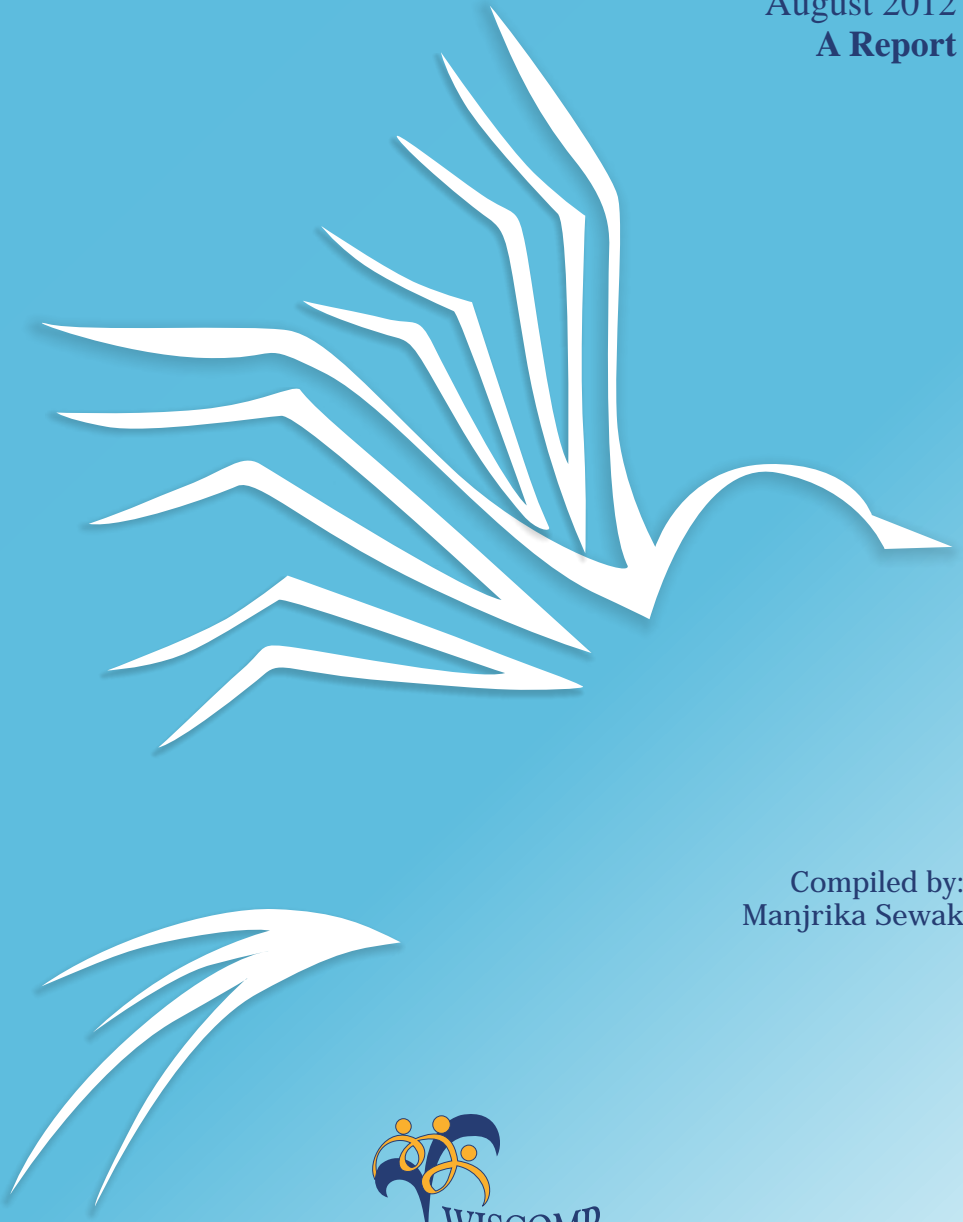


# The Software of Peacebuilding

Tenth Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop

August 2012

**A Report**



Compiled by:  
Manjrika Sewak



Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace  
Foundation for Universal Responsibility  
of  
His Holiness the Dalai Lama  
New Delhi

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**Manjrika Sewak**



Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace

*An initiative of the*

Foundation for Universal Responsibility  
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New Delhi

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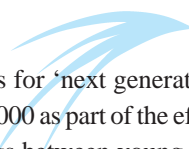
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## Introduction



The Conflict Transformation Workshops for ‘next generation’ Pakistanis and Indians were conceptualized in the year 2000 as part of the efforts of WISCOMP to facilitate peace dialogues and trainings between young people from across the conflict divide. The underlying assumption was that sustained face-to-face dialogues along with professional training in the field of Conflict Transformation are prerequisites for building long-term peace and security. Informed by a ‘generational’ approach to peacebuilding, the Workshops have attempted to create a space where young people can rise above the baggage of preceding generations and build a future based on trust and mutual respect. Thus far, the Workshops have brought together more than 400 youth leaders in a model that has been widely appreciated and emulated by civil society groups in the region.

WISCOMP chose the term ‘Conflict Transformation’<sup>1</sup> to define these dialogues-cum-trainings in the belief that trust- and relationship-building between the next generation of leaders and opinion-shapers—across the vertical

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<sup>1</sup> Sociologist John Paul Lederach coined the term Conflict Transformation in the context of the armed conflicts in Central America in the 1980s. Sharing his perspectives on the choice of this terminology, Lederach advocated a framework that addressed the ‘content, context, and structure of the relationship’ through three lenses. While the first lens focused on the immediate situation, the second lens tried ‘to see beyond the presenting problems toward the deeper patterns of the relationships’ between conflicting groups. The third lens looked at ‘a conceptual framework’ that could hold these perspectives together, connecting the presenting problems with the deeper relational patterns. ‘Conflict Transformation involves both de-escalating and engaging conflict in pursuit of constructive social change. Transformation... goes beyond a process focused on the resolution of a particular problem to seek the epicenter of conflict. The epicenter of conflict is the web of relational patterns, often providing a history of lived episodes, from which new episodes and issues emerge.’ John Paul Lederach, 2005, *The Little Book of Conflict Transformation*, Pennsylvania: Good Books, pp. 10–31.

and horizontal divisions of society—are vital to institutional transformation and to the realization of peace and security in the region. It is only when individuals (from across the conflict divide) ‘walk in the shoes of the other’ that they are able to empathize with a perspective different from their own and, develop solutions that serve the interests of all stakeholders. Predicated on the reality of human interdependence, Conflict Transformation foregrounds the principles of *dialogue* and *relationship*. While the interconnectedness of human beings exists as a spiritual truth across cultures, processes of globalization spurred by advancements in transportation and telecommunications (particularly the internet) have reinforced this fundamental reality of interdependence like never before. The human quest for peace and security is therefore linked to our ability to recognize that our sense of wellbeing is inextricably linked to how our neighbors experience these. This reality invites us to live and act with the awareness that our actions influence the lives of those around us.

In the context of India-Pakistan relations, the absence of sustained face-to-face interaction between the younger generations, along with widespread negative stereotyping about people from ‘the other side’ has led to deep-rooted prejudices and hostility. Ironically, young South Asians know little about their immediate neighbors even though they are well-versed with the cultures and lifestyles of their peers in Europe and the USA. Till recently, our education systems, media, and the political discourse also displayed this potent mix of ignorance, prejudice, and hostility towards those with whom we share a border and a common cultural heritage.

Through a combination of contemplative, experiential, and interdisciplinary dialogues and trainings, the Conflict Transformation Workshops have attempted to ‘conscientize’ participants to the need to expand the network of their relationships beyond friends and family to include those who are perceived as ‘the other’. Inviting participants to draw on their own internal resources to build cultures in which human diversity and the rights of all individuals are respected, the Workshops have supported efforts to:

- Build trust between young Pakistanis and Indians;
- Strengthen bilateral initiatives that focus on the ‘connectors’ between the two countries;
- Enhance professional development in the areas of gender, nonviolence, and peacebuilding;

- Build strategic cross-border partnerships for peaceful coexistence; and
- Provide dialogic spaces where young people can develop empathy for diverse worldviews and experiences.

The 2012 Workshop, titled *The Software of Peacebuilding*, was the tenth in this series of annual dialogues-cum-trainings for ‘next generation’ leaders in Pakistan and India. The curriculum consisted of seven modules:

- The Composite Dialogue and Beyond
- Jammu and Kashmir: Engaging with Possibilities
- Women, Peace, and Security
- Media and the Peace Process
- Peacebuilding: State of the Field
- Religion, Conflict, and Peace
- Envisioning Futures

The Workshop brought together 40 young professionals (in the age group of 22 to 35 years) from the two countries with a purpose to broaden the network of Pakistani and Indian peacebuilders and enhance their capacity to participate in processes of nonviolent social change and conflict transformation. While the participants represented different cultural backgrounds, diverse political perspectives, and professions such as law, psychology, conflict resolution, advocacy, education, media, business, development, public policy, and the arts, they came together for a common purpose: to build their capacity to contribute to sustainable peace and security in Pakistan and India. Kashmiris from both sides of the Line of Control constituted a large sub-group.\*

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\* Since participants came from both sides of the Line of Control, WISCOMP has retained the terminology they used while referring to the different parts of Jammu and Kashmir.





## Acknowledgments



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We are deeply indebted to the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of HH the Dalai Lama (FUR) for its unwavering support and especially to Rajiv Mehrotra (Trustee/Secretary, FUR) and Meenakshi Gopinath (Hon. Director, WISCOMP) for their inspirational leadership and sustained guidance.

Special thanks to the FUR-WISCOMP team of Seema Kakran, Harish Chandra Bhatt, Thupten Tsewang, Shilpi Shabdita, Sree Kumari, and Devender Kumar—and to Workshop volunteers Lavanya Nath, Vani Valson, and Tamanna Khosla—for working tirelessly to coordinate the program logistics before and during the Workshop.

Seema Kakran and Shilpi Shabdita along with volunteers Supriya Roychoudhury and Akanksha Narain, and Workshop participant Hemant Shivakumar, provided valuable help in transcribing the proceedings and in preparing write-ups on which this report draws.



## **Welcome Address**

### **The Software of Peacebuilding**

*From the East House of Light,  
may wisdom dawn in us so we may see all things in clarity.  
From the North House of Night,  
may wisdom ripen in us, so we may know all from within.  
From the West House of Transformation,  
may wisdom be transformed into right action, so we may do what must be  
done.  
From the South House of the Eternal Sun,  
may right action reap the harvest, so we may enjoy the fruits of planetary  
being.  
From Above, House of Heaven,  
may star people and ancestors be with us now.  
From Below, House of Earth,  
may the heartbeat of her crystal core bless us with harmonies to end all war.  
From the Center, Galactic Source,  
which is everywhere at once, may everything be known as the light of  
mutual love.*

With this *Prayer of the Seven Galactic Directions*, Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Hon. Director, WISCOMP, opened the Tenth Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop for youth leaders from Pakistan and India.

Underscoring the need to build a ‘public peace process’ that involved actors from multiple tracks of peacebuilding, she invited participants into a discussion on the central theme of this year’s Workshop—The Software of Peacebuilding. This includes an engagement with the micro and macro perspectives of the

conflict, interstate rivalries and misunderstandings, regional contexts, and a continuous dialogue with the *self* and *the other*. This engagement is infused with hope and excitement because the central characters are the youth of Pakistan and India—the third and fourth generations—who do not carry the baggage of the horrors of partition, who have access to new methods of communication spawned by advances in the internet and information technology, and who are therefore best positioned to use new lenses to search for creative and mutually inclusive solutions.



*Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath*

Gopinath traced the trajectory of the Conflict Transformation Workshops, which began in 2001 with a ‘peace camp’ for college students from Pakistan and India. Since then, each annual Workshop has attempted to take the dialogue and level of training to a more advanced level, with a variety of issues entering the agenda—Kashmir, geopolitics, security, oil, Afghanistan, the trust deficit, business interests, sports et al. While Kashmiris have formed a large sub-group of all previous dialogues, the 2012 Workshop was unique in the sense that it brought together stakeholders from both sides of the LoC, cutting across the religious and ethnic diversity of the region that was once the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The trust deficit has been a key focus of each Workshop, and WISCOMP has used the methodology of ‘sustained dialogue’ to transform this among the young participants from the two countries.

Over the last 11 years, the Workshops have made a significant contribution to the praxis of peacebuilding in South Asia, highlighting the accomplishments and challenges of facilitating face-to-face dialogues between individuals who hold antagonistic and exclusive identities. In fact, Gopinath shared that, at the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, these Workshops were among the first few in the region to provide a safe, catalytic space where perceived ‘enemies’ could converse with one another. In order to make these dialogues productive and long-lasting, WISCOMP conducted intense training sessions in active listening, focusing particularly on ‘non-judgmental listening’ skills.

The Workshops have also engaged with the structural dimensions of peacebuilding, wherein the focus has been on the relationship between peace, democracy, human security, justice, and last but not least, inner peace and individual-level transformation. Religion and spirituality have been integral to these engagements, because even though Marxist interpretations of religion as the ‘opiate of the masses’ remain popular among young scholars, the reality

in South Asia is that faith influences the lives and aspirations of millions of people in very palpable ways. From a conflict transformation perspective, the fundamental question is, ‘How do we energize those religious traditions within the secular spaces that allow us to revisit peacebuilding from a South Asian perspective?’

Commenting on the intersection of gender issues with peacebuilding, Gopinath said that a key goal of WISCOMP is to foreground women’s voices in the negotiations and contestations of democratic practice. However, this should not be misunderstood to mean the mere inclusion of more women. As Gopinath put it, ‘It is not just the size of the table, but what is brought to the table that is important.’ Even though the women’s movements in South Asia have interrogated conventional structures of security and democracy and offered feminist perspectives which also include the voices of other historically marginalized groups (based on caste, religion, ethnicity et al), Gopinath said that violence against women in different spheres—whether it is the domain of the home, the community, the workplace, or politics—remains rampant as also does their exclusion from levels where decisions are taken. There is a need to negotiate a new kind of democracy where women and men co-create a *just* and equitable society. In this context, Gopinath highlighted the following questions, which the 2012 Workshop would seek to address:

- How do we address the issues that arise when gender intersects peacebuilding?
- How do women define conflict and violence? How do we address the continuum of violence that many women face—from within their homes at the hands of family members to the repression carried out by community leaders and the state?
- In what ways can young Pakistani and Indian men partner with women in this quest for gender equity?

Reference was also made to the ideals of multiculturalism and coexistence, which have a vibrant history in South Asia. Inviting participants to proudly reclaim this shared heritage, Gopinath said that the immense cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity that the countries of the South Asian region represent should be used as a resource for peace and coexistence. In this context, the primary questions that the youth of Pakistan and India should address are, ‘How do we build common ground in spite of our different identities? How do we actively coexist with one another without doing away with the differences between our respective identities? How do we move from antagonism to



*Ms. Palwasha Kakakhel (Information Manager, FATA Livelihood Program, GIZ-German International Cooperation, Peshawar), Ms. Gulalai Khan (Communication & Advocacy Specialist, UNDP, Lahore), Ms. Samreen Shahbaz (Independent Researcher, Lahore), Ms. Heli Lehto (Second Secretary, Embassy of Finland, New Delhi).*

friendship? Because of its emphasis on social relationships, coexistence, and multiculturalism, the field of peacebuilding was proposed as a methodology to bring together ‘next generation’ leaders in the two countries to work collaboratively in pursuit of the goals of justice, peace, and security for all. Concluding with a quote from Albert Camus, Gopinath said:

*Great ideas, it has been said, come into the world as gently as doves. Perhaps, then, if we listen attentively, we shall hear, amid the uproar of empires and nations, a faint flutter of wings, the gentle stirring of life and hope. Some will say that this hope lies in a nation, others, in an individual. I believe rather that it is awakened, revived, nourished by millions of solitary individuals whose deeds and works every day negate frontiers and the crudest implications of history. As a result, there shines forth fleetingly the ever-threatened truth that each and every man and woman, on the foundations of his or her own sufferings and joys, builds for them all.*



## ***Keynote Address***

### **Geopolitics and Beyond: India and Pakistan**

Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Union Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Government of India, delivered the *Keynote Address* at the Conflict Transformation Workshop. The transcript of his presentation is printed here.

### **Geopolitics and Beyond: India and Pakistan**

***Dr. Shashi Tharoor***

It is a pleasure to be speaking at the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual WISCOMP Conflict Transformation Workshop. The work that WISCOMP has done over the last 10 years is extremely valuable and I appreciate your effort in actually making this an alternative to the narrative of conflict and hostility that has bedevilled relationships on this subcontinent, particularly between India and Pakistan. I want to welcome the delegates from Pakistan who are here. In fact, today by coincidence, there is also a group of Pakistani MPs who are visiting our Parliament, and the process of dialogue continues in the background, which is, I think, is healthy.

My own inclinations are, I have to say, slightly discordant from the point of view of the good members of WISCOMP, in that I am not a candles-at-Wagah-border-kind-of-dove. I used to be one...some newspaper recently dubbed me a 'hawkish dove'. And that's because I feel I'm a dove who has been mugged by reality—that every time India has initiated dovish actions,



*Dr. Shashi Tharoor*

it has sadly been met by different kinds of reactions from across the border. The bus *yatra* of Prime Minister Vajpayee was followed by the Kargil conflict in Kashmir; the years of negotiation with Presidents Musharraf and Zardari by Manmohan Singh were followed by 26/11. And so there is very much a sense of anxiety, an unwillingness to trust, that lies at the heart of many Indian approaches. But I would argue that you do need to hear me, not because I am going to set a tone for all of that is going to follow, but because I believe one must appreciate the nature of the problem candidly and without illusions before one can effectively advocate peace.

I believe that the most effective argument for peace is a Realist argument and that is the one I intend to make. Nearly six-and-a-half decades after independence and partition, Pakistan remains India's biggest foreign policy challenge. I will speak from the perspective of an Indian and I hope my Pakistani listeners will take it in that spirit. I'm not here to pick fights but rather to give you a frank exposition of an Indian point of view that I believe you need to be fully conscious of. Now many of us, we see Pakistan as a country that was hacked off the stoop shoulders of India by the departing British in 1947 as a homeland, of course, for India's Muslims. But at least until very recently, we can extrapolate from the two countries' population growth trends that more Muslims have remained in India than those who live in Pakistan. Pakistan's relations with India have been bedevilled almost since the start by the festering dispute over the divided territory of Kashmir, which remains India's only Muslim majority state.

Decades of open conflict, simmering hostility, punctuated by spasms of bonhomie that always seem to sputter out into recrimination have characterized the relationship that has circumscribed India's options and affected its strategic choices. The knowledge that our nearest neighbor, populated as it is by a people of a broadly similar ethnic mix and cultural heritage, defines itself in opposition to India, and exercises its diplomatic and military energies principally to thwart and undermine us, has inevitably colored India's actions and calculations on the regional and global stage. The resort by Pakistan to the sponsorship of militancy and terrorism within India as an instrument of state policy since the 1980s has made relations nearly as bad in recent years as at the time of partition. Four wars have been fought, 1948 over Kashmir, 1965, 1971 over what became Bangladesh, and 1999, the Kargil incursion. And then, since the late 1980s, we have had this pursuit of what Pakistani military analysts have called

the strategy of a 1000 cuts by the promotion of terrorism and militancy in India, culminating in the murderous assault on Mumbai on 26 November 2008.

And I do argue that the issue is not principally in my view Kashmir or any specific issue that divides us, but that the fundamental problem lies in the very nature of the Pakistani state. In India, the state has an army; in Pakistan the army has a state. And this has meant that the army has ruled the country for a majority of its years of independent existence directly, and indirectly for the period when the civilians have ostensibly been in power, but worked within constraints laid down by the military as to what red lines they could not cross. And we know that not one single civilian government has so far been able to serve out an entire term in office without being removed from its positions of power.

My concern is that for the most part, people don't join the Pakistani army to defend the country; they join the army to run the country. The Pakistani army is in control, not only of the government for the most part, but is also in control of various civil institutions, import export trade, petrol stations, companies of various sorts, think tanks, universities and so on, and the proportion of national resources consumed by the Pakistani army is the largest by any army on the entire planet. No army, no military establishment actually controls a larger share of the GDP or a larger share of the national government budget than the Pakistan army does. This means that the Pakistan army, as we have learned over the last 65 years, has no strategic interest in peace. They may not want war, no General particularly wants to die; but they have no particular interest in the promotion of peace because it is only the existence of hostility that can justify this extraordinary disproportionate share of national wealth held by one institution in that country. And as a result, the malign influence of this national dysfunctionality lies, in my view and in the view of many in India, at the heart of intractability over the last 65 years. India's responses have largely been defensive, not belligerent. Largely because India is essentially a status quo power. It preserves a notional claim to the portions of Kashmir that are held by Pakistan—we call it Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, they call it Azad Kashmir. But India is fundamentally a status quo power. It essentially preserves that claim in order to have something to concede in the event of a permanent settlement. And the proof of this is that after the 1965 war, when many portions of that territory were captured by Indian soldiers, in the peace



that followed at Tashkent, the territory that we claim to be our own was in fact returned to Pakistan in the peace talks. So the very clear indication is that even if you maintain that claim, we seem to have no serious desire to exercise it.

So the notion of an Indian threat so assiduously pedalled by certain apologists from the Pakistani military, particularly the paid lobbyists in capitals like Washington, is in my mind utterly cynical and disingenuous, for the simple reason that there can be no Indian threat to Pakistan since there is nothing that Pakistan has which India actually wants. Sadly, the reverse is not true. India does hold on to territory that Pakistan covets and that is of course Kashmir, which is why it is relevant. There is also the additional complication of Afghanistan where we have seen a proxy rivalry between the two states that has sadly resulted, amongst other things, in a serious loss of Afghan lives with two bomb attacks on the Indian embassy in Kabul. Now given this background, and as I said, I will start off with harsh talking, how do we look at prospects for meaningful peace? India has taken upon itself the enormous burden of talking peace with a government in Pakistan that in the very recent past has proved to be at best ineffective and at worst duplicitous about the threats emanating from its territory and institutions to the rest of South Asia, and to India and Afghanistan at the very least.

In pursuing peace with Pakistan, the government of India is indeed rolling the dice. Every conciliatory gambit is a gamble that peace will not be derailed from the other side. Now you have to understand, and I say this particularly to our friends from Pakistan, that there are not very many takers in the Indian political spaces to the general proposition for pursuing a peace process with a government that does not appear to control significant elements of its own military. A few in India are prepared to accept the notion that the world in general and India in particular is obliged to live with the state of affairs in Pakistan where terror is incubated, while the country's institutions remain either unable or unwilling to push against the so-called non-state actors that are said to be out of the government's control.

Now of course, recent events in the last couple of years, including attacks on Pakistan's own military headquarters and a naval base, may have stiffened the Pakistani military's resolve to confront some of these non-

state actors. But it remains to be seen whether some in Islamabad are still seduced by the dangerous idea that the terrorists who attacked the Pakistan military are bad, but those who attack India are to be tacitly encouraged, condoned if not directly commanded as in some cases we have had reason to suspect. Now our government is committed to peaceful relations with Pakistan. Indeed, our Prime Minister personally (and therefore the highest level of our government) has a vision of a subcontinent living in peace and prosperity, focusing on development, not distracted by hostility and violence. But there has been, for some time now, a demand that we see evidence of good faith action from Islamabad, before our PM who is accountable to Parliament and a public opinion outraged by repeated acts of terror, can reciprocate in full measure.

Now for the past three years, particularly under sustained American pressure, the Pakistani army has begun to selectively take on the challenge of fighting some terrorists groups, not the ones lovingly nurtured by the ISI to assault India, but the ones who have escaped the ISI leadership's control and turned against Pakistan's own military institutions. Indians for the most part—and this meeting is one more evidence of this—feel a great deal of solidarity with the Pakistani people. It is striking that no one in India has *schadenfreude*—what the Germans call satisfaction in the other's misfortune. But the unpalatable fact remains that what Pakistan is suffering from today is the direct result of a deliberate policy of inciting, financing, training, and equipping militants and *jihadis* over 20 years as an instrument of state policy. As Dr. Frankenstein discovered when he built his monster, it is impossible to control the monster once it's built.

Now I know that some in Pakistan say 'but we too are victims of terror'. Indeed, some have gone so far as to compare the number of deaths suffered by Pakistan in its current war against terrorism on its own soil with those inflicted upon India. But this, I'm afraid, obscures the fundamental difference between the two situations. Pakistanis are not suffering death and destruction from terrorists trained in India. No one travelled from India to attack the Marriott hotel in Islamabad or the naval base at Mehran. Indians however have suffered death and destruction from terrorists trained in, and dispatched from, Pakistan with the complicity (and some might argue more) of the Pakistani security forces and establishment. Pakistan has to cauterize a cancer in its own midst, but a cancer that was implanted by itself and its own institutions. This is for us fundamental desiderata.

But India has doggedly pursued peace. Within six months of 26/11, the PM travelled to Sharm-el-Sheikh in Egypt to meet with the Pakistani PM where his conciliatory language in the joint statement that followed got him into a huge amount of political hot water back home because he was perceived as offering the hand of peace at a time when Pakistan had done nothing to merit it.

In any democracy, there are always limits as to how far a government can go in advance of its own public opinion. And I think it is important that peaceniks at this meeting, on both sides, appreciate this. Subsequent moves have been undertaken a little more gingerly—cricket diplomacy; the invitation to the Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Raza Gilani to watch the world cup semi-final between the two countries in Mohali; designer diplomacy (the visit of the elegantly and expensively accoutred Pakistani foreign minister Hina Rabbani Khar to New Delhi; and what has been called *dargah* diplomacy (a lunch invitation to President Zardari from PM Singh, when the former sought to make a spiritual visit to a Sufi shrine in Ajmer in April 2012). These have all been attempted with a purpose to take the process of dialogue forward.

The resultant thaw, while involving no substantive policy decisions, has demonstrated Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's determination to change the narrative of India-Pakistan relations and to seize control of a process mired in a stalemate. As I have said, some Indian critics are less than enthused because India had suspended talks with Pakistan after the 26/11 attacks. By talking again at such a high level, even though there has been no significant progress in Pakistan about bringing the perpetrators to book, critics here feel that India has surrendered to Pakistani intransigence. The new wide-ranging and comprehensive talks agreed to by the two sides are in many ways the old composite dialogues under another label—the very dialogue that New Delhi had somewhat righteously called off since it felt that there was no point in talking to people whose territory and institutions were being used to attack and kill Indians. The fear in India, and I say this with candour, remains that the government has run out of ideas in dealing with Pakistan or at least that New Delhi has no good options between what would be a counter-productive military attack. I was one of those who argued passionately against a military response to 26/11 or a stagnant silence which is no good either. Our position articulated by the PM in Parliament in 2009 was that we can have a meaningful

dialogue with Pakistan only if they fulfil their commitment in letter and spirit—not to allow their territory to be used for terrorist activities against India. And yet, three years later, we have to admit that not talking is not much of a policy. Pakistan can deny its shared history with India and it does, but India cannot change its geography. Pakistan is next door and it can no more be ignored than a thorn pierced into India's side.

Now, India's refusal to talk actually worked for a while as a source of pressure on Pakistan. It contributed together with Western diplomatic efforts, particularly American, to some of Islamabad's initial cooperation including the arrest of a Lashkar-e-Taiba operative Zakiur Rahman Lakhvi and six of his co-conspirators. They have of course not been meaningfully prosecuted. No action seems to have been taken and they appear to have been continuing to conduct their LeT activities from their place of detention. Nonetheless, not talking as a strategy is long past its use-by date. The refusal to resume dialogues has stopped producing any fresh results. The only argument that justifies is that it is a source of leverage to some in India, the illusion of influence over events that New Delhi does not in fact possess. Instead, it was ironically India that came to be seen as intransigent and non-accommodative. As I have argued already, India is at bottom, a status quo power and for India therefore to come across as being unwilling to talk was not in India's interest.



*Dr. Shashi Tharoor delivers the Keynote Address titled Geopolitics and Beyond: India and Pakistan at the Tenth Annual WISCOMP Conflict Transformation Workshop.*

I am going to skip some of my arguments and come back to these in the Q&A session where we will have an opportunity to talk to each other. I would argue that we are doing the right thing. Because to say that we will not talk as long as there is terror is essentially to give the terrorists a veto over our diplomatic choices. Talking can achieve constructive results. It can identify and narrow the differences between our two countries on those issues that can be dealt with while keeping the spirit of dialogue, and implicitly of compromise, alive. Some years ago, I wrote a piece in the New York Times for which I was rather savagely attacked by Richard Holbrooke in the latter's column a few days later, in which I argued that talking has a value in and of itself. That was in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue that I had worked on at the UN, and the same logic applies here. So what then is the way forward?

It is clear that in many ways, the institutions in India want peace more than the institutions in Pakistan do because we have more at stake when peace is violated. Some in India suggest that we should ignore our dysfunctional neighbor except for the occasional terrorist blast, saying that there is nothing we need from Pakistan and let us get on with our development, free of that country's attentions. To them, there is only one answer: we cannot grow and prosper without peace and that is the one thing that Pakistan can give us and that is the one thing that we cannot do without. Peace. We cannot choose to be uninterested in Pakistan because there are some in Pakistan who are dangerously interested in us. By denying the peace we crave, Pakistan can undermine India's vital national interests, above all that of our own development. Investors shun war zones; traders are wary of markets that can explode at any time; tourists do not travel to hotels that might be commandeered by crazed terrorists. These are all serious hazards for a country seeking to grow and flourish in a globalizing world economy. Even if Pakistan cannot do us much good, and that is debatable, it can do us immense harm and we must recognize this in formulating our policy approach to it. I said I will make a realist case. Foreign policy cannot be built on a sense of betrayal any more than it can be built on illusions of love. Pragmatism dictates that we work for peace with Pakistan precisely so that we can serve our own peoples' needs better. This is the argument that I have made in my book *Pax Indica* to Indian readers. And I want to stress that I am not one of those who wants different things when speaking to an Indian audience and different things when Pakistanis are there in the audience. This is exactly what I say to Indian

audiences as well that we must do this without illusions, without deceiving ourselves about the existence of genuine partners for peace across the border, and without being taken in by the press releases by the civilian rulers who are occasionally allowed to don the masks of power in Pakistan.

But we do need to look beyond the self-perpetuating military elite next door, for lasting peace is indeed something that would attenuate them, their power and privileges. But we cannot at the same time, and I say this very honestly, be deluded into making concessions, whether on Kashmir or any other issue in the naive expectation that concessions alone will end the hostility of the ISI and its cohorts. We have every reason to be aware and conscious of the kind of nihilist mindset and attitude that led the killers of 26/11 to come here and destroy. They did not have any political demands; they did not seek the release of anybody; it was purely an act of destruction. But the more we grow and flourish in the world, the more difficult we make for people across the border to feel that there is a meaningful response to maintain. There are malignant forces in Pakistan who see their future resting upon India's failure and these are not motives that we can easily overcome. So, we have to talk, but at the same time we have to be conscious of the limitations of talking. A smooth President, bluff Prime Minister or a glamorous Foreign Minister make for good television, but behind their affability, they are each aware that a step too far towards India could make them targets of their own military establishment. That is something that we must be conscious of and yet we must engage Pakistan because we cannot afford not to. For even if we are talking to people who do not have the ultimate power to call off the killers, we know that their military overlords are listening, and that in the complicated arabesque that is the Islam-civilian-military relationship, some of our messaging will get through from the civilians to those who need to hear it.

It does seem that there is a subtle shift in the atmospherics surrounding what has been this intractable problem. We have actually been talking much more: the Home Secretaries have met, the Foreign Ministers are about to meet. The threats that have affected us are also combustible enough to threaten the Pakistani state—the terrorists are turning on their erstwhile patrons and this too has had an impact on Pakistan. Leading members of the Pakistani establishment are clearly beginning to see this too. On a visit to Islamabad and Lahore, I sensed—admittedly very anecdotal from conversations with a wide range of people—a widespread desire to put

the Kashmir dispute on the backburner and explore avenues that are mutually beneficial and in cooperation with India. There are impressions from private conversations that Pakistanis are saying it openly too. In a recent interview last year, Pakistani political and religious leader, Maulana Fazl-ur Rehman spoke frankly about Kashmir and I quote, ‘Obviously we are in favor of a political solution. Things have changed so much that the concept of winning Kashmir has taken a backseat to the urgency of saving Pakistan.’

Then, there are other voices that we have not seen before in the Pakistani media, for instance the columnist Yaqoob Khan Bangash, who openly derided the hallowed Pakistani argument that Muslims and Indian Kashmiris would want to join Pakistan. He wrote, ‘despite being practically a war zone since 1989, Indian Kashmir has managed a higher literacy, higher per capita, and higher economic growth than most of Pakistan. Why would the Kashmiris want to join Pakistan now? What do we have to offer them?’ These are the kinds of arguments that we had not seen in Pakistan before. It may reflect an understanding that the cost of a prolonged obsession of hostility with India has become unsustainable for a Pakistan mired in internal problems and many are arguing that hostility with India should not come at the cost of Pakistan’s own survival and of course the risk of state failure. Now, it may be convenient to say to Indians to focus on your own problems and leave us alone; in fact there has been an increasing grudging acknowledgment on both sides that the time has come to prioritize our domestic challenges rather than expend energy and resources in hostility.

I do want to stress that extremism is not a tap that can be turned off once it is open. The evil genie cannot be forced back into the bottle. The proliferation of militant organizations, training camps, and extremist ideologies clearly has a momentum of its own. A population as young, as uneducated, as unemployed, and as radicalized as many in Pakistan are, will remain a menace to their society, and in many ways, this represents a betrayal of the youth of the subcontinent, which will be a shame. But my counter argument is that perhaps we can offer a helping hand because a neighbor full of desperate young men without hope or prospects led by a self-aggrandizing military would be a permanent threat to India. India has every interest in helping Pakistan transcend these circumstances and helping it to develop a stake in mutually beneficial progress. That is the

way of helping both countries in one go. Perhaps, if Pakistan can be persuaded that it can benefit too. Rather than trying to undercut India and thwart its growth, Pakistan could look at the advantages that can accrue as a neighbor to an upwardly mobile and increasingly prosperous India. India has made some of the right gestures. In 1995, India granted unilaterally MFN trading status to Pakistan. Till today, it has not officially been reciprocated. Last year, we had a declaration of reciprocation but legislation enabling it has not yet been passed. But the fact is that for 17 years, it remained the only example in the history of world trade of a one-sided MFN arrangement. Trade, in my view, will first of all offer a market to Pakistani traders and industrialists in India which will certainly give them huge financial benefits. It will also help Pakistani consumers who are currently paying a fortune for Indian goods shipped via Dubai and repackaged there with a made-in-UAE label. Instead, they can get these goods directly at a fraction of the price. And I believe that it will help Pakistanis develop a stake in relations with India. Right now, when something like 26/11 happens, there is a shut down between the two countries and no one in Pakistan is affected. Tomorrow, those Pakistanis who are making money as a result of trade and investment will become a peace constituency. They will themselves be a voice against the kinds of actions of 26/11 and so on which will undercut their own ability to do well economically from relations with India.

Let's be honest, realistic, and cynical about it. We should do more; we should offer a creative umbrella to artisans in Pakistan as we have been doing and we can do more. There are Pakistani singers and actors who have been a big success in Bollywood and that should continue and be expanded. I would argue that the multiple channels, backchannel or front channel, the Bollywood connection; all of these should be pursued and events like WISCOMP's workshops, civil society groups, particularly those that channel the energy of young people who are impatient with decades of hostility, can also play a wider role in developing relations that go beyond the prescriptions and proscriptions of governments. I am particularly negative about visa restrictions that India has clamped upon Pakistan after 26/11. I have to say this is a disgrace; the killers of 26/11 did not apply for visas. We are punishing the very people who want to come here and talk and have normal relations by denying them the visas. I believe that even if there is a risk, the whole thing happened because of one individual, Dawood Gilani aka David Coleman Headley who



repeatedly came to India and scooped out the sites which were then used by the terrorists in the 26/11 attacks. That kind of shutting down the stable door after the horse has bolted is utterly pointless. Even if there are risks like that, the advantages of openly issuing visas and enhancing opportunities for Pakistanis in India outweigh the dangers.

A liberal visa regime which will not only give more visas but remove the current restrictions on points of entry and exits, the number of places that may be visited, and the onerous police reporting requirements—this, I think, will give very many Pakistanis a stake in normal relations with India. To begin with, a list can be drawn up of prominent Pakistanis in such fields as business, entertainment, the NGO community, and the media who would be eligible for more rapid processing and for multiple entry visas. Once that works for a while, we can expand it even further to other citizens, people with relatives, and so on.

The fact is that even if Pakistan does not reciprocate such an approach, I argue that India should, if necessary, be one-sided in its generosity on the visa policy. By showing a generosity of spirit, it could actually persuade some Pakistanis to rethink their attitude towards us. Instead of the unpleasantness you were subjected to when you wanted to come here, I would rather do the opposite and open up the space for others. I would also argue that we should make concessions where vital national interests are not involved so that we can solve some of the problems, whether it is the trade issue, the Siachen glacier, the territorial boundary between the two nations at Sir Creek, or contention over water flows of the Wullar Barrage. Many of these are amenable to resolution through dialogues. We should try and show some progress on specific issues.

It seems silly to many in India that public passions in Pakistan are being stirred over false claims that India is diverting the Indus river waters. But much of this could be dispelled by candid and open talk with the Pakistani public by Indian officials. And of course, I cannot stress trade enough. I am really hoping that the new arrangements that Pakistan is proposing with a reduced list of prohibited goods is going to give us a real basis to move on as soon as the newer range come into effect. In addition, India's financial services industry, its software professionals could also offer themselves to Pakistani clients giving themselves a next-door market and providing services that Pakistan could use to develop its own economy.

The education sector offers obvious opportunities. Why cannot we have more educational exchanges, particularly in these days of video conferencing which will allow students from one country to listen to lectures delivered in another? I see absolutely no reason. We do not even technically need government permission for that.

The prospects for cooperation in areas such as agriculture or development of wind energy are bright. These are the sort of easy winds that we could and should be pursuing. The big questions, particularly Kashmir and Pakistan's use of terrorism, will require a great deal more groundwork and constructive step-by-step action.

Afghanistan is another area, though oddly I think, it is one where we could actually cooperate rather than reduce it to a site of proxy conflict. There are a number of mutually shared interests there. We could turn the bilateral narrative away from the logic of intractable hostility in which both countries have been mired for too long. Once that happens, it may even be possible to look beyond each other with economic cooperation with third countries. The Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline for instance, or overland access for Indian goods through Pakistan and Afghanistan to Central Asia, neither of which looks feasible right now as long as Pakistan remains hostile territory.

The elephant in the room is of course the Pakistani army. This elephant, I am afraid, has wide reaches. From a pragmatic viewpoint, perhaps, India could encourage its firms to trade with enterprises owned by the Pakistani military in the hope of giving the military establishment a direct stake in peace. More military-to-military exchanges, even starting with basic ideas as sporting contests between the two armies would also help. Won't you like to watch a cricket match between the Indian and Pakistani army, why not? The idea of joint exercises between the two militaries seems preposterous today, but it is entirely feasible in a UN peacekeeping context. Just a few years ago, Indian aircraft traced Congolese rebel positions in support of Pakistani besieged ground troops as part of a UN peacekeeping operation. In my UN days, I personally witnessed the extraordinary degree of comradeship between Indian and Pakistani officers serving in the UN's peacekeeping department headquarters in New York. Perhaps, being amongst foreigners served as a constant reminder about how much more they had in common with each other. They were frequently lunching

together and visiting each other's homes and seeing the local sights together. Such contexts can and should be built upon to develop the right atmospherics for peaceful relations which unavoidably require engagement with the Pakistani military.

Indians are understandably amongst the strongest supporters of Pakistani democracy, at least in theory. But we have to live with the realities next door that require us to see the Pakistani military not just as a problem but as a vital part of the solution. I am struck by the important arguments that have been made against trusting Pakistan, the arguments against militancy, fanaticism, and so on, and I have given them a fair hearing in my remarks. At the end of the day, I come down very strongly in favor of making the efforts to build peace. Hostility is not a policy and hostility in perpetuity is neither viable nor desirable between neighbors. And while the doves may be right that New Delhi's visceral reaction to terrorist attacks is tantamount to giving the terrorists a veto over our foreign policy choices, you must appreciate that no democratic government can allow its citizens to be maimed and killed by forces from across the border without reacting in some tangible way that conveys to Pakistan that there is a price to be paid for allowing such things to happen.

So everything I have said is vulnerable to being destroyed by another 26/11. Let us be honest about that also. The important point is that there is hope for peace today and there is determination in New Delhi, I want to assure our Pakistani friends, to pursue that peace. You have a PM in India who is fundamentally committed to pursuing peace with Pakistan. But it does bear repeating that the primary onus for confining, if not destroying the deadly virus that has long incubated, must rest on the institutions of the Pakistani state. If it seizes that responsibility, it will not find India lacking. The former Prime Minister of India, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had remarked that you can change history, but not geography. He was wrong. History once it has occurred cannot be changed. The time has come instead for the victims of geography to make history.

Thank you.

## Discussion

Mr. Fakir Syed Aijazuddin, an Art Historian, Author, and Principal, Aitchison College, Lahore concurred with Tharoor on the point that hostility cannot be a sustainable policy, for either side. In this context, he lauded the vision that leaders such as Manmohan Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee had shown in the past, and made reference to Nawaz Sharif's speech at the Lahore Fort during Vajpayee's bus-for-peace initiative (in 1999) when the Pakistani Prime



*Mr. Fakir Syed Aijazuddin  
(Art Historian, Author, and Principal,  
Aitchison College, Lahore)  
makes an intervention.*

Minister had quoted from a poem written by his Indian counterpart: 'we will not let war become a reality; we will not let blood be shed'. Looking at the positive side of the bilateral relationship, Aijazuddin said that it is a tribute to the leaders and people of India and Pakistan that since 1971, there has been no state-to-state conflict. The need of the hour today is for the two countries to recognize that they must work together for collective prosperity and express a common ownership of the peace process, taking it beyond overtures in economic cooperation and sporting links. If there is common ownership, the likelihood of initiatives such as the 'peace pipeline' succeeding would be far greater. As Aijazuddin put it, 'common ownership is the guarantee, which will ensure that the gas is not switched off'. He cited the example of the reunification process in Europe during which French-owned factories were established in Germany and vice versa, and this ensured that neither country had an interest in bombing the other. In the context of India-Pakistan relations, the potential of cross-border financial investments and trade linkages to increase the stakes for peace is indeed powerful.

Adding to Tharoor's analysis of the Pakistan army as having a stake in the perpetuation of conflict, Mr. Syed Moazzam Hashmi, an Islamabad-based Political and Security Analyst, said that the political class, on both sides, is also to blame. He cited the example of the Kashmir conflict, the sustenance of which has become a livelihood and business for many politicians who now have a stake in the exacerbation of hostility. He however noted that within the Pakistani army, there is a discernible shift in its attitude towards India.

The intensity of seeing India as a rival has reduced and there is the realization that a better working relationship with India would be in Pakistan's interest.

Mr. Waqas Ali Kausar, a Lecturer at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, expressed concern over Tharoor's reference to the 'desperate youth' of Pakistan who were described as easy fodder for radical ideologies. Kausar said that the Pakistani youth, just as in other parts of the world, have aspirations to lead stable and peaceful lives and experience a sense of connection with their families and communities.

Ms. Anam Zakaria, Director, Citizens Archive of Pakistan, Lahore, stated that leaders should not allow acts of violence to deter the peace process. By doing so, they only contribute to the agenda of the spoilers. The breakdown of communication, through the suspension of rail and air links for example, serves little purpose and only exacerbates the tension and hostility towards a people that, to begin with, one has no first-hand information about. In this context, she felt that people-to-people contacts should not be held hostage to obstacles that the peace process confronts. While Tharoor concurred with Zakaria on the need for talks to be uninterrupted, the problem, he said, was that this was impossible in a democratic polity. He stated:

*When something like 26/11 happens, when there is evidence, even intercepted by third countries and not just Indian intelligence, that includes complicity by officials in institutions based in Pakistan, it becomes impossible for a democratic government not to be doing something in response. And the only way it can stave off the clamor for retaliatory military action and fatuous things like that is by shutting down other areas of cooperation...The truth is, in any democratic situation, you are accountable to Parliament and you are accountable to inflamed public opinion. How do you show them that you are doing something in response to an action like this? Also, that vulnerability actually ups the ante in Pakistan. Those who are in favor of peace in Pakistan need to take much more action within Pakistan to prevent another 26/11 from happening. Nowadays, we cannot have a situation where some people talk to us in Pakistan while others plot attacks on us. If we can actually say to the ones (in Pakistan) who are interested in working with us, 'we are with you, but you need to do more to ensure that these guys do not get a free hand', then the threat of the process being interrupted could actually work as a positive force for peace.*

Dr. Salma Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, disagreed with Tharoor's description of the peace process as mere 'designer or dargah diplomacy', saying that a serious effort was being made in Pakistan to improve ties with India. She added that it would be wrong to discard peace and reconciliation efforts by civilian leaders in Pakistan on the mere assumption that they are weak and without mandate in comparison to the military. The need, today, is to repose trust in the civilian government and to support it in its efforts to dialogue with India, and to perhaps resolve some of the less contentious issues such as Siachen and Sir Creek. This, said Malik, would infuse the peace process with new life, energy, and hope.

With reference to the Mumbai attacks, Malik shared that there was an overwhelming response from Pakistani civil society, parliamentarians, and ordinary people from a cross-section of society who expressed shock and anger at this act of violence and came out in support of the 26/11 victims. While there exist spoilers on both sides, she felt that by demonizing 'the other', Indians and Pakistanis would only fall into the trap laid out by those who have a vested interest in the conflict. Also, just as there are spoilers, there are also a large number of peacebuilders who work silently, diligently, and consistently to build trust and improve the bilateral relationship.

Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath echoed this sentiment when she shared that following 26/11, WISCOMP received an avalanche of emails from the Pakistani alumni of its workshops, who expressed solidarity with their Indian counterparts and were unequivocal in condemning the attacks. Referring to the efforts of WISCOMP to build trust between the next generation of leaders in India and Pakistan, she said, 'We work consistently with the *Subedars*, the *Saudagars*, and the *Sufis* to bring peace to our subcontinent'.



## *Module One*

### **The Composite Dialogue and Beyond**

The Workshop module titled *The Composite Dialogue and Beyond* employed a ‘multi-track’ approach to facilitate conversations around the roles that different tracks—government, political parties, conflict resolution professionals, feminist scholars, educators, media, business leaders, activists, and spiritual/religious leaders—can play in building sustaining peace and security between India and Pakistan. The significance of a ‘multi-track’ approach rests in its emphasis on drawing on the strengths of diverse actors, outside government and politics, whose expertise and skill can influence the trajectory of the conflict and thereby increase the stakes for peace. The need for multiple actors to use multiple approaches is vital to strengthening the motivation for peace. WISCOMP provides a synergetic space wherein participants might transcend the gap between traditional security establishments and those who call for a ‘bottom-up’ approach to the transformation of conflict.

Although each track of peacebuilding plays a valuable role in improving the overall bilateral relationship, WISCOMP has a special interest in promoting ‘education for peace’ initiatives between schools, colleges, and institutions of higher learning in the two countries. There is, in fact, now a common acceptance of the need to begin early—even kindergarten—to transcend the ‘dividers’ that have held the subcontinent hostage for over 60 years. In this context, the Conflict Transformation Workshop provided a space for education and other civil society perspectives to converse with track one and track two worldviews with a view to build a common synergy for peace between the two countries.

In addition, the Workshop engaged with the ‘dividers’ that form the agenda of the composite dialogue between the two governments and sought to broaden the canvas of engagement to include issues that could serve as ‘connectors’ and mobilize public opinion in support of what may be seen as ‘peace dividends’. Some of the ‘connectors’ that were addressed here were trade, energy, climate change, healthcare, information technology, agriculture, textiles, media, cinema, and education. These can play a significant role by raising the stakes for peace, promoting greater cooperation and goodwill, and thereby increasing trust between the peoples of the two countries. Within such an atmosphere, there also emerges the possibility to transform ‘divisive’ issues such as ‘water sharing’ into ‘connectors’ and areas of sustained collaboration. Therefore, this Workshop module included the following sessions:

- A Plenary Lecture titled *Beyond the Composite Dialogue: Transforming the Trust Deficit* by Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar, a Member of the Rajya Sabha and former Union Minister of Panchayati Raj and Petroleum and Natural Gas, Government of India.
- A Roundtable titled *The Composite Dialogue and Beyond: Exploring Connectors for Peace* chaired by Ambassador Salman Haidar, Vice Chairman, Global India Foundation, New Delhi, and former Foreign Secretary, Government of India.



## *Plenary Lecture*

### **Beyond the Composite Dialogue: Transforming the Trust Deficit**

**Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar**



*Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar*

*Is it really impossible for us to reconcile our differences? I say no. It is possible. We just need to give peace a chance.*

With respect to its relationship with India, we should compare the Pakistan of 1947 with the Pakistan of today. The most fundamental difference is that on the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1947, every Pakistani had been an Indian till the previous day. Today, about 90 percent of the citizens of Pakistan have never known what it is to be an Indian for they have always been a Pakistani. Either they were born after the creation of Pakistan or they were too young to have a real memory of life before partition. So while in 1947, we had former Indians as Pakistanis, today nearly all Pakistanis were born in what is now Pakistan. The important consequence of this is that no

Pakistani really needs any more to define his or her nationality in terms of a statement that was very widespread till some years ago, which was that ‘I am a Pakistani because I am not an Indian’. On what other basis could one define Pakistan since at least for that generation, everything had been a shared heritage, and the only reason why Pakistan had come into existence was the belief that it was necessary for the Muslims of the subcontinent to have a homeland of their own for fear that there would be majoritarianism in whatever became India.

In India, a similar thing happened. For my father, the area that became Pakistan was an integral part of India. He fled from caste discrimination in Tamil Nadu. As a Brahmin, he could not get a job as there was a very strong anti-Brahmin movement at the time. He had to therefore go as far as Lahore to get a job. For him, the idea that there is another country which has a city called Lahore was bizarre. Whereas for me, I have no memory of Lahore as an integral part of India. But I do have vivid memories of being a foreign diplomat in Karachi. They were undoubtedly the three best years of my life. But they were not the three best years spent in my country, but in Pakistan. Therefore, the idea of *akhand bharat*,

which was an important political slogan for about 10 years after partition and which saw partition as a transient, temporary phenomenon—is completely over.

Many Indians, thinking back to 1947 would say that while terrible human suffering was inflicted as a result of the movement of populations on a scale that the world had not seen before, the fact is that today India has been able to consolidate its nationhood largely because we have not had to argue about it. If we had gone along with the Cabinet Mission Plan to have a common central legislative assembly with 33 percent seats reserved for the Muslims, and the All India Muslim League as the principal opponent of the Indian National Congress, I think our fate would have been the same as that of Lebanon. We would have endlessly argued about the future of the Muslim minority in India. And since the Cabinet Mission Plan provided explicitly for secession after 10 years, it would have been in the interest of everyone who had favored secession to promote secessionist ideas for 10 years in order to secure Pakistan in 1957, if it weren't on offer in 1947. And so I think Pakistan's existence has provided a safety valve for India to get on with determining what the nature of its own nationhood is.

And in many ways, escaping from the anti-India syndrome is certainly the best guarantee for Pakistan to discover what its nationhood should be. This is a really serious issue for Pakistan, one that is addressed by Farzana Sheikh in her book called *Making Sense of Pakistan*, in which she shows that this combination of being anti-Indian and pro-Islam has meant that there is a fierce debate inside Pakistani society itself as to the nature of nationhood and the role of religion in building the nation. We went through a bad phase which I think is somewhat abating now where different sectarian groups in Pakistan were involved in virtually a civil war amongst themselves. And among other things, they spawned this wretched thing called terrorism of which Pakistan, much more than India is the victim. We do have terrorist incidents here (in India), once in a while sponsored from Pakistan territory, but quite often, sponsored by people from within our own country. Basically, the kind of terror syndrome within which Pakistan is caught, even though as I say it has abated in recent times, is one from which Pakistanis would wish to escape by asking themselves a very fundamental question as to whether they belong to West Asia or to South Asia. And I think this has been an

existential dilemma for Pakistan from not only the 14<sup>th</sup> of August 1947, but might I suggest the 11<sup>th</sup> of August 1947 when the Quaid-i-Azam made his famous inaugural address to the Constituent Assembly. That in Pakistan has simply not been realized. And I think it is useful to remind ourselves that the Quaid-i-Azam secured Pakistan in the middle of Ramzan and he held a lunch in honor of Lord Mountbatten bang in the middle of Ramzan. His response to people who said ‘you can’t do this in a Muslim country’ would have been that ‘we are an Islamic country but we are a secular country’. He also, on the 17<sup>th</sup> of August, which was the day that the Radcliffe award was notified, went to the great Saint Mary’s Cathedral in Karachi to pray along with the Christians to tell them that they are completely safe. All over Sindh, there were Hindus in very large numbers. And there was no immediate move to send them out. In fact, there is a recorded incident of Jairamdas Daulatram, the Indian Congress leader in Sindh (which was included in Pakistan) fetching up here at Birla House in Delhi, and Gandhiji said to him, ‘What are you doing here? Your job is back there (in Sindh) and you go back and do it.’ The All India Muslim League held two meetings without changing its name after August 1947 in Karachi. There is on record a statement by the Quaid-i-Azam that after his retirement, he intends to settle in Bombay. My own father who had lived in Lahore for 20 years and had built a lucrative chartered accountancy practice there had no plans to leave the city.

It was in this confused state that Pakistan was born and that India emerged as an independent nation. In India, one of the first things we decided—and we have consistently maintained it—was that we are not a Hindu country. This has made it very easy for us to build our nationhood on a South Asian tradition. And this South Asian tradition is so strong that although Muhammad bin Qasim succeeded in conquering the Sindh and Punjab regions, the first mosque built under his reign at Alor on the banks of the river Indus, has an inscription by him, which says, ‘You must not trouble people of other religions... They should be treated as we treat in Damascus the Jews and the Zoroastrians...and all that we have to ensure is that they pay their taxes properly.’ It is an administrative injunction.

And, this perhaps accounts for the fact that between 712 AD and 997 AD, there was no outsider Muslim with a sword in his hand, but the message of the Prophet—the antithesis of the leitmotif of Hindu society, which was equality versus institutionalized inequality—spread so far that before Sebuktigin, father of Mahmud of Ghazni, found the way into what is now Pakistan through the Khyber Pass, most of the area which is Pakistan today had become majority Muslim. And then after those dreadful 25 years when Mahmud of Ghazni repeatedly entered India and conducted his raids, we didn't get an outside Muslim with a sword in his hand until 1192 when Muhammad Ghori defeated the armies of Prithviraj Chauhan and other Hindu rulers in north India, which later led to the establishment of the Sultanate in Delhi. And from then on, 1192 to 1858, we always had a Muslim on the throne of Delhi—666 years. Now, it took from 1026 to 1192 or better still from 712 to 1192 for Muslim rule to be established in India. Yet, over this 500 year period, Islam, as a spiritual influence and the religion of a large number of Indians had come to be established. And then, at the end of 666 years of Muslim rule, we discovered in the first census of 1872 that only 24 percent of the population of India was Muslim.

If you look at the history of the Islamic expansion anywhere other than South Asia, you find that the Muslims either had total victory or suffered total defeat. They went right across North Africa from Arabia and then crossed at the Straits of Gibraltar and ruled Iberia for over 500 years. But when they left, there may be a few token Muslims there, but the region comprises Catholics primarily. And to the East of us, wherever the Muslims established themselves, it became a Muslim country.

Only in India did you have a Muslim elite ruling over an overwhelmingly non-Muslim population who were permitted to live as non-Muslims. So the tradition of Islam in the subcontinent has been to be extremely tolerant of other religions. But this is not true of West Asia. Also, West Asia has the great advantage of a single written language from Muscat to Mauritania. Accents and some words and phrases may be different, but basically the Arab language rules everywhere in the West Asian and North African worlds.

In Pakistan, the same Quaid-i-Azam who represented the South Asian tradition of diversity in his speech on 11 August 1947 inaugurating his

new country (and his new country on the 11 of August had a huge number of minorities) was the one who decided that Urdu had to be the solitary national language of Pakistan at a time when, according to Farzana Sheikh, the number of mother tongue speakers of Urdu in all of Pakistan was 4.6 percent of the population. And this was done because it was said that Urdu is the language of Islam. And then the Quaid-i-Azam goes and announces the same thing in East Pakistan. And Bangladesh became inevitable on that day. In the meanwhile, because neither did he live long enough nor did Liaqat Ali Khan live long enough, we got into this business of what should be the constitution of Pakistan...and how do you write the Objectives Resolution. And this held up the thing for the better part of the decade. This environment of conflict and confusion enabled General Ayub Khan to take control of the civilian government.

In the meanwhile, we in India, however, had not only finished our constitution but we had also gone into two general elections and totally established the roots of democracy in our country. And this democracy's critical feature was its secularism. The result is that although there are a huge number of problems relating to the Muslim community in India that require urgent attention, they have all been spelt out by a Committee set up by the Government of India under a Hindu judge called Rajindar Sachar. And it is they who have laid out in detail the problems faced by the Muslim community and indicated what steps need to be taken to make things better for them. What they haven't done is to make a comparison with how many other segments of India also suffer from many of the same deprivations. In fact, deprivation is rather a nationwide phenomenon. In Pakistan, whether it should or should not be an Islamic republic got resolved in a sense through the Objectives Resolution. But then under Gen. Zia-ul-Haq, we went into a very serious phase of Islamization.

Pakistan is a country that belongs to South Asia. And the attempt to pretend that it belongs to West Asia is at the root of many of its problems. And the only reason why it thinks it is necessary to be a West Asian country is the fact of India to its east. But if India does not figure in the making of its nationhood, then what is the problem? If you visit the Pakistan Museum in Islamabad, it shows Taxila, but then there is a gap of 1000 years before the arrival of Mohammad bin Qasim. The period in the middle is just wiped out of history.

So, we live in a common geographical space, and that geographical space has been cut by a political line. Now, either we become prisoners of that political line or we self-confidently remain Indians and Pakistanis, while acknowledging what it is that makes us different to other people in the world. And what makes us different is our diversity. And the acknowledgment of its own diversity by Pakistan will help consolidate its own nationhood for the same reason as our nationhood is consolidated on the basis of the recognition of this diversity. But we will never be able to fulfill our ambitions for ourselves so long as Pakistan is a hostile country, because as long as our relations with Pakistan are hostile, the Indian Muslim will live under a sense of siege.

What impresses me most after having lived in Pakistan 33 years ago and after having visited the country about 30 times, is that whereas clearly the sentiment in 1978 was more anti-India in Pakistan than it was anti-Pakistan in India, in the year 2012, I think the sentiment in favor of a friendly relationship with India is much stronger in Pakistan than it is in India. This is because almost all of Pakistan's population is concentrated in areas which are very close to the border with India. Whereas the bulk of the Indian population is so far removed from Pakistan that they have little understanding of who a Pakistani is.

If you look upon Pakistan as a country with human beings who are similar to your own (instead of looking at it as the enemy), and ask yourself whether you don't have prejudices in your mind which you should remove and biases in your thinking which you should remove...it is the only way, in a Gandhian way, of persuading Pakistanis who have got prejudices in their mind to change them. And this happens when there is interaction. We have lived together...we are still living together when we meet outside the subcontinent. In the subcontinent, we are divided because we have created so many barriers that we don't know each other. All I am saying is give us an opportunity to just interact. It is only when you are prevented from talking to the Pakistanis that you go on honing your differences and vice versa. The minute we start talking to each other, it is much easier to come to a quick agreement. If we don't talk to each other, then how do we arrive at a conclusion?

South Asia has a diversity that is not characteristic of any other part of the world. Take China for example. A huge country with such an ancient

civilization, but it has one written language right across. Europe's geographic area from Moscow to Lisbon is equal to that of India. The continent has 43 countries and these are still sub-dividing. My point is that let us celebrate the fact that we are all different. It is such a wonderful thing that we are not the same...we are a bouquet of flowers.

Secularism means let us all live together in peace. When Indian Muslims complain that they face discrimination when they try to rent a house or seek a job or get their children admitted into a school, it is largely because there is a residual mistrust which leads to the question, 'are you us or are you them?' Now this will completely end the minute we have a friendly relationship with Pakistan, because the other minorities of India don't suffer this question. And therefore it is in the interest of Pakistan to consolidate its nationhood by getting out of the anti-India syndrome and for India to consolidate her nationhood by getting out of this anti-Pakistan syndrome.

Therefore, to sum it up, I think communal hostility which was at the bottom of partition has been replaced by national rivalry. And it is easier to tackle national rivalries than it is to tackle communal hostility. Second, Pakistan and India would be benefitted in consolidating their respective nationhood if they were to move from a state of hostility to a state of amity. Third, the problem of terrorism which has its origins in Pakistan but of which Pakistan is the biggest victim, and India is an occasional victim, cannot be resolved by India insisting that Pakistan go into the dock and confess to its guilt. The only way it can be done is by Pakistan and India cooperating together in fighting the common menace of terrorism so that action is taken against terrorists whether they are Indian or Pakistani, whether they belong to the RSS or to Hafiz Saeed and his friends... it has to be a joint venture against this common menace. Fourth, India will never be able to take the place which is its due on the international stage until it gets rid of this albatross around its neck called Pakistan. Because so long as we are unable to sort out our neighborhood, who is going to think us capable of taking our place at the high table in the world. And as for Pakistan, since 1954, it has been and still is a frontline state in someone else's war. Isn't it time that Pakistan became a frontline state for its own interest? So if you add all these things up together, it is obvious that we must have dialogue, and it has to be between

governments. There has been a lot of dialogue and a lot of progress, but it has never been consolidated in a document which could be signed.

My hope is that if the two governments can sign a document on what has been agreed so far and convert that dialogue into an uninterrupted and uninteruptible process, then I believe that what is outstanding could also be resolved. And then we can move forward into the kind of era that both Gandhi and the Quaid-i-Azam appeared to have envisaged from time to time—that once Pakistan comes into existence, there would be no bone of contention, and that therefore we would have the friendliest of relations. That hope has seriously been belied through most of my lifetime. I hope that we can see a relationship between India and Pakistan which is as warm as the relationship that I as an Indian have had with a huge variety of Pakistanis that I have known over the last 33 years. Our hope is in your generation and I am absolutely convinced that whether you want to do it or not, it is a hope that is going to be fulfilled in the course of your lifetime.



*Mr. Mani Shankar Aiyar with Workshop participants.*



## *Roundtable*

### **The Composite Dialogue and Beyond: Exploring Connectors for Peace**

The Roundtable discussion titled *The Composite Dialogue and Beyond: Exploring Connectors for Peace* looked at issues that have served as ‘dividers’ between the two countries, and how these might be transformed into connectors. Specifically, the issues of trade, water, Siachen, Afghanistan, and education were discussed.

The Roundtable was chaired by Ambassador Salman Haidar, former Foreign Secretary and currently Vice Chairman, Global India Foundation, New Delhi. He had played a decisive role in conceptualizing the design, structure, and agenda of this government-level dialogue in the late 1990s and has since been a leading commentator on how India and Pakistan can make the peace process irreversible. In his opening comments, Haidar traced the trajectory of the composite dialogue, which was initiated in 1997 following a commitment by the two governments to hold regular meetings and to talk about all outstanding issues in different but linked forms. The issues identified for discussion included Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism and drug trafficking, peace and security, conventional and nuclear CBMs, Siachen, Tulbul Navigation Project/Wullar Barrage, Sir Creek, economic cooperation, and people-to-people contacts (which included an effort to liberalize the visa regime and promote friendly exchanges). While the composite dialogue provided an incredibly forward looking framework for pushing the peace process forward, Haidar noted that the Mumbai terror attacks of 2008 had set the clock back. In this context, where does the dialogue stand today? What have been the achievements so far?



*Ambassador  
Salman Haidar*

Although there have been suggestions that the composite dialogue has outlived its purpose, Haidar opined that this is not so much due to a lack of resolve; rather, there has been a supersession of interests wherein new issues have come up and gained significance. For example, while the issue of water sharing was not a prime focus of the dialogue, it has become an important dispute in recent years. How do India and Pakistan deal with this? Do they deal with it outside the agenda? Or should the agenda be amended?

It was hoped that, over the years, the agenda of this government-level dialogue would be lightened through the resolution of some issues. This was a practical and real expectation because representatives of the two countries have been engaged in addressing these issues for a long time now—even before the composite dialogue was framed. In fact, Haidar shared that, on a couple of occasions, the two countries were very close to agreement on issues such as the Tulbul Navigation Project and Siachen. So, it could legitimately have been expected that through a process of continued contact and application, formal agreements could have been signed to conclude these issues. However, this has not happened. ‘This is a considerable disappointment. It also points to the manner in which smaller agreements may be unattainable in the absence of an overall agreement. In this context, I think we have to consider carefully how results could be achieved’, said Haidar.

Fortunately, there have been signs of life recently. The two governments have shown an interest in making systematic efforts to advance the dialogue. Progress in other sectors has also helped to create an atmosphere conducive for government-level talks. For example, some of the most important developments have taken place outside of track one—as part of a back channel process. So the relationship between a more public dialogue (between officials who are dispatched from the two sides to meet and talk about identified issues) and a dialogue between representatives who don’t reveal themselves (and meet outside public view) has been interesting and often highly productive. While the back channel process has been quite successful, Haidar stated that there was a need for these agreements to be affirmed publicly in order to move forward.

Economic cooperation represents a sector where the advances between the two countries have been noteworthy. Speaking on the theme of **Trading for Peace**, Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia, Chairperson, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), New Delhi, opened her presentation with the comment that the mutuality of economic interest and the growing interdependence of South Asia’s economies could increase the stakes for peace and build an environment conducive for the constructive resolution of political conflicts.



*Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia*

*South Asia is a space where communities have coexisted for centuries. All of us in our respective countries, as South Asians, are recognizing our multiple identities. We are also recognizing that we cannot accomplish what we want in one identity unless we reconcile the conflicts across the different identities.*

Ahluwalia underscored the significance of today's reality, which is that as South Asian economies struggle to emerge as growing markets, they are increasingly becoming interdependent. There is also the recognition that the eradication of poverty and inequity requires economic growth, which includes an increase in exports, employment opportunities, and investments across countries. Each economy confronts the similar challenges of education, skill generation, employment, and growing urbanization. And what has become amply clear is that connectivity and economic integration of South Asia's economies is inextricably linked to their ability to provide development and prosperity to their citizens.

In this context, Ahluwalia articulated the key issue as follows:

*How can we create an environment where we grow together and how do we build stakeholding in each other's economy? I think this is the most important core of what we have to look for on the economic side if we want peace and prosperity in the region. Peace, economic prosperity, and the removal of poverty are intertwined and complementary. We cannot hold peace back till we have nine percent growth. There is growing recognition of this, which is why we now see progress on the trade front...*

Lauding the advances that have been made in the area of bilateral trade diplomacy in the year 2011–12, Ahluwalia said that Pakistan's grant of MFN status to India and the latter's removal of a long-standing ban on foreign investment from Pakistan represent a landmark change in the history of trade between the two countries. The grant of MFN status to India ended restrictions that led to most products moving via a third country. Pakistan has committed to end the negative list of 1209 items by the end of 2012. This change was also supposed to be applicable to all road-based trade, and since it coincided with the inauguration of the integrated check-post at the Wagah-Attari border to facilitate speedy customs clearance, the hope of greater economic engagement between Pakistan and India is now tangible.

The potential and desire for a closer economic relationship between the two countries is reflected in the large volume of informal trade, which according to estimates by ICRIER, is somewhere between USD 250 million and three billion. If this informal trade—which is a response to the high transaction cost of formal trade—is converted to formal trade, the gains for the two countries would be immense. Even in the area of formal bilateral trade, great strides have been made over the last decade. Ahluwalia shared that between 2000

and 2010, formal trade had increased tenfold. It stood at USD 660 million in 2005 and went up to USD 2.6 billion in 2011. While considerable progress has been made, the trade potential is as high as USD 25.2 billion, said Ahluwalia. While these figures represent a huge step forward, it was noted that stakeholders must be prepared for a process that takes them ‘two-steps forward and one-step backward’. There will be hiccups and murmurs of uncertainty on various aspects of the trade agreement, but stakeholders must stay the course and recognize that the achievements in the area of trade diplomacy in 2012 mark a huge leap of faith.

Ahluwalia recognized that while there are some traders who have vested interests in furthering a discriminatory protocol for trade with Pakistan, the initiation of CBMs and sustained and frequent contact will dissipate such resistance and, in the coming years, the discriminatory aspect of the non-tariff barriers will reduce.

Moving beyond trade, Ahluwalia said that if the two countries wish to increase stakeholding in each other’s economies, they should also focus on **increasing investment linkages**. Once Indian investments are allowed in Pakistan and vice versa, the facilitation of formal trade will be more efficient and mutual economic gains far greater. In this connection, Ahluwalia shared that ICRIER has launched a project on India-Pakistan economic linkages, which focuses on much-needed research in this area and which also seeks to bring together the Chambers of Commerce in the two countries for dialogue and action.

While there are reservations among some sections of the domestic Indian industry, Ahluwalia took the view that if traders have withstood competition from Singapore, Thailand, China, and other countries, there is no reason for them to get anxious about imports from Pakistan. In fact, there is already considerable bilateral cooperation in the areas of IT and healthcare. However, she did note that initiatives to open multiple trading routes would be effective only if bureaucratic resistance and the prejudices within some sections of the trading community abate. For it to be successful, business diplomacy does require processes that generate a society-wide spirit and desire for easier trade and greater contact. In the absence of these, new trade agreements and new trade routes will achieve little.

Concluding with a key challenge that trade diplomacy confronts, Ahluwalia said that while efforts are underway to **delink bilateral economic progress from the political conflict**, this is possible only up to a point. And when the political conflict escalates, it does damage progress on the economic front.

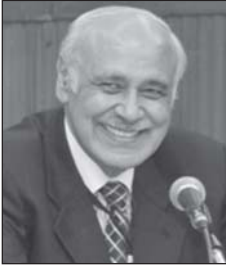
However, today, there is recognition in both countries that peace is a prerequisite for prosperity and development. As Ahluwalia put it,

*You can't have your neighbor's house on fire and expect to live in a palace next door. We have to recognize the importance of our neighbor's wellbeing when thinking of our own. It is as simple as that. And the hope for peace comes from the youth...the younger generation in the two countries, which does not carry the baggage of earlier generations. This is the environment in which progress has to be fertilized further so that we can reap more benefits.*

Shifting focus to the issue of water sharing, Mr. Fakir Syed Aijazuddin, an art historian, chartered accountant, and Principal, Aitchison College, Lahore, made a presentation on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), highlighting the critical need for cooperative relationships between countries that share natural resources. While in the case of India and Pakistan, the sharing of the Indus waters is critical to the pattern of relationships between the two countries as also to the very future of the people in this region, he said that it is equally significant to recognize that a country's economic growth is inextricably linked to its ability to engage in an equitable sharing of nature's resources and to work towards a common meeting point with its neighbors.

Titled **Water Sharing: Mix Peace with Water**, the presentation focused on one of the most complex issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, compounded by the rapid pace at which the world's population is growing. Since 1750, global population has multiplied almost five times, putting immense pressure on the availability and utilization of water resources. And the bulk of the requirement lies in developing countries that are least equipped to handle it. In the context of South Asia, the situation is more complicated because the major rivers, which flow through Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh, are sourced in Tibet. In other words, the rivers originate in an area which is under the control of somebody else.

Mapping the trajectory of the Indus waters dispute between India and Pakistan, Aijazuddin shared that in 1947–48, the Chief Engineers from West Punjab (Pakistan) and East Punjab (India) entered into a Standstill Agreement on 20 December 1947, the validity of which was limited to a period of three months. On 1 April 1948, India stopped the water that flowed into the canals from the Ravi and Sutlej. This led, 12 years later, to protracted negotiations which resulted in the Indus Waters Treaty. It was brokered by the World Bank and signed by Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and President of Pakistan Mohammad Ayub Khan.



Mr. F. S. Aijazuddin

*How can we go beyond this umbilical-like relationship that binds both of us to the IWT, and make it a functioning document...an instrument for common benefit rather than a weapon against the other? Where there is a common source of water, joint discussion based on the principle of mutuality has to be there because we don't have any other option. We have to agree-to-agree. Water does not wait for a resolution between us.*

In a sense, the Treaty was ‘Radcliffe relived’ because while Cyril Radcliffe had divided the land of Punjab, he had omitted any consideration of the waters of the Punjab and how these would be used by people in East Punjab and West Punjab. The Indus Waters Treaty, therefore, sought to address the question of ownership, control, and usage, which it did through the division of the rivers. However, Aijazuddin noted that while it talked about a minimum supply of water, the Treaty did not address the question of the distribution of water and neither did it foresee developments within each country which would be dependent on that water. It also did not distinguish between the upper riparian and the lower riparian as it saw the river as a continuous stream. So, for instance, the Treaty did not address a situation that may arise when one country constructs a dam on a river that flows through the other country. Since the dam could be a bottleneck for the supply of water downstream, how would such a dispute be settled? Further complicating the situation is the LoC, which crosscuts these rivers. The Treaty also did not address

the question of timing or of continuity of supply or increase of supply. Therefore, while it protected usage at the time, it did not safeguard each country’s requirements for the future since it did not foresee an increase or decrease of requirements in the future.

Further, the Treaty did not permit either party to unilaterally cancel the agreement. This meant that whenever there was a dispute, the two Commissioners—one Indian and one Pakistani—would try to resolve the dispute. If they failed, the dispute would be referred to arbitration and the third party would be appointed by the World Bank. In the context of disputes that have arisen between India and Pakistan in recent years, the pertinent issue, according to Aijazuddin, is this:

*Is the Agreement an instrument for sharing the waters or is it becoming a weapon? This is what we have to guard against. It began as an instrument (for sharing), but now gradually is transforming into a weapon between the two states. There is a popular perception in Pakistan that the Indian government is swallowing gallons of water at our own expense.*

To elaborate on this perception, Aijazuddin presented a summary of what Pakistan sees as violations of the Indus Waters Treaty. The first was the dispute over the Salal Dam on the Chenab River, which started in the 1970s. Pakistan objected to the height of the Dam and to the storage capacity of water for the generation of electricity. This was because the Dam could have interrupted the supply of water to Pakistan for three to four weeks during the *kharif* season (which is when Pakistan needs the water). Foreign Ministers of both countries resolved this dispute in 1978 by reducing the height of the Dam. The significance of this dispute lay in the way the issue was resolved. Ministers from India and Pakistan sat together and successfully resolved the dispute.

Not all subsequent confrontations have been as successful—the dispute over the Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River, for instance. This dispute is premised on a fundamental fact, which is that anything that is done up-river must necessarily affect the persons who are down-river. It came up in 1992 when India proposed to construct a concrete gravity dam on the Chenab River, which would be 130 meters high and 317 meters long with a storage capacity of 321,000 acre feet. Pakistan objected to the design of the dam—its height and storage capacity. This was because a dam with such design had the capacity to completely stop supply in the Chenab River for 26 to 28 days during the *kharif* season (November—December). While Pakistan proposed a change in the design of the Dam, India asked for a revised design. In January 2005, Pakistan approached the World Bank under the IWT to appoint a neutral expert for arbitration. In February 2007, the verdict of the neutral expert—binding on both parties—was announced. The verdict upheld three out of four of Pakistan’s objections, and recommended to India to reduce the height of the dam, which it did.

Drawing the participants’ attention to the irony of this situation, reflected in the fact that the neutral expert was a Swiss national—and the Swiss do not have dams—Aijazuddin said, ‘So, it was back to 1947 when Pakistan and India had to go to a third party for a decision on their own future. Due to the absence of mutual understanding, we agreed to be bound by a third person’s perception of what the problem was.’

Like Baglihar, the Kishanganga project—which involved the construction of a 600 MW hydroelectric-cum-storage power plant on the River Neelam—revolves around the basic premise that any activity upstream will affect the users who live downstream. The dam, located 160 kilometers upstream from Muzaffarabad, involves the diversion of the Neelam River (referred to as the Kishanganga River in India) to link with the Wullar Barrage through a tunnel of about 22 kilometers. Pakistan objected to the diversion of the Neelam River

and to the dam's gate structure, height, size, design, storage capacity, and power intake. According to the IWT, while the countries could use the water for power generation, they were not allowed to divert the river. In fact, India was required to release the stored water downstream. The diversion of the river would adversely affect the environment and ecology, as well as the livelihoods of more than 200,000 people who live in the Neelam Valley. Moreover, it was noted that such diversion could damage, through aridity, more than 50,000 acres of land.

With reference to the conflict over the Wullar Barrage on the River Jhelum, Aijazuddin said that the IWT does not allow the construction of a barrage on the main river. The dispute came up in 1984 when India started construction of the Wullar Barrage without informing Pakistan. When pressed, India said that this was the 'Tulbul Navigation Project' located at the outfall of the Wular Lake on the main Jhelum River. The Project proposed to be 439 feet in length with gates; a 12-meter-wide navigation lock; maximum discharge capacity of 50,000 cusecs; and it would allow water levels of up to 5178 feet. While India stated that the Tulbul Navigation Project was purely meant for navigability of the River Jhelum, Pakistan opposed the construction of the Wullar Barrage, seeing it as a violation of the Treaty. While negotiations are currently underway to resolve this issue, India plans to fill the Wular Lake by diverting the water of the River Neelam to the Kishanganga Project.

Sharing Pakistan's perspectives on the water disputes with India, Aijazuddin said,

*What we want to avoid is a situation where you have fertility on one side of the border and aridity on the other side. It is the same land. The concerns, on both sides, are supply of water for irrigation, the availability of water for power generation, and defense. You may ask, 'what has water got to do with defense?' Well, during the 1965 war, the canals at Wagah between India and Pakistan proved to be a stumbling block when it came to the movement of tanks etc. So both countries see the water courses as a line of defense as well.*

*Pakistan's position is that existing uses/usage should be sacrosanct. Excess water should be divided according to area and population. Pakistan believes that this position is supported by various treaties. India's position is that the upper riparian has an absolute right and the lower riparian can get it only under an agreement or a treaty.*



Underscoring the seriousness of conflicts arising out of the water sharing agreement, Aijazuddin said that geographically, Pakistan has a cultivable land of 77 million acres, while that which is under cultivation is 54 million acres. The country's ability to cultivate this remaining 23 million acres is dependent on an assured supply of water. This assumes greater significance in light of Pakistan's population which in 1947 stood at 43 million, and increased to 189 million in 2012. The country's population is estimated to grow to 250 million by the year 2050. What this means is that Pakistan—and more so India—are going to face a situation in the near future wherein less water will be available for a larger number of people. With an increasing population and decreasing water supply, both countries need to understand the long-term implications and the impact of water crises on their collective populations.

In conclusion, Aijazuddin said that the only way forward is for the two countries to cooperate and to work with the recognition that their prosperity is intertwined. Plus, there are many common issues that affect both India and Pakistan, such as global warming, sedimentation, canal seepage, salinity, mismanagement of water, and sea water encroachment. With neither of the two countries conforming to international treaty obligations such as the Trans-Boundary Water Courses 1992 or the Uses of International Water Courses 1997, the only way forward is for the people of Pakistan and India to focus on mutual gain and to jointly search for win-win solutions. The conflict is too important to be left to the two Commissioners to discuss and refer to arbitration. In fact, Aijazuddin proposed the setting up a Joint Commission, whose structure is based on the belief that water resources are a common asset and that neither country owns them. Each sees itself as a trustee of the resource for future generations. Rather than having two Commissioners from each country sit across the table and negotiate, the Joint Commission will be different in the sense that it would function as one body looking at the interests of both Pakistan and India. Its purpose would be to prevent a situation where one person has the water and everybody else has to live without it.

**Siachen: Breaching the Final Frontier** was the focus of the next presentation by Ms. Jyoti Malhotra, Freelance Journalist and Consultant, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI), New Delhi.

In her opening comments, Malhotra made reference to the 'resolution' of the conflict on paper that was arrived at in 1989 under the leadership of then Prime Ministers, Benazir Bhutto and Rajiv Gandhi. The 'resolution' included India's consent to bring its troops down from the heights of the Saltoro Ridge. The governments however got stuck on naming the position to which the



*Ms. Jyoti Malhotra*

troops would be relocated. Since Pakistan's view has been that India's occupation of the heights is a violation of the Shimla Agreement, it has refrained from giving its consent to a document that demarcates the position of the Indian soldiers. India, on the other hand, has an interest in demarcating the position that it would vacate and that to which its soldiers would relocate.

The Kargil conflict in 1999 changed the paradigm, as a result of which any efforts by the Indian Prime Minister to address the Siachen issue are accompanied by reminders from the Army Chief about the breach of trust at Kargil. Malhotra referred to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's bus-for-peace initiative from Amritsar to Lahore in 1999 to make the point that while Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif welcomed and hosted the Indian delegation, Gen. Pervez Musharraf was already strategizing on how to invade India at Kargil. Since then, no Indian Army Chief has failed to remind the Indian Prime Minister of this breach of trust. The fear, post-Kargil, is that if the Indian troops come down, Pakistan will retake those heights. And this would be a huge body blow to the security of India and to the morale of its soldiers.

Therefore, as a result of Kargil, the Indian position has become more hard-line. A sense of distrust of the Pakistani army, which remains the most powerful instrument of politics inside Pakistan, weighs heavy on the Indian psyche. Hence there is a constant refrain in policymaking circles in India, which asks the question, 'how can we trust them again?' This is further complicated by the growing fragility of coalition governments at the center in India, which reduces the power of political leaders to take bold and visionary steps.

Today, the main issue is India's insistence that before demilitarization, Pakistan should agree on authentication of present troop positions and demarcation of the Actual Ground Position Line. Pakistan's call for a settlement on principles agreed to by the two countries in 1989 and its offer to evolve a withdrawal schedule identifying 'present' and 'future' positions was rejected.<sup>2</sup>

Malhotra drew attention to the April 2012 snow slide in the Gayari sector of Siachen, which killed 140 Pakistani soldiers. This tragedy has created a renewed

<sup>2</sup> Maleeha Lodhi, 'Mixed Scorecard', *The News International* (Karachi: 23 August 2012). <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-9-127814-Mixed-scorecard>

context for the people of Pakistan and India to push for ending the conflict. Malhotra shared that what generated considerable discussion was the decision by the country's Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashraf Parvez Kayani to include an Indian journalist (Anita Joshua of *The Hindu*)<sup>3</sup> as part of his small entourage that travelled to Siachen following the tragedy. As a result, Pakistani officers stationed in Siachen had, for the first time, the opportunity to interact with an Indian. While this was a reflection of how the lack of face-to-face contact had allowed enemy images to flourish, Malhotra said that this step by Gen. Kayani could perhaps reflect an interest on the part of the Pakistan army to open a constructive dialogue with India on resolving the Siachen issue.

In order to break the deadlock over Siachen, Kashmir, and other political issues, Malhotra proposed the following steps:

- The active engagement and involvement of the political class in India and Pakistan—particularly legislators and politicians from Punjab, Rajasthan, and Jammu and Kashmir—would go a long way in overcoming the impasse on Siachen. ‘The value of engaging the political class is that you can hold them to their promises’, said Malhotra. Processes that sensitize and educate politicians about different aspects of the India-Pakistan relationship and that facilitate greater face-to-face contact will help to change their understanding of the conflict and perception of *the other*. Malhotra also articulated the view that while there has been considerable focus on the intra-Kashmir dialogue, less attention has been given to the potential for cooperation between the two Punjabs—a region that was witness to some of the most horrific violence during partition. Whether with respect to intra-Punjab trade or to the initiation of more frequent dialogues between Punjabi politicians on the two sides, the promotion of contact and goodwill between the two Punjabs will have a positive influence on the overall bilateral relationship between the two countries.
- The citizens of Pakistan and India need to reclaim their power, and play a far more significant role in the government-level composite dialogue. Governments respond to pressure from the people because the perspectives of those who form their constituency are important to the political class.
- Face-to-face dialogue sustained over a period of time is vital for the transformation of the many issues that have divided the people of the two countries. ‘We need to know each other much better. Once there is trust, we can resolve the issues and breach the frontiers’, said Malhotra.

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<sup>3</sup> Only two Indian journalists are allowed to be stationed in Pakistan.

- Regional connectivity and economic integration can play a significant role in transforming intractability. To elaborate on this, she quoted Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who said, ‘I dream of a day when, while retaining our respective identities, one can have breakfast at Amritsar, lunch at Lahore, and dinner in Kabul. That was how my forefathers lived.’

Shifting focus to a new arena of conflict—namely Afghanistan—Dr. Salma Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, looked at how the **Afghanistan factor has influenced Pakistan-India relations.**

Opening her presentation with the comment that Afghanistan has become yet another playing field for a proxy conflict between India and Pakistan, she said that from a Pakistani perspective, the ‘enemy image’ of India persists in terms of how it is seen in the Afghan scenario. Even moderate voices inside Pakistan express concern over India’s expanding operations in that country.

Articulating some of the concerns in Pakistan with reference to India’s closeness with Afghanistan, Malik said that India is engaging in soft-image building, having invested USD two billion in economic and military assistance to the Hamid Karzai government. This has made India one of the largest donors in Afghanistan. The trade between India and Afghanistan has increased manifold since 2001 and there are at least 50 development projects that the Indian government has initiated in the country. There are about 5000 Indian workers and security personnel in Afghanistan and a surprisingly large number of consulates have been opened in different parts of the country. These activities, along with India’s extensive investments in infrastructure (such as highways) and its assistance to Afghanistan in strengthening the country’s security forces, have raised suspicion in Pakistan. The concern is that Afghanistan and India are sharing intelligence against Pakistan, and that India is trying to spread its physical and material influence in Afghanistan with a purpose to encircle Pakistan in the long run. There is also the fear that India will become a proxy for the USA once the latter exits Afghanistan in 2014. The India-US Nuclear Agreement is seen as an example of this growing proximity between the two countries.



*Dr. Salma Malik*

*I see hope because the younger generation in the three countries is united in its view that something positive needs to be done...that we need to transcend state perspectives and look at the issues from a humane perspective.*

Whether the above are myths or realities, what is significant here is that for a wide cross-section of Pakistanis, these are very real concerns. In fact, some of these concerns are based on past experience and history. For example, when the Soviet Union intervened in Afghanistan in the 1980s, India took a public position on the issue. Similarly, when the civil war started, the Northern Alliance was supported by India and the Taliban by Pakistan. So, the lines of difference were drawn clearly and these became all the more pronounced when the Taliban killed President Najibullah and institutionalized a culture of hate and intolerance in Afghan society.

Complicating matters further is the widespread belief in Pakistan that India is supporting the militancy in Balochistan. As proof, Malik shared that Pakistanis often make a reference to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's statement at Sharm-el-Sheikh where he was perceived as acknowledging that there might be some Indian involvement in Balochistan.

These are Pakistan's concerns. While India-Afghanistan relations will work independent of what Pakistan's perceptions are and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations will similarly be independent of how India feels, what is important from a conflict transformation perspective is that these concerns need to be addressed in the interest of long-term peace and stability in the region.

Turning to Pakistan's relationship with Afghanistan, Malik said that owing to a common ethnic identity and a shared history, many Afghans and Pakistanis are connected to one another through familial and kinship bonds that transcend the Durand Line. Over the last three decades, new layers have been added to this cultural affinity with Pakistan opening up its border to refugees from Afghanistan. While some crossed over into Pakistan because of the civil war or due to environmental issues, others have made both countries their home. For instance, Malik shared that many Afghans own homes in both Hayatabad and Kabul. This has changed the demography of many areas within Pakistan. However, as Malik put it, 'there is now a loss of trust and too much closeness has bred a lot of animosity between the two countries'. Further, the spill-over effect of war and the economy that it has perpetuated has had a debilitating impact on the security of Pakistan as much as it has affected Afghanistan. It has given non-state actors a vested interest in the perpetuation of militancy, both within Afghanistan and Pakistan. For Pakistan, the situation is further exacerbated by the conflicts on its western as well as eastern borders.

Looking at Afghanistan in a global perspective, Malik was of the view that a new 'great game' is currently underway in Afghanistan. While old actors such

as the West European countries and the USA remain, new actors have entered the arena in order to get a share of the ‘war booty’ that Afghanistan has to offer. What happens post-2014 is a big concern for Pakistan because it will take the collective and coordinated efforts of all the countries involved to preempt the actions of militants and those who have a vested interest in the perpetuation of conflict and chaos post-2014.

The way forward, according to Malik, is to focus on the problems that are common to all three countries—energy and resource deficiency—and to collectively work towards a ‘stable’ Afghanistan. While a ‘stable’ Afghanistan is in everyone’s interest, the key question, as Malik noted, is ‘who’ defines this stability and ‘how’ do we define stability in Afghanistan?

The spoilers—those with a vested interest in the perpetuation of hostility and violence—pose a daunting challenge to the composite dialogue and to the broader peace process. Strategies that seek to address the problems presented by the activities of the spoilers have received growing attention in recent years. In this context, Mr. Syed Moazzam Hashmi, an Islamabad-based Political and Security Analyst, looked at the **different groups of spoilers that operate locally and regionally**, and often cooperate with one another to disrupt peace processes.



Mr. Moazzam Hashmi

Drawing on the interconnections between spoilers in the India-Pakistan and Afghanistan-Pakistan contexts, Hashmi said that these groups can be clubbed into the following categories. The first group—‘the termites at home’—are responsible for domestic economic and socio-political instability and for hampering the peace process with neighbors and relations with the international community. Describing their goals, Hashmi said,

*Whether manifested as the Lashkars or the Senas, these spoilers float on motivated self-centered agendas of correcting the world under the self-assumed guise of responsibility for jihad. What differentiates the Lashkars from the Senas is the element of export—with the former seeking to expand the jihadi franchise umbrella abroad. Sporting white, black, brown turbans or clad in saffron, their interest is to muster socio-political empowerment and multiply their prosperity, which is best furthered in the muddy waters of poverty, political instability, and chaos—not uncommon*

*to the region. Their invincibility stems from the reality, which is that, most often, inquiries and investigations into their acts of violence generally disintegrate into a blame game where the 'invisible' or the 'external hand' is held responsible—and the thriving spoilers remain at large.*

Hashmi also included some groups of 'religious' leaders in this category of domestic spoilers. While many of them send their own children to the USA and Europe for quality education, at the same time, they encourage other people to send their children to *madrassas* and to participate in the activities of radicalized groups.

Interestingly, the ratio of clandestine activities is directly proportional to criminal activities—the latter rising in number when there is an increase in 'special operations'. Because, as Hashmi explained, 'the authorities have to turn a blind eye to the other activities of the spoilers whom they have been employing to assist in clandestine operations'. The thriving production and trade of narcotics in Afghanistan was cited as a case in point where local warlords have been pampered by different groups—state and non-state—to further the efficacy of their respective clandestine operations. In the context of Pakistan-India relations, local politicians assume this role.

'Local thugs and smugglers' constitute a second set of spoilers. According to Hashmi, 'They generally work hand-in-glove with the security apparatus in the border areas, and are responsible for cross-border infiltration.' For example, in the case of the movement of NATO supplies on the Af-Pak border, the spoilers play a role in both making these goods and disrupting their transport. While the third group of spoilers are 'private contractors'—including ex-servicemen, bureaucrats, and/or politicians with clout in government circles—the fourth category constitutes the 'freelance rambos' and 'likeminded splinter groups'. Hashmi explained that these groups consist of trained youth who are highly motivated, full of zeal, and resent the fact that they have been used as easy fodder by their leaders. Having deviated from the 'holy cause' they were engaged for, these young men operate individually or in small groups. Such splinter groups have crept deep into the regional polity and can be hired and exploited by any interested force to wreak havoc in the populace.

Then, there are the formidable '*jihadis*' who, regardless of faith, espouse the concept of war jingoism. They can be further categorized into three subsets: Kashmir-specific, Afghan tribal region-specific, and those engaged in domestic sectarian violence and hate crimes against people of other faiths. For example,

Sunni violence against Shias, Hindu attacks against Muslims and Christians (in India), and Muslim attacks against Hindus and Christians (in Pakistan). Hashmi however noted that owing to the altering regional dynamics, changes in state policies, and international pressures, the ‘*jihadi* jobs’ have come under threat, thereby increasing unemployment levels among youth engaged in this kind of violence. As a result, many of these groups have shifted their focus to urban areas. This has led to an increase in crime rates and acts of vandalism. For example, while the *Jamaat-i-Islami* in Pakistan was more Kashmir-centered, it found an opportunity to expand its mandate by participating in the Afghan *ji*had against the former Soviet Union in Afghanistan. However, with the entry of the Arab *ji*hadists led by Al Qaeda, they were flushed out of the newly-made bastion in Afghanistan. Motivated by the same zeal, these militants penetrated into Xing Jiang, but due to the special nature of the Sino-Pakistan relationship, the foot soldiers returned to focus on the Kashmir conflict.

Some of these groups have adapted their tactics in accordance with changes in their funding sources. For example, Hashmi shared that with their funding sources from the Middle East and the Gulf drying up, the Taliban have diversified their means of income by focusing on criminal activities, kidnap-for-ransom, smuggling, and loot.

Posing a threat as deadly as the above actors are the ‘external spoilers’ whom Hashmi described as the ‘outside crocodiles’. These include the international weapons’ manufacturing complexes in the United States, Russia, China, Sweden, and other European countries that have become central players in the Af-Pak region. Pakistan is also a battleground for the proxy war between Iran and Saudi Arabia with the latter spearheading its orthodox version of *Wahabi* Islam through *ji*had elements in the region.

Commenting on why efforts to rein in the spoilers have failed, Hashmi articulated the view that counter-terrorism operations have created profit-generating mega complexes, far bigger than the military-industrial-bureaucratic complexes. As a result, even those involved in combating extremist violence now have a stake in the conflict. The second reason has to do with the fact that the clergy in Pakistan has also developed a vested economic and political interest in the perpetuation of hostility and violence. Third, the complacency of different quarters of the state in using non-state actors as extensions of their strategic policies has remained a key factor in galvanizing the robust existence of the spoilers.



However, some positive changes are discernible in Pakistan. Hashmi pointed to a change in the attitude of the Pakistani army in this regard and the articulation of political will to address this issue through education and economic policies. Pakistan's military has attempted to rehabilitate and reintegrate some of the spoilers, using large reserves of resources for this purpose. The example of Swat was cited where the army had some success in rehabilitating young men who had been radicalized by the Taliban. It helped them to complete their education and provided opportunities for them to train in various sports and professional courses.

However, considering the magnitude of the spoilers' mess, such rehabilitation efforts have had little impact. Hashmi expressed scepticism about the state's ability to rein in the spoilers because the post-9/11 'war on terror' has unleashed an industry that is profitable to many actors—state and non-state, local and international—who now have a vested interest in the perpetuation of instability and chaos. The only way out, according to Hashmi, is for the Pakistan government to reduce its economic dependence on external actors and focus on greater self-reliance.



*Ms. Anam Zakaria*

Locating her presentation in the context of the **role that educational exchanges and cross-border school dialogues can play in increasing the stakes for peace** between Pakistan and India, Ms. Anam Zakaria, Director, Citizen's Archive of Pakistan (CAP), Lahore, shared experiences from her work with school children in the two countries.

CAP focuses on cultural and historic preservation, and seeks to educate and instill pride in Pakistani citizens about their heritage. It draws on the tradition of oral story-telling to document the personal narratives of the 'partition generation' on issues of conflict, coexistence, and reconciliation. The focus of Zakaria's presentation was on CAP's education initiative which seeks to develop inclusive curricula in public and private schools. The significance of this initiative lies in the fact that many of Pakistan's school textbooks, particularly those of the Punjab Board, attempt to 'brainwash' children against other communities and nations. CAP's attempt, therefore, is to invoke critical thinking in young minds and to introduce an alternative narrative into the school curriculum, which highlights examples of cross-community friendship and inter-faith harmony that existed for centuries before the 1947 partition. Through its Exchange for Change (EFC) program, CAP

seeks to promote dialogue between school students from Pakistan and India with a purpose to enhancing the next generation's understanding of their shared history and culture. The project includes face-to-face meetings which are sustained through letters, postcards, collages, and oral history interviews (that students conduct with their grandparents). The material exchanged aims to dispel misinformation about historical events and encourage children to form their own opinions. More than 2400 children (aged between 10 and 14 years) from 10 schools across Pakistan and India have participated in this program. They represent different socioeconomic backgrounds, coming from families with varying income levels.

Zakaria shared that while the program was a success, it did encounter some fundamental challenges. The first challenge, which came as a surprise to her, was the hesitation on the part of the high-income schools to become active partners in this initiative. The assumption that quality education and affluence would make them more open and liberal was an incorrect one, and in fact the low-income schools turned out to be more proactive in their participation. Zakaria said that while there is a perception that the *madrassa* culture fuels radicalism and that the unlettered are easy fodder for extremist violence, what is perhaps more alarming is the reality that there is a lot of institutionalized extremism within government (and even private) schools.

The project's attempt to highlight the shared history and cultural heritage of the two countries as also current commonalities in lifestyles and aspirations, particularly those of the youth, received a negative reception with Zakaria and her colleagues being accused of challenging the 'Two-Nation Theory' by talking about 'similarities'. There was also a backlash from parents who questioned the project's decision to initiate dialogue in the classroom on leaders such as Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. Initially, the children too were sceptical as to why there was a need to talk about people who were disliked in Pakistan.

The children's views about *the other's* religion and perceived differences presented another significant challenge. Zakaria cited two examples to demonstrate this point. The first concerned a postcard that an Indian child had sent to her Pakistani counterpart in a high-income school. It included the picture of a Hindu deity. Upon seeing the postcard, the girl, aged 10, started to cry and said, 'My eyes have sinned...because I have seen this picture. My mother told me that if I see something like this on TV or in print, then I have sinned.'

The second incident took place in India when the Pakistani students were welcomed by one of the partner Indian schools. As part of the welcome ceremony, the school staff put a *tika* on the Pakistani guests. The children took this to mean that the school was trying to convert them to Hinduism, and they became anxious. It took Zakaria some time to explain to the students that this was a ‘welcome ceremony’ and not an attempt at conversion.

Both incidents underscored the need for greater contact and knowledge of *the other’s* culture to combat negative stereotypes as also the need for a sensibility that respects differences while celebrating the similarities.

Sharing some of the accomplishments of the project, Zakaria said that, often, it took only a month for the children to transform their enemy images of Indians into perceptions that celebrated the similarities between the people of the two countries even as they respected the differences. The project evaluation revealed that just one exchange of letters would bring about considerable change in perceptions about *the other*. The endline study revealed that 80 percent of the children (Pakistani and Indian) said that friendship was possible and desirable; 75 percent said that dialogue was essential to bringing about peace; and 85 percent said that they learnt something positive about *the other* and saw many similarities that cut across boundaries. Based on feedback of the initial phase,



*Session Chair Ambassador Salman Haidar (Former Foreign Secretary and currently Vice Chairman, Global India Foundation, New Delhi) with panelists Ms. Jyoti Malhotra (Freelance Journalist & Consultant, FICCI, New Delhi), Dr. Isher Judge Ahluwalia (Chairperson, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations, New Delhi), and Mr. Moazzam Ali Hashmi (Director-Communication, Society for Socio-Economic Development and Legal Aid, Islamabad).*

the initiative is now expanding its focus to include dialogues that involve school teachers and administrators. Zakaria concluded with a poem written by an 11-year old girl from Mumbai who had participated in the EFC initiative:

*Why are we separated?  
 And for each other, why do we have hatred?  
 What is the reason that we can't meet every season?  
 Why do people forget that each one of us takes a breath?  
 Why that half-an-hour way becomes a wait to death?  
 Where is the faith lost and to meet each other we pay a great cost.  
 After all, we laugh the same way, we smile the same way,  
 we love the same way  
 It is just that the border can't make us away  
 After all, we live the same way.*

## Discussion

- A considerable section of the Q&A focused on the construction of national and religious identity in India and Pakistan. The main question that participants grappled with was with respect to the creation of inclusive and positive identities so that the articulation of one identity did not imply a negation of the other. With respect to the construction of the Pakistani identity, the following question was posed by a Pakistani participant: ‘In a context where nationhood, religion, and communal relations are so intertwined, how do we get away from this anti-India sentiment when it is all so mixed up and when questioning this relationship questions the very basis of the Pakistani identity?’ In addition, the often violent articulation of ethnic identities—whether these are Balochi, Pashtun or Sindhi—have further complicated the dialogue on identity and nationalism in Pakistan.
- With reference to Aijazuddin’s presentation on the obstacles that the Indus Waters Treaty has encountered, Haidar articulated the view that this agreement is often seen as a ‘peace treaty’ in the sense that it addressed issues that were quite capable of bringing the two countries to war. While some of the provisions of the Treaty are far from perfect such as the division of the waters—three eastern rivers going to India and three western rivers going to Pakistan—he stated that in the years after partition, it provided a solution to something that had the two countries at each other’s throats. Over the last 60 years, water issues have become more complex because the clear division of three rivers on one side and three on the other side has worked out differently on the ground and it has failed to solve the myriad conflicts concerning the sharing of the river waters. But the good news,

according to Haidar, is that neither of the two countries has any inclination to tamper with the IWT, knowing fully well how difficult it was to arrive at the agreement. Both recognize the need to preserve the structure of water sharing even though one could certainly look at ways of improving the implementation of the Treaty.

- In response to a question on the ‘Kashmiri view of the Indus Waters Treaty’, Aijazuddin urged Workshop participants to look at water resources as a joint asset which have to be commonly monitored and distributed. He added,

*One party has an interest as does everybody who is going to have access to those resources. So it really doesn't matter what the Kashmiri view is or what the Sindhi view is or what the Punjabi view is. The fact is that these resources are valuable and they cannot be taken for granted.*

- There was considerable discussion on the situation in Afghanistan post-2014 when foreign troops pull out. While Malik anticipated a drawdown rather than a complete withdrawal of troops, the high levels of mistrust among the various stakeholders—whether between Afghanistan and Pakistan, India and Pakistan, or the USA and Pakistan—were identified as a critical issue that required urgent attention for long-term peace and security in the region.



- Zakaria’s presentation provided a context for wider conversations on school curricula revisions in both Pakistan and India. In recent years, social science textbooks have changed in content and structure to present a more holistic and inclusive conception of national identity. Oral history narratives from *the other* country have been included to provide a wider view of coexistence between Hindus and Muslims in the pre-partition days and to help students engage with stories of individuals who reached out to protect *the other* during the violence of 1947. The purpose of these is to bring on board multiple perspectives and a sensitivity to how partition is taught in the classroom. Ms. Seema Kakran, Assistant Director, WISCOMP, drew attention to an initiative by South Asian scholars to collectively author history textbooks that could be used across the region. The purpose of such collaborative projects is to write books that infuse a South Asian sensibility and that employ a narrative that is elicitive rather than prescriptive. Unfortunately, such initiatives continue to be the exception rather than the norm in most parts of India and Pakistan. For instance, Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath shared the example of school textbooks in the Indian state of Gujarat which are quite explicit in the portrayal of negative stereotypes against *the other*—whether defined as minority communities such as Muslims or Christians, or countries such as Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The textbooks have in fact exacerbated Hindu-Muslim relations in the state, and Gopinath stated that there is now sufficient evidence to draw a connection between how the state textbooks depicted Muslims and the subsequent pogrom of 2002 in which widespread violence was carried out against the Muslim community.



## *Module Two*

### **Jammu and Kashmir: Engaging with Possibilities**

Since their inception in 2001, the Conflict Transformation Workshops have sought to provide an invigorating and psychologically ‘safe’ space where issues related to the Jammu and Kashmir conflict have been discussed with candor by third and fourth generation Kashmiris, Pakistanis, and Indians. At each annual Workshop, the module on Kashmir has been designed to facilitate creative and collaborative explorations on the transformation of this conflict. While the modules have sought to build trust and relationships between young professionals from Kashmir, Pakistan, and India, they have not brushed aside differences. Rather, divergences in opinions have been discussed, using the methodology of sustained dialogue.

At the 2012 Conflict Transformation Workshop, the module *Jammu and Kashmir—Engaging with Possibilities* focused on issues concerning identity and nationalism, local perspectives on ‘peace’ and ‘justice’, political participation, the articulation of stakeholder aspirations, and demography and geopolitics. Multiple methodologies and formats including discourse analysis, opinion poll analyses, stakeholder analyses, quiz, and group research were employed to formulate a blueprint for sustainable peace and security in Jammu and Kashmir.

#### ***Panel Discussion***

#### **Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Myth and Reality**

The module opened with a panel discussion where scholars and practitioners shared their experiences and perspectives on ‘the way forward’ in Jammu and Kashmir. Foregrounding the salient issues of the **Public Discourse on Jammu**

**and Kashmir in Pakistan**, Dr. Salma Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, qualified her presentation with a note on the current internal security situation in Pakistan. Developments on Pakistan’s western border with Afghanistan have been the major focus of the internal security discourse in recent years. Events in Afghanistan and their impact within Pakistan have, in some ways, reduced the pre-eminence of the discourse on Kashmir among ordinary Pakistanis. The general tenor of public discourse on Kashmir in Pakistan can be categorized into the following sentiments:



*Dr. Salma Malik*

- The Kashmir issue has been shelved.
- Pakistan is not going to support any non-state actor activity inside Indian Kashmir.
- Kashmir’s status as a ‘disputed territory’ has been put on the backburner owing to Pakistan’s preoccupations with regard to its internal security.

Malik however shared that the Kashmir issue has not been shelved, but Pakistan is less vociferous owing to its preoccupation with the security situation on the western border. Has Pakistan denounced militancy in Kashmir? While the country has condemned groups that indulge in cross-border terrorism, such as the *Lashkar-e-Taiba* and others, the challenge lies in the fact that militant organizations change their names and continue their activities under new nomenclatures.

With reference to the question, ‘who are the stakeholders’, Malik said that there is an across-the-board acceptance in Pakistan that Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC should be the primary stakeholders of any peace dividend. While former President Gen. Pervez Musharraf was among the first leaders in Pakistan to articulate the view that the aspirations of the Kashmiris should guide the process even if this included a rejection of a union with Pakistan, in recent years, this sentiment has gained more acceptability in Pakistan. An increasingly large number of Pakistanis now take a very open-ended view to the issue, foregrounding the need to end the mass suffering that the violence of the last two decades has generated.

Yet, Malik said that, paradoxically, in practice, there is little acceptance for a process that allows Kashmiris to express views that are different from those



of the government of Pakistan. The general belief is that the governments of Pakistan and India will decide what is in the interest of the Kashmiris. Public discourse in Pakistan tends to remain state-centric with little space for civil society and NGOs to articulate alternate voices and options. There is also a tendency to exclude Gilgit-Baltistan owing to the region's ethnic composition and geography. This, according to Malik, was an issue that required greater attention in Pakistan—particularly with reference to the 'economic, demographic, and security dynamics in Gilgit-Baltistan vis-à-vis Azad Kashmir'. Mainstream discourse in Pakistan tends to treat the two regions separately, and this needs to be addressed, said Malik.

In recent years, the theme of 'connectors' has assumed significance in Pakistan. It entered public discourse in 2005 when the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service was launched and a second route, Jammu-Rawalkot, was opened a year later in 2006. However, Malik said that these bus services have proved to be of little use as 'connectors'.

*The fact that the bus services are open only to divided families and no other person can travel across the LoC is highly problematic because unless you have an open approach that allows the free movement of all Kashmiri people across the LoC, the intra-Kashmir dialogue will really not take off. People need to be able to meet one another for a dialogue to begin. Decades of forced segregation has resulted in a situation wherein Kashmiris know very little of those who live across the LoC. Within the region too, there is a lack of understanding and trust, for example between the Buddhists of Ladakh and the Muslims of the Valley.*

Malik also drew attention to the need to build institutional mechanisms and the necessary infrastructure to make cross-LoC trade a connector in the real sense of the term. In the absence of an efficient infrastructure, this system which works on barter will not be able to make the kind of impact on the peace process as was envisaged. Scepticism was also expressed about the ability of the revenue generated from this kind of trade to really impact the Kashmiri economy in any substantial way.

Even though many 'out-of-box' solutions have been proposed over the last couple of years, Malik was critical of the actual on-the-ground change that has been achieved so far. While there has been much talk of 'opening borders', 'softening borders', 'demilitarizing the region', little change has been seen on the ground. Leaders in both Pakistan and India have, from time-to-time, made

the comment that ‘anything short of independence is possible’ for Kashmir, but they have shown less courage and limited foresight in their ability to implement this view.

Malik concluded with the assertion that a first step for long-term peaceful transformation is a vibrant and open intra-Kashmir dialogue. Nothing will change on the ground if restrictions are imposed on Kashmiris to travel across the LoC. While it is important to open more bus routes, what needs greater attention is how the process could move beyond simply the reunion of divided families.

Malik proposed that the Siachen conflict could be used as a starting point for gaining momentum on the resolution of all outstanding issues on Kashmir. In terms of the risks involved, Malik was of the opinion that a resolution of the Siachen dispute would help India and Pakistan to save lives and money. Pakistan has lost 3000 soldiers in Siachen, while India has lost 5000. The irony is that only three percent have died due to enemy fire. The majority have succumbed to weather-related injuries. ‘It is such a lost battle. All we need is mutual trust and the motivation to resolve the issue’, said Malik.

The next presentation by Mr. Yashwant Deshmukh, Managing Director and Chief Editor, Team CVoter, Noida, focused on the theme, **Peace Polls in Jammu and Kashmir: What Do The People Want?** Exploring the methodologies through which people’s voices could be placed at the center of a peace process, he shared the findings of a peace poll conducted in Jammu and Kashmir (on both sides of the LoC) in 2008.<sup>4</sup>

But first, he made a comment on why the peace process had faltered in recent years. Peace negotiations are conducted in the backrooms amongst the *stakeholders*. Often, these *stakeholders* are not *the people* for whom conflict is an everyday reality. Nor is there an effort to get the voices of *the people* to the peace table where the *stakeholders’* perspectives influence key decisions.

Peace polls can play a role here. They seek to put the voices of the people into the agenda of the peace process. The brainchild of Dr. Colin Irwin, a British social scientist based at the University of Liverpool, peace polls have been used with success in various regions of conflict such as Northern Ireland, Palestine, the Balkans, and Jammu and Kashmir.

<sup>4</sup> Authored by Dr. Colin Irwin and titled *Peace in Kashmir: Myth and Reality*, the survey report can be accessed at <http://www.peacepolls.org/peacepolls/documents/000295.pdf>



*Mr. Yashwant Deshmukh*

*For so many years,  
we have talked on behalf  
of the people of Kashmir.  
But nobody thought of  
asking the people of  
Kashmir what they want.  
And even if you ask the  
people and do the  
research, nobody wants  
to read it. Even if they  
read it, nobody wants  
to implement it.  
So, it's a problem of  
political will.*

The Jammu and Kashmir peace poll was conducted by Irwin in partnership with Team CVoter and the Indian magazine *The Week* with a purpose to identify those solutions that people—across ethnic, religious, and regional identities—envision as the way forward for Kashmir. While the staff of CVoter carried out the research for this poll on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir, owing to visa constraints, the services of Gallup Pakistan were used to conduct the survey in Pakistan Administered Kashmir. This was the first ever exercise to conduct a peace poll on the conflict, using the same questionnaire on both sides of the LoC.

With reference to the methodology used, Deshmukh said that in the first phase of the project, the researchers went to the people and asked them two questions: What questions would you like to be asked in a survey about the conflict? What solution would you suggest in response to this question? With more than 300 questions in hand (and a smaller number of solutions),

the researchers designed the questionnaire and started their fieldwork with a sample of 3000 people spread across the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Separating myth from reality, the poll revealed the following:<sup>5</sup>

- The people of Jammu and Kashmir want an end to the corruption that has destroyed governance and development.
- They want the government to tackle the problem of widespread unemployment.
- They want to live in harmony with their fellow countrymen and women.
- They want a secular state without borders.
- They want their children from different communities and faiths to go to school together.
- They want an end to all forms of discrimination, particularly human rights abuses and killings.

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p.4.

- India and Pakistan should stop using Kashmiris for their own selfish interests. In fact, there was a widespread perception that the conflict is continuing due to the vested interests of all the groups involved.
- Kashmiris want to be masters of their own destinies and to this end they want negotiations in good faith.
- Unhappy with both India and Pakistan, Kashmiris want *azaadi*. However, the definition of *azaadi* is fuzzy because what the people in the Valley want is not what those in Jammu and Ladakh desire and vice versa. Similarly, the aspirations of the people in Pakistan Administered Kashmir are not only varied internally, but also differ from the concerns of those living on the Indian side.<sup>6</sup>

With reference to solutions, there was a convergence of views across the LoC on issues concerning education, economic development, and security. For instance, the majority of Kashmiris listed the following as ‘essential’ or ‘desirable’<sup>7</sup>:

#### ***Education solutions:***

- Improve education for all disadvantaged people in J & K. (83%)
- Education should be secular. (81%)
- Student exchange programs between ethnic groups. (79%)
- New textbooks on good governance and human rights. (79%)
- All students in J&K should be educated together. (68%)

#### ***Economic solutions:***

- Effective independent commission to deal with corruption. (89%)
- Build infrastructure and communications. (84%)
- Develop hydroelectric power to reduce dependency. (83%)
- Develop herbal medicines, horticulture, and forestry. (76%)

<sup>6</sup> Deshmukh shared that the survey on the Pakistan side of Kashmir was more ambiguous with many respondents selecting the ‘unsure/maybe’ options in the questionnaires. This could perhaps be attributed to the lack of a strong media presence in comparison to the Indian side which has a fairly independent and vociferous print media.

<sup>7</sup> Colin Irwin and Yashwant Deshmukh, ‘Kashmir: People Want to Move On’ <http://www.peacepolls.org/peacepolls/documents/001546.pdf> Accessed on: 25 October 2012

***Security solutions:***

- The violence should stop from all sides. (87%)
- Serious abuses of human rights by the security forces should be prosecuted to the full extent of the law. (82%)
- Investigate all killings: ‘who killed who’. (82%)
- Pakistan and India should work together for a ceasefire. (79%)
- Resolve the conflict through armed struggle. (18%)
- Resolve the conflict through negotiations. (81%)

***Human rights solutions:***

- Majorities and minorities should be treated the same. (85%)
- Effective laws to protect all minorities in J&K. (80%)
- More powers for the State Human Rights Commission. (78%)
- The Right to Information Act for J&K should be more effective. (73%)
- Minority rights in an independent Kashmir will be guaranteed by Islamic law. (47%)

***Refugee solutions:***

- All Kashmiris should be allowed to live together again as they did in the past. (83%)
- All funds and jobs should be distributed fairly according to the ration cards. (70%)
- The central government should work with *Pandits* to develop a policy for return. (68%)
- Establish a commission to settle refugee *Pandits*’ property matters. (68%)

***Peacebuilding solutions:***

- We must learn from the past. (84%)
- Politics in Kashmir should focus on education and development. (78%)
- All NGOs and civil society should cooperate to bring the people together. (77%)
- The media should be objective and not take sides in the conflict. (77%)
- Kashmiri people must be part of any talks and settlement of the Kashmiri issue. (76%)

While the majority of Kashmiris agreed on certain constitutional aspects such as, ‘J&K should be a secular state’; ‘there should be consultation between all districts’; ‘no political borders in Kashmir’; ‘union of South Asian countries to cooperate on economic and terrorism issues’; and ‘the people of J&K should exercise their rights to a plebiscite in accordance with UN resolutions’, their views on a future constitutional package differed:

- **Join Pakistan** (All of J&K should become a part of Pakistan like any other Pakistan Province): This was ‘essential’ for 8%; ‘desirable’ for 4%; ‘acceptable’ for 5%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 74% of those polled.
- **Full independence** (all five districts should join to become the independent state of Jammu and Kashmir with responsibility for both their domestic and foreign policy and protecting their borders with Pakistan, India, and China): ‘essential’ for 33%; ‘desirable’ for 12%; ‘acceptable’ to 12%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 32% of those polled.
- **Disintegration** (each of the five districts should be allowed to choose their own future with Pakistan or India): ‘essential’ for 12%; ‘desirable’ for 11%; ‘acceptable’ to 14%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 49% of those polled.
- **Regional integration and devolution** (The two Kashmiris function like a Co-Federation with an open border and decentralized/local control in all regions, districts, and blocks): ‘essential’ for 14%; ‘desirable’ for 15%; ‘acceptable’ to 19%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 32% of those polled.
- **No change** (the status quo should stay the same with present Central, State, and Regional arrangements for governance): ‘essential’ for 22%; ‘desirable’ for 16%; ‘acceptable’ to 15%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 34% of those polled.
- **Autonomy** (full implementation of Article 370 and return to the status existing in J&K before 1953 with a Parliament and Prime Minister leaving only defense, foreign policy, and communications to India): ‘essential’ for 21%; ‘desirable’ for 22%; ‘acceptable’ to 18%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 23% of those polled.
- **Join India** (all of J&K should become a part of India like any other Indian state): ‘essential’ for 33%; ‘desirable’ for 13%; ‘acceptable’ to 10%; and ‘unacceptable’ to 34% of those polled.

The percentage of people for whom the above options were ‘tolerable’ is not listed here.

Analyzing this data, Deshmukh said,

*Each part of Indian and Pakistan Administered Kashmir seems to be working to a different constitutional agenda (stay with Pakistan, stay with India, or independence). So going down that particular diplomatic road would not seem to provide for any kind of workable solution in the short- to medium-term. But everyone, on either side of the LoC, wants to stimulate their economy, strengthen democracy, improve education, and if the concerns of the vulnerable minorities (the Hindus and Buddhists) can be properly addressed with effective guarantees, then a 'regional solution' may be the answer...The option of 'regional integration and devolution' was more acceptable across faultlines. In addition, the option 'full implementation of Article 370 and return to the status existing in J&K before 1953 with a Parliament and Prime Minister, leaving only defense, foreign policy, and communications to India' was by far the 'lesser of all the evils' at only 23% unacceptable. However, the Buddhists would need to be persuaded that their minority rights and culture can be protected in an autonomous state. This can perhaps be done by leaving the responsibility for the rights of minorities with the central government in India and by implementing far reaching devolution to all levels of government.<sup>8</sup>*

Interestingly, there were many issues over which the different communities were in agreement. Deshmukh proposed that the areas of convergence could be used as a starting point for negotiations, rather than opening the dialogue with issues over which there is disagreement. For example, the people of Ladakh have been demanding that their language should be included in Schedule 8 of the Indian constitution. People in the Valley and in Jammu do not have a problem with this demand. Similarly, there is an inter-region and inter-community consensus on the need for a common school curriculum. There is also agreement on the opening of a trans-border route (for communication and trade), which goes beyond Srinagar-Muzaffarabad to extend to the old silk route entry through Ladakh.

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<sup>8</sup> Colin Irwin and Yashwant Deshmukh, 'Kashmir: People Want to Move On'. <http://www.peacepolls.org/peacepolls/documents/001546.pdf> Accessed on: 25 October 2012. See also, Colin Irwin and Team CVoter, 'Peace in Kashmir: Myth and Reality' (June 2008) [www.peacepolls.org](http://www.peacepolls.org)

However, the overwhelming focus on one part of the Valley prevents people as well as leaders from seeing this much broader and more complex picture. Deshmukh shared that the peace process has often excluded the voices of ‘minority’ stakeholders. In fact, the very definition of a minority in Jammu and Kashmir requires attention because it is different from what the conception would be in the rest of India. Those who are seen as a minority community in the other parts of India are in fact the majority in Jammu and Kashmir, and the equations therefore change. While displaced Kashmiri *pandits* have some visibility as a minority group, there is a complete blackout of the refugees of the 1947 war who crossed into Indian Kashmir from the Pakistani side. They have lived in India for 65 years, but still do not have citizenship rights and remain stateless. While their official documented number is 15,000, Deshmukh felt that the actual figure would be much higher. Attention was also drawn to the *gujjars*, who have since time immemorial wandered from one side of the ‘border’ to the other, and to the *shias* of Kargil who think differently from the *sunnis* of the Valley. Then there are the Buddhists, who are in a minority in terms of their numbers in Jammu and Kashmir, but who live in the largest geographical area of the state. A population of two percent occupies 70 percent of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. Saying that the discourse on the conflict fails to capture this complexity and often ends up highlighting the dominant narrative, Deshmukh shared that the purpose of the peace poll was to include these diverse voices and to compel leaders to put the perspectives of *the people* on the negotiation table.

Deshmukh concluded with the assertion that the inclusion of people’s aspirations and concerns must be the central ingredient of the peace process. Without the inclusion of the stakeholders, the peace process is likely to falter. Drawing on the analysis of the peace polls survey, he advocated the following steps in Jammu and Kashmir:

- Negotiations
- Good governance
- Minority rights
- Devolution
- Autonomy

The next presentation by Mr. Zafar Choudhary, Founder Director, Indus Research Foundation, Jammu, looked at the promise and potential of the **Intra-Kashmir Dialogue** to impact the broader peace process in Jammu and Kashmir.





Mr. Zafar Choudhary

*Once billed as an ambitious mechanism for conflict transformation, the intra-Kashmir dialogue is today struggling to seek a definition between myth and reality. The basic issue is, What exactly do we mean when we talk of dialogue between parts of Kashmir across the Line of Control? There is no evidence of conflict between the two sides of Jammu and Kashmir. There may be differences of perception, but not conflict. Unlike India and Pakistan, the different parts of Kashmir do not have any competitive claims. Moreover, there is no formal mechanism to determine the agenda, structure or design of the dialogue.*

In 2005, the governments of India and Pakistan undertook the historic step to initiate a Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service across the Line of Control. The purpose was to facilitate contact between the divided families of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, Choudhary noted that the overwhelming response to cross-LoC interaction came from Jammu and not, as expected, from the Kashmir Valley which has been largely mute after the initial political symbolism. The reason for this, he explained, was that culturally, ethnically, linguistically, geographically, and even topographically, Pakistan Administered Kashmir is similar to the Jammu province on the Indian side. In fact, eight of the present-day ten districts of Pakistan Administered Kashmir were part of the undivided pre-1947 Jammu province, while only two districts were part of the Kashmir province.

Nevertheless, the opening up of the LoC, which helped residents to, for the first time, see with their own eyes what life on the other side was like, represented perhaps the biggest emotional moment for Kashmiris and was hailed as a significant political development in the broader context of the India-Pakistan dialogue on Kashmir. Between 2005 and 2012, more than 20,000 people have been able to travel across the LoC, and 65,000 travel permit applications are pending clearance. This is hugely significant because, as Choudhary shared, ‘for one, it has weakened the propaganda machine of militant groups who manufactured hate by telling young people that Kashmiris did not have the liberty to practice Islam freely’.

A year later, in 2006, a second bus service was launched between the southern districts—Poonch and Rawalakot. In 2008, a cross-LoC truck service was launched, but, as Choudhary put it, ‘under unique circumstances—with half-a-million agitating Kashmiri Muslims undertaking a symbolic march along the Jhelum Valley road’. While the agitation was initially in response to the transfer of land to the Amarnath shrine board, other issues got added. Kashmiris alleged an economic blockade and declared that they want to procure goods

from the Pakistani side of Kashmir as there was a blockade from the Indian side. The situation generated bad publicity for India. In the middle of this crisis, India proposed to Pakistan the initiation of trade across the LoC. The latter agreed and cross-LoC trade was, as a result, launched in October 2008.

Even though cross-LoC trade is in its fourth year now, there is no supporting infrastructure in terms of banking and communication facilities. Traders do not have permission to visit their counterparts and markets on the other side. Yet, despite this lack of basic requirements, cross-LoC trade stood at Rs.197 crores during the fiscal year 2012-13.

These developments reflect the desire of the people, on both sides of Kashmir, to see the LoC rendered irrelevant. In Pakistan Administered Kashmir, the aspiration to have the liberty to travel across the LoC, meet relatives, do business, and live with some amount of internal political and economic autonomy, is widespread. In fact, even Hindus and Sikhs from the region have expressed an interest in crossing the LoC, interacting with Kashmiris from the other side, and doing business with them. However, New Delhi and Islamabad are now beginning to show reluctance in taking this initiative forward. According to Choudhary, ‘this seven-year journey has now come to a standstill. There is confusion, suspicion, and a lack of clarity, both in New Delhi and Islamabad as well as among the stakeholders within both parts of J&K as to the future and purpose of cross-LoC interactions.’ He cited two reasons for this:

- When India and Pakistan began discussing the idea of softening the Line of Control to facilitate travel and trade between people from different regions of Jammu and Kashmir, the intention was perhaps to move gradually towards an LoC-based resolution of the Kashmir conflict. President Pervez Musharraf had mentioned this on a few occasions. On the Indian side, this proposal was on Indira Gandhi’s desk, and, in the 1990s, Prime Ministers P.V. Narasimha Rao and Inder Kumar Gujral had made reference to this idea. However, today, New Delhi looks at the growing cross-LoC bonhomie as holding within it the kernels of a ‘Jammu-Kashmir identity’, which could, at a later stage, seek to be exclusive of both India and Pakistan. Deep in the establishment, this concern is shared by Pakistan as well.
- Second, the Kashmir Valley—which is the epicenter of the conflict—does not feel emotionally involved in the cross-LoC dialogues owing to the absence of ethnic, linguistic, and familial ties with the other side. If this CBM is unable to address the core stakeholders (those who live in the

Kashmir Valley), then there is a possibility that it could soon lose its relevance. It is for this reason as well that there is a pressure in Pakistan to discourage the cross-LoC dialogues. Evidence of Pakistan's reluctance can be gauged from its hesitation to agree to India's proposal to introduce modern banking methods in order to formalize cross-LoC trade. There is also a growing articulation in the Pakistani establishment that Islamabad might fall into India's trap of 'forcing an LoC-based resolution', and there are also some voices in Pakistan that would not like to see any resolution of the Kashmir issue in the near future.

Therefore, the current status, according to Choudhary, is as follows:

- Despite receiving mention in the official statements of Indian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries over the last two years, the cross-LoC travel regime remains as strict and cumbersome as it was at the time of introduction in 2005.
- While multiple entry for a period of six months on a single travel permit was agreed upon in 2011, obtaining the travel permit itself is a very difficult task.
- Cross-LoC trade is still conducted through a barter system. The list of goods to be exchanged is limited to 21 items and this is not reflective of local markets, either in terms of consumption or production.
- Telecommunication and postal services are absent. In the absence of basic communication tools, how is the dialogue to be furthered or sustained?
- While the Foreign Ministers and Foreign Secretaries had agreed to allow cross-LoC tourism and cultural exchanges, these have not been implemented on the ground.
- Official panels of the Government of India—most significantly the Prime Minister's Working Group—have suggested cultural and educational exchanges and the formation of joint working groups on issues of economic development and disaster management. However, there has been no forward movement in this area.
- Cross-LoC civil society exchanges have not been encouraged since the regime is strictly restricted to those with relatives on the other side. It was only recently, in July 2012, that the first group of civil society activists and traders from Pakistan Administered Kashmir were allowed to travel on the LoC bus for a meeting in Srinagar. All other civil society exchanges between the two Kashmiris take place either in third countries or in New Delhi and Islamabad.

- Today, many in the Valley are also expressing the view that ‘Kashmiris didn’t lay down their lives in the 1990s to do business with the other side. We want to go back to the core political issues.’ In the context of these diverse (and sometimes paradoxical) perceptions and aspirations, Choudhary concluded with the following statement: ‘The intra-Kashmir dialogue is wrapped in several layers of confusion, suspicion, and a lack of clarity.’



*Ms. Alpana Kishore*

*Today, observers say that violence levels have dropped down drastically... the violence is roughly seven percent of what it used to be in the 1990s. But for me, the Kashmir issue has never been a battle of the gun; it has always been a battle of ideas and ideologies.*

The next presentation by Ms. Alpana Kishore, a Delhi-based writer and researcher, looked at the subject of **nationality and identity shifts in the context of the armed conflict in Jammu and Kashmir**. Kishore opened her presentation with four questions, which have influenced the construction of identity in the region:

- What does Kashmir want?
- Who is a Kashmiri?
- What is s/he committed to?
- Who represents her/him?

She invited observers of the conflict to recognize that while the line separating myth from reality is often blurred, there are some myths that have increasingly come to be seen as reality in recent years. The first is that the Kashmiri separatist voice speaks for the state of J&K. In reality, it is not the *only* or *major* voice, and in fact, it speaks only for the Valley (and sometimes only for sections of the Valley). However, this perception has gained currency because the separatist voice is the loudest and most visual. As Kishore put it, ‘It is the one across your television screens. But if you want to transform the conflict, you have to go beyond this voice.’

Kishore quoted Lord Christopher Bromhead Birdwood who travelled through Kashmir in the 1950s and described it in his book *Two Nations and Kashmir* as,

*a mountainous country of no roads whose isolated groups are conscious only of their own existence. Cut off from inaccessible areas, ruled by others of varying communities, including the British within its own designated territory, the state of Jammu and Kashmir was a construct. It was constructed by the British.*

This cocooned existence was in fact a reality till the 1990s when the Indian security forces went into the mountainous regions of Kashmir and discovered that people in the rural areas led lives that were completely cut-off from the outside world. Kishore, who as a journalist travelled extensively through the state in the 1990s, would meet Kashmiris who had never stepped out of their village to travel to the next village. In such a context, she stated that the claim that the separatist voice speaks for ‘all Kashmiris’ was an exaggeration.

While the Kashmir Valley comprises a small portion of the state, it is home to a very large population. Most of the land in the state of J&K belongs to Ladakh, which has a population that is far lower than that of the Valley. Jammu has both a large land mass as well as a substantial population, which has its own issues. The people in these three regions have completely different aspirations and identity constructs. Consequently, Kishore noted that Kashmiri nationalism does not signify state nationalism. There is no unifying emotional loyalty to the construct of the state of J&K amongst the different regions or communities in the same way that it may exist in other states of India. She added:

*Communities are loyal to themselves—the Ladakhis are loyal to themselves, the people of Jammu have their own set of issues, the Kashmiris are the most vocal and visible, so we know what their issues are. So this is one myth—that this voice is homogenous. We often say that the voices of the Kashmiri people must be heard. But who are the Kashmiri people? We must know who they are before we hear what they have to say. And we must not let one voice dominate at the cost of the others. It has to be a democratic exercise across the board. If they are to be on board as stakeholders in India-Pakistan dialogues and other peace efforts, then they must all be on board or then nobody is on. It should not be limited to a single, very strongly put-across identity.*

The second myth, according to Kishore, is the perception that the idea of an independent Kashmir came up in response (or in reaction) to alleged Indian oppression. She traced the history of Kashmiri politics in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to suggest that the idea of *azadi* was not a response to Indian oppression. It may have been revived as a result, but it is an old idea with roots in the 1930s when Sheikh Abdullah, who led the National Conference and spoke for the Kashmiri-speaking people in the old state of J&K, tried to push forward this idea. He extolled the people to imagine Kashmir as a Switzerland—a ‘co-equal’ to India and Pakistan, a ‘dazzling gem’. Like Gandhi

and Jinnah, he appealed to past glory—to periods in Kashmir’s history when its people had made great advances—to awaken the Kashmiri masses. He tried to awaken people out of their slumber,

*reminding audiences that they were a scholarly, imperial race who had their own empires and annexed others’ territories, exhorting them to bring back their lofty past. In doing so, he restored a terribly battered self-esteem of an oppressed people who had been under the yoke of alien rule for centuries. Indeed, it would have been unnatural if he’d not allowed his mind to dwell upon those tempting vistas of past history. But its effect was perhaps more adverse than favourable. It created an unhealthy, extravagant self-importance in a small, uneducated, poor, downtrodden community, who entertained grand visions of power and might when they had the means for achievement of neither.*<sup>9</sup>

According to Kishore, this propelled them, 40 years later, into an armed insurgency for whose sacrifices they were neither prepared nor equipped. Yet the creation of a fantastic ideal and a glorious past is a very strong ideology in Kashmir. In this context, Kishore posed the question, ‘While the Kashmiris have taken on the mantle of the independence of the state of J&K, do others in the state agree with this view? What about Jammu, Ladakh, and other parts of Kashmir that disagree with them?’ The goal for the Kashmiri-speaking people of the Valley is a united state over which the Kashmiris will be the natural rulers. Do the other parts of J&K want to be part of such a state?

Further, Kishore opined that there is also a lack of global appetite for a tiny landlocked independent state, which is Islamist, minus parts of Jammu and Ladakh, existing without the support of India, Pakistan or China, at the mercy of radical non-state elements like the Taliban. ‘Is the world really ready to welcome such a state? I am not sure’, said Kishore.

The irreversibly altered contours of the state—some parts have gone to China, demographics have changed, the *pandits* have left the Valley, and on the Pakistan side, non-Kashmiri settlers have bought land—pose another significant challenge to the creation of a united, independent Kashmir. The articulation by Pakistani and Indian leaders to make borders irrelevant rather

<sup>9</sup> Lord Christopher Bromhead Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir* (Hale, 1956) quoted by Alpana Kishore at the Tenth Annual WISCOMP Conflict Transformation Workshop.

than redrawing them is in fact an acknowledgment of the unfeasibility of an independent state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Yet, according to Kishore, what complicates the situation is that the mythology or the ideology rules beyond all these realities. Kashmir's ideologically committed sections—whether those espousing the old slogan of a secular *azadi* or those supported by Pakistan-backed Islamists—are not ready to make the compromises that the changed reality calls for. And the drop in violence in recent years has, paradoxically, given them the space, time, and energy to hold on to their respective ideologies.

Summarizing her analysis of the conflict, Kishore said:

*Today, the stakes in Kashmir are embedded in conflict, not in peace. Kashmir is not ready for peace yet. It wants to take more time. It feels that anything short of a separatist or Islamist state is less than ideal. That this goal is still achievable or at least viable as a bargaining chip for maximum concessions from the Indian state, even after 20 years of a violent insurgency, means that Kashmiris are not happy to accept initiatives such as the cross-LoC bus, trade etc. These are pushed aside because Kashmir waits...it waits for some final solution. And I think this is the biggest myth of all.*

The next presentation by Ms. Seema Kakran, WISCOMP's Assistant Director, introduced participants to the organization's **women-led peacebuilding initiative in Jammu and Kashmir** called *Athwaas*. Qualifying her presentation with the comment that WISCOMP has always worked with the idea that conflict transformation requires the inclusion of both women and men, she said that efforts to advance gender equity should not mean the exclusion of men. This can, in fact, be counter-productive to the goal of women's empowerment.

The *Athwaas* initiative started in the year 2000 with a Roundtable titled *Breaking the Silence: Women's Voices from Kashmir*. The purpose was to bring women's voices to the center-stage and provide them a forum where broad-based discussion could take place with stakeholders from Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh, as well as other parts of India. One of the outcomes of this deliberation was that a small group of women who belonged to the Kashmir Valley (representing different religions, ethnicities, and linguistic groups), expressed an interest in transforming this conversation into some kind of action on the ground.

They approached WISCOMP to help them build a group that could take collective action on issues pertaining to the conflict in Kashmir. WISCOMP played the role of a facilitator, providing a safe space where the members of this group could come together to talk about their trauma and pain, and to also envision a blueprint for collective action. Kakran shared that in the year 2000, this was a difficult task for WISCOMP because for anyone in Kashmir to—at that point in time—talk about ‘peace’ was akin to supporting the actions of the Indian government in Kashmir. ‘Peace’ was a taboo word, and yet there was a desire and need for healing, justice, and transformation.

WISCOMP brought together this very diverse group of women, provided them with a space to have honest conversations, and initiated projects to facilitate individual and group healing. While some projects focused on team-building, others engaged with skills such as active listening, sustained dialogue, et al. Through this process, the women of *Athwaas* decided, as a next step, to travel the length and breadth of Jammu and Kashmir to listen to the different narratives of the conflict as well as to peoples’ aspirations, which varied as they travelled from one district to the other.

As a result of this journey, for the first time since the onset of the conflict in 1990, Valley Muslim women visited displaced Kashmiri *pandit* women who lived in the Jammu camps. Similarly, the *pandit* women mustered the



*Ms. Seema Kakran (Assistant Director, WISCOMP) makes a presentation on the Athwaas initiative.*



psychological strength to travel to different parts of the Kashmir Valley, and listen to the voices of women from different communities, whose lives had changed forever because of the conflict. This listening project helped the women of *Athwaas* to identify the specific goals for their interventions, which were:

- Networking
- Generating awareness
- Reconciliation
- Advocacy

Over the years, they gradually began to engage in a range of other activities, primarily acting as an interface between women and government officials. In November 2003, they started the *Samanbal* initiative, which in the Kashmiri language refers to ‘a meeting place’ or ‘a safe space’. Each of the core *Athwaas* members decided to take responsibility for a *Samanbal* depending on their own professional background and personal interest. As a result, six *Samanbals* were started in different districts of Jammu and Kashmir. The idea was to replicate the healing that the women of *Athwaas* had experienced at a broader community level, and to use this as a context to build constituencies for peace.

The *Samanbal* centers sought to facilitate trauma healing and reconciliation even as they initiated other ‘tangible activities’ such as psychosocial counselling, income generation projects, computer education for the youth et al. At regular intervals, WISCOMP would provide a context for members of all the *Samanbals* to come together to engage on a deeper, conceptual level about the diverse perspectives on the root causes of the conflict and the blueprint for coexistence. Exploring areas of convergence, they also worked jointly on issues such as the Domestic Violence Bill, the Right to Information Act, Panchayati Raj institutions et al.

In addition, WISCOMP initiated a youth-level project, drawing in young Kashmiri journalists and training them in conflict-sensitive reporting. Titled the *Peace Journalism Initiative*, the workshops invited young women and men to engage with the syncretic history of Kashmir and explore possibilities for rebuilding some of the values of coexistence, openness, and multiculturalism, which were so central to the ethos of the region.

Sharing some of the challenges that WISCOMP has confronted in its efforts to facilitate this initiative, Kakran said that a key obstacle has been the political

difference of opinions between the *Athwaas* members. While they have been able to connect with each other at a personal level and transcend some of their prejudices, the differences over their political positions have remained entrenched and have served as an obstacle to the group's ability to make effective peace interventions. The heightened polarization in the state and conflicting positions of political parties in recent years have placed the relationships within *Athwaas* under even greater strain.

The multiple narratives of victimhood, which were further accentuated in the wake of the polarization following the Amarnath land conflict in 2008, have also served as a potent challenge. Irrespective of their religion, geographical location, political position or their minority-majority status, different stakeholders across the state feel victimized vis-à-vis *the other* group, albeit for different reasons. WISCOMP has attempted to address this complex narrative of victimhood by creating a broader peace coalition and bringing in a larger number of young people into the fold.

It was in this context that the *Qalamkar Samith*—where young aspiring writers and poets are mentored by senior writers from the Kashmir Valley—was initiated. The young women and men have, in fact, now expressed an interest in translating the work of Dogri writers into Kashmiri so that there is a 'coming back' of the syncretic culture of Kashmir. WISCOMP is also working with civil society in Jammu where it has started the *Marasim Samanbal*—a small, grassroots initiative, which seeks to include broader civil society coalitions. In its efforts to link these initiatives with 'track one', WISCOMP has consistently provided a space for dialogue between its grassroots initiatives and representatives of the central government in Delhi. Recently, WISCOMP facilitated an interface between the Government of India interlocutors and members of the expanded *Athwaas* and *Samanbal* initiatives.

## Discussion

- In the context of Deshmukh's elucidation of the peace poll surveys, a question was posed about the authenticity of the data, given the perpetual state of insecurity that the respondents live in. With the threat of violence looming, how candid were the survey respondents? Deshmukh shared that the survey methodology was context driven. As a prerequisite, the researchers (who were drawn from the media) bore sound knowledge of the terrain, were sensitive to the ground realities, and were in fact selected only if the locals trusted them. While most locals embodied an underlying skepticism of the Indian state, they had faith in the Indian media.

This propelled the locals to engage in uninhibited discussions with the researchers, expressing concern over the daily strife of their lives as well as the broader purview of the Kashmir issue. In addition to local journalists, primary school teachers from the state of Jammu and Kashmir were also trained to conduct the research. Like the journalists, the teachers too were considered trustworthy and wielded considerable influence in their families and communities.

- Although the governments of India and Pakistan have expressed the need to consult with the Kashmiris, participants (particularly those from Kashmir on both sides of the LoC) said that the ground reality remains unchanged. Kashmiris are still not seen as the principal stakeholders in the conflict. From Deshmukh's perspective, there are four stakeholders—the Kashmir Valley, Jammu, Ladakh, and Pakistan Administered Kashmir—whose aspirations must be heard.
- The religious, ethnic, and linguistic diversity of Jammu and Kashmir was the source of considerable discussion. Deshmukh underscored the need to acknowledge this diversity as also the diversity of thought and opinion that this generated. However, according to him, 'the biggest problem in Kashmir is the lack of a shared analysis of the conflict between the different



*Session Chair Ms. Bushra Gohar (Member of Parliament & Senior Vice President, Awami National Party, Islamabad) with panelists Mr. Zafar Choudhary (Founder Director, Indus Research Foundation, Jammu), Dr. Salma Malik (Assistant Professor, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad), Mr. Yashwant Deshmukh (Managing Director and Chief Editor, Team CVoter, Noida), and Ms. Alpana Kishore (Writer & Journalist, New Delhi).*

communities’. The imposition of stringent communication barriers and the absence of an inter-community dialogue have led to isolation and polarization across communities. This has been further exacerbated by the nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, and religious leaders who have their own vested interests in the conflict. As an antidote, Deshmukh pointed to the urgent need for an honest, strong-willed political leadership, which could foreground the conflict in the mainstream national agenda.

- Many participants expressed their anger at the atrocities committed by the Indian army and its adoption of stringent mechanisms of repression against the Kashmiris. In this context, they called for a complete withdrawal of the army from Kashmir. Kishore urged the audience to bear in mind that Jammu and Kashmir is a border state, and this mandates the presence of the army. She delineated the changing patterns of deployment and operations of the army in Kashmir. The army evacuated the cities years ago and its presence is now limited to the remote areas to check infiltration. The onus of law and order in the cities rests with the J&K police, which consists of Kashmiris.
- Kashmiris from both sides of the LoC talked about the restrictions that are imposed on their political rights. While the concerns of those from the Valley are well documented, participants from Muzaffarabad expressed a similar resentment saying that those Kashmiris who propagated independence were barred from contesting elections in Pakistan Administered Kashmir.
- Kishore’s analysis that, owing to the large voter turnout in elections, it could be said that India had a stronghold in Kashmir between 2002 and 2008 was questioned by a Kashmiri participant who said that people voted so that they could get access to basic civic amenities—*bijli*, *paani*, and *sadak*. Reference was also made to the politics between the People’s Democratic Party and the National Conference, which perhaps resulted in a larger voter turnout, but this should not be seen as an acceptance of ‘Indian rule in Kashmir’. Kishore clarified that the reference was to the ‘idea of India’, which had a stronghold from 2002 to 2008, and not the state of India. Elaborating on the ‘idea of India’, she said this meant the values of secularism, democracy, free polls, multiculturalism, pluralism, and free press (where even pro-Kashmiri independence or anti-India rhetoric was not censored).
- Some Kashmiri participants felt that political aspirations aside, the more pressing issues were the hardships they faced daily in terms of food shortage, lack of electricity and quality education, inadequate sanitation and healthcare facilities et al. In this context, they expressed frustration at the high levels

of corruption that existed within the apparatus of the state government in Jammu and Kashmir, as a result of which there was rampant misappropriation of development funds. It was however noted that this emphasis on basic human needs includes the vociferous opposition to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, which has taken away from the Kashmiris their fundamental rights.

- A strong pitch was made for shifting the state-centric approach of confidence building measures (CBMs) towards initiatives that broadened the engagement at the grassroots level. For example, civil society groups that seek to build a culture of peace through educational interventions should receive greater support from the state. Malik, in fact, questioned the authenticity of the intentions of the governments of India and Pakistan vis-à-vis statements about promoting people-to-people contact. She also stressed the futility of the public pronouncements of government spokespersons concerning CBMs when nothing really changed on the ground.
- Figures on the number of ‘missing Kashmiris’ and those who had died as a result of the conflict, were contested. Kishore challenged the authenticity



*Workshop participant Ms. Shazia Salam (PhD Scholar, Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) makes an intervention. Also seen, Ms. Sarah Adil (General Secretary, Pakistan Youth Organization, Karachi), Mr. B.P. Sandeep (Masters' Student, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi), Ms. Tenzin Pema (Researcher, Tibetan Policy Institute, Dharamsala). Second row: Ms. Vanshree Kurveti (Masters' Student, Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi) and Mr. Nasirul Mehdi Shabani (Assistant Professor, Government Degree College, Kargil).*

of the popularly quoted figures of ‘100,000 dead and 10,000 missing’. She sought evidence of these figures through some kind of formal documentation. According to her, the government’s stand on the same claim is roughly ‘43,000 dead and 1200 missing’. She also noted that many of those ‘missing’ had crossed the LoC to the other side. Besides the government, no other agency or civil society group, has documented these figures or produced valid counter-figures. Hence, Kishore disputed the figures of ‘100,000 dead and 10,000 missing’, which were not based on veritable research and documentation.

- Discussion and debate also centered on the different identities within Jammu and Kashmir and, correspondingly, their varying aspirations. Within the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, the tension between the three regions—Jammu, Ladakh, and the Kashmir Valley—is now palpable. Within these regions as well, there are the faultlines of ethnicity, class, religious difference, and equally significant, gender. In the context of these multiple conflicts, the challenge for stakeholders is to separate the ‘people’ from the ‘problem’, and to suspend judgment and acrimony about ‘the myriad others’.

The session chair, Ms. Bushra Gohar, Member of Parliament and Senior Vice President, Awami National Party, Islamabad, concluded the deliberations with a plea to the participants to shun the baggage of the last 65 years, which have moulded their views and which have prevented them from moving beyond the ‘blame game’. Instead, young Kashmiris, Pakistanis, and Indians need to separate myth from reality, sensitize themselves to the layered



*Ms. Bushra Gohar*

intricacies of the conflict, imbibe an unbiased and dispassionate knowledge of the origins of the conflict, and map how the discourse has shifted over the last 65 years. Gohar also urged the participants to practice empathy and active listening, particularly when hearing perspectives that they differ with. In the absence of these, conflict transformation in Jammu and Kashmir will remain a distant dream.

## *Stakeholder Analysis*

### **Mapping Multiple Aspirations and Strategies in Jammu and Kashmir**

Drawing on inputs from the panel discussion *Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Myth and Reality*, participants engaged in a stakeholder analysis titled *Mapping Multiple Aspirations and Strategies in Jammu and Kashmir*. The purpose of this stakeholder analysis was to search for areas of common ground and to develop strategies to transcend the ‘dividers’.

A key factor that has contributed to the ‘intractability’ of this conflict has been the inadequate attention that political leaders have given to addressing the needs of *all* the stakeholders. The existence of multiple stakeholders and hence multiple aspirations, has meant that ‘peace’ and ‘normalcy’ have different meanings and connotations for different actors across Jammu and Kashmir. For instance, a Kashmiri Muslim student living in Srinagar might have a different perception of these terms from, let’s say, a resident of Leh or a displaced *pandit* living in Jammu. What is, however, significant from a peacebuilding perspective, is the provision of a space and context for a constructive dialogue between these diverse stakeholders, within the two Kashmirs as well as across the LoC.

Commenting on the challenge of engaging the state—about which participants had expressed considerable frustration in earlier sessions—Workshop resource person Dr. D. Suba Chandran, Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, said that while the state is rigid, corrupt, and tends to cocoon itself to ideas and inputs from civil society, the key question is:

*What do we do? Do we continue to lament about the high-handedness of the state at workshops such as this, or do we focus our energy on evolving strategies to engage with the state and impact policymaking? How do we pressurize the state to make changes?*

Chandran wondered if the state was as impervious as civil society believed it to be. He cited the example of the initiation of the cross-LoC bus service between the two Kashmirs in 2005 and later trade contacts, which, according to him, took place not because of pressure from civil society but because the state wanted it to happen. This initiative, which creatively transcended the stalemate over varying perceptions of the ‘border’—making it just a line on

the map—was difficult to imagine as a realistic possibility even at the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Yet, in 2005, the governments of India and Pakistan put their strength behind this idea, and in 2006, Dr. Manmohan Singh said at the launch of the Amritsar-Nankana Sahib Bus Service:

*Borders cannot be redrawn but we can work towards making them irrelevant—towards making them just lines on a map. People on both sides of the LoC should be able to move more freely and trade with one another...The vision that guides us is that the destinies of our peoples are interlinked...When our neighbours live in peace, we live in peace.*<sup>10</sup>

The state does have a stake in peace and in the wellbeing of its people, and the role for civil society is to attempt to expand and deepen initiatives—for example, pushing for an increase in the list of goods that can be traded across the LoC or increasing the number of bus services between the two Kashmiris so that a larger number of people from different parts of the region can connect with one another.



*Dr. D. Suba Chandran*

*Waging peace is tough.  
Waging war is easier.  
See what just a few  
men could do  
in Mumbai. Peace needs  
multiple initiatives,  
sustained enthusiasm,  
patience, and consistent  
engagement with  
policymakers.*

Commenting on the scepticism expressed by other Workshop resource persons on the impact of the LoC bus service, Chandran pointed to the bonds of kinship and memory that connect people on either side of the LoC. He shared the experiences of some Kashmiris who had used the bus service to make the point that despite the bureaucratic hurdles and red tapism, the initiative was still worth the effort. And as a result of this bold CBM, in some ways, the peace process is now irreversible. Even if the governments want to scrap cross-LoC travel and trade, they cannot do so owing to the pressure from their constituencies to promote contact across the lines of conflict. The local traders now have a stake in it and would not allow any obstacle or stoppage to the trade. Chandan therefore expressed the view that despite the current challenges that the intra-Kashmir dialogue faces, this is a period of immense opportunity and hope.

<sup>10</sup> Manmohan Singh, 'Just Lines on a Map', *Outlook* (24 March 2006).  
<http://www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?230665> Accessed: 31 October 2012.



Inviting participants to map their vision for Jammu and Kashmir for the year 2022, he asked them to address the following questions in small groups:

- Where would we like to be in 2022? What recommendations would we propose to policymakers?
- What strategy would we adopt to move towards this goal?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses?
- What strategies might be employed to bring all stakeholders on board the peace process and how might the peace process in turn respond to their needs? What roles can different groups play in making this process truly ‘irreversible’?

Participants formed five groups, each group donning the role of one stakeholder—India, Pakistan, Indian Administered Kashmir, Pakistan Administered Kashmir, and the international community.

## **Group One**

### **Indian Administered Kashmir (IAK)**

#### ***Goal:***

The group role-playing stakeholders from Jammu and Kashmir in India presented the following proposal. Their goal was twofold:

- To make Kashmir a symbol of peace and a connector that brings India and Pakistan closer together;
- Rather than serving as a divider, the Line of Control would represent a vibrant zone of cooperation, trade, and travel.

The group proposed that the focus over the next 10 years should be on the wellbeing of the people who inhabit this region on both sides of the LoC. This includes economic development and adequate investments in human capital in order to build an environment conducive to the creation of jobs, growth, and prosperity. The political process should be conducted in a manner that enables ordinary men and women to have a political voice and a sense of control over the future of their land.

On the ground, the idea of ‘making the LoC irrelevant’ would imply that a Srinagar resident could travel to Muzaffarabad as if s/he were travelling in his/her own country, without the need for any detailed paperwork. Likewise, a resident of Delhi could use his/her Pakistani visa to travel to Muzaffarabad



*Participants role-playing stakeholders from Indian Administered Kashmir: Sakshi Kharbanda, Faheem Bin Tariq, Tenzin Menkyi, Haroon Khalid, and Imran Khan.*

or Gilgit, while an Islamabad resident could travel to Srinagar or Leh on an Indian visa (thereby doing away with city-specific visas). The border police at the LoC would comprise Kashmiris and they would manage the logistics of cross-LoC travel.

### ***Strategy:***

- In order to accomplish these goals, it was suggested that tourism between the two Kashmirs should be enhanced. For this, the opening of two additional bus routes—Kargil–Skardu and Jammu–Sialkot—was proposed. Their significance lies in the fact that they are historical routes. In terms of the type of travel document required for cross-LoC travel, the group suggested that Kashmiris should be able to cross the LoC on the basis of any valid identity card.
- In addition, Pakistanis should be allowed to travel freely to the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir, and likewise, Indians should be able to travel to different parts of Pakistan Administered Kashmir. This strategy was proposed in furtherance of the goal that Kashmir emerge as a peace-connector between India and Pakistan—representing a physical space where people of the two countries (not just Kashmiris) meet and dialogue.
- The renunciation of violence, in all its forms and from all sources, was seen as an important strategy by this stakeholder group. Kashmiris will ‘wage conflict nonviolently’, using constructive, dialogic, and nonviolent

methods to express disagreement and grievance. Stakeholders would also encourage militants to renounce violence and to engage with the political process on both sides.

- With respect to political status, the group proposed numerous confidence building measures and the renunciation of violence in order to build an environment conducive for Kashmiris to decide, perhaps through a referendum, their political future in the year 2022. In this context, it was proposed that the governments of India, Pakistan, and the two Kashmiris would prepare the groundwork for such a referendum.
- In order to accelerate economic growth and generate jobs, the stakeholders solicited the participation of the Kashmiri diaspora that lives in Europe and the USA to make investments in the region, on both sides of the LoC. The governments of India and Pakistan should facilitate this process by removing barriers to financial investments and economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmiri diaspora was also seen as capable of playing the role of a conduit for the export of Kashmiris products from IAK and PAK to other parts of the world, particularly to the UK and the USA which are home to a large number of Kashmiris.

### ***Strengths and Weaknesses:***

- The strong people's movement and high levels of political awareness among ordinary Kashmiris were seen as strengths. Further, stakeholders saw the engagement of the Pakistani army on the western border with Afghanistan (and the tragic snow slide in Siachen) as providing an opportune moment for a rapprochement between the governments of India and Pakistan.
- The following were identified as the weaknesses of the people living on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir: the use of violence to express anger and grievance; the failure of the people of Kashmir to draw the sustained attention of the international community to their cause; and, the fragmentation of the former princely state along religious and ethnic lines with the different communities leading segregated lives—the Hindus in Jammu, the Buddhists in Ladakh, the Muslims in the Kashmir Valley who are culturally and ethnically different from the Muslims in Jammu and Ladakh, the Sudhans of Poonch (in Pakistan Administered Kashmir), and the Mirpuri Jats who hail from Mirpur, the southern-most district of Pakistan Administered Kashmir. It was also noted that extremist violence has changed the demography within all the five regions of undivided Kashmir. For example, reference was made to Gilgit-Baltistan where a group of Shias were recently massacred and some areas have subsequently come under the control of the Tehreek-e-Taliban.

## Group 2

### Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK)

#### *Goals:*

Participants role-playing stakeholders from Pakistan Administered Kashmir identified four goals for 2022:

- First, the establishment of a free trade zone across the entire region comprising the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir;
- Second, the free and easy movement of Kashmiris across the LoC and the facilitation of travel for non-Kashmiris as well, particularly those who wish to visit shrines and undertake pilgrimages;
- Third, promotion of educational and media exchanges between students and journalists from the two sides of Kashmir.
- Fourth, greater autonomy and control over their own natural resources.<sup>11</sup>

The broader idea informing this vision was that Kashmir should come to be seen as a zone of peace and cooperation and an important economic unit which connects the two countries. To address the political issue without dealing with



*Participants role-playing stakeholders from Pakistan Administered Kashmir: Hassan Hakeem, Ambreen Abbasi, B.P. Sandeep, Tenzin Pema, and Tridivesh Singh Maini.*

<sup>11</sup> Participants expressed their reservations over the fact that the Prime Minister of Pakistan was the Chairman of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council.

the challenge that the economic backwardness of the region poses would be akin to putting the cart before the horse. So, development of the entire region of Jammu and Kashmir (on both sides of the LoC) through free trade, improvements in infrastructure, and the generation of jobs was seen as a critical goal.

***Strategy:***

- Since there was wide consensus on the need to infuse economic activity on both sides of the LoC, participants felt that trade-related initiatives would be a good entry point to build an environment conducive for discussion on the differing political aspirations of the stakeholders. It was therefore proposed that the current cross-LoC trade which was more in the nature of barter, should be used as a starting point for converting the whole of Kashmir into a free trade zone. The group recommended the unhindered and free movement of goods and services, which should be substantial in volume.
- The governments of India and Pakistan should make concerted efforts to reduce the paperwork and time taken for Kashmiris to secure the permit to cross the LoC. The process should be made less cumbersome and procedural delays removed so that cross-LoC travel and dialogue can become a lived reality for the average Kashmiri.
- As with the stakeholder group representing Indian Kashmir, participants role-playing stakeholders from the Pakistani side of Kashmir invested tremendous faith in the ability of the Kashmiri diaspora to contribute to the economic development of the region. The support of the Kashmiri diaspora was solicited to lobby internationally for their political goals and to help in the economic development of the region on both sides of the LoC. This also implied that the diaspora use its own domestic economic and political clout to pressurize its own government (in the Europe or the USA) to act on the issue.
- Efforts should be made to build consensus on the diverse political aspirations of the Kashmiris. Their perspectives should not be hyphenated with those of Pakistan and India, but rather should be seen as constituting an independent voice.
- The aspirations of the people should be channelized in constructive ways in order to reduce grievance and the allure of violence as a means to seek justice.

- The group was critical of the CBMs that had so far been undertaken by India and Pakistan. In this context, it urged the two countries to move beyond rituals and token initiatives, and undertake steps that could actually instill a sense of confidence, hope, and trust.

### *Strengths and Weaknesses:*

- Human capital and the natural beauty of Kashmir were identified as strengths, which could be channelized to lift the region out of economic backwardness.
- In terms of weaknesses, the stakeholder analysis revealed that, politically, the Kashmir lobby is not strong enough to influence the broader discourse on issues such as unhindered travel, economic development, and trade. While trade between other parts of India and Pakistan has increased exponentially, the two Kashmirs lag behind in this respect. And this was attributed to the failure of Kashmiris to undertake effective advocacy and lobbying strategies.
- It was also noted that, aside from the international community, sometimes Kashmir is not even topical for India and Pakistan or for the other regions such as Jammu and Ladakh. A participant from Pakistan commented that in light of the recent increase in insurgent and sectarian violence in different parts of her country, particularly in the north-western region, the focus of many Pakistanis has moved away from Kashmir and towards the issue of internal security and stability. The challenge therefore lies in evolving effective strategies for constructive and sustained engagement on Kashmir.

## **Group 3**

### **Pakistan**

#### *Goals:*

Drawing on the UN Human Development Index, the Pakistan team identified the meeting of basic human needs for all Kashmiris as the primary goal to be accomplished by the year 2022. This included quality education, minority rights, poverty reduction, healthcare, employment, good governance, individual security, and greater freedom of speech. The group also proposed large-scale capacity building initiatives so that, after a decade, Kashmiris would have the knowledge and skill to determine their own political future. With reference to Muzaffarabad's relationship with Islamabad, participants recommended greater decentralization and autonomy for the former, even as they articulated the view that 'Azad Jammu and Kashmir' should have adequate representation in the country's highest law-making body, the Parliament.

### ***Strategy:***

The strategy included engagement with Pakistani and Kashmiri politicians; the sustenance of a constructive dialogue with India and Afghanistan; addressing the issues and grievances of dissenting groups; controlling illegal arms' trade; and, robust economic development across the region.

### ***Strengths and Weaknesses:***

- Participants role-playing Pakistan identified the following as their strengths: a strong, dominant military (which has kept the cause of Kashmir alive); greater Islamization in Kashmir which would bring the Kashmiris closer to the people of Pakistan since they would have a common culture and lifestyle; the government's funding of the militancy in Kashmir, which has increased the 'power' of the Kashmiri people; and a good relationship with China. In addition, the group felt that the April 2012 snow slide in Siachen could provide an opportune moment to resolve this conflict. The tragedy in which Pakistan lost 140 soldiers has turned public sentiment against war, questioning the rationality behind sustaining this dispute.
- Sectarian violence and the insurgencies in Balochistan and in the north-western region along the border with Afghanistan were seen as Pakistan's weaknesses. This may result in the Kashmir cause losing its preeminent position. Also, Pakistani citizens are now more concerned about internal



*Participants role-playing Pakistan: Anamika Gupta, Anam Zakaria, Vanshree Kurveti, Chintan Girish Modi, Hemant Shivakumar, and Satyabrat Sinha.*

security. India’s growing closeness to the USA and its presence in Afghanistan were also seen as developments that threatened Pakistan’s sense of security. Reference was also made to the Peace Poll Survey<sup>12</sup> which revealed that the Kashmiris’ alienation from India has not translated into support for a political union with Pakistan.

## Group 4

### India

#### *Goals:*

The group representing India proposed a four-point agenda for 2022: trade, human security, the transformation of inequality, and the adoption of a conflict resolution approach to resolve disputes. While participants role-playing India were divided on the issue of referendum, they expressed the desire to hold public opinion polls to gauge the diverse aspirations and grievances of ‘all’ the stakeholders in Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh.

#### *Strategy:*

The enhancement of trade with Pakistan was seen as an important strategy to build trust and an environment conducive for the resolution of all disputes,



*Participants role-playing India: Sheikh Mustafa Mumtaz, Rehana Manzoor, Shabnoor Sultana, Raja Bagga, Syed Moazzam Hashmi, and Raja, Wasim Khan.*

<sup>12</sup> For more information on the Peace Poll in Kashmir, see <http://www.peacepolls.org/cgi-bin/generic?instanceID=17>



including Kashmir. The need to improve Hindu-Muslims relations was emphasized as this was perceived as having a positive impact on the overall bilateral relationship as also on inter-community interactions within the state of Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, the group suggested that rather than using a ‘fire-fighting’ approach to combat terrorism, it was necessary for the Indian government to address the root causes of terrorism and to constructively engage with young men who had been radicalized.

***Strengths and Weaknesses:***

- The India group identified the following as the country’s strengths: secularism, democracy, and a strong civil liberties culture.
- Corruption, lack of political will, limited connectivity, and a troubled neighborhood were seen as the weaknesses of the Indian state.

**Group 5**  
**The International Community**

***Goals:***

Participants representing the international community expressed a need to focus on the *process* rather than on the *outcome* envisaged for 2022. Equal representation and participation of ‘all stakeholders’ involved in the conflict were seen as a central element of this process. The five regions of the former



*Participants role-playing the international community: Madhavi Shukla, Arko Dasgupta, Huma Rehman, Syed Waqas Ali Kausar, and Mohammed Nasirul Mehdi Shabani.*

princely state of Jammu and Kashmir—Pakistan Administered Kashmir, Indian Administered Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Jammu, and Ladakh—were identified as the ‘stakeholders’ who would select their own representatives and have a political voice (independent of India and Pakistan) by the year 2022. The United Nations would play the role of facilitator in efforts to transform the troubled relationships between the various stakeholders. The purpose would also be to help the parties arrive at a ‘common minimum agenda’, which could be used as the groundwork for negotiations at a later date.

### ***Strategy:***

The strategy would include lobbying with various international, regional, and local actors on the diverse aspirations of different stakeholders. The establishment of an India-Pakistan Commission under the aegis of the UN, which includes members from Pakistan, India, the five regions of Kashmir, the USA, Russia, China, and the UK was proposed.

### ***Strengths and Weaknesses:***

- The *neutrality* of the UN and its emphasis on the involvement of all the stakeholders from the five regions of the former princely state were seen as strengths.
- The UN’s *power* and *capacity* to persuade countries such as the USA and UK to focus on Kashmir were questionable. In light of the current focus on Afghanistan and the Middle East and war fatigue as a result of a decade-long engagement in these regions, participants doubted the motivation and ability of the international community to focus on Kashmir.

## **Discussion**

A panel of experts comprising Dr. Salma Malik, Assistant Professor, Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar, Media Professional and Honorary Advisor to the Prime Minister’s Informal Group on Global Nuclear Disarmament, New Delhi, and Workshop resource person Dr. Suba Chandran responded to the aforementioned proposals, raising the following issues:

- The central question which this session sought to address—how do stakeholders generate a constructive change in the status quo in Kashmir—faces several challenges. There is a nexus between politicians, bureaucrats, the military, and the religious elite in the perpetuation of this conflict.

In addition, there are extremist groups and militants whose one act of violence can cause widespread suffering and derail peace efforts. As Malik put it, ‘How do we get the politicians, the bureaucracy, and, most significantly, the spoilers to respect and act upon the aspirations articulated by the people of Jammu and Kashmir?’ A commitment to avoid falling into the trap laid out by the spoilers becomes absolutely essential.

*If these proposals are implemented, in the year 2022, a referendum may not be needed. If Kashmiris can travel across the LoC to meet friends and family and do business with traders in different parts of the region, what is the need for a referendum? The current need is a concrete work plan and timeline that the two governments can follow and adhere to even when crises occur or when spoilers try to derail the process.*

— Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar

Social change will happen when the communication between the two sides of Kashmir deepens and widens. Face-to-face dialogue can transform the Kashmiris’ understanding of their own aspirations and goals and also deter the ability of the spoilers (and at times even the politicians) to divide the people. It gives power to the people to pressurize governments to initiate change policies. Shankar shared that such communication could begin with a radio channel or a terrestrial TV channel that could then be linked up. Through such mediums, people would have a space to air their feelings and to also listen to the perspectives of those who live in far-flung parts of the region. Such communication will not only change peoples’ thinking, it will also strengthen the constituency for peace and prosperity.



*Dr. Salma Malik and Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar*

- Responding to the comments of some participants who felt that the existence of multiple religious and ethnic identities had further exacerbated the conflict, Shankar said that such diversity should be seen as a strength. ‘The greater the differences, the better the dialogue among the people. The communications are improved if there is diversity because then there will be more views as well.’ In this context, he proposed a pan-Kashmir Assembly with legislators from both sides of the LoC who could be its members and who would also be responsible for their respective districts and be empowered to solve local-level problems. It was however acknowledged that fragmentation and division along religious and ethnic

lines, particularly over the last 20 years, do pose a daunting challenge to the goals of building consensus and a culture of coexistence. As one participant put it, ‘How would the stakeholders transform the antagonistic and exclusive identities that years of conflict have generated and deepened?’

- Several questions were raised with reference to the type of travel documents that would be acceptable to both India and Pakistan in order to make cross-LoC travel an easy proposition—irrespective of whether the traveler was from Mirpur, Gilgit, Jammu, Srinagar, Leh or the Valley. How would this work on the ground? Shankar proposed that technology could be used to address the question of travel documents and to also lay the foundation for a referendum in 2022. For example, a process that perhaps draws on the unique identification card system could be used to build a database of residents, which could then be employed for multiple purposes in the future—as a travel document to cross the LoC, as a base document to prepare electoral rolls which could be used for a referendum in 2022, et al.
- Shankar advised participants to avoid lecturing people about renouncing violence. ‘There would be few takers for such preaching and what would be the locus standi of those who do the preaching?’ Instead, a better strategy would be one that focuses on promoting free and sustained communication between the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the LoC.
- The group role-playing the international community was asked as to why it hadn’t considered military intervention in Kashmir on humanitarian grounds. It responded with the view that military intervention would only exacerbate the conflict, increase the number of civilian casualties, and generate a new set of grievances. It would take India and Pakistan further away from the process of conflict resolution. Questions were also posed about the very credibility and ability of the international community to initiate change processes. The Shimla Agreement between India and Pakistan makes third party intervention redundant. So, how would the UN or any other actor from the international community address this obstacle?
- The perception of the participants role-playing Pakistan that the country’s military was a ‘strength’ vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue was questioned by the panel of experts and other participants who felt that the military was in fact a liability. The defeat of the Pakistani army in the wars of 1965 and 1971 as also during the Kargil conflict were cited as examples to advance the argument that the military has weakened Pakistan’s position on Kashmir. Likewise, some participants felt that the Islamization of Pakistan and Kashmir should be seen as a weakness because it has unleashed radicalization and extremist violence. ‘Islamization processes have

weakened the state and society and reduced Pakistan's credibility in the international community', said a participant.

- The panel urged participants to refrain from defining a single-point goal for Kashmir. Rather, the issues should be addressed as part of a process and the outcome should be dictated by this process. The more important question, as Shankar put it, is this: 'Have we set in motion a process for the kind of goals we want to see realized 10 years from today?'
- The session closed with Chandran urging participants to go beyond criticism and laments about the unchanging nature of the state. Instead, he encouraged them to individually and collectively generate their own ideas for change and collaborate across faultlines to work towards the realization of these goals. As he put it,

*The India-Pakistan relationship is tough, it is hard, but it is still worth a try. We should do what is in our capacity to initiate change. There would be no bigger crime if good, well-meaning people sat quiet and didn't do anything about it. Instead of criticizing and blaming the state, we need to do our bit to initiate change...Let us run with the process and keep hope alive in our hearts. Let us not think about winning or losing.*



*Workshop resource person Dr. Suba Chandran with Anam Zakaria, Huma Rehman, and Rehana Manzoor who role-played 'Pakistan', 'the international community', and 'India' respectively.*

## *Participant Presentations*

### **Conflict Transformation in Jammu and Kashmir: A Blueprint**

Engaging further with the proposals discussed in the Stakeholder Analysis, participants formulated Policy Briefs on the transformation of the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir. These sought to address the concerns of the governments of India, Pakistan, and Jammu and Kashmir as well as the aspirations of all the stakeholders, giving special attention to issues of security (internal and external), territory, sovereignty, democracy, independence, autonomy, equity, and inclusivity.

At the conclusion of the Workshop, participants prepared two Policy Briefs, the highlights of which are shared here.

#### **Policy Brief One**<sup>13</sup>

Workshop participants prefaced their Policy Brief with the following comment:

*The Jammu and Kashmir conflict is a multi-dimensional problem. It is not only a territorial dispute between India and Pakistan, but it has internal dimensions as well. Apart from its territorial dimensions, it has been a problem of and for the people of the state who have borne the brunt of this dispute since 1947. Therefore, it is pertinent to address the issue at both levels that redresses the sufferings of the masses caused by the continuation of the dispute. In this context, we find Cynthia Cockburn's words from her book *The Space between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* relevant.*

*'...We need to know more about how peace is done.... Not how politicians posture, demand and concede. Not how people tolerate each other by muffling their disagreements and turning a blind eye to their injustices, but how some ordinary people arrange to fill the space between their national differences with words in place of bullets.'*

Participants identified the governments and the people of India and Pakistan as well as the people of all five regions of the former princely state of Jammu

<sup>13</sup> This Brief was prepared by Ritambhara Mehta, Avineet Prashar, Raja Wasim Khan, Imran Khan, Shazia Salam, and Samir Ahmad Bhat.

and Kashmir as key stakeholders in the conflict. They recommended the following initiatives for conflict transformation:

At the official level:

- All the concerned parties at the official level—governments of India and Pakistan and the leadership in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (mainstream as well separatist)—should accept the multidimensional nature of the conflict that goes beyond addressing territorial concerns to include socio-economic-cultural interventions as well.
- Complete demilitarization of the region and repeal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA): Laws violating the ‘right to life’ and ‘liberty’ of the citizens should be completely revoked. The issue of Jammu and Kashmir should be dealt with on humanitarian grounds rather than through a nationalistic perspective. Army personnel involved in the rape of Kashmiri women should not be granted impunity, and legal action should be initiated against the perpetrators of such crimes. The question of half-widows should be taken up in the corridors of policymaking. All political prisoners should be released. Similarly, militant groups should realize that there is no space left for violence as a means to resolve the issue.
- Establishing traditional trade links by lifting economic barriers and making borders porous: Broader economic ties will create vested interests to resolve the conflict. Further, a more specific and regional focus would strengthen local economies as well.
- Relaxing visa regimes and establishing tourism channels will help build the constituencies of trust, thereby creating an atmosphere of tranquility and harmony.

At the civil society level:

- The governments of India and Pakistan should promote people-to-people contact (on a regular basis) to build and sustain trust between all sides. This will go a long way in eliminating negative stereotypes and prejudices. All non-conventional methods of communication should be promoted. Concerted effort should be made to engage people from all regions of the undivided princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The efforts of civil society should also include sponsoring cultural, social, and religious<sup>14</sup> activities between the people of the two countries.

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<sup>14</sup> For example, easing visa procedures for people who want to undertake religious pilgrimages to the other country.

- Youth from all the regions of Jammu and Kashmir (as well as from other parts of India and Pakistan) should be involved in the peace process. This could begin with the initiation of small projects in which young women and men from the two countries could travel across border and get to work together on issues which are common to both countries. Universities should sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) through which cross-border teacher and student academic exchanges could be made possible. This would help the next generation to think differently from previous generations, and to perhaps generate strategies and solutions that are more creative, equitable, and inclusive.
- There should be specific policies which address the integration of the families that have been separated owing to the conflict. Both the governments should take such humanitarian aspects into cognizance. Engagement of women in the peacebuilding process should be considered seriously and they should be given an active role in initiatives related to peacebuilding.

## Policy Brief Two<sup>15</sup>

The following recommendations were proposed:

- The free movement of people, goods, and services between the two Kashmirs is a pre-requisite for resolution of the more complex political issues. This will also bring the people closer and facilitate some degree of healing and transformation.
- A free trade zone spreading across the two Kashmirs should be created. This will lead to the eventual normalization of relations between Pakistan and India. Through this step, not only can the trust deficit be bridged, but trade relations could also change the atmosphere since business stakeholders would eventually become pressure groups on both sides of the LoC. Therefore, any unpleasant political situation or diplomatic deadlock between the countries would be unable to derail the peace process owing to the pressure exerted by such groups who have stakes in peace.
- For trade regimes to function efficiently, easy visa procedures between Pakistan and India are vital. Hence, a relaxed visa regime must be put in place.

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<sup>15</sup> This Brief was prepared by Hassan Hakeem, Syed Waqas Ali Kausar, Mohammad Nasirul Mehdi, Ambreen Anjum, Rehana Manzoor, and Satyabrat Sinha.



- Demilitarization is a necessary step that must be taken to release tension between all parties to the conflict. This will lead to a ‘thinning of the LoC’ and eventually to making it ‘irrelevant’.
- The promotion of tourism, the opening of more bus routes, and an increase in educational exchanges between Kashmiri students from the two sides will further help to bridge the trust deficit.



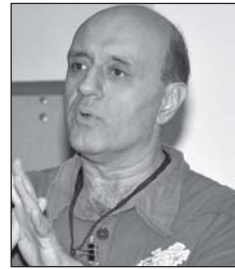
*Kashmiri participants Mr. Raja Wasim Khan (Director, Press for Peace, Muzaffarabad), Mr. Samir Ahmed Bhat (PhD Scholar, Political Science, University of Kashmir, Srinagar), Ms. Shazia Salam (PhD Scholar, Women's Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi), and Ms. Ambreen Anjum (Masters' Student, Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi).*

## Quiz

### Kashmir: The Land and Its People

The session *Kashmir: The Land and its People* was designed in the format of a Quiz with a purpose to facilitate an appreciation of the multicultural ethos of Jammu and Kashmir by capturing its diversity through visuals that focused on the region’s people, landscape, languages, cuisine, places of worship, livelihood, and lifestyle practices. Engaging with the demographic and geographic canvas of the region, the quiz opened conversations on the former princely state’s multi-ethnic and multi-religious character and spaces that reflect a shared, syncretic heritage.

The resource person, Mr. Parvez Dewan, Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, New Delhi, walked participants through a history of Kashmir, focusing particularly on its fascinating diversity and components within it that serve as cultural connectors across the religions and regions of Kashmir. Some aspects of this historical and cultural journey, that Dewan shared, included:



Mr. Parvez Dewan

- Temples, mosques, shrines, and other syncretic spaces that are important to the Hindus, Buddhists, and Muslims of Kashmir;
- The architecture and handicrafts of the region, which benefitted from historical interactions with countries such as Iran and Afghanistan, and which also influenced the cultural heritage of countries as far as France that imported Kashmiri shawls wrapped in *papier mache* boxes. Dewan shared that, as a result of this historical connection, today one will, for instance, see a lot of Kashmiri *papier mache* in the palaces of France.
- The Kashmiri *wazwan*, some dishes of which are common to both Muslims and *Pandits*;
- Centuries-old Kashmiri miniature paintings and the depiction of life and culture in them;
- The traditional sports of the region, for instance Polo, which was invented in Baltistan.

A primary purpose of the quiz was to help participants understand the depth of the unity of religions in the region in the decades before partition. For example, Dewan said that while Jammu was never ruled by a Muslim, yet

one can find villages here that are named after Muslim saints. It was also noted that the mass conversions to Islam that took place in Kashmir as a result of the efforts of Shâh-é-Hamadân were entirely voluntary. There was no element of force or coercion in these conversions. Even after the conversions to Islam, the three religions—Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam—coexisted in harmony with myriad cultural threads that wove them together. In fact, the region is dotted with palaces and other sites which reflect a joint cultural heritage that binds together the different religions.

In this context, Dewan invited participants to engage with the concept of ‘dual religion’, which historically, was a fact of life in both Kashmir and the subcontinent. This has been chronicled in historical texts such as the *Rajatarangini*, which mentions the practice of both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. The belief that one is either a Muslim or a Hindu is a more recent concept that travelled with European imperialism to the subcontinent. The examples of Nepal and Japan were cited to further elucidate this point. Nepal and Japan were not ruled by a European power. They did not have a census where citizens had to choose one religion over the other. As a result, even today, a number of Nepalis are both Buddhist and Hindu. Likewise in Japan, a large section of the population practices both Buddhism and Shintoism. In fact, there still remain communities in parts of the subcontinent today that are both Hindu and Muslim. Dewan shared the examples of the Hussaini Brahmins (Punjab), the Meos (Mewat), the Nadars of Tamil Nadu, and Sikhs and Hindus who share a common cultural heritage.



*The session by Mr. Parvez Dewan in progress.*



### *Module Three*

## **Women, Peace, and Security**

A gender perspective is woven into the Conflict Transformation Workshop curriculum in the belief that conflict affects women and men differently, and that sustainable peace requires the participation of *all* stakeholders. The Workshops address this issue from the viewpoint that gender relations need to be transformed at all levels of society—within the home, in the community, and at the negotiation table. So, while it is vital to focus on how the number of women participating in peace processes might be increased or how their perspectives might be incorporated in negotiations, the dialogue must also take on board the view that peace begins within the home. In other words, gender inequities perpetuated in the home are inextricably linked to those carried out in the community and the public writ large. For WISCOMP, the struggle for gender equality is not one where women and men are pitched against one another for greater power. Rather, it is a conflict of two ideologies, one that subscribes to patriarchy and the other which believes in the creation of gender relationships based on mutual respect and equity. In fact, WISCOMP actively invites the participation of men to support its efforts to advance women’s rights. Men’s inclusion, participation, and support as partners are vital to efforts to promote women’s security and the inclusion of their perspectives in peace processes.

### *Panel Discussion*

#### **Women and Peacebuilding**

In this context, the Workshop module on *Women, Peace, and Security*, which included a panel discussion, engaged with the questions: What do women do

*differently* in times of conflict? How do they respond to violence? How do they define the needs of security and development? It also problematized assumptions that link women to peace and men to war. This is because armed conflict not only affects men and women differently, but it also provides a context for them to play different roles and encounter different experiences. These in turn affect their identities and the political positions they take on issues concerning the conflict.

While providing a space to women to share stories of peacebuilding, this session critically examined the notion of a ‘sisterhood’ that cuts across ethnic and religious faultlines, highlighting the need to listen deeply to the gender-sensitive voices of both men and women on issues such as militarism, governance, human rights, and development.



*Ms. Mossarat Qadeem*

The panel discussion opened with a presentation by Ms. Mossarat Qadeem, Founder and Executive Director of PAIMAN Trust, Islamabad, on **women’s efforts to prevent violence in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Khyber Pakhtunkwa** regions of Pakistan. The problem of violent extremism has emerged as a formidable threat across Pakistan in recent years. Although the government of Pakistan has not defined it as a ‘conflict’, Qadeem underscored the urgent need to address the multiple causes and sources of these violent convulsions that the country is witnessing today. Exploring some of these causes, she pointed to a primary factor, which is that the different sects of Islam are at loggerheads with each other—the tensions between the Shias and the Sunnis being the most visible example of this. Then, there are conflicts over ethnicity—for example, the Mohajirs against the Sindhis, or the Pathans against the Mohajirs—as well as the problem of political extremism. However, the most significant source of conflict is economic deprivation and related to this, the deep divisions within Pakistani society along class lines.

Since 9/11, the menace of extremism has permeated across FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkwa. Yet, Qadeem shared that to discuss the problem in public or any attempt to transform it is akin to inviting violence and even death upon oneself. It was in this context that Qadeem and her colleagues at PAIMAN Trust decided to look at the positive role that women could play in addressing the problem of violent extremism. The organization started by analyzing the role of women in Pakhtun society and then sought to strengthen their position, bearing in

mind the cultural and religious boundaries within which they lived. The attempt was to invite Pakhtun women to think about methods, which were rooted in their local traditions that could be employed to reduce violent extremism. Qadeem also worked with them to build peace from within because as she put it, ‘Unless and until one does not realize the necessity to build inner peace and social cohesion in the community, people will not be receptive to the idea of peacebuilding.’

The next step involved the establishment of a platform titled ‘Let Us Live In Peace’ through which women could articulate their views on extremism. This was followed by a multi-pronged strategy, which included community outreach, local capacity building, and engagement with the media. The participation of schools was solicited to reach out to the youth by introducing the idea of peace education. Qadeem shared that considerable lobbying with provincial policymakers had to be carried out in order to win their support in these endeavors.

A key element of the education strategy was the initiation of conflict transformation workshops for the youth—particularly those who were vulnerable to the propaganda of radical groups—across seven universities in Peshawar. These trainings were titled *tolana*—which in Pashtun means ‘together’ and is seen as a neutral word that no group could feel challenged by. So far, PAIMAN has trained 63 youth groups across FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkwa.

Through the ‘Mother’s for Change’ initiative, Qadeem reached out to women whose sons were vulnerable to extremist ideology. First, she identified those boys who were already radicalized as well as those who had shown potential to join extremist groups. Once this was done, she then reached out to their mothers and began work with them. This was a difficult endeavor because not only were the mothers themselves vulnerable to radicalization, they were suspicious of any efforts to change the status quo. Through methods such as storytelling, Qadeem helped these women to develop critical thinking skills and discover the ‘power within’ to speak out against radicalization that male family members may be votaries to. With the sons who had joined extremist groups or who were on the verge of doing so, Qadeem drew them into conversations that focused on the correct interpretation of the Hadith and Quranic verses in order to get them back to leading nonviolent and purposeful lives.

In addition, Qadeem shared that a civil society group, comprising 700 activists from across the two regions, was set up to give support to initiatives for the

mothers and the youth. This network was further widened in 2008 when Qadeem decided to connect with women in other parts of Pakistan who were working to curb violent extremism. This led to the establishment of the *Aman-o-Nisa* Coalition.

Reflecting on how she gained the courage to work with radicalized youth, Qadeem shared the heart-wrenching story of a mother whose son had joined the Taliban insurgency in Swat in 2009. The distraught mother, harassed by both the Taliban and the Army, asked Qadeem to help her and save her son. Although Qadeem later learned that the young man had killed seven military personnel with an IED, she worked with the local Brigadier in Swat to transform the young insurgent by persuading him to give up the gun. Eventually, he joined a professional training course in engineering and was able to support himself. PAIMAN walked with him through the entire process of demobilization, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Since 2008, PAIMAN has worked with scores of such radicalized youth, successfully helping them to renounce violence and reintegrate with their families and communities. She however added that efforts to reintegrate the young men are often challenging because the communities are

hesitant to welcome back individuals who have harmed them.



*Dr. Sumona DasGupta*

The next presentation by Dr. Sumona DasGupta, Senior Research Consultant with the Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi, looked at **gender identity and the faultlines of armed conflict in the context of Jammu and Kashmir**.

Elaborating on the notion of ‘borders’, DasGupta said that these are not just cartographic lines that crisscross the former princely state of J&K, separating sovereign writ. Rather, these relate to mindscapes—the lines that are etched in the minds of people, generated or accentuated by the conflict. Of course, there is considerable overlap between landscapes and mindscapes, cartographic and non-cartographic lines. And when these intersect, they can both collide or coalesce—creating patterns for coming together or generating violent conflict. These lines affect the lives of men and women differently. DasGupta noted that the first non-cartographic line was between urban and rural landscapes after 1989 (in Jammu and Kashmir). The urban conflict changed, morphed, and took different directions, with its epicenter moving from the urban to the rural areas, and then into the mountains and jungles. So, from the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF), it passed into the hands of the rural-based Hizbul Mujahideen, and then to the ‘Mehman

Mujahideen’ (who were non-Kashmiri speaking armed combatants).

According to DasGupta, owing to this militarization of the rural landscape, the post-1989 period witnessed large-scale migration from the rural to the urban areas, with men moving into the latter to secure a livelihood. As a result, the idealized concept of the hamlet or the sense of security of the home suddenly disappeared as the militants or security forces could enter any time, day or night. DasGupta said that while there has been no systematic study of this aspect, there are some sporadic examples drawn from mental health professionals, who have talked about the ways in which the militarized rural space affected the lives of men and women, albeit in different ways. Studies have pointed to the use of the *hookah* and drug addiction among women in rural Kashmir (indicators of post-traumatic stress) as well as higher rates of suicides among women in these areas.

In this context, DasGupta shared the findings of a study conducted by Doctors Without Borders that focused on the areas of Budgam and Kupwara. Data from this study showed that the brunt of the armed conflict has been felt in the rural spaces within the Valley and the ‘symptoms of distress’ were attributed to problems emanating from the fact that women could not work in the fields, there was a sense of constant dependence on others, and the regular witnessing of acts of torture and killing.

Describing a different nature of insecurity, DasGupta drew attention to the situation in a village called Dardpura in the Kashmir Valley, which is located along the LoC. Home to many fratricidal wars at the peak of the militancy, able-bodied men of a certain age-group are conspicuous by their absence and families are run by women. While the militancy has completely changed the demography of the region, what came as a surprise to researchers was the bitterness and fractious politics that existed between the Gujjar women of upper Dardpura and the Kashmiri-speaking women of lower Dardpura. In spite of the common experience of losing male family members and being accorded the label of ‘half widows’, the women of Dardpura have been unable to come together and unite. What divides them deeply is livelihood insecurity—as DasGupta put it, ‘the politics and economics of firewood’. Without firewood, it becomes difficult to cook or light. Firewood and its access spawn a mad scramble, and these have pitted the women of this village against one another. The idea of cooperation and joint access remain an alien concept.

Shifting focus to a different set of borderlines—those between settled and migrant



communities in Jammu—DasGupta said that Jammu has emerged as a place of refuge where all kinds of migrant communities have settled as a result of the conflict. There are communities from Rajouri, Doda, Poonch, and the Valley. In these spaces, the women, who up until the time of migration led a largely agrarian, hamlet kind of life, are forced to work—in shops, as prostitutes, beggars, and other demeaning roles. The men sit idle in the migrant camps. DasGupta shared that there is a lot of violent masculinity that is unleashed in these spaces because the men’s whole sense of identity as breadwinners has now been taken away. So, there is this tension between the myriad migrant communities—between those who have received more attention from the government and those who have received relatively less attention.

What perhaps is the most distressing aspect of the conflict is the deeply entrenched faultline that exists between the so-called settled communities of the state—a faultline that is as deeply entrenched as any line on the map. This is with reference to the conflicts between Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh. While the regional divides have existed for a long time, they came into sharp focus during the Amarnath land crisis in 2008. As DasGupta noted, ‘What could have been a secular discourse on sub-regional identities became a high-pitched communal drama marked by Hindutva slogans in Jammu and Islamist slogans in the Valley, almost mirroring each other in their intensity and articulation.’



*Session Chair Dr. Syeda Hameed (Member, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi) with panelists Ms. Bushra Gohar (Member of Parliament & Senior Vice President, Awami National Party, Islamabad), Ms. Mossarat Qadeem (Executive Director, PAIMAN Trust, Islamabad), and Dr. Sumona DasGupta (Senior Research Consultant, Society for Participatory Research in Asia, New Delhi).*

And ironically, there were huge gatherings of protesting women from both the communities. In this context, DasGupta noted:

*It is this violent militant mobilization of women that raises some fundamental questions. Whether a new wave of feminist politics marked by a feminist consciousness can actually emerge in this state of affairs is the moot question. Can it transcend identity borderlines that have remained so firmly entrenched in the minds of the people? Because what we have actually seen in practice is that women's gender identities have been subsumed by other identities of religion, class, and/or region. While gender identity can never be seen in isolation as it always has to be located at the intersection of various other identities; yet in the context of Jammu and Kashmir, it is hostage to the politics of competing nationalism and the politics of competing sub-regionalisms. The mere presence of women in dharnas and rallies that we see in Jammu or in the Valley is not really a sign of genuine emancipation.*

*It is ironic that the seeds of a new genre of politics are now contained in a woman who would deny that she has anything to do with politics. I am talking about a new imaging of politics that one sees, for example, in an organization—Association of the Parents of Disappeared Persons—that was formed and led by Parveena Ahangar. This is important because it is a tableau of protest in a public space, which is nonviolent and which represents a story of loss. The methods that the APDP uses are completely constitutional, for example Habeas Corpus. This is an unrecognized way of doing politics...and it perhaps generates a possibility for a humanizing politics in the public space. And the manner in which Parveena's life has seamlessly traversed between the private and the public sphere, creating a space that challenges injustice and teaches us how to 'wage conflict nonviolently'...this perhaps marks to me a new imaging of politics from where a feminist consciousness could begin to take shape.*

DasGupta also pointed to the challenges that WISCOMP has faced in trying to bring women together from across myriad faultlines, where experiences of personal transformation could not facilitate larger change. And in a moment of crisis, the group was unable to arrive at a collective consensus on its



*Ms. Bushra Gohar*

aspirations and action plans. This is the dilemma of building peace in an area of conflict, and whether a feminist consciousness emerges from this area of conflict remains to be seen.

Locating her presentation in the context of the **role that Pakistani women parliamentarians have played in advancing progressive legislation** and in

strengthening the voices for coexistence, Ms. Bushra Gohar, Member of Parliament and Senior Vice President, Awami National Party, Islamabad, opened with a comment on the political environment within which she works. She said that Pakistan is witnessing a shrinking of spaces for dialogue and dissent. This is even more so the case with respect to women activists and political workers who wish to challenge dominant norms and practices. This shrinking of space for the articulation of dissent and alternative perspectives was a cause of concern, particularly for women politicians such as herself.

Gohar walked participants through a history of the participation of women parliamentarians in Pakistan, which received a big boost with the election of Dr. Fahmida Mirza as the first female Speaker of the country's National Assembly. Crossing enemy lines like so many Pakistani and Indian women before her, Mirza wasted no time in reaching out to her counterpart in India, Meira Kumar—who also holds the position of the first female Speaker of the Lok Sabha. Parliamentary diplomacy between Pakistan and India has received a huge push thanks to the efforts of these two dynamic leaders.

Gohar added however that despite their accomplishments, there is a constant questioning of the legitimacy and authority of women Parliamentarians in Pakistan. The general refrain is that they hold the positions they do because they belong to political families and their representation in politics has little to do with their own ability or capacity. There is also the unrealistic expectation that these women should be able to wave a magic wand through which deeply rooted gender oppression can be removed in a short span of time.

In this context, Gohar underscored the need for male politicians to actively support their female counterparts in efforts to improve the status of women in Pakistan. It should not be seen as a battle that only women politicians have to wage. This is particularly daunting in a context where just the creation of a space to articulate their views is an uphill task. In spite of these challenges, women politicians have been able to impact parliamentary discourse on many

issues, particularly those concerning the basic human needs of the downtrodden, violence against women, and terrorism. In this context of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Gohar shared that women parliamentarians in Pakistan were the first to come together and issue a resolution condemning the attacks and expressing solidarity with the victims' families. They pushed for a greater role for women in the peace process between India and Pakistan, as also in the context of the insurgency that broke out in Swat in 2009. Their emphasis in both contexts was to engage with the root causes of terrorism and violent extremism. As a result, and also thanks to the efforts of Mirza, a women's parliamentary caucus has been established and it has now become the norm among political parties to nominate at least one woman to any parliamentary committee that is set up.

The acts of women parliamentarians have stood out for the exemplary courage they have shown in condemning violence and promoting tolerance. Gohar cited the example of the public position that women parliamentarians took after the assassination of Punjab Governor Salman Taseer by his own bodyguard. Due to the threat of violence, no politician was willing to condemn the assassination. In this context, women were the first to come together and publicly condemn the assassination.



*Dr. Syeda Hameed*

Saluting the formidable work of the three presenters, Dr. Syeda Hameed, Member, Planning Commission, Government of India, New Delhi, concluded the session with a comment on the need to sustain hope and optimism in contexts of hopelessness and violence. She pointed to the accomplishments of the broad-based civil society movement in Pakistan, which has remained consistent in its efforts to reduce violence against women. She noted that the act of bringing the private into the public space is a formidable challenge and civil society in Pakistan has shown exemplary courage and strength of conviction by sustaining its focus on these issues. Drawing on DasGupta's reference to the APDP and Qadeem's elaboration of her work with the mothers of radicalized youth, Hameed pointed to the emergence of parents' groups as a powerful voice against violence. They have come to be recognized as important actors in multi-track peacebuilding processes.



## *Module Four*

### **Media and the Peace Process**

#### *Roundtable*

#### **Media Speak**

The ability of the media to influence public opinion and shape events and discourses gives it a social and political power that is unmatched. For instance, it is estimated that in India, ‘more than 80 percent of the questions asked in Parliament are based on what newspapers and journalists write. Ninety percent of what foreign offices think comes from what they read in the media. The diplomatic reports, the dispatches from the ambassadors come much later.’<sup>16</sup> In situations of armed violence and political conflict, this power assumes further significance because of the media’s ability to influence perceptions about *us* and *them* and issues of prejudice and conciliation. It can exacerbate tensions and deepen prejudices or it can adhere to ethical and responsible reporting, and at the minimum, ‘do no harm’. Over the last decade, scholarship on the role of the media in conflict transformation processes has increased exponentially with governments, international organizations, and local peacebuilders recognizing its ability to influence the beliefs and actions of parties in a conflict. This has led to the formulation of terms such as ‘peace journalism’ and ‘conflict sensitive journalism’, which invite journalists to report the multilayered dimensions and causes of conflict. Calling on reporters to refrain from sensationalist and jingoistic coverage which could exacerbate

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<sup>16</sup> B. G. Verghese quoted in Sevanti Ninan, ‘The Media as Peacemaker’, *The Hindu Magazine*, 4 July 2004 (New Delhi), p.3.

tensions on the ground, peace journalism foregrounds nonviolent and dialogic responses in the coverage of conflicts.

In the context of the India-Pakistan peace process, the Fourth Estate has played diverse roles over the last six decades. Although the media today is more independent and less likely to mirror government perspectives, it is not entirely free of vested interests, particularly those that profit from conflict and violence. Its reportage of events such as the Kargil conflict (1999), the Agra Summit between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee (2001), and the Mumbai terror attacks (2008) generated heated debates about the rights and responsibilities of the media, as also the ethics of journalistic intervention and the relationship between media and society. There was considerable introspection within journalistic circles about the extent to which media organizations contributed to the perpetuation of an aggressive and jingoistic nationalism in the two countries. Braving stringent visa regimes, bureaucratic hurdles, and political deadlocks, some media organizations decided to step forward to do their bit to ‘energize the peace process’. One such example is the *Aman ki Asha* collaboration between The Jang Group and The Times of India, which seeks to promote goodwill and trust between the people of the two countries, refusing to serve as mouthpieces for those who seek to manufacture hate and hostility between the two countries.



Ms. Pamela Philipose

In this context, the WISCOMP Roundtable *Media Speak* engaged with the different ways in which the media in the two countries can facilitate trust-building and conflict transformation processes, particularly during times of tension and hostility. It opened with a presentation by Ms. Pamela Philipose, Editor-in-Chief, Women’s Feature Service, New Delhi who looked at this subject through the **lens of peace journalism**. Highlighting the need to carve an alternative mindset that appreciated the strength of words in reporting conflicts, she said that peace journalism was orientated towards conflict, truth, people, and solutions. It focused not on the violence and propaganda emanating from conflict but on journalistic objectivity with a stress on the ‘truth’. While it is an important classification within the media discourse, it is often seen as a ‘funny construct’ because people seldom identify themselves as ‘peace journalists’.

Noting that the media has the strength to both build and destroy, Philipose emphasized its unique powers to defend the greater common good in times of

violence. In this context, she quoted Pierre Bordeaux who put forth the view that ‘in a world of alleged shrinking attention spans, when media practitioners are ruled by anxiety and fear, boring the viewer or reader is the biggest fear that practitioners work under’. Consequently, the popular belief that ‘less is better, newer is better, the more dramatic is better’ took root, and news was streamlined into brief reports, lacking substance but high on sensationalism. In addition, the shrinking attention span of readers and viewers was often blamed for meting such superficial treatment to news.

The first challenge that such a construction of news presents is that it does not facilitate an understanding of the multi-layered complexity of reality. As Philipose put it, ‘Impassioned recitals of entertaining events with no real beginning or end; a sequence from the war zone is cut into and melts seamlessly into a fashion show or a political election’. Such sequences were ‘de-historicized’ and, as a result, discarded the importance of the historical context of a conflict. This was disturbing because it propelled the creation of an apathetic class of people, who lay in oblivion to the roots of the conflict, and consequently felt alienated from the same.

In this context, Philipose remarked that a major constraint in peace reporting is the nature of war reporting that strongly feeds into ideas of patriotism and national pride. She illustrated this with the example of the US invasion of Iraq in 2003 through ‘Operation Shock and Awe’, where the bombings were being telecast as a spectacular display of fireworks, paralyzing any negative perception of war by the audience. The gory reality and bloodshed of the war were never highlighted. It was also in this context that the notion of ‘embedded journalism’ was popularized, which resulted in biased reports that overrode the negatives of war. As a result, people remained unperturbed by war. This molded mindsets and led to easier public acceptance of the American invasion. On the contrary, reportage in Vietnam compelled national leaders and policymakers to acknowledge that they were caught in a quagmire and must take reformative steps.

Philipose asserted that it was important to discern the specific manner in which national interest was defined within the media, which sometimes functioned as an indistinguishable part of the politico-corporate-military complex. Unfortunately, journalists often compromised in the honest narration of a story owing to vested interests in cultivating contacts with high-ranked officials in military and political establishments. Pointing to the Kargil conflict, Philipose said that the reportage deliberately underplayed the human cost and the adverse impact on civilian lives.

In this context, the moot question is, 'How do we use our powers of expression for peace journalism?' Good peace journalism demands that media practitioners make use of their powers of expression to interpret the mess, provide clarity to the causes and effects of conflict, and demand rational resolutions for such conflicts. Philipose cited an example of peace reporting in the wake of the Hiroshima bombing by the US forces in 1945.

*On August 6, there wasn't a cloud in the sky above Hiroshima. Mild, hardly perceptible winds blew from the South. Visibility was almost perfect for 10 or 12 miles. But at 7:09 am, an air raid sounded and four American B-29 planes appeared. At 7:31 am, the all-clear was given. Feeling themselves in safety, people came out of their shelters and went about their affairs. Suddenly a glaring whitish pinkish light appeared in the sky accompanied by an unnatural tremor, which was followed almost immediately by a wave of suffocating heat and wind.*

Philipose underscored the impact of such a graphic account of the disaster that served to eternally freeze the moment for the rest of humanity. She pointed to the significance of the verbal and written media since it stood as a rich repository of the past. The power of the media was expressed in capturing unique fleeting moments and conjuring a sense of these for the greater understanding of the world.

Speaking in the context of peace journalism vis-à-vis India-Pakistan relations, she stated that there was an intimate connection between opinion formulation, national interest, and media coverage. National identity in India and Pakistan were largely constructed on the foundation of perceived notions about each other, mutual mistrust, and suspicion, which dated back to pre-partition days. In both countries, the issue of Kashmir had emerged as a lynchpin in such an ideological consolidation. Kashmir, for India, represented a blatant rejection of the 'Two-Nation Theory' and served as a symbol of secularism in boasting India's prowess in nation-building. For Pakistan, India's non-acceptance of the idea of Kashmir as a part of Pakistan translated into India's non-acceptance of Pakistan's right to exist. Such were the construction of narratives in both the countries.

Philipose observed that, for 60 years, engagement between India and Pakistan had been expressed through a series of points and counterpoints, which stifled fresh ideas. In the context of the Kashmir conflict, she said that Indian elites saw this as being an issue of Pakistan-back terrorism and not an indigenous



struggle for independence. The perception across the border in Pakistan was diametrically opposite. Pakistan claimed no role in perpetuating discontent in the Valley. The enormous social and political cost of this protracted conflict for both India and Pakistan (particularly the people of Jammu and Kashmir) indicated that the cost of the conflict had not been adequately discussed by the media.

Philipose concluded that effective peace journalism includes the following:

- An active disengagement from the zero sum game;
- A recasting of the way in which old war stories are related;
- A rigorous inclusion of the voices that propagate peace from within civil society (which are often sidelined);
- Reportage that is uninterrupted and unintermittible; and,
- Keeping alive the peace narrative against all odds.



*Ms. Suhasini Haidar*

Continuing the engagement with peace journalism, the next presenter Ms. Suhasini Haidar, Deputy Foreign Editor and Prime Time Anchor, CNN IBN, New Delhi, opened her comments with a reference to American actor Groucho Marx's statement that military intelligence was a contradiction in terms. Likewise, she opined that peace journalism represented a similar contradiction, and journalists ran a high risk of dampening the gravity of news by attempting to produce it from a peace journalism perspective.

Haidar stated that the **tools for reporting every conflict were different** and this was particularly true in the case of India and Pakistan. The impact and interest of reporting both the minutiae as well as the pertinent issues of government change etc. in an adversarial country were unique. The permeating atmosphere of mistrust made reporting both different and difficult, even though news gathering and analysis were done on the basis of facts. Haidar cited the example of a study conducted by a Chandigarh-based newspaper which revealed that 70 percent of the reports on ceasefire violations along the LoC were printed in the Sunday edition of newspapers. Such methods of reportage exacerbated the atmosphere of mistrust. Haidar also pointed to the narratives that are taught in schools, which further contribute to this atmosphere of suspicion. The prevailing narratives and counter narratives mold the impressionable minds of young children even before they are formally

introduced to the two sides of the story. As an example, she referred to the maps that Indians study at school. While these delineate faulty borderlines, their presence in textbooks is never questioned.

Haidar also pointed to the problem of limited access to each other's countries on the ground, reflected in restrictions such as city-specific visas (usually given for a week), limited mobility for Indian journalists in Pakistan and vice versa, and the practice of allowing only two resident journalists from the other country. She concurred with Philipose on the point that there is a constant necessity to prove one's patriotism and that the protracted conflict between India and Pakistan does have a residual effect on the way journalists report *the other* country. This has further incited radical nationalist identities which are stringently competitive and exclusive of *the other*. Speaking in the context of a mushrooming of 'experts' on India-Pakistan relations, Haidar expressed concern over the paucity of journalists who had a nuanced, thorough, and unbiased knowledge of local issues in India and Pakistan. As she put it, 'there is an interest in each other but there is a dearth of interest in how we affect each other'.

Yet, despite these odds, Haidar chose to view the glass as half full. The Mumbai attacks in 2008 provided a context for journalists on both sides to introspect and to recognize the need for a 'clinical approach to reporting'. This was reflected in the subsequent stance of journalists who have become increasingly less trusting of their governments.

Hope was expressed in the internet and the new and exciting social media that this medium of communication has generated. Such media have made borders redundant, fostered virtual interactions and friendships through social networking, and most significantly, they have demonstrated the potential to remove psychological borders. Haidar stated that as a consequence of the burgeoning influence that the internet has come to wield, the nature of reporting would gradually change as well. Sharing her own experiences, she noted that her own access to Pakistani analysts had increased manifold thanks to the internet.

Concluding on a positive note, Haidar drew attention to the exciting partnerships that have developed between television channels in India and Pakistan where considerable resource sharing takes place without any transfer of money, based solely on friendship and trust. She also expressed her faith in the college-going population of Pakistan and India, which thanks to the social media, were more connected with one another, and more likely to build

consensus around contentious issues such as Kashmir. In fact, following her interactions with the youth of the two countries, Haidar sensed a cross-border consensus on the Musharraf-Singh four-point formula for Kashmir. In this context, she urged the Workshop participants to challenge old mindsets that denigrate *the other*, to ask more questions, and to use the social media (and where possible face-to-face dialogue) to learn more about the so-called *other*.

The next presenter Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar, a Delhi-based Media Professional and Honorary Advisor to the Prime Minister's Informal Group on Global Nuclear Disarmament, New Delhi, brought into focus the role that **cross-border partnerships between media groups can play in forging a South Asian sensibility** in the region. Saying that the media has a unique strength to serve as a unifying force in South Asia, Aiyar talked about the partnership between



*Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar*

CNN-IBN in India and Dawn News in Pakistan through which the two television channels initiated journalist exchange programs and shared resources such as live footage of events and news analyses, which were aired across the border. This also meant that each channel could conduct live interviews with analysts from across the border, which added to the quality of news reportage and analysis. In fact, he noted that the growing presence of Pakistani guests 'live' on prime time news has transformed the way Indians think about people across the border. For one, it has reduced ignorance and confusion about what people from 'the other' side are like and provided a context for Indians to listen to Pakistani reactions to events that affect both countries.

Likewise, Aiyar advocated that such partnerships should be built between media houses across South Asia, perhaps through networks such as SAARC. For example, he said it was ironic that Indian channels could get live pictures out of Washington and London, but not out of South Asian cities. Reportage of the South Asian region is in fact limited to flashpoints such as disasters and conflict. However, if human interest stories of one country are aired in the other, this will help to create a sense of regional solidarity and concern for what our neighbors experience. 'Then, the sense of "who I am" expands instantly with the realization that I am not just an Indian, but I am also a South Asian', said Aiyar.

He added that such partnerships would also help South Asians to transcend the borders imposed by visa restrictions and security issues, giving them access

to a more layered picture of the ground reality in the other country. This in turn would lead to more informed public opinion.

Analyzing the **perceptions of the Pakistani media towards India**, Mr. Haroon Khalid, a Freelance Journalist with *The News* and *The Friday Times*, Lahore, used evocative visual images and quotes to elucidate on the position taken by various media groups in Pakistan. At the outset, he made two points. The first was with reference to the profile of the average Pakistani journalist who was raised during the Islamization era of General Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s. Second, over the last decade, Pakistan has witnessed a mushrooming of private television channels. Today, there are about 100 private channels of which 20 are news channels.



*Mr. Haroon Khalid*

Khalid explained that most private channels are caught in the mire of competition and battle for ratings. They cater primarily to the middle class sensibilities of religion, morals, traditions, and patriotism. And due to paucity of time, there is little effort to contextualize and analyze the multi-layered complexities of a conflict. Consequently, the essence of most conflicts is distorted and sensationalized to appeal to the majority of viewers.

Delineating the ideologies of various factions within the Pakistani media, Khalid pointed to the immense power that the media holds to shape mindsets. With respect to reportage of India, he drew a distinction between the perspectives of two influential Pakistani media groups, Nawa-i-Waqt and The Friday Times. Nawa-i-Waqt was noted for its radical anti-India and anti-US views, which are reflected in its publisher Majeed Nizami's comment, 'Pakistanis could live their life by depending on lamps but they would not be beholden to electricity from India.' Opposing religious fundamentalism and advocating a liberal view, The Friday Times voices opinions about fast-tracking the process of 'normalization' with India and fostering trust with its neighbor.

Khalid examined the stance of different media groups in Pakistan on three events and illustrated the uproar and myriad of responses they fetched:

- Pakistan grants India the Most Favored Nation status;
- Veena Malik, a Pakistani actress and model, participates in an India reality TV show and poses for a men's magazine;
- *Aman ki Asha*, a peacebuilding partnership between the Jang Group in Karachi and the Times of India in Delhi.

In November 2011, Pakistan granted MFN status to India, reciprocating India's gesture of 1996. Khalid shared that rather than debating the economic implications of the MFN status, the discourse was usurped for political purposes by religious and right-wing parties in Pakistan who carried out intense protests against the decision. Khalid stated,

*Most sects of the Pakistani media seized the moment to perpetuate hate and misunderstanding towards India. Many talk shows invited hawkish opponents to engage in heated debates over this issue, which was exacerbated by private media channels vying for ratings. The popular slogan voiced by religious fundamentalists became 'Bharat se rishta kya, nafrat ka, intiqam ka.'*<sup>17</sup> *On the other hand, Najam Sethi's editorial in The Friday Times, critically analyzed the impact of the MFN status on the import, export, and balance of payments of India and Pakistan. He said, 'Cheap imports from India will help in controlling inflation just as exports to India will help the balance of payments.'* *Thus, a balanced view, making pertinent reflections on the economic aspect of the MFN status coupled with a hope to initiate a process of stability, peace, and prosperity in the region, was put forth by The Friday Times.*

The second episode, Veena Malik's participation in an Indian reality TV show and her alleged relationship with an Indian actor, created a national uproar in Pakistan. Khalid shared that not only was Malik's reputation publicly vilified, but her family was also embroiled in the ruckus. Religious scholars in Pakistan were invited as 'live' guests to a host of television talk shows and given considerable time to pass moral and religious judgments on Malik. For example, one commentator on ARY News said, 'Veena is a criminal of Islam, Pakistan, and the ISI.' Khalid cited several more examples to make the point that issues concerning India were unduly amplified in the media and were deliberately layered with religious, political, and social connotations. The result of giving such undue emphasis to frivolous issues such as Veena Malik's alleged relationship with an Indian actor or deliberately misinterpreting facts such as on the MFN status issue was that the mindsets of innumerable people were indoctrinated with hate for the neighboring country.

The third example—*Aman ki Asha*, a joint peace initiative between The Jang Group in Pakistan and The Times of India in India—was used to demonstrate

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<sup>17</sup> Translation in English: 'What is our relationship with India? That of hatred and revenge!'

how a campaign aimed at promoting goodwill and trust between the people of the two countries was criticized by radical groups who attempted to muster public opposition to this initiative of friendship with the ‘enemy other’. Khalid showed pictures and other visuals, emanating from media houses, to demonstrate the backlash against *Aman ki Asha*. Labeled ‘*Aman ka Tamasha*’, media groups linked the peace initiative to the Kashmir conflict, merging the *Aman ki Asha* with visuals of violence from the region. The attempt, as Khalid put it, was to confuse people and to lead them to believe that violence against Kashmiris is rampant and that all peace initiatives will be rejected until this violence ends.

## Discussion

- Participants expressed their concern over what they saw as the growing tendency of journalists to dramatize news to fetch better TRPs, with little thought to the consequences of their actions. Aiyar refuted this assumption and stated that journalists, at least in India, were well aware of the responsibility they shouldered and the consequences of their reportage. He drew attention to the losses and debts that the Indian news channels incurred when they attempted to sell news as entertainment. This was in contrast to Pakistani news channels which enjoyed high ratings owing to a conscious blurring of lines between news and entertainment. Noting that Indian journalists work under enormous pressure, he felt that if left to themselves (and without external pressures), journalists would do an extremely professional job.
- Considerable discussion centered on Aiyar’s suggestion that the media could help build a South Asian sensibility, sensitizing people to what their neighbors experienced. Although Aiyar was hesitant to accept a proposal for a joint South Asian journalism curriculum saying that it may not be wise for journalists to be ideologically inclined towards unifying South Asia, he expressed support for a South Asian television channel (with a South Asian editorial board) that could help sensitize people to the issues that affect the region. But most significantly, the primary focus of journalists should be to perform their jobs with integrity, ask the right questions, criticize, and be honest. Philipose was enthused with the idea of journalists undergoing training in South Asian studies and proposed that as a degree requirement, they should travel to each other’s countries to broaden their understanding. ‘Creative thinking and out of box solutions are the need of the hour’, added Philipose.
- Responding to a question on the methods used by the media to build peace between India and Pakistan, Haidar stated that the task of fostering peace

should not be on a journalist's agenda. News should be dictated by the popular sentiment rooted in what people are interested in viewing. She added that rather than attempting to interpret news to project a neutral or a 'peacebuilding' position, a journalist should simply report news as s/he sees it. The onus of understanding and interpretation lies with the viewer.

- Foregrounding the importance of using a peace journalism lens, Philipose said that a journalist should try to inform the audience about different sides to the same story. Multiple perspectives should be given space in a journalist's report and less attention should be given to the hostility or to the divisiveness emanating from a conflict.
- With reference to the opposition to the *Aman ki Asha* initiative, some participants from Pakistan foregrounded the principles of equality and dignity in the conduct of bilateral relations. In the absence of an equal relationship between the two countries, no peace initiative can succeed.



*Session Chair Mr. Fakir Syed Aijazuddin (Principal, Aitchison College, Lahore) with panelists Ms. Pamela Philipose (Editor-in-Chief, Women's Feature Service, New Delhi), Ms. Suhasini Haidar (Deputy Foreign Editor and Prime Time Anchor, CNN IBN, New Delhi), Dr. Vidya Shankar Aiyar (Media Professional and Honorary Advisor to the Prime Minister's Informal Group on Global Nuclear Disarmament, New Delhi), and Mr. Haroon Khalid (Freelance Journalist, Lahore).*

## *Film Workshop*

### **The Ever-Present Other: Bombay Cinema and India-Pakistan Relations**

While the impact of the electronic and print media on public discourse in the two countries has been significant, popular films, particularly those emanating from Bombay cinema, have come to acquire an unmatched position in public discourse. Their ability to influence ‘public opinion’, challenge ‘negative stereotypes’, and transform ‘enemy images’ on a mass scale has given these films a power that can be channelized to support peacebuilding efforts and promote positive images about ‘the other side’. In this context, the film workshop titled *The Ever-Present Other: Bombay Cinema and India-Pakistan Relations* explored visual representations of conflict and coexistence, addressing in particular the role that Bombay cinema has played in conflict generation and conflict transformation. Oriented towards a better understanding of the role of Bombay cinema in both reinforcing and challenging stereotypes around the political ‘other’, this workshop looked at how Bombay cinema has sought to promote a culture of coexistence and how conflicts around gender and religious identities have been negotiated.

Workshop resource person Dr. Ira Bhaskar, Associate Professor of Cinema Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, explored the notion of deploying cinema as a means to explore issues around identity, political otherness, and statehood.<sup>18</sup> Cinema, she argued, is a mass cultural form that enables powerful discourses to be created through the use of a variety of tropes and metaphors. Equally, it foregrounds public debate on various political and sensitive issues. At the very outset, she made a clear distinction between Bollywood and Bombay cinema. Unlike Bombay cinema, Bollywood is more closely associated with corporatization, business, the diaspora, and the deployment of stardom for its continued success.



*Dr. Ira Bhaskar*

She shared a personal anecdote to highlight the cultural, historical, and social interconnectedness that essentially underlines relations between India and Pakistan. At an International Visitors Program organized by the American Embassy in 1993, she illustrated the shock with which her American

<sup>18</sup> The report for this section was written by Ms. Supriya Roychoudhury.



counterparts noted the familiarity, comfort, and ease with which Bhaskar and her husband interacted with their Pakistani participants. The episode was significant in the way it was able to dispel commonly-held perceptions and stereotypes around Indo-Pak enmity, illustrating instead the strong affinity and friendship that exists between people belonging to these two states.

What often takes place within the political domain, however, is quite different. Political discourse on bilateral relations is premised on the ‘othering’ of India and Pakistan, Hindus and Muslims. This is especially true in the case of right-wing discourse, where the process of ‘othering’ manifests itself in particularly violent ways, often resulting in communal violence and pogroms. As an instrument of mobilization, right-wing discourse had become particularly powerful in India during the 1980s. The demolition of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya in 1992 was the visible articulation of this ideology. Bombay cinema, Bhaskar argued, often reinforces such stereotypes and jingoistic ideologies. Films such as *Gadar* (2001) and *Tere Pyaar Mein* (2000) are but two examples of this. Indeed, 1992 marked a historic moment for Bombay cinema. It was then that the mainstream film industry began to recognize the need to address issues around communalism and secularism—which it had previously seen as too inflammable to touch. Till then, it was primarily independent, art house cinema that engaged with such issues. Interestingly, Bhaskar shared that Bombay cinema was replete with positive stereotypes of the Muslim up until the communal violence of the early 1990s.

Bhaskar highlighted the following themes in the context of Bombay cinema’s portrayal of relations between India and Pakistan:

### **1. The historical weight of partition**

Between 1947 and 1984, there was a deeply entrenched silence on the issue of partition. It was during this period that the national consciousness attempted to grapple with the mammoth task of post-partition reconstruction, rehabilitation, and recovery. In 1984, however, when the anti-Sikh riots broke out following Indira Gandhi’s assassination, the horrors of partition were evoked once again for the Sikh community, many of whom had migrated from Pakistan to Delhi in 1947, and for whom return to Pakistan was no longer a possibility. In fact, it has been argued that contemporary communalism has itself become a metaphor for partition, in the Indian context. The pogroms which took place in Gujarat in 2002 aptly illustrate how residual anger arising from the partition was in part responsible for fuelling the conflict. In this context, Bhaskar showed a clip from the film, *Salim Langde Pe Mat Ro* (1989)

which tells the story of a working class family caught in the crossfire of Hindu-Muslim riots in Bhiwandi.

## 2. Identity, women, and homeland

Issues around gender began to occupy a more central position within partition discourse, post-1985. The oral histories curated by the likes of Urvashi Bhutalia, Ritu Menon, and Kamala Bhasin, were to a large part instrumental in foregrounding a more gendered analysis of the violence that surrounded partition. Women's bodies not only took the brunt of the violence but also became symbols of the assertions of power and honor and dishonor for whole communities. In the film *Mammo* (1994), the central character moves to Pakistan with her husband during partition. On her husband's death, she desires to move back to India. In the face of numerous attempts by both governments to prevent her from moving back to India, she declares herself dead, which in turn enables her to circumvent the authority of the state. The film essentially raises issues around identity, nationhood, and home and the ways in which these three notions interact and intersect. Reference was also made to films such as *Pinjar* (2003) and *Khamosh Pani* (2003) which explore similar issues. Ironically, films that engage with this theme, point to the disconnect between nation and home for women who were abducted and then forcibly 'recovered' by the states of India and Pakistan after they had settled down in the other country.

## 3. Kashmir

Whilst popular Bombay cinema does indeed set the scene for deep political analysis, Bhaskar noted that it is equally concerned with exploring the more 'human' dimensions of conflict, using the tropes of family and friendship to illustrate how love, kindness, and kinship can, to an extent, transcend conflict and mindless violence. To that end, Bombay cinema dealing with partition and conflict typically contains a number of characters whose function is to represent and give voice to the humanist ethos. Indeed, in the 1950s and 1960s, Kashmir served as a cinematic trope for such a philosophy. Kashmir was intended to represent the power of *eros*, beauty, and fulfilment, and to that end, a number of romantic songs were often deployed in such films. This trend, however, changed in the 1990s when Kashmir began to be associated with conflict, militarism, and terrorism. Both *Mission Kashmir* (2000) and *Roja* (1992) evidence this. *Roja*, however, was critically received on account of the stereotypes it appropriated. The film also personalized the Kashmir issue, using the theme of personal vendetta to raise broader issues around militarism and justice. Many of these films, said Bhaskar, are about 'reclaiming'

the terrorist, and bringing him 'home'. The assumption underpinning many of these films is that the Kashmiri militant is not one who is inherently violent, but one who can and will eventually be rescued and redeemed.

Whilst a majority of the films focusing on Kashmir tend to focus primarily on the figure of the militant, there are yet others such as *Lamhaa* (2010) which seek to provide a more in-depth analysis of the different stakeholders involved in and interested in stoking the conflict. As such, *Lamhaa* provides a powerful indictment of all actors including Kashmiris, the Indian Army, the Kashmiri police, and the Indian and Pakistani states. The film also portrays the various factions within the *azaadi* movement itself.

On the issue of Indian governmental support to such films, it was noted that subsidies are not readily available for films dealing with sensitive issues. Moreover, clearances by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) can at times be challenging. It was also noted that whilst films dealing with the Kashmir conflict have been produced in relatively large numbers, celluloid representations of political struggles and separatist movements taking place in other parts of the country have been few and far between. *Sangharsh* (1999) is one such film which deals explicitly with the Khalistan movement. Political movements taking place in the Northeast, have, by comparison, received little to no coverage in mainstream, popular cinema.

Some participants raised the issue of gender, particularly in relation to a commonly used trope in Bombay cinema in which the Muslim woman must necessarily be 'rescued' or have her *izzat* reclaimed. Bhaskar, however, argued that the trope is not so much around the need to reclaim or rescue the female, Muslim protagonist, as it is about the need for the majority community to absolve itself of the crimes and atrocities committed against the minority community. By way of an example to support this, Bhaskar cited *Bombay* (1995), a film whose central characters are a Hindu man and a Muslim woman. In this film, the marriage between these two characters is an attempt to transcend the identities to which they have been assigned by birth, and create an alternative identity instead. The protagonists' twins, for instance, carry both their parents' Muslim and Hindu names, suggesting another step forward in the direction of forging an identity that cuts across the historical divide between Hindus and Muslims.

Bhaskar also spoke of the use of melodrama and hysteria in Bombay cinema films that deal with issues related to Kashmir. Melodrama, for instance, is geared towards resolution. It is a device that is used by cinema to articulate

what we would like to have happen, and as such, does not reflect reality, as it were. She quoted literary critic Peter Brooks who argues, ‘melodrama is based on hyperbole and exaggeration in a form that is able to achieve plenitude of meaning. Although melodrama does not contain within it the means to resolve the political issue, it is able to locate and project human desire for peace and reconciliation.’

*Yahaan* (2005), for instance, places its emotional center on the melodramatic relationship between the Kashmiri protagonist and an Indian army officer. *Veer Zaara* (2004), in a similar manner, places its emphasis on the coming together of India and Pakistan through the often intense and melodramatic relationships it delineates. In *Lahore* (2010), the themes of sport and personal vendetta combine to create the melodrama required for political reconciliation. In *Zakhm* (1998), Mahesh Bhatt plays with the notion of hysteria, which itself becomes a metaphor for the nation attempting to cope with the aftermath of the horrific Bombay riots of 1992-93.

Bhaskar shared that the notion of law and what constitutes legality became particularly important post-independence. Films like *Veer Zara*, for instance, have attempted to challenge traditional legal frameworks in an attempt to make a case for a more humanistic, alternative paradigm. Once again, an emphasis on the human element is what is stressed, not least because the film’s director Yash Chopra, whose own family hailed from Lahore, was deeply and emotionally vested in issues around Indo-Pak relations.

#### **4. Cinematic resources for the existence of multiple selves and the imagining of peaceful coexistence**

In this segment, Bhaskar pointed to films that question singular notions of identity and that introduce the ideas of plural selfhood and cross-cutting identities. She discussed the deployment of Sufi music, often from Pakistan, in Bombay cinema films. Interestingly, Sufi culture is often shown to illustrate that secularism in India is a plural religious experience, even in films where the storyline has nothing to do with religion. The significance of Sufism in present-day cinema also has to do with an attempt to generate a different view of Islam—one that is not linked to extremism, but rather to music, poetry, equality, and social responsibility. Renowned Sufi artists such as the late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan have lent their voices to these films, and their music often serves as the backdrop for resolution or dénouement. To illustrate this point, Bhaskar screened the concluding scene from *Refugee* (2000) which ends with a *qawwali* in a local *dargah* and with the symbolic birth of a child on the night

of the 14 and 15 August on the border. This child is projected as the representative of *Insaniyatsthan*.

In conclusion, Bhaskar urged Workshop participants to look at *what* cinema *does* with prevailing stereotypes. Does it reinforce them, does it question them, or does it go further to break negative stereotypes? She noted that the majority of Bombay cinema films which have engaged with issues of religious identity and communalism have used different narrative techniques to promote the ideals of coexistence and reconciliation. Even as the films have given voice to the baggage of the past, they have done this in a way that enables the characters to transcend the trauma and their antagonistic identities in ways that reconciliation and coexistence become possible. In so doing, Bombay cinema has often transcended commercial goals, and demonstrated a larger commitment to humane, liberal, and plural values.



*Dr. Ira Bhaskar (Associate Professor, School of the Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi) conducts a film workshop on the theme, The Ever-Present Other: Bombay Cinema and India-Pakistan Relations.*

## Module Five

### Peacebuilding: State of the Field

#### Workshop

#### Challenges to Peacebuilding: Nourishing and Sustaining Ourselves

While previous sessions dealt with a wide range of issues concerning the relationship between India and Pakistan, the Workshop *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Nourishing and Sustaining Ourselves*, conducted by Dr. Scilla Elworthy, Cofounder, Peace Direct, London, invited participants to engage with the cyclical relationship between social change and personal change. Exploring blueprints for conflict transformation at the individual level, Elworthy offered hands-on tools and daily practices to help the Indian and Pakistani participants nourish their internal capacity for peace, nonviolence, and compassion.



Dr. Scilla Elworthy

Although these ideals of peace, nonviolence, and compassion exist as spiritual truths across the world's diverse cultures and religions, the end of the Cold War provided a context for scholars and practitioners to garner the collective will and political support to apply these concepts in efforts to end armed conflicts. This was most aptly reflected in the then UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros Ghali's 1992 paper *An Agenda for Peace* in which he formulated a blueprint for the field of peacebuilding. This would later evolve to encompass the different yet overlapping frameworks of

conflict resolution, conflict management, conflict prevention, and conflict transformation.

Today, the field of peacebuilding has come to include a wide range of activities including crisis management, mediation, violence prevention, humanitarian assistance, and the more long-term efforts at relationship-building, peace education, conflict resolution, justice delivery, and reconciliation.<sup>19</sup> It ‘seeks to prevent, reduce, and transform conflict and help people recover from violence in all forms, even structural violence that has not yet led to massive civil unrest. At the same time, it empowers people to foster relationships’.<sup>20</sup>

Over the last two decades, individuals and organizations representing disciplines as diverse as theology, politics, psychology, science, business, and education, have attempted to formulate frameworks to build peace in divided societies. They have contributed to shaping the contours of peacebuilding—a field which has received increasing attention from governments, civil society, and international grant-making organizations. This attention was perhaps most visibly reflected in 2005 when the United Nations set up a Peacebuilding Commission. Today, the foreign ministries of several countries have designated peacebuilding desks to address issues of conflict prevention and transformation. Peacebuilding organizations and university-supported peace and conflict study centers have mushroomed across the world, as more and more young people enroll for specialized courses in peacebuilding.

Yet, the ‘big picture transformational change’ is complicated, at best. Peace and security scholars estimate that a high percentage of peace processes and accords collapse within five to ten years, resulting in a recurrence of violence in the country/region coded as ‘post-conflict’.<sup>21</sup> U.S. President Barack Obama drew attention to this trend when, in 2007, he stated that the United States was

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<sup>19</sup> For a glossary of key peacebuilding terms, see [www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm](http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/glossary.htm).

<sup>20</sup> Lisa Schirch, 2004, *The Little Book of Strategic Peacebuilding*, Pennsylvania: Good Books, p.9.

<sup>21</sup> For data on organized violence, see Tara Cooper, Sebastian Merz, and Mila Shah, ‘A More Violent World? Global Trends in Organized Violence’ in *Human Security Report Project 2011* [http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/cooper\\_et\\_al\\_handbook.pdf](http://www.berghof-handbook.net/documents/publications/cooper_et_al_handbook.pdf) Accessed: August 13, 2012.

Exploring the reasons for a recurrence of violence in ‘post-conflict’ societies, John Paul Lederach points to the tendency to focus on the institutional dimensions of peace agreements. He notes that little attention is paid to the fact that, apart from the public handshake, leaders may not have changed their beliefs and attitudes, particularly the ways in which they continue to perceive

on the ‘wrong battlefield’ when it shifted focus from Afghanistan to Iraq in the mid-2000s.<sup>22</sup>

Recent studies reveal that armed violence continues to kill and maim a surprisingly large number of civilians, particularly children, around the world. According to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, in the year 2011, ‘armed conflict’ killed 52,000 people. In addition, it estimated that in ‘peaceful countries’, over 500,000 people are killed each year as a result of lethal violence. Many more—200,000—die from the indirect effects of armed conflict such as poverty and hunger. It is estimated that about 50 percent of these deaths take place in Asia, primarily in Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka.<sup>23</sup> Ironically, South Asia, the cradle of nonviolence and myriad peace traditions, has emerged as a region where prejudice and hate, poverty and inequality, mix dangerously together to create cycles of violence and oppression.

These developments have generated introspection among practitioners and scholars working on issues of peace and conflict. Different reasons have been cited for the challenges that peacebuilding efforts encounter. These range from economic, political, and institutional factors to those related to the existence of fragmented and hostile relationships at different levels. Critics have also noted that the focus on establishing societal peace through institutional changes and inter-group dialogues has not yielded the expected results. The assumption was that once ceasefires, peace accords, and democratic institutions were in place, the benefits of peace would trickle down to each person. But this hasn’t happened on the ground.

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their ‘enemies’. Yet, these are the people that they have to live with and work with in order to build a peaceful and *just* society. While peace accords have been successful in dealing with the more immediate, crisis-oriented issues, they have rarely addressed the expectations for long-term social, economic and cultural change which gave rise to the fighting in the first place. This is because while peace accords can establish the frameworks for democratic governance and participation, they cannot transform mindsets and attitudes. Examples of this gap can be seen in many ‘post-conflict’ democracies where the peace accord has had little impact on rates of gender-based violence, weapons’ proliferation, cultural prejudices, and societal inequities. John Paul Lederach, “The Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Justpeace”, *People Building Peace: 35 Inspiring Stories from Around the World* (Utrecht: European Center for Conflict Prevention, 1999).

<sup>22</sup> ‘Remarks of Senator Obama: The War We Need to Win’, August 1, 2007, *News Room*, Washington D.C. See [http://www.barackobama.com/2007/08/01/the\\_war\\_we\\_need\\_to\\_win.php](http://www.barackobama.com/2007/08/01/the_war_we_need_to_win.php) Accessed on July 31, 2012.

<sup>23</sup> <http://www.genevadeclaration.org/measurability/global-burden-of-armed-violence/global-burden-of-armed-violence-2011.html> Accessed on: May 7, 2012.



Less attention was paid to the reverse of this theory—which is that the seeds of peace, justice, and coexistence, should be sown in human hearts first. Governments and international organizations have invested resources on the external dimension of societal transformation, often at the expense of the need for individual transformation. While Mohandas Gandhi’s assertion, ‘be the change you want to see in the world’ remained a talisman for many peacebuilders around the world, ‘inner transformation’ was often relegated to a later stage in light of what stakeholders considered to be the more pressing issues. Yet Gandhi, and so many others before him, recognized that individuals cannot do peace work without undergoing a deep personal transformation themselves. Such change requires personal commitment, discipline, a high level of self-awareness, and an abiding faith in spirituality. For many peacebuilders, it seemed easier to focus on the conflict ‘out there’ than to look inwards and examine how our own thoughts and actions have influenced the suffering around us.

Today, there is a growing recognition among peace practitioners of the need to focus on this vital piece of the puzzle—namely, inner peace. The assertion of spiritual leaders that ‘peace in the outer world’ depends on our ability to practice ‘peace and compassion in our own lives’, has now become a practical necessity. The cultivation of compassion to a point where individuals ‘embrace a shared, common humanity’, particularly with those perceived as enemies, is a prerequisite for ending hatred and violence and creating a world where our children and grandchildren can coexist peacefully. Personal change has come to be recognized as a necessity for the broader social change processes that we aspire for our communities and societies. In fact, the nonviolent transformation of armed conflict rests on this cyclical relationship between the two levels of change. The challenge for us today is to implement this globally, at multiple levels. In other words, within the home, we treat our family members with the same respect and compassion that we wish from them; at the level of the collective, we show compassion to those who are different from us as well as those who disagree with us; at a global level, we treat other nations as we would wish to be treated.

It was in this context that Workshop resource person Dr. Scilla Elworthy drew participants into a conversation on how they can nourish and sustain the internal capacity for peace, and coexist with the difference and diversity that surrounds them. Sharing peacebuilding lessons from diverse regions of armed conflict, she introduced the ‘Seven Principles for the New Peacemaking’—based on the assumption that by practicing peace in our own lives, we can by example

and influence, respond to the suffering we see around us and spread the ethical revolution for a safer and happier world. In this context, the following questions were addressed:

- How do we reach out to those who we perceive as *the other*?
- How do we make empathy and compassion for all people a part of our daily practice?
- How do we begin the journey inwards, and work for peace inside-out? Where do we start? And how do we stay on this path of transformation?

## *Lecture*

### Challenges to Peacebuilding: Nourishing and Sustaining Ourselves

© *Dr. Scilla Elworthy*

I will start with a brief overview of the state of conflict today, discuss why peace agreements fail, identifying some of the characteristics of conventional Conflict Resolution. I will then outline how we can support ourselves to be Agents of Peace and Transformation, and introduce some Principles for the New Peacemaking. Following this, we shall move into a collaborative inquiry as to how you personally can further develop the Seven Qualities of Agents of Transformation, including some exercises that may be useful to you in your work. I will share a true story to illustrate what I mean in each case. I am confident that in discussion you will greatly improve what I have to offer.

*When a country is in harmony with the Tao ('the way' or 'the path'), the factories make trucks and tractors. When a country goes counter to the Tao, warheads are stockpiled outside the cities. There is no greater illusion than fear, no greater wrong than preparing to defend yourself, and no greater misfortune than having an enemy. Whoever can see through all fear will always be safe.*

*Tao Te Ching, Verse 46*

*Lao Tzu, 6<sup>th</sup> century BC*

### *Conflict: Today and Tomorrow*

The headline news in newspapers and televisions suggests that we live in a world at war. Violence seems to be endemic and embedded in all aspects of our lives. Is this really so? Is the world less or more peaceful today than at the end of the Cold War?

Let us start with the positive side. The 1990s witnessed a striking change: for the first time, more wars ended by negotiated settlement (42) than by military victory (23). This started a trend that accelerated in the new millennium: between 2000 and 2005, 17 conflicts ended in negotiated settlements; just four ended in military victory.<sup>24</sup>

This is indeed a considerable achievement. We have witnessed some remarkable cases of profound and meaningful conflict transformation led by exemplary and inspiring figures. Some are world famous like Nelson Mandela and Kofi Annan, and some are little known outside their local communities. These are the people that my organization Peace Direct identifies and brings to the knowledge of the public.

Yet, experts tell us that 50–60 percent of negotiated agreements collapse within a few years, plunging regions or countries back into violence. This is a fact that should interest us as peacebuilders profoundly. Why do peace agreements fail? Whatever their differences and success rates, most conflict mediation methods focus on outer, visible, external, measurable factors, and few explore the inner dimension where the real causes of conflicts lie and need to be transformed. They tend to deal with conflict as an outer state that needs to be ‘fixed’, not an inner state that can be ‘transformed’.<sup>25</sup>

Let me tell a story to illustrate the difference between formal ‘resolution’ and actual ‘transformation’.

*I was in Cape Town for a session of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 1998. The Commission was set up by Desmond*

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<sup>24</sup> For further data on the incidence of violent conflict, see *The Berghof Handbook on Conflict Transformation* and the *Berghof Glossary on Conflict Transformation*.

<sup>25</sup> I am indebted to my colleague Dr. Rama Mani for the above concept paradigms, in her papers for the Celebrate Life Festival, Oldenburg, July 2012.

*Tutu to try to transform the trauma and get rid of the hurt, grief, and terror that had been ruling South Africa for so long. I was there on the day when a young man was being questioned. He had been in the African National Congress. He was fighting against the Apartheid government. And he betrayed six of his colleagues because he was seduced by an offer from the intelligence services of the Apartheid Government. As a result of his betrayal, six of his previous colleagues were shot in cold blood in an ambush. He was questioned for a long time as well as the white apartheid people who had caused him to do this. The photo evidence was chilling and horrific for the mothers of the deceased men, who were seated in the front row. At the end of the three days, the man was asked what he wanted to say. He said he regretted what he had done. Just that. Nothing happened. Then a very perceptive Commissioner asked him if there was anything else he wanted to say. He thought for a long time, and then he looked up to all the mothers of those people whose death he had caused and said 'Yes. I'm willing to go into a room alone with the mother of each of the men whose deaths I caused, and hear what she has to say to me.' The entire room shivered. The mothers cried. And that was transformation happening in front of our eyes. Although nobody really could put it into words, but everyone knew it instantly.*

### ***A personal note***

So if we want to transform violent conflict, the overall principle is that the personal is political and vice-versa. So for myself, while staying super-aware of 'real politik' that we discussed in earlier sessions, I have discovered how essential it is to strengthen own inner muscles and become super-fit in terms of training in personal growth and in assembling the skills for self-knowledge and self-nourishment. Because otherwise we can't do this work well.

In my case, what I needed to do, just to add a personal note, was (when I was 16) to leave cosy smug UK and learn a little about other cultures. So I went to work in camps for Vietnamese refugees, then in an orphanage in Algiers just at the end of the Algerian civil war. And I worked in nutrition education in southern Africa for 10 years and I helped set up the first (illegal) multi-racial theater there, 20 years before Apartheid was abolished.

I needed to discover psychology, and I learned gradually to assert myself, and to protest. I also learned the limitations of protest, and as a result I started the Oxford Research Group. Here, we engaged with nuclear weapons' policymakers, dialoguing bit by bit, with all those involved—from the drawing board right through to deployment. And then, gradually, to bring those people together in dialogue with their harshest critics. So those meetings between Chinese, Russian, UK, French, and American nuclear weapon policymakers and their critics, formed a dialogue, and there was a real exchange of views which became a basis later for treaties. And doing all that, I discovered the effectiveness of meditation.

Meditation, as far as I understand it, is the calming of the busy mind—what we call the monkey mind—by attention to the breath and allowing our thoughts to slow down. So if we imagine our thoughts as passing by like screens in front of our minds, we want to just slow down the pace of that screen and allow more space inside. And it's not just the mind, but the heart. It allows the mind to connect with the heart so that we are more whole with the way we see things, more complete. And it gives us access to a far greater intelligence, a divine intelligence, whatever you would like to call it, that could ever inhabit inside here.

### *Becoming Agents of Peace and Transformation*

At this time in human evolution, we have gained the consciousness and commitment as well as the skills and experience to embody a new and more meaningful kind of peace, and to practice a new kind of peacemaking at all levels—from ourselves to our families to our societies and even to our nations. The key to transformation is realizing that peace starts with us, and within us. It is only by becoming peace ourselves that we can radiate peace around us, and actually affect what happens at a deep level. And some of the stories that I will tell you will illustrate how that happens.

### *Principles for the New Peacemaking*

The seven principles for the new peacemaking all start with us. Transformative peacemakers and transformative peacemaking embody seven principles that can help overturn the characteristics of destructive conflicts. They can have more lasting effects than conventional mediation/resolution methods.

They are:

1. Self-awareness
2. Balancing yin and yang
3. Respect
4. Listening
5. Self-support
6. Sorry is the first step
7. Perseverance and determination

### 1. Self-awareness

We see a lot of energy wasted in organizations in internal feuds, rivalries, jealousy, and misunderstandings. It is partly because people who want to change the world are fuelled by very strong emotions. So peacebuilders require knowledge of how they themselves ‘tick’—otherwise they will simply ‘project’ their unresolved inner issues onto others. So we need to be brave enough to go into our own inner darkness, what is known as our ‘shadow’. We need to address our own powerful emotions like fear, anger, and jealousy. This can be painful, is certainly difficult and challenging, but in my view it is essential.

*My heroine here is Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma. Many years ago, before her arrest, she was leading 4000 students in a protest when they rounded a corner and came face-to-face with soldiers with machine guns. She realized instantly that the young soldiers whose fingers were shaking on the triggers of the machine guns were just as scared as the students behind her. So she turned around and told the students to sit down, and she walked steadily on, very calm. She heard the order given: ‘Release safety catches, prepare to fire!’ She walked forward quietly and slowly, up to the first gun, and put her hand on the barrel to slowly lower it. Complete silence. Nobody got shot. There was no massacre.*

Now my question to you is, ‘how did she do that’?

I am sure you know that we give out about 2000 messages every second in addition to what we say. So we are all reading different messages from each other unconsciously. The message that she was giving out was that

she had no fear. She had overcome fear and done this through years of inner work and self-knowledge. The quality that she exuded, in such a powerful way that it saved not only her life but that of many others, was inner peace.

So, what do we do about fear? I have a little mantra:  
The things I dread,  
Get fat on the energy I feed them.  
Then they become real.

So that's fear, what about anger? Inevitably, where there's injustice, which many of us are dealing with daily, there's anger. Anger's useful, but it's inflammable, like gasoline. And like gasoline, if you spray it around and someone lights a match, there's an inferno. But if you can channel gasoline into your engine and use it as fuel, it is a powerful source of energy that can drive you forward. So you have to be able to work with your anger and use it in your engine. It can also give you courage. Anger is a great source of courage. But you have to be in charge of it. When I started working on dialogue with nuclear weapons policymakers, I was powered with anger. I was furious at what they were doing; outraged at the dangers they were exposing our future generations to. And this anger that I had was entirely ineffective.

It took me a while to learn that it was okay to use anger as a fuel in efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. But it was pointless—counter-productive in fact—to get angry with the people doing it. In fact, many of them became my friends. So, doing this kind of work on our emotions enables us to be fully present, to be grounded, patient, humble, and ready to be of service in the work that we do.

## **2. Balancing Yin and Yang**

Peacebuilders need to be balanced. And when we are internally balanced, we are far more able to guide conflicting parties and populations to overcome past prejudices of 'good' and 'bad', 'right' and 'wrong', 'us' and 'them'—aspects that divide their societies. We all have this tendency to fall in the idea of 'us' and 'them'... separation, separation, separation. Balance is our way out of this.

This can help us craft peace agreements that internally re-balance the Yang elements or the masculine 'rational' and pragmatic aspects of conflict

with the ‘feminine’, ‘intuitive’, and non-material aspects—the Yin principle which focuses on the collective and inclusiveness. Externally, it enables us to design peace processes whereby women regain their rightful place as equal stakeholders in all sectors of society, and are validated in their contributions to society.

Most people lead a Yang life—a life of constant doing, duties, responsibilities—and Yin has little place in their lives because it has little place in our culture. Yang is encouraged by the media, advertising etc. Yin is time to do what you yearn for, what nourishes your soul. Yin is connection—to each other and to nature. Yin is intuitive, inclusive, and opens up to creativity. Balance between Yin and Yang allows us to be healthy, have loads of energy, and receive wisdom from the body.

The body is very reliable. The mind is capable of all kinds of deception, but the body doesn’t lie. It tells us all sorts of things we really do need to know—when to rest, when to stop, what it needs, and when we are in the presence of someone or something special—via goose bumps.

*I worked with Desmond Tutu and Nelson Mandela in helping to form The Elders—a group of 12 experienced leaders who have wisdom to guide the world, like elders of the global village. This was originally an idea of Peter Gabriel who believed that since the world is a global village, we need the elders of the village to guide the world in better decision-making, looking further into the future and envisioning longer-term plans. Through this initiative, I had the extraordinary opportunity to sit in a very hot hut, in the midst of the African bush, with about 40 people squeezed into it. And into the room walked slowly Nelson Mandela. You know how you get goose bumps when something special happens, usually for a few moments and it’s gone? I had goose bumps for 25 minutes solid while this man spoke! I’ve never had that experience in my life, and it was an incontrovertible proof through my body that this man was extraordinary. And it’s not as though he’s a great orator, he doesn’t deliver great oratorical flourishes, he just speaks in such a way that it gets to you—and it’s all about integrity.*

I offered this story because it was a body-felt experience for me; a proof of when I was in the presence of something really extraordinary.



### 3. Respect

It is rare to be able to appreciate the US role in Iraq, but here is the story of a brilliant US Army Colonel, Chris Hughes.

He was leading his men down a street in Najaf in Iraq, soon after the invasion in Iraq, when suddenly people came pouring out of the houses that lined the street, furiously angry, screaming, waving their fists in the air, surrounding the troops.

*The soldiers, who were mostly about 19 years old and didn't speak any Arabic, had no idea what was happening and were terrified. But Chris Hughes strode into the middle of the crowd—and by then, there were hundreds of people who had surrounded these soldiers—and raised his rifle above his head pointing it at the ground, and said to his soldiers, 'KNEEL'. The bewildered troops in their heavy body armour wobbled to the ground, rifles pointed downwards. The crowd quietened in disbelief and there was absolute stillness for some two minutes. And then the crowd dispersed and a bloodbath was avoided. The presence of mind of this young colonel saved many lives.*

What this story comes back to is that many, if not most conflicts, are caused by humiliation of one sort or another. Humiliation or misunderstanding. And what is the antidote to humiliation? Respect.

The more I investigate it, the more I find that sudden outbreaks of violence, whether it's in the home domestically or in the community or internationally, start because somebody has been humiliated. And the immediate antidote that works is Respect.

And the most effective way we can learn this is by applying it to ourselves. Most people frequently humiliate themselves—through self-criticism. It's insidious and nearly all of us do it—maybe women more than men—habitually telling ourselves we're not good enough, or we got that wrong, or we did something stupid. We tear to pieces what we've done, what we should've done, what we might have done. We regret, we introspect in a negative way. This is really humiliating ourselves inside. It's like self-destruction. It's insidious. And many people do it.

I want to say that the same antidote works inside us as well. When we engage in self-criticism, the antidote to this is self-respect. So the way to deal with self-criticism is that when you catch yourself doing it, you really attend to that voice, you talk with it, and tell that inner negative voice about the positive things that you've done that counterbalance the negative things. The trick is to spot it in time before it starts tearing us apart.

#### 4. Listening: Moving from 'I' to 'We'

Many of us think we're good listeners. But we are not. Why? Because most of the time, when someone else is speaking, we're thinking about what we want to say, whether they are wrong or right, attractive or not, or what's for lunch. We are having opinions. That means we're not present to this person.

Most of us tend to concentrate our attention only on ourselves—what I need, what my future is going to be, what I will learn from this, what I won't, and so on. The way forward, the new consciousness, the new peacebuilding is going to be us learning to move from *what I need* to *what we need*. So we are moving away from this isolated little ego to a connectedness and sharing and naming that your suffering is my suffering...that your lack of water is my lack of water. That we share and we take mutual responsibility for the crises facing our planet. And this is THE ONLY WAY that human beings are going to survive. Listening is one of the ways to do that.

The job of the listener is very important. The job of the listener is to give full attention to the speaker, to maintain eye contact, and not to interrupt. That will help the speaker to articulate his/her feelings from a deeper level. Here, I would like to tell you about the work of a young German teacher in Berlin.

*He realized that his generation, many of whose parents had been in the Nazi regime and never spoken about it, still carried shame and guilt. These people, the second generation, did not have anything personally to do with the Holocaust, but still carried the shadow of what their parents did. Yet, no one spoke about what happened in the families and what people did. So, he invited 600 people to Hitler's bunker in Berlin to meditate together.*

*And after the meditation, they turned to each other and they spoke about what had happened, and what their parents had done. The atmosphere that was created as a result was powerful, healing, and generated a ‘field of consciousness’ that he felt should be used for positive purposes. He then invited those who could, to come with him to Israel. I went along on the trip to observe. Here, 40 German people met one-to-one with 40 Israelis whose parents had been in concentration camps. They sat in pairs—one German and one Israeli—and they talked. They talked, and they listened, intently. I was in the room when this happened, and I watched nearly every pair in tears. Because for the first time, they were actually talking to somebody who had suffered and imagining that they had suffered. And you could see the hearts opening as they did this. In the end, the entire room was in tears. They were listening, all through intently listening, giving their total attention to somebody who had been a deadly enemy, a vicious persecutor, a repressor or a victim. And it enabled them to free themselves in that way. They had understood that the other is not ‘them’ but ‘us’.*



*Dr. Satyabrat Sinha (Assistant Professor, Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh) and Ms. Anam Zakaria (Director, The Citizens’ Archive of Pakistan, Lahore) participate in an active listening exercise.*

So in times of practical peacebuilding, this example underlines that good listening is not just polite. It is actually powerfully useful. So, when there is a group of people in a room who deeply disagree with each other, then one of the most powerful things you can do with them is to have people talking one-to-one and really listening. And you're listening not just for the words that the other person is saying, but you listen for the feelings and emotions behind the words, and one step further, you're listening for the needs behind the feelings, behind the words. What does that person need? And in that instant, what they need is your full attention. Because your full attention is your empathy. It's your sharing of what they've been through. And it works! This works even in the most disputed issues. The problem is that there is so much noise going on in political meetings, lectures and so on, that we don't sit one-to-one with the other person and really listen to them.

Listening does not include unsolicited advice. Advice is a reflex action. The advice that we can give ourselves from the inside is the right advice for ourselves. If I give you advice, it might work for me, but may not suit you. So the best advice is that which comes from deep within us. The best service I can offer as a listener is to listen deeply and actively, and to feed back to the speaker what I heard and what I understood their feelings and needs to be.

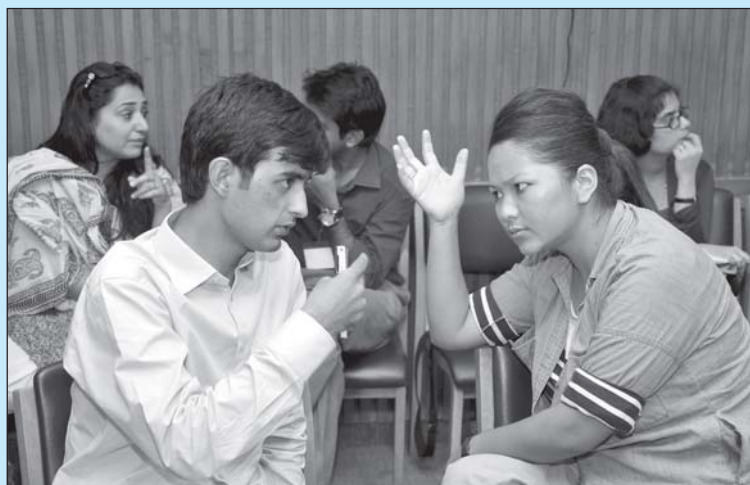
## 5. Self-support

The principle of self-support is about how we nourish ourselves. How we gather support for what we need to do. Each one of us has the capability to give ourselves enormous support, daily, to replenish our body, mind and spirit during the demanding, and sometimes exhausting process of building peace. There is a vast reserve of strength available from reflection, quiet time in nature, contemplation, and meditation. This quietening of our busy minds allows great reserves of wisdom to come in. This comes under the heading of developing 'inner power'. Let me illustrate.

*In 1982, we identified the individuals who made the actual decisions about nuclear weapons—design of warheads, strategy, contracting for the missiles, financing the programs, deployment, firing power, etc. We began to meet with them, and gradually to invite them to come to residential meetings to have a dialogue*

*with their opposite numbers from other countries, and with their critics. We didn't just bring the American, British, and Russian policymakers, but also those in similar positions of power in Pakistan and India. What we often noticed at the end of several days of dialogue were the friendships that were formed at these meetings—the ability that people discovered to talk and listen to the other.*

*What, you may well ask, has meditation got to do with this? I would like to tell you about an incident that happened during one of these meetings, which was held in a Quaker retreat center—an old manor house—near Oxford. We avoided hotels because these were too formal and impersonal. We made very delicious home cooked food. The center had a huge room on the first floor, and underneath was the library. While the meetings took place on the first floor, we invited the Standing Stones—five very experienced meditators—to sit all day in the library underneath the room where the meetings took place and meditate. Now why did we do this? It was to create a safe container, a vessel if you like, that was strong enough to hold those very strong emotions that would be there in the room—fear, suspicion, anxieties, and anger that such encounters produce.*



*Mr. Syed Waqas Ali Kausar (Lecturer, Department of Governance and Organizational Sciences, National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad) and Ms. Tenzin Menkyi (Research and Media Officer, Tibetan Women's Association, Dharamsala).*

*On the second day of a meeting on fissile materials, a participant from the US State Department came to me and said:*

*‘Scilla, this room is very special.’*

*I said, ‘Yes, it was built in 1360.’*

*And he said, ‘No no. I mean it’s VERY special, this room!’*

*I said, ‘Well, people have been doing yoga and tai chi here for years.’*

*He continued, ‘No no...there’s something coming through the floorboards!!’*

*And what he had picked up was this meditation from underneath.*

*So I told him about the Standing Stones.*

*His response: ‘You’re kidding!’*

*‘No I’m not. Just ask those elderly people who wait on you at the dinner table and bring you dinner. It is them.’*

So, this is just to give you a sense of the power that can be created to support the work that we do. It creates a different atmosphere. Everybody would have their own way of doing this. Moreover, peacebuilding is very hard work. It’s hard work emotionally, physically, intellectually. And everybody needs support and strength. So what we are searching for here are the sources of our inner power. What are the practices that nourish us and that give us strength? Do you have a quiet moment every day; do you have a fairly regular practice of reflection, meditation, yoga, journaling, silence, walks in nature or some other repeated opening up of space to contemplate? What is it that you do and what is it that you would like to do more? What we discover with regular practice is that we take ourselves less seriously. We seem to have more humor, and notice lightness around life issues that wasn’t there before.

## **6. Sorry is the hardest word—taking the first step**

The person who is the most courageous in a conflict is the one who can take the first step to reconciliation. An extraordinary tradition from the indigenous people of Hawai’i demonstrates how the pain of an injury, an assault, or even a terrible illness can be borne by even the apparent ‘victim’ or someone who seemingly had nothing to do with it by taking responsibility. The concept rests on the assumption that we are all responsible for whatever comes into our lives, shocking as that might

seem to the rational mind. The concept and the practice go under the name of Ho O'pono pono<sup>26</sup>.

I will tell you the story about how I heard it. I heard it from someone who worked with a clinic psychologist, Dr. Hew Len.

*More than 30 years ago, at the Hawaii State Hospital, there was a special ward for mentally ill criminals. No day would pass without a patient-inmate attacking another inmate or a member of the staff. Things were so bad that inmates were shackled all the time, and the scarcity of staff was chronic. The situation was completely desperate.*

*One day, Dr. Hew Len, the newly appointed clinical psychologist, arrived at the ward. He didn't seem to be doing anything in particular, except just coming in and being always cheerful and smiling, in a very natural, relaxed way.*

*Ho O'pono pono is an ancient Hawaiian practice of reconciliation and forgiveness. One has to repeat constantly the mantra, 'I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I love you. Thank you.' It is based on Len's idea of 100% responsibility, taking responsibility for everyone's actions, not only for one's own. If one would take complete responsibility for one's life, then everything one sees, hears, tastes, touches, or in any way experiences would be one's responsibility because it is in one's life. The problem would not be with our external reality, it would be with ourselves. To change our reality, we would have to change ourselves.*

*From time to time, he would ask for the files of the inmates. He never tried to see them personally, though. Apparently he just sat in an office, looked at their files, and to members of the staff who showed an interest, he would tell them about a weird thing called Ho O'pono pono. And what he did, you will hardly believe. He took the patients' files home, and with each file, one-by-one, he did the following, which is the practice of Ho O'pono pono:*

*I'm sorry.  
Please forgive me.  
Thank you.  
I love you.*

<sup>26</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HoO'pono\\_pono](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HoO'pono_pono)

*The reasoning behind this, in his words, was that ‘we all have to take responsibility for anything that comes into our lives’. If somebody hurts us, we have to say ‘I’m sorry’. It’s really tough. So, he did this every day for a month with all the files. Little by little, things started to change in the hospital. Gradually, one by one the patients began to recover. They began to become less violent, the staff were able to take them out of their restraints, and lessen the drugs that were used. More and more patients obtained permission to go outside unshackled, without causing trouble to the hospital’s employees. In the end, the atmosphere changed so much that the staff was not on sick leave any more. Prisoners started gradually to be released. Dr. Hew Len worked there for close to four years. In the end, there remained only a couple of inmates that were relocated somewhere else and the clinic for the mentally insane criminals had to close.*

So we have to take collective responsibility. It is so impactful that anything that comes into your life, that interferes with your life, that irritates you, that spoils what you were doing, hurts your feelings, if you put your attention on the person who did it and say ‘I’m sorry; Please forgive me; Thank you; I love you,’ you will notice positive change. This practice is at the heart of most of the great spiritual traditions. It is at the heart of Buddhism, Sufism, and many of the great mystical and indigenous traditions.

## **7. Perseverance and Determination**

The reason we have had this workshop, and the reason we need to nourish and sustain ourselves, is because peacebuilding is a long, often exasperating, and frequently tiring business. The question of how exhausted we get, I find, depends on the heart. If the heart is open, we get less tired. As it is said, ‘You have to keep your heart open in hell’. So that means whether it’s a hellish marriage, or a hellish community issue, or a hellish relationship, you’ve to keep your heart open. And then you don’t get crushed by the weight of the problem. Because the enormity of the problems that people in this room are dealing with, the huge weight of the problems, the viciousness that people in this room are dealing with day in and day out can be a heavy weight. And it’s an exhausting weight if our hearts are tight. But if our hearts are open, we have more energy. If we



keep love for those we work with, then the whole process feels lighter and easier. Probably because we are a bit less self-important and therefore less convinced that ‘we’ are doing it. It is taking ourselves seriously that is weighty. And this doesn’t depend on ‘me’ or ‘I’ only; it depends on ‘us’. A friend of mine in Germany said to me recently, ‘We need to move from “I” to “we” where there is no “them”.’

This was undoubtedly the case with Gandhiji, the Mahatma who is our mighty model of nonviolence. I will conclude with a story about Gandhiji.

*During the partition of India, when the violence in Calcutta was terrible, Gandhi was broken hearted. He sent out the word that he was going to fast until death, or until the violence stopped. Day after day, his aides reported a lessening of violence, urging him to eat, but he would not. He was already old and frail, but he did not waver. Word spread of his vow, and slowly the violence dissipated until there were only sporadic attacks. Again his aides begged him to eat and he refused—‘not until ALL the violence had stopped’. Finally, it did. Everyone laid down their hatred, their fear, their weapons. It was as if Gandhi’s incredible spiritual force had lifted everyone else up to an equivalent place.*

All these developments are part of feeling connected—of realizing that we are perhaps not the epicenter of the world, but a part of a vast interactive inter-dependent universe. This implies that what we do, even possibly what we think, has an effect on the whole. The key to transformation lies in realizing that peace starts with us, and within us, and that by becoming peace ourselves, we can radiate peace around us.

## Discussion

Reflecting on the ‘Seven Principles for the New Peacemaking’, participants made the following observations:

- The principle of respect found resonance with many participants. Imran Khan, Head of Training and Strategic Communication at Khudi Pakistan, Islamabad, shared the example of a dialogue between liberalists and Islamists in Pakistan to demonstrate how ‘showing respect’ helped to increase trust between the two groups that otherwise sat on opposing sides of the ideological divide. In the context of this polarization, Khan’s organization

**Participants engaged in an active listening exercise, which focused on a conflict that they were currently grappling with. The listener had to feed back to the speaker what s/he heard about the latter’s feelings and needs. Some reflections from this exercise are shared here:**

- A good number of participants experienced a situation where their listeners understood more than what was said. In other words, the listeners were able to feel the speaker’s emotions in addition to understanding what s/he said.
- For many speakers, the act of paraphrasing by the listener and feeding back to them what they had said was powerful. The paraphrasing helped the speaker to think deeply about what s/he had said.
- Active listening was recommended as a life skill that both educators and students must learn. ‘If students are to imbibe these, it is important for school teachers to first practice active listening’, said Mr. Chintan Girish Modi, an educator with the Shishuvan School in Mumbai.
- It was difficult for some listeners to discern the feelings behind the words because, as one participant put it, ‘In many families, men are conditioned to not express feelings. So it could also be difficult for the listener to listen to those feelings because one has grown so used to disguising them. To let the other person know our feelings would mean making ourselves vulnerable, which is not considered okay for many men, even today.’ Another male participant added, ‘In our society, men are not supposed to be soft, we are told to not express our feelings. This is wrong because then the conflict stays within us.’ Interestingly, this male participant had a female participant as the listener. He felt that because she was a woman, she was able to intuitively ‘read between the lines’ and understand his feelings (which he had not expressed). Elworthy acknowledged that the norm of hiding behind our invulnerability is a difficult one to crack, particularly for men. She added however that vulnerability is becoming much more acceptable today because people realize that the truth of how they feel in a moment and who they really are is actually more exciting than who they are pretending to be. However, it was also noted that women in many parts of Pakistan and India are under similar pressures in terms of what they can say and can’t say. As Bushra Gohar put it, ‘As a South Asian woman, as a Paktoon woman, I find there is so much pressure in terms of what society expects us to say. There are so many inhibitions for women in this part of the world. So the pressures on men and women may be different, but they exist on both sides.’
- Participants who live in regions of constant conflict and violence shared the pain and experience of what it is like to not be heard. When no one wants to listen to you—whether it is your family or community or at a wider level, international organizations such as the UN—what do you do? One route is violence—violence inflicted on others and even on oneself through self-immolations (as in Tibet) and suicide bombs (in Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Iraq and so many other places). Expressing the pain of those individuals and communities that are oppressed but whom nobody wants to help or even listen to, Elworthy said, ‘You feel very alone, afraid, and deserted by the world. And it feels as though nobody is giving you the support that you need. You need people to take action. You need the world to stop talking and do something. The pain is so deep for a young woman who pours gasoline on herself and lights it even though she has little children to nurse....’

Khudi Pakistan invited youth leaders from these two groups for a conference in Lahore. Khudi showed respect to both by telling each invitee that there would be space for the articulation of their views and that *the other* would listen to what they had to say. While the dialogue began with hostility, by the end, the two groups were able to agree on many issues. According to Khan, the act of providing a safe space where opposing groups could sit together and listen to each other respectfully made the conference a success. In this case, the act of active listening by one party communicated respect to the other group. Taking this point forward, Anam Zakaria, Director, Citizens Archive of Pakistan, Lahore, shared the examples of the divides between West Pakistan and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and the current situation in Balochistan and Kashmir to assert that groups feel disrespected when their grievances are not heard and when the state in fact attempts to conceal or suppress alternative aspirations.

- Raja Bagga, a Law Student at the Campus Law Center, University of Delhi, drew attention to a study by American psychiatrist James Gilligan<sup>27</sup>, known for his work with some of the most ‘violent criminals’ living in America’s prisons. According to Gilligan, a violation of self-esteem through insult, humiliation or coercion is an important source of anger and aggressive human behavior. Looking at the act of shaming as a cause of violent conflict, this theory underscores the human need for individuals to live with a certain degree of self-esteem and respect. If a person’s self-esteem is violated or is perceived as being violated, rage and violence will eventually follow. Self-esteem, in this context, also refers to the self-image of communities and nations. When people lack self-respect and feel incapable of eliciting respect from others around them, they might see violence as the only way to assert their selfhood. This theory draws attention to the destructive weapon that ‘humiliation’ can be, for both individuals and communities. Interestingly, shame theory plays out differently when gender is used as a category of analysis. According to Gilligan:

*Violence can be for men a very powerful way to ward off shame, and to achieve pride and honor; whereas it does not serve that purpose for women nearly as frequently or effectively. Understanding why men are more violent than women requires*

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<sup>27</sup> James Gilligan presents a comprehensive analysis of this theory in his book *Preventing Violence* (New York: Thames & Hudson, 2001). The book proposes a radically new way of thinking about violence by offering theories on the ‘root causes’ of violence and strategies for its prevention.

*an understanding of the highly asymmetrical gender roles to which the members of each sex are powerfully conditioned to conform to. Differences in these gender roles make it possible for men to undo feelings of shame and disgrace by means of violence, whereas this is significantly less true for women. Women are shamed not for being too submissive or un-aggressive, as men are, but rather for exactly the opposite traits: being too rebellious, independent, and aggressive. Thus, if a woman responds to being shamed by becoming aggressive or violent, that may only lead to more shame rather than, as for men, to less.<sup>28</sup>*

Workshop participant Mr. Chintan Girish Modi shared the example of a conflict which elucidated this point. The conflict took place between students in their mid-teens at the Shishuvan School in Mumbai. A boy had kicked a girl and it was discovered that gender stereotypes were at the root of this conflict. The girl had mocked the boy by telling him that he behaved like a ‘girl’, and he in turn told her that she was behaving like a ‘boy’ by being too aggressive. This led to a wider discussion on gender identities and whether these need to be antagonistic.



*Workshop participant Mr. Chintan Girish Modi (Educationist, Shishuvan School, Mumbai) makes a comment.*

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, pp. 56–60.

- Mr. Haroon Khalid, a Lahore-based Freelance Journalist felt that it would be too much of a generalization to believe that all situations of potential violence would end the way the two examples of Aung Saan Sui Kyi and Christopher Hughes did. While values like respect and fearlessness are important from a peacebuilding perspective, they are not sufficient in themselves to prevent violence and transform conflict. Every conflict is not amenable to nonviolence. Khalid shared examples from pre- and post-independence eras in Pakistan to make the point that constructive social change requires more than the acts of showing respect and overcoming fear. At the crux of this is the question: How do an oppressed people make their needs known without resorting to violence, particularly when nobody wants to listen to them? As Khalid put it, ‘Nonviolence can work only if you have an audience that has a stake in listening to you.’
- The Hawaiian concept of Ho O’ponopono had a resonance for some of the participants who shared that similar practices exist in the faith traditions they follow. For example, Anamika Gupta, Volunteer, Borderless World Foundation, Faridabad, speaking in the context of Buddhism, said, ‘When we find ourselves in a situation where someone else is being hurtful to us, we recognize that there might be some negativity in our own life that attracts this kind of energy. In such a situation, I need to apologize, take responsibility, and embrace that person. So in Buddhism, we pray and send positive prayers to that person. Initially, it might seem very mechanical.’



*Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath and Dr. Scilla Elworthy*

How can I send wishes and prayers to a person who hates me so much? But as we begin doing it, with time, we discover its power.’

- Reflecting on the story of the German-Jewish dialogue, Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath said, ‘We need to ask ourselves, why it is that erstwhile victims also end up becoming perpetrators? Why it is possible in Israel to do what is today being done to the Palestinians?’ This generates questions concerning the needs of trauma healing, justice, and genuine reconciliation. The role that the feeling of fear plays in this context was underscored because it is this emotion which causes people to be suspicious of others and to unleash acts of hatred and violence.
- The key learning from this Workshop was that peacebuilding does not imply solving other people’s problems; rather it begins with a daily practice of being and radiating peace in our own lives. As Gopinath put it, ‘For many of us who are students of international politics, we find the rationality of Realist paradigms very seductive and engaging. And anything that has to do with the heart seems somewhat not what serious academics engage in...something that peaceniks do out there. But this session so beautifully brought together how important it is to concentrate on this dimension of peace and to recognize the interconnectedness of our lives and the notion of universal responsibility. Quoting Proust, Gopinath concluded, ‘The true voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes. This session has helped us to look at peacebuilding through new lenses.’

## *Workshop*

### **Facilitative Processes in Conflict Transformation: The Limits and Possibilities of Intermediary Roles**

Dr. Shweta Singh, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi, led a workshop on third-party facilitation and mediation roles, drawing on insights from peace processes in Northern Ireland and Sri Lanka.



*Dr. Shweta Singh*

She explained that the process of mediation comprises third party involvement with a purpose to help warring parties regulate incompatibilities and decrease or stop the levels of violence. Mediation is often used interchangeably with other terms such as facilitation, good offices, consultation, and third party intervention. In all of these, disputants seek the help of an individual, state, or organization to resolve differences without resorting to violence.

Quoting the late Richard Holbrooke, former US envoy to the AfPak region, who had remarked that the success of mediation was hard to define and measure, Singh said that success is determined by the way in which the mediator frames the process and his/her ability to wield a certain degree of power over the conflictants when the process hits an impasse. While a mediator holds considerable power to persuade parties to arrive at a consensus on contentious issues, ultimately, the process needs to be owned by the stakeholders. If stakeholders don't feel invested in the process, no facilitated agreement will hold in the long run. In this context, Singh made a distinction between mediation by muscle where force or a high degree of assertiveness was prevalent vis-à-vis pure mediation where the focus was more on process (and the agenda and pace were determined by the conflictants). The involvement of the USA in Northern Ireland and the role of Norway in Sri Lanka were cited as examples of 'power mediation' and 'pure mediation' respectively. The structure and format of the mediation process in each case was a key factor in determining the degree of success with reference to conflict resolution.

While in the case of Northern Ireland, the key stakeholders were the UK, the Irish Republic, paramilitary organizations, unionists, and nationalists, in Sri Lanka, the primary parties were the Buddhists, Sinhalese, Muslims, factions, the LTTE, and the UNP. Following a presentation on the historical factors and

asymmetries that led to the creation of the two conflicts, Singh highlight the challenges that mediators in the two contexts confronted. These included psychological barriers, lack or absence of party consensus, stalemate, lack of attention to underlying fears, et al. She quoted George Mitchell, the then US envoy to Northern Ireland, who said,

*Centuries of conflict have generated hatred that makes it virtually impossible for the two communities to trust each other. Each disbelieves the other. Each assumes the worst about the other. If there is ever to be a durable peace and genuine reconciliation, what is really needed is the decommissioning of mindsets in Northern Ireland. That means that trust and confidence must be built, over time, by actions in all parts of society.*

With reference to outcomes, Singh noted that while mediation resulted in the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland, a similar effort failed in the Sri Lankan context. In the case of Northern Ireland, the Good Friday Agreement led to other accords, which resulted in institutional arrangements for power sharing, minority vetoes, and security guarantees. It was a success in contrast to the Sri Lankan scenario where six rounds of talks collapsed. In 2006, the Sri Lankan army launched a military offensive, which resulted in a decisive military victory in 2009 with the defeat of the LTTE. Clearly, mediation as a nonviolent process had failed in a context where later, violence was used to change the balance of power between the Sri Lankan state and the LTTE.





In her concluding remarks, Singh urged participants to critically analyze and grasp the dynamics of the two cases and apply these to the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. She raised the following questions:

- Do you think the conflict between India and Pakistan is ripe for resolution? Is 'internal readiness' still the missing factor?
- Can third party intervention work in the context of Kashmir? If so, which form—power or pure? Who are the stakeholders that should be invited to be part of this process?



## *Module Six*

# **Religion, Conflict, and Peace**



## *Heritage Walks*

### **Sites, Rituals, People**

*Religion is a powerful constituent of cultural norms and values, and because it addresses the most profound existential issues of human life (e.g., freedom and inevitability, fear and faith, security and insecurity, right and wrong, sacred and profane), religion is deeply implicated in individual and social conceptions of peace.<sup>29</sup>*

Dr. Navina Jafa, a Delhi-based cultural historian and performing artist led the Workshop participants on two Heritage Walks—to the Nizamuddin Dargah and the ISKCON Temple in New Delhi. The purpose of these Walks was to familiarize participants with different religious, spiritual, and cultural traditions that coexist in India—sometimes conflictually, sometimes peacefully—and how spaces of worship might be used as resources for advancing processes of conflict transformation. Unlike many Western societies which divorce



*Dr. Navina Jafa*

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<sup>29</sup> Abdul Aziz Said and Nathan C. Funk, 'The Role of Faith in Cross-Cultural Conflict Resolution' (presented at the European Parliament for the European Center for Common Ground, September 2001).

religion from the public sphere and where ‘separation of church and state’ is largely the norm, in South Asia, faith touches the everyday lives of millions of people in palpable ways. It is very much a part of the warp and weft of our consciousness. In this context, places of worship where rituals and other religious practices are conducted in a public space are important sites for study. The critical issues in such a study are:

- Is a temple, mosque or gurudwara a place of worship across religious divides? If so, what are the energies that infuse it and make it a sacred space?
- How is the sacred appropriated by the political?
- How can religious spaces become symbols of inter-cultural understanding?

It was in this context that Dr. Navina Jafa conducted the Heritage Walks to the Nizamuddin Dargah and the ISKCON Temple. Listed below are some participant reflections from these Walks.

A majority of the participants, Pakistanis and Indians alike, expressed surprise at the number of similarities they found between the Nizamuddin Dargah and the ISKCON Temple. As Mr. Moazzaam Hashmi, an Islamabad-based security analyst, put it, ‘You have an idol; we put a *chadar* on our God. The culture is the same.’ Exploring the **similarities between the Dargah and the Temple**, Jafa said that from a sociological perspective, there is a functionality of how people move and negotiate with the space and participate in the functioning of that space. And this is very similar in the two spaces of worship. Being in a temple and a dargah is an experience—a feeling that one can be free and do what one desires. The central focus in both is the concept of *darshan*, an



*Workshop participants at the Nizamuddin Dargah in New Delhi.*

audience. So whether the *darshan* involves draping a *chadar* on Khwaja Sahib’s tomb or catching a glimpse of the deity when the *dwara* opens, the experience is similar. Also, the purpose in both is to imbibe the positive energy and spiritual resonance that years of worship have generated. In fact, it was said that a mosque is perhaps different in the sense that it is a more solemn space, like a church, where silent prayer and reflection are possible.

Ms. Anamika Gupta articulated a different perspective on this, saying that what individuals experience in a temple or a *dargah* is more an external and perhaps superficial manifestation of God. ‘A true “audience” with the divine requires inner work where we open our heart to see the divinity that lives in other people and in ourselves. When we are able to see the divine in ourselves and in others, then we are ready for a true *darshan*. This awakening is important because visits to places of worship are meaningless if we can’t make religious precepts a way of life and translate ideals into action’, said Gupta.

While some participants felt that religion is about unconditional love and is blind to the markers of caste, gender, and creed, Jafa reminded them that the ground reality in South Asia is different. ‘Here, it is always about the self...my own home. The social psyche is very self-oriented. This is in contrast to Western societies which, while being individualistic, treat public spaces as shared spaces. The ethics of tolerance are much stronger there’, said Jafa. Further, there is also a gap between theory and practice with reference to the history of a shared culture between Hindus and Muslims in the subcontinent. Despite this history, the reality is that the **division of the mindscape between ‘us’ and ‘them’ is firmly embedded in public consciousness**. The distrust exists because people are never introduced to or interact with *the other* culture. Jafa added that in India, there are fewer Hindus who have knowledge of Islam than there are Muslims who know of Hinduism. Adding a perspective from Pakistan, Mr. Imran Khan felt that there are too many instances of how religion has



Dr. Navina Jafa conducts a Heritage Walk at the ISKCON Temple in New Delhi.

been used for the perpetuation of vested interests and for the subjugation of people. For example, he shared that in Pakistan, some landlords and politicians have gained legitimacy and undue power from their kinship ties with Sufi families. The emphasis, he said, should be on using religion to promote tolerance and pluralism in society. Commenting on the daunting challenge that such a goal presents, Mr. Hassan Hakeem, Graduate Student, National Defense University, Rawalpindi, drew attention to the danger posed when the state begins to patronize religion as was the case in Pakistan under the rule of Gen. Zia-ul-Haq in the 1980s. The manipulation, distortion, and misuse of religion have resulted in the threat of extremism which has begun to affect the lives of Pakistani citizens in very palpable ways. Citing an example of how the political use of religion has become commonplace to exacerbate tensions between Pakistan and India, Mr. Faheem Bin Tariq, Director of the Pakistan Educational and Cultural Foundation, Karachi, pointed to the recent grant of MFN status to India by Pakistan. Right-wing religious groups in Pakistan used slogans such as *Hindustan key sath rishta kiya? Initiqaam ka, nafrat ka*<sup>30</sup> and images of a burnt Babri Mosque to respond to the announcement of MFN status to India.

There was also consensus on the emergence of **religion as a successful commercial activity**. This was witnessed at the Temple as well as at the Dargah where caretakers of both places of worship undertook aggressive marketing of not just the religious space, but of the overall faith tradition. Jafa shared that religious institutions are the largest unorganized economic sector in the subcontinent. They carry out aggressive marketing of who they are and it would not be an exaggeration to call them ‘corporate religious institutions’.

There was also the view that **religion can play the role of a connector between India and Pakistan**. As one participant put it, ‘All we need to do is to reverse the process of othering. Religious leaders of both communities (Hinduism and Islam) can play an important role in initiating the process of seeing *the other* as a fellow human being. Once this process is initiated, it will bring the people of the two countries closer together.’

Speaking on the **influence of Sufism in South Asia**, which has been a binding force in the region and which gave South Asian Islam a unique character, Jafa said that the tenacity of tolerance which was propagated by Sufism was understood even by the most orthodox of conquerors who had proclaimed

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<sup>30</sup> Translation in English: ‘What is our relationship with India? Of vengeance and hatred!’

*jihad*. In fact, the entire legitimacy of political Islam from the 13<sup>th</sup> century onwards, through sea and land routes, was always without the sword. It was always through the traders, whether Arabic or Sufi. That was even understood by fanatics like Muhammad Ghori who got defeated in the Battle of Tarain and made a retreat following the advice of Moinuddin Chishti. Sufism has played an important role in the trajectory of how the craftsmanship of political Islam was laid down in South Asia. In this context, Jafa posed the question, ‘How were the Sufis so successful in bringing Islam here... into a region which had its own strong religious tradition?’ She offered three reasons:

- First, the Sufis served free food—*langar*—which was completely vegetarian (without even garlic and onion), and this remains so even today. In fact, when there was a famine in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British could not but recognize the greatness of this whole idea of *langar* at Ajmer Sharif.
- *Barqat* (blessing) was the second tool. Jafa shared that irrespective of an individual’s caste, religion or ethnicity, s/he could go there for counseling and advice to address psychological problems and other conflicts that weighed heavy on the person.
- Third was the concept of *qawwali*. The most populous school across South Asia, it is only the Chishti order where there is accommodation for music in the form of *qawwalis*. Interestingly, there are numerous references to *Radha* and *Krishna* in the different categorizations of the *qawwali*.



Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath with Workshop resource person Dr. Navina Jafa.

Sharing experiences from Pakistan, Workshop participant Mr. Moazzam Hashmi said that despite the growing influence of the Saudi Wahhabis, the number of people who visit Sufi shrines in Pakistan is increasing. The reason for this is that the Sufis focused on the fundamentals and allowed people to follow their own cultural practices. They recognized that Hindus and Muslims share the same culture and this permeates through religious practices.



*Workshop participant Mr. Faheem Bin Tariq (Director, Pakistan Educational and Cultural Foundation, Karachi) demonstrates the similarities between methods of prayer in Islam and Hinduism. Reflecting on the Heritage Walks, he said:*

The visits to the Dargah and the Temple facilitated intellectual growth and created a more positive construction of identity. The similarities between qawwali and bhajan, dua and prarthana, 'dhayi' and 'muraqba' that Dr. Jafa so beautifully elucidated, made me feel a sense of connection to our shared heritage.



## *Module Seven*

### **Envisioning Futures**



#### *Workshop*

#### **Building Cross-Border Partnerships for Peace**

The Workshop closed with the session *Envisioning Futures: Building Cross-Border Partnerships for Peace*.<sup>31</sup> Addressing the question, ‘where do we go from here’, this session looked at how the WISCOMP Conflict Transformation Workshops can be taken forward to serve as platforms for enhancing alumni collaborations and supporting the participants in their peacebuilding endeavors. Exploring what participants might want to do to sustain cross-border linkages and partnerships, it invited them to collectively formulate their own blueprint for conflict transformation between India and Pakistan—looking specifically at the roles that they see themselves playing and the responsibilities they are willing to undertake in this respect.

As a first step in this direction, participants mapped a ‘preferred future’ for India and Pakistan, and what they can do, individually and collectively, to transform this ‘preferred’ or ‘desirable’ future into one that is ‘possible’ and ‘probable’. The pedagogical principles of ‘awareness, reflection, and action’ were held together in close relationship so that participants could brainstorm concrete proposals and translate these into practical initiatives in their communities and with colleagues across the border.

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<sup>31</sup> The report for this section was written by Ms. Supriya Roychoudhury.





*Mr. Ashok Panikkar*

Led by Workshop resource person, Mr. Ashok Panikkar, Founder and Executive Director, Meta-Culture, South Asia's first relationship and conflict management consulting firm, the session opened with a number of interactive group and active listening exercises and exploratory conversations, designed to help participants reflect on the meaning and function of peace, both in their personal and professional lives. Through these conversations, Panikkar also invited participants to

reflect on those stereotypes about their country that they wish to remove and how might they work collaboratively with others in this endeavor. Each interactive exercise helped in the creation of a safe and trusted space in which participants could exchange their views, perceptions, feelings, and experiences in an honest and open way—precisely the kind of exchange that is integral to efforts that seek to minimize the trust deficit in conflict areas.

He then followed this with a set of contemplative and interactive exercises, the purpose of which was to help participants understand the complexities inherent in the process of negotiating one's personal needs, interests, and priorities. Yet, as Panikkar noted, 'for peacebuilding to be effective, we need to recognize that our personal futures and priorities intersect with the collective requirements and needs of the region. It is this process of continual negotiation between the personal and the public that underlies any peacebuilding endeavor.' In this context, he invited participants to reflect on the personal challenges that they had faced on account of their decision to work professionally in the field of peacebuilding. Responses ranged from sacrificing one's career to shouldering the responsibility of raising one's children, to challenges faced on account of being a woman in a predominantly patriarchal society, to challenges confronting teachers who attempt to break certain stereotypes entrenched in the minds of young children, to the particular difficulties thrown up by those wishing to do grassroots work in a sector that does not necessarily pay enough to sustain oneself and one's family. Through these conversations, participants were able to identify specific instances where one's personal context posed a significant challenge to the broader, collective objective of working towards peace in the region.

Panikkar then asked the participants to think about the following questions:

- Identify one thing that you can accomplish without anybody's help or support;

- Identify one realistic goal that you could accomplish with support or help from someone else;
- Identify one concern that you have about India-Pakistan relations;
- Identify one fear that you have about being seen to do this kind of work;
- Identify one kind of help you would like from across the border to do this work;
- Identify one person from your country/outside of your country who you would like to work with.

Holding their reflections on these questions, participants formed small working groups based on the kind of peacebuilding activity they wished to undertake in the context of India-Pakistan relations in the near future. Eight activities were identified:

1. Advocate for inclusive growth
2. Skills and training/capacity building
3. Create and sustain networks, and dialogue for peace
4. Reduce prejudice
5. Increase the constituency of youth peacemakers
6. Forge a South Asian identity
7. Speak out against fundamentalism
8. Gender sensitivity



*Mr. Ashok Panikkar leads Workshop participants in a trust-building activity.*

Participants drafted an action plan to take forward their work in one of these areas, based on their own area of professional experience and expertise. Additionally, they identified specific mechanisms and processes through which group members could stay connected after the conclusion of the WISCOMP dialogue. Listed below are some of the group recommendations:

### **1. Advocate for inclusive growth**

- Revive the old Silk Route, which would be beneficial not only to Pakistan-India relations, but to the region as a whole.
- Improve access to quality education by conducting surveys and assessments on learning levels. Improved education levels can result in broader policy-level changes.
- Create joint micro-finance groups comprising members from different professional and socioeconomic backgrounds. Encourage social businesses as a means to revive the local economies.
- Strengthen internal and external market linkages where trade opportunities exist (apricot production in Baltistan was cited as an example).

### **2. Skills and training/capacity building**

- Sensitize different segments of the society through grassroots and field training.
- Create training materials, such as manuals on nonviolence and peacebuilding, for dissemination.
- Organize lectures and seminars on skills and training in peacebuilding.
- Ensure that such initiatives are covered by the media.

### **3. Create and sustain networks, and dialogue for peace**

- Create peace constituencies through universities.
- Use the electronic media to create these networks and initiate dialogue.
- Facilitate inter-school exchanges across the different regions.
- Initiate cross-regional university collaboration through joint degree programs.
- Facilitate cross-regional teacher exchanges.
- Develop joint blogs for the exchange of information and for the facilitation of a more broad-based dialogue.

#### 4. Reduce prejudice

- Share positive experiences of interactions with *the other*.
- Practice tolerance and be respectful to others.
- Promote active listening.
- Create a Facebook page which would be open to all constituencies and which would serve as a platform to discuss such issues.
- Set up group meetings in the different South Asian countries to take the conversation forward.

#### 5. Increase the constituency of youth peacemakers

- Create a database of all university departments and centers for peace studies in India.
- Initiate correspondence with the deans and directors, as well as the students, of these departments and centers.
- Similarly, establish contact with organizations that conduct programs on peace and conflict resolution with the youth.
- Devise ways by which there is greater debate and exchange on the subject in colleges and universities.



*Mr. Ashok Panikkar conducts the Workshop on Envisioning Futures:  
Cross-Border Partnerships for Peace.*

## 6. Forge a South Asian identity

- Establish a common platform to publish writings on South Asian issues. This could be initiated by WISCOMP and other like-minded organizations.
- Create South Asian networks and organize events that bring together youth from all the countries of the region.
- Use the South Asian University blog and other resources as a platform to enhance interaction on this issue.

## 7. Speak out against fundamentalism

- Propagate a counter-narrative to challenge the dominant narrative and premise of radical politics.
- The counter-narrative would be based on arguments taken from both political philosophy as well as theology.
- The critique against fundamentalism should be extended to other societies as well.
- Concept notes, blogs, and papers highlighting this counter-narrative should be published.

## 8. Gender sensitivity

- The issue of gender sensitivity could be tackled in a number of ways— from pushing for greater health and sanitation rights for women to ensuring a gender sensitive education system.



*Mr. Imran Khan shares his group's proposal on methods to counter radicalism.*

- Lobby for a Private Members' Bill on the prohibition of gender violence.
- Take forward the ongoing work aimed at preventing all forms of sexual harassment. Develop a website which provides a virtual and anonymous space for people to share their narratives and empathize with others.

In conclusion, Panikkar raised a key question for the participants. He prompted them to reflect on a quality that they had either learnt about themselves while serving as peacebuilders, or something which they recognized needed to be transformed in order to make their peacebuilding work more effective. Responses to this question were varied, with some professing that their work had instilled within them a much stronger sense and awareness of their own identity, and others claiming that their work enabled them to realize that they were part of a much broader network of likeminded individuals who shared a common vision and hoped to achieve similar things vis-a-vis peacebuilding in South Asia. Others stated that their work inspired them to be proactive rather than just introspective, and there were still others who learnt that their work had resulted in the transfer of a set of skills to the constituencies with whom they worked closely.



*Ms. Sakshi Kharbanda presents the recommendations of her group for cross-border collaborations on 'advocacy for inclusive growth'.*

## WORKSHOP PROGRAM

**AUGUST 23, 2012**

### **Session 1**

#### *Keynote Address*

#### **Geopolitics and Beyond: India and Pakistan**

Time: 9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Speaker: Shashi Tharoor

Chair: Meenakshi Gopinath

### **Break**

10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.

### **Session 2**

#### *Workshop*

#### **Introductions and Perspectives on Conflict Transformation**

Time: 10:45 a.m. – 12:45 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Facilitators: Manjrika Sewak, Seema Kakran

### **Lunch**

12:45 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

### **Session 3**

#### *Workshop*

#### **Facilitative Processes in Conflict Transformation: The Limits and Possibilities of Intermediary Roles**

Time: 1:30 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Shweta Singh

### **Break**

3:00 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

### **Session 4**

#### *Panel Discussion*

#### **Women, Peace and Security: ‘What Women Do, Why It Matters’**

Time: 3:15 p.m. – 5:15 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 3

Chair: Syeda Hameed

Speakers:

- Bushra Gohar: *Legislating Women’s Rights—The Role of Women Parliamentarians in Pakistan*
- Mossarat Qadeem: *Women Preventing Violence—Perspectives from FATA and Khyber Pukhtunkhwa*
- Sumona DasGupta: *Gender Identity and the Faultlines of Armed Conflict*

**Heritage Walk: Nizamuddin Dargah**

Time: 6:15 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Resource Person: Navina Jafa

**AUGUST 24, 2012**

**Heritage Walk: ISKCON Temple**

Time: 7:00 a.m. – 8:00 a.m.

Resource Person: Navina Jafa

**Session 5**

***Roundtable***

**Sites, Rituals, People: Reflections on the Heritage Walk**

Time: 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Navina Jafa

**Break**

10:00 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.

**Session 6**

***Workshop***

**Challenges to Peacebuilding: Nourishing and Sustaining Ourselves**

Time: 10:15 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Scilla Elworthy

**Lunch**

1:30 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

**Session 7**

***Panel Discussion***

**Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Myth and Reality**

Time: 2:15 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 3

Facilitator: Bushra Gohar

Speakers:

Salma Malik: *Public Discourse on Jammu and Kashmir in Pakistan: An Analysis*

Yashwant Deshmukh: *Peace Polls in Jammu and Kashmir: What do the People Want?*

Zafar Choudhary: *Intra-Kashmir Dialogue*

Alpana Kishore: *Nationality and Identity Shifts in Jammu and Kashmir's Armed Conflict*

Seema Kakran: *WISCOMP's Initiative in Jammu and Kashmir*



## AUGUST 25, 2012

### Session 8

#### Roundtable

#### The Composite Dialogue and Beyond: Exploring Connectors for Peace

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Facilitator: Salman Haidar

Speakers:

Isher Judge Ahluwalia: *Trading for Peace*

Jyoti Malhotra: *Siachen—Breaching the Final Frontier*

Syed Moazzam Hashmi: *Engaging with the Spoilers*

Anam Zakaria: *Education for Peace*

### Break

11:30 a.m. – 11:45 a.m.

### Session 8 (continued)

#### Roundtable

#### The Composite Dialogue and Beyond: Exploring Connectors for Peace

Time: 11:45 a.m. – 1:45 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Facilitator: Salman Haidar

Speakers:

F.S. Aijazuddin: *Water Sharing—Mix Peace with Water*

Salma Malik: *Pakistan-India Relations and the Afghanistan Factor*

Mani Shankar Aiyar: *Beyond the Composite Dialogue—*

*Transforming the Trust Deficit*

### Lunch

1:45 p.m. – 2:15 p.m.

### Session 9

#### Roundtable

#### Media Speak

Time: 2:15 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Facilitator: F.S. Aijazuddin

Speakers:

Pamela Philipose: *Role of the Media in Reporting Conflict—  
A Peace Journalism Perspective*

Suhasini Haidar: *Reporting India-Pakistan Relations*

Vidya Shankar Aiyar: *Cross-border Media Partnerships and a South Asian  
Sensibility*

Haroon Khalid: *India-Pakistan Relations: Views from the Pakistani Media*

**Break**

4:00 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

**Session 10**

*Stakeholder Analysis*

**Mapping Multiple Aspirations and Strategies in Jammu and Kashmir**

Time: 4:15 p.m. – 6:15 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: D. Suba Chandran

**AUGUST 26, 2012**

**Session 11**

*Workshop*

**Envisioning Futures: Building Cross-Border Partnerships for Peace**

Time: 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Ashok Panikkar

**Lunch**

12:30 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

**Session 12**

*Film Workshop*

**The Ever-Present Other: Bombay Cinema and India-Pakistan Relations**

Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Ira Bhaskar

**Break**

2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.

**Session 13**

*Quiz*

**Kashmir: The Land and Its People**

Time: 2:45 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Resource Person: Parvez Dewan

**Session 14**

*Open Space*

Time: 4:00 p.m. – 5:30 p.m.

Venue: Lecture Hall

Facilitator: Meenakshi Gopinath

## Resource Person Profiles

**Alpana Kishore** (New Delhi, India) is a writer, researcher, and journalist. She has reported extensively on Jammu & Kashmir, as a journalist, at the peak of the armed conflict in the 1990s. In 2006, she was awarded a WISCOMP *Scholar of Peace* Fellowship to map the shifting identities of nationality and religion during J&K's armed conflict of 20 years.

**Ashok Panikkar** (Bangalore, India) is the Founder and Executive Director of Meta-Culture—South Asia's first relationship and conflict management consulting firm. He holds a graduate degree in Critical and Creative Thinking from the University of Massachusetts, Boston, and has advanced training in Conflict Resolution from leading institutes in the USA. Mr. Panikkar has conducted hundreds of workshops in communication, conflict resolution, critical thinking, and cross-cultural diversity in the US, India, and Europe. He has advised senior management of leading Indian and international companies on relationship management, conflict resolution, and conflict systems design.

**Bushra Gohar** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is Senior Vice-President of the Pashtun secular-nationalist Awami National Party and Member of the National Assembly. She holds a Masters' degree in Human Resources Management from the USA, with over 19 years of experience in policy design and influence, development design and plans, project evaluation, and implementation of human rights in Pakistan. She has been a Member of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) and the National Council on Social Welfare; Chair of the South Asia Partnership-International (SAP-I); Regional and Global Vice President of the International Council of Social Welfare; and a Member of a number of Provincial and Federal Government advisory committees on women and children's rights. Ms. Gohar has represented civil society and the Government of Pakistan at the United Nations and other international forums.

**D. Suba Chandran** (New Delhi, India) is Director of the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies (IPCS), New Delhi, an organization that seeks to develop alternate frameworks of peace and security in South Asia. His primary area of research includes Pakistan's internal security, Afghanistan, and Jammu & Kashmir. He has published widely on security and conflict in South Asia and is currently researching the subject of State Failure in South Asia. Dr. Chandran is also an Associate at the Pakistan Study Research Unit (PSRU), University of Bradford. Earlier, he was a Visiting Fellow at the Department of Peace

Studies, University of Bradford, UK; ACDIS, University of Urbana-Champaign, USA; and the University of Jammu, J&K.

**Fakir Syed Aijazuddin** (Lahore, Pakistan) is Principal of Aitchison College, Lahore, and has had a distinguished professional career as a Chartered Accountant at a senior level in the private and public sectors, both in Pakistan and abroad. In addition, he is an internationally recognized art-historian and author of more than a dozen books. Their subjects include a catalogue of miniature paintings from the Punjab Hills, the work of 19<sup>th</sup> century British and European artists who visited the Punjab and other areas that are now Pakistan, a definitive monograph on antique maps of the region, two books on the history of Lahore, one on Dr. Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China in July 1971, another on President Richard Nixon's policy towards Pakistan during 1969–74, and a recently published volume of memoirs. He is also a feature writer for DAWN, Pakistan's leading daily English language newspaper.

**Ira Bhaskar** (New Delhi, India) is Associate Professor of Cinema Studies at the School of Arts and Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Previously, she was a teacher of English at Gargi College, Delhi University, and has been a member of the Visiting Faculty at the University of Pavia, Italy; the Mass Communication Research Center at Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi; the Film and Television Institute of India, Pune; the Whistling Woods International Film School, Bombay; and the School of Convergence, New Delhi. Her research interests include historical poetics, cinematic forms including melodrama, cinema and modern subjectivities, literature and film, historical trauma, violence, memory and representation. Dr. Bhaskar has published on narrative poetics, adaptation, nationalism and cinema.

**Isher Judge Ahluwalia** (New Delhi, India) is Chairperson, Board of Governors of the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), where she served as Director and Chief Executive from 1997 to 2001. She was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the President of India in the year 2009 for her services in the field of education and literature. She is Chairperson of the High Powered Expert Committee on Urban Infrastructure and was appointed by the Ministry of Urban Development, Government of India, to this position in May 2008. Dr. Ahluwalia is also a member of the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Council, Government of India, and holds a PhD in Economics from MIT. Her research is focused on industrial development, macro-economic reforms, and issues in social sector development in India.

**Jyoti Malhotra** (New Delhi, India) is a Freelance Journalist and Consultant with the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) where she is responsible for promoting Track II dialogue between the Indian political class and their counterparts across the world. She has been a full-time journalist for the last 26 years, working in India and abroad. She chose to specialize for over half that period in foreign affairs and national security issues. She has wide experience with political and social issues, having reported and analyzed the convulsions of our times, as well as having interviewed a number of politicians, both at home and abroad.

**Mani Shankar Aiyar** (New Delhi, India) is a Member of the Indian National Congress and currently a member of the Rajya Sabha. A diplomat, writer, and social worker, he was earlier the Union Minister of Panchayati Raj and the Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas. He has been elected to the Lok Sabha thrice. He is also a well-known political commentator and his special interests include grassroots democracy, Indian foreign policy particularly with reference to neighboring countries, West Asia, and nuclear disarmament. Mr. Aiyar received his education at St. Stephens' College (University of Delhi) and Trinity Hall (Cambridge University, UK). He is an Honorary Fellow at Trinity Hall and has authored several books including: *Confessions of a Secular Fundamentalist* (2004) and *A Time of Transition: Rajiv Gandhi to the 21st Century* (2009).

**Mossarat Qadeem** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is the Founder and Executive Director of PAIMAN Trust, the only political and economic network of women legislators, social-political female activists, and young leaders from across Pakistan. She also formed *Aman-O-Nisa: Pakistan Coalition of Women Moderating Extremism*. She has diverse experiences of over 22 years in education, research, training in decentralization, political participation of women, good governance, gender and development, and peacebuilding. From the platform of PAIMAN, Ms. Qadeem has formed women and youth peace groups in FATA and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and has built their capacities in conflict transformation and leadership using indigenous methods.

**Navina Jafa** (New Delhi, India) is a cultural professional. She specializes in creative activities including academic cultural tourism, cultural representation, cultural diplomacy, arts in development programs, and conflict transformation through the arts. Dr. Jafa has been associated with WISCOMP and is widely known for her cultural heritage tours. She is a cultural activist, an academician, a performing artist, a cultural historian, and a cultural entrepreneur. Her research

has been a detailed documentation of social organization and performing structures of North Indian performing communities and patronage related to the field of *Kathak* in the urban towns of Delhi, Lucknow, Varanasi, Rampur, and Raigarh.

**Pamela Philipose** (New Delhi, India) is Director and Editor-in-Chief of Women's Feature Service, an agency mandated to visibilize gender in media coverage. Earlier, she was Senior Associate Editor with The Indian Express, anchoring the edit page and writing articles on a range of issues, from conflict and displacement to the politics of gender. She began her career with The Times of India, and was also an Editor with the Down To Earth magazine. In 1999, she was awarded the Chameli Devi Jain Award for Outstanding Woman Journalist and the Zee-Asthiva award for journalism in 2007. She has also contributed to various anthologies—most recently to *Memoirs from the Women's Movement in India: Making a Difference*.

**Parvez Dewan** (New Delhi, India) is Secretary, Ministry of Tourism, Government of India. He is an Indian Administrative Officer of the Jammu and Kashmir cadre. Through a distinguished career in public service, he has held different posts and has contributed actively to the development of Kashmir. Previously, he was the Chairman and Managing Director of the India Tourism Development Corporation. He has translated the *Hanuman Chalisa* and *The Names of Allah* into English and brought out *Jesus Christ Superstar* in Urdu.

**Salma Mehr Fatima Malik** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defense and Strategic Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. She specializes in the areas of war, arms control and disarmament, military sociology, and South Asian affairs. She has worked as a Research Officer at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad; Visiting Faculty for the Intelligence Bureau Directorate; and has rendered lectures as a guest speaker at the PAF Air War College, Karachi, the Command and Staff College, Quetta, and the Fatima Jinnah Women's University, Rawalpindi. Dr. Malik has also anchored television programs on current affairs. Her publications include *Small Arms and the Security Debate in South Asia* (2005).

**Salman Haidar** (New Delhi, India) is a former Foreign Secretary, Government of India. He has served as the Indian ambassador to the United Kingdom, China, and Bhutan, and as First Secretary and Deputy to the Ambassador in Afghanistan. He also served as Head of the Diplomatic Service, Secretary East, and Spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs and later Chief of

Protocol, among other diplomatic positions. In 1977-80, Amb. Haidar was the Minister/Deputy Permanent Representative of India at the United Nations in New York. He writes a weekly column on political affairs for *The Statesman* and is currently Vice Chairman, Global India Foundation, New Delhi.

**Scilla Elworthy** (London, UK) is the Founder of Peace Direct, an organization which aims to fund, promote, and learn from peacebuilders in conflict areas. Peace Direct received the ‘Best New Charity’ honour at the 2005 Charity Awards. Previously, she founded the Oxford Research Group in 1982 to develop effective dialogue between nuclear weapons policymakers worldwide and their critics. It is for this work that she was awarded the Niwano Peace Prize in 2003 and nominated three times for the Nobel Peace Prize. In 2007, she was appointed a Member of the World Future Council and the International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy. She is also the Co-founder of ‘The Pilgrimage’—a 24-hour intensive course that enables participants to make major shifts in consciousness and perception.

**Shashi Tharoor** (New Delhi, India) is Minister of State for Human Resource Development, Government of India. He is also an author, a United Nations peacekeeper, refugee worker, human rights activist, a former Minister of State for External Affairs, and an elected member of the Indian Parliament from the Thiruvananthapuram constituency in Kerala. His UN career began in 1978, when he joined the staff of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Geneva, and held key responsibilities in peacekeeping after the Cold War, and as a senior advisor to the Secretary-General, as well as the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Communications and Public Information. Dr. Tharoor is an internationally-known speaker and author on India’s recent transformation and future prospects, globalization, freedom of the press, human rights, literacy, Indian culture, and India’s present and potential influence in world politics. His recent books include *Pax Indica: India and the World of the Twenty First Century* (Penguin, 2012) and *Shadows Across the Playing Field* (Roli, 2009) co-authored with Shaharyar Khan.

**Shweta Singh** (New Delhi, India) is Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations, South Asian University, New Delhi. She is also a Visiting Professor at the Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding Program at Lady Shri Ram College. She completed her Doctoral research at Jawaharlal Nehru University. She has also worked extensively on critical issues around Education for Peace, Pedagogy for Peace, and recently published a module for Teacher Educators on *Education for Peace* in the Resource Manual

published as part of the Ministry of Human Resource and Development and Delhi University Project 2008.

**Sahasini Haidar** (New Delhi, India) is the Deputy Foreign Editor and Prime-Time Anchor for CNN-IBN, regularly anchoring its award-winning show India@9. She entered the world of journalism in 1994 with an internship at the CNN's United Nations Bureau in New York. Ms.Haidar regularly covers the subcontinent, frequently reporting from Pakistan. She has also travelled with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to cover his official visits to the US, France, Russia, NAM, SAARC, and CHOGM.

**Sumona DasGupta** (New Delhi, India) is Senior Research Consultant with Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA). She is the former Assistant Director of WISCOMP and her research and writing in recent years have been around new issues of security, peace, and conflict, especially with reference to Jammu and Kashmir. Gender has been a cross-cutting research issue and currently she is also working on a research and writing assignment with International IDEA, Stockholm, that analyzes Indian political parties from a gender perspective. Dr. DasGupta has been a Member of the Expert Committee set up to design the Masters Curriculum on Peace and Conflict Studies at Sikkim University, Gangtok, and is currently a Member of the International Advisory Group of International Conflict Research (INCORE), University of Ulster, UK.

**Syeda Saiyidain Hameed** (New Delhi, India) is a Member of the Planning Commission of India where her responsibilities include Health, Women and Children, Minorities, Voluntary Action, Handlooms and Handicrafts, the states of Haryana, Rajasthan, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, and Island Development Authority. She is also the Chancellor of Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad. Dr. Hameed has been a founding member of the Muslim Women's Forum and South Asians for Human Rights. She was also a founder of the Women's Initiative for Peace in South Asia where she organized the movement for the Women's 'Bus for Peace' between Delhi and Lahore and Kolkata and Dhaka. She was awarded the Padma Shri in 2007.

**Yashwant Deshmukh** (New Delhi, India) is the Managing Director and Chief Editor of Center for Voting Opinion and Trends in Election Research and the Founder of YRD Media Network, South Asia's largest Indian-owned Media and Stakeholder Research Agency. As a seasoned communications entrepreneur, he has always placed special emphasis on impeccable research, design, and production and delivered innovative and original news analysis.



He has travelled to and reported from various conflict regions of Asia, Africa, and the Middle East.

**Vidya Shankar Aiyar** (New Delhi, India) is Honorary Advisor to the Prime Minister's Informal Group on Global Nuclear Disarmament. He is also a Media Professional. He helped establish the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies and led the first-ever South Asian team to the Harvard Project for Asian and International Relations. The Rockefeller Foundation identified him as a Next Generation Strategic Analyst in 1998. Globally, he writes and speaks academically on international affairs. He was the face of Channel News Asia, Singapore, and has interviewed several hundred top world personalities. In India, he was an executive editor with CNN-IBN and used to host their 9 and 10 pm shows. Live coverage of world events is his forte. He conducts media training and workshops now, and is a passionate advocate of professional media ethics and using the media to unite South Asia.

**Zafar Choudhary** (Jammu, India) is the Founder Director of the Indus Research Foundation, a Jammu based think-tank. He was recently nominated as a Fellow on Asia Society's India-Pakistan Regional Young Leaders Initiative. A journalist by profession, he was the Editor-in-Chief of Epilogue, a monthly current affairs magazine on Jammu and Kashmir. Previously, Mr. Choudhary was Resident Editor of the English daily Kashmir Images (Jammu edition) and Executive Director of the Center for Media Research and Documentation.

## Participant Profiles

**Ambreen Abbasi** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is a Barrister of the Honorable Society of Lincoln's Inn, London. She was a member of the International Bar Association, London in 2010 and Inner London Crown Court in 2011. Ambreen holds an LLB degree from the University of Peshawar, Pakistan; a degree in LLM (International Environmental Law) from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland; and a Graduate Diploma from the College of Law, London. At present, she works as an associate at Rizvi, Isa, Afridi and Angell, Advocates and Corporate Counselors, Islamabad. She has specialized in World Trade Organization Law and Environmental Law. Her general practice is related to corporate law, international trade, competition law, and energy and natural resources law.

**Ambreen Anjum** (Srinagar, India) is pursuing a Masters' degree in Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding from the Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. She holds a Bachelors' degree in Political Science, History, and Functional English from the Government College for Women, University of Kashmir in Srinagar. She has been a part of an Academic Exchange Program in International Relations, American Literature, and Creative Writing in the USA. She has dedicatedly volunteered with organizations working in the field of gender and human rights.

**Anam Zakaria** (Lahore, Pakistan) is the Director of the Lahore and Islamabad Projects of The Citizens Archive of Pakistan where she spearheads CAP's Exchange-for-Change program, a venture opening communication channels between Pakistan-India and Pakistan-USA at the micro-level. She holds a Bachelors' degree in International Development from McGill University, Montreal. She has previously interned with the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, Coca-Cola Export Corporation of Pakistan, and the Maternity and Child Welfare Association of Pakistan.

**Anamika Gupta** (New Delhi, India) is presently involved with the Borderless World Foundation in the Special Interventions and Administration Department, working for the wellbeing of orphaned girls in Jammu and Kashmir. She has secured a B.A. Degree in English from Calcutta University and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Social Communication Media from Sophia Polytechnic, Mumbai. Anamika has worked as an Assistant Output Editor at NDTV Metronation (2008) and as a Sub Editor at Hindustan Times Online (2009) and Eternal

Ganger press (2010-11). She will begin her Post-Graduate education in Peace and Conflict Studies at the European Peace University at the end of 2012.

**Arko Dasgupta** (New Delhi, India) is a national-level quizzier and published writer. He is currently pursuing his Masters in Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding from the Nelson Mandela Center for Peace and Conflict Resolution, Jamia Millia Islamia. He holds a Bachelors' degree in Sociology from St. Joseph's College, Bangalore, where he was the valedictorian and was involved in voluntary activities at the college-level. Arko has been associated with the Foundation for Nonviolent Alternatives as a Research Associate. He enjoys reading Oscar Wilde and Amitav Ghosh.

**Avineet Parashar** (Jammu, India) is a Lecturer of Political Science in the State Education Department, Jammu. She has previously worked as a Research Fellow at the Special Assistance Program of the Department of Political Science, University of Jammu. She holds a PhD in Political Science from the University of Jammu and has published books, namely *Conflict and Politics of Jammu and Kashmir: Internal Dynamics* (2007) co-edited with Paawan Vivek and *Elections in Jammu and Kashmir: A Commentary* (2008) co-authored with Rekha Chowdhary and Paawan Vivek. She won the Basheeruddin Ahmed Memorial Best Investigator Award in 2006 from the Center for the Study of Developing Societies.

**Azhar Shahbaz Khan** (Rawalpindi, Pakistan) works as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Defence and Diplomatic Studies, Fatima Jinnah Women's University, Rawalpindi. He has secured an M.Sc. degree in Defense and Strategic Studies from Quaid-i-Azam University. His five years' experience of teaching and supervising research dissertations which encompass a diverse range of areas such as gender, human rights, democracy, and conflict resolution come from his degree in Social Policy from Middlesex University, London. He has been a Research Associate at the Foundation for Research on International Environment, National Development and Security (2003-4). At present, Azhar is a participant in two projects, sponsored by the British Council and the Ministry of Human Rights and Minority Affairs.

**B.P. Sandeep** (New Delhi, India) is a student of International relations at the South Asian University. He has a degree in Engineering in Biotechnology from PESIT Bengaluru, India. His focus is on environmental issues and he plans to work on climate change with UN organizations. He is currently working on a study on Climate Change and its impact on South Asia. Earlier, he worked as a Research Intern at the Observer Research Foundation where

he researched on energy matters in India. He has also volunteered with the National Service Scheme in the Nagarhole forests, where he worked on the “Impact of Government Policies on Tribal people”.

**Chintan Girish Modi** (Mumbai, India) works with Shishuvan, a Mumbai-based school committed to nurturing democracy, dialogue, cross-cultural understanding, and nonviolent forms of conflict resolution. He travelled with his students to Lahore in February 2012 as part of the Exchange-for-Change program facilitated by Routes 2 Roots and The Citizens Archive of Pakistan. Chintan is also a researcher with the Hri Institute for South Asian Research and Exchange and a social media consultant with Adhyayan Quality Education Services Pvt. Ltd. He holds a Bachelors’ degree in English from St. Xavier’s College, Mumbai and an MPhil in English Language Education from English and Foreign Languages University, Hyderabad.

**Gulalai Khan** (Lahore, Pakistan) is a Communication and Advocacy Specialist at UNDP. She has been Coordinator and Manager (Student Affairs) in the first ever professional training course by a media organization called Geo Television. She has produced a Defence Day special documentary called ‘Sarhadon Kay Taray’ on the armed forces of Pakistan, and is a Member of the Faculty for the School of Communication and Visual Arts, University of Lahore.

**Haroon Khalid** (Lahore, Pakistan) is a Freelance Journalist writing for *The News* and *The Friday Times* among others, and an actor with Ajoka Theater. He has previously worked as a Minority and Lollywood Project Director with The Citizens Archive of Pakistan and as a Staff Reporter for Newsweek Pakistan. He holds a Bachelors’ degree in History/Anthropology from Lahore University of Management Sciences and has worked extensively with the religious minorities of Punjab on whom he is currently compiling a book.

**Hemant Shivakumar** (New Delhi, India) is a Legislative Assistant to the Member of Parliament Fellowship at PRS, a Unit of the Center for Policy Research. Previously, he has worked as a Research Assistant at Chaitanya: The Policy Consultancy, Chennai. His recent published work includes: ‘Shaping India’s Foreign Policy: The Role of MEA and Research Think Tanks’, ‘India’s Energy Security: Strategizing Nuclear Energy’, and ‘Conflict Management: Case Study of the Sampit Conflict’. Hemant has extensive field research and volunteer experience. He has volunteered and blogged for Prajnaya’s *16-Day Campaign against Gender Violence* and other events. He holds a Masters’ degree in Defense and Strategic Studies from the University

of Madras, and has participated in a workshop on Multi-Track Diplomacy in Peacebuilding by John Davies at the University of Madras.

**Huma Rehman** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is an Associate Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies (CISS), Islamabad. She has studied courses in conflict, security, and international affairs and has worked on a thesis on nuclear organization learning. She has also worked at the Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad and has participated in several national seminars on defense policy as a researcher.

**Imran Khan** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is a Founding Member of Khudi Pakistan, a counter-extremism and pro-democratic culture social movement promoting tolerance, peace, and pluralism. As the Head of Counter-Extremism Training and Strategic Communications since April 2010, Imran has been engaged in advocacy with the Pakistani youth, the civil society, the government, think-tanks, and diplomatic community. Prior to joining Khudi, Imran worked as a Communications Officer at the International Committee of the Red Cross and as a Sub-Editor for Daily Times, an English newspaper. He holds a Bachelors' degree from GC University Lahore and an M.Sc. degree in Anthropology from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad.

**Kamellah Khan Miankhel** (Peshawar, Pakistan) is the Central Vice President of the Awami National Party. She organizes various youth-centric political activities for the Baacha Khan Trust and has previously worked as a Member of the National Democratic Institute. Kamellah has also been a Master Trainer for UNDP's Musalehti Jirga Project and a Lecturer of Law at Islamia College University. She holds a Bachelors' degree in Law.

**Madhavi Shukla** (New Delhi, India) is pursuing a Masters' degree in Conflict Analysis and Peacebuilding from Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi. Additionally, she holds a P.G. Diploma in Disaster Preparedness and Response from the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai, where she has studied papers related to conflict and governance. Previously, Madhavi interned at a UNDP project on 'Urban Risk Reduction' which was in collaboration with the Government of Maharashtra.

**Mohammed Nasirul Mehdi Shabani** (Kargil, India) is Assistant Professor in the Department of Commerce at Government Degree College, Kargil. He holds a Masters' degree in Commerce from Mumbai University and a Bachelors' degree in Education from Kashmir University. His publications include 'Politicization of Religion in Ladakh' and 'Buddhist Muslim Relations in Ladakh: A Responder'.

**Muhammad Faheem Bin Tariq** (Karachi, Pakistan) is Founder and Director of the Pakistan Educational and Cultural Foundation and a Founder Member of the National Youth Foundation. He has also been a UNESCO Youth Peace Ambassador and a Member of the Youth Peace Parliament, Pakistan. Faheem is a leadership facilitator and the youngest yoga/meditation teacher in Pakistan. He was recognized as a ‘Global Scholar and Leader’ by the International Presidential Council of Singapore. He holds a Bachelors’ degree in Architecture from NED University, Karachi.

**Muhammad Hassan Hakeem** (Rawalpindi, Pakistan) is a student of International Relations at the National Defense University at Islamabad. With research interests in both domestic policies and international affairs of Pakistan, he has been a regular columnist and researcher for many significant publications. He has also been an active participant in theater and event management.

**Palwasha Kakakhel** (Peshawar, Pakistan) is an Information Manager, GIZ-German International Cooperation-FATA Livelihood Program, Peshawar. She has been a lecturer at the Institute of Management Studies, University of Peshawar, and holds an M.Sc. degree in International Human Resource Management from the University of Bristol, United Kingdom. Her publications include ‘Expatriates Selection, Training and Development and Repatriation’. Previously, Palwasha was associated with the Human Resource Development Center, Peshawar, and also served as Languages Interpreter at Chinese Services Limited in the United Kingdom.

**Raja Bagga** (New Delhi, India) has worked as a Client Coverage Manager at the Standard Chartered Bank, Mumbai, and interned with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, Delhi. He holds a Bachelors’ degree in Economics from Hansraj College and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding from Lady Shri Ram College for Women. Currently, he is pursuing an LLB from Campus Law Center, Delhi University, where his thesis focuses on Penal Prescription: Synchronizing Crime and Punishment. Raja has also presented a paper on Viewing Prisons from the Lens of Rehabilitation at the All India Criminology Conference, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai.

**Raja Wasim Khan** (Muzaffarabad, Pakistan) is Director, Press for Peace, ‘Azad Jammu and Kashmir’. He has been engaged in the promotion of peace and gender equity in AJK for over seven years, and has extensive work experience in the area of women, peace, and security. In this context, he has participated in a series of workshops and dialogues in Islamabad and Lahore.

In addition, he has prepared a booklet on the Kashmir conflict, published by the ASR Resource Center Lahore. Wasim has played a pivotal role in sensitizing and mobilizing women to actively participate in the promotion of peace and security by engaging them in awareness raising, advocacy, and capacity building endeavors.

**Rehana Manzoor** (New Delhi, India) is pursuing her Masters in Human Rights from the Jamia Millia Islamia. She graduated from Miranda House with a Bachelors' degree in Sociology. She is an active member of the Human Rights Forum in Jamia Millia Islamia, and has interned with the Jammu and Kashmir State Human Rights Commission and the J&K Yateem Trust Foundation (where she has taught orphaned children).

**Ritambhara Mehta** (New Delhi, India) is a Senior Research Associate at the ASER Center, Pratham. Currently, she is involved in a Middle School Study which will explore issues of access to and quality of post-primary education in Maharashtra and Bihar, with a focus on educational opportunities for girls. She holds a Master's in International Relations from Jawaharlal Nehru University.

**Sakshi Kharbanda** (New Delhi, India) is pursuing her PhD in Microfinance from Jamia Millia Islamia. She holds a Masters' degree in Public Administration from IGNOU and a Masters' in Economics from Annamalai University. Sakshi has qualified the NET for Lectureship in Public Administration.

**Samir Ahmad Bhat** (Srinagar, India) is pursuing his PhD in Political Science from the Institute of Kashmir Studies and holds a Masters' degree in Political Science from the University of Kashmir. He has coordinated a study titled 'A Perception Survey of Media Impact on Kashmiri Youth'. Also, he has held a research internship on 'Conflict Management and Preparing of Diagnostic Reports related to Economic Development in Jammu and Kashmir' under Mercy Corps, US. He has worked as a Field Investigator with the Center for the Study of Developing Studies and interviewed more than 300 people and collected data in relation to voting behavior in the Kashmir region (2008). Samir was selected for the Indian Fulbright Short-Term Scholarships in 2004.

**Samreen Shahbaz** (Lahore, Pakistan) is working on an independent research paper which focusses on how nationalism affects our understanding of history. She is a peace activist and volunteers for the Institute for Peace and Secular Studies. Also, she is a co-founder, editor, and contributor at Roshni, an Urdu website which aims to promote alternative discourse about various social, political, regional, and religious issues. She has worked as a Project Coordinator

for Mashal Books and Research Assistant in the Humanities and Social Sciences Department of the Lahore University of Management Sciences. Samreen is a member of Pul-e-Jawan, a regional peace and security forum. She holds a Masters' degree in South Asian History from the University of Punjab, Lahore.

**Sarah Adil** (Karachi, Pakistan) works as a General Secretary at the Pakistan Youth Organization, an online facilitator for Asia Pacific Youth Network, and is involved in several volunteer projects for children and women's empowerment. Simultaneously, she works in an advertising agency in Karachi along with pursuing her passion in youth activism. She has represented Pakistan as a Speaker at the Asian Youth Conference Pakistan 2011, Presenter at the World Youth Congress Turkey 2010, and Mass Media Delegate at the International Youth Forum 2011, Russia. Sarah has secured a Bachelors' degree in Marketing from the Institute of Business Management, Karachi.

**Satyabrat Sinha** (Chandigarh, India) is an Assistant Professor at the Center for Research in Rural and Industrial Development, Chandigarh, and was previously associated with the Department of Peace and Conflict Studies, Sikkim University, Gangtok. He has also worked as an Assistant Editor at the Institute of Chinese Studies, and a Research Officer at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies. He has contributed several web and newspaper articles such as 'Premier Wen Jiabao's Visit: From Rivals to Partners', 'The India-Pakistan Peace Process: Looking Beyond Musharraf', and 'The Situation in Nepal: Possible Outcomes'. A number of articles of his have been published in *Sikkim Now* namely, 'Peace and Conflict Studies: Scope and Prospects', 'The Ideal and Philosophy of the Uniform', 'Chinese Incursions into Indian Territory: Seeking an Explanation', and many more.

**Shabnoor Sultana** (New Delhi, India) is Country Coordinator of the Women's Regional Network, India, and Researcher and Editor at the South Asia Forum for Human Rights. She is also the India Correspondent at *Encompassing Crescent*, an online monthly magazine based in New York. She has published a number of articles like, 'The Question over India's own version of the Arab Spring', 'Karzai's Visit to India and the Strategic Partnership Agreement', 'Shying from my Islamic Identity in India', and many more. Shabnoor holds a Masters' degree in Human Rights and Duties Education from the University of Madras and an MPhil in Women's Studies from the University of Calcutta.

**Shazia Salam** (New Delhi, India) belongs to 'Indian administered Kashmir' and is currently pursuing her PhD in Women's Studies from Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is an independent social worker and is passionately committed



to working for the women of Kashmir. Her current research is focused on studying the conflict narratives of women in Kashmir and the manifestation of resistance through writings by women in Kashmir. Shazia's broader academic interests cover the issues of Muslim women and the modern world: the debates that need to be confronted, the critical engagement with such issues, and the ever increasing friction between cultural modernity and Islamic tradition.

**Sheikh Mustafa Mumtaz** (Rawalpindi, Pakistan) is pursuing his Bachelors' in Business Administration from the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Islamabad. He has been a Conflict Resolution and Mediation Trainee at the SEEDS Community Resolution Center, Berkeley, California, and has served as the Vice President of AIESEC in Islamabad (2010–11). Mustafa was a Member of the Youth Parliament of Pakistan in 2008 and a Summer Fellow at the Metta Center for Nonviolence in 2010.

**Syed Moazzam Ali Hashmi** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is a political and security analyst. His specialization and expertise is diverse and covers areas including radicalization, religious extremism, counter-terrorism, media, and communications. He has studied international affairs at the American University, the Johns Hopkins University and the University of Karachi, Pakistan. Having intensive field experience, Moazzam has worked as a Political Affairs Advisor with the US Consulate General in Karachi; senior journalist with the Associated Press of Pakistan, The News International, Islamabad Dateline, and The Diplomatic Insight; and Director, News Desk, Xinhua–Pakistan Bureau. Currently, he is engaged as Director Communications with the NGO 'Viquar SSEDLA' (Society for Socio-Economic Development and Legal Aid).

**Syed Waqas Ali Kausar** (Islamabad, Pakistan) is a Lecturer at the National University of Modern Languages, Islamabad, and a Youth Leader in Muzaffarabad, facilitated by Conciliation Resources, United Kingdom. Previously, he worked as a Research Associate at the Center for Peace Development and Reforms and a Research Assistant at the Institute of Social and Policy Sciences. His publications include, 'Shanghai Expo and Pak Pavilion', 'Path to Peace', 'Impact of Conflict on Youth of Kashmir'. Waqas holds a Masters' degree in Governance and Organizational Sciences and an M.Phil degree leading to PhD in Governance, both from NUML, Islamabad.

**Tenzin Menkyi** (Dharamsala, India) is a Research and Media Officer at the Tibetan Women's Association (TWA) which is an NGO that advocates human rights for women inside Tibet and is committed to empowering women in

exile. She has helped organize workshops for TWA on gender sensitization, democracy and peace. She firmly believes in dialogue as a mode of conflict resolution and hopes to learn new methodologies of conflict transformation for her work with the Tibetan community.

**Tenzin Pema** (Dharamsala, India) is a member of the research staff at the Tibet Policy Institute, Dharamsala, where her primary area of focus is the status of the Tibetan language inside Tibet. She holds a Bachelors' degree from St. Joseph's College, Darjeeling, and B.Ed. degree from Loyola College of Education, Sikkim. She has served as a social science teacher for over three years with TCV Suja and later undertook the responsibilities of project officer-cum-general secretary at Khawa Karpo Tibet Culture Center in Dharamsala. Pema joined the Central Tibetan Administration as a civil servant in May 2011.

**Tridivesh Singh Maini** (New Delhi, India) is an Associate Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation, New Delhi. He holds a Masters' degree in International Development from The School of International Service, American University, Washington D.C. and a Bachelors' degree in Politics from the University of Sheffield, UK. He has authored *South Asian Cooperation and the Role of the Punjabs* (2007) and co-authored *Humanity Amidst Insanity: Hope During and After the Indo-Pak Partition* (2009) with Tahir Malik and Ali Farooq Malik. He is also one of the editors of *Warriors after War: Indian and Pakistani Retired Military Leaders Reflect on Relations between the Two Countries, Past Present and Future* (2011).

**Vanshree Kurveti** (New Delhi, India) is pursuing a Masters' degree in International Relations from the South Asian University, New Delhi. She holds a Bachelors' degree in Information Technology from RGPV, Bhopal. Her research interests include India-Pakistan conflict transformation, women in conflict transformation and post-conflict reconstruction, South Asian security, nuclear deterrence, and SAARC.



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## About WISCOMP

WISCOMP (Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace) is a unique South Asian initiative. It provides an interface between academia and the NGO sector, and positions its work at the confluence of Gender and Peacebuilding.

WISCOMP strives to:

- Enhance the role of women as peacebuilders, negotiators, and as agents for nonviolent social change;
- Empower a new generation of women and men with the expertise and skills to engage in peace activism through educational and training programs in Conflict Transformation;
- Contribute to an inclusive, people-oriented discourse on issues of security, which respects diversity and which foregrounds the perspectives of women and the hitherto marginalized;
- Facilitate theory-building and innovative research on holistic paradigms that address the transformation of intra- and inter-state conflicts;
- Build synergy at various levels—between theory, practice and policy; between those working in academia, in the formal structures of foreign policy and diplomacy, and those engaged in grassroots peacebuilding;
- Build constituencies of peace through training, research, and praxis in areas such as multi-track diplomacy, peace advocacy, coexistence, and cross-border civil society dialogues; and,
- Work with educational institutions to engender a culture of peace through the development of curricula and innovative methodology.



Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace  
Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama

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Core 4A, Upper Ground Floor, India Habitat Center  
Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110 003, India  
Tel: 91-11-24648450 Fax: 91-11-24648451  
Email: [wiscomp.ctprogramme@gmail.com](mailto:wiscomp.ctprogramme@gmail.com)  
Website: [www.wiscomp.org](http://www.wiscomp.org) / [www.furhhdl.org](http://www.furhhdl.org)