indian-held portion of Kashmir” (3). Of the 1989 crisis in Kashmir, according to Ganguly,

"Though some of the roots of the crisis are indigenous, systematic Pakistani involvement in and support for the insurgency have dramatically affected Indo-Pakistani relations" (5).

If that is the case so as said by Ganguly then what are the factors that could explain the cause of indigenous problems of the insurgency in Kashmir? Pakistan is accused of being "engaged in a systematic strategy infusing Islamic fundamentalist ideology into the Kashmir valley since the late 1970s" (15) and this shows India has nothing to do with violence in Kashmir. However, Pakistan gives its own line of explanation to the inception of the crisis in Kashmir. In the chapter entitled "Political mobilization and the onset of the insurgency," Ganguly presents Pakistan's political standpoint regarding the insurgency movement in Kashmir saying:

> The government of Pakistan has offered its own explanation for the genesis of the crisis. A tract from a Pakistani government-sponsored organization has enumerated a number of factors that underlie the insurgency: "The current uprising in Kashmir is the outcome of multiple factors. These include historical betrayals, constitutional despotism, negation of socio-cultural identity, religious discrimination, economic deprivation and state repression, besides 43 years of misrule and manipulation by Delhi. (16)

Whatever the case is with both India and Pakistan's version of histories regarding Kashmir's crisis, the above mentioned points show that both sides have been equally responsible for the exclusion of Kashmiri people's human rights and hopes. At the same time the contemporary state government's failure to establish order and peace justifies how people have gone through a miserable life during the conflict era. The BBC News posted on 25 February, 2010, says, "In addition to the rival claims of Delhi and Islamabad to the territory, there has been a growing and often violent

separatist movement against Indian rule in Kashmir since 1989" (1). Obviously, the history of Kashmir witnesses this bitter reality of the 1990s riot. But a question arises: Why were Kashmiri people, the peace lovers, compelled to revolt against Indian rule putting their lives at such a great risk?

In the book *Kashmir: New Voices, New Approaches*, an outcome of a project of the International Peace Academy, the writers Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Bushra Asif, and Cyrus Samii, write that in the 1990s "[T]he Kashmiris decided to take up arms and fight for their freedom, mainly due to repeated and increasing human rights violations by the Indian forces, ongoing Indian mishandling of Kashmir, and continued rigging of polls" (67). It shows the Indian government's misrule in Kashmir structured the eruption of insurgency movement. What happens if people's dreams get shattered one after another at the hands of power holders? What happens when common people's hopes become like raisin in the sun? This is exactly what has happened in Kashmir.

The issue of Kashmir conflict has been described very critically and effectively by the writers mentioned above. Their efforts to dig out the causes and consequences of 1947 partition and the 1990s militancy in Kashmir have erased most of the shadow parts of Kashmir's history. However, in the research, the researcher found that all the writers, consciously or unconsciously, have reconstructed the history of Kashmir from the perspective of 'us' and 'them.' And this is their major fault. Their historical narratives of Kashmir sometimes speak in favour of India, sometimes Pakistan, and the time they speak of Kashmir their accounts create a sense of 'theirs history,' that is, Kashmir is someone else's history. In this regard, Gyanendra Pandey, a critic and writer, says that ". . .[I]n the history of any society, narratives of particular experiences of violence go towards making the 'community'- and the subject of history" (4). Pandey's argument is that the reconstruction of past

"constitutes the community, the subject of history, 'us' and 'them' " (175). He further writes that the accounts of past contributes "significantly to the making of new subjectivities, new versions of self and other, new communities and new histories" (176). In the same way, the writers on Kashmir issue have created new versions of 'self' and 'other'; they have represented Kashmir's history as part of what the people did and what they lost. So, Pandey writes, ". . .[w]hen history becomes rather more reflexive-and adds historiography, the history of history, to its concerns. . .It continues to be based on the belief in the past as past, in the privilege of large and centralised socio-political formations, in objective facts and predictable futures" (10).

Similarly, the writers'description of Kashmiri history only shows how Kashmiris have gone through a tough time in the period of conflict. They talk about the facts, written and unwritten, which merely depict the nature of disciplinary history, that is, it does not give justice to the real pain, loss and suffering of the common Kashmiris. Here, Pandey says, "The 'partition' that historians describe in careful constitutional detail, and seek to explain in terms of political mechanizations, comes across very differently indeed in the non-disciplinary accounts" (188). It means that what disciplinary history talks about always differs from the subject presented in the form of memoirs and local stories. This is a very point in the present research that marks Basharat Peer's point of departure from other writers' narratives of the Kashmir issue. Unlike other writes, it is Basharat Peer who presents the issue of Kashmir in *Curfewed Night* from the perspective of 'we.' In the text, Peer not only illustrates the official version of Kashmiri history but also writes the stories of war-wounded people from the bottom level at the same time. Peer represents the turmoils and real wishes of ordinary Kashmiri people through a humanitarian perspective.

Moreover, the main reason behind the outbreak of militancy is due to the socio-political corruption of Indian government in Kashmir at the same time the rival

power politics between India and Pakistan over Kashmir territory is another genuine factor. Since the 1987 election dashed all hopes of Kashmiri people, their anger and frustration against Indian government crossed the boundary of limitation making them compel to pick up the arms. Also, the wave of communal tension increased in conflict era which is another bitter side of the contemporary Kashmiri society. Because of this, Kashmir became a land of blood and tears; schools and hospitals became barracks and torture chambers. Above all, common people became homeless and hopeless.

III. Depiction of Socio-Economic and Politico-Cultural Aspects of Kashmir During the Insurgency Movement in Peer's *Curfewed Night*

Curfewed Night deals with the history of the 1990's militancy in Kashmir. In the text, Peer dwells upon many historical events and historical figures of the 1990s conflict to expose the devastation of socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects of Kashmir on the one hand and to show the bitterness, frustration, suffering, loss, and uncertainty of Kashmiri people's lives on the other. The self-centered orientation of both India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue, negligency of the state government, and the power seeking tendency of the power holders set a flame of separatist movement in the 1990s in Kashmir, writes Peer. With that, as the symptom of political unrest had been developing since 1947, Kashmir's much needed voice for peace, justice, normality, and autonomy shattered and wounded much further. Desperately, people have been living a sterile life ever thereafter.

In the non-fictional text *Curfewed Night*, Peer's narration unravels ordinary Kashmiri people's fragmented hopes and dreams nurtured so far even when the war hammered down the overall sectors of Kashmiri society very badly. The hard times, the agony and repugnance, of Kashmiris during the 1990s riot comprehends the general meaning of the present text which supports the argument: "Representation of the world in written discourse participate in the construction of the world they are engaged in shaping the modalities of social reality" (396) as said by Louis Montrose in his essay "New Historicism." This means when a piece of text is produced, it reflects the historical reality of the time. In the same light of argument, *Curfewed Night* depicts the dreadful history of the militancy in Kashmir. Hence, the text represents the loss of socio-economic and politico-cultural aura of Kashmiri society in the 1990's, and it is Peer who, nevertheless, emphasizes on unity, harmony, brotherhood, peace, and freedom of Kashmiri people the most.

The denial of true representative democracy by the Indian government in Kashmir, Peer writes, is the sole cause of unrest which drastically altered the peaceful status of common people. It forced people to carry guns, to change their Kashmiri self into the militants and thereby securing their fundamental rights through violence. The uprising in Kashmir was, in fact, followed by ongoing tussle between Indian military force on the one side, and Pakistan-supported guerillas and Kashmiri militants, on the other. From 1987 to the decade of 1990s, every socio-economic and politico-cultural heritage of Kashmir worsened ceaselessly. This weakened Kashmiris's long awaited hope for the restoration of freedom, autonomy and peace in their homeland.

Unfortunately, thousands of Kashmir youths were disappeared, handicapped and killed; women were being raped and hundreds of Kashmiri families were displaced as refugees in the border lines of India and Pakistan. As the violence increased in Kashmir, antagonism between Hindus and Muslims transformed into bloody war and ethnic rivalry became inevitable. This is why all Kashmiris suffered a lot.

Peer writes, the Indian government gave its full authority and power to its military operation in Kashmir to initiate counter-insurgency through series of curfews, crackdowns, and frisking. And that served to generate Kashmiri people's qualms over Indian government; Kashmiri rebellions protested against the brutality of Indian military force. Because of the fight between the armed militants and the Indian force, common Kashmiri people were trapped in a war. In addition to their helpless condition, temples and masjids were demolished, schools and hospitals changed into military camps, curfews and crackdowns painted the silence of Kashmir's streets and Srinagar became "the city of protests, the city of massacres" (126) in the 1990s, writes Peer. But this reality was never realized by India and Pakistan. Even the contemporary state political leaders pretended as a blind person to the true

representation of the people's aspirations. Not a single attempt was made in favour of Kashmiris and the insurgency continued violently throughout the decade. This stark reality of the 1990s Kashmir's plight remained as a silent issue in the domain of India and Pakistan's government, in the documented history of Kashmir. *Curfewed Night* is about this silenced issue of the 1990s Kashmir. As Foucault in his essay, "Nietzsche Genealogy, History" argues, genealogy attempts to "[C]apture the exact essence of things, their purest possibilities, and their carefully protected identities and it necessitates the removal of every mark to ultimately disclose an original identity" (78). Foucault means to say genealogy attempts to capture every possible aspects of the history and finally bring out the hidden original reality to the fore. Foucault further says:

> Geneology does not resemble the evolution of species and does not map the destiny of a people. . .it is to identify the accidents, the minute deviations -or conversely the complete reversals-the errors, the false appraisals, and the faulty calculations that gave birth to those things that continue to exist and have value for us; it is to discover that truth or being does not lie at the root of what we know and what we are, but the exteriority of accidents. (81)

According to Foucault, history paints errors, fragments, accidents, false appraisals and hence, it is not pure. This means that genealogical history captures the excluded or overshadowed issues of a society, therefore, it is digressive. It counters officially recorded documents of history and focuses on the fact that truth always lies at the exteriority of accident. In this regard, Peer's *Curfewed Night* serves as a model of Foucault's genealogical history which excavates the fragmented realities of the 1990's Kashmiri society.

The 1990s conflict damaged every socio-cultural aspects of Kashmir. Ordinary people suffered greatly at that time. *Curfewed Night* exposes the then difficulties and sufferings of Kashmiri people and the fragile state of Kashmir in a broad manner. Peer writes that Kashmir was not that much disturbed before the outbreak of the 1990s riot. Peer's description of his happy childhood life in the lap of serene Kashmir in the very beginning of the text reveals the contemporary socio-cultural harmony and political normality that prevailed in Kashmir.

Peer grew up with a familiar milieu of his surroundings like beautiful paddy and mustard fields, mighty Himalayas, adoring parents and friends. The knot of brotherhood and harmony among and between Hindus and Muslims was strong; they would respect each other's religion and had a common peaceful life. This beautiful image of Kashmir is illustrated in the text as Peer writes, "On winter afternoons, grandfather joined the men of our neighborhood sitting on the storefronts warming themselves how that year's snowfall would affect the matured crop in the spring" (1). This is why, Peer's generation before the decade of 1990s would go to school together, eat together and play friendly. The daily chores of life had its own meaning and identity unaffected by violence and curfews. The opening lines in the text show Peer's blissful childhood life:

> I was born in winter in Kashmir. My village in the southern district of Anantnag set on the wedge of a mountain range. Paddy fields, green in early summer and golden by autumn, surrounded the cluster of mud and brick houses. In winter. . .My younger brother Wajahat and I made snowmen using pieces of charcoal for their ices. And when our mother was busy with some household chore. . .we rushed to the roof, broke Icicles off it, mixed them with a concoction of milk and sugar stolen from the kitchen, and ate our homemade ice creams. We would often

> slide down the slope of the hill overlooking our neighborhood or play cricket on the frozen waters of a pond near the hill. (1)

These lines assert the fact how Kashmir was socio-culturally peaceful during Peer's childhood in the mid-80s. Similarly, Kashmiri people would celebrate Eid and met relatives and friends in the ceremonial village ground of Eid prayers. The traditional value of family love was practiced in Kashmir as Peer writes: "We would form a circle with grandfather as its nucleus and eat" (5). Importantly, basic human rights in Kashmir were not violated because of which people had their individual identity and certainty of life. Therefore, "Villagers. . .routinely sat on the wooden shopfronts to gossip, talk politics and cricket" (9) in Kashmir, writes Peer.

Not only this, the evening celebration of wedding ceremony was a cultural identity of Kashmiri people before the 1990s. In the text, Peer also addresses the traditional belief and practice of Kashmiri people and respects their innocent village life as he writes, ". . .[V]illagers worried about the clouds and the rainfall. . .If there were clouds on the northern horizon, they said, there would be rain. And around sunset if they saw streaks of scarlet in the sky, they said, 'There has been murder somewhere. When a man is killed, the sky turns red' " (3). These lines reveal the reality of contemporary farming life of Kashmiri people. It means the Kashmiri people had their individual freedom to work, to share ideas and make a life. In this regard, Peer represents his homeland, Kashmir, as a symbol of natural paradise in the beginning of the text. Hence, Peer says, "Our land is a garden!" (2).

However, the winter of 1990s swept away all the socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects of Kashmir. *Curfewed Night* is the realistic portrayal of the incident of the 1990s conflict time in Kashmir. The loss of cultural aura, identity crisis, haunts of memory, displacement, uncertainty of life, etc. are some of the indelible wounds of Kashmiri people brought by the 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir, asserts

Peer. During that era, Kashmiri people became innocent victims at the hands of both Indian soldiers and militants. The cross-fire between the two rival sides caused many Kashmiris' lives. It is no surprise, then, that in order to secure their birth rights, Kashmiri people opposed the atrocities of the Indian military force in particular and the Indian government in general. In this context, Peer says how he, a bookish boy, who used to spend "long happy hours in the library reading Stevenson, Dickens, Kipling and Defoe" (10) began to develop anti-Indian sentiments in his war-striken life. Peer writes:

> Despite the rather sleepy existence of our village and my ignorance about the political history of Kashmir I had a sense of the alienation and resentment most Kashmiri Muslims felt and had against Indian rule. We did not relate to the symbols of Indian nationalism-the flag, the national anthem, the cricket team. We followed every cricket match India and Pakistan played but we never cheered for the Indian team. (11)

Peer's point here is Kashmiri people, particularly the Muslims, revolted against Indian rule because of the violation of human rights and inhuman treatment by the Indian government. For the sake of freedom and identity, Kashmiri people fought against the cruelty of Indian rule.

Vesser opines that, ". . .[S]ocial systems are produced and reproduced in the interactive social practices of individuals and groups" (33) and so as the case with the 1990s Kashmiri society described in the text *Curfewed Night*. Kashmiri society was engulfed by the vicious war of 1990s which brought a change in the social system of Kashmir followed by the ordinary people's protest and revolution against the Indian rule. But, Peer writes, "Kashmiri demonstrations faded out after the massacres of protesters. . . firing on protesters, arrests, disappearances, custodial killings,

kidnappings, assassinations, and torture dominated Kashmir" (140). This shows the very critical condition of all common people in Kashmir during the 1990s. People had no other choice than simply becoming victims of the then power politics of Indian rule and the Pakistan's policy of supporting the insurgency both morally and financially. People would scare of traveling and children feared of uncertain ambush and firing in Kashmir. But was that armed conflict unstoppable? While responding to this question, Peer writes, "I often think the conflict might not have turned so fatal if India had allowed those peaceful demonstrations. Maybe those demonstrations and not the armed militancy would have become the dominant aspect of politics in Kashmir" (140).

While talking about deteriorating socio-political situation of Kashmir in the 1990s, Peer further writes:

> By February 1990, Kashmir was in the midst of a full-blown rebellion against India. News on the radio became the news of defiance and death. Protests followed killings and killings followed protests. News came from Srinagar that hundreds of thousands of people had marched to pray for independence at the shrine of the patron saint of Kashmir . . .all marched together, their voices joining in a resounding cry for freedom. (16-17)

Here, Peer shows the angst of the 1990s Kashmiri society against Indian government. The Kashmiri people's growing dislike of India and their revolt for the sake of sovereignty and collective identity is crystal clear in these lines. In this regard, Foucault argues, ". . .[W]hat connects discourses –and their analysis-with politics is the whole field of power and the positions it generates for subjects" (56). It means the subject-oriented discourse is affected by the politics of a contemporary society who exercises it. In this case, power of a certain field plays a vital role in shaping the

forms and ways of discourses. And this is exactly the case with the 1990s Kashmiri society. The Indian government used its military power and exploited the common Kashmir people to stop their struggle for freedom and peace. At the same time Pakistan found the insurgency movement as an opportunity to support the local Kashmir militants to oppose the Indian military force and later, capturing Kashmir in case of victory. Consequently, Peer writes, socio-politically exploited people, particularly the Kashmiri youths, began to engage in arms training secretly in Kashmir. In chapter fifteen, Peer mentions this fact in a sad tone as he writes: "I think of the beginnings again and again: the winter of 1990 and the thousands of Kashmiri boys making journeys across the LoC" (212) to become militants. Therefore, in the text, Peer not only focuses on the damage of physical as well as psychological sides of Kashmiri people in the 1990s but also vehemently criticizes the treacherous and barbarous act of both Indian military force and militants.

The socio-economic and politico-cultural reality of the 1990s Kashmir and the bizarre condition of Kashmiri people is genuinely represented in the non-fictional text, *Curfewed Night*. In the text, Peer narrates his own experience, memory, events and experiences of Kashmiri people. In a very critical way, Peer tries to describe and clarify almost all the events and issues of the 1990s Kashmiri society and thereby showing the hidden part of Kashmir and Kashmiri people's situation as it is. In this regard, Donald Hubbard argues, "The book itself has provided us a long view of how all these events-all the history of India, Pakistan and Kashmir-have filtered down from grandfather to father to son to produce this touching and heartbreaking work that encompasses all the tragic aggregations deftly woven into the author's own personal narrative" (3). The 1990s insurgency movement exacerbated every socio-cultural aspects of Kashmir, writes Peer.

With the beginning of the insurgency movement, curfews, crackdowns, abduction, rape, and massacre paralysed Kashmir. Instead of fulfilling Kashmiri people's dreams, the Indian government "ordered half a million soldiers to the India-Pakistan border" (85) which brought hostility and suffering in the lives of Kashmiri people during the conflict time. The author was in his teenage phase when the 1990s riot broke out in Kashmir. Peer writes the Indian force behaved Kashmiri people like animals. The human sentiments, love and respect meant nothing to the Indian soldiers. During crackdowns, they would harass and rape Kashmiri women, torture and kill the people in suspicion. This is why, Peer writes, "Kashmir was rife with stories of soldiers misbehaving with women during crackdowns" (52). Hence, this made Kashmir a land of brutality, protest and violence. The following lines assist to show the contemporary social tension developed between the ordinary Kashmiri people and the Indian government in the 1990s, in Kashmir:

> The bottled up resentment against Indian rule and the treatment of Kashmiris erupted like a volcano. The young guerrillas challenging India were seen as heroes-most of them had received training between early 1988 and late 1989, and they had in turn secretly trained many more within Kashmir. In the next two months, the Indian government responded ruthlessly. Hundreds were killed and arrested after Indian troops opened fire on pro-independence Kashmiri protesters. It was January 1990; I was thirteen. The war of my adolescence had started. (14)

This brings alive the 1990s' horrors, insecurity, domination and never ending grief of people in Kashmir. What kind of psychological impact would occur in the lives of youths and the generation of Peer is very much clear in the above extract. The struggle of Kashmiri young guerrillas rather tensed the Indian soldiers which caused

many incidents like “the first massacre in the Kashmir Valley” (15) that questioned the primordial socio-cultural modes and values of Kashmiri people.

In the text, Peer writes, it became a daily routine to the paramilitary men slamming doors in Srinagar and dragging out Kashmiri men. Because of the ongoing protest during 1990s, curfew was imposed and hundreds of Kashmiri people were arrested. Consequently, “Kashmiris poured out onto the streets in thousands and shouted slogans of freedom from India” (14). “More than fifty people were killed” in Maisuma by the “Indian paramilitary, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)” (15) and it was the first massacre in Kashmir caused by the 1990s militancy. This clarifies Kashmir is the same place where people before the outbreak of 1990s insurgency would think that sky turns red because of murder but the 1990s Kashmir, as Peer himself experienced, became a daily death note on the newspapers. That is why, Peer’s words on the issue of 1990s conflict in Kashmir, in the text, represent the incurable grief and turmoil of all common Kashmiri people.

Catherine Gallagher and Stephen Greenblatt argue that new historicism “invokes the vastness of the textual archive” (16). They further argue that new historicism “. . . [W]hile deeply interested in the collective, it remains committed to the value of the single voice, the isolated scandal, the idiosyncratic vision, the transient sketch” (16). According to Gallagher and Greenblatt, new historicism incorporates all the issues of a society giving individual case a critical look. It blurs the boundary between margin and center and focuses on all socio-economic and politico-cultural traces of an era. In this regard, *Curfewed Night* exposes the contemporary reality of the 1990s Kashmir society vividly. It addresses different issues like the Indian military force’s exploitation of common Kashmiri people, ill acts of militants, abduction, displacement, rape, loss of identity, violence, massacre, curfews, emerged in the decade of 1990s in Kashmir. More importantly, in the text,

Peer gives voice to the marginalized voice of Kashmiri people, their hope for peace, harmony, sovereignty, and normality of life. At the same time the text paints the real life experience of Kashmiri people during the 1990s war. Hence, it makes much clear to argue that *Curfewed Night* is a book which tells about Kashmiri people's sufferings in the 1990s insurgency period to the world. This is why, Tavleen Singh, a critic, says *Curfewed Night* is "[A]n important book-for a change we hear the story of what happened in the past fifteen years told in a genuine Kashmiri voice" (Cover Page).

The political instability is another visible symptom of the war-wounded Kashmir described in *Curfewed Night*. Peer writes that Kashmir's politics has been questioned ever since the British sold Kashmir to Gulab Singh, the Hindu King, in 1846. And in 1947, a century later, partition of the Indian sub-continent occurred that caused the geographical division of Kashmir. The border line issues, the question of Kashmiri people's rights, and the state's biased policies to Muslims and Hindus, had always been major obstacles in the smooth progress of political environment in Kashmir. As the mainstream politics of India-administered Kashmir never came to the terms of common Kashmiri people, it became a disputed discourse time and again. Therefore, Peer writes, the outbreak of insurgency movement in Kashmir is long fostered by the 1947 partition history.

Curfewed Night discloses how the play of power politics between two rival countries, India and Pakistan, has destroyed the political paradigm of Kashmir now and then. And the political instability in the 1990s is one of the striking examples of this cause. Clearly, Peer explains, Pakistan wants to merge Kashmir to its territory and that is why, it helped the insurgency movement showing its both political and financial support. Regarding Indian government's political stand, it equally shows its claim over Kashmir. Both countries have created own line of discourses and truths on the basis of their power politics since 1947. Of course, this violated the identity of

Kashmiri people leaving their fate in limbo. In this context, Peer writes how Pakistan assisted Kashmiri youths in their arms training in the 1990s in this way, ". . .[T]hat winter, too, busloads of Kashmiri youth went to border towns and crossed over to Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir for arms training. They returned as militants carrying Kalashnikovs, hand grenades, light machine guns, and rocket launchers issued by Pakistan" (19). These lines in the text show Pakistan's political interest in Kashmir. If not then why did it come forward to help the Kashmiri youths in the insurgency period? This basic question in the text makes the readers intellectually much concerned.

Another line of evidence Peer mentions in the text clarifies how the tussle between Pro-Pakistan militants and the Indian security force damaged thousands of lives in Kashmir in the war era. Peer writes:

> August 14 and August 15 are the Pakistani and Indian independence days. Pro-Pakistan militants held celebratory parades on August 14 and a day later, the Indian Independence Day was declared a 'Black day.' On August 15, traffic stops, shops close, schools shut down, identity checks by Indian troops increase and life freezes. In the capital, Srinagar, however, Pro-India politicians who form the local state government herd groups of their supports and force government schools to gather contingents of schoolchildren in a cricket ground guarded by hundreds of Indian flag. Outside the stadium, the streets remain empty. (38-39)

The apparatus of Indian government always highlighted its power and position over its Kashmir administered part failing to address Kashmiri people's human rights properly. Against the injustice and misgovernance of India, Kashmiri people were compelled to take part in protest though in a peaceful manner. But Pakistan took this

rising tension in Kashmir to its advantage. As a result, pro-Pakistan militants formed in Kashmir, gun battle introduced, and that eventually affected the existence of Kashmiri people. In the flame of war, even the schoolchildren had been victims and their misery went silent to the ear of Kashmiri government. Peer criticizes this aspect of politics of the 1990s Kashmir.

Lois Tyson posits the argument of new historicists saying, "[P]ower does not emanate only from the top of the political and socioeconomic structure. According to French philosopher Michel Foucault. . .power circulates in all directions, to and from all social levels, at all times" (284). More clearly, it is Foucault who discusses the nature of power in this way, ". . .[P]ower produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations" (175). Here, the central idea of Foucault is power does not flow only from the top to the bottom rather it regulates in every aspects of a society. Foucault argues, power is the source of knowledge and there lies a reciprocal relationship between power and knowledge. In *Curfewed Night*, Peer shows the power holders' acts, the Indian military force and the militants, produce a knowledge that their counter battle is linked with each other's certain political needs and fame. This is because neither of sides takes responsibility to the suffering of Kashmiri people. Hence, the political instability in Kashmir prolonged throughout the decade of 1990s.

Peer writes, Kashmiri people were dominated by the Indian government since Kashmir's governmental bodies would run through pro-Indian politicians. That is why, Kashmiri people's fury resulted into insurgency movement. But why did Pakistan wish for Kashmir's separation from India in the 1990s? It is because, Peer writes:

> On August 14, 1992, Shabnam and I watched Tariq and other guerrillas celebrate the Pakistani Independence Day in Eid prayer cum cricket ground. . .Militant leaders made fiery speeches in favour of Pakistan and raised separatist slogans. . .A militant leader raised the Pakistani flag after the songs. (39)

Pakistan's support to the insurgency movement in Kashmir has been cooked by its own political need, that is, seizing of Kashmir. In fact, Pakistan's support in the 1990s was not designed to the wellbeing of Kashmiri people; to their normality of life and peace. If not then why the Pro-Pakistan militants abducted and raped Kashmiri women, killed Kashmiri Pandits and damaged infrastructures like school, hospital, post office and many others? If not then why the militants raised Pakistani flag instead of helping Kashmiri people in their peaceful protest? Hence, the truth was that ordinary people became victims in the conflict time and their voice was controlled and dominated by the power holders. *Curfewed Night* discloses this pitfall of the 1990s Kashmir's history. In this regard, Paul Rabinow in *The Foucault Reader* puts light on what Foucault talks about the 'political economy' of truth. For Foucault, one of the traits of political economy of truth in a society is that it "is produced and transmitted under the control, dominant if not exclusive, of a few great political and economic apparatuses"(73).

The politics in Kashmir worsened day by day as militant groups stood firm against " all sorts of elections-village level, district level, state level" (77), in Kashmir. In such a heated political atmosphere, "fear and paranoia" (78) destroyed common people's lives. Another prominent incident which paints the worst side of Kashmir's politics Peer writes is the terrorists' attack on the Indian parliament which the hardliners "inside and outside the Hindu right, the BJP, claimed that December 13 was India's 9/11" (89). In the days following the attack, hostility rose between India

and Pakistan and that spark of bilateral tension damaged Kashmir's politics further. Particularly, the villagers living by the India-Pakistan border had been displaced in a great number as "India and Pakistani gunners were continuously firing mortar shells at the villages along the India-Pakistan border and the LoC" (85). The simulacrum of contemporary political side of Kashmir here becomes much alive when Peer writes:

> Winter means heavy snowfall, a slower pace of life, and therefore less blood spilled in Kashmir. . .We were leisurely drinking tea and talking, indifferent to the television news droning on. And suddenly, the anchor's voice turned shrill and loud. 'Terroists have attacked the parliament!' . . . We immediately feared that a war might erupt between India and Pakistan. 'This winter the snow will turn red', grandfather sighed. . .Kashmir was debating whether India or Pakistan would go to war or not. A lot of people wanted a war; 'It will be better than dying slowly every day'. (84-85)

This shows how the politics of Kashmir would come into question time and again when any incident like that of parliament attack took place in either domain, India or Pakistan. Peer says the internal politics of Kashmir becomes vulnerable as soon as the problem rises in India-Pakistan's external affairs like military operation on the subject matter of LoC. For example, "The Indian government believed that the Lashkar-e-Toiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed had attacked the Indian parliament; these groups had been operating mostly in Kashmir" (89) in support of Pakistan was denied by the latter one. Peer writes, such dispute would often turn into gunfires, curfews, crackdowns and interrogations in Kashmir.

Following the incident of terrorist attack, in the text, Peer mentions his experience of reporting the case of Banglar, a village on the border, deserted right after the attack on parliament. There Peer sees, "Families of refugees lived in tents

and school buildings in various towns near the border. Many were in hospitals with legs and arms torn by shrapnel" (86). Among the war victims, a villager, tells to Peer that ". . .[T]hey were tired of the cross-border shelling every time relations between India and Pakistan became embittered. 'They should fight a war now and settle it. We are tired of dying every day,' he sighed" (86). That was the reality of the then political instability in Kashmir caused by the insurgency movement. Desiring a war between India and Pakistan than dying every day in own homeland was the obligation of common people. They were placed inliminal position since India and Pakistan began to fight over Kashmir territory. Victoria Schofield also asserts this fact in *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War*, saying her findings on her years long research that, "'You cannot talk about Kashmir as a dispute between two nations. It is a conflict because we-the Kashmiris-are in the middle' " (Preface). *Curfewed Night* exposes this line of reality woven deep in the politics of Kashmir.

Salma Malik, a critic, writes, "Kashmir is about Kashmiris, their lives, their collective loss and their right to self determination, sanctified by the United Nations" (145). However, this issue of peace and justice has never got a through look in the war time. Similarly, another profound writer Turkkaya Ataov writes, "It may be asserted that since 1947 there has always been some conflict and even hostilities in Jammu and Kashmir" (125). Ataov asserts Kashmiri people went thorough unpleasant political environment as "[p]eace and order in the state had radically deteriorated by mid-1988. There were bomb blasts in Srinagar (1 August) and in the main bazaar in Jammu (12 August)" (127).

The marginalization of Kashmiris' voice in the political domain of Kashmiri state government is explained in the chapter eight as Peer pens:

> News did not mean the daily body count that it became after 1990.
>
> News was not about self-determination, sovereignty or terrorism; about

> summits, strategies and geopolitics; about fundamentalism, tolerance, and secularism. News was made in places nobody from our village had been to. News was not about us. (107-8)

It not only shows the exclusion of Kashmiri people's standpoint from its own government but also clarifies the 'margin-center' celebration in Kashmir's government, and Peer counters such hierarchy in the text.

Peer also writes that the policy of war economy during the conflict period helped both India and Pakistan play their political games differently. So, in the period of war, "[e]veryone talked about the abundance of easy personal loans and the huge amounts of money both India and Pakistan had pumped into Kashmir to win loyalties-the war economy" (113). But that did not help Kashmiri people in achieving their exigency. India-Pakistan' s power politics in flourishing the war economy in Kashmir was their one of the twisted discourses of helping Kashmiri people, which makes Foucault's argument here much clear that "Discourse moves in, and as, the flows of power" (23).

Things became worse in Kashmir in the 1990s conflict. Common people were displaced, disappeared and killed, Kashmiri cultural values and social harmony destroyed, religious fanaticism increased, unemployment disturbed youths and Kashmir became "a heavily militarized society" (236). In the insurgency time, different politico-religious groups having diverse political agendas were seen. The militant groups began to exercise Islamic methodology of politics countering Kashmiri nationalist groups who fought for Independent Kashmir. Initially, Pakistan had helped Islamist militant groups in Kashmir and later expanded its hands towards the Jammat-e-Islami, a minority politico-religious organization, which got defeated in the late sixties' state elections. Peer further writes the whirlpool of politics in Kashmir got another turning point in the early nineties as "the Jamaat reasserted itself after its

militant wing, Hizbul Mujahideen, was founded. Jamaat man suddenly became all-powerful because of their influence in the militant group, which had immense support from Pakistan and sought Kashmir's accession to the country" (184). Basically, the use of Islam in Kashmir by the people from "all shades of the political spectrum" (184) was for certain political achievement. People from all walks of life were encouraged to join the Hizbul Mujahideen and it is Peer who himself encountered this situation in his teenage phase.

In the mid-nineties, Kashmir faced another wave of change in its political sphere. Because of the outrageous behaviour of Jammat men and the Hizbul Mujahideen, many Kashmiris "credit the rise of a brutal counter-insurgent group, Ikhwan-ul-Muslimoon (Muslim Brotherhood)" (185). Peer writes that the people called 'ikhwains' of Muslim Brotherhood were:

> [A]rmed by the Indian government and given a 'free hand-immunity from prosecution against their crimes. . .Ikhwan was armed and funded by the Indian army, and went on a rampage, killing, maiming, harassing anyone they thought to sympathetic to the Jamaat specifically and the separatists in general. (185)

This kind of political game in Kashmir pervasively took its grip throughout the 1990s riot and its aftermath. Here, Peer clearly explains the fragile political condition of Kashmir fueled up by the power politics of India-Pakistan's relationship. At the same time, Kashmiri government's failure to heal its political instability becomes clear here. Peer writes though "most Kashmiri Muslims were disillusioned with India and had sympathies for Pakistan" (184) that did not suggest whole Kashmiri people's desire for being a part of Pakistan. Importantly, freedom and peace in Kashmir valued a lot to them than anything else.

But India's continuing hegemony in several aspects of Kashmir including its politics dashed Kashmiri people's hope time and again. In the name of Kashmir's development and peace, sometimes India created discourses of human rights and security while Pakistan followed other versions which were not totally true or false. To this date, their multiple truths about the unresolved conflict in Kashmir have been a source of promises and policies enough for playing a political drama. Therefore, Peer writes, Kashmiri society witnesses the practice of India-Pakistan's power relations and the insurgency movement of the 1990s is a vivid example of it. In this regard, Foucault argues, ". . .[T]here are no necessary or universal forms for the exercise of power to take place: our society bears witness to the production of quite specific practices which characterise the ways in which power relations function within it" (65). Foucault writes:

> [I]n a society such as ours, but basically in any society, there are manifold relations of power which permeate, characterise and constitute the social body, and these relations of power cannot themselves be established, consolidated nor implemented without the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse. There can be no possible exercise of power without a certain economy of discourses of truth which operates through and on the basis of this association. (59)

A constitution of a social body in any society is driven by power relations, opines Foucault. And without the formation of discourse with a certain degree of truth, power relations cannot exist. In the same way, Peer shows how India-Pakistan's power relations have produced innumerable discourses about Kashmiri people's dreams, which is another layer of truth. But, nothing has turned out fruitful as such in

the debated issue of Kashmir's territory. *Curfewed Night* invites the readers to acknowledge this hidden fact of Kashmiri society.

Without political stability in a nation, any sort of work on development becomes implausible. It is true that every new step for the socio-cultural cohesion of a country is always guided by smooth political environment. In fact, people's voice should and must be there in politics and then only they become able to celebrate their rights and democracy rightly. That is why, uncorrupted politics is vital in the overall development of any nation. But Kashmiri people have never been privileged with such a blessing. Peer writes that Kashmiri people had lost respect to their politicians who only speech bogus talks every time and "throughout the high political drama" in the 1990's, "there remained moments of frivolity" (21). They fought for seats in the polls, enjoyed private matters, and remained indifference to the people's problems. Most of the time, they played with common people's sentiments which designates their cupidity. Hence, today, ordinary Kashmir people wounded by the conflict like Mubashir Professor Rashid Nazaki, Asif, Shammema, Mubeena, Rashid and many others have been living in a "faint glimmer of hope" (193), a hope that something good will happen in Kashmir. Despite struggling with growing hopelessness and resentments, people are "clinging onto straws of faith" (193), pens Peer.

In the text, Peer writes, "People have no hopes from the government or any politicians. They turn to the shrines, to the Prophet and to God" (193). Today, Srinagar, "is wily politicians repeating their lies about war and peace to television cameras and small crowds gathered by the promise of an elusive job or a daily fee of a few hundred rupees" (120). And today, Kashmir, "is stopping at sidewalks and traffic lights when the convoys of rulers and their patrons in armoured cars, secured by machine guns, rumble or broken roads" (120). But Kashmiri people do not want it to be. Behind certain hidden motifs, the politicians always created discourses that

autonomy and self-determination belong to Kashmiri people but it was not the absolute truth as for Michel Foucault truths are created, and its effect is produced within discourses; these are neither true nor false. These are not false because they bear certain real context, and these are not true because they are created to rule the margins. Foucault further opines, "Truth is undoubtedly the sort of error that cannot be refuted because it was hardened into an unalterable form in the long backing process of history" (79). So, Peer's words in the text clarify that Kashmiri people have to live through an inevitable truth about Kashmir's disintegration of 1947 history.

The later phase of the insurgency movement in Kashmir is seen as somehow relatively peaceful days. The frequency of bombings, kidnappings, curfews, crackdowns, protests and killings had lessened. Peer comments, "The bodily frisking, the proof of identity, the rude questions, which had seemed humiliating earlier were routine now, like brushing your teeth" (214). Similarly, the Kashmiri militants had avoided suicide bombings since they got departed from Pakistani Islamist militants. In 1994, with the dominance of the pro-Pakistan Hizbul Mujahideen over the pro-independence JKLF, the nature of the "separatist militancy in Kashmir had changed" (224). The days in Kashmir found only occasional gunfires, protests and funerals. However, in 1996, "[A]fter six years of direct rule from Delhi, India decided to hold local elections in Kashmir" which "was a joke" (225), writes Peer. Again, this unhealthy political environment in Kashmir followed another "grim massacre of Kashmiri Hindus in the village of Nadimarg" (226), in 2003. To report the incident, Peer goes there where he sees: "All major Indian politicians, including then Deputy Prime Minister LK Advani, the Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi" (226). Moreover, the massacre followed fear and frisking in Kashmir.

Harold Aram Vesser in *The New Historicism* writes, ". . .[N]ew historicists have been strongly influenced by Foucault's argument that constructions of the past

are inevitably implicated in present networks of power and domination and thus never disinterested" (204). Vesser's such line of argument on Foucault's idea that writing a past history is always affected by the present networks of power and domination is found in Peer's attempt of addressing the 'Kashmir issue' in *Curfewed Night*. The details of the Kashmiri history from 1947 up to 2005 which the text talks about is scanty. Peer sometimes talks about a particular incident took place in Kashmir thoroughly and sometimes provide only few information of the historical incident. This maybe because of uneasiness of the time, of the contemporary power and domination in socio-political sphere of Kashmir, that Peer went through while writing this book *Curfewed Night*. For example, Peer does not bring many details about massacre in Nadimarg and the major Indian politicians' succeeding acts and responses towards the culprit and bereaved family.

Furthermore, in June 2004, Peer writes, "After parliamentary elections, the BJP had been thrown out of power and the Congress, supported by the left parties, came to power" (236). Certainly, changes in the mainstream of India's politics would affect the domestic affairs of Kashmir's politics. In epilogue section, Peer pens, to the fortune of all Kashmiri people, particularly of those families who have been divided between 'Azad Kashmir' and 'Jammu and Kashmir' since the LoC was created, in April 2005, "the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus" (243) service began with the establishment of " India-Pakistan bonhomie" (244). And here, for the first time in the text, Peer's lines expose the eternal happiness of Kashmiri people. It exposes the rays of hope of future peaceful Kashmir. Peer writes, "Some equated it with the fall of the Berlin Wall. Some were more restrained and saw it as a step forward in resolving the Kashmir dispute. Some militant groups saw it as a distraction from the real resolution of the dispute and threatened to attack the bus" and they did so by launching "a suicide attack at the nearby Tourist Reception Centre building" (242). But more than

that, like Peer, all Kashmiris became hopeful towards the progressive nature of India and Pakistan's peace talk. The point is, "After fifty eight years, a bus would cross the LoC and divided families would be allowed to visit each other" (242). Peer further writes, "By the evening thirty nine Kashmiris from both sides of the divided had walked across the bridge, after fifty eight years in the history of Indian and Pakistan, and fifty eight years after the division of Kashmir in 1947" (244). And it is Sharief Hussein Bukkhari, who, like other passengers, returns home for the first time after 1950 by crossing the bridge, 'Peace Bridge,' "from the Pakistan-controlled part into the India-controlled part" (242). Peer wants to experience the flourishment of this happiness and peace in every corner of Kashmir eternally. Peer wants to see violence disappear from Kashmir forever. *Curfewed Night* throws a light on this reality of Kashmir's politics.

So, *Curfewed Night* historicizes these issues of the contemporary Kashmir. It deals with the fragile socio-economic situation; the power politics in Kashmir; the worsening political situation; the decay of cultural and religious harmony; the agony and shattered dreams of common people; and, their hope for freedom and peace.

The Kashmiri people's simple modes of life, their customs, traditions and socio-cultural values, have been altered with the beginning of war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir territory. More than ever, the 1990s insurgency movement ruined Kashmir socially, culturally, politically and economically. One of the major social impacts that occurred in Kashmir during 1990s is the displacement of thousands of Kashmiri families from their own homeland. The 1990s riot brought, Peer writes, ". . .[N]umerous crackdowns in my village and the neighbouring villages . . .death and fear became routine like going to school, playing cricket and football" (48). Because of this, common Kashmiri people including Muslims and Hindus migrated to different parts of India as refugees. In this context, in chapter two, Peer

writes, “The deaths had scared the Pandits and thousands, including my classmates and their families, had left the Valley by March 1990 for Jammu, Delhi, and various other Indian cities and towns” (22).

Similarly, in chapter six, Peer further writes, “Families of refugees lived in tents and school buildings in various towns near the border” (86). It reflects the bitter life of Kashmiri people caused by the 1990s unrest in Kashmir. It clarifies how Kashmiri people were compelled to leave their own homeland and suffered hard in tents and school buildings due to the fear of both Indian military force and militants. In the book *The Crisis in Kashmir*, Sumit Ganguly argues that “Faced with harassment from both the insurgent groups and the security forces, most Kashmiris had started to yearn for relief from the continuing turmoil and violence” (122) and this supports what Peer illustrates the issue of Kashmiri people’s displacement in the 1990s. In fact, migration to the other parts of India became a way of getting some kind of relief for the common Kashmiri people. Ganguly further writes, “[M]ore than forty thousand Hindu inhabitants of the Valley had fled to the Comparative Safety of Jammu” (107-8).

Peer’s personal life experience of departing from his school friends creates a very sympathetic tone in the text. When Peer returns to Kashmir from Delhi to writing about those people who got wounded, raped, abducted, trautamatized, displaced and killed in the 1990’s Kashmir war, Peer memorizes his school friends Vinod and Vikas in chapter fourteen and writes:

> I missed Vinod. I had not seen him since the conflict had erupted. I had been twelve when I had left Lyceum for boarding school; his family had migrated to the southern province of Jammu like thousands of other Pandits, who felt threatened by the separatist militants. After the migration of the Pandits. . .half the chairs in my classroom had become

> empty. . .Kashmir was exploding and we were preoccupied with our own survival. (202-3)

These are the lines which tell about the ordeals of Pandits in the 1990s. Uncertainty of life coupled with humiliation, exploitation and subjugation, all these factors forced Kashmiri Pandits to migrate to the safer zones of India and Peer's school friend, Vinod, represents that suffering of the time. The uprising of militancy plagued Kashmir's development completely, throwing public life out of gear. Since the Indian intelligence began to kill "hundreds of pro-India Muslims ranging from political activists to suspected informers" (22), the militants began to threaten and kill the Kashmiri Pandits as a revenge to the act of Indian force. To challenge the Indian Government's military policy in Kashmir, the militants "killed hundreds of Pandits on similar grounds, or without a reason" (22).

Hence, Kashmiri people had no other choice than migrating away from Kashmir. Peer writes it is Vikas, a school friend in Lyceum, who "too had migrated with his family to Jammu in the early nineties" (211). All these bitter facts of the 1990s in the text reflect a chaotic image of the then Kashmir.

New historicism is a theory in literary criticism which rejects text-only approach and suggests that literature must be studied and interpreted within the context. To new historicist, the production of literature is not confined to a single mind because it is based onparticular socio-cultural and political movement. Therefore, new historicist critically studies literature along with other socio-cultural products of a particular historical period to analyse the formation and operation of different concepts, ideas, attitudes and ideologies in a society. While defining new historicism, John Brannigan opines, "The new historicist critics. . .intent on using literary texts as equal sources with other texts in the attempt to describe and examine the linguistic, cultural, social and political fabric of the past in greater detail" (13). In

this regard, the present research attempts to analyse Peer's *Curfewed Night* in relation to other useful texts or sources to show the hidden issues and impacts of the 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir in a broad way.

The issue of migration in the 1990s war in Kashmir continues in chapter eight as Peer writes about one of his villagers, Ramesh, who too had migrated to Delhi from Kashmir during the insurgency time. Peer visits Ramesh in Delhi as a reporter and found that a shabby municipal building got "Tattered curtains, tied with nylon strings to nails in the walls, served as partitions demarcating the space for a dozen or so families living there" (100). Peer further writes, "Ramesh was a Hindu from Budgam district in central Kashmir. His family had migrated to Delhi in the early nineties. He lived in a slum in south Delhi. . .He missed his village in Kashmir; his eyes spoke of the shady willows, the crystalclearstreams and the apple orchards where he had grown up" (100). These lines explore Ramesh's longing for his homeland, Kashmir. Like Ramesh, thousands of Kashmiri people had migrated to the different parts of India in search of security and normality of life in the 1990s. The cause behind the incipient of this kind of situation is because the political leaders jettisoned common Kashmiri people when the latter one is bereft of actual democratic rights. Instead of creating peaceful environment, the political leaders lured with their own party-based agendas and ideologies, neglected what the time was importantly demanding, and that sidelined understanding of demands of the grief-stricken people. This brought anarchy, protest, violence, and killing in Kashmir. Therefore, "Srinagar has also lost its multireligious character, with the migration of the Kashmiri Pandits in the early nineties" (132), writes Peer.

John Brannigan postulates an idea that ". . .[L]iterary texts do not just make sense of the world when examined in historical context, they also serve a particular function in persuading people of a particular view" (37). In the same way, a new

historical study of Peer's *Curfewed Night* explores different issues that tell us about the pangs and tears of all Kashmiri people in the 1990s. And one of the major socio-political issues which Peer describes in the text is the loss of Kashmiri people's identity too. The point here is the collective identity of Kashmiri people was spoiled as the religious antagonism increased much in the late 1989 insurgency movement. They would not have allowed enjoying their basic rights, and showing their identity as 'Kashmiri Muslim' or 'Kashmiri Pandit' could cause one's life at risk. The power relations between India and Pakistan and their continuing battle over the land of Kashmir put Kashmiris' identity into shadow. In this regard, Brannigan further argues, "Reading literature as one source among many for reading the past, and reading the power relations of past societies and cultures, is the common focus of new historicist analysis" (48). Hence, the research analyzes the issue of how Kashmiri people's identity came into question in the 1990s in a very critical way.

Peer pens, Kashmir is a land of Hindus, Muslims, Shikhs, Buddhists and Christians. All people have their own beliefs, culture and tradition, yet, they all are united because they believe in harmony and brotherhood. They believe that they are first Kashmiris and this helped to kindle their unique collective identity in the world. Before the 1990s, Peer writes, "Young men and adolescents from our village would hire a bus, got to Heaven cinema in neighbouring Anantnag town, and watch the latest Bollywood film" (7). People had a sort of freedom to express their ideas and share their feelings. They would feel pride at a time of being called Kashmiri. But, Peer writes, that beauty of Kashmiri identity took only a span of the 1990s winter to be faded away. The touching lines in first chapter of the text show the loss and suffering of Kashmiri people in this way:

> Our nieghbourhood stationary shop had brought us a big bundle of identity cards from a dealer in Anantnag. The shopkeeper boasted that

> the identity cards he sold worked best with soldiers. They had the words 'Indian Identity Card'. . .I too bought an identity card. I got it signed and stamped by the local magistrate and promptly pulled it out whenever I was stopped by soldiers on the street or was walking past one of their numerous check posts. It became a part of me. (21)

Kashmiri People had to carry identity card and curfew pass for the sake of safe travelling. In the 1990s, "military and paramilitary camps sprouted up in almost every small town and village" (18), and life became so vulnerable. Peer's desolate feelings towards the plight of Kashmiri people here come much alive when he writes, "Those were the days of night curfews in Kashmir. Every man moving around after dusk needed a curfew pass" (157). It clearly articulates the question of Kashmiri people's identity problematized and challenged by the Indian military force. If anyone simply forgets to carry her/his identity card, then s/he would go through series of inquiries and tortures in the military camps. Not only this, a suspected person to the Indian soldier would certainly get arrested, tortured, and killed. Peer, in the text, excavates this critical situation of Kashmiri people. So, their inarticulate suffering and psychological tension caused by the loss of identity in the 1990s is what genuinely portrayed in *Curfewed Night*.

In chapters first and fifteen, Peer illustrates how India, in the name of border security, dominated Kashmiri people in every respects in the 1990s and its aftermath. Of this unsecured and tensed circumstances, Peer's father became victim as the following lines make the context livelier:

> The Indian government seemed to have deployed hundreds of thousands of troops to crush the rebellion. Almost every day the soldiers patrolled our village, walking in a mixture of nervousness and aggression, their fingers close to the triggers of their automatic and

> semi-automatic machine guns. . .It became harder for Father to visit home on weekends. . .Almost every time he came home, it took him around five hours. On lucky day his bus would only be stopped every fifteen minutes at a military check post, he and other passengers made to stand in a queue, their raised hands holding an identity card. (18)

In the extract, Peer tells identity card meant everything to Kashmiri people since it would work as provisional safety. Obviously, life maters the most to everyone than anything else in the world. And it was the same case with people in the time of conflict in Kashmir. People, like Peer's father, would have been victimized when the days in Kashmir became night due to Indian soldiers' ferocity. When an identity card values one's meaning of life, Peer imagines, it might be the dreariest part of life that one could bitterly experience in the time of violence and destruction.

Peer further writes people's conversations at the shopfronts "would come to a sudden halt every time we saw a column of soldiers or a convoy of their trucks and armoured cars pass by" (20). To expose the contemporary hardships of Kashmiri people, Peer mentions the words of Rashid, a driver in the village, who says "a town called Handwara near the border that had been burnt by Indian troops. They throw gunpowder over the houses and then fire mortars and an entire village is burnt in an hour" (20). It symbolizes India's image as oppressor in Kashmir. Because of brutality and domination of the Indian military force, all common Kashmiri people's identity was marginalized during the militancy. Consequently, this aroused anti-Indian sentiments among Kashmiri people. Moreover, the evil acts of the militants also disturbed the communal harmony in Kashmir challenging collective identity of people, writes Peer.

When Peer returned to Kashmir thinking to write about the story of 1990s Kashmir, he himself experienced many difficulties in course of travelling in Srinagar.

In this context, Peer writes, “India has more than half a million soldiers in Kashmir. Armoured cars and soldiers patrolling roads or manning checkposts have become as much a part of the landscape as the chinars and willows. . .Being a Kashmiri, it was also unwise to have a real conversation with a soldier. Some conversations can have consequences” (236). This was the exact socio-political situation of that time. Both the Indian government and the state government of Kashmir were responsible for it. Neither of the sides have acknowledged the present necessity of Kashmiri people and left them in a disgraceful condition. This cause worked as a stimulating force to many common Kashmiri people voluntarily joining the rebellious groups supported by Pakistani armed force, asserts Peer.

John Brannigan opines that new historicism goes for the replacement of something old by new, it suggests “a renewed interest in, and attention to, reading history” (53). New historicism is a practice, a project of reading literature in relation to history, society and politics. It takes all literary texts as historical and cultural artefacts. In this regard, Brannigan further argues, “All texts, all documents, are representations of the beliefs, values and forms of power circulating in a society at a given time in specific circumstances, and therefore all texts of a given time are in some ways interconnecting and interactive” (74). Brannigan’s idea of representation suggests that any piece of literary work depicts certain views, ideas, beliefs, and forms of power operating in a society under specific circumstances. Peer’s *Curfewed Night* also represents the contemporary history of 1990s Kashmir. The non-fictional text depicts the very pathetic condition of common Kashmiri people, their dilapidated socio-cultural and politico-economic situation, and their constant struggle for freedom and normalcy of life. Showing the brutality of Indian military force and the Pakistani armed militants over the innocent Kashmiri people, Peer exposes the contemporary political instability of the state. Hence, Peer primarily focuses on the marginalized

position of Kashmiri people in the present text. In fact, Peer speaks of the plightful and outlandish state of Kashmiri people to the world.

One of the dire consequences brought by the 1990s violence in Kashmir is the violation of right to education of Kashmiri generation, writes Peer. Because of the lack of security and peace, thousands of Kashmiri youths went to the different parts of the world pursuing better education. This issue of the Kashmiri society was sidelined at that time. *Curfewed Night* exposes this reality.

"Parents saw getting their children out of Kashmir as the solution" (61) is one of the striking lines in the text which draws a critical response of the readers most. The Kashmiri school children had to struggle hard to get education in school in a peaceful environment. Their psychology was badly affected by the insurgency movement. As the Indian government manoeuvred against rebellions, the school children had also been ambushed, shot, kidnapped and killed directly or indirectly. Here it becomes clear as Peer mentions the poor condition of Kashmiri children and youths in this way:

> Homecomings were fraught with danger. The fighting had changed the meaning of distance. I went home almost every weekend from my school. . .But the six mile ride in a local bus was dangerous. Military and paramilitary trucks drove on the same road throughout the day, carrying supplies between various camps or going on raids in the villages. Guerrillas hiding in the fields by the road would often fire at convoys or detonate landmines planted in the road. Soldiers would retaliate after such attacks, firing in all directions, and beating anyone they could lay their hands on. (40)

In these lines, Peer's personal experience of his fearful schooldays in the 1990s represents the war affected psychology of all Kashmiri children. The Kashmiri

children were caught up in the war between Indian soldiers and the militants. Going to school became dangerous as there had been uncertain firings and crackdowns everyday in the 1990s. Peer's this line of vivid description of Kashmir school children in war in *Curfewed Night* makes the readers very much somber.

Another prominent example Peer foregrounds in *Curfewed Night* is his live experience of war during his school days in "a village called Siligam" (40). When he was going home on weekend, Peer writes, "a paramilitary convoy overtook our bus and hovered just ahead of us" (40). All the passengers got very frightened and drove in silence. Later, a loud explosion echoed in Siligam and the driver "slammed the brakes and in the distance we saw a paramilitary truck skid off the road and land in the fields" (40). Peer further writes, "I sat on the floor of the bus, gripping a seat. . .I buried my head in my knees and closed my eyes" (40). But when their bus was heading to the village called Aishmugam, a convoy of paramilitary trucks stopped them and armed "soldiers circled the bus and an angry paramilitary officer ordered us out" (41). Peer was in school uniform, tensed and terrified. Peer writes, the officer "lowered the gun and pushed me with his other hand. I knew he was going to shoot me. But then he grabbed my arm and shouted, 'You are from the school near our camp. I see you pass by every day. Now get out of here. He let us go" (41). This example shows the war-stroked psychology of Peer's generation, their wailing faces and their scary school days.

The 1990s riot in Kashmir had terribly affected the daily life style of the common people. Once peaceful Kashmir turned into a land of violence where people would lose their lives in a every single day. And such disturbed socio-political environment directly ruined the educational system in Kashmir. While defining new historicism, Louis Montrose views history as a reciprocal concern with "the historicity of texts and the textuality of histories" (410), the earlier of which means that the

subject matter of the text is based on the history or the social reality of a particular time. Montrose says, “By the historicity of texts, I mean to suggest the historical specificity, the social and material embedding, of all modes of writing. . .also mean to suggest the historical, social and material embedding of all modes of reading” (410). Similar is the case with *Curfewed Night* which historicizes the 1990s insurgency movement reality of Kashmiri society.

Tanka Nath Subedi, in his M. A. thesis, says, “Peer depicted the terrible and unforgettable history in this text with various events and moments that he himself experienced, saw and listened from other people of Kashmir” (2). Kashmiri people lived in uncertainty in every aspects of life in the conflict time. They went through indelible wounds like brutality, rape, torture, identity crisis, loss of cultural aura, poor education and many other things. Peer’s masterpiece *Curfewed Night* genuinely addresses all these issues in a broad manner. Subedi further writes, “The text *Curfewed Night* portrays Kashmir of 1989 and 1990s when Kashmir was governed by violence” (3). Subedi’s such remark also suggests the historicity in *Curfewed Night*.

More than getting education in schools and colleges, Peer writes, knowing the politics of the time became essential to the Kashmiri students. This would help one to survive the anger of troops and militants, though temporarily. This is why Peer writes the 1990s “winter began my political education. It took the form of acronyms: JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front), JKSLF (Jammu and Kashmir Students Liberation Front), BSF (Border Security Force). . .To go with these I learned new phrases: frisking, crackdown, bunker, search, identity card, arrest and torture” (19). Because of the militants’ barbarism over the Kashmiri Pandits, many “Pandit houses of the village stood apart in their desolation” (203). Hence, Peer’s many Kashmiri classmates left the school which brought melancholy to the Kashmiri Muslim students like Peer as he writes, “On the first day of school as I sat in the classroom, I was

struck by some empty chairs. I felt a little numb, unsure how to process the absences" (22). Peer's grave voice develops high when he writes about how the school environment got polluted by the 1990s strife degrading the quality of education in Kashmir. As the periphery of school was taken for the war purpose by the Indian force, the Kashmiri children's education came to halt. Hence, the school children stopped to chant the Indian national anthem. The students began to support the protest against Indian government's brutality because they were influenced by a thought that "[w]e are Kashmiris and now we are fighting for independence" (23). In the school, the teachers did not threat to "dismiss us from the school; they knew our world had changed and so had the rules governing it" (23), writes Peer. And this worked as a backing force to the Peer's generation to leave Kashmir for better education or to stay and join the rebellion. This kind of changing psychology tempted thousands of Kashmiri youths to be a part in the protest, asserts Peer.

Another consequence of the changing psychology of Kashmiri students and youths during the war era was their fascination towards the wave of combating. To learn combating, Kashmiri people including youths went to Pakistan crossing the Line of Control in the 1990s. They were compelled to do so because of the loss of identity, uncertainty of life, and marginalization of their human rights. There would be no guarantee of those who have to go for work outside. Despite all these chaotic situations in Kashmir, it is like Peer's parents who would guide their children and teach them the significance of humanity in life. They respected people of different faiths and cultures and the growing generation followed it. In chapter two, Peer talks about how his father's liberal thoughts on religion helped him to know and respect all the religions of the world as he writes, "Father sorted his books and picked up a commentary on the Quran in English. 'You must read it. You will understand religion and improve your English. You must also read the Bible" (30). Not only this, Peer

was given education that violence is the worst thing in the world. His father would often tell him about Nehru, Gandhi, Vaclav Havel, Dalai Lama who did not use "guns but they changed history. If you want to do something for Kashmir, I would say you should read" (30). Like every parents in Kashmir, Peer's parents wanted him to "join the Indian Civil Service" (10) to make them feel proud. It is Peer who would spend most evenings doing his homework in his schooldays before the outbreak of insurgency movement. Peer writes, "I remember, one evening, being distracted by the strains of a Bollywood song coming from our neighbour's house. I tried to focus on the sums but the answers kept going wrong. Grandfather slapped me and left the room. . .Every schoolboy got a few canes and slaps for not doing his homework properly" (8). The basic point here is education meant everything to Kashmiri people and educating their children was a matter of pride. But this did not last long in Kashmir, laments Peer. As the militancy became active, people thought to have seeing their children as rebellions fighting for freedom or sending them off abroad for better education in the 1990s.

As Lois Tyson says that "human beings are never merely victims of an oppressive society, for they can find various ways to oppose authority in their personal and public lives" (285), in *Curfewed Night*, Peer shows how Kashmiri people opposed the self-centered authority of the then government by involving in protests and by getting militant trainings in Pakistan. Consequently, that affected school areas. The school premises, a peaceful zone, became a battle ground between the Indian troops and the militants in Kashmir. In chapter four, Peer writes:

> I saw a convoy of military trucks drive on the dirt track connecting our school to the village of Aishmuqam. . .The trucks screeched their brakes and came to a halt at the gate of my school. The soldiers were moving in; though there was a camp only a mile away in the state high

> school building in Aishmuqam. They set to work fast. In a few hours the trucks had been unloaded and the few empty buildings-the complex was owned by the Geological Survey of India but they had shut the offices down soon after the fighting started and our Indian education ministry-run school rented some of the buildings, moving in from a small private building nearby-in the compound were turned into a military camp. (58)

This was what the socio-political situation of that time. In Kashmir, schools and colleges were misused for the war purpose. Camps and bunkers were set up in schools which scared the students. What kind of psychological impact would have occurred in the life of Peer' generation here becomes clear when Peer describes about the terrified situation at school hostel as he writes, "At night, in our rooms we would hear the cries of the prisoners being tortured" (59). Peer further writes, "The military camp and its operations were an invitation for a guerrilla attack. We, uneasily, expected the inevitable. Yet most of us hoped that the militants would not attack our part of the campus" (59). Kashmiri students went through uneasiness of the time as violence had been dogged in Kashmir. The students had to follow new rules imposed by the military personnel, so, Peer says, "We had to carry identity cards on us and show them every time we entered or left school" (58). Because of all these reasons, in Kashmir, "The rich were sending their children to Europe and North America; the middle and the lower middle class chose all sorts of colleges and universities in Indian cities and towns from Banglore to Balia" (61).

In the insurgency period in Kashmir, the schools were becoming increasingly unsafe zones day by day. Military camps, military vehicles, armed soldiers, machine guns poking out of sandbag bunkers, were everywhere in Kashmir and the "guerrillas would still visit and stay" (31) in the school premises, writes Peer. This is why

Manzoor, Peer's school friend, "had bruises all over his body from the beatings" (57) by Indian army during a crackdown. This is why a common people like Bashir Lala, Peer's relative, would go through several tortures in the check posts if he mistakenly told 'Islamabad' in place of 'Anantnag,' his village. And yes, this kind of tensed socio-political environment angst Kashmiris like Tariq, Tonga, Afaq, to be militants and fought for their lives. Peer was also one of those Kashmiris who had been influenced by this spirit of the time. *Curfewed Night* exposes this seedy reality of the 1990s Kashmir.

Becoming militant was like finding oneself as a 'hero' in the 1990s, writes Peer. Here, Peer recalls his schooling days and says, in the early nineties, "militants walking the ramp of war determined the fashion trends. Militants wore Kamachi shoes and boys wanted Kamachi shoes" (213-14). Because of the unwell treatment of Indian government, familiarity towards the militants seen as a repercussion among the Kashmiri Muslims and this cultured in the psychology of Muslim students too. Peer writes, "We began drawing maps of Kashmir on our school notebooks and painted slogans like 'War till Victory' and 'Self-determination is Our Birthright' on the school walls" (22).This shows how the 1990s militancy provoked war feeling on the educational path of innocent students. A question arises, why they thought war as a final way to freedom? Peer answers that people had no trust in their leaders and the Indian force's exploitation was ever growing in the form of curfews and interrogations in the war time. In this context, Peer mentions how he used to be crazy to follow the life of militants and how his hopes would grow higher all the time as he writes:

> [I]n the autumn of 1991, when I was fourteen, I walked with four boys from my dorm to a nearby village looking for guerrillas. We saw a group of young men dressed in fatigues, assault rifles slung on their

> shoulders. . . I blurted out, 'We want to join you.' The commander, a lean youth with a stubble, laughed. 'Go home and grow up, kids!' the commander said, in a stern voice. . .My friends and I didn't give up hope of finding a way to go for arms training. Groups of boys left for arms training every other day. We needed to find a commander who didn't know our families and would let us join a group. (24-25)

These lines explain the developing support of contemporary Kashmiri generation to the promulgation of militancy, that is, the rise of indigenous militant groups. To be a militant during the insurgency in Kashmir was a kind of fashion, a trend, and also a way to get engage in revolt against the center-based politics of the state. Michael Payne in his *The Greenblatt Reader*, argues, "Social actions are themselves always embedded in systems of public signification" (4). Payne's line of idea supports what Peer describes about the formation of indigenous militants in Kashmir and combat trainings of Kashmiri youths in Pakistan in *Curfewed Night*. For the Kashmiri youths, arms training meant a sort of social act to make the government aware that they are not satisfied with the state's rules and policies.

Such heated socio-political atmosphere of the time allured thousands of Kashmiri teenagers and youths like Peer to the story of militants, to the side of gun like "the magical Kalashnikov" (23), than enrolling in violence caught school environment. Hence, they were infatuated with the contemporary discourse of how it is worthy to be a militant and thereby giving justice to the war-ravaged homeland, Kashmir. The following lines justify this theme as Peer writes:

> Outside our small world, there were endless series of gun battles between the soldiers and the rebels, grenades were lobbed, and mines were exploded –death, fear and anger had taken over Kashmir. By the summer of 1990, thousands of young Kashmiri men crossed the Line

> of Control, for arms training in the Pakistan-controlled part of Kashmir. When they returned as militants, they were heroes-people wanted to talk to them, touch them, hear their stories. . .I like almost every teenager, I wanted to join them. Fighting and dying for freedom was much desired, like the first kiss on adolescent lips. (24)

These lines tell about boiled blood of the Peer's generation in the 1990s. Here, Peer says to the world about the contemporary bewilderment and suffering that every Kashmiri citizen went through. There was no other option of reclaiming Kashmiri identity than fighting against the corrupted government, writes Peer.

In the same line of argument, Peer further writes that the rebellion in the 1990s was themed on multiple voices coming from all strata of a society. Kashmiri people including "the tailor," "the lawyer," "the chemist," "the unemployed educate," "the Salafi revivalist," got involved in mass protests demanding for freedom and peace in Kashmir; it was the solemn truth of this radical movement. And it is Peer who for the first time found himself changing his self from 'I' to 'We' as he writes:

> The crowd itself was a human jumble. . .Amid the collision of bodies, holding of hands, interlocking of eyes in affirmation and confirmation, the merging of a thousand voices, I had ceased to be a shy, bookish boy hunched by the expectations of my family. I wasn't scared of being scolded any more; I felt a part of something much bigger, unknowingly making a journey from I to We. I let myself go, fly with the crowd. Azadi! (17)

Common Kashmiri people were tired of constant torture and humiliation. They wished for certainty of life, self-respect, and autonomy. So, Peer writes, this was an ultimate truth in the 1990s. Kashmir people were not solely in favour of militants. Nor they were fellow lovers of the Indian government's policy either. They simply wanted

their home back and nothing else. They knew well what is true and what is false. Peer writes, they had been a part of the "most appalling massacres in Kashmir" (125) as listeners, viewers as well as experiencers. In the early nineties, they held funerals of their loving ones "almost everywhere, almost every day" (223).

Curfewed Night is a chronicle from the eyes of Basharat Peer who sees the gradual transformation of Kashmir's long-rooted cultural values, traditions, customs, and religious harmony in the 1990s. Peer marvels on how the insurgency movement brought a massive upheaval in the life of common Kashmiri people blinding them to their own religious faith and respect. The war factors like the Indian government's malpractice over Kashmiri Muslims and the Pakistan-supported militants' savagery in the day to day life of Kashmiri Pandits stimulated religious tension in Kashmir. Peer concurs with the fact that if people start to fight for their own distinct political, economic and cultural space then it invites cultural clash. The point is unity among people is vital to sustain peace and progress in the nation. People have to value each other's socio-cultural ethics to define their identity in the international community. But just opposite of Peer's thought, various ethnic conflicts and racial bloodsheds became active in Kashmir in the 1990s and its consequences were intractable. In chapter thirteen, Peer writes there used to be noreligious fight and quarrel in Kashmir as it developed during the insurgency movement. Though there was "a consciousness of religious identities and differences in political opinions" (182) among Hindus and Muslims, they fostered communal feeling, respect, brotherhood and harmony. For example, Peer mentions, "Many Muslims and Hindus would keep separate cups and plates in their homes for the visitors of the other faith" (182). However, they would treat each other as brothers and sisters.

In the text, Peer talks about the importance of religious harmony in the formation of collective identity of Kashmiri people. Peer says, the cultural charm of

Kashmir denotes to the preservation of its social ethics and morality which is possible only when Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Christians and other minority faiths respect each other, help each other in need and share feelings by participating in festives and ceremonies. The past history described in the text shows that Kashmir is a shared haven for Hindus and Muslims. It is a major hub of Hindu and Buddhist culture at the same time. Hence, the co-existence of different socio-cultural values had been a part of life in Kashmir. It helped to create a unique ethnicity in Kashmir. A visible evident of it is the existence of 'PariMahal,' "a place of multiple religious traditions in Srinagar" (115). In this context, in chapter fourteen, Peer pens:

> Islam in Kashmir had borrowed elements from Hindu and Buddhist pasts; the Hindus in turn had been influenced by Muslim practices. In my childhood, nobody raised an eyebrow if a Hindu woman walked to a Muslim shrine to seek the blessings of a saint. The religious divide was visible only on the days India and Pakistan played cricket. Muslims supported the Pakistani cricket team; the Pandits were for India. Yet the tensions, which were partly class-based, never simmered into sectarian violence. But things fell apart after the eruption of armed conflict. (201)

How Kashmiri people would value distinct religions atop is described in the above extract. In Kashmir, existence of one religion is affected by the properties of other religion in a positive lien. In the past, as peer recalls his memory, temples and masjids would attract people of diverse faiths. Therefore, collective identity of Kashmiris through religious harmony was alive. The ephemeral divide in terms of religion would occur only in the context of cricket match between India and Pakistan. Here, peer recalls the past religious framework of Kashmir and becomes very much pathetic seeing Kashmir's destruction after the eruption of armed conflict. But, the spark of

hope is not yet totally erased out because despite "the ensuing bitterness both Muslims and pundits tried to maintain their personal relationships" (201), writes Peer.

New historicism is a theatrical tool based on the fact that history and text go hand-in-hand. One of the central assumptions of new historicism which borrows credit from Tyson's idea is that literary texts are immersed and enmeshed with the history. Tyson opines, "[L]iterary texts shape and are shaped by their historical contexts" (291). This is why, new historicism goes after a historical implication of a text. This feature is prominent in *Curfewed Night* as it captures almost the overall situation of the 1990s Kashmir. The issue of religious violence becomes much clear in the text when Peer describes about his "rhythms of student life and the confusions and longings of early youth" (67) in Delhi. Like other thousands of Kashmiri boys and girls who left "in the early nineties to study in Indian cities and towns, and to universities and colleges in North America, Europe, and Russia" (186), Peer writes, "I was one of them" (186). While journeying to Delhi for education, Peer experienced the environment of religious demarcation when he saw strange names like "Hindu Hotel. Sikh Hotel. Muslim Hotel" (62) on the highway of the mountain ridges that connects "Kashmir to the Indian plains" (62). Moreover, Peer's bitter experience of religious tension during his college life in Aligarh, Delhi, is described in the following lines:

> The political context of the university made things worse: it is one of the foremost institutions of Indian Muslims and their anxiety and frustration about their position within India was palpable. . .In December 1992, about a year before I joined my school in Aligarh, an extremist Hindu mob had demolished the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, a few hundred kilometers from Aligarh. The Hindu right led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) argued that the mosque had been built

> after demolishing an ancient temple. They wanted to construct a Ram temple on the site of the demolished mosque. The demolition triggered religious violence throughout India and thousands were killed. (65)

The religious monuments were destroyed in the name of religion. Fear and insecurity ruled over India and its negative impacts were also seen in Kashmir. More dangerously, people forgot they are human beings and suffered of precarious state of life. In fact, the religious divide between Muslims and Hindus walloped all walks of life in the insurgency time.

Peer further addresses the predicament of his Indian Muslim friends who "seemed quite patriotic" despite "their insecurity and despair in an India witnessing the rise of Hindu nationalism" (66). Therefore, they "disagreed with the Kashmiri ideas of secession from India and saw the secession of a Muslim-majority Kashmir form India as bound to make life worse for India's Muslims" (66-67). *Curfewed Night* represents this fear and suffering of Kashmiri people and of Indian Muslims. Therefore, the text depicts the loss of religious harmony in the 1990s.

Another dominant issue of the 1990s which Peer describes in *Curfewed Night* is the collapse of culture, tradition and custom in Kashmir. Culture, in any society of the world, represents particular social values and mores of people. In fact, culture shapes people's way of life, their discipline, faith and more importantly, their identity. Culture is about feelings, attachments and emotions which is needed to make a peaceful society, believes Peer. In the same vine of argument, John Brannigan argues,"Culture' referred to intellectual development and to the arts in general. . .it tended to have the more anthropological sense of the way of life of a people. It involved their collective practices, beliefs, social customs, political values and forms of expression" (55). But what if people begin to violate each other's culture? Peer locates the magnitude of this question in the text showing how the 1990s militancy

grew bitterness and animosity among people, basically on the part of their culture and tradition. While saying so, Peer mentions one of the shocking incidents, rape of a bride by Indian soldiers, in the text. Peer writes, in Kashmir, people believe that marriage is a part of culture. The "night of henna: maenziraat" (108), "the traditional Kashmiri cuisine of thirty six varieties of meat" (109), are the parts of marriage ceremony in Kashmir. Here, Peer details the cultural significance of marriage ceremony in Kashmir and comments on how it got violated by the Indian soldiers in the conflict time in this way:

> Women and girls formed a circle, held hands and sang. They moved back and forth, tapped their feet on the ground, shook their heads, raised and lowered their voices. It was an old custom practiced before the groom left for the bride's house; grooms left for the bride's place after the sunset and returned after a late dinner. Kashmiris had discarded that centuries-old tradition after the evening of May 16, 1990, when Indian paramilitaries fired upon a marriage party and raped the bride. (110)

This was the bitter reality of the 1990s Kashmir. The extract clarifies how Kashmiris' culture of marriage ceremony halted by the brutality of Indian military force. Because of the rising conflict, innocent Kashmiri people were compelled to give up their culture and tradition. Otherwise, they had to be victims at the hands of gun holders. *Curfewed Night* exposes this othered issue of the contemporary society.

Kashmir lost its economic growth right after the eruption of 1990s bloody war. Every now and then the developmental prosperity was swallowed up by Kashmir's protracted problem of insurgency. "Most Pandit houses had been abandoned or burnt during the conflict; the temple complexes had been taken over by the military and paramilitary" (201).Today, Peer writes, "Srinagar is a medieval city dying in a

modern war. It is empty streets, locked shops, angry soldiers and boys with stones. It is several thousand military bunkers, four golf courses, and three book shops" (120). This has directly affected the development of Kashmir and its economic status. In chapter nine, Peer mentions the destruction of infrastructures caused by the conflict in this way:

> I began retracing my visits to the other monuments of Kashmir. I thought of the library of Islamia College, the oldest college in Srinagar, which was burnt down in a battle, along with many rare manuscripts, including a 1400 year old Quran handwritten by Usman, the third Caliph of Islam. The 600 year old shrine of Nuruddin Rishi, the patron Sufi saint of Kashmir, was destroyed in another gun battle between Indian troops and militants. Hindu temples and Buddhist stupas were dying from neglect and misuse, as much victims of the conflict as people. (115-16)

The insurgency movement vandalized the infrastructural beauty of Kashmir and thereby weakening its economic ground. The public and private properties were targeted and demolished for the sake of a political goal. The vested interest of Indian military force, of Pakistan alliance militants and the indigenous guerillas, squandered Kashmiri people's trust, faith, allegiance and dream. Peer vouches this fact of the 1990s in *Curfewed Night*.

Throughout the decade of 1990s, the contemporary government invested all materials and monetary sources in war economy which rather brought fatal consequences in Kashmir. In chapter entitled "Political Economy of the Conflict", Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu, Bushra Asif, and Cyrus Samii write:

> Significant cash flows reach the Kashmir Valley from different sources. Militants and separatist leaders receive money from Pakistan

> and several other Islamic institutions in the Islamic world, while "turncoats" receive similar favors from the Indian intelligence agencies. Huge amounts of resources are spent maintaining the security forces in Kashmir, and much of this flows into the local economy. (19)

This was a bleak reality of the 1990s Kashmir. Those people who were in power and authority polluted every possibilities of Kashmir's development, misused politics and that undermined economic growth. In this regard, Michel Foucault argues, "power is comprised of. . .apparatuses-of control" (22). Foucault suggests, "[P]ower is intelligible in terms of the techniques through which it is exercised. Many different forms of power exist in our society: legal, administrative, economic, military, and so forth" (65). Foucault's this line of argument supports one of the thematic aspects of the text *Curfewed Night*, that is, as Peer asserts, the 1990s Kashmir society was in the grip of Indian military force and its nemesis, the militants. That is why Kashmiri people were dominated and marginalized and this led to the violence and communal protest. Ultimately, that disturbed Kashmir's developmental side.

Foucault argues if power is forcefully applied it eventually turns into exploitation which may result in protest, violence and disorder. During the insurgency time, Pakistan helped the separatists in Kashmir to accomplish certain political goals whereas the Indian government implied war policies by using its military force. The power circulation in and outside Kashmir governed by both India and Pakistan caused Kashmiri people suffer bitterly. Hence, doing trade and business was not in their hands and "the shops had been closed" (41) almost all days during insurgency. Here, Foucault's argument becomes clear as he opines that power always circulates and functions in the form of a chain. According to him, power, "[M]ust be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody's hands, never

appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization" (89).

Representation of the Government, the Militants, and the common Kashmiris in *Curfewed Night*

The representation of the Indian military force, the militants, the women and common Kashmiri people, is another significant aspect of Peer's masterpiece *Curfewed Night*. In the text, by representing the socio-economic and politico-cultural reality of the insurgency period in Kashmir, Peer not only tries to comprehend the scars of his war-ravaged homeland but also fastidiously captures the marginalized history of Kashmir. And this excluded history reflects the then image of the war stakeholders and the dark days of common Kashmiri people. According to Vesser, ". . .[T]he texts of each are inscriptions of history" (36). In the same way, *Curfewed Night* depicts the history of the insurgency movement in Kashmir. One of the heart breaking contexts in the text comes into light in chapter four as Peer writes, "The troops continued setting up camps in school buildings; militants burnt down many others they feared might be converted into military camps. And going to school was fraught with danger, pretty much like every kind of travel" (60-61). It depicts the inhuman side of both parties. Many ordinary Kashmiri people including school children got killed during the insurgency movement. Such a brutal violence of Indian soldiers and militants is shown in *Curfewed Night*.

The vicious act of Indian soldiers upon Kashmiri people threatened the security of life during the war era. In this context, Peer writes about how his father's life would often get jeopardized in course of visiting a home in this way, "Another day on the way to catch a bus home, a grenade explosion was followed by intense gunfire and people ran wherever they could find a place to hide. Father and a friend of his found themselves lying on the dusty floor of a tea shop" (18-19). This was a

situation of Kashmiri people in the 1990s represented by Peer's father. It shows how difficult it would have been for people to make a normal life at a time when the cloud of insurgency overwhelmed Kashmir. The Indian military soldiers would not spare anysort of sympathy to the people nor they would love them walking freely in the street. Therefore, in a boundary around "the camp. . .grim-looking soldiers stood in the bunkers behind machine guns. Every pedestrian and automobile had to stop a hundred metres from the camp; people had to raise their hands and walk in a queue to a bunker, where a soldier frisked them and checked identity cards" (20), writes Peer.

Like other Kashmiri boys, Peer experienced many troubles during his teenage phase when violence in Kashmir was going on. Whatever peer memorizes the events and circumstances of the conflict produces a very gloomy image of Kashmir in the text. Peer tells about how people's lives would have been halted by the Indian soldiers in the insurgency as he writes, "A soldier stopping near you meant trouble. It meant an identity check, a possible beating or a visit to the nearest army camp. Or he might simply order you to carry a bag of supplies to his camp. Soldiers forcing civilians to work for them was common" (49). This situation depicts the exploitation of common Kashmiri people by the Indian soldiers. At that time people had no right of enjoying their birth rights. They had to do whatever would come along with the orders and demands of the security force. Unfortunately, they were abandoned in their own land and absurdism rooted in their lives.

An event of crackdown in the text paints the tensed situation of the time more clearly.Once in the morning, Peer remembers, "The army has cordoned off the village. Every man and boy has to assemble in the hospital lawns by six. It is a crackdown. Every house will be searched" (51). At that time people were terrified, depressed and obessessed. "A small crowd of freshly washed faces began a reluctant journey through the empty market towards the hospital compound. . .Soldiers barked

at us to walk faster. We obeyed. Another group asked us to pull out our identity cards and raise our hands" (52). In the hospital compound, people were taken away for interrogation one by one. Peer too was taken to the interrogation center for identifying a boy from his school. There Peer heard the words "Khodayobachaav (Save me, God!)" and "Nahinpata, Sir! (I don't know, sir!)" (54), and found out the soldiers were "torturing the men and the boys who were taken away. . ." (54). A loud cries and shrieks of the people in the interrogation center made Peer very numb.

The common people extremely suffered of both physical as well as psychological torture without any reason. In the insurgency period, the soldiers were "particularly suspicious of anyone with any kid of facial hair" (57). So, "Grey hair, a certificate of ageing, made you less of a suspect for the soldiers" (57). In Kashmir, "One day it was a protest against arrest or a killing of an arrested person in an interrogation centre; another day it was a gun battle or a crackdown" (60). *Curfewed Night* represents this inhuman side of Indian military force.

Similarly, in the text, there are also the events of ambushing, abduction, frisking, disappearance, killing and massacre of people in the war time in Kashmir. When Peer was pursuing his career in Delhi, one day, a call from Srinagar about the ambush scared him. Later, Peer knew that when his parents were travelling back to his uncle's village after celebrating a weeding, a mine blast took on the road side. However, they survived luckily. The sentences which run in the pages of chapter five make the readers stunned as Peer writes, "Parents. Mine blast. Safe. The words hit me as if someone had punched my heart. I sat on the office floor and rested my head against a stack of newspapers. I broke down" (72). Like Peer's parents, many common people became victims of ambush planned by the militants against Indian soldiers. Peer criticizes the contemporary government's carelessness towards its subject's suffering and loss.

Not only this, Peer writes, the first massacre of ordinary Kashmiris at Gawkadal Bridge by the Indian paramilitary is one of the worst events happened in the war era. In chapter nine, Peer addresses the voice of Merajuddin, a veteran Kashmiri news photographer, whose bitter words on the "Gawkadal massacre" (120) goes in this way, "I cried like a child when the protesters were massacred at Gawkadal Bridge. Nothing I saw after that made me cry" (120). Here, Peer comments, "The memory of the massacre of Gawkadal is tied up with the memory of a series of other massacres" (126).

Also, the text depicts the "Papa-2," the most "infamous torture centre run by the Indian forces in Kashmir" (141) during the 1990s. Peer writes, "During the nineties, most people dreaded Gupkar Road. It was the road to Papa-2" (141). The suspected people for terrorism would have taken to Papa-2 and they had a lesser chance to be free. They would go through severe torture, exploitation and even got killed. In this context, Peer mentions Shafi, Ansar and Hussein's horrible war experience who survived Papa-2.

Shafi joined a student wing of JKLF in the 1990 at the age of nineteen and his "war with India began: attacking patrols of Indian soldiers, moving with guns from one hideout to the next, and evading arrest in crackdowns became his routine" (144). Later, he got arrested, jailed for two years, and finally released. But he "began working for the movement again" (144) and caught by a paramilitary force. For seven months, he was put in Papa-2. Shafi says in a bitter tone, " 'They kept me in the local BSF camp for a week before shifting me to Papa-2'. At the camp, he was interrogated, beaten with fists, feet, batons, gun. They wanted information about the group; they wanted his weapons" (144). While talking about Papa-2, Safi says:

> It was hell. . .The floor was bare. Smears of blood blemished the whitewashed walls. Every man had a coarse, black blanket for

> bedding. The blankets were full of lice. . .A corner of the room was their toilet. The prisoners defecated and urinated into polythene bags in that corner; they then threw the bags into a dustbin. Every time a man had to use the 'toilet,' two others held a blanket like a curtain to give some privacy. . . During the interrogation, I was made to stare at very bright bulbs. Even in our room, the light burnt my eyes. (144-45)

Like Shafi, thousands of Kashmiri rebellions were caught by Indian military force in the war time and they were traumatized at Papa-2. The Kashmiri people didn't wish war in Kashmir. Their protest didn't mean to violate the ethics of humanity. They simply wanted to restore normality of life. But what they achieved in return is only suffering like Shafi does.

Ansar and Hussein were other victims who survived Papa-2. Ansar joined "a separatist organization called People's League in the mid-eighties" and later imprisoned in Papa-2. Ansar says to Peer, Papa-2 "destroyed most people who were there. You do not live a normal life after that torture. It scares you forever" (147). In a sad mood, he adds, "[T]hey burnt your arms and legs with cigarette butts and kerosene stoves used for welding. . .But the worst was when they inserted the copper wire into my penis and gave electric shocks. They did it with most boys. It destroyed many lives. Many could not marry after that" (147-48). In response to such a terrible life experience of both Shafi and Ansar, Peer writes, "The attacks on their masculinity had left them vulnerable even after the prison sentence was over" (148). Similarly, another victim of the war, Hussein, explains to Peer the viciousness of Indian force at a time of interrogation in this way, "I was asked to undress, be naked. The first time I resisted, I was beaten, undressed forcibly and tied to a chair. Then they tied copper wire to my arms and gave me electric shocks…I fainted a few times" (150). All these

show the utmost brutality of Indian soldiers. This exposes their ego and animal like behaviour. *Curfewed Night* is about this bitter history of the 1990s Kashmir.

Security personnel are the representatives, an armed body force, of government. However, they are not shown civilized in the present text. Peer criticizes the derogative role of Indian force in the 1990s and blames them as a responsible side behind the misery of Kashmiri people. The security force had killed not only militants but also the innocent people who did not help them the way they wished during interrogation. Without having a solid reason, the soldiers suspected people to be the guerilla and dragged them away to the camps. In chapter eleven, peer talks about the barbaric act of Indian army over Kashmiri women as he writes, ". . .[T]he village of Kunanposhpora, the village in the northern Kupwara district where the Indian army raped more than twenty women in 1990. It had become a symbol, a metaphor, a memory like Srebrenica" (160). Hence, *Curfewed Night* addresses the suppressed voice of common Kashmiri people who became scapegoats in the 1990s riot. In this regard, Lois Tyson argues, ". . .[N]ew historicism tries to promote the development of and gain attention for the histories of marginalized peoples" (288).

Equally important, in *Curfewed Night*, Peer criticizes the militants' inhuman acts in the same ground. Peer says that Pakistan supported guerillas and the local militants fought against the Indian security force throughout the insurgency movement. In the name of helping Kashmiri people, the militants took weapons against the Indian government but most of the militant groups eventually ended up with their own political needs and agendas. Therefore, many Kashmiri people became prey at the hands of militants. To expose the cruelty of militants in the 1990's, in the chapter two, Peer writes about his bitter childhood experience of escaping the village with his parents and neghibours as the militants forced them to vacuum the village planning "to attack a convoy of Indian troops" (43). Peer writes, "Soon our walk

turned into a run. I hoped that father would hear about the attack and stay away; I hoped that nobody killed in the attack and the soldiers would not set our house on fire. . .Our village was emptying fast and almost everyone seemed to be running towards Numbul, the neighbouring village" (45). The uncertainty of life during the war time is explicitly described here. How people would have been threatened by the militants, a stakeholder of war, is the central issue which Peer is concerned much. Many Kashmiri people lost their lives in a battle between the militants and the security force. In fact, they became puppet in the political game of insurgency movement.*Curfewed Night* exposes this evil side of the militants.

Because of series of violence, crackdowns, curfews and gunfire, life has been hell in Kashmir, writes Peer. Another incident of violence done by the militants is related with the context of 1992 as Peer writes, "In the summer of 1992, my aunt was pregnant and mother constantly worried about a militant attack or a crackdown in our village" (48). Peer further writes when his parents found it crucial to move his aunt "to the hospital in Anantnag" (48), a sudden news that "Militants had attacked a military convoy near the hospital in Anantnag and a severe gun battle was going on" (48) escalated Peer's family condition. It shows how militants' war-based activities would often violate the day to day life of Kashmiri people in the 1990s. Had militants were been on the side of Kashmiri people in a true light then problems like that of Peer's family would never occur in Kashmir? But the militants' war approach was wrong. They would target common people as a mediator to reach the certain ill goal. They saw gory as a final option against the Indian government which consequently put Kashmiri lives in danger, writes Peer.

The militants were against the Indian rule in Kashmir but their way of approach along with guns and bullets was completely destructive. They never ever realized that peaceful protest against anarchy always welcomes some positive lights

of hope. This is why, Peer writes, in the 1990s scenario in Kashmir, "Militants had been killing pro-India politicians, police, or anybody whom they perceived as working against them" (76-77). And like many other common people, Nabi's family got tragedy in Kashmir. Nabi, Peer's grandfather's younger brother, got a contract to work on a road in his village in 1998 but he was unaware of the upcoming storm in his life. One day when Nabi with his daughter, Mubeena, walking towards the cowshed at night, suddenly, in the "faint lantern light they saw three militants pointing guns at them" (78). The militants came there for taking Nabi away because they thought he works "for the National Conference" (79). Fortunately, they survived the situation. Peer further writes that Nabi stayed at our house for almost a year. He refused "to move out of the house for the first few months. Every time someone knocked on the door or the phone rang, he jumped. 'I feel they are looking for me. I hear the phone bell and it seems they have traced me and are calling me' " (79). Because of fear, he took "anti-depression drugs" (79) and the "residues of fear remained" (80) still in him. Nabi's such grave experience of the conflict shows how common people would survive having scars of war in life in Kashmir; they would go through traumatic situation each day. In this regard, Tank Nath Subedi says, "*Curfewed Night* exposes such traumatic situation of people" (33) of the 1990s Kashmir.

In the insurgency period, the militants would often knock at the door of Kashmiri people and harass them, writes Peer. The common people had to provide them shelter and feed them well. Otherwise, chances of getting torture, kidnapping and even uncertain death would become high. And it was the Indian security force who would put Kashmiris' lives at risk if found people helping the militants. It is such a pathetic situation of Kashmiri people in the text which the author emphasizes most. For example, Peer mentions the militant life of his old school friend, Asif, who says,

". . .[W]e had to move from village to village, seeking shelter and food. People welcomed us in their houses. But at times, I felt that people hosted and fed us because they were scared. . ." (216). In the text, the militants are shown responsible for ambushing the public vehicles, and bridges, killing the police and pro-Indian people, threatening and torturing the common people, destructing the infrastructure, and many others. Therefore, Peer shows both sides, the militants and the contemporary government which favoured Indian military force, as the equal culprit for the misery of Kashmiri people in the text.

The non-fictional text *Curfewed Night* depicts the 1990s chaotic political environment of Kashmir in a lucid form. Abductions and killings of targeted personalities, brutalities inflicted on innocent persons, atrocities on women and children, attacks on Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, robberies, extortions, looting, all these ill activities had eaten up Kashmir in the conflict time. This reality is depicted in the text.

So, *Curfewed Night* historicizes these issues of the contemporary Kashmir. It deals with the fragile socio-economic and politico-cultural situation; the brutality of Indian security force and militants; the celebration of center position by the Indian government; the broken dreams of common people; and, their voice for sovereignty, peace, self-respect, and normality of life.

Position of Basharat Peer, the Author, in *Curfewed Night*

In *Curfewed Night*, Basharat Peer portrays the bitter and unforgettable history of Kashmir with various events and moments that he himself experienced, saw and listened from other Kashmiri people. Exposing Kashmir of 1989 and 1990s at a time when people suffered much due to violence, in the text, Peer advocates for Kashmiri people's marginalized voice for freedom, collective identity, peace and normality of life. Peer speaks on behalf of Kashmiri people's insurmountable misery, their loss and death. While doing so, a Muslim born writer, Peer, never bent his degree of sympathy

towards Kashmiri Muslims more than other people of India-administered Kashmir. He equally respects the voices of all Kashmiri people from the perspective of humanity. Very broadly, Peer tries to address a long silenced Kashmiri people's identity to the world readers. For this, he gives up his career of journalism in Delhi and returns to his war-turned homeland, Kashmir, and there he struggles hard to write the stories of people of war which ultimately turned into the masterpiece *Curfewed Night*. In this regard, the text is rife with many representative historical accounts, events and figures of Kashmir which show the then historical reality critically. It speaks of the tears of common people who have been wounded, handicapped and left neglected in the war time. It describes the tension and fury of people against the Indian government's misgovernance and the evil side of India-Pakistan's power politics in Kashmir.

Writing on this very setting in the text, Peer not only tries to paint the contemporary turmoil and hopelessness of Kashmiri people but also calls for harmony, brotherhood, peace and thereby lessening the increased gap between Kashmiris and Indians at the same time. Praising Peer's effort on redrawing the boundaries of Kashmiri history in *Curfewed Night*, Javeria Khurshid in *Galaxy International Multidisciplinary Research Journal* writes, "Peer writes of the people who die during the events that are undocumented" (3). Khurshid further writes:

> Peer tells stories from his youth and gives gut-wrenching accounts off the many Kashmiris he met years later as a reporter. He chronicles a bewitching tale about insurgency and the effects it had on the 'Paradise,' captivates his readers into pondering over the devastation, and coerces them to ask a question whether desolation was necessary? (3)

In the non-fictional text *Curfewed Night*, Peer encompasses the stories of survivors who witnessed the horrors of the insurgency movement. Peer tires to give meaning to their inner pain, exploitation and marginalization as for Foucault, "The author is the principle of thrift in the proliferation of meaning" (118). Hence, *Curfewed Night* is based on the testimony of Kashmiri people's experience which Peer carefully mentions as it is. So, Peer captures the voice of Kashmiri people in their own words that helps to give a realistic touch to the text. There are the events of disappearance, rape, exploitation, killing, funeral, injustice and many others in the text which Kashmiri people including the author himself experienced bitterly. Blending own personal experience with the 1990s world of Kashmiri people, Peer, primarily in the text, "uses the testimony to supply first-hand knowledge to all" (37), as said by Tanka Nath Subedi.

There are many worth nothing incidents in the text which show the burning issues of the contemporary Kashmir like the issue of injustice and domination, the Kashmiri militants' journey to the LoC, lost identity of dead rebellions and many others. This is why, Peer writes, "There are only difficult, ambigious, and unresolved stories" (171) in Kashmir. The story of Shameema highlights how war victims would have gone through injustice in the 1990s. Shameema tells to Peer that she lost her innocent son, Shafi, in a gunfight "between the militants and the Indian army atQabmarg village" (173) and Bilal, younger brother of Shafi, "was psychologically disturbed. . .he refused to go to school. Then, he began smoking. . .'But every time Shafi is mentioned, he is agitated. Which mother would pass a hookah to her son? But I have to, it calms him down' " (175). This agony of a war-disturbed Kashmiri mother is highlighted in the text. This psychological disorder is the result of war which damaged many Kashmiri families. Later, the family began "to fight the wars of their daily life" (175) with the process of compensation in the district administrative office,

writes Peer.The horror that had befallen Shameema's family was an untold story of the 1990s which is shown in *Curfewed Night*. So, the text takes Shameema's story as a motif to show the negative image of war.

Peer as a victim and as a narrator, in the text, remains conscious to critically analyze the various fragmented stories of the war survivors. He performs the role of a listener and reporter to provide authenticity in the text. While doing so, he exposes almost every sides of socio-cultural and politico-economic situation of the 1990s insurgency movement in the present text. James Baldwin's argument, "People are trapped in history and history is trapped in them" (Cover page) is, hence, proved by Peer as he unravels the individual story of people of the 1990s and gives justice to their othered voice.

Becoming a peaceful, prosperous and independent state was a dream of Kashmiris. The Kashmiri people wanted to preserve their socio-cultural and religious diversity; they longed for celebrating freedom and normality of life. But, it was shattered with the explosion of the militancy in Kashmir. Of course, this theft away Kashmiri people's happiness, their trust and faith. This stark reality of Kashmir's history run through every pages of Peer's masterpiece *Curfewed Night*. If Kashmiri people were given a right to live together the way they had been before 1947 then the present bloodshed in terms of religion would not happen. But the power holders chose gun and violence instead of peace and justice that made Kashmir more fragile. If both nations, India and Pakistan, could have mutually settle their bilateral issue by holding a plebiscite in Kashmir in the past then the insurgency could have been miscarriaged. Therefore, the title of this non-fictional text is symbolic in the sense that it symbolizes the havoc of the 1990s Kashmiri society. It symbolizes the 'curfewed dreams' and 'hopes' of common Kashmiri people during the war era.

It is because of Peer's attempt the excluded history of Kashmir has come to the eyes of the world readers in the form of *Curfewed Night*. For the sake of his homeland, Peer even gives up his parents' dream as he writes, "I was not going to be the bureaucrat my family wanted me to be" (68). Every time, Peer becomes desperate when he comes around the piles of rubble of the 1990s, the refugee life of war-wounded Kashmiri people. However, "Writing about such violence-stained lives was painful but the writing partially liberated me" (83), writes Peer. In chapter nine, Peer talks about the gloomy image of Kashmir in a broad way:

> Srinagar is also about being hidden from view, disappearing. Absences and their reminders stand at every other street. . . Between 4000 and 8000 men have disappeared after being arrested by the military, paramilitary, and the police. Newspapers routinely refer to the missing men as 'disappeared persons,' and their waiting wives are the 'half-widows'. . . Many Kashmiris believe the 'disappeared' men were killed in custody and cremated in mass graves. Wives of many such men have given up hope and tried to move on. Others are obsessively fighting for justice, hoping their loved ones will return. (135)

In the war time, many people have disappeared and nobody still knows their whereabouts. Numberless graves were dug up and their beraved families continued fighting for justice. Getting no positive response from the government, they have been living a troubled life.

Writer of any text may possibly create distinct views and arguments on a particular subject matter with their own interest and ideology shaped by their socio-cultural origin. The point here is others may have written about India's partition and its latter grave impact in Kashmir from different perspective than that of Peer. *Kitne Pakistan* by Kamleshwar Prasad Saxena, is an example of it. In the novel, Saxena,

particularly, represents Pakistan and Muslim community as metaphor of violence, responsible for partition. Prithi Raj Bhattarai, in his M.A. thesis, writes:

> Kamleshwar in the novel *Kitne Pakistan* (*Partitions*) on the one hand represents Pakistan and Muslim religion as metaphor of violence on the other hand Muslim people were blame as intruder and attacked the Hindu temple. . .While presenting the violence he almost added the event and activities that India Hindu people victimized from Pakistani Muslims activities. Every Indian people caught up in the grip of war. It is the presentation of incidents and events which were violent and impact upon the people especially on Indians. (15)

So, it shows that the history is just mere a perspective. Kamleshwar is an Indian prolific novelist and hence, his creation *Kitne Pakistan* is based on his perspective, whereas, Peer sees the suffering of people in Kashmir from the perspective of whole Kashmiri people. Therefore, the thematic content of a particular event or issue in a text varies with the situatedness of writers who write it.

Kashmiri people never wished violence and bloodshed in Kashmir. With war, power and fear, they became outsiders in their native land. So, for freedom, they resisted against the power and domination of the Indian government. The Indian government's technique of using military power over ordinary Kashmiri people made the situation even more tensed. For Foucault, "resistance is more effective when it is directed at a 'technique' of power rather than at 'power' in general. It is techniques which allow for the exercise of power and the production of knowledge; resistance consists of 'refusing' these techniques" (86). Peer writes, during protest, "Villagers stood around on the sidewalks, by shopfronts, and on the road passing through the village" (16) and they marched together shouting a slogan like:

> 'Hum Kya Chante?'

‘Aazadi!’

(We want? Freedom!) (16).

The desperate rebellions would sing a slogan about peace, justice and autonomy. But whenever they would appear in the streets, the soldiers fired at the crowd mercilessly. In the run, many rebellions would lose their lives. Therefore, *Curfewed Night* highlights Kashmiri people’s right to freedom, peace, justice, self-respect, and certainty of life.

While pursuing a career of journalism in Delhi, the memory of his home, Kashmir, haunts Peer time and again. The newspapers about the daily death count of Kashmiri people make him teary and he hopes he will never have to read names of people he loves the most in Kashmir. Such a pathetic condition of the author comes to the limelight in chapter five as he writes, “I might have forgotten Kashmir-it might have turned into a place I visited every two or three months-but I could not. Kashmir was the text and subtext of my professional, personal and social worlds in Delhi” (71). This shows Peer’s love and devotion towards Kashmir. In course of writing *Curfewed Night*, Peer welcomes every ordeals caused by the Indian soldiers and the militants because the war-wounded Kashmiri people’s cry of suffering matters him most. Peer becomes happy to see his friends and villagers who survived the war and reports their fragmented stories genuinely in the text, which Anton Kaes opines it is one of the major features of New Historicism. Kaes writes, “New Historicism. . .pursues “local knowledge” (Geertz); it prefers anecdote and montage over linear narratives: not one (hi)story, but stories” (156). In the same way, it is Peer who in 2001 got a chance in Delhi based office to report Kashmir which gave him eternal happiness as he writes, “It was hundred times the rush of graduation, I was tossing my hat far, far into the air. My excitement dwarfed my experience and competence. I was going home as reporter; I could take the stories of Kashmir to the world” (81). In this regard,

Curfewed Night depicts Peer's ups and downs in the war time in Kashmir. Also, Peer writes, "Listening to people talk about death, fear and humiliation was hard. It made me angry and sad. It made me cry" (84). This reflects Peer's true humanitarian side. It proves how he cares much about Kashmiri people's grief and struggle.

In the text, Peer does not fabricate the history of Kashmir nor does he go to support only Muslim community as the sole victim of the war. Had this been his intention he would not have incorporated the story of Kashmiri Pandits, of the brutality of Indian security force. In fact, Peer stands against arms struggle. He believes in achieving peace though collective unity and this justifies his neutral position in the text. Whatever he has seen and experienced in Kashmir is written in a humanitarian spirit. However, there might be mediation in the text as said by Montrose. The insurgency movement fueled up by the India-Pakistan's political clout in Kashmir damaged Kashmir poorly. And it is not only in Kashmir people suffered much but even the Kashmiri Muslims living in India for certain purpose went through many difficulties as Peer writes, "Living in Delhi as a Kashmir Muslim had become even more difficult after the attack on the Indian parliament" (89). Peer faces problems while searching an apartment in Delhi because of his Muslim identity and writes, "I was scared of saying I was a Kashmiri" (87). This reflects Peer's genuine endeavour in representing the status of Muslims in India.

But Peer never judges the Indian people in terms of religion rather he takes them as the source of "warmth and generosity" which he finds among "colleagues and friends" (89) in Delhi. Peer's humble feeling towards the Indian people that he experiences during his stay in Delhi is written in chapter five in this way, "I was also getting to understand the various Indias that existed, Indias that I liked and cared about, Indias that were unlike the militaristic power it seemed in Kashmir" (70). Peer further writes:

> India was grotesque and fascinating. Delhi was beginning to be a second home. Maybe a city feels like home when you know there will be a person or two who will come to the airport, to the railway station to greet you, when you know there are people you want to meet as you arrive in a city. (71)

This shows Peer's positive line of thinking towards Indian people. But, what Peer criticizes most about Indian government is its military rule and domination in Kashmir which gave birth to one of the unforgettable wars, the 1990s riot. Peer goes against the Indian government's continuing spurious role in establishing peace and harmony in Kashmir. Peer, in Kashmir, does not digest the Indian "[M]ilitary camp and its propaganda billboards with pictures of smiling, self-conscious soldiers pouring water for old Kashmiri men or showing affection to Kashmiri children" and their fancy motto "Love transcends all barriers" (117). In this regard, Paul Staniland writes, though "there has been a substantial decrease in violence since 2003" (939) in Kashmir, "Peace and development are the watchwords of progress" (938).

H. Aram Vesser, in one of his assumptions of the new historicism in the introduction part of his book *The New Historicism* writes, "Discourse, by which is meant all sign systems and generators of meaning, is the only material subject of study, and therefore the only route to the past, to self, to any form of knowledge" (xi). In *Curfewed Night*, scrutinizing the contemporary history wisely, Peer criticizes the discourses of war made by the power holders. Peer blames the war stakeholders, the Indian government, the Pakistani supported militants, the Kashmiri militants and the corrupted political leaders of Kashmir, for the rise of militancy in Kashmir. Importantly, Peer attempts to highlight how the 1990s violence affected the Kashmiris' lives very badly. To his credit, peer is never one-sided in his account of the insurgency movement in Kashmir. Peer's this line of balanced self is found more

evident in chapter nine in which he exposes the savagery of both militants and Indian soldiers' upon ordinary Kashmiri people like Maulvi Farooq:

> On May 21, 1990 militants from Hizbul Mujahideen, the pro-Pakistan militant group, assassinated the head of priest of Srinagar, Maulvi Faqooq, a controversial politician. A procession of mourners began from his house in the northern part of Srinagar. . .paramilitary forces fired at the slain priest's funeral procession. Bullets pierced the coffin; pallbearers and mourners fell. About a hundred men were slain. Their blood-soaked shoes lay on the road after the bodies were carried away. People forgot the head priest's assassination; anger rose against India. His eighteen year old son, Omar Farooq, who was sorn in as the head priest, appealed to the world leaders to help Kashmir seek self-determination. The firing on the mourners and the image of their blood-soaked shoes found their way into poetry and paintings. Many of the mourners were buried at a new graveyard. (126)

Both Indian paramilitary force and militants' demon like image is represented in the above extract. Peer does not valorize such image of both sides in the text. Nor he speaks in support of the power politics of India and Pakistan over Kashmir. Opposing war, Peer wishes for peaceful Kashmir. Hence, Peer's *Curfewed Night* polemicizes the failure of thecontemporary government.

Peer's politics behind the representation of Kashmir's marginalized history in the text is to make the world aware of Kashmiri peoples' suffering and their struggle for human rights, as for John Brannigan, ". . .[T]exts of all kinds are the vehicles of politics…" (3). Brannigan writes, ". . .[A]ll forms of representation are engaged in political struggle…" (62). Peer's political struggle in the text is to make audible Kashmiris' silenced voice, that is, he wants to reinforce the voice of war victims like

Geelani who says, " 'Without justice, there will be no democracy' "(96). He wants to say that violence never brings peace in Kashmir and it is the government which should first and foremost address Kashmiri people's wish instead of exploiting them through military power and threat.

Peer welcomes any rapprochement between India and Pakistan to make Kashmir once again a land of paradise. He believes that unity among Kashmiri people is a present need and for this, they have to erase all their feelings of fanaticism. All Kashmiri people should join their hands against violence and domination following a peaceful path. And then only their decades long 'curfewed nights' could have been vanished forever. The final paragraph in chapter fifteen depicts Peer's strong voice for peace, unity, harmony, freedom and normality of life in Kashmir:

> I hoped that some day they could cease being part of processes that reduced individuals to suspects or military targets, shorn of all human complexity; processes that left them with bare nomenclatures like militants, soldiers, paramilitaries. I hoped that some day they could return to their homes where they could sit on balconies, or argue with their cousins about changing channels. I hoped that some day the war they were fighting and the reasons for its existence would disappear like footsteps on winter snow n my childhood. (240)

This proves Peer's neutral position in the text. His desire for peace and freedom in Kashmir suggests the collective desire of common Kashmiri people as well. His anti-war feelings, his desire for the reunification of divided families, his dream for collective identity and brotherhood, his voice for the war survivors, all these help to assert Peer's neutral position in the text.

Based on a sagacious observation of the then Kashmiri history, *Curfewed Night* highlights the voices of marginalized, suppressed and oppressed groups in the

society. The impact of war on the overall aspects of Kashmir is depicted critically in the text. And it is Peer's critical approach to this dimension of Kashmiri history which shows his bitter dissatisfaction with the approaches both the government and the militants chose to fulfill their ends. To show this evil side of war and violence in Kashmir in the text, Peer uses memory as a tool at the same time narrates the story of Kashmir merging his personal experiences with the pain and suffering of common Kashmiri people. This is why, Peer writes, "The memories and stories of Kashmir that I had carried with me VIP suitcase could fade away. I had to find the words to save memory from the callous varnish of time. I knew I had to write" (99).

Also, Peer's literary craftsmanship is seen in his use of prosaic style in the text that helps him to represent the then Kashmiri's historical reality more vividly. Use of simple language structure, various war related terms and dictions like insurgence, interrogation, crack down, violence, murder, fear, curfew, violation of human rights, haunt, and indirect and satirical phrases like "This winter the snow will turn red" (84), "Indian soldiers patrolled the road and looked around like weathercocks" (112), in the text project the critical situation of the contemporary Kashmiri society. Not only this, Peer also gives emphasis to the use of local dictions and terms like "Aazadi!," "Mubarak huv!," "Shukr Khodayus, SaheeSlamatvot!," "Khodayobachaav," "Nahinpata, sir!," "Chai garam!," which paints the cultural theme of Kashmiri society.

Foucault suggests that the counter-reading of history is necessary because the history of margin is always concealed or excluded in the official history. Not only Foucault, the thinkers like Gallagher and Greenblatt also opine that "Counterhistory opposes itself not only to dominant narratives but also to prevailing modes of historical thought and methods of research" (52). Here, in *Curfewed Night*, Peer has countered the canonicity of Kashmiri history and presents the voice of the margin.

With great sensitivity, Peer tells the palimpsest of war in Kashmir still remains alive and fresh out there in the form of absences, isolation, fear, hopelessness, frustration and trauma. Why Peer visits his war-wounded Kashmir? Why he feels a part of something inevitable which he could not resist approaching the panic Kashmiri families? Why he questions the political rhetoric of India-Pakistan and Kashmir and reminds the readers that Kashmir has a voice of its own? This is because Peer cares of his people, of the marginalized voice of his unnoticed land. Each single voice of Kashmiri people has to be respected, heard and remembered, urges Peer. In Kashmir, "People lived. . .obeying either the soldiers or the militants" (215), and so, Peer calls for the world society's attention.

Even though Peer has written a marginal history, it is a mere perspective of him as said by Montrose. So, Peer's *Curfewed Night* is a part of the then history only. It is Peer's interpretation, as for Tyson, ". . .[H]istory is a matter of interpretations, not facts, and that interpretations always occur within a framework of social conventions" (289). Peer's critical interpretation of the 1990s militancy in the text here becomes much clear as he writes:

> Being a militant wasn't only about getting arms training and fighting, it was also about being excluded from the joys of life. . .was also about the near certainty of arrest, torture, death and killings. Graveyards, named and nameless, have become part of this landscape. . .The Kashmiri militants who died fighting the Indian troops were carried like heroes in funeral processions and their comrades-in-arms saluted them with guns. Some of them even became mythical figures. But they were dead and so were the men they had killed. And that was the absolute truth. People went home after the funerals and the slogans and

> continued their lives till the next funeral and the next round of slogans. (218-19)

But what Peer tells about the reality of the 1990s as 'only absolute truth' is one of the truths of the contemporary society as said by Foucault. Foucault argues, "Truth is a thing of this world: it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. And it enduces regular effects of power" (72). It means the existence of truth in the world is reproducible in nature, however, truth is produced within the network of power relations followed by certain constrains. In the same way, *Curfewed Night* is just a perspective of Peer. It bears certain limitations since it is one of the possible interpretations of the contemporary history of Kashmir. Peer's criticism on war and violence, his one of the interpretations of the 1990s, is evident in the text as he writes in the epilogue section that"Both Kashmir and I had changed. The heady rebellious Kashmir I left as a teenager was now a land of brutalised, exhausted, and uncertain people. I was now in my late twenties, already old. The conflict might leave the streets, but it might not leave the soul" (241).

Whether it is Foucault's concepts of "power" and "discourse" or Gallagher and Greenblatt's term "Counterhistory," Peer as a spokesman of common Kashmiris, seeks to identify the accidents, errors, silences, deviations and weaknesses of the 1990s Kashmiri society in the text. He studies of the then conflicted discourses, violence, suffering, injustice, law and disorders. Therefore, Peer's position in the text is neutral as he has dealt with the marginalized history of Kashmir in *Curfewed Night* from the lens of humanism. Foucault opines genealogy is simply a process of looking at the past. It is the product of confrontation of different power mechanisms of the society. It is the blending of scholarly knowledge and the local memories. In *Curfewed Night*, Peer writes the forgotten history of Kashmir, particularly of the 1990s, hence, it represents the multiple voices of the then society. The text is not only

about the issues of displacement, migration, uncertainty of life and violence of human rights in Kashmir. Nor it is only about the border, the LoC, which runs "through 576 kilometers of militarized mountains" (245). More than that, Peer writes, *Curfewed Night* is about that line of control which has divided Kashmir into two different poles, 'Aazad Kashmir' and 'Jammu and Kashmir,' and that line of control:

> [R]an through our souls, our hearts, and our minds. It ran through everything a Kashmiri, an Indian, and a Pakistani said, wrote, and did. It ran through the fingers of editors writing newspaper and magazine editorials, it ran through the eyes of reporters, it ran through the reels of Bollywood coming to life in dark theatres, it ran through conversations in coffee shops and TV screens showing cricket matches, it ran though the whispers of lovers. And it ran through our grief, our anger, our tears, and our silences. (245)

This is one of the heart breaking extracts in the text which tells much about Kashmiri people's tears and silences caused by the conflict in Kashmir. Here, it discloses the readers how that Line of Control in Kashmir doomed all common people now and then. At the same time it reveals the author's worry to the misfortune befallen to his people. In spite of this bitter reality of Kashmir, Peer is very much hopeful to the future peaceful Kashmir which is yet to flourish. In the final paragraph of the text, Peer's this line of optimistic vision is evident when he writes about the context of opened bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarbad as, "The buses carrying the passengers form Muzaffarabad travelled under a drizzling grey sky to Srinagar. . . There was no fear that evening. There were only hands reaching out of the bus windows, waving in air, as if each wave would erase the lines of control. I raised my hand and waved" (246). Such winds of change are what Peer welcomes to see more in the days to come.

Emphasizing on peace building, Peer wishes common people like Sharief Hussein Bukhari could not "be arrested at the LoC and turned back" anymore even in their "journey back home" (245) in dreams; Peer wishes the coming generation in Kashmir could not have been gone through "the pain of leaving home" the way he experienced during his "many departures from Kashmir, as a student, as a journalist on a visit from Delhi" (206); Peer wishes not to experience more wars between the Indian army and Pakistani militants like that of 1995 in Chrar town in Kashmir where "2500 houses were burnt; scores of civilians were killed" (199); Peer wishes a man like Maqbool Sheikh could not again have to have the "look of eternal grief" who " had sliced open and stitched together more than 12,000 bodies of men, women and children since the armed conflict had begun in Kashmir" (83); so, Peer wishes for the revival of old pictures of Srinagar in Kashmir which "is elegant; latticed houses, mosques, and temples admiring each other from the banks of the river Jhelum; people strolling on the seven wooden bridges spanning it, wandering into old bazaars selling spices" (111); yes, Peer wishes people of Kashmir, now onwards, could not have to conceal their identity in any corner of the world and could be able to rejoice their socio-cultural values and religious harmony with pride and dignity.

IV. *Curfewed Night* as a Voice to Voiceless Kashmiris

The wake of the 1990s insurgency movement in Kashmir claimed lives of thousands of innocent Kashmiri people rather than establishing Kashmir's peace and autonomy in the line of Kashmiris' wish and dream. The war fought between the militants and the Indian force was undesired incident for the ordinary Kashmiris. People wanted peace, justice, freedom, and normality of life in the state, but the power holders, the Indian government and the militants, responded them with the power of guns and curfews. Both the war stake holders valorized their self-centered activities for war by producing different layers of truths in the form of discourses. And this made the common people remain voiceless.

The 1990s conflict was not a sudden product of the time since the 'grand narratives' of the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 hold the pillar cause. As some politically coloured reasons, conditions, and circumstances which played both centrifugal and centripetal roles in the process of administrating 'truth' in the history of partition, different versions of historians' history belonging to both Indian and Pakistan claim Kashmir as an inevitable part of their respective domains. Importantly, what comes to the light in the present research is that both India and Pakistan look at Kashmiris from the perspective of 'they' or 'other.' That is why, seeing Kashmiris enjoying their human rights is neither of their choice. It is Basharat Peer's masterpiece *Curfewed Night* which gives voice to voiceless Kashmiris highlighting the significance of what it actually meant to be recognized as Kashmiri first whether s/he is from Azad Kashmir or Jammu and Kashmir.

While going through different sources and materials regarding the issue of Kashmir conflict, the researcher comes to know that the outbreak of the 1990s riot in Kashmir is rooted deeply in the partition history of 1947. The fresh reasons behind the incipient of militancy like India's violation of fair election may serve the explanation

of the scenario of the insurgency time but more than this, Kashmiri people have been marginalized since the regime of Hari Singh. It was in 1947 that Kashmir got divided into India and Pakistan and the question of Kashmir territory and the rights of people has been questioned ever since. And the outbreak of 1990s riot in Kashmir is one of the consequences of this continuing dispute. Peer blames both India and Pakistan and the corrupted leaders of Kashmir equally responsible for making Kashmir a land of war and terror. Basically, answering the question: Why did Kashmiris decide to take up arms and fight for their freedom in the late 1980s?, the present research project comes across a finding that because of repeated and increasing human rights violations by the Indian military forces, India's misruling of Kashmir and subversion of democracy, political manipulation and corruption, both India and Pakistan's intervention in LoC, Pakistan's material backing to the insurgents, all these components played as a political background to inspire separatist activists in Kashmir. Since the outbreak of the armed struggle in IJK, Kashmiri people have suffered devastating losses. Honestly, in *Curfewed Night*, Peer becomes able to rekindle such sidelined issues of the time.

The issue of migration, displacement, rape, killings, violence of human rights, loss of identity, religious fanaticism, uncertainty of life, political instability, decay of socio-cultural values and many other issuers engulfed Kashmiri people's life in the 1990s. Because of war, many common people became refugees; many lost their lives; and many were displaced. And every socio-economic and politico-cultural aspects of Kashmir became very fragile during the time. Peer's *Curfewed Night* deals with such fragmented and unnoticed issues of the contemporary Kashmir especially from the perspective of common Kashmiris. So, in the text, Peer questions what sense of Kashmir do the Kashmiris have now? Hence, Kashmiris' voice is for peace and freedom which the government should have to address first, asserts Peer.

In the text, Peer's main focus is to bring the past and present reality of Kashmir questioned by the 1990s militancy. While doing so, he follows the suffering of common people caught in the war. Hence, the real characters in the text represent the common Kashmiri people of the time. They were the real victims who were directly or indirectly affected by the conflict. All the characters' individual stories like that of Ahmad and Hameeda, Manzoor, Tariq, pervez, Vinod, Mubeena and others depict the grave effects of the insurgency movement. As common people were silenced during the war time, Peer gives them voice in this non-fictional text. He counters the silenced history of Kashmir in the text. The war stakeholders claimed to have fought for the betterment of the common people, but it was Kashmiri people who suffered most during the insurgency time.In this kind of power politics, common people including Hindus, Muslims and other minorities became scapegoats. Unlike other writers, Peer has become able to show this issue very vividly in the text from the perspective of humanism. Apart from this, Peer calls for unity, peace, brotherhood, justice, collective identity, and freedom in Kashmir, a way to conflict resolution.

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