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**Topic:** Class and Religion in Kashmir Conflict: Examining the Role of Kashmiri Pandits (1947-1990)

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### **Findings**

The study aims to provide a fresh entry point into the Kashmir conflict by situating class processes and religion in conjunction with desiring relations. Particularly, a post-Marxist approach informed by the 'schizoanalysis' of Deleuze and Guattari is the starting point of research. This means looking at the process of desiring-production of Kashmiris. In tandem, the communitarian identity politics of Kashmiri Pandit has also been examined to provide a counter-narrative to the prevailing hegemonic self-narration. The period of focus of the study is the post-partition period up until the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990.

Desire is not viewed as mediating reality (psychoanalysis) but rather as directly affecting social reality (schizoanalysis). Class is understood as a process and not a sociological identity. This is consonant with Marxian political economy where labour is seen as a category specific to state societies.

It is proposed that the history, politics and culture of Kashmir should be viewed as a *Nadur* (lotus-stem)/rhizome. The rhizome, a biological entity, implies heterogeneity, asignification and rootlessness. The study argues that there has occurred an 'oedipalization' of the Kashmiri conflict. This means a literal triangulation akin to the Oedipal complex and clamping down on the lines of flight of Kashmiri desiring-production and the multiplicity of its cultural heritage. The term desiring-production invokes investigation of capitalist society as a system of generalized production i.e. production of commodities and desire.

It is argued that Kashmiri's political unconscious has been oedipalized by the 'despotic signifier' of nationalism. Third-world nationalism is explained as a movement caught in the

axiomatization of capital i.e. simultaneous double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Third-world nationalism deterritorializes colonial social relations and power matrixes. However, the promise of anti-colonial national liberation is reterritorialized by the reconstitution of power and exploitation in the guise of the nation-state. Expansion of pre-existing boundaries of the nation-state and claims of sovereignty on contested regions can be seen as an example of such territorializations.

With this framework in mind, a historical analysis of state and pre-state societies has been conducted. A schizoanalysis of desiring-relations proposes a view of production relations via production, reproduction and antiproduction. The Brahmanical socio-cultural structures of the early state in Kashmiri were deterritorialized and there occurred a transition of Kashmiri society to Islam. This decoding of flows released new energies and saw the introduction of many new crafts and trades to supplement Kashmir's one-crop economy. These flows were reterritorialized towards the new despotic signification of Islam. The loyalty towards Islam was overcoded as the loyalty towards the Sultan and the state. Towards the end of the Sultanate, there were various power struggles and the Chaks became the last sovereign rulers of Kashmir before the Mughal invasion.

British colonialism introduced modern capitalist subjectivity and codified religious assemblages into tightly compartmentalized understandings, ossifying them discursively and materially. These religious segmentations were later over-determined by the global political events of the post-partition period- Cold War, the Algerian resistance to French colonialism, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Afghan *Mujahideen* uprising against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. The communitarian identity politics of both Kashmiri Muslims and Kashmiri Pandits became polarized and over-determined by their respective chauvinisms and their response to such international political developments.

The rhizomatic formations and assemblages of Kashmiri culture were disrupted by the puritanistic Islam of Jamaat and the *Akhand Bharat* vision of Hindu nationalists. This was witnessed in asignifying ruptures of religious relations such as the *Moi-i-Muqqadas* agitations (1963) and the Parmeswari Handoo agitations of the Kashmiri Pandits (1967). Both types of religious chauvinisms sought to Oedipalize Kashmiri desire in their own way.

Primary evidence collected for this research from the Directorate of Archives, Jammu and Kashmir (Srinagar) and through open-ended discussions with numerous Kashmiri participants highlights religious segmentations, differences in languages of belonging and their respective views of the conflict. An interesting fact that emerged was that all participants, irrespective of religion and caste, acknowledged the rhizomatic culture of Pandit-Muslim assemblages in Kashmir.

Among the interviewees, neither Kashmiri Muslims nor Kashmiri Pandits had monolithic views. Kashmiri Pandits in particular were segmented between the migrants, non-migrants and migrant-returns/in-betweens. The study demonstrates that the non-migrants have a much more nuanced and sophisticated understanding of the Kashmir conflict which doesn't seek to produce an 'othering' of Kashmiri Muslims.

The research observed that while both communities sought reconciliation, there was no mutual consensus among them on how this could be achieved or how the conflict could be resolved. A key theme was that none of the participants had faith in either of the nation-states (India and Pakistan) and believed that there had been a systematic betrayal of Kashmiri desiring-production in the name of 'nationalism'.