

# **DIGITAL JIHAD**

## **Global Trends, Architecture and Footprints in Kashmir**



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VICTORY THROUGH VISION



# DIGITAL JIHAD

## Global Trends, Architecture and Footprints in Kashmir

### Chapter I

*“The Greatest Jihad is to battle your own soul, to fight the evil within yourself”.*

— Prophet Muhammad (PBUH)

*“So we want an Islamic State where Islamic is not law just in books but enforced, and enforced with Determination. There is no space or no room for democratic consultation.”*

— Abu Bakar Bashir

Indonesian Muslim Cleric

(Leader of Jamaah Ansharut Tauhid)

### Introduction

The twenty-first century has been embraced by the Information Revolution in all dimensions of life. The desire of a common man to remain virtually and digitally present in cyber domain has been suitably supported by the advent of omnipresent internet services, availability of cheaper computers and smartphones and the booming market of websites and mobile-based applications for social networking. It has sparked an information revolution around the world, leading people, governments and organisations, both publicly and privately, to re-evaluate their information management strategies and participate in an all-encompassing world. It has challenged the hierarchy of information, opened the approach and created a completely new ecosystem of information exchange. Technological innovations are fast and are constantly turning barriers, borders and controls irrelevant. Technological advancements and the ease of access to these technologies for an extensive audience, have created unlimited avenues to broadcast and

share information. Since its creation, the internet has introduced various platforms for communication among the masses like YouTube, WhatsApp and Twitter, to name a few. It is quite evident that among the common masses we also have terrorists and their affiliated organisations using the same internet and social networking facilities. The cyber Caliphate being run and flagged by Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS), Al-Qaeda, Al-Shabaab, Boko Haram, Taliban and other minor terrorist groups, is growing exponentially in the soil of cyberspace. It flourishes photos, audios, videos, messages and well-drafted magazines like *Dabiq*, which are easily shared on digital platforms. Tweets-retweets, likes and shares on pages are the nutrients on which Jihad is growing in the digital domain. ISIS and other terror groups use such digital platforms to radicalise the youths, who then join ISIS and other terror groups active in the conflict zone; such is the power of the penetration of the emerging 'digital Jihad'. Junaid Hussain (needs a special mention in cyber Jihad) and Anwar al-Awlaki were the "*Osama bin Laden*" of digital Jihad and they laid the initial foundation of "**Cyber Caliphate.**" At the age of 15, Junaid created the team-hacker named **Team Poison**.<sup>1</sup> In 2012, he joined 'Operation Free Palestine' and, along with the group called Company Hacking Crew (ZHC), he stole credit card details from American and Israeli citizens as an act of retaliation for the Israeli attack on the Palestinians. **Team Poison** claimed hacking websites of NATO and Britain's Defence Ministry, and had obtained personal data from members of the English Defence League.<sup>2</sup> Hussain became the founding member of an English-language online recruitment collective within the Islamic State made up of a dozen members who the FBI dubbed "The Legion" and the "Raqqa 12".<sup>3</sup> Between 2014 and August 2015, an online group called the "Islamic State Hacking Division" under Junaid Hussain, aka "Abu Hussain al-Britani", carried out cyber intrusions on United States based websites, and publicly posted messages calling for ISIS followers to attack Americans. For example, on August 11, 2015, he posted a message on Twitter that contained the names and private personal identifying information of approximately 1,351 United States service members and government employees, along with the following statement: "[W]e are in your emails and computer systems, watching and recording your every move, we have your names and addresses, we are in your emails and social media accounts, we are extracting confidential data and passing on your personal information to the soldiers of the *Khilafah*, who soon with the permission of Allah will strike at your necks in your own lands!". However they were soon killed by drone attacks in the same month<sup>4</sup> but their legacy still endures and inspires thousands to follow their acts in cyberspace.

Following Junaid's death, a group of ISIS cyber supporters founded the hacking collective known as the **Islamic Cyber Army (ICA)**.<sup>5</sup> The rising trend of "Lone Wolf Attacks" all across the globe establishes the fact that many youths are using the internet for their self-radicalisation, thereby leaving no physical traces for security forces to track.

Radical Jihadists have devised methods to exploit social media to make a forceful impact, even though their numbers and strengths are minuscule as compared to the entire user base. In this case, the ISIS leads the way. It runs 'highly organised' social media campaign(s) using deceptive and propaganda tactics. The 'Cyber ISIS' under its umbrella once had 'United Cyber Caliphate', 'Islamic State of Hacking Division', 'Islamic Cyber Army', 'Cyber Rox Team' and 'Rabital-al-Ansar' operating together to spread the Islamic caliphate in cyber domain.<sup>6</sup> The new threat of cyber caliphate is growing in its impact and reach and have intensified the threats of online radicalisation, online recruitment and lone wolf attacks. The threat is further multiplied by numerous online publications, videos, graphics, photos and video games supporting the jihadist propaganda.

Kashmir, a core national issue, has been suffering from terrorism for the last three decades. The political turmoil in the past weakened the institutionalised approach to address the issue of terrorism holistically. With the power vacuum created by the fall of the state government and the changing dynamics of the Kashmiri society, a breeding environment has developed for all internal and external state and non-state actors, especially Pakistan, to support terrorism. The social and political situation in Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370, has become more fragile and unpredictable. In today's modern world where internet, mobile phones and virtual existence on social media platforms are the basic amenities of a common youth's life, it is almost impossible to prevent and contain a Kashmiri youth from the "ills" of internet-based "e-jihad" movement.

The statistics shows that the number of social network users in India was 258.27 million in 2019, a big leap from 168 million users in the year 2016.<sup>7</sup> The most popular social networks are YouTube, Facebook followed by WhatsApp. Facebook itself is projected to reach close to 319 million users by 2021. Hence, it is pertinent and urgent for all stakeholders of our national security to understand the menace of digital jihad, its endless reach and impact on the lives of our innocent youth. This research is aimed at deliberating on the impact of digital content available on the internet and social media platforms which are used for radicalising the youth of Kashmir.

## The Problems and Scope of Study

After studying the books and articles available on the internet, it was realised that, since the youths in any society are most lured to internet and social media platforms, therefore, they are also most affected by the impact of these new dimensions of information era. By the end of year 2019, in India there were 525 million active internet users<sup>8</sup> and 20 million active mobile phone internet users.<sup>9</sup> By January 2020 in India, there were 400 million active social media users<sup>10</sup> and hundred per cent<sup>11</sup> were accessing through mobile phones. Youths in Kashmir are also vulnerable due to their presence on various social media platforms and usage of mobile phones. Today all active terrorist organisations are exploiting these means to define their narrative and to influence the youth. The arrest of three boys from Hyderabad at Nagpur airport who tried to flee to join ISIS, suggests that our youths in Kashmir are also highly vulnerable to local and global digital jihad. Hence, as part of the security apparatus of national policy, we must analyse the behavioural patterns of our Kashmiri youths on internet to assess their vulnerability to online radicalisation. In the present time, mass media based on cyberspace has played a key role in influencing the mindsets of the masses. ISIS was at the epitome of running cyber jihad where, at one point of time, they had almost 200 million people as their social media followers, including followers from Kashmir. In Kashmir, post Burhan Wani's encounter, the complete dynamics of terrorism of Kashmir and its law and order situation has changed. Since the encounter on July 8, 2016, more than 80 youths have been killed and hundreds, including boys and girls, have been injured during the aftermath clashes. Presently, thousands of youth come together to show their presence during protests which often leads to aggressive stone-pelting and clashes with armed forces. Hundreds of youths are either arrested and put behind bars or are facing trial for being involved in terrorist incited incidents. Hence, it is essential to focus on youth and their vulnerabilities for tracing and then fighting the online radicalisation. The paper concentrates on the broad understanding of digital Jihad, cyber Caliphate of ISIS as a case study model, architecture of digital jihad, footprints of digital jihad in Kashmir, its modus operandi, vulnerabilities of youths and their impact in Kashmir. It will lay emphasis on measures to contain digital jihad in Kashmir and how security forces should engage youth as well as elements of digital Jihad in Kashmir. The study also focuses on the means to bring synergy and integration among various agencies to form a unified structure to counter the threats of digital Jihad.

## Chapter II

### RIISING GLOBAL TRENDS AND ARCHITECTURE OF DIGITAL JIHAD

#### Current Status of Global Jihad

Currently, more than 130 countries are battling Islamic terrorism wherein Afghanistan, Iraq, Nigeria and Syria are the four worst affected.<sup>12</sup> In 2017, more than 18,000 and in 2018 approximately 16,000 were killed in terrorist related incidents.<sup>13</sup> Between 2002 and 2018, South Asia, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) and sub-Saharan Africa accounted for 93 per cent of all deaths from terrorism. The largest number was recorded in MENA, with more than 93,700 fatalities.<sup>14</sup> In the *Global Terrorism Index* report, India is at the seventh position with 350 dead and 540 injured in the year 2018.<sup>15</sup> The global economic impact of terrorism in 2018 amounted to US\$ 33 billion which is higher than the GDP of many countries.<sup>16</sup>

ISIS was the deadliest terrorist group in 2016, overtaking Boko Haram.<sup>17</sup> More than 25,000 were killed in violent conflicts related to ISIS in the same year.<sup>18</sup> The other three most lethal global terrorist groups are Boko Haram, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban.<sup>19</sup> The affected countries with their ranking are shown in Fig. 1.

Fig 1: Global Ranking in Terrorism

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE	RANK CHANGE
1	Afghanistan	9.000	+1	28	United Kingdom	5.405	→	56	Sweden	3.45	+5
2	Iraq	9.241	+1	29	Ethiopia	5.345	+3	57	Algeria	3.400	+3
3	Nigeria	8.597	→	30	Saudi Arabia	5.238	+1	58	Bolivia	3.387	+60
4	Syria	8.006	→	31	Bangladesh	5.208	+6	59	Tywin	3.354	+9
5	Pakistan	7.689	→	32	Palestine	5.177	+1	60	Tanzania	3.272	+1
6	Somalia	7.8	+1	33	Burundi	5.102	+1	61	Uganda	3.201	+5
7	India	7.518	+1	34	Nepal	5.093	+1	62	Paraguay	3.119	+3
8	Yemen	7.258	→	35	Indonesia	5.07	+7	63	Italy	3.109	+6
9	Philippines	7.137	+1	36	France	5.008	+6	64	Jordan	3.091	+4
10	Democratic Republic of the Congo	7.039	+1	37	Russia	4.9	+3	65	Nicaragua	2.952	+26
11	Egypt	6.794	+2	38	Chad	4.782	→	66	Rwanda	2.948	+10
12	Libya	6.766	+1	39	Iran	4.717	+5	67	Peru	2.84	+1
13	Mali	6.653	+2	40	Israel	4.525	+1	68	Zimbabwe	2.834	+18
14	Central African Republic	6.622	+1	41	South Africa	4.511	+5	69	Ireland	2.692	+8
15	Cameroon	6.62	+1	42	China	4.495	+6	70	Republic of the Congo	2.687	+3
16	Turkey	6.533	+4	43	Lebanon	4.395	+6	71	Australia	2.645	+3
17	South Sudan	6.316	+3	44	Germany	4.254	+5	72	Cote d'Ivoire	2.598	+9
18	Iceland	6.000	+1	45	Greece	4.187	→	73	Brazil	2.53	+17
19	Colombia	5.912	+8	46	China	4.123	+12	74	Malaysia	2.495	+8
20	Yemen	5.897	+7	47	Venezuela	4.101	+0	75	Kuwait	2.487	+11
21	Kenya	5.756	+2	48	Mexico	4.08	+8	76	Guatemala	2.455	+12
22	United States of America	5.691	+2	49	Uganda	3.957	+3	77	Netherlands	2.347	+1
23	Niger	5.596	→	50	Tajikistan	3.947	+24	78	Iran	2.291	+11
24	Lithuania	5.547	+3	51	Tanzania	3.938	+4	79	Kosovo	2.255	+8
25	Myanmar	5.542	+15	52	Angola	3.784	+9	80	Haiti	2.18	+1
26	Myanmar	5.512	+2	53	Belgium	3.636	+6	81	Finland	2.016	+8
27	Burkina Faso	5.418	+30	54	Canada	3.591	+5	82	Maldives	1.987	+10
				55	Sri Lanka	3.509	+6				

Source: Global Terrorism Index 2019, pp 8

### Internet—An Instrument of Terror

**Exploit Information.** Today, global terrorist organisations are using the internet to gain information of sensitive targets across the globe. Using the information available on various communication systems, these terrorist organisations identify vulnerable targets and plan their highly synchronised attacks. Hamas was planning to use Google Earth to plan its operations and Al-Qaeda holds a database of information about potential American targets. Madrid bombings of March 2004, the failed attempt to bomb German trains in July 2006, serial blasts in London in 2005 and the recent lone wolf attacks like Nice-Bastille Day Truck attack<sup>20</sup> in 2016 and Abderrahman Bouanane's rampant killing<sup>21</sup> in Finland in August 2017, are few examples where the internet has played a key role in radicalising and gathering information for planning the attacks.

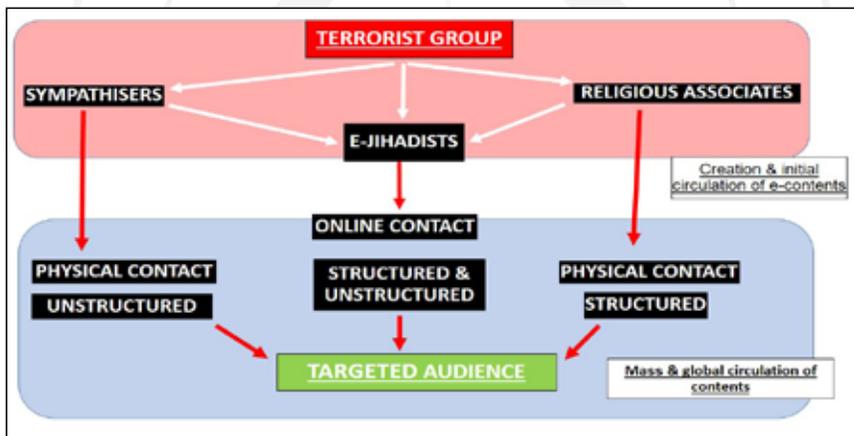
**Propaganda and Radicalisation.** The Al-Qaeda and ISIS networks have been successful in their use of audio-visual propaganda, pre-recorded videotapes, computer audio-video games and jihad inspired music, in order to spread radical ideology and to reach out to supporters across the globe. The Jihadi websites show videos of attacks on the World Trade Center and other major attacks to motivate sympathisers for the cause. Lone Wolf Attackers are generally motivated by such unidirectional process of radicalisation. Azzam.com was launched in 1996 to gain support for the jihadists of Chechnya, Bosnia and Afghanistan. Hezbollah invented a new dimension to inspire youth for Jihad by launching a video game "Special Force", developed by Hezbollah Central Internet Bureau.<sup>22</sup> The theme of this game was to promote the Jihad fight against Israel and to achieve martyrdom. Hizb-ut-Tahrir, an Islamist extremist group, offers music and computer games to introduce their ideology and attract young supporters.<sup>23</sup> They portray that Islam is vulnerable and "to fight to protect" is the duty of every Muslim. Hizb-ut-Tahir leaflet displayed on its website urged Muslims to "kill [Jews] wherever you find them".<sup>24</sup>

Al-Qaeda in Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) launched the *Inspire* magazine, to radicalise English-speaking Muslims primarily in Europe.<sup>25</sup> ISIS launched cyber war magazine for jihadists called *Kybernetiq*.<sup>26</sup> This magazine instructs militants about the use of technology in cyber domain. The Islamic State is exploiting social networks like Facebook and Twitter to communicate with its audience and diversify its reach, by incorporating peer-to-peer apps like Telegram, Surespot (a secure mobile messaging app that uses end-to-end encryption for every text, image and voice message) and content sharing applications

like *JustPaste.it*.<sup>27</sup> “Make a Bomb in the Kitchen of Your Mom” was one of the most popular propaganda themes to inspire youths all across the globe by *Inspire* magazine.<sup>28</sup>

**Recruitment.** In recent times we have witnessed how terrorist groups are reaching out, motivating and instructing youths from all over the globe to join Jihad. ISIS being the pioneer in recruitment through the internet, has recruited volunteers from various countries, mainly from Russia, Jordan, Tunisia, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.<sup>29</sup> Roughly 6,000 Tunisians left homes to join the ranks of ISIS, the highest per capita rate in the world.<sup>30</sup> The recruitment process, based on internet and social media platforms, follows a very simple process which starts with the sharing of contents on Jihad and seeing as to who liked them. Repeat the process to identify people who are consistently following and liking such content. In the initial phase, the contents may not be very radical, however, the intensity and frequency will gradually be increased to target a few like-minded persons. Thereafter, contacts will be shared and links would be established by existing sympathisers to direct and instruct these “identified” people to join the terrorist group. This has been depicted in Fig. 2.

**Fig 2: Online Recruitment Model**



Source: Pictorial Representation by Author

**Networking & Inter-Connectivity.** Digital forums provide a secure yet open environment for all “like-minded Jihadists” to interact with each other and share their plan and objectives. Some Jihad Forums are, Al-Malahem, Al-Qimmah, Atahadi, Al-Jihad Al-Alami, Al-Fajr, Al-Furqan, Al-Hanein, Al-Ansar, Hanein, Al-Shamukh, Al-Luyuth Al-Islamiyyah, Al-Maark, Al-Medad, Al-Tahaddi and the Mujahideen Electronic Network.<sup>31</sup> Some of them are comprised of tens of thousands of people. Websites like

*www.shawati.com*, have more than 31,000 registered members and *www.kuwaitchat.net* have more than 11,000 members. Such chat rooms and cyber forums are gaining prominence and are now exploited to undertake propaganda operations, psychological attacks, and recruitment to execute all kinds of kinetic operations. Such forums have also increased communication between various global Jihadi terrorists groups.

**Nexus of Funding System.** Fund raising through online means is like supplying oxygen to cyber Jihad. The terrorist groups are using e-mails, messages and encrypted links to collect donations for the group. Every terrorist group is also linked with a non-terrorist religious/political party which collects the funds and transfers it by overt and covert methods, including hawala transactions. Terrorist groups like ISIS, Hamas, Boko Haram and Al-Shabab, who controls substantial territory, requires strong financial resources to support operations. These groups own legitimate businesses, impose taxes and receive sizeable foreign donations.<sup>32</sup> Kidnapping and ransom collection remains a major fund raising option for Abu Sayyaf Group.<sup>33</sup> Zakat or Islamic charity donations is another source of funding. The examples of Holy Land Foundation in the US, Islamic Society of North America, Islamic Services in Canada and INTERPAL in UK show how charity is being subverted to terror financing all across the world.<sup>34</sup> The terrorism in Kashmir follows the same pattern of financing. Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), a charity run by terror outfits Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), and Al-Rehmat Trust, backed by another terrorists group Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), has been funding terrorism in Kashmir.<sup>35</sup> “Al-Rehmat Trust” distributes pamphlets to raise funds for sacrificing animals during Eid and use the money to finance terrorism.<sup>36</sup> While recognising that “the LeT also reportedly operates 16 Islamic institutions, 135 secondary schools, an ambulance service, mobile clinics, blood banks and several seminaries across Pakistan” (South Asia Terrorism Portal n.d.), it has continued to use this as a front for its terrorist activities.<sup>37</sup> Hacking of bank systems, financial firms and other assets on digital platforms are new trends in collecting funds. Syrian Electronic Army hacked the Associated Press Twitter account and shared a fake message about an attack on the White House which crashed the Dow Jones stock exchange index to dip by one per cent, hence temporarily stealing US\$ 136 billion off the market.<sup>38</sup> Another method of collecting money is by posting videos on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter and then earning money based on their popularity through various advertisements. ISIS multimedia products used to receive as many as two million mentions per month on Twitter. Cryptocurrencies are the new dark web currency which operates on blockchain method with no actual tender or asset value. It is very difficult to track transactions carried out through various anonymous virtual

currency exchanges. Bitcoins, Ethereum, One Gram and Stellar are commonly used cryptocurrencies for transfer of money. Financial Action Task Force (FATF) report to G20 in 2018, established the usage of cryptocurrencies by terrorist organisations and listed 106 cases of linkage between terrorists and cryptocurrencies. ISIS supporters created a guide to use Dark Wallet,<sup>39</sup> a dark web app that claims to anonymise all transactions through Bitcoin. By 2016, ISIS and Al-Qaeda fighters were already calling for crypto-donations on social media. By 2017, ISIS had received numerous Bitcoin donations from all over the world, including from places in the US. To this day, one can find calls for Bitcoin donations across ISIS-linked chat groups on the Telegram app. The deadly Easter Day bombings in Sri Lanka in April 2019 was funded by ISIS through cryptocurrency.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, groups like Al-Sadaqa, run by Western fighters associated with other jihadi factions in Syria, were among the first to fundraise with Bitcoin in a significantly organised sense to buy weapons for its foreign fighters in Syria.<sup>41</sup> Narco-terrorism or drug-trafficking is also used by terror groups to fund their operations, and Afghanistan remains one of the worst affected nations. According to the United Nations' **Al-Qaeda and the Taliban Sanctions Monitoring Teams'** assessments, out of the total 2011-2012 budget of the Taliban of US\$ 400 million, one-third was raised from the poppy trade. To raise money, the Taliban run a sophisticated protection racket from poppy farmers and drug-traffickers, collecting taxes from the farmers and pay-offs from the traffickers for transporting the drugs through insurgent-controlled areas.<sup>42</sup>

**Online Weapon Bazaar and Training.** Social networking sites are being used for trading weapons online. Facebook is quite popular in hosting online bazaars for weapons from small grenades to heavy machine-guns and guided missiles.<sup>43</sup> The weapons are distributed by various countries to security forces and their proxy alliances in the Middle East. These online bazaars provide open platforms for terrorist groups to buy weapons and explosives for their attacks. It has also increased the capability of lone wolf attackers in any region. Online tutorials supported by scripts, audios and videos are available on Jihadi websites for new volunteers to learn about handling of arms, ammunition, explosives and even on how to carry out attacks. Online classes on hacking, encryption and maintaining anonymity are also available for their followers to learn. A 34-page manual was also published by ISIS on securing communication on online platforms. For example, in June 2005, a militant Arabic language website *Tajdid Al-Islami* uploaded a series of training videos for beginner Mujahideen(s) which covered discussions on basic physical fitness, ninja martial arts, uniforms, battle fatigues and radio and mobile communication techniques.<sup>44</sup>

## Case Study: ISIS—Hallmark of Digital Jihad

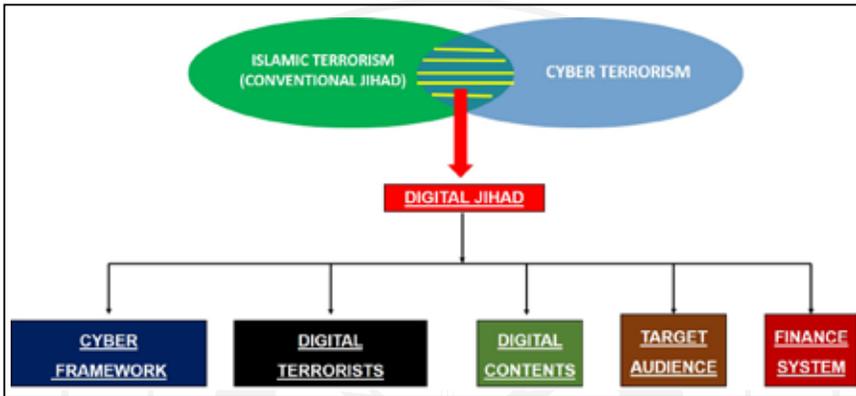
ISIS gained its popularity and dominance in the Middle East in the year 2013, after the crisis in Syria grew, and the fighters of Iraq and Syria joined together. The group was new compared to other global terrorist organisations, however due to its level of violence and the exploitation of the internet to spread its threat, ISIS became the most terrifying terrorist group by 2014. ISIS in 2014 was backed<sup>45</sup> by 46,000 followers and in 2015 approximately 200,000 tweets<sup>46</sup> were shared every day in a repetitive manner by ISIS backed twitter accounts. “ISIS sends out 90,000 social (media) messages a day” as stated by the Former National Security Council staffer Hillary Mann<sup>47</sup> on February 17, 2015. It was also estimated that ISIS has approximately 20 million followers on social media. At its peak, it was creating 38 unique propaganda events every day and was winning its battle in the digital domain by a big margin. *Al Hayat Media Centre* is the central controlling agency running its propaganda show. *Dabiq* and *Rumiyah* magazines are instrumental in spreading the propaganda and brainwashing innocent people for the cause.<sup>48</sup> #AllEyesOnISIS and #CalamityWillBeFallUS were popular stunts by ISIS. “Dawn of Glad Tidings” app was developed by ISIS as a propaganda tool, and videos of “Clanging of Swords IV” and “Saleel-al-Sawarim” has been the rage amongst ISIS followers.<sup>49</sup> ISIS songs like “Dawlat al-Islam Qamat”—which *The New Republic* magazine called “the most influential song of the year”—is one of the best online jihad products. The videos have generated hundreds of thousands of views.<sup>50</sup> *Alrawi* and *Amaq* applications are used for sharing of messages. Applications like Skype, Viber, Surespot and Threema are also used regularly. ISIS have five centralised propaganda units, which are Al-Furqan Foundation (delivers official statements and concentrates on military warfare), Al-Itisan Foundation (focuses on social and religious activities), Al-Hayat Media Centre, Al-Bayan Radio and Amaq News Agency.<sup>51</sup> ISIS published a manual which recommended German Cryptophone and Blackphone as secure voice and messaging platforms.<sup>52</sup> ISIS also did the “gamification” of Jihad, by creating various online video games on the themes of Jihad of ISIS.<sup>53</sup> The *Dawn of Glad Tidings* and *Saleel-al-Sawarim* were the most popular games developed by ISIS to target youths all across the world.<sup>54</sup> Reports suggest that today ISIS may use inexpensive cyber weapons to attack Iranian nuclear facilities. ISIS was also suspected of hacking US Central Command’s Twitter Account, Malaysian Airlines’ website and UK data centres. From all the above-mentioned examples and facts, it is deduced that ISIS is the most dangerous terrorist group in cyber domain since 2014, and the group which is losing its territorial control, is undoubtedly trying to gain footprints in cyber domain not only in the Middle East but also trying to expand in North Africa (Saleh region) and in South East Asia.

# ARCHITECTURE OF DIGITAL JIHAD

## Relation with Islamic Terrorism (Jihad) and Cyber Terrorism

Digital Jihad is actually the amalgamation of two words, i.e., Digital Space and Conventional Jihad. Hence, it has characteristics of both, Jihad & cyber terrorism. On the one hand it is rooted to the ideologies of traditional Jihad, and on the other it is executed under the mechanics of cyber-terrorism, as shown in Fig. 3.

Fig 3: Anatomy of Digital Jihad



Source: Pictorial Representation by Author

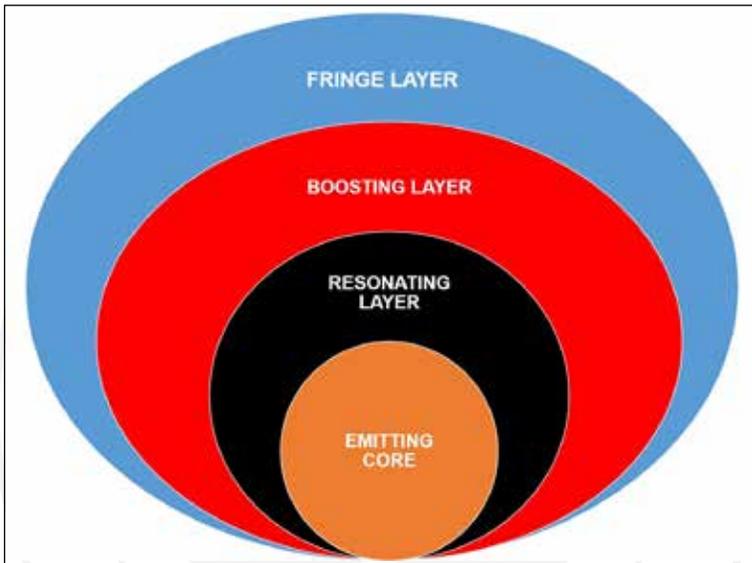
## Components of Digital Jihad

**Cyber Framework.** This is the technical framework of hardware and software which is supporting the complete operation of digital Jihad. It requires a strong database supported by redundant servers connected by infallible internet services. It is run with the help of proxy servers, proxy IP addresses, proxy chat rooms, anonymous forums and proxy browsers. Maintaining anonymity during the entire communication is of foremost importance for any digital Jihadi. Hence, the majority resort to use TOR (The Onion Router) and T.A.I.L.S. (*The Amnesic Incognito Live System*) browsers to maintain anonymity on websites. Jihadis have been advised to use non-American companies like *Hushmail* and *ProtonMail* for sharing emails.<sup>55</sup> ‘Cyber Help Desk’ was also maintained by ISIS to look after queries of volunteers.<sup>56</sup> Applications like “Glad of the Tidings” developed by ISIS, suggests that they also have a large pool of cyber experts who are continuously developing mobile-based applications for browsing, messaging and online gaming. These experts are also creating viruses, trojans, malware, ransomware and

phishing emails to target individuals and organisations. ISIS is also looking for Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) capability to completely shut down the internet facilities in the targeted countries.<sup>57</sup>

**Digital Terrorists (e-Jihadists).** These are the “human ingredients” of this structure. They are trained or untrained cyber soldiers, volunteers and are motivated, for the fight for Jihad. The digital Jihadists or e-jihadists can be classified into ‘Emitting Core’, ‘Resonating Layer’, ‘Boosting Layer’ and ‘Fringe Surface’ as shown in Fig. 4.

**Fig 4: Layers of Digital Terrorists**



Source: Pictorial Representation by Author

The innermost layer is the **Emitting Core** consisting of highly trained and trusted e-jihadists who also form the core of complete operation in cyber domain. They decide the themes of operations and dictate the terms and conditions involved in it. They either create or aggregate the e-contents to create a propaganda theme. **Resonating Layer** will be formed by the digital terrorists who may share both physical and digital communication with the emitting layer. The role is to propagate the contents into social media loops of trusted members and followers of the terrorist groups. This layer runs the authentic accounts of the terrorist group(s) in various websites and media platforms. The members are trained and highly trusted who can be tasked independently to run the

operation in their domain in consonance with the themes of Emitting Core. **Boosting Layer** are those sympathisers who may be trained or untrained, can be motivated or are thrill seekers, may not be trusted in all cases and who are not duty bound to propagate the content. This layer is the largest as it includes all the self-motivated, self-radicalised, cyber loners, cyber mob, identity seekers, thrill seekers and unguided supporters of Jihad who knowingly or unknowingly are spreading the contents on cyberspace. **Fringe Layer** is the outermost layer which consists of generally passive followers who only receive and share the contents as per choice. Influencing the Fringe Layer and converting them into Boosting or Resonating Layer is the target of all e-Jihadists.

For example:

- **Emitting Core.** Digital Jihad experts form this core for creation of primary themes. For example “ISIS helping locals in Iraq” is set up as a propaganda theme by them.
- **Resonating Layer.** Authentic accounts and members on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, etc., constituting this layer, will share news, photos, videos and blogs to support the theme like “ISIS members distributing sweets to children”, “bringing justice to people”, “highlighting atrocities committed by security forces”, etc.
- **Boosting Layer.** Retweets, Likes, Shares and Forwards by thousands of Followers on various social media platforms, will further multiply and amplify its intensity.
- **Fringe Layer.** Passive/neutral audience receiving contents on the theme and getting influenced to support the cause.

**Digital Recruiters and Digital Preachers.** These are constituted by human elements and are subsets of Digital Terrorists. Digital recruiters are the influencers-cum-recruiters of youth through online contact. Digital Preachers are guiding and radicalising innocent people towards Jihad. Digital Preachers may also act as digital recruiters in some cases or vice versa.

**Digital Contents.** The Digital contents broadly include all types of videos, photos, audios, messages and mails being shared through websites, mobile applications and SIM-based messaging. The latest additions are online-offline video games based on the theme of Jihad in Iraq and Syria. Contents which are authentic and have proven effective in spreading traditional Jihad, are selected to be converted into digital files and then uploaded by digital terrorists. The contents are tailor-made and produced to target-specific segments of a particular society. They often

have multilingual releases. The contents are fabricated, either by altering its truth or misleading by connecting it to an alternate context. The means of propagation of these contents are via internet using computers and mobile phones, however in places with no or partial internet connectivity, these contents are supplied in storage devices like CDs, DVDs, pendrives and hard disks. Another means to share such data is by using short-range wireless communications like Bluetooth, Near Field Communication<sup>58</sup> (NFC) and data sharing mobile applications like “SHAREit” which do not require internet facility. Designated bodies of administrators control the inlet-outlet flow of digital content and they also check and validate the veracity and lethality of each content before dissemination.

**Target Audience.** The target audience includes all the people who are interested in the activities of the terrorist organisation and are actively or passively following the groups on online platforms. Target audiences are further divided into many categories depending upon their intentions, interests and pattern of activities. Interestingly, in the process of dissemination of digital content, every involved member simultaneously plays both the roles of Digital Terrorist and Target Audience, depending upon his interest at that particular moment. A member acting as digital terrorist to someone may be the target audience for some third person. The roles and relations totally depend upon their positions in the Layers of Digital Terrorists. The Digital Jihadists (offenders) that includes the target audience are categorised as Cyber Mobs, Loners, Fantasists, Thrill Seekers, Identity Seekers, Moral Crusaders and Narcissists.<sup>59</sup>

**Finance System.** The complete funding is divided into three categories—Donations, Collections and Theft. Generally, the donations and collection of funds are carried out through *Hawala* transactions, charities, trading of commodities, online smuggling bazaars and many other innovative means through online and offline procedures. The Theft of funding is generally executed by hacking of banks and finance firms, online collection on kidnapping, ransom collection via ransomware and many other innovative means. Broadly, any terror group prefers to raise money by donations from NGOs and charities, donations from individuals and diaspora, levies on businesses (Zakat), money transfer from other Jihadi groups, financial support from various private firms, drug-trafficking and ransom from kidnappings.<sup>60</sup> The money is preferred to be collected nowadays through cryptocurrency and other dark web-based e-wallets. The use of cryptocurrency has its inherent limitations for transnational transactions as it lacks factors like universal usability, redundant security, multi-domain acceptance and technical reliability. However, if only one strong cryptocurrency emerges

in the market which provides widespread adoption, better anonymity, improved security and more flexibility, perhaps then in future all the Jihad funding would be based on that cryptocurrency.<sup>61</sup> Speaking innovative means of fundraising, in the year 2014, ISIS raised US\$ 2 billion from sale of oil, tolls and taxes, the Afghan Taliban earned US\$ 400 million from donors and sale of drugs, Al-Shabab earned US\$ 100 million from sale of charcoal and taxes and Boko Haram raised US\$ 10 million from kidnapping ransoms.<sup>62</sup> This illustrates the capacity of the terror groups in raising money from conventional and innovative means. ISIS holds a substantial online presence through its **“United Cyber Caliphate”** (UCC). The UCC had once called its supporters to conduct “Electronic Jihad” by hacking energy networks. The cyber warriors of ISIS once held a good percentage of total thefts (US\$ 70 billion to US\$ 140 billion extracted annually) from US through cybercrimes and cyber espionage.<sup>63</sup> Illicit trading of antiquities was well exploited by ISIS in the captured areas for fundraising. ISIS had earnings of US\$ 36 million from the sales of antiquities. John Pipkins claims that “ISIS profits from the illicit sales of antiquities through two primary methods; run excavation and looting operations and the taxation of any non-ISIS run excavation”.<sup>64</sup> Terrorists need money and other assets, for weapons, training, travel and accommodation to plan and execute their attacks and develop as an organisation. Countering terrorism financing is therefore an essential part of the global fight against terror threat. As terrorists and terrorist groups continue to raise money with use of various means, countries must make it a priority to understand the risks they face from terrorist financing and develop policy responses to all aspects of it.<sup>65</sup>

## Chapter III

### FOOTPRINTS OF DIGITAL JIHAD IN KASHMIR

#### **Kashmir- Journey for “Freedom” to “Mass Protests” (“Azaadi” to “Narebaazi”)**

**1989-1998: Political Debacle and Rise of terrorism.** The political crisis in 1988 led to violent demonstrations against the Government. More than 2,000 armed infiltrators, indoctrinated and trained in PoK and Pakistan, infiltrated into the Valley. Random terrorist attacks, demonstrations and bandhs became common issues. The state government functionaries heralded the first phase of terrorism. The state assembly was dissolved and the state was put under Governor’s Rule on February 19, 1990.<sup>66</sup> Hence, the armed movement was soon joined by the common masses and the level of protests grew exponentially. A purge of civil servants resulted in the collapse of the administrative machinery. In the year 1992, Kashmir witnessed more than 1,200 casualties and the year 1993 was the worst affected with approximately 1,600 casualties.<sup>67</sup> With over 300,000 Hindus evicted from the Valley, the process of ‘ethnic cleansing’ is the worst example of abrogation of human rights in the region. However, democracy regained its ground in 1996 and remained intact during this period. The external support from Pakistan remained unrelenting with gradual ups and downs. ISI and nexus of various terrorists organisations, primarily Hizbul Mujahideen (HM), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Al-Badr continued their violent acts to keep security forces engaged in low intensity conflicts. The year 1998 witnessed the lowest level of violence with approximately 900 civilians and 1,000 terrorists killed.<sup>68</sup>

**1999–2007: Period of Respite.** The Kargil war made the year 1999 historic between India and Pakistan and also changed the course adopted by Pakistan to tackle the Kashmir issue. Pakistan, suffering from internal turmoil, could not support terrorism in Kashmir strongly. With the decrease in violence, people’s confidence grew in democracy and the voter turnout increased with every successive election. Transformed measures for internal peace and confidence-building measures were numerous, however small in their magnitude, but brought significant improvements. These included the removal of barricades from roads; the vacation of school buildings by security forces; unrestricted mobile communications; the increased accountability of security forces for the maintenance of human rights; and the disbandment/restrictions on the Special Operations Group (SOG) whose actions had become unpopular.

Progress on the composite dialogues with Pakistan, confidence-building measures, trans-LoC and International Boundary (IB), transport services for people and trade were a few highlights. The Centre's assistance to Kashmir grew enormously.<sup>69</sup> While per capita Central assistance to other states increased from Rs. 576.24 in 1992-93 to Rs. 1,137 in 2000-01, the same for Kashmir gained from Rs. 3,197 to Rs. 8,092. In 2001-02, the state spent Rs. 7,516.6 crore out of which Rs. 4,577 crore, or 60 paise of each rupee spent, received from the Centre.<sup>70</sup> However the period of peaceful situation soon ended in the year 2008.

### **2008–2020: Agitation Politics and Surge in Terrorism.**

Allocation of 800 kanals (one kanal equals to 605 sq yard) of forest land to SASB (Sri Amarnath Shrine Board) gave birth to a new dimension to the mass resistance and animosity for the centre and state governments. A series of mass protests in which thousands of locals coming on roads to protest against the decision were witnessed. Issues like killing of Kashmiri boy, Zahid Farooq Shah<sup>71</sup> and Machal fake encounter kept the year 2010 burning for more than three months. The 2010 protests after the death of Tufail Mattoo in police firing led to death of 120 people.<sup>72</sup> An environmental campaign in 2008 against the transfer of land to the Amarnath Shrine Board aggravated the violence that led to death of 70 locals.<sup>73</sup> Afzal Guru, involved in the Parliament Attack in Delhi, was hanged in 2013. This again led to widespread protests and expression of anger by the locals of the Valley. However, Kashmir changed dramatically after the encounter of the Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) terrorist commander Burhan Wani. Thousands of people came out on the streets in violent protest against every institution of the state. More than 100 lost<sup>74</sup> their lives and more than 10,000 were injured<sup>75</sup> in six months in 2016, including civilians and security forces. However, *The Guardian* reported more injuries during the clashes.<sup>76</sup> Non-lethal weapons used also injured many.<sup>77</sup> This violence led to arrest of more than thousand people by police under Public Safety Act (PSA), to contain the widespread protests in Kashmir. In an unparalleled situation, the complete Kashmir Valley suffered from prolonged shutdown of more than a hundred days due to curfew as well as protest calls given by the separatists. The separatist camp itself saw a unification of its otherwise fragmented factions after several years,<sup>78</sup> and sprang back into action with renewed vigour. Schools, offices, petrol pumps, mobile internet, shops, tourist facilities, public transport—all remained shut due to the protests through the greater part of the second half of 2016. The protests and agitations petered out with the onset of winter. However, restrictions on the assembly of people, telephones,

and certain sections of the media continued even later, amidst sporadic incidents of violence. The period from 2016 to 2018 witnessed protests, bandhs and a rage among youths for recruitments. Pathankot and Uri attack in 2016 and Pulwama attack in 2019 were the bloodiest in the recent past. The restlessness of Pakistan-based terrorists remained at an all-time high in the year 2018 as this year witnessed the highest attempts for infiltration across the Line of Control with 328 bids.<sup>79</sup> *The Economic Times* cites, “A total of 113 terrorists were killed between January and June 16, 257 were killed in 2018, 213 in 2017 and 150 in 2016, taking the total number of those killed during the period to 733. More than 700 terrorists were killed in three years, which proves that the government has adopted a policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism”.<sup>80</sup> The year 2019 was historic as it witnessed the abrogation of Article 370. The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, passed by the Indian Parliament on August 5, bifurcated the state into two union territories (UT)—Jammu & Kashmir, and Ladakh. While the UT of Jammu and Kashmir will have a Legislative Assembly, Ladakh (including Leh and Kargil districts) is under the administration of a Lieutenant Governor.<sup>81</sup> The security situation was heightened with deployment of additional security forces in response to the presence of approximately 400 terrorists in the Valley.<sup>82</sup> According to official data, Kashmir witnessed 1,999 stone-pelting incidents in 2019 as compared to 1,458 in 2018 and 1,412 in 2017.<sup>83</sup> With intermittent communication blackouts, the Valley has remained partially open and calm since the abrogation of Article 370 and it still strives to regain its normalcy in socio-economic growth.<sup>84</sup>

### Key Players of Digital Jihad in Kashmir

- **Active Terrorists Organisations.** Hizbul Mujahideen, under Syed Salahuddin, has promoted Pakistani propaganda and supports unification of Kashmir with Pakistan. Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Deobandi Jihadist group, aims to liberate Kashmir and unite with Pakistan. The group recently carried out the Pulwama Attack in February 2019. Lashkar-e-Taiba (also known as Jama'at-ud-Da'awa) is headquartered in Muridke (Lahore) in Pakistan and is led by Hafiz Muhammad Saeed with the aim to uproot Indian control over Kashmir. Al-Badr Tanzeem is active in Budgam, Anantnag, Baramulla, Srinagar and Kupwara districts. It also has its footprints in Poonch and Rajouri districts of Jammu region. Ansar Gazwat-ul-Hind, raised by Zakir Rashid Bhat aka Zakir Mosa, is a militant organisation and Al-Qaeda cell in Jammu and

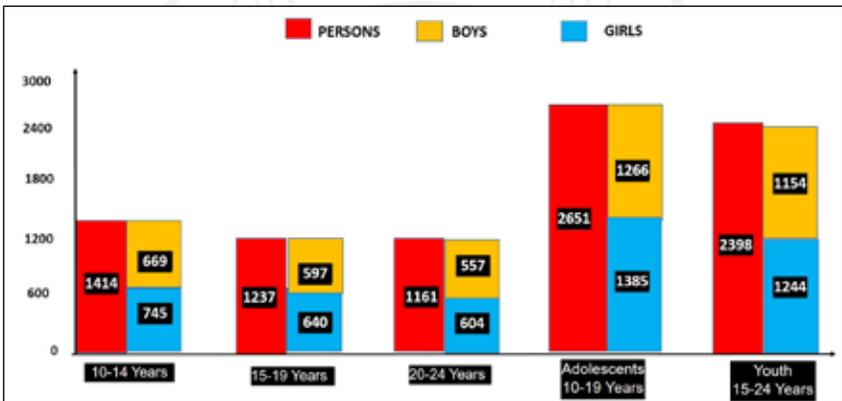
Kashmir and Punjab. Its aim is to spread Islamic rule and ultimately the conquest of India.

- **Separatists Leaders and Parties.** The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) is an alliance of secessionist parties and leaders. Raised in 1993 as a political front to support separatism in Kashmir—the united front has been constantly supported by Pakistan.<sup>85</sup> The APHC considers itself as sole representative of the Kashmiri *Awam* and spreads the propaganda among locals to resist and hate any Indian control over the region. The leaders are very popular among youths and intellectuals and many fan pages are devoted to them. Social media platforms are routinely used by them to spread their messages to rage against India or government.
- **Religious Bodies/Organisation.** The place of Islam in the lives of common Kashmiris is most important as compared to any other facet of their lives. People in Kashmir are highly religious, and they either sincerely or blindly follow everything taught under the “gambit of Islam.” Islamic education system is imparted through several government or private run madrassas and every youth undergoes some degree of Islamic education, either structured or unstructured, by attending of Masjid functions or as part of educational curriculum. Although *Hanafi* is the largest sect, *Wahhabi*, *Salafi* and *Ahli Hadith*, which are more radical, are growing in their dominance in the region and are the key sects that are dangerously radicalising the youths. As mentioned in CLAWS Seminar Report, indicators of religious extremism are—“the huge influx of madrassas and mosques belonging to Tablighi Jamaat, Ahl-e-Hadees. Religion propagated through Tablighi Jamaat which asks Muslims to improve their ‘Deen’, acts as a pull and a crutch in the absence of any other sort of entertainment. Sout-ul-Haq, one of the four grades of mosques, which is represented by the IS, for which ‘wajib-e-qatl,’ i.e. murder for religion is authorized”.<sup>86</sup> Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), a politico-religious organisation, which strongly influences the educated and financially well-established people in Kashmir, supports Jihad in Kashmir and advocates Islamic way of rule. The group is well organised and has its followers in almost every corner of the state. The JeI along with separatist parties are controlling the nerves of the locals of Kashmir.

## Interplay between Key Players of Digital Jihad, Kashmiri Youth and Social Media

**Youth in Kashmir.** As per census 2011, out of the total population<sup>87</sup> of J&K, which is 12,541,000, the approximate population of adolescent age group<sup>88</sup> amounts to 2,651,000 with decadal population growth of 5.7 per cent and youth population amounts to 2,398,000. The population size of age group 10-14 years is 1,414,000 with 669,000 girls and 745,000 boys. Another important age group falls between 15 and 19 years which amounts to a total population of 1,237,000 with 597,000 girls and 640,000 boys.<sup>89</sup> Around 35% of the total population lives in urban areas and 65 per cent in rural areas<sup>90</sup> (refer Fig. 5).

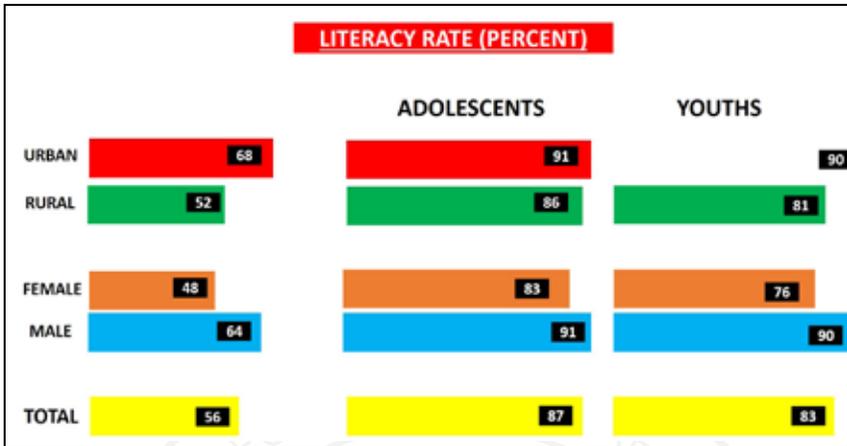
**Fig 5: Population of Adolescents and Youths In J&K**



Source: Census of India 2011

The overall literacy rate<sup>91</sup> is 56 per cent with 68 per cent in urban and 52 per cent in rural areas.<sup>92</sup> However, the literacy rate of adolescents is very high with overall 87 per cent.<sup>93</sup> The literacy rate of adolescents<sup>94</sup> in urban areas is 91 per cent and 86 per cent in rural areas. The census details of Kashmir valley in particular are unavailable hence, after extrapolating the same data onto Kashmir, it is assumed that the figures would roughly remain the same in the same proportions. Fig. 6 shows the literacy rates of adolescents and youth in J&K.

**Fig 6: Literacy Rates of Adolescents and Youths in J&K**



Source: 'A Profile of Adolescents and Youth in India' india.unfpa.org, pp. 66

**High Density of Internet Users.** J&K, as per the data available with the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, had around 1.13 crore cellular subscribers as on December 31, 2016. There are 28.62 internet subscribers per 100 population in the state as compared to All-India figure at 25.37 per 100.<sup>95</sup> As per report of Telecom Regulatory of India in 2015, 17.2 lakh internet subscribers lived in urban areas, and 18.1 lakh subscribers lived in rural areas.<sup>96</sup> The report also reveals that in comparison to the rest of India, the internet penetration is higher in Jammu and Kashmir. The rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir have much higher density of internet subscribers with 20.32 subscribers per 100 compared to the all-India figure of 13.17. The dawn of 3G and 4G networks, available at low cost, has transformed the definition of communication in Kashmir. As per the Telecom Regulatory of India Report 2018, J&K state has 13.65 million wireless users and 115,678 wire-lined users with a density of 108.63 per cent as in March 2016. There were 5.02 million internet users in J&K.<sup>97</sup> The figures show a high density of mobile phones and cellular internet users in J&K. Hence, high density of cellular phones and internet users and their role in the spread of Jihadist contents are key issues while understanding the problem.

### **Vulnerabilities of Youths in Kashmir**

**State of Unemployment.** Nearly 40 percent youth, in the age group of 15 to 30 years, are unemployed in Jammu and Kashmir.<sup>98</sup> In J&K, in the age group of 15-17 years, 555 persons out of 1,000 are unemployed, while in the

age group of 18-30 years, 228 persons out of 1,000 persons are jobless.<sup>99</sup> As per the Economic Survey Report of 2016, the employment rate in Jammu and Kashmir is higher than the average national employment rate. Nearly a quarter of its population in the age group of 18 to 29 years is unemployed, which is far more than the national rate of 13.2 per cent.<sup>100</sup> As per survey reports reflected in “CLAWS Seminar report: Mapping of perceptions in Jammu and Kashmir”, an overwhelming 61 per cent of youth wanted to take up Central Government jobs.<sup>101</sup> However, the lack of institutionalised engagement programmes for youths in Kashmir definitely leaves a vacuum, which is exploited by radical entities. Educated yet unemployed youths in Kashmir offer abundant resources for recruitment, in the form of terrorist and e-Jihadists by the terrorists’ organisations.

**Rage to Join Militancy.** From January 1, 2019 to August 4, 2019, 105 individuals joined the terrorist ranks. In 2019, 135 joined terrorist ranks.<sup>102</sup> *The Economic Times* writes: “In Kashmir, the situation in 2018 has become so worse that every third day, a youth is taking up arms and joining terrorists outfits”.<sup>103</sup> As per police reports,<sup>104</sup> the number of local youths<sup>105</sup> joining militancy in past years is tabulated below:

#### Year-Wise Details of Recent Recruitments in Valley

Year	Number of Locals Joined Terrorists Outfits
2019	135
2018	199
2017	124
2016	88
2015	66
2014	53

Source: Based on News Reports of *Economic Times* and *India Times*

The factors fuelling these numbers, are the influences of terrorists directly or indirectly on youths, losses suffered by them during prolonged protests, radicalisation of youths by radical elements and financial or personal temptations in some cases. The situation for Kashmiri youth is not conducive to their self-sustaining growth.

**Route of Radicalisation in Kashmir.** Figure 7 below depicts the process of radicalisation in Kashmir.

Fig 7: Radicalisation Process in Kashmir

PRE-RADICALIZATION	IDENTIFICATION	INDOCTRINATION	ACTION
MOTIVATION/ CONVERSION DUE TO:-	INDIVIDUAL ACCEPTS THE CAUSE OF:-	AFFINITY/PROXIMITY TO RADICAL INDIVIDUALS/GROUPS BY :-	EXTREMISTS ACTIVITIES :-
ILLITERACY/ LOW EDUCATION	JIHAD	TERRORISTS ORGANISATIONS	KILLING SECURITY FORCES
UNEMPLOYMENT	KASHMIR FREEDOM	SEPARATISTS ORGANISATIONS	ATROCITIES ON CIV
SOCIAL NEGLIGENCE	GHAZWA-E-HIND	JAMAAT E ISLAMI	DAMAGE TO GOVT INSTITUTES
STIMULUS – BY SELF/PEERS/RELATIVES	SELF EXPLORATION – BUILDING NEW IMAGE	BACKGROUND RELIGIOUS BELIEFS & IDEOLOGIES	RADICALIZE OTHERS

Source: Pictorial Representation by Author

A person in the **pre-radicalised** stage is unsatisfied with his current status due to personal or social reasons like illiteracy, unemployment, neglect or he has been instigated by his associates. The catalyst for radicalisation can be external factors like Wahhabi/Salafi ideologies, ISIS propaganda, Pakistan, international media, etc. and internal factors like influence of Jel and separatist, unemployment, dissatisfaction with government, glorification of terrorists, identity crisis, drug abuse, etc.<sup>106</sup> In the **identification stage**, he accepts the cause and gets associated with it. This could be any of the causes like spreading Jihad, freedom for Kashmir or even re-establishing himself again in the eyes of his close ones among whom he had lost his credibility. The success of the process is dependent on the affinity and attitude of the target subject, the influencing ability of the radicaliser and amount of time and resource spent in the process. In Kashmir, generally the major factors manifesting at the pre-radicalised stage, are the outcome of the incoherent policies of a weak state administration. The moment a vulnerable individual is identified by the overground workers of terrorist organisations or separatist parties, or cherry-picked by radical religious entities, his indoctrination for the acceptance of the cause starts. Depending upon his affinity or vulnerabilities, a suitable cause will be lured to him by like-minded people. Generally, the **indoctrination stage** is the longest, which aims in converting a non-violent youth into a potential terrorist as it demands. In **Action Stage**, the “now radicalised person”, will be ready to execute any subversive action as per instructions of his influencers.

It varies from a low-level offence of stone-pelting to severe crimes of snatching of weapons and killings. Since, crime is a non-reversible path, the execution of the first crime becomes a must for any youth volunteer to join terror groups in Kashmir.

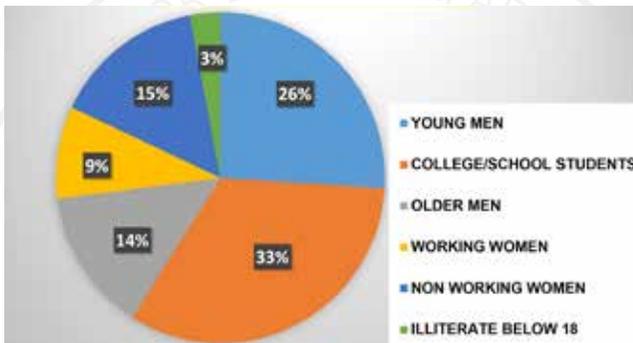
**Internet and Social Media in Kashmir—A Tool of Radicalisation Platforms of Digital Jihad on the Internet.** People in Kashmir are accessing the internet through both computers and smartphones, however the majority of them are using personal smartphones to access Jihad contents available on digital platforms. Websites like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitter are the major web-based sources for the dissemination of radicalising contents. WhatsApp is the most popular, though Snapchat and Telegram applications are also used for sharing of messages, but they are used by a small fraction of youth. Kashbook is a unique website connected and used only by the people of Kashmir.<sup>107</sup> In May 2017, after the Jammu and Kashmir government banned 22 social media services, including Facebook, WhatsApp, Twitter, the Valley came up with its own version of Facebook. VPN-free website was developed by a 16-year-old boy from Anantnag district and it featured the Kashmiri language. This example proves the abundance of technical expertise among the youth of Kashmir and their desire for social media platforms. Messaging application like Telegram<sup>108</sup> is also preferred other than WhatsApp due to its end-to-end encryption and self-destruct messaging facility. It can also store unlimited data in the cloud and can share videos up to 1 GB data. The level of security and being anonymous is very high in Telegram and it is very difficult for security agencies to track down the communicating members and the nature of its contents. Skype and Viber applications are generally used to make internet-based audio and video phone calls without using cellular SIM, hence locations of the communicators are not disclosed. VoIP calls are preferred among terrorists and their sympathisers.

**Usage Pattern of Internet among Youths.** A user spends 200 minutes<sup>109</sup> every day on mobile internet, out of which 40 per cent of the time is spent on social media and communication. The young generations hold the highest share among internet users in India.<sup>110</sup> Other details are given in Figs. 8 and 9.

**Fig 8: Time Spent on Mobile Internet by an Indian**

INDIA
A USER SPENDS <b>200 MINUTES</b> EVERYDAY ON MOBILE INTERNET.
40% ON SOCIAL MEDIA & COMMUNICATION, OF WHICH 38% ON FACEBOOK, WHATSAPP & INSTAGRAM. 30% EACH ON ENTERTAINMENT & ON OTHER CATEGORIES.

Source: Adapted from Times of India

**Fig 9: Internet User Demographic Profile**

Source: Times of India

A survey with the help of online (Google) forms was conducted among 110 youths in South Kashmir (Srinagar, Awantipora and Anantnag) by the author in order to ascertain the impact of digital Jihad on youths in Kashmir. The primary data survey shows that, the youths in Kashmir are addicted and fairly exposed to online content available on social media platforms. It shows that on a daily basis, approximately 16 per cent are exposed to the internet for approximately 2 hours, 12 per cent are exposed for 1.5 hours, 8% respondents for one hour and 8 per cent respondents remain online for 30-40 minutes daily. A total of 42 per cent of respondents are exposed to online content ranging from a minimum of 30 minutes to a maximum of 2 hours daily. This shows the exposure rate of youths to online content including digital jihad content available on various websites and social media platforms. As per survey reports reflected in "Seminar report: Mapping of perceptions in Jammu and Kashmir", more than 80 per cent youths of Kashmir region use social media. Around 75 per cent said the contents were "Not

Very Truthful” (28 per cent) or “Sometimes Truthful” (34 per cent). Around 32 percent affirmed getting influenced by social media and 28 per cent had heard people getting radicalised through social media.<sup>111</sup> With respect to frequency with which content of digital Jihad was received in the past, the survey showed that 56 per cent respondents used to receive such content every time the internet was activated, 12 per cent received once or twice a day, 14 per cent received once in 2 to 3 days and 12 per cent received once in a week. The survey showed that Facebook (65 per cent responses) being the most populated with such contents followed by WhatsApp (20 per cent responses) and YouTube (13 per cent responses). Spreading of any digital jihad content is not purely through electronic means but the humans behind these operations are far more important. Through the questionnaire it was realised that school friends, neighbourhood friends, supporters of Jihad groups and religious followers have almost equal contribution in sharing such contents. The questionnaire is attached in Appendix A.

### Major Themes of Online Radicalisation

The various themes adopted by terrorists groups, separatist groups and religious entities are explained in subsequent paragraphs.

**“Freedom for Kashmir”.** This is the most dominant narrative and supported by most of those who get radicalised and pick up arms. It is used by both external and internal parties including Pakistan, All Party Hurriyat Conference and all active tanzeems. Youths are being radicalised with the false hope that, armed and unarmed aggression against government will lead to freedom of Kashmir. Burhan Wani’s encounter onwards, all supporting elements seem to revive the “Kashmir Freedom Movement” by fuelling the agitation. Separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani issued a 10-point resistance agenda for Kashmiris to block the central government from changing the demographics in response to abrogation of Article 370. He warned Kashmiris to resist attempts to entice and allure people to sell their property in the name of business, education, medical institutes and development. He said: “Mosques, monasteries and seminaries will no longer be safe and urged pro-India Kashmiri politicians to side by the people. They will try to rob us of Urdu but you will have to guard it as well, so that our Islamic identity remains intact”. His statements encouraged Kashmiris to take control of their own narrative for the sake of the next generation and asked them to protect their history.<sup>112</sup>

**“Jihad against Infidels—Duty of Every Muslim”.** Finding its roots from Hadith & Sunnah, the attraction for purity, *Jannat*, rebellious struggle and *Shahadat* of mujahideens of Jihad, is motivating muslim youths in Kashmir, to

join armed or unarmed support for Jihad in Kashmir. This theme is primarily propagated by religious and politico-religious groups like Maulvis, Jamaat-e-Islami and followers of Salafism, Wahhabism, and other radical groups. Youths connected with these religious entities, are extremely vulnerable to radicalisation either by traditional or by digital contacts. Kashmiri Jihad which started in the 1990s advocating “Nizam-e-Mustafa,” has witnessed Islamisation of socio-political and economic setup all across the Valley. The Amir (Chief) of terrorist group LeT, Hafiz Mohammad Khan, once said: “Democracy is among the menaces we inherited ... These are all useless practices and part of the system we are fighting against. If God gives us a chance, we will try to bring in the pure concept of an Islamic Caliphate”.<sup>113</sup> The violence in the Kashmir Valley is now both religious and political in nature, as the new militant leaders like Zakir Musa had openly supported global Jihad. The young Islamic militants of today carry placards of Osama bin Laden, hoist Taliban and ISIS flags while participating in anti-government rallies.<sup>114</sup> They identify with the Sharia law and choose to remain alien to the concepts of democracy and modernisation. The militant groups imposed the Islamist viewpoint on society, politics, governance and laws, and declared practices of democracy and secularism as unethical.<sup>115</sup>

**“Unification with Pakistan”.** Pakistan has kept this theme alive for Kashmir. It is mainly supported and fuelled by Pakistan state and non-state actors. Other important contributing entities for this theme are terrorists groups like LeT and JeM. The believers and followers of this narrative are comparatively less than those supporting the narrative of “Azadi in Kashmir”. In spite of its fading impact, Pakistan continues to ignite it. For example, recently on May 10, 2020, Radio Pakistan started reading out weather updates on Twitter for “Indian-occupied-Jammu and Kashmir” which suggests how Pakistan is still keeping the narrative alive among the internet users.<sup>116</sup>

**“Ghazwa-e-Hind”.** Sunan an-Nasa’i (1:25:3175) quotes Abu Hurairah, and states that, “The Messenger of Allah promised us that we would invade India (*ghazwa al-hind*). If I live to see that, I will sacrifice myself and my wealth. If I am killed, I will be one of the best of the martyrs, and if I come back, I will be Abu Hurairah Al-Muharrar”. This theme is propagated by religious groups (for example, Salafi, Wahhabi) active both in India and Pakistan. Global terrorist groups like ISIS, Al-Qaeda and the Taliban are also propagating this theme indirectly and motivating youth to join the religious fight against India. “Kashmir will become a Darul Islam (an abode of Islam). Insha’Allah (God willing), I am always opposing those who want to accede with the infidels”, Zakir Musa, former HM commander. In a recent video released by Zakir Musa, a former HM commander, he professed his support to militant outfit

Al-Qaeda which supports Shariah, warning that people would be beheaded for referring to the Kashmir-issue as “political” and not an Islamic struggle.<sup>117</sup>

### **Trends of Digital Exploits by Radicalising Players**

**Exploits by Terrorists Groups.** The major terrorists groups which are hyperactive in digital and cyber domain in Kashmir are HM, JeM, LeT, HuM, Al-Badr and the recently rising Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind. These terrorist groups are exploiting the reach and accessibility of the internet to influence and brainwash the impressionable minds of adolescents in Kashmir. Using the internet and mobile based websites and social media platforms, these *tanzeems* are spreading content based on the themes of radicalisation. Terrorists like Burhan Wani and Zakir Musa surfaced online as poster boys of Kashmiri Jihad and soon gained popularity among youth and *Awam*. The protests in 2010, after the killing of Tufail Matoo, witnessed the first youth-driven, semi-organised and widespread usage of social media in sharing information, organising discussions, sharing multimedia and organising stone-pelting in protests. Kashmiris who used to meet once a week to discuss issues, were now free to use their chat forums through social media. This broke the sense of isolation of Kashmiri youths.<sup>118</sup> “The protests quickly spread to areas of Srinagar, Baramulla, Sopore and Anantnag. In 2010, it was urban-driven”, said former chief minister Omar Abdullah.<sup>119</sup> The video by Burhan Wani in which he threatened all locals to refrain from assisting security forces, was the first and most targeted attempt of exploiting social media in 2015. Soon after, the video was circulated through WhatsApp and YouTube. This set the trend among local terrorists of conveying their messages through social media platforms. The locals found the face for their suppressed struggle after watching these videos. Zakir Musa uploaded a couple of videos in 2016, urging Kashmiris, especially the Kashmiri youths, to join Jihad. Many youths, who were victims of unemployment and poverty, got radicalised and found such calls as the trigger to join Jihad. This resulted in surge of youths joining terrorist ranks in consecutive years, 2017 (124) and 2018 (199).

**Exploits of Social Media for “Freedom of Kashmir”.** A random search on Facebook and YouTube using search terms “Freedom of Kashmir” or “Kashmir Azadi” was carried out. The searched results show us the intensity, level of digital traffic and their intentions. The Digital Jihad contents are well planned and directed at the highest level and are further controlled and fuelled by separatists and various active *tanzeems*. A few extracts from social media are shown in Appendix B.

**Exploits of Social Media For “Jihad in Kashmir”.** Many religiously affiliated groups like followers of Jamaat-e-Islami, Salafi, Wahhabi, Al-Hadees,

Tablighi Jamaat, etc., are spreading digital content on the internet to support Jihad in Kashmir. Fiery speeches by terrorist leaders calling for Jihad, change in the dress code and massive protests after the Friday congregations are a few indicators of the rise of Wahhabi/Salafi groups in Kashmir.<sup>120</sup> As per survey reports reflected in “CLAWS Seminar report: Mapping of perceptions in Jammu and Kashmir”, 84 per cent of respondents said that they visited religious institutions in their spare time with 40 per cent doing so frequently.<sup>121</sup> The intention of these radicalising attempts is to lure the innocent youths of Kashmir in the name of religion, provide them radical education and ask for support for the cause in lieu of financial support for their families. It is the most stringent and impervious way of radicalisation, as this method is directly linked with the extremist interpretation of Islam. WhatsApp groups based on common religious beliefs are effective in uniting such people. WhatsApp is the favourite social media platform for youths in Kashmir, due to its user-friendly structure, smooth accessibility to limitless photos, videos, messages and group forums, and its availability on every smartphone in Kashmir. It is difficult for security forces to monitor, identify, track and analyse the content being circulated on this platform due to its end-to-end encryption. The list is actually limitless, however an excerpt of digital footprints of Jihad in Kashmir is shown in Appendix C.

#### **Exploits of Social Media for “Unification of Kashmir with Pakistan”.**

Unification of Kashmir with Pakistan has remained one of the national aim(s) of Pakistan. Often it has been mentioned in its election manifesto and complete national assets have been mobilised for the same. Pakistan state and non-state actors are now exploiting the internet and social media applications like Facebook and WhatsApp to brainwash and motivate youths to join armed–unarmed struggle against Indian central and local governments. As *DNA media* cites, “Figures compiled by different agencies reveal that there are 10,000 to 15,000 fake profiles and Pages on Facebook from Pakistan for cyber Jihad. Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) have its own IT wing. There are around 50 youth from Kashmir who went from Kashmir to Pakistan and joined militant outfits. They are part of this cell. They monitor the activities on social media. If someone from Kashmir posts opinions different from their ideology, they threaten them through their ground network”.<sup>122</sup> The input however was not reported by any other source. Twitter remains the most widespread and impactful social media tool to fuel its agenda in Kashmir. Following the government’s announcement of abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, a total of 1.58 lakh tweets were posted with hashtag #ModiKillingKashmiris. The tweets were re-tweeted 27,000 times and reached a mass of 3.9 lakh population.<sup>123</sup> Pakistan agencies crossed all their limits when they used

their innocent children in making a propaganda video to claim Kashmir. On October 12, 2019, the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba Pakistan, as part of event *Azadi-e-Kashmir Convention of 2019* released a 45-second promotional video on YouTube, Facebook and Twitter featuring children in which these children speak about their plans for a future when “Pakistan will win control over India”.<sup>124</sup> Recently, during the crisis of COVID-19 pandemic, Twitter handlers based in Pakistan launched a propaganda campaign. The campaign was driven by systematically engineered circulation of video clips of isolated incidents of attacks or harassment of Muslim individuals in India to project as if the entire community was under attack”.<sup>125</sup> Pakistan’s Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has been recruiting more than a thousand recruits to spread the propaganda war against India. The ISPR is organising such competitions every month and more than 100,000 youths have participated till 2019.<sup>126</sup> A few selected pages out of endless searched results of videos on the same theme of radicalisation from social media YouTube are shown in Appendix D.

**Radicalisation of Protesters and “Sangbaaz Force”.** Stone-pelting has become the new face of unarmed agitation and now is becoming a much bigger threat than the threat of armed terrorists. The violence is cyclic and the rage among youths to join stone-pelting, also known as Sangbaaz Force, is very high. More than 300 WhatsApp groups were once used to gather stone-pelters at an encounter site wherein each group had an average of 250 members.<sup>127</sup> These groups have been identified and blocked. Closed WhatsApp groups being active in J&K, PoK and Pakistan are coordinating all protests and agitation with stone-pelters. Some examples of usage of social media to radicalise and motivate youths for stone-pelting and protests are shown in Appendix E.

## Chapter IV

### IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY FORCES IN KASHMIR AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### IMPLICATIONS ON SECURITY FORCES IN KASHMIR

A myriad of security forces are operating in Kashmir to fight against terrorism. All the forces operate within their own Standard Operating Procedures and domains of specialisation.

#### Challenges Faced By Security Forces

**Reservations on Internet Censorship.** Under the Constitution of India, there is no established law defining censorship of the internet or websites, under the Information Technology Act, 2000. Computer Emergency Response Team, or CERT-IN was created to monitor all incoming and outgoing internet traffic from India. However, if the blocking is arbitrary, unreasonable and unfair, it would be in violation of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution of India.<sup>128</sup> Internet Service Providers Association of India (ISPAI) feels censoring the Internet or blocking thousands of websites will be an impossible task for any administrator.<sup>129</sup> The security forces are operating to augment civil administration to lower down the level of violence. Hence, the basic rights of freedom of speech, as promulgated by our laws, are very much in order for the common citizen of J&K and no singular security apparatus or whole can impose censorship without consent from government on the content being flooded on the internet related to terrorism, especially on social media platforms.

**High-speed, Swarming and Dense Traffic.** The digital traffic in Kashmir is very dynamic and vivid in nature. The flow of data due to 4G internet connectivity is very fast, multi-layered, multidirectional and very dense at chokepoints in terms of magnitude of messages, thus giving a swarming effect to the complete traffic in cyber domain. In Jammu and Kashmir, violent mobilisation based on online content (both fake and real) is seen as a major issue for law enforcement.<sup>130</sup>

**Privacy vs Monitoring.** The monitoring of online data of suspected people involves scanning, reading, identifying and tracking the data to gauge their intentions. Hence, this procedure has to be done secretly. There are a large number of citizens who are in contact with anti-national elements but

due to end-to-end encryption and privacy concerns, their online activities cannot be tracked. This is a major factor due to which online recruitments remain unchecked.

**Lack of State-of-the-Art Cyber Equipment.** The possibility of scanning the digital data is difficult due to the large amount of data traffic. One of the ways for the armed forces is through Wireless Experimental Units which have the capability to intercept and locate voice calls through cellular SIM numbers. J&K Police has equipped all its important police stations with phone tracking and interception equipment and are the main contributors. However, the terrorists are quickly shifting to VoIP (Voice over Internet Protocol) calls using Facebook, WhatsApp, Viber, Skype, etc. which are not very easy to track. For example, virtual SIMs<sup>131</sup> (Subscriber Identification Module) were used in Pulwama attack to remain in contact with Pakistan and Kashmir-based handlers.<sup>132</sup> The security forces are not completely equipped to scan and analyse the pattern of internet usage, identify high-traffic zones, usage pattern of various social media outlets and to identify key originators of messages on social media during protests and day-to-day functioning.

**Inadequate Cyber-Trained Manpower.** Armed forces, CAPF and J&K police deployed in Kashmir, need to have trained manpower in cyber domain with specialisation in aspects like internet networking, social media, online monitoring and scanning, eavesdropping and ethical hacking into the anti-national nexus.

**Dilemma in Legal Framework.** The erstwhile Section 66A of the IT Act, provided for punishment for sending offensive messages through communication services. The Supreme Court struck it down in its entirety calling it violative of Article 19(1)(a) and not saved by Article 19(2) of the Constitution of India in August 2015.<sup>133</sup> After four years in August 2019, the Supreme Court of India issued notice to the Central Government for the continued use of Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, 2000.<sup>134</sup> The legal dilemma for four years not only handicapped security forces in taking actions against persons who were uploading hateful and violative content but also gave the opportunity for offenders to escape from legal action. Moreover, Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) is an old act and hence does not mention any offences under its gambit in relation to cyber-terrorism or offences related to online jihad. The dilemma and complexity of the situation is illustrated by a recent incident. In Feb 2020, a First Information Report (FIR) was registered while taking cognisance of the social media posts by the miscreants by use of different VPNs, which were propagating rumours with regard to the current security scenario of the Kashmir valley, propagating secessionist ideology and glorifying terror

acts/terrorists. The police claims that they have taken the action over a J&K UT government order dated January 14 that bans the use of all social media sites to curb the misuse of these sites. They have filed the FIR under Sections 13 of UAPA, 188 and 505 of the Indian Penal Code and 66-A (b) of IT Act. Notably, Section 66A of IT Act was struck down by the Supreme Court back in 2015 and the top court even ordered the various state governments to sensitise cops about the same last year. The legality of the FIR, filed by newly formed Cyber Police Station Kashmir Zone, Srinagar, is in question due to the use of Section 66A of IT Act.<sup>135</sup>

**Unaccountability of Service Providers.** In April 2016, the Union Home Ministry had requested internet companies to maintain servers in India to help get real-time information about accounts which spread mischievous and incendiary messages.<sup>136</sup> Since the servers of social media providers are outside India, it is difficult for central security agencies to monitor cyber offences at the apex level. The same is the situation at tactical level, wherein the internet service providers in Kashmir are not accountable to security forces for their queries and security related concerns. WhatsApp is the most problematic platform in India. More attention is required to address the issues of fake content and propaganda tailored to this platform.<sup>137</sup>

**Inability in Controlling the Narratives.** Separatist parties, terrorist groups and religious bodies are using social media platforms in formulating and propagating 'Anti-India' & 'Anti-Security Forces' themes and narratives. These narratives, however, are to be controlled and countered wherever possible.

## Recommendations

**Joint Anti-Terror Cyber Defence Organisation.** To enhance the synergy and integration between various forces operating in Kashmir, a joint organisation with domain experts from all agencies to counter digital jihad is much needed. It should have representatives from intelligence and signal units of armed forces, CAPF and J&K Police. It should further be augmented by representatives from Directorate of Signal Intelligence in J&K, Intelligence Bureau, NTRO, National Intelligence Agency, RAW, Revenue Intelligence, Directorate of IT (Intelligence and Criminal Investigation), CID and Joint Cipher Bureau. The joint cell should operate as central nodal agency to scan, identify, monitor, track and scrutinise the data in cyber domain including social media platforms. The highest organisation should be formed at J&K UT level to monitor all regions of J&K. Joint Anti-Terror Cyber Cells should be formed at regional level to ensure each region is covered by a dedicated cell. The suggested regions for dedicated cells are Jammu, Rajouri-Poonch, South Kashmir and North Kashmir. Regions like Ladakh and Doda due

to comparatively low digital traffic may be covered by smaller cells with representatives from selected agencies. Officers, JCOs and NCOs and equivalent in other agencies should be trained in cyber aspects to carry out their tasks as part of Joint Anti-Terror Cyber Defence Organisation. Domain experts in the fields of IT, networking, internet, mass media and social media, legal from civil counterparts should also be included to form a strong and self-reliant cyber force.

**Amendments in Legal Framework.** The biggest hindrance for the security forces to scan data, is the right to privacy of every citizen. However, in a recent move by central government there has been an amendment in existing Section 69(1) IT Act by which, ten agencies including IB, NIA, CBDT, ED, DIA, CBI, Revenue Intelligence and Directorate of Signal Intelligence (J&K), RAW have been empowered to scan the online data of any electronic devices without any prior consent. The DGP/IGP of J&K Police should have been included in the list as the Commissioner of Delhi Police has been empowered by this act. The cyber offences facilitating terrorist activities directly/indirectly or which may pose a threat to local law and order by instigating masses in the future, should be considered severe offences. Legal framework, if amendment be necessitated, should empower the security forces to arrest on valid suspicion.

**Joint Policies by MoD & HM.** Joint policies should be clearly spelt out covering legal framework, allocation and sharing of resources, inter-agency accountability, response mechanism and timelines of actions after a cyber-offender or digital terrorist has been identified.

**MoUs with Private Service Providers.** The unaccountability of service providers and owners of social media platforms towards internal security can only be abolished by MoUs being signed between government agencies and private players. The MoUs should include responsible private players in containing fake profiles, fake messages and online activities with potential subversive threat.<sup>138</sup> The intermediary rules necessitate all platforms, with more than five million subscribers, to be a registered entity in India under the Companies Act. They are required to appoint a nodal officer in India to engage with law enforcement agencies on a 24x7 basis and communicate to users once in a month, regarding their privacy policies. The rules would compel platforms such as Facebook, its messaging service WhatsApp and Twitter to remove unlawful content, such as anything that affects the “sovereignty and integrity of India” within 24 hours.<sup>139</sup>

**Procurement of ‘State of Art’ Cyber Equipments.** Due to lack of State-of-the-Art cyber equipment, currently the security forces faces difficulties in scanning and monitoring the digital traffic in Kashmir.

Cellphone-spying software, to assist in monitoring, tracking and analysing activities occurring on a phone, is required. This software can be bugged inside the communication network of terrorists and suspected sympathisers to track data/activities of instigators and coordinators of mass protests and stone-pelters. Such software applications should be developed as per the requirements of security forces.

**Engagement with Education Centres.** The research clearly shows that adolescents are highly vulnerable to digital Jihad in Kashmir. They are receiving the major part of such content from their friends and acquaintances at schools including Madrassas. Security forces are required to monitor the activities of suspected schools and their members to reduce the exposure rate of innocent adolescents to such seditious agents. Education bodies should conduct “Social Media Awareness” capsules for adolescents and youths to enhance their awareness on social media, to highlight the threats of fake messages, cyber offences, online radicalisation and measures to avoid them.

**Control the Narratives.** Separatists’ parties, religious bodies and terrorist groups are using the internet and social media to publicise and sensitise locals about their themes and narratives. Security forces should form a “Narrative Desk” within UT level and should formulate narratives to counter the propaganda of Pakistan and terror groups. Active engagement of national and vernacular media should be one of the pillars of operations. Since, 84 per cent youths repose more faith in teachers and 84 per cent of respondents visit religious places in their routine daily, education bodies, religious groups, social workers and think tanks should be incorporated in developing such counter-narratives.

**Fast Judgment to Cyber Offenders.** The Joint Policies by Home Ministry and MoD, regarding handling of cyber offenders and digital terrorists, should definitely dictate clear-cut timelines and modalities of scanning, identifying and tracking them. Fast track courts should be ordered for fast judgements to cyber offenders. This will not only create a sense of apprehension among digital terrorists but will also ensure early release of innocent youths.

**Choke Digital Funding.** Online funding is the spine behind digital Jihad. Revenue Intelligence, Directorate of IT (Intelligence and Criminal Investigation), CBDT and other concerned agencies should operate in conjunction with “Joint Anti-Terror Cyber Defence Organisation” and focus to choke the Hawala funding nexus in Kashmir.

**Strict Rules For Purchase of SIM & Internet Facilities.** SIM cards are easily available on fake ID proofs in Kashmir. This must be stopped at the earliest. An individual with a proper ID proof can possess a maximum

of three SIM cards from one service provider, subject to a cap of nine overall. However, unscrupulous elements as well as some SIM card dealers have been found using fake or multiple ID proofs to procure and sell SIM cards.<sup>140</sup> How easy it is to access a fake ID in Kashmir can be illustrated by the example of shopkeeper Ghulam Jeelani. When his shop was raided in November 2017, various fake licences, fake vehicle insurances, fake shop licences, forged security forces, ID cards, mobile phones, computers and other incriminating materials were seized from the spot. He revealed that he was running this racket of fake government documents (Adhaar cards, Voter cards, PAN cards) for the past 2-3 years. Alarming, many fake ID cards of various security forces like CRPF, JKP, Army were also recovered from his possession.<sup>141</sup> Such rampant sale of SIM through fake ID proofs leads to crimes not only in Kashmir but all across the country. Ministry of Telecom should enforce strict rules for distribution of SIM and internet connections to citizens not only in Kashmir but all across the country.

**Productive Engagement of Youths.** Security forces and other agencies should conduct various vocational training capsules to enhance the skills of youth in Kashmir. Productive engagement of unemployed youths is a must to keep them away from the evils of digital jihad.

**Field Survey on Digital Jihad.** A detailed study-cum-survey on impact of digital Jihad and online radicalisation of youth in Kashmir should be carried out to explore the nature, sources, accessibility, frequency and intensity of such contents.

## Conclusion

Kashmir Valley post the abrogation of article 370, is witnessing one of the major shifts in its political and social discourse. On the one side, the intensity of digital jihad on social media platforms has dipped due to weak internet but the roots are still well etched in cyber domain. The players of digital jihad are exploiting this socio-political issue to radicalise youth against the government setup. The vulnerabilities of Kashmiri youth to online radicalisation have increased alarmingly due to a prolonged lockdown as the COVID-19 pandemic spreads in India and the Kashmir Valley. With complete shutdown of administrative institutions, the government is struggling to address the issue and half-measured steps of complete shutdown of internet in the Valley post abrogation is not the final and wholesome solution to curb it. A mid-way solution of embracing and confining the social media simultaneously would be far more effective. The handlers in India and abroad should be cornered by exposing their e-financial support to bring down the spread of e-jihad. The rampant radicalisation of youth and the rage among them to join terrorist

ranks need to be addressed by political, legal, intelligence and security setup simultaneously. The issue, if not addressed, would become a challenge for all of us with thousands of digital terrorists or e-jihadists spreading the hatred while operating anonymously and supporting acts of terror and terrorist agendas.



### QUESTIONNAIRE: INTERNET JIHAD AUR KASHMIRI AWAM

Kashmir ke haalaat har din badal rahe hain. Terrorists groups aur separatists groups aaj Social media jaise Facebook, Whatsapp aur Youtube ka istemaal kar rahe hain aur zyada se zyada Kashmir ke ladko ko gumraah karne ki koshish kar rahe hain. Facebook aur Whatsapp pe Jihad aur Kashmir azaadi se jude messages, photos aur videos ko dekh kar kaafi ladke protests, pattharbaazi aur mujahideeno se judne ki koshish kar rahe hain. Kashmir ke ladko ko internet Jihad mein fail rahe Jihadi khabron se gumraah hone se bachaane ki koshish mein yeh ek pehal hai, jisme mein aap ke saath ki zarurat hai. Niche diye sawaalo ka jawwab dein aur hamein aapko jaan ne ka ek aur mauka dein. Shukriya. (\* Required)

1. Aapka Email ID/Naam
2. Aapki Age (Umar) kya hai? \* *Mark only one oval.*  
 25 saal se zyada       20 se 24 saal       17 se 20 saal  
 14 se 17 saal       10 se 13 saal
3. Aapki Education degree kitni hai? \* *Mark only one oval.*  
 Graduation       12th class pass       10th class pass  
 8th class pass       5th class pass  
 Uneducated (padhayi nahi ki hai)
4. Aapki pariwaar ki saalana maali (annual financial state) haalat kaisi hai? \* *Mark only one oval.*  
 10 lakh se upar       6 se 9 lakh       3 se 5 lakh  
 1 se 2 lakh       1 lakh se kam
5. Kya aapke paas apna niji mobile ya computer hai? Tick karein jo aapke paas apna hai \*  
 Computer ya Mobile  
 Computer aur mobile Dono  
 Aap dusre ke mobile/computer ya public cyber cafe se internet karte hain  
 Kuchh nahi hai
6. Kya aapke mobile phone ya computer mein internet connection ki facility hai? \*  
 Yes  
 No
7. Ek hafte (week) mein aap internet par kitna samay kharch (spend) karte hain? \*  
 15 ghante se zyada (lagbhag 2 ghante har din)  
 8 se 12 ghante (lagbhag 1.5 hours har din)  
 Lagbhag 7 ghante (lagbhag 1 hour har din)  
 3 se 4 ghante (lagbhag 30 se 40 minute har din)  
 1 se 2 ghante (lagbhag 15 minute har din)  
 1 Ghanta se kam
8. Niche likhe kis kis social media applications ka aap istemaal karte hain?

(Select karein jinka aap istemaal karte hain) \*Check all that apply.

Facebook  Whatsapp  YouTube  Twitter  Instagram

9. Aapka sabse pasandida (favourite) mobile application kon sa hai? \*Mark only one oval.

WhatsApp  YouTube  Twitter  Instagram

10. Jihad se juda hua message/videos/news aapko kitne samay par milta rehata hai ?

Har baar internet kholne par

Din mein ek se do baar

Ek do din ke baad

Hafte mein ek baar

15 din mein ek baar

11. Kashmir Azaadi ya 'Anti-India' issue se juda hua message/videos/news aapko kitne samay par milta rehata hai? \* Mark only one oval.

Har bar internet kholne par

Din mein ek se do baar

Ek do din ke baad

Hafte mein ek baar

15 din mein ek se do baar

12. Niche diye mein se kon se application mein sabse zyada jihadi khabrein/photos/videos dekhne ke liye maujood hote hain? \* Mark only one oval.

Facebook  WhatsApp  YouTube  Twitter  Instagram

Koi aur application

13. Jab aap Facebook, whatsapp aur youtube par jihadi khabrein/videos/mujahideen ke photos dekhte hain to aapko bhi jihad ki wajah sahi lagti hai aur jihad se judne ki khwahish hoti hai? \*

Yes

No

Neutral

14. Inme mein se kon sa group sabse zyada jihadi khabrein, videos aur photos Awam ke beech bhejta hai? \*

Hurriyat Party  Mujahideen Group - HM, Let,JeM  Molvi aur Tableegh

15. Kya aapko lagta hai aaj kashmir ka youth internet par jihadi content dekh kar jihad se judna chahta hai? \*

Yes

No

16. Jihad aur azaadi ke message aapko sabse zyada kin logo se milte hain? \*

Padosi doston se se

Molvi/tableegh ke logo se

School ke dosto

Terrorist ke supporters

17. Kya aapko mobile ya computer par kisi ne kisi Jihadi terrorists group mein recruitment ke liye message kiya hai? \*

Yes

No

18. Kya school/college mein cyber jihad (internet se bheja jihad material) ke bure asar ke baare mein aghaah (warning) kiya jaata hai? \*

Yes

No

**SEARCH RESULT ON YOUTUBE WEBSITE: VIDEOS ON  
'FREEDOM OF KASHMIR'**



**'We want freedom': Anti-India protesters clash wit...**

RT • 1.3M views • 3 years ago  
Anti-India protests triggered clashes between students and government forces in the



**Kashmiri people raising their slogans (HUM KYA...**

Exotic Sounds • 5.9K views • 9 months ago  
In this video the kashmiri people are raising slogans for their freedom..... Guys must share



**Sarjan Barkati (freedom chacha) speech at Pinjoo...**

Kashmir Global • 463K views • 3 years ago  
Sarjan Barkati (freedom chacha) speech at Pinjooa Shopian Chalo prog on Sep 4. In the



**Heart Touching Tarana New 2019 Kashmir Song...**

Message Tv • 64K views • 10 months ago  
Kashmir #ISPR #Song.



**kashmir new azadi tarana 2019| kashmir hamara...**

ifra Malik • 11K views • 1 year ago  
tarana,new tarana,kashmir,kashmiri tarana,kashmir azadi,avr pranks,p4 pakao,the



**Kashmir Ki Azadi [ A Tribute to Kashmiri...**

Murtaza Arshad Butt • 12K views • 9 months ago  
A Video by Murtaza Arshad Butt A valiant

Source: Youtube.com

## Appendix C

### SEARCH RESULT ON YOUTUBE WEBSITE: VIDEOS ON 'JIHAD IN KASHMIR'

 FILTER

Did you mean: [Jihad kashmir video](#)



**kashmiri Mujahidden Viral Video | Kashmir Jihad sy ...**  
SR Abbasi - Kashmir • 3.4K views • 3 months ago  
Kashmir Jihad Sy Hi Azad Hoga | Viral Video of Kashmiri Muahideen | Jihad E Kashmir



**Kashmiri Mujahid Commander Burhan Wani...**  
SR Abbasi - Kashmir • 8.5K views • 4 months ago  
Tribute to Our Hero Burhan Wani Shaheed. Subscribe Tehreek Labbaik Kashmir for more



**new viral video of kahmir mujahideen/jihade kash...**  
chishti Squad • 6.5K views • 8 months ago  
new video viral of kashmir mujahideen please share or subscribe kera.



**Taliban Ny india Mein Jihad ka Elan Kar Dia |...**  
Rumi Studio • 2K views • 3 days ago  
Taliban Ny india Mein Jihad ka Elan Kar Dia | Afghan Taliban Jihad Against india Asslam o New



**Kashmir People Encouraging Jihadis...**  
Only Entertainment • 1.2K views • 2 years ago  
Shame on us. Today in Kashmir one Army Man was brutally killed by these \*\*\*\* jihadis.



**Afghan Taliban Attack Latest News - Taliban Ka...**  
Infolsm • 3K views • 3 days ago

Source: Youtube.com

**SEARCH RESULT ON YOUTUBE WEBSITE: VIDEOS ON  
'UNIFICATION OF KASHMIR WITH PAKISTAN'**



**Kashmir Banega Pakistan | Summan Sheikh | New...**  
Summan Sheikh • 43K views • 8 months ago  
Song: kashmir Banega Pakistan | Summan Sheikh | New Milli Naghma 2019 | Kashmir



**Kashmir banega Pakistan Meet ke rehega Hindusta...**  
Rob boy • 4K views • 3 years ago



**Sikhs shout "Kashmir banega Pakistan" while...**  
The Kashmir Pulse • 1.7M views • 4 years ago  
Sikh protesters on Sunday shouted pro-Pakistan slogans during a protest against the



**Kashmir Banega Pakistan go India go back Pakistan...**  
Nadeem ahmad • 21K views • 2 years ago



**NEW MILI NAGHMA 2019 KASHMIR BANAY GA...**  
Amjad Farooq Mirani • 7.6K views • 6 months ago  
Kashmir banay ga Pakistan by Atta Ullah.



**Aazadi || Kasmir Bany Ga Pakistan || New Tarana F...**  
Kch Multimedia Naat • 911K views • 1 year ago  
TITLE : azadi VOICE : shahid khattab Audio

Source: Youtube.com

## Appendix E

### SEARCH RESULT ON YOUTUBE: VIDEOS ON 'SANGBAAZ FORCE' TO INSTIGATE PROTESTS



'We want freedom': Anti-India protesters clash wit...

RT 1.3M views • 3 years ago

Anti-India protests triggered clashes between students and government forces in the



CRPF vehicle attacked by stone pelters in Jammu...

IndiaTV 1.4M views • 1 year ago

CRPF vehicle attacked by stone pelters in Jammu and Kashmir's Srinagar. For More



Heavy stone pelting in hmt srinagar

TeChNiCaL BaDsHaH • 67K views • 1 year ago

Please Watch like and SubScribe to our YouTube Channel and press the bell Icon FoR



Girls throwing stones in Kashmir Intense teargas...

Controversial Kashmir • 184K views • 3 years ago

Kashmir a disputed controversial region in the world where humans are being used as shield,



India Ja Ja Kashmir Se Nikal Ja | Full Song |...

Aj Pak Official Studio • 11K views • 9 months ago

India Ja Ja Kashmir Se Nikal Ja | Full Song Jammu Kashmir New Pakistani Song 2019



Anantnag. TIGERS. Kashmiri Sangbaaz.

KMR Gaming • 391 views • 3 weeks ago

kashmiri mujahidin videos Kashmiri Sangbaaz Kashmiri taranay. Burhan muzafar.

Source: Youtube.com

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