BURHANISATION OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE RESISTANCE MOVEMENT IN KASHMIR

Sheikh Gh. Waleed Rasool
& Ameer Abdullah Khan *

Abstract

This study is an impact assessment of Burhan Wani, a freedom fighter from Kashmir who was killed by Indian security forces in July 2016. Wani, through use of social media, gave a new outlook to the Kashmiri struggle for freedom, which is completely indigenous and involves new generation of Kashmiri youth. The soft images diluted the negative image created by state controlled Indian media about Kashmiri struggle and gave birth to a new phenomenon i.e. interplay of message, images and sentiment called “Burhanisation.” These images did not pass through routine media gate-keeping; therefore, they triggered a mass resistance against the Indian rule in occupied Kashmir and Burhan Wani was glorified as a freedom fighter. The study explores how these images through the use of social media promote a soft image of resistance by giving it an indigenous outlook which is more effective than the symbol of ‘Kalashnikov’ in catching the attention of the international community.

Key Words: Social media, Kashmir, Kalashnikov, Burhanisation, Conflict, Mass-uprising, AFSPA, POTA

Introduction

Kashmiris started their freedom struggle in the 1930s when this region was a part of the British Indian empire. Following the partition of the sub-continent and the emergence of Pakistan and India as independent states, Kashmir went through a de facto partition with India occupying a major chunk of the Muslim majority areas against the aspirations of the people. This movement went through several

* Sheikh Gh. Waleed Rasool is PhD Scholar at the Department of International Relations (IR), International Islamic University, Islamabad (IIUI). Ameer Abdullah Khan is lecturer, Department of International Relations (IR), National Defence University, (NDU) Islamabad.
phases, where the latest phase started in 2016 after the killing of a young freedom fighter, Burhan Wani, at the hands of Indian security forces. Burhan Wani was a young Kashmiri who joined the resistance against Indian occupation at the age of 15 after being beaten up along with his brother at a military check post by Indian army men. However, contrary to the previous trends in Kashmiri freedom struggle, this time use of modern communication technologies ensured that the narrative of liberation from illegal occupation of Kashmir by Indian forces would reach to the maximum number of people. Burhan Wani, 'the Poster Boy' of Hizbul Mujahidin, became a social media sensation of his own kind. He started uploading his selfies and video messages on the famous social media platform Facebook, which were shared and liked by thousands. In his messages, he would criticize the Indian government for their unlawful occupation of Kashmir. He also targeted the Indian army and the local police for committing atrocities in Kashmir. After the killing of Burhan, a reaction erupted which was probably not anticipated by the Indian government. The protests spread across Kashmir, where most of the participants were young boys and girls. It forced the Indian authorities to impose a two months long curfew, stop the publication of newspapers, close down schools and suspend internet and telephone services. ¹ When the images of Burhan’s dead body were shared on social media, the reaction became severe. Kashmiris flooded the roads and their protests were met with the use of brute force by the Indian authorities. Over 30 people were killed and hundreds were injured in mere three days following Burhan’s killing.² The role played by Burhan Wani and the impact of his killing is a unique episode in the history of Kashmiri freedom struggle. Burhan never travelled outside of India and had no linkage with any foreign element, thus reflecting a purely indigenous struggle against the Indian occupation. Secondly, he used an innovative tool to spread his message to the people of Kashmir and his charisma helped his message being widely accepted. Collectively, these impacts can be called Burhanisation a phenomenon created through the interplay of images and sentiments.

**Genesis of the Kashmir Struggle**

Kashmiris started their freedom struggle when the people of the sub-continent were struggling to get independence from British


Burhanisation of Social Media in Kashmir

As the region was ruled by a Hindu Maharaja, a gulf between the Muslim majority and the ruler became visible in the 1930s, following a series of events sparked by interference by the government in religious affair of the people. In the days to come, All India Muslim League and Indian National Congress created their separate areas of influence in the region. However, a majority of the Muslim population was more inclined towards the narrative of All India Muslim League, owing to close religious, cultural, historical and geographical connections with the envisioned state of Pakistan. However, the boundary award announced by the commission led by Cyril John Radcliffe contentiously divided the Gurdaspur district of Punjab between two new states of the sub-continent; providing India geographical connectivity with the valley of Kashmir. Meanwhile, the Kashmiris started resisting against Maharaja’s autocratic and repressive rule.

The situation became grim when the newly independent states got engaged in hostilities and fought a war in 1948. At the end of the war, Kashmiris found themselves divided between two states. During the war, Kashmir’s Hindu ruler signed a controversial instrument of accession with India. The war ended with a UN Security Council Resolution promising the right of self-determination for Kashmiris, though later developments proved that India never wanted to give Kashmiris their legitimate rights. Earlier, the Indian religious and political leader M. K. C. Gandhi, while visiting Srinagar, declared the will of Kashmiris as the supreme law in Jammu and Kashmir. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in his parliamentary speeches, letters and telegrams also repeatedly avowed about Kashmiris’ right of self-determination and showed willingness to solve the Kashmir dispute as per the will and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. India accorded a special status to Kashmir under Article 370 of its Constitution but gradually many of its clauses were amended. In the coming years, India and Pakistan fought two more wars and engaged in several limited conflicts but the status quo over Kashmir remained intact. After Indo-Pak war in 1971 Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Abdullah signed an accord in 1974. Though, the Indian government had already made several amendments in the Constitution to fully integrate Kashmir into the Indian Union, this accord further enabled India to erode the special status of Kashmir under Indian constitution.

---

1987 elections proved hollow for Kashmir and turned out to be a mockery of democracy, which triggered an armed resistance against India. The leaders who are leading the present uprising contested 1987 assembly elections from the platform of Muslim United Front (MUF). Syed Salahuddin, the Supreme Commander of Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) and Chairman of United Jihad Council (UJC), contested from Amira Kadal constituency of Srinagar. He is considered a top ranking “terrorist” by India now. The MUF leadership comprised of peaceful actors of democracy who were disheartened by the manipulation of 1987 elections results by the Indian establishment. This paved the way for armed struggle in Kashmir which continued throughout the 1990s in which Kalashnikov became symbol of resistance. 9/11 adversely affected the resistance movement and forced the freedom aspirants to opt for political struggle. However, by 2007-2008 a strong wave of protests emerged in Kashmir over the ‘Amarnath Yatra land controversy generated by the Indian government’s decision to transfer 800 kanals forest land to Shri Amarnath Shrine Board. The latest wave of resistance was triggered in the wake of brutal extra-judicial killing of Burhan Wani by the Indian security forces.

**Traditional Media and the Kashmir Resistance Movement**

The Kashmir resistance is an indigenous political movement to liberate the people from an illegal Indian occupation. The killings and the mass uprising in Kashmir are not objectively reported by the traditional Indian media. The Kashmiris have kept the political movement alive; initially, the medium of communication available to freedom leaders was speeches during small meetings and gatherings, mosques and public places, educational institutions. In addition, wall chalking, pamphlets and then print media such as the “Azaan”, a prominent weekly published by an official organ of Jamaati Islaami, were other tools used by the leaders of the movement. The Azaan was later banned permanently in 1987 by the Indian government. Robbing the pro-freedom Kashmiri leaders of their

---

8 Muslim United Front was amalgamation of seven parties of Jammu and Kashmir which contested election against National Conference and Congress in 1987. Syed Ali Geelani, APHC Chairman, Syed Salahuddin Chief Commander HM, Yaseen Malik, Chairman Liberation Front, Prof. A.G Butt, Abbas Ansari etc were part of the elections.

9 Hizbul Mujahideen is the largest indigenous militant organization having a fighting cadre. Burhan Muzaffar Wani was District Commander of HM from South Kashmir district of Islamabad.

10 UJC is amalgamation of various militant outfits who are involved in armed struggle against Indian rule in Kashmir.

mandate in the 1987 elections triggered the armed resistance against India yet again. Syed Salahuddin Chairman United Jihad Council (MJC) and All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) leaders Syed Ali Geelani, Mohammad Yaseen Malik, Abbas Ansari, Prof. A. G. Bhat were the first casualties of the Indian media and its negative framing.

Radio Kashmir was another main propagating tool, controlled by the All India Radio and it remained a mouthpiece of the establishment promoting only one-sided framing. Hence, BBC Radio was more popular than other media in the region. However, due to its own limitations, it could not serve the purpose of spreading the message of freedom to the people of Kashmir. Radio Darjeeling (RD) and the Voice of America (VOA) also had a presence. As far as Television is concerned, there was only one Indian TV channel, “Doordarshan” available in Kashmir up till 2002.

As analyzed by Teresa Joseph, the coverage of the news by Indian newspapers dominated the media narrative of the state. Sreedharan concludes on the basis of content analysis that the press and electronic media in Indian occupied Kashmir is “vigorously government-led” and intensively “negative”. The coverage given to Kashmiri freedom struggle was “ethnocentric” and mostly relied on Government sources. Tavleen Sigh, in her book, Tragedy of Errors, says that it is misguided patriotism. The coverage of Kashmir by Indian media has been merely sensational and antagonistic in nature. The sufferings of Kashmiris and their struggle gets distorted coverage in the Indian media. The journalists reporting on Kashmir have always relied on biased reporting. The quantitative analysis conducted by Akshay Tarfe holds that 78 percent of news across mediums belongs to the Indian military. The prime-time news channels are projecting lies about Kashmir to the rest of India. It was the impact of this inability of Indian media to give due coverage to the Kashmiri struggle that led to the emergence of social media as an actor in 2016 after the killing of Burhan Wani.

Conventional media in Indian occupied Kashmir (IOK) is controlled and used to project Indian stance in the name of national interest. The

13 Chindu Sreedharan, Reporting Kashmir: An Analysis of the Conflict Coverage in Indian and Pakistani Newspapers (Bournemouth University, 2009).
local media of Kashmir is forced to comply with the rules and regulations laid down by Delhi which also controls accreditation, resources and advertisements that ensures the survival of any publication. This control is also used by the Indian government to keep media in Kashmir under tight control. Freedom of the press is always suppressed and every piece of information has to pass through stringent censoring according to the benchmarks set by the Indian authorities. If there is any news story against the role of the armed forces or any analysis that questions the role of the armed forces, it cannot pass through the spokesperson of the 15th corps stationed in Srinagar.

Private media channels and newspapers based in IOK are under severe stress. The writers and journalists who dare to write against the government face grave consequences. Ghulam Mohammad Lone, a freelance print reporter, who also wrote for the English newspaper Greater Kashmir, was killed by unidentified gunmen at his residence in August 1994. Ghulam Rasool Sheikh, the editor of Urdu daily Rehnuma-e-Kashmir was killed by Indian security forces in April 1996. Javed Ahmed Mir working for Channel 9 was killed by security forces in April 2008 while on assignment to cover a protest in Srinagar. There is a controlled presence of international media in Kashmir; however, some media houses are still present there with their offices outside the Kashmir region. BBC and Voice of America (VOA) have extended their bureau offices to Kashmir but remain threatened by both the security forces and the militants. The international media also has little access to the areas which are in turmoil so correspondents avoid covering a story on the spot. Rather, they often rely on government news agencies or press releases issued by resistance groups. Pakistani press or electronic media has neither direct access to Indian occupied Kashmir nor has any correspondent there.

**Evolution of Social Media in Kashmir**

Unlike people in many other parts of the world, Kashmiris were deprived of the privilege of using internet and social media by the Indian government until 2014. Initially, people were able to have a limited access to social media sites in 2014 through official internet. It was only after the introduction of 3G and 4G cellular networks in Kashmir in 2015 that social media started acting as a catalyst for the cultural connectivity. Masses,

---

18 Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ), https://cpj.org/data/people/ghulam-rasool-sheikh/.
who were isolated by the prejudices of mainstream media, resorted to the
use of social media to communicate with each other. This communication
also included messages against the atrocities being committed by Indian
forces in Kashmir and the illegal occupation of Kashmir by India.

Earlier, Indian military stationed in Kashmir robbed the state
assembly elections of 1987, strictly controlling the information in and out
from Kashmir. Radio Kashmir was used as the primary weapon for
information management purposes. Radio Kashmir announced the results
of assembly elections against the winning candidates of Muslim United
Front (MUF). This was followed by the arrest of the MUF candidates and
the counting agents directly from counting halls. The announcement of the
results against the MUF was the time when the democratic and political
struggle finally changed into an armed resistance within two years. This
not only depleted Kashmiri confidence in Indian state institutions but also
dashed any hopes of truthful coverage by Indian media. With the negative
role being played by Indian media at the occasion and in the following
years, a vacuum was created and the voice of Kashmiris remained
suppressed. For next two and a half decades, the Kashmiris had only
pamphlets, small journals and magazines to spread their message.
However, this void was filled by the emergence of social media in Kashmir
which proved to be oxygen for the victimized after the journalistic
apartheid.

Thus, with the spread of 3G and 4G technologies, social media
provided a platform for the provision of information to and from the IOK
and filled the vacuum. This further contributed to the emergence of
another wave of agitation against Indian occupation of Kashmir. Social
media also provided the much-needed home-grown outlook to the
Kashmiri struggle and effectively undermined Indian portrayal of the
movement as being sponsored by Pakistan. As the youngsters are the
primary users of social media, so it revolutionized the whole landscape of
the society. To gauge the control of Indian army on the news coming out
from Kashmir, one can refer to a report by Khalid Waseem written in the
wake of floods in Kashmir. The report shows how mainstream Indian
national media always propagates the Indian military’s narrative on IOK
and demeans freedom struggle of Kashmir.21 In these circumstances of
extreme censorship and suppression of truth, social media becomes the
only space available to bring out sentiments in the open. The content
analysis of two major dailies of the Indian press carried out by Danish Nabi

https://www.privateinternetaccess.com/blog/2016/08/month-since-indian-
government-shut-internet-access-jammu-kashmir/.

21 Waseem Khaid, “Media Propaganda and the Kashmir Dispute: A Case Study of
the Kashmir Floods,” Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, August 2016.
https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk.
Gadda\(^{22}\) concludes that the Indian media ignores the voice of dissent in Kashmir and mostly favours Indian nationalistic narrative and official policy.

Aspirations of the common masses of IOK have been a victim of partial, distorted and controlled journalism by the self-proclaimed liberal press of India since 1947. Social media not only proved to be an alternative and filled the gap, but also brought the suffering of Kashmiris to the forefront. Thus, the popularity of social media increased multi-folds as an alternative to represent the aspirations of the majority. Social media gave a public face to those far-flung areas which were never covered by conventional media.

In view of the qualitative and quantitative analysis of media content published in India and abroad, it is concluded that Kashmiris are becoming increasingly dependent on social media because conventional media in IOK is marginalised while mainstream Indian media has been discredited. In 2016, there were 22 reported instances of internet shutdown in India that were mainly imposed to suppress the resistance movement in Kashmir.\(^{23}\) Internet shutdowns in India occurred more than those in Syria, Turkey and Iraq. Social media has greatly influenced the Kashmir conflict and made people aware of the ground situation there. Social media is a game changer as it has brought about a paradigm shift in narrative about the Kashmir conflict because ‘offline democracy’ did not work. Choking social media hatches rumours and it has not helped the Indians while the mainstream media is highly discredited. Amnesty International too, in a report in 2016 expressed serious reservations over blockade of internet in Indian Occupied Kashmir.\(^{24}\)

**Burhanisation of Social Media**

As a picture speaks a thousand words, so did the images of atrocities committed by Indian forces in Kashmir when they were uploaded on social media. These images represented a scenario contrary to the one portrayed by the Indian media through edited pictures and manipulated information. Timing is also a decisive factor for the consumption of the content to affect a group’s thinking. Social media


helped its Kashmiri users to convey their message promptly as it is free from the barriers of gatekeeping and editing. Imaging and framing through social media is cheap, instant and readily available to freedom aspirant Kashmiris. The time constraint also does not provide room to edit the images before sharing on social media. It also made it possible for the content to reach to various viewers from remote areas where conventional media has little reach, or where access of conventional media has been deliberately choked or where the content had to pass through gatekeeping of regulatory authorities. The self-loaded images of 22 years old young, unmasked, smiling, Burhan Wani, on social media posing with a Kalashnikov has introduced a unique phenomenon in the resistance against India. It created a mass following of Burhan Wani on social media and most of those following him were young educated Kashmiris. It provided a boost to Kashmiris freedom movement.

The killing of freedom fighters by the Indian forces in disputed area is a routine practice in Kashmir, licensed by Armed Forces Special Powers Ac.\textsuperscript{25} Indian troops in Kashmir use the sub-conventional operations tactics with an aim to neutralise all the opposing elements in the conflict zone that can transform the will and attitudes of the people.\textsuperscript{26} However, the assassination of Burhan Wani gave birth to a mega cycle of locally-driven resistance. Images of his dead body shattered the conventional framing of Indian media and gave birth to a new phenomenon i.e. the interplay of images and sentiments called Burhanisation. Pictures of the bullet-ridden perforated body of Burhan Wani were uploaded on Facebook by villagers from the vicinity on the site of the targeted killing, creating a “magic bullet” effect among the social media users of Kashmir. Indian media, backed by the military establishment, geared all its resources to sell the routine cover-up stories to the Kashmiris, Indian civil society and the international community that the young man killed was a “wanted terrorist”, therefore his killing was justified. However, this time, the Kashmiris were not ready to accept any story broadcasted by mainstream Indian media and pro-freedom narrative widely prevailed. The message and ideology of Burhan Wani spread to the Kashmiri people through social media, who hailed him as a hero. Meanwhile, this Burhanisation made it difficult for Indian media to mislead Indian civil society and international community.

\textsuperscript{25} Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) that gives special powers to Indian Armed forces is applied in IoK since 1990, Human Rights Watch, 16th March 2015.

The routine manoeuvring and managing of content in occupied Kashmir by Indian mainstream media not only backfired after Wani’s killing but worked as a catalyst to cement the sentiment of the masses resisting Indian rule. It also discredited the conventional Indian media and the mainstream leadership’s efforts to de-escalate the situation. As a reaction, India choked the social media, cell phone services and local media and imposed curfew to control the damage done by the unjustified killing of Burhan Wani. Though Indian army has killed tens of thousands of people since 1989, but after the killing of Burhan Wani, the protests triggered a long cycle of resistance, which beats all records of previous shutter-down strikes and human and property losses. Kashmiri masses rejected Indian media’s framing of Wani as a terrorist and made it clear that killing of freedom fighters can no more be justified by simply tagging them as ‘terrorists’.

Burhanization of Kashmir struggle internationalised the Kashmir issue in favour of Kashmiris to utter disdain of India. Social media has now emerged as a vibrant tool in the Kashmir conflict in both the presence or absence of conventional media. Burhanization triggered mass mobilization against the Indian atrocities, though there were certain other factors too that contributed to the intensification of the resistance. These included the extreme right-wing politics of BJP government and its attempts to undermine article 370 of the Indian Constitution that gives special status to Jammu & Kashmir, the lethal use of force in post-Wani protests and economic decline of Kashmir.

Social Media: Catalyst for the Kashmiri Resistance

Social Media is a modern platform of communication and poses a mega challenge to some conventional theories about the role of print and electronic media during a conflict. Social media proved to be more reliable in the conflict ridden IOK. The authenticity of content being shared by the government controlled electronic media is challenged easily by the social media users. The state usually justifies the killings of its opponents by manipulating the media content so as to control the masses. Social media has emerged as a major actor both in presence and in absence of conventional media, and is used as an effective tool of communication. Killing of Burhan Wani, ‘the poster boy of Kashmir struggle’ created a unique impact. It has been observed that Facebook pictures uploaded by Burhan Wani constructed his soft image in the people even though he was posing with a Kalashnikov. When he was killed by the Indian army, the masses of Kashmir rejected every manipulation by India to tag him as a terrorist and justify his killing. The killing of Wani brought the masses out on the roads and to control the mob, the military killed more than 101 people, blinding another 550 by indiscriminate showering of pellets.
through animal hunting guns. India locked down the social media and imposed curfew which continued for three months.

Burhan was educated young Kashmiri boy who was fond of using internet, social media through his cell phone. He was keen to use social media to fight against Indian occupation of Kashmir and never crossed over to Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Before the emergence of Burhan Wani and his use of social media, the Indian conventional media used to label indigenous Kashmiri freedom movement as Pakistan sponsored terrorism. This manipulation of facts was neutralized in the wake of Burhanisation of social media. This change has not only had a local impact but also a global one. Social media has emerged as a potent instrument of press as a two-sided persuasion tool. Anyone possessing a cell phone and having access to telecommunication networks can share one’s messages in multimedia formats. The power of social media is its availability and accessibility to every individual, as conventional media does not have that level of outreach to remote areas.

The statement of Omar Abdullah\(^{27}\) is an eye opener when he said, “Mark my words - Burhan’s ability to recruit in to militancy from the grave far outstrips anything he could have done on social media”. This statement of the ex-Chief minister accepts that the political system had failed and the youth was inclined towards antagonism. He confessed to the failure of Indian policies in Kashmir by saying, the killing of Burhan Wani had revived and legitimized the armed struggle. Similarly, the Lt. Gen of 15\(^{th}\) Corps Satish Dua stationed in Srinagar says that 60 percent of the population of the valley is below 30 years of age and admits, “We have to ensure engagement with the youth. The youth is hypersensitive on social media. The youth is brave not to conceal their identity.”\(^{28}\) The Superintendent of Police of district Pulwama, the place where Burhan Wani’s village is located, said, “The videos uploaded on Facebook have affected the psychology of youth. He is considered as a role model.\(^{29}\) These confessions support the argument that social media has had an influence in presenting the real story of Kashmir to the world. Ironically, many hurdles have been put in place by Delhi such as blocking the internet and social media services to keep the outside world in the dark about the reality in Kashmir.

\(^{27}\) Omar Abdullah is former Chief Minister of IoK and former Minister for State on External Affairs of India, twitter, July 9, 2016 @abdullah_omar.


\(^{29}\) “Facebook for Search Burhan Wani”, https://goo.gl/b1K7Lo.
Social Media and Kashmiri Sentiments

Indian government has been providing the legal cover to the killings by Indian army in Kashmir through various laws which are in conflict with global human right values. Thousands of young and educated Kashmiris have been killed in the name of terrorism since 1990. However, in case of Burhan Wani, Indian narrative was completely rejected by the Kashmiris and world at large. It gave a new outlook and lease of life to the Kashmir resistance. The images uploaded by Burhan Wani were available on his Facebook page and were overwhelmingly liked by the Kashmiri youth. His image was uploaded by 1,300 Facebook friends and shared by 83,892 ID’s within three days after his killing and before the suspension of communication services by Indian establishment controlling Kashmir. Facebook authorities blocked dozens of accounts, pages and posts carrying the image of Burhan Wani, apparently on the request of Indian army. The images shared by Burhan Wani penetrated the minds of youth who were emotionally connected and ideologically associated with him.

Social media eroded the agenda setting of mainstream Indian media therefore bringing the resistance at an all-time high despite lockdown of the Indian occupied Kashmir’s mainstream media for three months. The impact of social media proved more potent than the conventional weapon Kalashnikov that was allegedly recovered from Burhan Wani by the Indian army (RR) contingent who raided his hideout at midnight and killed him on the spot. Social media in the conflict zone of IOK transcended the physical and psychological hurdles laid by powerful state controlled media and Indian military.

Indian military establishment failed to sustain its interpretation and to push Indian agenda on the psychological warfare front in IOK. Excessive use of force by Indian security forces backfired and triggered a mass resistance led by Kashmiri youth in IOK. Indian propaganda failed to portray Burhan Wani negatively and justify his murder which has had remained a general practice of the Indian war machine since 1990.

Breaking the Myth

Burhan Wani represents the fifth generation of Kashmiris but the first one to start using Facebook influencing the opinions, emotions, attitudes and behaviours of the Kashmiri people. A prompt impact of the use of Facebook after the killing of Wani was to challenge the findings of various theories of conventional media. The manipulation of Indian media to frame the freedom fighters as terrorists utterly failed to sell

---

30 Compiled by Sheikh G Rasool, one of the author of this article.
domestically or globally. The collapse of propaganda war machinery diluted other prominent negative projections created by Indian media, which include:

- Kashmir’s freedom struggle is foreign sponsored rebellion
- Resistance doesn’t enjoy the support of the masses
- Freedom camp voice is fractured
- Resistance leadership are not on the same page
- Kashmiris have accepted the Indian role after mass participation in assembly elections of 2013
- Elected candidates are representatives of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir
- Killing thousands of Kashmiris and use of military might have crushed the resistance
- People are tired and only a small percent of the masses are demanding the right to self-determination.

The Indian media failed to apply the tactic of propaganda warfare to further the efforts of political, economic and military actions. Innocent killings backfired in the shape of massive mass resistance against India. The death of Burhan Wani proved costlier for Indian establishment in suppressing the right to self-determination than armed Burhan Wani. Social media furthered the agenda of the masses of Kashmir more effectively than lethal weapons. Social media challenged the negative projections of the conventional media and turned out to be more credible in the given condition. The Indian civil society was evoked for the first time in favour of the right to self-determination and generated a debate on Kashmir at various forums, civil society organizations, Indian mainstream political parties and universities among which Jawahar Lal University (JNU) in New-Delhi played a vital role.

Social media is a force multiplier. Generally, a single Facebook ID can keep 5,000 people connected. It simply means that one can send a message and an image or both, with a single click to 5000 people at a time. It is a two-way means of persuasion as one can receive feedback, which was not possible in the realm of print or electronic media. One can choose, select and delete the persons of one’s choice and remain connected with them round the clock. A person can tag a huge number of individuals at a time and the message can reach a multitude of people with a single click. The social networking platform has the capacity to reach an entire state population that has access to cell phone, with a mere click.

Conclusion

The multiplication of the message of resistance reached the masses of Kashmir through Burhan could not have predicted his social media
campaign working more after his death. The images uploaded by the masses reached the target, even the remote ones and gave birth to a new phenomenon i.e. the renewed sentiment which was dormant triggered after the killing by the Indian forces and gave birth to the longest cycle of the resistance. The circulation of his images multiplied after his death through social media neutralized the negative projections of the Indian state media during conflict. The internationalization of the issue was due to the images of those pellets, which were showered by occupational forces to halt Burhanisation with little success. Those images reached some sections of the Indian civil society and across the borders via conventional media of Pakistan.

Burhanisation has raised the level of resistance and sensitised but world community about the plight of the Kashmiris. Social media is an alternative means to raise one’s voice more effectively than lethal weapons, but it needs the partnership of conventional media which can use the information of social media as primary content. Social media has significance in conflict zones but it is effective locally, until and unless it is not integrated with conventional media as an indigenous content. The mode and method of the resistance can be transformed accordingly in the era of globalization where borders cannot cease the flow of information.