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Counterinsurgency strategy of the Indian state in Kashmir: A critical analysis

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Abstract

Jammu and Kashmir, a strategically located state and a source of continued dispute between India and Pakistan, has been rocked by insurgency since the late eighties. The insurgency has been simmering in the region since then though its nature and its intensity have varied over time. It is beyond a shadow of a doubt that whenever and where ever insurgency erupts, there is an urgent need on the part of the state to counter and quell it as it impinges heavily on the security, stability and integrity of the state. Moreover, it also causes enormous loss at the level of man and material. The present paper examines the concept of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Then it attempts to analyses the counterinsurgency strategy of the Indian state in Jammu and Kashmir. It suggests that insurgency in Kashmir is essentially a political issue and the belief of the state that it can battle insurgency through the use of both military and winning hearts and minds (WHAM) strategy is an underestimation of the ground reality in Kashmir.

Keywords: Counterinsurgency, strategy, critical, analysis, underestimation

Introduction

Why Insurgency Occurs and How to Combat It

Before analysing the concept of counterinsurgency, it is worthwhile to analyse the meaning of the term 'insurgency'. Simply put, 'insurgency' encompasses all violent struggles against the state by a group of people who try to secure political control over an area and its population. Insurgency is said to be an unconventional and protracted form of warfare in which dissatisfied groups tend to take action against the constitutional authority of a nation-state through the use of subversion, coercion, terrorism, guerrillas warfare and other such violent tactics ^[1]. The objective of insurgency may vary from case to case. It could be a demand for reform in policies, autonomy, succession or replacement of incumbent government through a quick seizure of power. Renowned scholar Bard E O Neil has argued that "Insurgency is a struggle between a non-ruling group and ruling authority in which the non-ruling group deliberately uses political resources and violence to reformulate, sustain or to destroy the basis of legitimacy of one or more aspect of politics ^[2]." As insurgency threatens the internal security of a state, inflicts severe costs in terms of human and material resources and also puts a question mark on the state's monopoly over coercion and casts a shadow on its legitimacy, it requires a whole new strategy on the part of the established government to tackle it through a well-calibrated strategy. And this strategy is called counterinsurgency (COIN).

Counterinsurgency means all the measures and efforts a state takes to suppress and defeat insurgency within its territory. And these measures are not confined to just military operations. They include military, political, economic and other psychological measures taken by a state to win over the hearts and minds of the larger population. Furthermore, what forms counterinsurgency would finally take largely depend on the nature, objective and operational strategy of the insurgents and the demography and the culture of the infested area.

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¹ For details see Steven Metz and Raymond Millen, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in 21st Century: Conceptualizing Threat and response*, Strategic Study Institute, November 2004.

² Bard. E. O. Neill, *Insurgency and Terrorism: From Revolution to Apocalypse*, Virginia Potomac Books, 1964, pp. 46-48.

According to Scott Moore, “Counterinsurgency is an integrated set of political, economic and security measures intended to prevent the reoccurrence of armed violence, creating and maintaining of stable political, economic, and social structures and resolving the underlying causes of insurgency in order to establish lasting peace [3].” Support and sympathy of the local population to the cause of insurgency acts as oxygen in sustaining it. Therefore, an effective counterinsurgency strategy should focus on winning the hearts and minds of the inhabitants of the insurgency-infested area. In his foundational work, ‘Counterinsurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice’, French scholar David Galula also prioritized the establishment of effective communication with civilians. He treats this as an essential condition for the success of counter-insurgency operations [4].

In countering insurgency, two broad strategies are available to a state: the first strategy is militaristic and relies on the indiscriminate use of force. It largely depends on the military and other coercive agencies of the state and makes use of force to curb and quell insurgency. The second strategy, though, uses force and coercion, but largely relies on political measures as well as economic inducements. This strategy is called ‘Winning Hearts and Minds’ (WHAM).

Insurgency in Kashmir: An Overview

The purpose of the article is not to go into the details of the genesis and the causes of the insurgency in Kashmir. The Kashmir insurgency [5] has both internal as well as external dimensions. Internally, the erosion of democratic processes and gradual dilution of Article 370 that give autonomy to the state lies at the roots of disaffection and frustration that has developed among the people of Kashmir.

From 1953-89, successive central governments interfered in the administrative affairs of the state, imprisoned popular leaders and installed puppet regimes in Srinagar [6]. Externally, Pakistan, an adversarial neighbour of India, with whom India had a dispute over Kashmir since the beginning, left no stone unturned in fomenting disturbance in Kashmir and in aiding and abetting insurgency through moral, material and military means [7]. Pakistan’s intelligence agency (ISI) trains militants and sends them across the border to stir insurgency in Kashmir. Unable to take control of Kashmir through conventional wars Pakistan fought with India [8], it fuels a proxy war in Kashmir as a low-cost strategy.

The armed insurgency in Kashmir broke out in 1989 and since then, mass agitations, strikes, civilian killings and

kidnappings have become commonplace in the region. The alleged rigging of the 1987 state assembly elections acted as a catalytic event for the birth of insurgency. Pent up hopelessness and frustration built over the years in the Kashmiri population poured out in the form of insurgency. During the 1980s, the Centre under the prime ministership of Indira Gandhi took control over the local politics of Kashmir. A severe crackdown was carried out on insurgent groups and the extra-ordinary law ‘Terrorists and Disruptive Activities Act’ (TADA) was imposed in the state in an effort to stall violent activities against the Indian state. In such circumstances, the gun became the symbol of revolt and an instrument to achieve the power which Kashmiris thought had long been denied to them. By 1994, insurgency in Kashmir acquired a brutal form. The Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) and Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) were important insurgent outfits that recruited and trained Kashmiri youth to fight against the atrocities committed by the Indian state in Kashmir. And this fighting has now lasted for more than three decades [9].

From its peak in 1995 to now, there has been a perceptible decline in the violent activities of insurgents and also a decrease in the killing of civilians and security forces. According to data provided in the Ministry of Home Affairs’ annual report for 2012-13, incidents of terrorist violence reduced from 499 in 2009 to 192 in 2012 [10]. The year 2012 was perceived as a year when ‘normalcy returned’ to the Valley. In that year, more than 1.2 million tourists visited Kashmir and the lowest number of deaths were reported since the 1990s.

Table 1: Violent Incidents in the Valley (2005- 12)*

| Year | Incidents | SFS Killed | Civilians Killed | Terrorists Killed |
|------|-----------|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 2005 | 1990 | 189 | 557 | 917 |
| 2006 | 1667 | 151 | 389 | 591 |
| 2007 | 1092 | 110 | 158 | 472 |
| 2008 | 708 | 75 | 91 | 339 |
| 2009 | 499 | 79 | 71 | 239 |
| 2010 | 488 | 69 | 47 | 232 |
| 2011 | 340 | 33 | 31 | 100 |
| 2012 | 220 | 15 | 15 | 72 |

*Source: MHA Annual Report 2012-13

The perceptible decline in the intensity of insurgency was achieved due to several developments that took place during this period. The Indian government initiated the political process in Kashmir and conducted elections in 1996, 2002 and 2009. India also engaged the external patrons of insurgents in Pakistan through talks and arrived at a host of agreements during this long period [11]. The changed perception of Kashmiri youth also helped mitigate the severity of the insurgency. Disillusioned with the idea of insurgency, the youth once again placed their faith in democratic processes as the appropriate way to redress their grievances.

However, when the insurgency in Kashmir does not follow a predictable or linear model of progression. From 2014 onwards, a new period of militancy rose in Kashmir. The

³ R Scott Moore, The Basics of Counterinsurgency, DOD Dictionary of Military and associated Terms, Joint Publication dated 12th April 2001.

⁴ For details: David Galula, Counter Insurgency Warfare: Theory and Practice, Pager. Security International West Post. 1964.

⁵ Various terms have been used by analysts and security experts to describe the ongoing internal conflict in Kashmir in addition to the term insurgency. Militancy, Hybrid War, Proxy War, cross border terrorism are some other expressions that have been used. The top officials of security forces have frequently used the term militancy to describe the conflict in Kashmir. Though all the terms used have some relevance and their own context, but this paper uses the term insurgency and militancy in the similar sense.

⁶ For details see, Happyymon Jacob: Conflict in Kashmir in Moid Yusuf (ed), Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in South Asia, Washington 2014, 27-30.

⁷ Sumit Ganguly. The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace. Cambridge University Press 1977, 82-83.

⁸ India had three wars with Pakistan over Kashmir in 1947, 65, the Kargil conflict in 1999.

⁹ Sushma Gupta, The Changing Dynamics of Insurgency in Kashmir, Global Thought, April 2021, 93-97.

¹⁰ Ministry of Home Affairs Annual Report 2012-13.

¹¹ For details of Indo-Pak relations see Simeerjeet Ghosh: Indo-Pak Composite Dialogue, 2008, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies Special Report no. 65, February 2009 <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/93340/IPCS-Special-Report-53.pdf>

killing of Burhan Wani, a popular militant and a top commander of the Hizbul Mujahideen by security forces in July 2016 sparked violent protests across the Valley. This new militancy was different from its earlier phases for several reasons. In this new phase of militancy, social media has been extensively used by militants to mobilize support among the masses and to carry out their propaganda against the government. Social media also helped the insurgents in recruiting and training new entrants. This virtual space was also used by Pakistani terrorist groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba, Hizbul Mujahideen and Jaish-e-Muhammad to augment the recruitment and training of new militants^[12]. Another worrisome trend in this phase was the increased participation of the local population in insurgency measures. In 2018, the killing of more local militants than foreign militants highlights this trend. A new breed of militants is rising in Kashmir argues, Jason Burke, who are young educated and tech-savvy^[13].

Moreover, increasing coordination and cooperation among local and foreign militants poses new challenges for Indian security forces. These local militants are not hardcore terrorists, fully equipped with training and weapons, but are new entrants who do their assigned missions that is to carry out violence and then return to their normal activities. As such it is difficult for counterinsurgency forces to trace them as their names do not appear in their lists^[13A].

Another significant development in this phase is the ideological shift that has taken place in the militant movement in Kashmir. It is apt to mention here that religion has always been used as a tool of mobilization and provided a ready ideology to insurgents all through the insurgency period. But its nature has changed with time. The militant movement has started drifting towards radical Islam propagated through social media leading to mass radicalization. In February 2016, the Islamic State (ISIS) for the first time announced its plan to establish a foothold in Kashmir^[14]. Another change seen in this period is the increasing support and sympathy of the masses for the militants. Incidents of mob support for militants through pelting of stones at the Indian Army, mass gatherings at the funerals of militants, disturbing of counter-terror operations and breaking of curfews have increased in recent times. Reports suggest that agitators travel miles to the site of encounters to pelt stones and disturb security forces^[15]. In short, the impact of this newfangled support for insurgency in the current phase of militancy has accentuated anti-Indian feelings and further alienated the local population. A popular perception circulated among Kashmiris is that India is a 'colonizer' and an 'occupier' of Kashmir.

On 14th February 2019, after three decades of militancy, the region saw its biggest terror attack in Pulwama, in which 40 Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel were killed in a Vehicle-Borne Improvised Explosive Device (VBIED) attack. The attack exacerbated already strained ties between India and Pakistan, bringing the two historically antagonistic nations to the brink of war. India retaliated by conducting airstrikes on the border town of Balakot in Pakistan's

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province on 26 February 2019. The Pulwama attack called for deep introspection and a serious debate on the changing nature of the insurgency and the need for a well-planned counterinsurgency strategy.

Barely six months after the Pulwama attack, the right-wing BJP government at the centre on 5 August 2019 promulgated a Presidential order that abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The state of Jammu and Kashmir not only lost its special status but didn't even remain a state. Through a reorganization act, Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two separate Union territories Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. More than two years have passed since the decision was taken. Though there has been a significant decline in terror attacks, insurgency still continues in the region despite the heavy presence of security forces.

Counterinsurgency Strategy of the Indian State

The counterinsurgency strategy adopted by the Indian state in Kashmir continuously changed because of the shift in the nature and intensity of the armed struggle. Varying over time and space, the Indian state response to the struggle was influenced by multiple factors such as developments within the militant movement, the extent of local cooperation, the changing domestic and international environment, Pakistan's role in fuelling the insurgency and the choice of counterinsurgency strategies available to the state.

As mentioned earlier, violence in Kashmir gained new salience in the post-1980s era. The year 1989 marked the beginning of a full-fledged armed insurgency against the Indian state. The struggle was not merely a reaction to the presence of security forces in Kashmir or just an agitation against the rigging of the 1987 state assembly elections, it was an outburst of the anger and alienation that had accumulated in the minds of the people of Kashmir over the years due to the politics and the policies of the governments both at the Centre and the state level.

The initial response of the central and state governments to the armed struggle was governed by their understanding of the situation. The struggle was perceived as a routine law and order problem that could be managed through conventional law machinery that is the local police. In addition to the law and order problem, the armed insurgency was also viewed as a strategic threat to the security and integrity of the nation. Since the police was unable to handle the situation, it was replaced by paramilitary forces. The CRPF was the first force that took charge of the situation. Later on, the Indian state deployed 1.5 lakh security personnel in Kashmir^[16]. Bringing in a large number of armed forces was part of the militaristic approach employed by the Indian state. The security forces had a tough time fighting the insurgency as the situation kept deteriorating. A successful counterinsurgency operation requires a great deal of coordination among its various units such as the Army and the police. As such in 1993, for the first time, a unified command structure was set up in Kashmir. In addition to paramilitary forces, it included the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Forces (CRPF) and Special Forces (SF). Rashtriya Rifles (RF), a force specialized in

¹² Vinay Kaura, Countering Insurgency in Kashmir, The Cyber Dimension, Occasional Papers, January 2017, Observer Research Foundation, pp 4

¹³ Jason Burke, The Guardian, 11 August 2013, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/aug/11/kashmir-conflict-new-wave-militants>.

¹⁴ Khalid Shah, Ideological Shift: Public support and Social Media: The New in Kashmir new Militancy, ORF papers, January 2020, 17-18.

¹⁵ Ibid. p. 18.

¹⁶ Victoria Sheffield, Kashmir in Conflict: Kashmir, Pakistan and unending War, London 2003, 40.

counterinsurgency operations were deployed in Kashmir in 1994^[17].

With the coming of foreign mercenaries and the augmentation in the fighting capacities of local insurgents, the insurgency in Kashmir became more violent and brutal as the years passed by. In 1993, the Jammu and Kashmir and Liberation Front (JKLF) took control of the Hazrat Bal Mosque and in 1995 another mosque Char-e-Sharif was seized by Afghan militants^[18]. Fighting its own people in the sensitive state of Jammu and Kashmir posed an insurmountable challenge for the Indian state, specifically in devising a viable counterinsurgency strategy. When a nation-state uses force against its own people, an important question that needs to be answered is how much violence is to be used by the state and exactly when?

If repressive policies and excesses committed by security forces lead to the violation of human rights in the region, the legitimacy of the state comes under serious suspicion^[19]. Echoing the same sentiments a Srinagar-based journalist once asked, "Would it be wrong to say that the greater the use of violence against those who question its legitimacy, the more Indian government expresses doubt about its legitimate authority?"^[20].

In 2017, the Indian armed forces launched 'Operation All Out' to crush militant networks, their top commanders and their over ground workers^[21]. This strategic operation was based on a well-calibrated plan and intelligence gathering. A district-wise survey was conducted to identify military hideouts. This operation relocated more than 2000 army troops to South Kashmir. Six new Army camps were set up and the military once again carried out mass cordon and search operations. The analysis of the coercive approach employed by the Indian state would not be complete without mentioning the extra-ordinary laws that have been imposed in Kashmir all through the period. Many of them are still in operation^[22]. These extra-ordinary laws give enormous power to the authorities and security forces and impinge heavily on the rights and liberty of the people. Promulgated in 1978, the J&K Public Safety Act (PSA) empowers security forces to detain any person who acts in any manner against the maintenance of public order and security of the state^[23]. This act is still in operation with some relaxations in its provisions^[24]. Another law enacted in 1990 was the Jammu & Kashmir Disturbed Area Act which empowered the Officer of "at least Sub Inspector rank to launch search operation in the area notified as disturbed"^[25]. Another extra-ordinary law, the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA), a colonial legacy carried into independent India,

was extended to the state in 1990 and is still in operation. This act gives enormous power to the armed forces and makes them free from prosecution while conducting their counterinsurgency operations^[26].

Another important feature of coercive counterinsurgency strategy is the use of surrendered militants by the Armed Forces. These militants have been employed the armed forces in special operation groups. They got rehabilitated by the security forces and the information provided by them is being used by the Armed forces in carrying out their operation^[27].

Winning Hearts and Minds (WHAM) strategy

By 1995 the insurgency in Kashmir was perceptibly declining. According to Brigadier AN Ray "Insurgency has been capped and brought down to acceptable levels^[28]."

As calm and peace started prevailing in Kashmir, the central government showed its desire to resume democratic processes in Kashmir. In March 1996, elections in Jammu and Kashmir were announced. After 1996, democratic elections were held again in 2002 and 2009. An expert on Kashmir, Rekha Chaudhary argues "Taking an initiative in holding the election in 1996 was an effective strategy not only in tackling armed insurgency but also in creating a situation in which the political vacuum could be filled^[29]."

In the post-1995 period, the Indian state used force in a more discriminate manner and also tried to win the trust of the Kashmiris by resuming the political processes in the state. By 2000, the realization also dawned on armed forces and voices were raised against the brute use of force on civilians. The then Chief of Army Staff General S Padmanabhan said "In the history of mankind no insurgency has been solved by the military^[30]."

Maturing from a purely coercive response, the counterinsurgency strategy of the Indian state acquired a more nuanced and balanced understanding of the situation and as such along with force, the strategy of winning hearts & minds was also applied in Kashmir. It is worth mentioning here that as a primary model of counterinsurgency operations, WHAM came to prominence in modern times. The British followed this strategy in Malaya in 1950 and in Northern Ireland in the last decades of the twentieth century as an important approach. Both Britain and the United States have used it extensively and this approach has evoked serious debate in the West in recent times^[31].

It is to be noted that WHAM has to be a long-drawn strategy and not a periodic response to militancy. The Indian army, which has had the primary responsibility in Kashmir's counterinsurgency operations, launched its WHAM strategy

¹⁷ Rekha Chaudhary, India's response to the Kashmir Insurgency in Moid Yusuf (ed) *Insurgency and Counter insurgency in South Asia*, Washington DC. 2014. P. 52.

¹⁸ Wajahat Habibullah, *Seize: Hazrat Bal Kashmir*, Indian Review, Vol. 1, No. 3, 2002, pp. 73-98.

¹⁹ <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/10/kashmir-un-reports-serious-abuses>

²⁰ Manisha Gangadgar, op sited, p. 36.

²¹ India Today, 19 July 2017. URL: <https://www.indiatoday.in/magazine/31-07-2017>.

²² The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act

²³ <http://jkhome.nic.in/pdf/PSA0001.pdf>.

²⁴ Mufti Mohammed Government in Kashmir declared that it would gradually de notify certain areas. *The Hindu* 26 March 2015. <https://www.thehindu.com/archive/web/2015/03/26/>

²⁵ THE ARMED FORCES (JAMMU AND KASHMIR) SPECIAL POWERS ACT, 1990 ACT NO. 21 OF 1990, URL: <https://www.mha.gov.in/sites/default/files/The%20Armed%20Forces%20%28Jammu%20and%20Kashmir>

²⁶ URL: THE ARMED FORCES (JAMMU AND KASHMIR) SPECIAL POWERS ACT, 1990

<https://legislative.gov.in/actsofparliamentfromtheyear/armed-forces-jammu-and-kashmir-special-powers-act-1990>

²⁷ Rekha Chaudhary, India's Response to Kashmir Insurgency, op sited, p. 55.

²⁸ Ray in an interview April 1995, quoted in Victoria Schofield's *Kashmir in Conflict: India Pakistan and the Unending War*. London, I B Tauris 2003 pp 172

²⁹ Rekha Chowdhary in Moeed Yusuf (ed) *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in South Asia*, Washington DC, United States Institute of Peace, 2014, 62.

³⁰ Quoted in AG Noorani's Question about Kashmir Ceasefire. *Economic & Political Weekly*, Volume 35 no 45, 2000 pp 3949-55

³¹ Rahul K Bhonsle, *Winning Hearts and Minds: Lessons from Jammu and Kashmir*, Manekshaw paper no 14, 2009, p 9

in 1998 under the banner of 'Operation Sadbhavana'. A budget of Rs 40 million was sanctioned by the Indian state to implement various projects under this operation ^[32].

From Rs 40 million in 1998, the budget of this operation was increased exponentially over time, totalling Rs 5500 million in 2020 ^[33]. Demographically, one of the key beneficiaries of this operation was the youth of Kashmir. The Indian army website states that the army has built 46 schools in addition to assistance provided to nearly 1900 government schools for their upkeep and modernization in Kashmir. In addition, the Army arranged more than 100 national integration tours for the youth of Kashmir to introduce them to the history and culture of India. The Indian army also promoted the culture of sports, music and arts among young Kashmiris. Other initiatives taken by the Army include setting up of vocational training centres, the building of health & financial awareness as well as the launch of skill development programs ^[34]. However, Operation Sadbhavana did not produce the expected outcome as this operation was launched by the Indian army and thus viewed with suspicion and doubt by Kashmiris. Instead of a goodwill initiative, the operation was viewed as a tactic by the army to justify its occupation of Kashmir ^[35].

In August 2019, just weeks after the revocation of Article 370 on 5 August, the army launched an operation called 'Mission Reach Out'. Providing assistance to locals in procuring essential services such as ration, water and medicines was the aim of this mission as Kashmir was placed under a heavy lockdown by the Centre. In 2021, the Army started another initiative called mission 'Pehal' in which face-to-face interactions were held between army officers and Kashmiri youth. The purpose of the mission is to facilitate the exchange of their respective perspectives ^[36].

Conclusion

Like interstate wars, insurgencies and militant movements are also adverse and hostile events for the state as they inflict heavy losses and put a threat to the security and stability of the state. Underlying insurgencies are deep-rooted alienation and estrangement of the people of the affected area. In addition, the political and economic deprivation and exclusion further add fuel to the fire. While handling insurgencies and armed uprising always prove tough for the state constant external support from across the border make the task of the state all the more difficult. Kashmir is a glaring example of such an insurgency.

The counterinsurgency strategy of the Indian state has mainly gone through two broad phases. Initially, when the arms struggle broke out in Kashmir the state because of its naive understanding of the situation treated it as a law and order problem. Though it is also perceived as a threat to the security of India because of the involvement of Pakistan in it. Applying coercive methods the state made use of massive and indiscriminate force to establish its edict in the state which was largely absent at that time. As the contours of insurgency change so do the counterinsurgency strategies of

the state. Realizing the value of democratic political processes as a means to channelize people's expectations, the Indian state moved on to the political dimension away from a purely coercive approach. The elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir in 1996, 2002, and again in 2009 and lastly in 2014. As the time passed by, to cut the umbilical cord of Pakistan's support to insurgent the Indian state engaged its neighbour Pakistan in talks and dialogues.

The second phase in the counterinsurgency strategy adopted by the Indian state, begin with the launch of the Sadbhavana Mission, from 1998 onwards. The Indian state realized that the problem of militancy in Kashmir could not be tackled merely by coercive means which included arrests, search, seizures, frisking, encounters, cordoning off, and killing of militants. It also includes the deployment of extra-ordinary laws such as the Public Safety Act, the Armed Forces Special Power Act in disturbed states. The Indian state realized that without winning Hearts and Minds of Kashmiris no lasting solution and enduring peace could be established.

Therefore, applying its WHAM strategy the Indian state introduced several schemes for the economic development and welfare of the people. A huge financial sum has been earmarked for the development of Kashmir. New development schemes have been launched and day to day needs of the people were taken care of. One thing seems to be sure so long as the insurgent groups have the support of local people and have legitimacy in their eyes; it would be difficult to find a lasting solution to the violence inflicted by the militants.

In recent times, new challenges to the counterinsurgency strategy of the state stem from cyberspace. The state needs to make use of the same social media which the militants use to launch counter-campaign and to communicate effectively with the people of the region, to discredit and delegitimize militancy and to restore the faith of the people in the efficacy and the effectiveness of the state apparatus and the democratic processes. The continuing violence in the state bears enough proof of the fact that the back of the militancy has yet not been broken. To solve the problem, the Indian state should not only focus on good governance and economic development but on giving governance back in the hands of the people.

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³² Indian army's Operation Sadbhavana [https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplate/firmTempSimple.aspx?MnId="+7sOnDpi00smvjEaGa8ujA==&ParentID=FPbIVuBSzczE9iJ1Oki0LZA==](https://indianarmy.nic.in/Site/FormTemplate/firmTempSimple.aspx?MnId=)

³³ Ibid

³⁴ Ibid

³⁵ KD Chakrabarti, Sadbhavna & the Paradox of Winning Hearts and Minds, Economic & Political Weekly no 24, May 2015, 21- 23

³⁶ Javaid Traili, Mission Pehal, Jammu & Kashmir Policy Institute, 9 March 2021