

Viewing Kashmir Conflict through the Prism of Dignity and Humiliation

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ABSTRACT

The paper aims at dissecting the Kashmir conflict from Human Dignity and Humiliation Perspective as it argues by eliminating the vicious circle of humiliation and disrespect for dignity in which all the parties to the conflict are involved, a space can be created for the resolution of the conflict by peaceful means in an atmosphere of mutual respect. The Human Dignity and Humiliation perspective appears more cogent in the context of Kashmir as it is not only one of the most violent conflicts in the world, but two of the parties involved in it possess nuclear weapons.

The undivided state of Jammu and Kashmir currently divided between India, Pakistan and China has been undergoing a long and arduous churning process since late 1940s. The conflict is basically having two dimensions: external wherein India and Pakistan are at loggerheads and have fought four wars and many war scares over the issue; and internal in which a separatist movement is going on in the Indian part of the undivided state of Kashmir. Both the dimensions of the Kashmir conflict are interlinked, and casualties due to their fallouts are too gruesome. It appears parties involved in this conflict have clung to respective rigid positions, without factoring the people's craving for peace and dignity in their calculations.

This paper while providing an overview of this complex conflict would focus on the internal dimensions of the conflict and consequently analyse the humiliation aspect that along with many other factors has led to alienation in the Kashmir valley. The people caught amidst two guns suffer humiliation almost on daily basis from numerous impositions such as cordon searches by the security forces and heavy demands by the militants. The humiliation meted out on the people of Kashmir is also related to the fact that the territorial aspect of the conflict has been given more importance rather than the people inhabiting the region. The humiliation includes the policy of Indian government to try to tackle the problem by the policy of appeasement and at time by economic packages without genuinely trying to address the grievances of the people that are more political rather than economic. The humiliation also includes the attempts by the militants to impose cultural and religious restrictions on the people.

Based on the several extensive surveys conducted by the authors in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir over the past several years the paper would try to understand the vicious circle of humiliation that people in conflict situations undergo. It would also endeavour to suggest ways to maintain or regain the dignity of the people in conflict situations like Kashmir since as, it argues, humiliations further accentuate the tense scenario by motivating the affected people to avenge the humiliation through further violence.

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