

BOOK REVIEW

**Moral Rupture of Kashmir Society: Impact of Prolonged
Conflict**

Authored by Bashir Assad

MORAL RUPTURE OF KASHMIR SOCIETY
Impact of Prolonged Conflict

Bashir Assad

The book “Moral Rupture of Kashmir Society: Impact of Prolonged Conflict” by Bashir Assad is a thought-provoking work that seeks to move beyond conventional discussions of Kashmir. The social and ethical consequences of decades of war on Kashmiri society is something Assad is seeing, which differs from the geopolitics, militancy, state policies, diplomacy or territorial conflict. The book tries to understand the duration of violence and its effects on the moral landscape that creates values, relationships, identity and collective consciousness of a community. It has offered the readers a unique perspective to understand Kashmir’s contemporary challenges.

The core argument of the book is that prolonged conflict has caused a significant moral transformation in the Kashmir society. The decades of violence due to ideological polarity and political instability have weakened social trust and distorted interpersonal relationships. This crisis normalized fear. The author has introduced the concept of “moral rupture” as a condition where ethical standards have become fragmented. People are keen on adapting to survival-oriented behavior instead of principled conduct. In the lives of the Kashmiris, fear became a routine, and silence became a strategy for survival. The Collective conscience gradually became subordinated to political and ideological pressures.

The book is divided into two sections consisting of twenty-three chapters. The first section appears to establish the theoretical foundations of moral rupture. Chapters such as Silence as Survival, Moral Order, Education and Morality, Inherited Conflict, and Ethical Return focus on the ethical consequences of living in a conflict environment. These chapters investigate how ordinary people adapt to uncertainty and violence. The second section shifts attention toward contemporary Kashmiri society and its broader transformations. Topics such as Scarred Psyche: Kashmir's New Normal of Conflict, Normalized Corruption, Crisis of Trust, Pluralism Silenced, Dependence and Hostility, and Changing Society and Identity suggest a broader sociological examination of how conflict has reshaped social institutions, collective memory, and cultural identity. The central thesis is reflected throughout the chapter structure. The chapters such as Silence as Survival, Moral Order, Conscience, Ethical Evasion, False Consensus, Crisis of Trust, Pluralism Silenced and Changing Society and Identity, indicate systematic attempts to explore various perspectives of moral degradation and social change.

Prolonged instability weakens moral order as competing sources of authority emerge. When violence becomes normalised, moral judgements become conditional. Actions that are interpreted as unacceptable, may become justified for the sake of security, ideology or resistance. This is a strong theme that addresses questions which are rarely discussed in Kashmir politics.

Traditionally, education has been viewed as a tool to transmit social norms and values. However, in areas experiencing prolonged conflict education institutions succumb to societal fragmentation. Younger generations inherit the ideological consequences of the conflicts they did not experience. This concept of inherited conflict is particularly significant. The conflict is never limited to only those who experienced it directly. The consequences get spread to the upcoming generations as well, through family narratives, shared past and collective memory. The author presents a critique of this process since young people might inherit fear and mistrust, resentment and ideological assumptions even if they have witnessed all of it directly. It explains as to why conflicts prolong.

One of the most persuasive themes of the book is the crisis of trust which is a basic necessity for social cohesion. Erosion of trust brings in suspicion, conspiracy theories and ideological polarisation. The author highlights the fact that how rebuilding infrastructure is easier than building trust. There has been gradual increase in ideological rigidity and political absolutism. The author mentions that this has threatened the pluralistic character of the society. Ever evolving competitive narratives hold the power to suppress ordinary people's voices and hinder meaningful dialogue.

Strengths

The book was initially oriented towards morality and ethics instead of classical political analysis. Most of the literature works on Kashmir emphasises insurgency, security or international relations. This argument has attempted to fill an important research gap in the current body of research. The book has combined various sciences like sociology, psychology, political science and conflict studies. In this reading, the perspective of ordinary people is privileged over that of political elites.

Weakness and Suggestions

The book has relied on heavy concepts and requires interpretive understanding, which is very insightful. But more field visits, surveys, statistics and case studies might have helped the readers' interpretive capacity. The book does not have a purely analytical style, but has a moral and philosophical undertone, but readers may require empirical proofs for broader claims. The phrase and the concept “moral rupture” are very intellectual and powerful. However, generalising the term carries certain risks. Kashmir consists of various socio-economic groups with different political viewpoints. The author has Therefore, one single narrative could be incapable to capturing the entire complexity of the social reality of the Kashmiris. The book influences the readers to think beyond political events and inculcate a futuristic thought to think about long term consequences. Peace requires moral reconstruction, and building morality requires long-term effort. This book presents both a diagnosis and a warning. An unresolved conflict gets prolonged and subsequently reshapes society.

It is an era wherein the public discourse of Kashmir is predominantly decided by the security, geopolitics and state policies. By shifting perspective, Bashir Assad reminds the readers that the true cost of conflict can't be measured only in terms of economic or political losses. The author has exposed the wounds that remain even after the headlines fade. Although the book is centric towards the lived experiences of Kashmiri people, his insights transcend regional boundaries and raise questions on the prolonged turmoil of various regions. The future of Kashmir is not simply based on political settlements. Whether one supports Bashir Assad's observations or not, the questions that have been raised are far-reaching and difficult to disregard.

Moral Rupture of Kashmir Society: Impact of Prolonged Conflict is available in both paperback and digital formats through Amazon.com, Amazon Kindle, and Flipkart, with the paperback edition priced at approximately ₹1,000 (prices may vary depending on the platform and current offers). For readers seeking a balanced and reflective exploration of the human costs of conflict, this book is a worthwhile and enriching addition to their personal or academic library.

Medhavi Hiwale
Research Interns,
CENJOWS