

# The Post-Colonial Discourse of Valley: A Critical Reading of Rahul Pandita's 'Our Moon Has Blood Clots' and Mirza Waheed's 'The Collaborator'

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**Abstract - A walk down memory lane of Kashmir always accentuated the disturbing shadow of conflicts, human- rights violation, mindless political ventures and so on. From foreign invaders to the current political urges, the Kashmir or Kashmiris have been witnessing chaos and devastation be it social, political, cultural or economical facets. The popular discourse of Kashmir or Kashmiris has been under the shadow of doubt as it does not reflect depredation and persecution in its totality. The present paper seeks to bring back the articulation of local narratives thereby contemplating over the dual perspective to look upon death like conditions of Kashmiris be it muslims or Kashmiri pandits. The present paper tries to scrutinize over the pathetic conditions out of political and religious upheavals while undertaking the parallel reading of saga as one from Muslim community other from Brahmin community who at the end share some common condition of victimization.**

**Keywords – Kashmir, Conflict, Popular Discourse, Majority, Minority, Local, Narratives.**

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The facets that were restrained under the shadow of popular discourse have begun articulating their first hand and experience as Pankaj Mishra expressed " life on the political operation has begun to yield... a rich intellectual and artistic harvest" (Ali). There is no doubt about the fact that Kashmir has remained focal point of conflicts and clashes. The political crisis in 1989 which compelled Kashmiri pandits to leave their motherland and roamed around like a lost Calf in the at the wake of twilight or Kashmiri Muslim, those who have nothing to do with so-called Azadi as proclaimed by separatist or subsequent militarization and Crackdowns and curfews. The dominant discourse has failed to expose this dual exploitation to set in the mainstream, so it is requisite to juxtapose the voices of victims from both sides regardless of communal identities. Here researcher tries to throw light on the conflicts and repercussions by pondering over two novels named 'The Collaborator' (2011) of Mirza Waheed and 'Our Moon Has Blood Clots' (2013) by Rahul Pandita.

The novel *Thecollaborator* sets in a village named no gum that is next to the border for Line of Control and that is why it is always under the shadow. The story is narrated by a Kashmiri Gujjar Muslim. The story commences in 1993 where unnamed young man of 19 begins unfolding the narration from first person perspective. The present novel is shared in three sections namely 'now and then','then...' and 'now...' These divisions show the movement in between past

and present. The first section unfolds the changing scenario of Nowgam as protagonist is meditating over his four friends who went to undertake arm training on the other side of the border that is Pakistan. At present the entire village seems deserted as there is single family of protagonist that is left there. The next section unveils the Indian armed forces compacted in the village over protagonists' friends' unjustified transgression. The final section is about the collaboration of protagonist with captain Kadian.

The protagonist also contemplates over joining the training camp as his friends did but ends up getting work under captain of Indian armed forces. Being collaborator of captain who is described as intoxicated all the time, protagonists' task is to assemble personal identity cards and arms from dead separatist or freedom fighter, relying on the perspective(Shamsie), who are dispersed beyond the brook. This stream where protagonist along with his lost friends used to roam around enjoying the breeze and luses. At present he only finds "fearsome, mutilated, underwater apparitions" (Kak)of his companions. The lying corpse of those who crossed the border to get arm training are only the people protagonist is left with. The narrator feels suffocated in this deadly situation. He is seen battling with the idea of liberty from all these upheavals. This state of protagonist embarks, how civilians have suffered out of separatists on one

hand and militarization on the other side. The narrator astonishes or rather gets confused over "pasture of dead boys" (15) that is prepared by Pakistani forces as reactionary image for Indian forces' "dead Valley". The novel condemns the excessive militarization and intervention from both the sides of border.

The biggest threat is the thing that humanity is at stake in war ridden region like Kashmir. The operation and exploitation are not adhered to living moving souls but it includes dead people too. As it is Apparent when captain reveals to protagonist that some media wants to cover the external militants and that "he can turn any Kashmiri look like Afghan as the dead don't speak" (09). The dead one compels to get pain in death. The moving souls suffer from unending shadow of curfews and crackdown. As captain made announcement," the area is declared under curfew day and night, and no one will venture out of their house. Anyone violating this order will be dealt severely. This is a government order. Do not panic" (177).

The novel Express the physical as well as mental torture experience by civilians at the hands of separatists as well as armed forces. The book is full of incidents that yields the loss of Identity, honor, and normality of everyday life.

On the other side of discourse *Our Moon Has Blood Clots* describe the pathetic condition of Kashmiri pandits who suffered to their souls and forced to leave the valley in 1990s. Pandita clears,

I have made it my mission to talk about the other story of Kashmir (220). This special mention of 'other story' signifies the ignored discourse of Kashmiri from Indian as well as Pakistani mainstream. Rahul Pandit tells straight that Pandits had been force to leave the land where their ancestors had lived for thousands of years. (02) The novel clearly stands firm as strong voice marking the popular Kashmiri discourse that usually articulates the one side of the story that is the victimization and partiality towards the Muslim community. The memoir lights out the darkest hours of Kashmiri pandits who were compelled into exile initially from Valley to Jammu and subsequently to Delhi. They didn't just get assaulted by armed terrorist but even "common man on the street participated in some of heinous murders as well"(115).

The notion of religious eclecticism and co-existence fell short when it was most needed. Same as the popular discourse kept quiet over the decline of Kashmiriyat at the wake of insurgency and at the crisis when faith and bond between different communities dashed to the ground. Pandita picturizes the pitiable and wearable condition in refugee camps where they have got deprived of the food, basic amenities and mental peace, "there was total uncertainty of our future"(99). Their hopelessness and helplessness paved way for their exploitation at the hands of local people too, " it was a pathetic existence. . . elderly people died of sunstroke. . . children became infected

with fungal disease. . . heart disease and hypertension made their way (130).

They lost the space both geographical as well as metaphorical. This binary of inside outside fall short as brahmins where were lost the in their own land. Their culture, social and political or economic and marginalization pushed them to a "Limbo like state" (Downey). They lost roots and hopes and subsequently the normality of life. The honor of Kashmiri brahmins got killed many times as for instance they had to set in queue to register their details to get ration card. This needed photographs of family elders like husband-and-wife. In between they started clicking pictures with other people as husband and wife just to get more aid in form of ration. It was the question of life and survival. They faced insulted and antagonism from every corner be it Kashmiri separatist, civilians, forces or their own people in Jammu.

As far as the post-colonial discourse over the valley, Kashmir is concern it seems that the focus has given topopular Kashmiri discourse by merely emphasizing on human rights violation. In between the media reports or literary expressions have neglected the destructive tendency of religious prejudices which have been one out of other sources to eliminate Pandits from their homeland. From covering the involvement of youth in arm training from Pakistan to their victimization, the popular discourse has kept them at the center putting aside the tragic Saga of Kashmiri minorities. Those who went back to resettle in Kashmir could not get necessary aid from the authority. Keeping the story parallelly, that is the victimization of Muslims and devastating condition of Kashmiri Pandit completes the tragic circle. It seems that every individual group pines for their better share in discourse to prove who the real victim is. This in turn may prove to be real threat to harmony and resolution. The honest confession about half-truth from either sides will help to re-conciliate and that may not restrict to polarization of pain and agony. The common factor between Kashmiri minority and majority is *suffering* which does not know the religion or cast but hurts everyone with the same degree. The flames of violence absorbs all. The discourse must encompass the complete truth which may lead to understand the gravity of this anarchy and subsequently the suffering of all human beings regardless of one's a religious identity.

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