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**Religiosity, Temperament, Character and Socio-demographic profile of Released and Surrendered Militants of Kashmir Valley**

### **Abstract**

**Background:** Militancy has been recognized as a grave problem which gives birth to lot of other social problems. An armed struggle for the liberation of the areas of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from the state of India began in 1989. Hundreds of young men crossed the border into Pakistan for arms training, riding the wave of popular sentiment (Sonpar, 2001). These young men demanded freedom of Kashmir from India and they are called as “militants” in Kashmir. Keeping in mind the political unrest in Kashmir, a need is felt to understand the psychological and personal factors, which are related to their shift from the position of a bystander in the pre-militant stage to their rebirth as militants? How their religiosity (or their perception of being religious) makes them different from their peers who remained indifferent to armed conflict or choose not to be a part of it, makes an important research problem worth investigation. Besides this, militant’s temperament and character may also play an important role in understanding their involvement in violent activities. **Method:** The nature of the research was purposive with non-experimental design of three groups i.e. released, surrendered militants and non-militant groups of Kashmir valley. The sample included 60 participants in each group of released, surrendered militants and non-militants. Both released and surrendered militants were approached using official and personal contacts. They were fully assured about confidentiality of responses and written consent to participate in the study was also obtained. General Health Questionnaire (GHQ-12) was administered to exclude all those cases having psychotic or any other mental illness. Data was collected by individual administration of Religious Personality Scale and Temperament and Character Inventory. **Results:** The data was analysed by descriptive and inferential statistics such as chi-square, t-test and multiple regression. The main findings of the study revealed that 75% of released and 83% surrendered militants have education upto 9th Class and 15% of released militants reported that they were doing graduation when they joined militant group. 15% of surrendered militants were doing university courses when they joined militant group. 55% of released militants informed that their family monthly income was upto Rs 5000. Most of them reported that they are from rural background and father’s occupation was farming. Most of them joined militant group at the young age and released militants were arrested twice which indicates that they have spent maximum duration in jail. Released militants were observed to be more religious as

compared to surrendered militants. They explored unfamiliar places and situations even if most people think it is a waste of time, sometimes described as sensation seeking. They get excited about new ideas and activities easily, for they tend to seek thrills, excitement and adventures. It was found that surrendered militants have approach-avoidance conflict, were more excitable, dramatic impressionistic and temperamental individuals who took decisions quickly on incomplete information and controlled their impulses poorly. They were often distractible and have short span of attention that is they have difficulty in staying focused for a long time. Hence they preferred to make quick decisions on incomplete facts. Surrendered militants were quicker to lose their temper, showed and expressed anger outwardly when they did not get what they wanted. It was found that released militants were resistant to negative emotions like anxiety, depression, and anger; they were often cheerful, overconfident, and boastful regardless of the situation. Released militants were highly self directed persons, described as mature, strong, self sufficient, reliable, goal-oriented, constructive and well integrated. Released and non militants were high on cooperativeness, which means that they are empathetic, tolerant, compassionate, supportive, fair and principled individuals who enjoy being of service to others and try to cooperate with others as much as possible. Novelty seeking and cooperativeness accounted significantly in the prediction of religious personality in released militants. In surrendered militant group, novelty seeking and persistence accounted significantly in the prediction of religious personality. Self transcendence emerged as the most significant predictor of religious personality in non-militants. **Conclusion:** To conclude, the results are in general agreement with the previous findings mainly drawn on terrorist samples in the world. The findings have clear and strong implication for the cause of peace and security in the ongoing intractable conflict like the one in Kashmir. Thus, paving the way for psychological interventions in bringing the large sections of Kashmiri youth in the main stream of society.

**Key Words:** Released Militants, Surrendered Militants, Religiosity, Temperament, Character, Socio-demographic profile and Kashmir.