

# Changing Dynamics of Internal Security Threats in Kashmir and Abrogation of Art.370

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## Abstract

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government took a bold step of abrogation of Art.370 and Art. 35A ending the special status of the state of Jammu & Kashmir and completely aligning it with India. It marked a significant turning point in the political and security context of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Many hues and cries were raised over the abrogation more internally than externally except a few nations including Pakistan. Rest of the world termed it as an internal matter of India and a bilateral issue. Much has changed since then. From forced lockdown in Kashmir after the abrogation to hosting of a G20 meeting and making Srinagar a smart city, India has come a long way. Terror attacks over security officials and minorities are still there but their number has declined significantly. The special status and the autonomy enjoyed by the State earlier had been an issue of contention for decades. Therefore it is important to explore the changing dynamics of terror in Kashmir after the abrogation of Art.370. This paper tries to explore the reasons behind the abrogation of Art.370, the internal and external reactions to its abrogation, its effects on the insurgency in Kashmir, the immediate consequences of the revocation of Article 370 on the insurgency highlighting the response of the local population, role of Pakistan after the revocation of Article 370, measures taken by the Indian government to address the insurgency in Kashmir post the abrogation.

Overall, this paper tries to provide a brief view of changing dynamics of internal security threats in Kashmir following the revocation of Art.370 and its future implications including immediate ones.

**Keywords:** Terror, Insurgency, Bilateral, Security, Threat, Art. 370

## Methodology

Both primary and secondary sources have been used. Data published on Insurgency in Kashmir has been used as primary resource and research papers, journals, articles and newspapers are used as secondary sources.

## INTRODUCTION

The issue of Kashmir has always been a bone of contention between India and Pakistan. The root of this conflict can be traced back to partition of India in 1947. Kashmir which had not aligned itself with either India or Pakistan was attacked by Pakistan in 1948. Under these circumstances the Maharaja of Kashmir sought help from India and India in turn sought its alignment with it. The Maharaja signed an instrument of accession with India which Pakistan does not accept till date as according to Pakistan, Kashmir is a muslim dominated state which acceded to India under pressure. The accession was on the condition of

maintaining autonomy of state except issues like defence, currency and foreign affairs. This was the first war over the issue which both the nations fought. The United Nations brought a ceasefire between the two and a new Line of Control emerged dividing Kashmir into two parts: Indian administered Kashmir and Pakistan administered Kashmir. Still the ceasefire brought by the United Nations is being observed by the United Nations Military Observers Group on India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) <sup>1</sup>

This was not the only war which both the nations have fought. They fought in 1965, 1971, 1999. The war of 1971 was not on the issue of Kashmir. They are in constant conflict. Both of them being nuclear powers, there always has been fear of the conflict turning into non-conventional war which can be catastrophic for the region.<sup>2</sup>

Another war which is continuously going on between India and Pakistan is a proxy war allegedly supported by Pakistan. This low intensity conflict which India has been fighting on its soil since 1980's is a major Internal Security threat for it. It gained momentum in 1980's demanding independence or alliance with Pakistan. Coincidentally when Kashmir saw bomb explosions, it was the same time when Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan leaving behind arms and ammunition. There was political turmoil and unrest in Kashmir of which Pakistan tried to take benefit. There have been killings thousands of security personnels and common people for decades. Earlier casualties were mainly common people. Then security persons and minorities became targets leading to exodus of Kashmiri hindus from their homeland. Many terrorist outfits emerged in the region and made the region a living hell which was once termed as heaven on earth. The continued indoctrination of Kashmiri youth led to total devastation of the region both in terms of life and resources which led to stagnation. Abduction of foreign tourists in 1995 and hijacking of plane ICJ814 also show the desperation of terrorists that they were ready to deploy any means to generate terror. While facing such security threats naturally Indian security forces have to run counter insurgency operations in which civilians also sometimes have fallen prey. Pakistan uses cross border firing as a cover for infiltration of militants to Indian Kashmir. India on its own has taken several initiatives to resolve conflicts Lahore Bus Yatra, ceasefire alongside the borders, Narendra Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan. But nothing has generated required results.<sup>3</sup>

Under these circumstances, on August 5, 2019, the Indian government took a bold step of abrogation of Art.370 and Art. 35A ending the special status of the state of Jammu & Kashmir and completely aligning it with India. It marked a significant turning point in the political and security context of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. These articles have been part of Kashmiri identity that they never thought of doing away with. Afterwards the apex court also ruled in the government's favour calling the move of abrogation as within the constitutional paradigm. The move also brought a full stop to Indo-Pakistan relations as the Pakistani government criticized the Indian government's move alleging that the Indian government can't take any unilateral decision regarding Kashmir. It held Indian Kashmir as a disputed territory. The people of Kashmir also criticised the move but slowly and steadily a wind of change is blowing there which has also changed the security scenario there.

### **Why abrogation of Art. 370**

The logic given by the Indian government behind the decision of abrogation of Art. 370 was to "eliminate the threat of terror." Kashmir and its people have suffered much because of this article According to the government this article was a big hurdle in the complete alignment of Kashmir with India. And Pakistan always tried to take advantage of the situation. It was also a big hurdle in bringing political , social and economic reforms in the valley. According to the government this constitutional transformation was done

for the better administration, good governance and economic development of the region. In the name of the article there was rampant corruption and militancy in the valley. Full integration of Kashmir was required so that it is on the same path of development as other states are and can come out from the situation of decades long misery.<sup>4</sup>

According to Foreign Minister Mr. Jaishankar, it created separatist tendencies and bred terror, hatred and violence. It was the major cause of terrorism in Kashmir and was proving to be a major security threat. And also it kept the valley away from progressive laws and development.<sup>5</sup>

### **Global Response to Abrogation of Art.370**

“Pakistan strongly condemned the move considering it as a unilateral decision by India on a disputed territory. It termed the decision as violation of United Nations Resolutions on Kashmir and bilateral agreements. The Pakistani government raised the issue at various international platforms and alleged that by abrogating Art.370 and 35A, the Indian government is trying to change the demography of Kashmir. But all efforts by Pakistan have gone in vain. The international community showed little interest in the dispute. The President of the United States of America first offered to mediate between the two nations but after meeting Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi on the sidelines of the G-7 summit, termed it as a bilateral issue. However, later on the Congress passed two resolutions condemning the Indian government’s decision. As usual, the United Nations’ stance on the issue is that both the nations should resolve their issues bilaterally. It didn’t call a formal meeting of the Security Council immediately however it called two closed door UNSC meetings over the issue. Under international pressure the Indian government had to call foreign diplomats for visits to the valley to analyze the ground situation themselves. As far as Russia and China are concerned, both the nations want India and Pakistan should resolve disputes amicably.”<sup>6</sup>

### **Effects of Abrogation of Art.370 on Insurgency**

Before the abrogation of Art.370 and Art.35A, the valley was witnessing a large number of protests and demonstrations. There was discontent in local people towards the policies of Local and Central government which was growing since 2013. Still many times Art.370 was diluted but people didn’t raise any hue and cry as psychologically it was there. But due to growing discontent among ordinary people the Armed civilians were proving to be a headache for the state.<sup>7</sup>

During a review meeting over the security situation in Kashmir on 18th February 2022, Union Home Minister Mr. Amit Shah said that the security situation in the valley has improved very much. He compared the situation before and after the abrogation of Art.370 in Kashmir by giving statistics. According to him, the number of terror incidents have decreased after the abrogation. This move has led the government to take control over the security situation in Kashmir. In 2018 there were 417 incidents of terror as compared to 229 in 2021. The number of security persons martyred in 2018 was 91 and in 2021 it was 42.<sup>8</sup>

“There has been a notable decrease in various security-related incidents including grenade attacks, IED blasts, stone pelting and civilian casualties in J&K. The decrease reflects a positive impact on public safety with a reduced threat from these incidents,” the report by Sanjeev Pargal in Daily Excelsior said. The report analyzed seventeen security indicators pre and post abrogation of Art.370 and came up to the conclusion that there had been a significant reduction in the number of incidents of violence post abrogation. The number of stone pelting incidents came down from 5050 to 445, hartals and call of bands also came down from 302 to 31. No civilian was killed during peacekeeping operations post the abrogation

whereas the number was 132. The number of civilian injured also came down from 9303 to 117, the number of security personnel's martyrs also declined significantly. The number was 345 four years prior to abrogation and after four years, it came down to 150. And injuries to security personnel also came down sharply from 13,100 to 797.<sup>9</sup>

### **Response of Kashmiris to Abrogation of Art.370 and 35A: Now and Then**

Kashmiris believe that the move of abrogation of both the articles is the first step in changing the demographic structure of the land by allowing non-Kashmiris to buy land over there. They are skeptical of the intentions of the Indian government if it wants to rehabilitate Kashmiri pandits or for settling non-Kashmiris over there. Leaders from opposition parties were arrested muting the voice of dissent. Many others were arrested keeping in mind peace and security of the region. The people wanted their release. Other than this there was ban on communication services and also the militancy threats, the economy of Kashmir suffered huge losses. It also affected the education sector. According to the opposition parties the development projects undertaken by the government had started well before the change in the constitutional status of Kashmir. The Kashmiris are also opposing the allocation of their land to security forces.<sup>10</sup>

According to the C Voter Survey cited in India Today, it will be very early to say that the Kashmiris have forgotten Art.370. The sense of isolation, detachment and oppression is still there. 'In December 2023, the Supreme Court upheld the decision of abrogation of Article 370, some people are still skeptical about the intentions of the central government. This article has been ingrained in the psyche of Kashmiris for so long that it has been a difficult task to part away with it. Also due to long standing political propaganda it has now become an emotional issue too. But one positive outcome brought forth by the survey is that the Kashmiris want full statehood restored to J&K.<sup>11</sup>

Many Kashmiris now feel that the government has turned the State into a 'Police State'. They feel that the government has some other agenda and that none of the top officials or administrators are from Kashmir or from the majority community here. The journalists or political leaders don't have freedom to act independently. Both separatists and pro India people are demanding elections. The demarcation of constituencies is also considered as biased as only one constituency is added to the region of Kashmir while six are added to Jammu region. Even after these type of actions the government is still far away from conducting elections. This is a positive development that even the separatists are now asking for elections which is a great opportunity for the government to bring the isolated into the mainstream.<sup>12</sup>

After initial forced lockdown which according to the government was for smooth implementation of abrogation of Art.370 and then lockdown forced by Covid-19, after three decades life in Kashmir is back to normal. The schools are functioning without shutdowns. The tourism industry is back to normal growth. The incidents of mob violence or stone pelting are not there. One can move freely in the valley. All this is because of the Public Safety Act and Anti Terrorism Law UAPA but people are feeling the difference of living a peaceful life. People fear being put behind the bars if they raise anti-state slogans. Heavy crackdown on anti state activities has also brought this peace. The peace in the valley has brought it on to the path of economic development.

But this is one side of the problem. The militancy is not over but it is underground as is evident by the killings of security personnel and minorities or government officials now and then. Now there are target killings and no one knows who comes from where and does these violent acts as nowadays terrorists are underground. Mainstream parties of the state have also took back seat.<sup>13</sup>

Many new parties have come into forefront especially after the abrogation of Art.370. This is also a positive point for the integration of Kashmiris into the mainstream. They want full statehood for the state. These new parties have new agendas and new thinking. They are critical of traditional parties and want integration with the rest of India removing doubts from the minds of the rest of Indians that Kashmiris are anti nationalists.<sup>14</sup>

### **Kashmir After the Abrogation**

After the release of leaders of opposition parties, they together have formed a Gupkar Alliance . The alliance contested DCDC elections and won. The government is trying to rehabilitate Kashmiris who left Kashmir due to insurgency. According to a government reply in Rajya Sabha in March 2021, 3841 Kashmiri migrant youth has come back and joined jobs there in recent years. The government also told that 1997 candidates have been selected for different jobs in the valley in April 2021. In industrial sector the government replied that 456 MoUs amounting to Rs 23,152.17 crore have been signed with investors. The government has also proposed a industrial development scheme for Kashmir with a amount of Rs 28,400 crores. From now onwards husbands of local women married outside state will also be provided domicile certificates so that they can buy land there.<sup>15</sup>

When the apex court was to pronounce the verdict about the abrogation, the government took precautionary steps to check the probability of violence. The leaders of opposition parties also claimed of being under house arrest while the judgment was being pronounced.<sup>16</sup>

### **Kashmir and G20**

The Indian government under its G20 presidency hosted a tourism meet at Srinagar from May 22, 2023 to May 24,2023. Around 60 foreign delegates from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, France, Germany, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, South Korea, Mexico, Russia, South Africa, the UK, the US, and the European Union.

China skipped the meet. Egypt also withdrew from the meeting. All these were from among the invited countries.<sup>17</sup>

The meet was symbolic as it was to show to the world that Kashmir is an integral part of India and India can host its events anywhere within its territory. It was also held to show to the world that all is now well after the abrogation of Art.370 and the situation is normal now and the valley is now on the path of development. The Indian government with the help of Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL) gave a facelift to the valley for the meet. Many development projects were carried and completed before the meet.<sup>18</sup>

### **Prime Minister in Kashmir**

In March 2024, the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi visited Kashmir valley. This visit was long awaited since he came into power or since the abrogation of Art.370 & 35A. The government declared projects worth for the development of agriculture and tourism there.<sup>19</sup>

### **Ray of hope in Kashmir**

Mahatma Gandhi had said that even in Indo-Pak violence soon after independence, he saw a ray of hope in Kashmir as everyone there was living in harmony.<sup>20</sup>

Separatist voices are now turning towards being supportive voices in Kashmir. A cool breeze of peace has started blowing in the valley. Many youths are now calling for peace. Stone pelters have diminished from



the streets. New generation of mainstream leaders are emerging. New parties have also emerged and now are center of attraction for young aspirants. Youth from majority religion in Kashmir is also joining BJP. Not only that, old regional parties are also recruiting fresh faces who are experts in using new technologies. In the elections of DDC or Kargil Hill Council many new faces won defeating stalwarts. In the absence of a legislative assembly now, these local bodies are also turning out to be a platform for political parties to engage with the local people. Also the separatist voices are now turning towards demanding assembly elections which is a good sign for the future of Kashmir. This newly found love of Kashmiri youth for participation in politics is also good for channelising the energies of youth. It has diverted them from engaging in stone pelting or violent means.<sup>21</sup>

According to a local Kashmiri, a lot has changed since the abrogation. The Kashmiris themselves are now feeling the changes and improvement on the ground. They also saw the G-20 meet as an opportunity to showcase Kashmir, its cultural heritage, traditions to the world.<sup>22</sup>

In recent elections to Lok Sabha held in May 2024, the Kashmiri voter turnout was highest in the last 35 years. BJP and National Conference won 2 seats from the region whereas one seat was won by an independent candidate. But most significant was the defeat of stalwarts like Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti Saeed, both the former Chief Ministers of Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>23</sup>

### **Role of Pakistan In Kashmir Insurgency After the Abrogation of Art.370 and 35A**

The Pakistani government is now showing Jammu Kashmir as its part not a disputed territory. Moreover, as always it is not reluctant to raise the issue on international platforms. It wants to do all diplomatic efforts to keep the issue alive. Terror training camps are still there across the borders but Pakistan has changed its locations. But it is facing both financial problems and negative world public opinion. The Pakistani government is facing criticism over its inaction after the abrogation. The people of POK are also not happy with Pakistan and rising inflation. Comparisons are being drawn between the Indian Kashmir and the Kashmir held by Pakistan. For Pakistan US and China are the only hopes but the situation of political and economic turmoil in Pakistan is not in its favour. The U.S is not helping Pakistan. The Pakistani government is losing its credibility and India is growing in stature. In this situation Pakistan's only hopes are not doing anything for it.<sup>24</sup>

Pakistan has also linked the abrogation with talks and trade. Now India is also not interested in talks. It has linked talks and trade with ending support to terror by Pakistan.<sup>25</sup>

### **Strategies And Tactics Of Insurgents After The Abrogation Of Art.370**

Before the abrogation of ART.370, the militants were openly criticising and opposing the Indian government. They were doing anti state propaganda, distributing anti state pamphlets, pelting stones, calling for shutdowns. They also openly pasted information regarding recruitments to terror groups on walls. But after the above said move of the Indian government they had to change their strategy and tactics. They even used social media for this purpose but after the abrogation security agencies tightened their grip over the valley. Now militants are recruiting locally. The number of foreign militants has declined. New terror groups have emerged like The Resistance Force (TRF), Kashmir Tigers, United Liberation Front of Kashmir (ULFK) and People's Anti-Fascist Force (PAFF). Earlier militants were open in claiming responsibility for attacks, sharing even their images on social media. But given the crackdown by security agencies they have now chosen to be silent and not claiming responsibility. Now one can't find if a person is a common man or a militant owing to the emergence of 'hybrid militancy'. After doing

targeted killings they again resume their routine work.

### **Efforts by Indian Government to Counter Insurgency**

The Indian government is also now adopting a more stern approach towards militancy. The number of security forces has been increased. There are more checkpoints, more bunkers. Under PSA no one is let go if he has done anything to disturb peace in the valley. The government has dismantled the hideouts of terrorists. The government also has undertaken many development projects like building roads and hospitals in the valley. Not only this, the Indian government is also targeting young minds by improving the education and health sector and by also providing opportunities in the same. But it is still skeptical whether these developmental or economic incentives can lure Kashmiris or help change their mindset. Some are welcoming the government's initiatives but some are still critic of the initiatives taken by the government.<sup>26</sup>

In January 2024 the government of India approved 'J&K Security Model' to counter terrorism in the valley which was on the rise in the second half of 2023.

Now many virtual terrorist groups are also operating and the government will now have to counter them with the use of technology. The Resistance Front (TRF), Jammu Kashmir Ghaznavi Force, and People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAAF) have come to emerge. These are now the covering organizations of old terror groups. They are using platforms like Telegram, WhatsApp Channels, Tamtam, Mastodon, Enigma, BiP Messenger, X, Chirpwire etc.<sup>27</sup>

One more attack in J&K which shook the nation was the Reasi attack on June 9, 2024. The militants opened fire on a bus of pilgrims and the bus fell into a gorge killing 9 and injuring 33. The attack was followed by more strikes in the next few days.<sup>28</sup>

### **Elections in J&K**

Recently held elections in J&K in October 2024 were testimony to the improved law and order situation in the area. The process was overall peaceful and incident free. As against the background of turbulent or low participation elections it was a turning point. Lieutenant Governor's administration, the security forces and local police, everyone coordinated to achieve these results. Moreover, the voter turnout was high particularly younger generation participated enthusiastically.<sup>29</sup>

### **MIGRANTS TARGET OF MILITANTS**

In an attack on Migrant workers near a construction site in the Sonamarg area of Ganderbal district in Jammu and Kashmir, seven people got killed. It was the first major attack after the newly elected government of Jammu & Kashmir National Conference under the leadership of Mr. Omar Abdullah assumed power. There were a series of targeted killings within a few days after the new government's assumption of power.<sup>30</sup>

### **Attacks over Non-Locals**

In a renewed strategy, the terrorists now have made non-locals as the target of their attacks, sending a terror wave among the non-locals in the valley. The motive is to discourage the people from outside the state to come to the valley and work. Everyone in the Union territory including the administration and the separatists alike have condemned such attacks on civilians. In October alone, in a series of attacks 10 civilians and two soldiers were killed in the attack.<sup>31</sup>

### Challenges Before Indian Government: Now And Then

After the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, the Indian government faced and is still facing several challenges in the region. Also they had shifted their base to Jammu region which was peaceful before 2021. This was revealed by a report of Indian express that there May have been fewer incidents of terror in Jammu region in comparison to Kashmir but the impact has been more violent and caused bigger damage.

These are:

1. **Peace and Security:** The major challenge before the central government is maintenance of peace and security in Jammu and Kashmir which has always been a headache for the government. Even when the above said articles were in force the situation was turbulent over there. Now after abrogation the government had to deal with an immediate security challenge as there were concerns about potential unrest and protests in response to the abrogation. The government had to impose curfew and lockdown for a while to thwart any unfavourable situation. Tight security measures are still enforced in the region. But even amid tight security measures the militants are doing targeted killings, targeting people from minority communities, migrants, security personnel and government officials.
2. **Public Sentiment and Trust-Building:** The reason for the abrogation is complete integration of the region into Indian State. But the integration has to be psychological alongside territorial and constitutional one. The government is required to address the sentiments of the local population and build trust. There is a great sense of isolationism in Kashmiris even today. The government is facing the challenge of building trust amongst people of Kashmir which is the biggest challenge ever. They feel ditched on the question of Art.370 and 35A. The complete integration of the Kashmiri population into mainstream politics and nation is the answer. They have face turbulent times since independence. Those horrible memories cannot be forgotten but a healing touch of care and development is the need of the hour. Education is the answer to many problems. It can show the path of righteousness to all and can remove darkness from the minds also. The education of Kashmiri youth should be an utmost priority now.
3. **Political Transition:** With the abrogation of Article 370, the political landscape in Kashmir underwent a significant change. From a state to a union territory the change is rather difficult. The government has also promised to give back the statehood to the valley soon when the time is appropriate. The territory of Ladakh also wants some constitutional changes and also statehood which should also be addressed. The protests in Ladakh demanding constitutional changes regarding their status is also proving to be a major challenge for the government.
4. **Economic Development:** Kashmir has always faced economic stagnation and unemployment, and addressing these issues is still a big challenge for the government. Bringing a state which had been derailed from the path of development due to constant times of conflict and turmoil, back to the path of prosperity, progress and development is a challenge for the government. The region had been under continuous turmoil for decades which is a significant time lost for the state after Indian Independence. As other states marched ahead , the valley remained embroiled in terrorism.
5. **Reintegration and Reconciliation:** There are different types of interests in the valley and different aspirations. Bringing them back to the mainstream is the biggest concern. There are mainstream parties, local parties, separatist parties as well those who don't participate. The government has to look after the interests of everyone and has to bring back those who have chosen the wrong path.



6. International Relations: The abrogation of Article 370 attracted international attention, which the government of India never wanted. The government had to navigate diplomatic challenges. Now also it attracted both support and criticism for organising a G20 event there. But it was also seen as an opportunity for the government to show to the world that Kashmir is different from the propaganda done.
7. Virtual Terror: Nowadays the government of India is finding its enemy ready with technological warfare which is difficult to curb.  
These challenges require a comprehensive approach that includes security, political, economic, social, and diplomatic aspects and above all emotional too. The government has been working towards addressing these challenges and bringing stability and development to the region.

### **Future Prospects And Recommendations**

The abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir has opened up various future prospects for the region. While the long-term impacts are still unfolding, here are some potential prospects:

1. Integration with India: The abrogation aimed to integrate Kashmir more closely with the rest of India. With the removal of special status, there is an opportunity for increased economic, social, and political integration, leading to greater connectivity and exchange of ideas and resources which the government should avail.
6. The government has to focus on initiatives aimed at reintegrating Kashmir with the rest of India and building reconciliation among different communities. This includes promoting dialogue, cultural exchanges, and building bridges between Kashmir and other parts of the country.
2. Economic Development: The government has to emphasize economic development in Kashmir as a key priority. The region's natural beauty and resources, such as tourism, agriculture, and handicrafts, offer significant potential for growth. Investments in infrastructure, industries, and skill development can contribute to job creation and improved living standards. The opportunities created will help to refrain Kashmiri youth from following the path of terrorism. The Kashmiris should be made partners in planning and execution.
3. Investment and Business Opportunities: The removal of Article 370 according to the government has created an environment that is more conducive to domestic and foreign investments. It can attract businesses across various sectors, including tourism, hospitality, manufacturing, and technology. Increased investment can lead to economic diversification, innovation, and entrepreneurship in the region. The government has now the opportunity to prove that.
4. Educational and Employment Opportunities: The abrogation provides an opportunity for enhanced educational and employment prospects for the youth of Kashmir. With a more open and connected environment, students can access better educational institutions and opportunities for skill development, leading to increased employment prospects within and outside the region.
5. Infrastructure Development: The government has focused on improving infrastructure in Kashmir, including road networks, connectivity, and healthcare facilities. Enhanced infrastructure can bolster trade, tourism, and overall development, benefitting the people of Kashmir.
6. Social Integration and Cultural Exchange: The abrogation can facilitate social integration and cultural exchange between Kashmir and other parts of India. It offers an opportunity for people from different regions to understand and appreciate the rich heritage, diversity, and traditions of Kashmir, fostering

unity and strengthening the fabric of the country. People from other parts of India should not view Kashmir as an issue but a state like theirs which is having a unique culture.

7. Continuous Engagement: There has to be a continuous engagement with people from the government's side. As terrorism has now evolved into a new form i.e hybrid militancy, now no one knows the terror operators. They are from common people with no past records. They have adopted guerilla warfare and attack suddenly means now the attacks are sudden. To break this new trend continued engagement is required. And digital warfare can also woo Kashmiri youth. The government will have to keep vigil on this issue also.
8. Space to Opposition and Freedom of Press: There have been news of house arrests of leaders from opposition parties and people from the press. To get support from local parties and to integrate local aspirations, the government has to give space to opposition and freedom to press also. The parties have participated in recently held Lok Sabha elections is also a positive development.

### Conclusion

Kashmir is an integral part of India and for its complete integration, the government abrogated articles 370 and 35 A. One hope which the region has unleashed is through the results of recently held Lok Sabha elections which are indicative of people's love for ballot instead of bullet. One more important conclusion which can be drawn is that people want to experiment with new hope. The defeat of the stalwarts is testimony to this. Now the Government should also cater to their newly built hopes. It is important to note that the future prospects of Kashmir depend on various factors, including the implementation of policies, effective governance, and the involvement and aspirations of the people of Kashmir. A healing touch is needed for the complete transformation of the mindset of Kashmiris. More opportunities must be created for their representation in national as well as regional politics. More young people are nowadays getting attracted towards politics. Many new political parties are coming to the forefront. This enthusiasm must be encouraged. Youth always has energy for transformation. This energy must be channelized. Continuous efforts towards reconciliation, inclusivity, and sustainable development will be essential to harness the potential and shape a positive future for Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370. For that huge amount of investments are required. The government has diverted some funds but more diversion of funds is required. And also to give full representation to local voices the government should conduct elections as soon as possible and statehood should also be restored. Somehow now the focus has diverted to the demand of full statehood from the demand of revocation of decision of abrogation of Art. 370. Now as the government has bifurcated the region into two, it will have to now address their concerns separately. The region of Ladakh must also be in the focus of the central government as far as diversion of funds and developmental projects are concerned.

Terrorism is still an issue of major concern, the government will have to establish the environment of peace and stability. Many problems will be solved with better Indo-Pakistan relations. The government should also start working on this front also.

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