

# THE HINDU BusinessLine

## Violence in the Valley

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The anger It has a history and we must understand it

*It offers an opportunity to take a relook at the crisis and correct mistakes. The state*

The ongoing violence in Kashmir is seen primarily from a negative perspective as a tool to bounce back and become politically relevant, bleeding-heart liberal state and its (in)action, and security forces bouncing back with a 'we told you so' and 'discuss AFSPA'. What is forgotten conveniently in the blame game is the loss of achievements of the security forces in reducing the level of violence, tough bargaining parties and the slow process of normalisation.

Between 2010 and 2012, there was a clear window of opportunity for the state and the Kashmiri civil society. Violence had come down drastically, thanks to the state looking for a political opening, thanks to the civil society; and there was a moment to and fro led by interlocutors. It was a moment to be seized.

Some early action and few risks could have placed Kashmir politics in a different direction with removal of security forces and AFSPA from the urban areas, at least from the beginning.

That moment was lost; and the civil society in Kashmir and the state are back to square one over again. The young lives that were lost should mean something for both the state and the people together. One cannot blame the other completely to go back to what they have. New Delhi has to think beyond having a BJP government in Srinagar.

The ongoing violence perhaps presents another moment again. Can we, as the state, think again, and ensure that there are no more lives lost?

### Wrong reading

First, the new development should make New Delhi understand that the end of the conflict in Kashmir. Unfortunately, since 2004-06, we started believing ourselves to be on the right track. We started measuring the 'return of peace' with 'absence of violations,' 'number of foreign militants present' and more importantly 'number of tourists'.

The last one was a self-defeating point in particular. All those who have been near the Shri Mata Devi shrine in Jammu region are counted as tourists visiting J&K. The equation is simple: no violence, less foreign militants, high voter turnout, increased tourists — put Kashmir on the map.

Second, the state should take political control and not fire from the shoulders of the central government, a South Asian trait, visible in India's approach in J&K, and also in its northeastern states. The state in eliminating militancy and to an extent reducing the 'physical' violence.

But in the process, there is bound to be an element of 'emotional' violence built into the process. This is not just collateral, but inevitable. The replacement of militant violence with a more subtle expression of violence getting internalised. This internalisation of violence by the people is the real danger. Violence led by militants.

### Healing touch, again

Third, the absence of a 'localised' healing touch makes the above internal violence more unfortunate that the Mufti is not here at this moment; his presence would have helped in the Valley and in his dealing with New Delhi and also the BJP in the State. Unfortunately, the last year was spent politically in dealing with the BJP, than addressing real issues.

However, she is still capable of bringing the society back to normalcy. She has to reach out to various sections of the society and use her party leaders to talk to others, including the security forces can bring down the external violence using force; but only Mehkashin can bring down the violence of the youth through politics. Perhaps, the time is ripe for a policy of 'healing touch'.

Fourth, the Civil Society of Kashmir will also have to seize the moment. From p educational institutions — there are numerous reasons for the youths to pick u guns, even if it was for social media. Undoubtedly, none will deny the long pen society not blame only the security forces and New Delhi. If the present situatio Kashmir back to the 1990s.

New Delhi will only be willing to fire once again through the shoulders of the se may lead to further loss of lives. Let those lives lost during the last few days, ar as an eye opener to prevent any further loss.

The separatists in Valley — may come with further political slogans to revive th relevant. Both the civil society and the State should understand their narrow p  
Don't repeat mistakes

Finally, New Delhi should take responsibility for what has happened in the last are not repeated again. It should have seized the moment during 2010-12 and from few urban towns could have been a great beginning. There were substanti interlocutors' report.

While the immediate priority for the State should be to address the violence, lc political engagement. Let New Delhi and the BJP in the State encourage Mehbr present level of violence comes down, let there be a serious discussion in handi police in select towns and remove the military and AFSPA from those places.

The ongoing violence do present a moment. Let the state and society seize the the loss of lives — whether youths or security forces.

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