



# Stone Pelting in Kashmir: A Form of Protest/Movement

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## Abstract

Kashmir is an internationally recognized dispute between two nuclear powers India and Pakistan. At the ground realities democracy was never allowed to nurture in the fertile land of Kashmir valley. There have been violent protests in the form of militancy when youth took gun in 1989 against the Indian occupation. The present working is the original contribution of the researcher. He has tried to make the things clear that what has really happened or happening in the valley. The present research paper is concerned with the stone pelting, and throws light on some aspect related with the stone pelters and their aspirations. It discussed the various issues where stone pelters and is they hired by some organization or not. The current crisis is yet again at the crossroads after the killing of militant commander Burhan Wani in an encounter on July 8, 2016 in Kashmir brings into focus the precarious importance of the issues of human rights- an issue which meanwhile has reappeared on the top of the political agenda of the world. The findings of this study show that Kashmiri Populace in general and youth in particular continue to remain plagued by numerous problems, which affect their living throughout their life. There has been a systematic denial of democratic rights to Kashmiris or Deliberate & systematic human rights violation. From 2008, the form of protest from gun to stone pelting has been a hot issue as people participated in large numbers. And also the people of Kashmir mostly the young ones come out on roads whenever there is search operation of militants by Indian Army, They do their best in escaping the militants. Police and administration has dealt protesters who mainly are young with bullets and tear gas shelling resulting in death of hundreds and injuring many. As of now stone pelting which in local language is called kanijung has become a routinized process of protest in Kashmir valley.

**Keywords:** Kashmir; Stone pelting; Kanijung; Dispute; Protests; Occupation.

## 1. Introduction

Jammu & Kashmir is northern-most Indian Administered state (IAK), lying between six mountain ranges and covering an area of 2, 22,236 KM<sup>2</sup>. It is located between 32°17' and 36°58' North latitude, and between 37°26' and 80°30' East longitude (Guroo, 2016). The region commonly known as Kashmir is bounded on the north by Afghanistan and China, on the east by China, on the south by the state of Himachal Pradesh and the state of Punjab in India, and on the west by the North-West Frontier Province and the Punjab Province of Pakistan. Jammu and Kashmir actually comprises of three regions: the foothill plains of Jammu; the lakes and valleys of Kashmir with high altitude plains and mountains of Ladakh which lies beyond narrow passes (Bhandari and Kale, 2009).

Kashmir is distributed into three parts. The Indian-administrated part (45.5%) is the state of Jammu and Kashmir, with an almost 70% Muslims majority; the Pakistan-controlled part makes up 27.6% and has a population that is 99% Muslim. Some 16.9% of the territory, which is under Chinese administration, is home to ethnic Tibetans (Guroo, 2016).

The total area of the state of Jammu and Kashmir is about 2, 22,236 KM<sup>2</sup> out of which 78,113 KM<sup>2</sup> are under the occupation of Pakistan and 37,556 KM<sup>2</sup> under China. In addition to this, 5,181 KM<sup>2</sup> kilometres of Jammu and Kashmir State were conceded to China by Pakistan under the March 1963 Sino-Pak boundary agreement. The line of control (LoC), which divides India and Pakistan-occupied parts of the state, is 1001 kilometres long (Jammu-204 kilometres Valley-461 kilometres. and Ladakh/Sioachin area-336 kilometres.). The border with China is 465 kilometres long. Pakistan has occupied the districts of Dianer, Baltistan, Gilgit, Muzarffarabad, Kotii, Mirpor, Poonch and Bagh, which collectively had a population of about 2.5 million (1981 Census). Almost all the people in the Pak- occupied part are Muslims. The Chinese-held territory is called Aksai-Chin (meaning un-inhabited). According to the 2001 censuses conducted after 20 years, the size of the Jammu and Kashmir population is 10,069,917 (<http://www.newkerala.com/states-of-india/jammu-kashmir.php>).

Democracy was never allowed to nurture in the fertile land of Kashmir valley (Guroo, 2016). Stone-Pelting means USE of stone for violence, and coercion to intimidate mostly Security personals. Stone-Pelting may also be defined as action or response of civilians, carried out in a violent and planned manner to achieve political goals; it may be Government or other agencies. Stone-Pelting may also define as a defence or a violent action against failure of government. In other words it may also define as (*A Voice against humiliations*) or a new form of mass movement to achieve freedom or a desired goal or a *promised promise*.

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### 1.1. Stones Pelting Stone on Armed Forces



Source: Malini Parthasarathy August04, 2010 01:59 IST

### 1.2. Pelting stones: A Voice of the Kashmir

While stone pelting has become a routine feature of street protests in Srinagar since the summer of 2008, 2008, 2010 and 2016, three mass revolts have seen driving from Kani Jung or stone pelting. Let's understand how stone pelting works.

Political power is either derived from the support of the people or by suppression of the people. Suppression and support, much like stone pelting comes from the street. The underlying politics of stone pelting in Kashmir are not complicated at all, "In an exclusive interview to India Today, Jammu and Kashmir's former chief minister Omar Abdullah reasoned that political disconnection from the country is giving rise to stone-pelters."

Guaranteeing that the stone-pelters don't see their future with the nation, He said unless there is an acknowledgment or acknowledgment of the political idea of the issue there will be no solution. In nutshell former CM wants to say Stone pelting a voice of youth for the justice (for the materialized a promised promise made by Indian)<sup>1</sup>

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah in his press conference in New Delhi on Monday appeared to be at pains to balance the two imperatives of the situation he is now confronted with. He stressed that the cycle of violence would have to be broken and was clear that law-breakers would have to face the consequences. At the same time, the Chief Minister was careful to emphasize that the problem of Kashmir was "a political one" and the state needed a "political package". But with the ground situation worsening by the day, it may be a case of "too late too little" if Mr. Abdullah is seen as relying primarily on a law and order tactic to the protests instead of moving quickly to address what is essentially a crisis of confidence in the political system. However it is additionally evident that scaremonger portrayals of the road dissents in Srinagar as the start of an intifada as in Palestine challenging Israeli control or another tehreek (movement) likened to the development of the mid '90s when the development for self-determination started in the Valley, don't pass on the genuine picture of what is going on in Srinagar today<sup>2</sup>. From numerous archives, the circumstance in Kashmir is clearly retrievable.

According to experienced observers such as Wajahat Habibullah, the street protests today have very little of the sting of the protests of the '90s which had a strong undercurrent of intense anti-India sentiment. Today's protesters might shout anti-India slogans such as Azadi, but their anger is specifically directed at the security forces in the context of the brutal killings of innocent boys. Unlike the '90s, the street protests are spontaneous gatherings reacting to events. If this latest manifestation of popular outrage is suppressed by force, there is a danger that these protests will become currents merging in the larger separatist movement.

The protesters on the streets, aside from the young people, are educated doctors and MBAs, frustrated at the lack of employment and economic opportunities. It isn't difficult to see where the dissatisfaction and frustration of the educated Kashmiri youth comes from. Stone pelting is a response against injustice or a voice of Kashmir for Kashmir cause.

<sup>1</sup> 5 January 1949: UNCIP stated that the question of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India or Pakistan would be decided through a free and impartial plebiscite. As per the 1948 and 1949 UNCIP Resolutions, both countries accepted the principle that Pakistan would secure the withdrawal of Pakistani intruders followed by withdrawal of Pakistani and Indian forces, as a basis for the formulation of a truce agreement, the details of which were to be determined, followed by a plebiscite.

["Resolution adopted at the meeting of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan on 5 January, 1949."](#) Retrieved 5 December 2014.

["Resolution adopted by the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan on 13 August 1948."](#) Retrieved 5 December 2014.

<sup>2</sup> Yet it is also clear that alarmist descriptions of the street protests in Kashmir as the beginning of an intifada as in Palestine protesting Israeli rule or a new tehreek (movement) akin to the movement of the early '90s when the movement for self-determination began in the Valley, do not convey the true picture of what is happening in Srinagar today. From many accounts, the situation in Kashmir is manifestly retrievable [The Hindu National News Paper] (Aug, 04, 2010 01:59 IST).

### **1.3. Kashmir: Tackling the Challenge of Stone Pelting**

Although stone pelting has become a routine story of street protests in Kashmir since the summer of 2008, it had invigorated with particular intensity after April, when three youths were alleged to have been killed in a fake encounter in Machhil. The accidental death of a schoolboy, Tufail Mattoo, as a result of teargas shelling on June 11, 2010 was the apparent flashpoint setting the Valley afire as mass protests vented all over. Waves of stone pelting protesters descended on the streets in valley, defying curfew orders. As security forces retaliated by firing on these teenagers armed only with rocks, those killed in the firing were immediately appropriated and titled as shaheed or martyrs to the separatist cause, thereby infusing fresh dynamism into the separatist agitation.

Terrorism as a tool for separatism seems to have again its relevance in Jammu and Kashmir. While random incidents of terrorist violence are likely to continue, this may be the key agent for change in the days ahead. While the motivation of the agents behind the stone-pelters is clear, there are varied interpretations of who these youth represent. The security denomination has been 'agitational terrorism'. On the other hand Wajahat Habibullah, the Chief Information Commissioner of the Government of India, typifies these youth as genuine grievance seekers. "Kashmiri youth are pelting stones. There is a prerequisite to know why they are doing so. They feel this government is not theirs. They are deeply estranged. They have grievances about the functioning of the system," he said at a Seminar on Right to Information Act in the Valley.

It is obvious that tagging the youth who are resorting to stone pelting is not easy but it is important to do so even at the cost of oversimplifying a complex problem, so as to evolve viable solutions to the same. Given their motivations, stone-pelters can be divided broadly into the few categories; youth with genuine grievances marginalized from the process of employment and empowerment; anti-socials and small time criminals who have taken to stone pelting for pecuniary gains; hard-line separatists, the quasi terrorists who are the main drivers of the stone pelting movement. According to the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, stone pelting has been most frequent in downtown or old Srinagar, Baramulla and Sopore and is fuelled by the political machinations of the separatists as well as the opposition party mainly the PDP. The opposition and the separatists blame the government for marginalization of youth and thus the political recriminations continue.

The solution however lies in a comprehensive approach; political, social, economic and security. To enable application of the right palliatives, it is important to note that the problem is not only socio-economic but also its exploitation by pro-independence elements espousing violence has a security dimension.

The second front against stone pelting has to be political. Ironically while all shades of opinion in the Valley, the government, the opposition and separatists oppose stone pelting in public, this is seen as a political tool which is allowed to fester. This approach will have to change and hard-line separatists who espouse this form of violence will have to be politically isolated.

### **1.4. Objectives**

1. To know the causes of stone pelting in Kashmir.
2. Much like stone pelting comes from the street is Suppression or support
3. To know political power is either derived from the support of the people or by suppression of the people.

### **1.5. Hypotheses**

H<sub>0</sub>: The cause of stone pelting in Kashmir is unemployment, under development and corruption.

H<sub>1</sub>: The basic cause of stone pelting is political goal (referendum)

## **2. Materials & Methodology**

As the approach followed in most social science research, present study is based on the both primary as well as secondary source of the data collection.

### **2.1. Universe & Selection of Sample**

#### **2.1.1. Universe Coverage**

The research was carried out in ten district of Kashmir valley (mainly in Town area). The researcher selected 200 samples (stone pelters) as respondents for the study.

The selected universe is constituted of ten districts with almost equal population. From each district 20 respondents were selected for the collection of research data in relation to the demographic composition of the Kashmir valley. In this way, 200 respondents were selected in total from the concerned universe. After that with the help of random sampling, 20 respondents from each district are selected for the collection of research data.

#### **2.2. Sample Method**

Researcher used the snow-ball sampling method and selected 20 respondents in each district with the help of accidental sampling method out of whole population. Every next respondent was selected as identified by the previous respondents. This type of sampling was used, as it is otherwise [almost] impossible to identify the stone pelters who act unmasked and underneath, not in open.

**Table-1.** Profile of Respondents

District	Marital Status		Educational Status		Age status		
	Ma	Um	Lit.	Ilit.	28-28	21-39	40-above
Anantnag	16	04	19	01	09	10	01
Bandipora	15	05	18	02	09	07	02
Baramulla	14	06	17	03	09	09	02
Budgum	14	06	19	01	10	10	00
Ganderbal	18	02	16	04	10	10	00
Kupwara	17	03	18	02	12	08	00
Kulgam	15	05	18	02	08	07	05
Pulwama	13	07	19	01	09	06	05
Sopain	17	03	17	03	06	07	07
Srinagar	10	10	19	01	08	08	04
Total	148	052	180	20	90	82	26

**Note:** Ma=Married, Um=Unmarried, Lit=Literate, Ilit=Illiterate, below 20, 21-39, 40 above Age Group.

From each district of Kashmir valley, we have taken 20 respondents, On the basis of marital status among 200 respondents, 148 are married and 52 are unmarried and by the educational wise distribution 180 are literates and 20 are illiterates. And the above table graph shows that out of 200 respondents,90 are belong to 20 below age group, 82 are belong to 21-39 age group and 26 are belong to 40 above group.

### 3. Discussions

**Table-2.** Q1, which political party does you believes/support?

Responses	F	%
Main political Parties	0	0
Separatists	155	77.5
Freedom fighter	45	22.5
Average	66.667	
Median	45	

The data collected from the Stone pelters revealed that out of the total 200 respondents, 77.5% answered that they have supports freedom fighters, which maximum in number out of the total respondents. Out of total respondents 22.5% support the separatists and non among them support the main political parties. The average scores were 66.667 with median of 45.

**Table-3.** Q2, Do you get paid by any organization or party to pelt stones?

Responses	F	%
No	196	99
Yes	4	01
Average	100	
Median	100	

The above table showed that out of the 200 selected respondents, only 1. %, which means that only 4 respondents say yes to above cited question. Out of 200 respondents 196 respondents i.e. 99% refused to that they get paid. The average and the median score were 100.

**Table-4.** Q3, why you pelt stone?

Responses	F	%
unjust	4	2
Anger Against present government	3	1.5
Other reason	2	1
For liberation/freedom	190	95
Other reason	1	0.5
Average	40	
Median	3	

In relation with the above question, the researcher tried to know about that why respondent pellet stones. The above gathered data revolves that majority that is 95% respondent (which was 190 in numbers) endorsed that they pellet stone for liberation. Out of total respondents 2% are pellet stones for Injustice done to them, while 1.5% and 1% which merger amount of out of total respondents mark the tick on “Anger against present government and “Other reason” respectively. The average score was 40 with median of 3.

**Table-5.** Q4. how long you has been involved in stone pelting?

Responses	F	%
One year	80	40
Two years	30	15
Three years	20	10
Four years	10	5
Six months only	60	30
Average	40	
Median	30	

The above table shows that 40% of stone pelters have been involved since a year. While 15% and 10% were for two to three years. Out of 200 stone pelters only 5% respondent involved in stone pelting for 4 years. And 30% respondents involved for six months only, they said they were new in it. The average score was 40 with median of 30.

**Table-6.** Q5. Are you jailed any time?

Responses	F	%
No	90	45
Yes	110	55
Average	100	
Median	100	

As per above gathered data, majority of the stone pelters 55% were jailed once or more than once in their life time up to yet. There number was 110 out of 200 respondents, while as 45% stone were refused to the e above cited question and they were 90 in number. The average and median score was the same as 100 both.

**Table-7.** Q6. If yes, how many times?

Responses	F	%
Once	60	30
Twice	20	10
Thrice	16	8
More times	14	7
None	90	45
Average	40	
Median	20	

The tabled data shows that 45% of the stone pelters are not arrested of jailed unto yet. 30% were jailed once and 10% twice while 8% and 7% were jailed thrice and more than thrice up to yet respectively. The average score were 40 while the median score was 40.

**Table-8.** What do you want by stone pelleting?

Response	Frequency	%
Employment	1	0.5
Justice	5	2.5
Merger with Pakistan	10	5
Political autonomy	0	0
Freedom	194	97
Average	42	
Median	5	

The above table gyrates that most of the stone pelters pelt stone for the cause freedom as they have given the response to the above question. They were 97% and 194 in number out of the total 200 respondents. Out of total respondents 5% want to merger with Pakistan and they were 10 in number. Only single respondent i.e. 0.5% pelt stone for employment, as they were unemployed educated youth. None among them had given response as they want political autonomy within Indian union. The average score were 42 with median 5.

## 4. Conclusion

The present working is the original contribution of the researcher. He has tried to make the things clear that what has really happened in the valley and why youth Pellet stone. From the table number 8 the data clearly indicated that majority of the stone palters (as respondents) pelt stone for the cause freedom stone. Advocating for a political engagement to control the turmoil in Jammu and Kashmir, the state's former chief minister Omar Abdullah today said stone-pelting is a result of political disconnection from the country.

"Please understand that majority of these stone-pelters are not doing it for money or because they want a job. They are not doing it because there is an absence of tourism. They are doing it because they feel politically disconnected from the union of India," Abdullah said in an exclusive interview to India Today.

From ongoing study it becomes clear that the militancy in J&K is deeply rooted in the contemporary history of the state as well as that of the Indo-pak relations. The political, militant forces and Stone Pelletier's active in J&K and need a patient hearing by both India and Pakistan to resolve the Kashmir issue permanently. The bilateral engagement between India and Pakistan could not bear fruits unless the people from different shades of J&K are involved in the processes of conflict resolution. The unilateral initiative by the GoI to hold negotiations with APHC and other representatives of the people of J&K will not pave the way for permanent peace in the state unless Pakistan and the militant organizations are involved in such a process. And if the Kashmir issue will not solve very soon then the result will be a nuclear war in south Asia.

To sum up the paper it will not be wrong to say that the stone pelleting is reaction or anger of Kashmiris against India and some of the stone pelters have said they were against Indian imperialism in Kashmir. Stone pelleting is special young youth's movement for their promised promise made by first prime Minister of India Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru (i.e. Right to Self-determination). Some of the stone pelters have clarified that Indian and Pakistani leadership doing politics on the name of Kashmir issues, both at national and international level. So we want both the countries come together without any condition and let the people of Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistani occupied Kashmir do what they want either to join India or Pakistan or to remain an independent state entity. Plebiscite is the original and most universally accepted solution and may be the best possible solution for unsolved issue of Kashmir up to yet.

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