

**‘TUMULT IN PARADISE’:  
RESISTANCE, FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY IN  
KASHMIR**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI  
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RESISTANCE, FREEDOM AND COMMUNITY IN  
KASHMIR**

**by**

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**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

**Submitted**

**In fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of doctor of philosophy**

**to the**



**INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI**

**JULY 2024**

## THESIS CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, “**Tumult in Paradise**”: **Resistance, Freedom and Community in Kashmir**’ submitted by **Nazia Amin** to the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Delhi, for the award of the degree of **Doctor of Philosophy**, is a record of the bona fide research work carried out by her. She has worked under my supervision and the accompanying thesis is her genuine and original work. She has completed the necessary courses to the requisite standard. This thesis has not been submitted, in part or full, to any other university or institute for the award of any degree or diploma.

Date: 09 July 2024

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a reflection on the political in Kashmir through the concepts of resistance, freedom and community. Its central argument is that the meanings of resistance and freedom are significantly circumscribed if they are thought of in terms of binary relations of resistance-to-occupation and liberation-from-India. In foregrounding the relationship between resistance, freedom and the idea of a Kashmiri political community in the making the dissertation attempts to dislodge occupation (and thereby the State) from the centrality it is accorded in most discourses on Kashmir even as it remains the overarching context within which these concepts are elaborated.

The broad questions that inform this dissertation are: What are the multiple contesting relations and meanings through which resistance may be thought about? In a place like Kashmir, which is ethnically, religiously and politically diverse, what would the search for freedom as an ethical idea imply? Do the people imagine a political framework that offers an alternative to the sovereign logic of the nation-state and the competitive identitarian politics it engenders? The work tries to locate and underline how such concerns are implicitly as also explicitly voiced in the selected texts written by Kashmiris.

The concepts of resistance, freedom and displacement invoke both their psychic and political meanings in the dissertation. As it reflects on the moral and political ambiguities among Kashmiris produced by their prolonged experiences of political repression and violence, the dissertation draws attention to certain difficult psychic-political questions which bear upon political movements and which demand reckoning. It asks, might there be resistances to the very ideas of freedom and political resistance within the people? Alongside the pursuit of freedom and the will to resist, violence also produces states of despair, fatigue and the wish to withdraw from the political. Whereas the experience of being occupied or displaced may



engender among people the dream of a home that neither imprisons nor banishes but is a place of radical openness and hospitality it may also arouse aspirations for absolute sovereignty over home and for an exclusivist, hyper-nationalist homeland. To understand the political in Kashmir, this work attempts to consider what may be the unconscious conflicts, fantasies and psychic investments underlying people's political ideologies and aspirations.

Through a focus on the relationship between Pandits and Muslims, this work also raises wider questions about the making of a political community. It examines both the blocks and the openings for the possibility of conversations between the communities towards imagining a just and free future for all in the region.

KEY WORDS: Resistance, Freedom, Community, Displacement, Home, Ambivalence

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## सार

यह शोध कश्मीर में राजनीतिक विचार का एक परिचय है जिस पर संघर्ष, स्वतंत्रता और समुदाय के अवधारणाओं के माध्यम से विचार किया गया है। इसका मुख्य तर्क यह है कि संघर्ष और स्वतंत्रता के अर्थ बहुत हद तक सीमित हो जाते हैं अगर उन्हें मुख्यतः संघर्ष-ऑक्यूपेशन और भारत से मुक्ति के संबंध में परिभाषित किया जाए। यह शोध कश्मीरी राजनीतिक समुदाय के निर्माण को महत्व देता है और इसके साथ ही, राज्य और ऑक्यूपेशन को उन मुख्यताओं से हटाता है जिन्हें कश्मीर पर अधिकांश विचार-विमर्शों में स्थान दिया जाता है। संघर्ष और स्वतंत्रता को समुदाय से संबंधित करते हुए, इनका विस्तार से विवरण करने का प्रयास किया गया है।

इस शोध को निर्देशित करने वाले मुख्य प्रश्न हैं: संघर्ष को किस प्रकार के विवादास्पद संबंध और अर्थों के माध्यम से विचारा जा सकता है? कश्मीर जैसी जगह में, जो जातिगत, धार्मिक और राजनीतिक रूप से विविध है, नैतिक विचार के रूप में स्वतंत्रता की खोज क्या संकेतिक करेगी? क्या लोग राजनीतिक रूप से एक ऐसे रामबाण राष्ट्र-राज्य के प्रति विकल्प प्रस्तुत करते हैं जो औरों के लिए मुक्ति के रूप में नई संवैधानिक सम्भावनाओं को प्राथमिकता देता है और जिसके अंतर्गत परस्पर प्रतियोगी पहचान-राजनीति को जन्म दिया जाता है? यह निबंध यह स्पष्ट करने का प्रयास करता है कि ऐसे चिंतन किस प्रकार चुने लिए गए कश्मीरी लेखकों के लेखों में व्यक्त होते हैं।

यह शोध विरोध, स्वतंत्रता और विस्थापन के दोनों अर्थों, अंतर्मनस्तात्मिक और राजनीतिक, का अध्ययन करता है। इसमें कश्मीरियों के उन नैतिक और राजनीतिक अस्पष्टताओं पर ध्यान दिया गया है जो उनके दीर्घकालिक राजनीतिक दमन और हिंसा के अनुभवों द्वारा उत्पन्न होती हैं। और कुछ कठिन मानसिक-राजनीतिक प्रश्नों पर भी ध्यान दिया गया है जो राजनीतिक आंदोलनों पर प्रभाव डालते हैं और जिन्हे समझना ज़रूरी है, जैसे: क्या लोगों के भीतर भी स्वतंत्रता और राजनीतिक प्रतिरोध के विचारों का विरोध हो सकता है? स्वतंत्रता और विरोध की इच्छा के साथ-साथ, हिंसा निराशा, थकान

और राजनीति से हटने की इच्छा को भी उत्पन्न कर सकता है। राजनीतिक दमन तथा कब्जे में रहने का अनुभव या विस्थापन होने का अनुभव लोगों में एक ऐसे घर के सपने को जन्म दे सकता है जो न तो जेल जैसा हो और न ही निर्वासन करने की सम्भावना पैदा करे, बल्कि जो खुलेपन और मेहमाननवाज़ी की जगह हो। पर यह अनुभव लोगों में अपने घर पर पूर्ण संप्रभुता और एक संकीर्ण, अत्यधिक राष्ट्रवादी देश के लिए आकांक्षाएँ भी उत्पन्न कर सकता है। कश्मीर में राजनीति को समझने के लिए, यह शोध यह सोचने का प्रयास करता है कि लोगों की राजनीतिक विचारधारा और आकांक्षाओं में क्या अचेतन इच्छाएँ, संघर्ष, और कल्पनाएँ हो सकती हैं।

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