

## NORTHEAST AND KASHMIR: Problems in A Comparative Perspective<sup>\*\*</sup>

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*Though no two situations can be exactly same, there are a number of similar factors that go into making of the problems in Kashmir and in the Northeast. Some of these can be located in the colonial legacy and the manner in which the partition was executed in 1947. This and stiffened borders pushed both the places to a position of seclusion, disconnecting these from their immediate surroundings. Indian federalism with all its successes failed to accommodate peripheral regions where greater ethno regional diversity and geographical disadvantages required to be addressed by special federal arrangement with greater quantum of autonomy. But in India such arrangement were not seen favourably even in relation to Kashmir which was granted special status under the Art.370. From the very beginning stronger assimilationist forces have worked to erode it thereby complicating the problem. Disaffection in both the places resulted in the violent protests. However, whatever the objective causes of violence may be its consequences are always socially disastrous. There is similar experience of suffering both in Kashmir and the Northeast. Discontent, rooted in objective factors, needs to be addressed and cannot be undone by mere application of coercion. Contemporary developments are allowing options for undermining some of these historically inherited disadvantages, in the form of a more viable federal arrangement, option of softening borders and strengthening regional and inter-regional cooperation for empowering people. There is need to ensure the adherence to rule of law, ensuring honest democratic practices and demilitarization for promoting human security in its different dimensions.*

Located in a trouble spot like Kashmir, probably gives one the advantage of empathetically looking at the problems in the Northeast. Though no two situations can be exactly same, there are a number of similarities and common factors that go into making of the problems in the

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As in the case of Kashmir, the problems in the Northeast can be traced to a number of factors in its history. There is a colonial factor because of which borders got erected somewhat arbitrarily with little regard to the composition of people and their historical placement in terms of cultural connectivity, communication and economic linkages. Because of this factor "most of the post colonial states inherited units and borders that had been drawn arbitrarily and had little relationship with the socio-cultural make-up of the people and their history".<sup>1</sup> The situation became all the more challenging in societies that were of plural character. In such plural societies, nation building became all the more problematical. In the context of India, the un-desirable brunt of this fact was largely borne by people in areas like Kashmir and the Northeast. The two regions were separated from their immediate surroundings. Thus these got deprived of their geographical, economic, social, cultural centrality that these regions had enjoyed historically within their own neighborhoods and were pushed to a position of 'secluded periphery'.<sup>2</sup>

The problem in the Northeast is rooted in what became East India Company's predicament with Burma. It started with its concern for securing Bengal from the westward expansion of the Burmese empire that resulted in conflict between the two. The conflict culminated in the Burmese defeat and imposition of a treaty to draw Indo-Burma boundary whereby the Northeastern region got divided, leading to the dislocation and arbitrary division of various tribal communities (of Assamese and of Sino-Tibetan and Tibeto-Burmese stock) in the region between what subsequently became the two administrative domains of the British Empire. Thus Assam and other parts of present day Northeast that had remained independent of the Mughal Empire became part of the rapidly expanding British Raj.<sup>3</sup> After the British withdrawal the impact of these developments survived as their permanent legacy in the region. Even at the time of the partition borders between the two emerging states of India and Pakistan were drawn with little regard for economic and cultural linkages at vulnerable places. Both Kashmir and the Northeast were deprived of their economic lifelines. This is true of Northeast because it for its existence and survival become dependent solely on a narrow, lengthy and vulnerable 16 km wide corridor (the so called "chicken neck") connecting the region with mainland India. The Chittagong hills that connected the region to the sea port went to East Pakistan now Bangladesh. It is reported that when the two countries gained independence, the hill people hoisted the Indian flag in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) on 15 August, "as they had been assured that CHT

with a 93 percent non-Muslim population, would be included in India. It was only on 17 August, two days after independence, was it announced that Chittagong Hill Tracts had been included in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), together with East Bengal."<sup>4</sup> This deprived the Northeast of whatever hopes it had of having link to a seaport. Even this fact alone was sufficient to push such regions to tremendous social and economic disadvantages. This seclusion occurred despite the region having geographical contiguity with Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal and China. It shares about 98 percent borders with these states and only two percent with the mainland India.

There is a similarity with Kashmir. It needs to be noted that historically Kashmir has been at the crossroads of civilizational, social and economic currents through different directions and passages. That is why it has had very close trade and cultural relations with places in China, Tibet, a number of cities in Central Asia, Afghanistan, Iran, not to speak of close connections with North and more particularly North Western Indian sub-continent.<sup>5</sup> Of various passages, the Jhelum Valley (JV) Road via Muzaffarabad-Rawalpindi has been the most important link that connected the valley of Kashmir with the rest of world for trade, people to people contact and exchange of cultural and social influences.<sup>6</sup> The 1947 political developments, resulting in the division of Indian sub-continent and *de facto* division of Jammu and Kashmir and the placement of its two parts under the actual control of two different and hostile states, the resultant hardening of borders and blocking of the traditional road links pushed the valley to a number of social, psychological, political and economic disadvantages. In addition to emotional and psychological implications of the division on the people, Kashmir was also thus pushed to a status of secluded periphery,. From a position of being connected through a number of passages, it became practically dependent on a fair weather road that is less dependable and lengthier to connect people to the centers of trade and for other types of interaction.<sup>7</sup> In the case of Kashmir main connecting lines and all weather road links went on the Pakistani side and it became solely dependent on the fair weather road link that connected it to Indian main land. The fact to be noted is that about 82 % Jammu & Kashmir (as on August 14/15, 1947) borders are with China, Pakistan and Afghanistan and only about 18 percent of this touch the Indian main land. Much of this narrow stripe touches with mountainous Himalayan barriers in the Himachal with no possible motor-able link to Kashmir. Out of this connecting stripe, in terms of topography, only about its two per cent,

touching Punjab at Akhnoor, has been worthy of developing a road or rail connectivity to Jammu part of the state. This point referred to Chicken Neck surrounded by Pakistan has remained a vulnerable point of defense for India.<sup>8</sup> The national highway, 1A, which links the Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of India passes through this stripe. Connecting the valley of Kashmir through Jammu has also remained and is likely to continue to be a problem. With all the improvement this highway between Jammu and Srinagar continues creating lot of inconveniences for people of Kashmir particularly during winter months and the rainy season. The 1998 threat of its blockade in Jammu has exposed its other risks for the Valley. Compared to JV Road it is less secure and also lengthier to carry goods to centers of trade. Even though it is not generally realized, this fact has socially and economically marginalized the people of the Kashmir Valley. Because of this fact people of Kashmir have always remained nostalgic about the JV Road via Muzaffarabad. That is why its reopening has figured as an important CBM on Kashmir in different official and non-official meetings between India and Pakistan. It is in this context opening of bus service on the route on April 2003 made a sense.<sup>9</sup> It was expected to gradually lead to conversion of this road to a full-fledged trade route giving Kashmir traders an additional option. But not much has been achieved on this account so far.

One of the dimensions of Kashmir issue has been the division of Jammu and Kashmir into the two. In 1947-48 Jammu and Kashmir got divided between what is known as Indian and Pakistani controlled Kashmir. This has divided families resulting into a lot of human problems. After 1962 Chinese aggression the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is practically divided into three parts. Out of the total of 222,236 sq. km of what used to be Jammu and Kashmir till 1947, Pakistan holds 78,114 sq. km i.e. about 35 percent of the territory. China with 42,735 sq. km holds about 20 percent of the territory. Not many people know that what is shown as Indian Territory in maps is not what India actually holds. India controls only 101,383 sq. km i.e. only about 45 percent of the total territory indicated on the Indian maps. These developments not only did separate different parts of the state from the surrounding countries but different regions within the state and even on each side of the Line of Control (LoC) were cut off from one another.<sup>10</sup> This has caused one of the greatest disadvantages that Kashmir has suffered because of its post 1947 political placement. This disadvantage has also been shared by its surrounding regions like Kargil, Leh and

Punch-Rajouri which continue to suffer communication disadvantage. The partition and the *de facto* division of the state pushed it, regions within the state and even regions within each side of the Line of Control (LoC) to a kind of isolation. For example Punch city prior to 1947 was on about five to six hours run from the Srinagar via Rawalakot and Uri. But because of the erection of the LoC road travel distance between Punch and Srinagar has become practically a minimum of two day run.

The post colonial Indian state made little effort, or may be could do little, to address some of these distortions created by the erection of borders at locations that undermined community life of people at vulnerable places and mistrust that must have been generated by the British policy of divide and rule. Some of the western critics have noted that "while South Asian governments denounce colonialism and its entire works, they have formed an intense emotional attachment to one of the most important legacies of colonialism, namely, their own territorial definitions."<sup>11</sup> In their definition of their nationalism these, many a times artificially evolved borders, gained a very high degree of sanctification. It was so that even a free discourse on their feasibility and legitimacy became a criminal offence and was strictly banned.<sup>12</sup> This also undermined the sense of uniqueness that the people in these two places enjoyed. Instead, the Indian state after gaining independence, in accordance with the logic of the times, further stiffened and sanctified these borders making adjustment at rationalizing or softening some of these even more difficult. It is only in recent years discourse on softening borders or making these irrelevant and opening cross border links for transportation and people to people contact became acceptable at least at the level of official discourse.

Part of the problem is also rooted in the context in which India gained independence that conditioned the mindset of its leadership in the crucial task of the state/nation building. Somehow constitution provided for a sort of federal framework for Indian state. However, all did not go well with the Indian Union as there was strong unitary bias in-built in the constitution for which it was characterized as a quasi-federal state only.<sup>13</sup> This did not go well with the social diversity in India. So there has been demand for greater powers to the states.<sup>14</sup> This has had relative success in structuring Indian state within its mainland where the degree of geo-ethnic diversity is relatively less. However, the constitution makers exhibited extraordinary degree of caution in dealing with greater diversity and in applying federalism as a dynamic framework to

accommodate plurality of different order. It exhibited unwillingness to provide for special measures for accommodating the special situations and the sense of uniqueness and the autonomy urges of people in Kashmir within the Indian Union. This prejudice also operated against similar urges in places like in the Northeast.

It was in 1826 that British defeated Burma and imposed a treaty to draw Indo-Burma boundary whereby they arbitrarily divided the Naga areas, which had historically enjoyed certain degree of independence and autonomy. It is reported that the subsequent British entry into the Naga areas was strongly resisted by the Naga people. Therefore, as usual to their colonial practice; the British used the policy of using different tribes and ethnic communities against each other in order to stay in the region.<sup>15</sup> It was thus that distortions in distribution of the ethnic communities in the region and the mistrust among them got cropped up. In response to resistance the British right from 1919 started, even though incrementally, conceding distinct position for Naga areas. By 1929 it recognized self rule for the Nagas. In 1935 constitutional arrangement the British had also recognized the distinct position of the Naga areas and placed them as excluded areas while dividing their empire as British India and British Burma.<sup>16</sup> Formalization of this division and its stiffening in 1947 as said earlier was bound to add to the disadvantages of the region. In the backdrop of this situation Government of India needed to make a special effort to accommodate the people's concerns in the region on special terms and with special provisions in the constitution. In fact on the eve of independence a 'nine point agreement' was reached between the Naga National Council and British India Government whereby among other things the Naga interest in land, forests, culture and education in the Naga areas were to be secured. Part of the commitment was that after the interim period of ten years under the guardianship of the Indian State, the Naga National Council might through negotiations with the government of India decide to continue with the existing arrangement or alternately if necessary work out a new agreement to determine the future dispensation of the area<sup>17</sup>. This is similar to the commitment that Indian government had made in case of Kashmir. While declaring its authority on Naga areas on the day of independence Government of India on May 9, 1948 through the then governor of Assam Sir Akbar Hyderi reaffirmed the commitment to the Nine-Point Agreement, and assured that it will form Sixth Schedule of the Indian Constitution. However, the Constituent Assembly ignored the commitments completely. Government of India subsequently de

recognized the agreement. Instead of unilaterally rejecting the agreement the prudent way would have been to take the local leadership into confidence and work out a compromise with it whereby Indian State should have been willing to concede a special position for the region<sup>18</sup>. But the mindset at that time did not allow it to be done. Impression must have been that all such issues can get addressed automatically with the consolidation of the state power. In somewhat similar context it was after a lot of resistance that the Constituent Assembly conceded to grant special position to Jammu and Kashmir but only to be undone in the earliest opportunity. The experiences have suggested that disregarding the commitments has deeply added to the sense of betrayal of Kashmiri and Naga people.<sup>19</sup>

Indian federalism may have worked well in general terms in relation to areas that were socio-culturally in greater proximity with core constituents of Indian nationalism. But, Indian state has had problem in relation to the relatively peripheral regions where ethno regional diversity is further reinforced by a distinctive religious identity as in the Northeast, Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. In all these areas the conflict has taken violent form on demands ranging from greater autonomy to separatism and independence. Because of their reinforced identity consciousness, the general framework of the federation was not sufficient to accommodate the demands of the diversity, with regard to these states. With regard to them, a more viable federal arrangement with greater quantum of autonomy could be used as a conflict resolution mechanism. The arrangement that was worked for Kashmir was not radical in any manner. Its provisions were not different from the normal federal provisions of the United States' Constitution applicable to all the states that constitute it. Here is a comparative statement of the position that the State enjoyed up to 1953 before the dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah with the position that the Constitution of the United States of America grants to its federating units (States).

No.	Jammu & Kashmir (1952-53) under Art. 370	States in the Unites States
1	Union jurisdiction with regard to Jammu and Kashmir was restricted to areas corresponding to Defense, External Affairs and Communication.	Federal government's jurisdiction restricted to areas connected to Foreign Affairs, War & Peace, Currency and Communication.
2	The State had residual powers	All the states are left with residual powers
3	State was in the process of framing its own constitution	Every state has its own constitution.
4	Provision of state subject was retained in addition to National citizenship	Every citizen has double Citizenship. National citizenship and the citizenship of the respective state
5	Head of the state (J&K) indirectly elected by state the legislature but required the endorsement by the union president.	Head of every state locally & directly elected by the people in every state independent of the Federal Govt.
6	Semi-independent state Judiciary with appellate jurisdiction with the supreme court.	Independent judiciary for each state with provisions for appeal only in limited special cases
7	Separate civil administration	Every state has separate Administrative Structure independent of Federal Bureaucracy.

Based on the comparative reading of the Indian and the US Constitutions.<sup>20</sup>

While as in the context of the Indian Union J&K was the only state to enjoy such a position, in the United States all fifty states enjoyed the similar position. Here the autonomy was visualized more as a problem and less as an arrangement of addressing the problems of nation building. It is for this reason that from the very inception all the so-called 'nationalist' (ultra nationalist) forces grouped together to undo it. As a contrast in the Unites States constituent states enjoyed this position for more than two hundred years without any conscious attempt being made to undermine their position. Federal government there has gained greater power as it emerged most powerful country of the world, however, without legally undermining the position of the states.

In India there has never been a consensus on using autonomy provision as a strategy of Nation Building. It was viewed as a potential source of the problem. It was for this reason that when because of special circumstances a special status under Art. 370 was worked-out to regulate



the relationship of Jammu and Kashmir with the Union of India, it was seen as aberration and a potential threat to the unity of the country.<sup>21</sup> That is why it has not been only the *Sang Pariwar* that wanted the scrapping of Art. 370 but even the Congress from the early days of the adoption of this provision within the constitution looked to it as compulsion of circumstances to be undone in the earliest opportunity.<sup>22</sup> That is why severest erosion of this article took place by joint connivance of congress government at the centre and its stooge governments in the State.<sup>23</sup>

Because of this thinking, from the very beginning, various forces became active within and outside the state against the autonomy. As a result of these pressures for the erosion of the autonomy, shortly after the adoption of the constitution in 1950, the cordiality between the governments headed by Shiekh Abdullah (whose endorsement of accession was crucial for India) and Pandit Nehru, was being replaced by anger, open hostility, bitterness and frustration *vis-à-vis* each other. The political events of 1953, that led to the dismissal of Sheikh Abdullah, the most potent advocate of the state's autonomy, started casting their shadow on this special position. This facilitated the process of greater merger (in legal terms) of the state within the Indian Union, beginning with the Presidential Order of 1954. This further undermined the legitimacy of the Indian State vis-a-vis the people of Kashmir.<sup>24</sup> This is why, in spite of greater legal integration, State authority remained fragile and dependent on coercive agencies. Democracy became its major victim. In order to ensure the hand picked people in the power, rigging of the elections in the state became an accepted practice and almost a matter of national consensus particularly with reference to the valley. State authority rested on the continued repression leaving very little of elementary civil and political rights to its people. This became an important contributing factor in the present situation in Kashmir.<sup>25</sup> Similar attitude of suspicion has been exhibited towards the similar commitment made in the Northeast and Punjab. Indian government's casual attitude on fulfilling commitments made through various accords in Kashmir, Punjab and the Northeast stems from this kind of mind set. Various commitments and accords with various leaders in the Northeast and Kashmir for some sort of internal empowerment were never honored fully.<sup>26</sup> It is time that the Indian state concedes normal and genuine aspirations of various ethnic communities for greater share of power and autonomy.

As mentioned, it was with great difficulty that the government of India conceded to grant special position to Jammu and Kashmir within the constitution as adopted in 1950. It was because of the international dimension of the issue that the leadership in Delhi was constrained to handle Kashmir situation with extra care. It could not afford to alienate the local leadership completely at the critical time. But subsequently even the commitment to the special status was not kept and on the earliest opportunity (i.e. as early as 1952) the process of its undoing and erosion was initiated. This was seen as a breach of trust in Kashmir. Since there was no such external compulsion, Indian government did little to accommodate local urges in the North East even in the nominal way. The understandings with the Naga leadership for being granted special position was never honored.<sup>27</sup> Even the acceptance of the minimum genuine political urges of people in the Northeast for political units took much longer. The reorganization of Assam and border region, North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA), took place in stages. Four new predominantly tribal states emerged beginning with Nagaland in 1963. It was followed by the formation of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh in 1972, and Mizoram in 1987. But that did not address the problems in the region. Instead of seriously finding out solutions to the problem the Indian state took recourse to the use of high degree coercion. The logical consequence of the policy has been a high degree of militarization, eruption of violence, undermining of human and democratic rights of the people and the application of special repressive laws. All this has undermined social, economic and the ecological assets in the two regions.<sup>28</sup>

Any serious attempt at resolving disputes in the interest of promoting peace in the two regions should begin with developing a realistic appreciation of all the important dimensions of these disputes. We must begin with an admission that all major conflicts are generally rooted in certain objective historical situations. Every conflict passes through different phases and may have divergent manifestations, but its underlying causes continue to be broadly the same. With the passage of time, such a conflict becomes an integral part of the collective subconscious of the society in which it emerges. This is how the problems have persisted both in the Northeast and Kashmir. Therefore, in spite of the occasional-changing manifestation, the conflicts in the two places have survived. Its underlying causes and the core concerns have not only but will also continue to be the same till they are meaningfully addressed and resolved. We must note that the present problem in the

two places is not basically the problem of militancy. In fact, the militancy has been the outcome of the objective problems. The source of all protests is some sort of serious dissatisfaction with the existing political arrangement. It takes violent form only when normal and peaceful channels of the expression of dissent get blocked and constrain the disgruntled to revolt in a violent form. However, whatever its causes may be, its consequences are mostly undesirable and harmful to society. This is what happened both in Kashmir and the Northeast.<sup>29</sup>

In the Northeast violence came into politics from the early years of independence. It started with the Naga discontent in 1950s. Gradually this spread to other areas in the Northeast. Comparatively violence came to Kashmir much later in late 1980's. But we need to note that violence is always rooted in some objective factors. However, whatever the causes of the violence its consequences are always disastrous. It leads to a vicious circle of death and destruction, physical and psychological strangulation of common person. Women and children suffer more. Extortion, rape, enforced disappearances; death, destruction and violation of human rights become a common practice. This has been the story both in Kashmir and the Northeast. Security agencies in the both places are armed with similar kinds of repressive powers.

On the basis of our experience in Kashmir, the eruption of militancy and violence results in the activation and large-scale mobilization of security agencies (military and paramilitary forces), with enormous and arbitrary powers granted under provisions like, Public Safety Act, Armed Forces Special Powers Act, Disturbed Areas Act, and various other such acts applied nationally from time to time (like TADA, and POTA) exposes common people to a number of vulnerabilities and risks. The problem is accentuated by the fact that most of the security personnel operating in such situations are from different ethno cultural stock and therefore have little sensitivity and empathy to local population and their concerns. This makes the situation much more complex and very often terribly dangerous.<sup>30</sup> The situation became worse as with the greater pressure from security forces, politico-ideologically less committed cadres and criminal elements within militants changed their side to become what came to be known as pro-government renegades. Operationally these renegades have had to function in subordination to security imperatives of the state. Most often these elements cause greatest suffering to common people. Similar situation operates in the Northeast. In short, the cycle of violence has brought a lot of miseries to

common people in both the places. The estimate of the people who lost their lives in the turmoil in Kashmir ranges between 40,000 (official estimate) to over 100,000 (unofficial estimate). This is in addition to the tremendous economic, social, psychological and material loss that the people had to suffer in the process. There is probably no family left in Kashmir, which has not adversely been affected by the situation. Naturally in this situation of anarchy, insecurity, universal fear and uncertainty, there is no section of society in Kashmir that has remained unaffected. This is even true about the security forces operating there. There have been credible reports of their suffering from depression and other psychological disorders resulting in growing number of suicides and killings of colleagues. These are similar stories in the Northeast as well. The reports of custodial killings, civilian disappearances, sufferings of women and children, are some of the common experiences in the two regions.<sup>31</sup>

Another similarity between the two places has been a high degree of plurality in the two regions that contributed to making the problem in the two places much more complex to be addressed to. Indian constitution also did not attend sufficiently to social diversity present within India. At the time of independence of India, assimilationist ideologies were relatively stronger. However, today in the post modernist context, multiculturalism has offered new ways of dealing with issues of diversity and plurality. It was with some resistance that some minority rights were conceded and Indian state did have secular features. What is needed in the context of plurality as in the Northeast is to develop frameworks for reconciling social diversity and allowing each one to live in peace, security and tolerance with regard to the rest. In the context of Kashmir, experiment with Hill Development Council in Leh and Kargil has had reasonable success. This could be emulated in addressing regionally based minority discontent within some of the North-eastern states.

Today the atmosphere for the viable federal arrangement has become more conducive. Diversity has to be taken as natural and given and cannot be undone by artificial means. There is need to develop imaginative arrangements for accommodating them within. Today we also have a concept of undoing, undermining and softening borders. This, if applied in the context of Kashmir and the Northeast, will be restoring some social and economic empowerment to the people in the two regions. Strengthening regional and inter-regional cooperation will address many aspects of the problems in the two places. Today instead of

erecting we are in for softening and undermining borders. The strengthening of the SAARC framework for cooperation and networking with ASEAN, Myanmar and China can help to address many aspects of the problems in Kashmir and in the Northeast. There is need to develop imaginative arrangements for addressing the issues. Fortunately the Government of India's look east policy is going to help in restoring to Northeast some amount of connectivity. Under this policy the Government of India is planning to build a 160-km road link with Myanmar and developing a port in that country that will facilitate easier passage of goods to and from states like Nagaland and Mizoram. It also entails the promotion of the region's development. Look East Policy in the context of the Northeastern regional development is a welcome development.<sup>32</sup> PM's unfolding of July 2008; "Northeastern Region Vision 2020" document is also aimed at addressing some of the concerns and issues in the Northeast. In the context of Kashmir starting Srinagar-Muzaffarabad Bus service also was to begin with a small step in the right direction. The starting of bus on April 7, 2005 and opening of five border points in itself is a small thing as it involved only small number of passenger exchange in a month under its present schedule. Nevertheless, this was important because only some years back even this small development would have been impossible to imagine happening. One also hopes that in the context of changing character of Indo-Pak relations, the process is taken further and the J V Road becomes functional for frequent travel of people, removing the psychological barriers between two divided parts. It also needs to be combined with free flow of goods across the two sides of Kashmir and beyond to larger markets. It is this development that is going to have tremendous positive impact on the economy of the people as this route, for its relative advantages of security, distance and smoothness, is going to have considerable economic advantage for the transportation of goods and services to the outside world.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, urgent steps need to be taken for early opening of this road regular trade and people to people movement across the LoC.<sup>34</sup>

In the end, it needs to be reemphasized, that discontent rooted in objective factors cannot be undone by mere application of coercion but by finding ways and means of addressing these and by meeting the legitimate aspirations of the people. Contemporary developments are allowing options for undermining some of these historically inherited disadvantages. There is dire need for strengthening the Human Rights Regime, restoring the Rule of Law and withdrawing the extraordinary

powers vested with security agencies. Demilitarization must be pursued for promoting human and environmental security. People need to be empowered and given a sense of security by guaranteeing special provisions for their empowerment. These, in my opinion, are some of the concerns that are common to Kashmir and the Northeast.

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- 5 See Mushtaq A. Kaw, "Dynamics of Silk Route and Kashmir" *Greater Kashmir*, (Srinagar), August 8, 2008. and also Wariko K , *Central Asia and Kashmir* (New Delhi, 1989)
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- 11 Gunnar Myrdal, *Asian Drama*, Vol. I. (New Delhi, Kalyani Publishers, 1982), p.186
- 12 For example section 2 of the Indian Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1961 states that "whoever by words either written or spoken, or by signs or by visible representation or otherwise, question the territorial integrity or frontiers of India in a manner which is, or is likely to be, prejudicial to the interests or safety or security of India will be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years, or with the fine or the both" quoted in *ibid*. p. 186.
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  - 31 Ibid. also See also Amnesty Reports issued on the two places from time to time.
  - 32 'Northeastern Region Vision 2020' see also PTI Report, July, 1, 2008.
  - 33 Baba, n. 9.
  - 34 Noor Ahmad Baba, Reconnecting Kashmir: Need for Reopening Traditional Routes, *Epilogue*, (Jammu) September, 2008.