COLLECTIVE MEMORY AND IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED KASHMIRI TEXTS

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Candidate of **<u>Master of Philosophy</u>** at the National University of Modern Languages do hereby declare that the thesis **<u>Collective Memory and Identity Construction: An Analysis of Selected Kashmiri Texts</u>** submitted by me in partial fulfillment of MPhil degree, is my original work, and has not been submitted or published earlier. I also solemnly declare that it shall not, in future, be submitted by me for obtaining any other degree from this or any other university or institution.

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ABSTRACT

Title: Collective Memory and Identity Construction: An Analysis of Selected Kashmiri Texts

This study examines the impact of collective memory on identity construction and perception formation in the Kashmir conflict, as depicted in Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Nights* and Mirza Waheed's *The Collaborator*. The theoretical framework used for the purpose of the analysis is Zheng Wang's study of collective memory, identity, and conflicts. This research highlights the role of collective memory in forming a distinct identity and integrating the people of Kashmir. The texts reveal that collective memory is used as an instrument to incite hostility and mobilize people in Kashmir. In the Kashmir conflict, collective memory and trauma bind people together as historical enmity is passed on generationally. As depicted in the literary texts, collective memory is used as a lens to view the Kashmir conflict. Collective memory serves as a frame through which the people of Kashmir analyze their position in the conflict and plan their actions. They draw on their collective memory for self-justification, self-glorification, and interpretation of the conflict. Their common past and memories are used to create a master commemorative narrative by the politicians for nationalist movements, as portrayed in the literary texts. This research is significant as it applies the theoretical underpinnings of memory studies to a conflict in the Global South to study its impact. This research is also significant in understanding conflict behavior guided by collective memory. This research highlights how the perception of a conflict can be changed to pave the way for conflict resolution.

Key words: Memory Studies, Kashmir Conflict

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my father for his love, endless support and encouragement.

CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION

1.1.Background of the Study

In this study, I have explored collective memory and its impact on identity and perception of the Kashmir conflict. The role that collective memory plays in forming a distinct and separate identity that integrates and brings more social cohesion within Kashmir has been studied in this research. This research also explores how collective memory serves as a lens through which the conflict is viewed. This collective memory influences the attitudes and perceptions disputants form regarding a conflict. These perceptions and collective memory guide conflict behavior or how people act in conflicts. This research highlights the significance of collective memory in conflicts by studying its impact on identity and perception formation.

World War II's start and the Indian National Congress' formation of the "Quit India" movement significantly influenced the partition of the sub-continent, which resulted in the creation of the two independent dominions of India and Pakistan. The native states could merge with either of the two dominions. (Mohan 07) Despite the Congress's public support for popular self-determination under Nehru, it airlifted troops into Kashmir in October 1947 to fight Pakistani tribal raiders based on the Instrument of Accession, which the Dogra king had signed while fleeing a popular uprising. The Accession Instrument was exhibited to the public for the first time in 1992; it has been the subject of debate about its legitimacy for more than 50 years. Nevertheless, it justified India to fly troops into the Kashmir Valley, stopping the tribal raiders' progress but starting the first of four wars between the two countries. Due to a 1949 ceasefire brokered by the UN, the Line of Control that separates the portions of Kashmir controlled by India and Pakistan was formed. (Mathur 07)

India maintains a vast apparatus with over 500,000 military and paramilitary personnel besides the ever-increasing numbers of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, even though it does not identify the status of Kashmir as a conflict or military rule (JKP). The area is the most militarized in the world due to the troop-to-citizen ratio, creating a landscape overrun with state security.

(Duschinski 46) The militarization of troops in Kashmir and the insurgency impact the civilians residing there. The impact on their identity has been studied in this research. This research has focused on their perception of the conflict to study their conflict behavior.

The theoretical framework for analyzing these themes will be Zheng Wang's Study of collective memory, identity, politics, and conflicts. He provides a framework that studies collective or historical memory as a variable to analyze its impact on various other aspects, such as identity and perceptions. He has provided separate frameworks for the studies used in this research.

His framework on collective memory and identity explores the different functions of collective memory that produce different types of content identity in conflicts. This framework has been applied with Tajfel and Turner's theory of Social Identity to study identity formation in Kashmir.

Historical memory can influence policy conduct in various ways as an identity component. It could serve as either a constitutive norm, outlining the laws or standards that a group is defined by. Additionally, it references and compares with other groups, particularly those with a history of conflict with the group. Thirdly, it impacts how a group perceives and comprehends the world. Finally, it assigns future roles and responsibilities to the group. (Wang, 12)

In addition to Wang's model of identity content, Galtung and Volkan's concept of 'chosen trauma' has been applied to literary texts to study the role of collective memory and trauma on social cohesion and identity. "The three forces of chosenness (the idea of being the people chosen by transcendental forces), trauma, and myths combine to form a country's Chosenness–Myths–Trauma (CMT) complex, or a more evocative term: the collective megalo-paranoia syndrome" (Wang 15). This complex defines group identity and the way it functions in conflicts.

Similarly, Wang's model on the influence of collective memory on perceptions has been applied to the Kashmir context. This research has attempted to study if the model is equally applicable when it is applied to conflicts in the Global South. Wang's model has been used to study the framing and reframing of the Kashmir conflict, which forms the interpretation of the conflict.

Wang defines frames as "shortcuts that people use to help make sense of complex information. These frames are often built on underlying structures derived from beliefs, values, and experiences. These differ across cultures and nationalities" (Wang 27). The concept of framing has been applied to literary texts to study the decision-making process in a conflict.

Wang's collective memory and perception model has been combined with Daniel Bar Tal's Study of shared beliefs of conflict to study conflict behavior. In this framework, Bar Tal studies the impact of shared beliefs on actions taken during conflicts. According to Bar Tal, these actions or conflict behaviors include self-glorification, self-justification, and victimization. (88) This research has used this framework to study the impact of collective memory and shared beliefs on the conflict behavior of Kashmiri civilians. This research also studies the impact of collective memory on nationalism and the political legitimacy of the political elite.

The texts selected for research include fictional and non-fictional accounts that highlight the sufferings of the Kashmiri people. These include *Curfewed Nights* by Basharat Peer and *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed. Peer gives factual accounts of many Kashmiri citizens and their plight in his memoir; it is a recollection of memory. In contrast, Waheed's fictional accounts reflect Kashmir's everyday reality, which is horrifying and chilling.

Basharat Peer's *Curfewed Nights* sheds light on the lives of Kashmiri people away from the political posturing between India and Pakistan. Peer shares tales from his upbringing and heartbreaking recollections of the several Kashmiris he encountered when working as a reporter years later in his memoir *Curfewed Nights*. He describes events such as a young man being initiated into a training camp, an Indian soldier forcing a mother to see her kid carry an exploding bomb, and a poet discovering religion after his family is murdered. He describes politicians residing in former torture cells, picturesque towns laced with land mines, and centuries-old Sufi shrines utterly destroyed by bombings. This text has been chosen for analysis as it provides insight into the everyday lives of people living in Kashmir.

Waheed's *The Collaborator* is set in 1993 when Kashmiri militancy was at its height, and attacks between India and Pakistan across the Line of Control were commonplace. The unnamed 19-year-old narrator is the son of the headman of Nowgam, a community that serves as a crossing point for militants traveling from both sides of the LoC. Nowgam is deserted. The

Indian army surged in to restrict the movement of persons and weapons when several young men, including the narrator's four closest friends, snuck across the Line of Control into Pakistan-controlled Kashmir for paramilitary training. The headman of Nowgam and the narrator's father refuse to leave, so his son is forced into working with Captain Kadian, an alcoholic Indian army officer. Captain Kadian sends the boy daily into a nearby valley, where militants are being slaughtered as they try to smuggle back into Indian-held Kashmir. The narrator is tasked with removing IDs and weapons from the dead. The text had flashbacks into the narrator's life when he and his friends contemplated life choices during the conflict. This text has been analyzed to study the impact of conflict on the perceptions, attitudes, and behavior of people living in a conflict zone. These texts have been used to explore themes of identity and perceptions in the Kashmir conflict, using collective memory as a variable that affects these themes.

1.2. Thesis Statement

Collective memory shapes the collective identity of people living in Kashmir, and it influences the perception of the conflict, which guides the conflict behavior of Kashmiri civilians, as portrayed in the selected narratives from Kashmir.

1.3. Research Questions

1. In what ways does collective memory function in forming collective identity in the literary texts from Kashmir?

2. How does collective memory influence the characters' perception of the Kashmir conflict and their conflict behaviors as portrayed in the selected narratives?

1.4. Delimitation

The delimitations set for this research are as follows,

1. This research is restricted to studying the Kashmir conflict from the recollections of fictional and non-fictional memories of the civilians. It has not drawn comparisons with the official historical narratives.

2. Every conflict has multiple disputants or groups with different historical memories; this research focuses only on Kashmiri civilians' collective memory and does not consider the other group's perspectives.

1.5. Significance of the Research

This research is significant as it applies memory studies to a conflict in the Global South, the Kashmir conflict. This research highlights the power of collective memory and its influence in conflict situations. This research adds to the existing knowledge of memory studies.

This research views collective memory from a political standpoint and signifies its importance in forming perceptions, social cohesion, and nationalistic sentiments during a conflict. This research highlights the significance of collective memory in forming a distinct identity.

This research is also significant in understanding conflict behavior and its reasoning, guided by collective memory. This research highlights how the perception of the conflict can be changed to pave the way for conflict resolution.

1.6. Structure of the Study

There are five chapters in this research study. The study's background and objectives are provided in the first chapter to provide a glimpse into the research. The second chapter reviews the literature and existing texts on this research topic. The third chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings used in this research and the methodology used for analysis. The fourth chapter uses the theoretical framework to analyze the literary texts according to the research objectives. The fifth chapter of this research concludes the Study and highlights the findings.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Memory Studies

Since the 1980s, memory studies have gained attention and developed into a field of study as more approaches and perspectives were added. This field of research continuously reinvents itself. Different disciplines have contributed to this field, but there needs to be more collaboration between these perspectives, due to which memory studies are theoretically isolated. The study varies from country to country as different countries have different cultural trauma and public memory. (Tota and Hagen 22) This study has attempted to study collective memory and its impact in conflict zones in the global South, specifically Kashmir.

History and memory have a complicated relationship. Memories serve as raw materials for history; they are perceptions of past events, and perceptions can be selective. Thus, neither memory nor history can be objective. Memory itself is unobservable; it is studied through its influence on contemporary situations. (Tota and Hagen 24) Disputants have different perceptions of the conflict in a conflict zone because they have different collective memories. They view the conflict from the lens of their collective memory, which justifies their position. This difference in perception of a conflict has been studied in this research.

Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist, was one of the first sociologists to study memory. He wrote extensively on collective memory, exploring the relationship between society and memory. He argued that memory is not an individual faculty; it is collective. Memories are located in a specific time and space, tied to society and rooted in tradition, acquired and recollected through it. Memories are shared representations of past events. (Coser 174)

Similarly, the people of Kashmir have collective memories rooted in their culture and tradition. The conflict has significantly influenced their shared representation of the past. This research will explore the impact of conflict on their shared representation of the past.

Halbwach's work is the primary reference point in memory studies used as a theoretical framework by researchers, but some critique his idea of collective memory. His anti-individualism approach stems from Durkheim's ideas, a teacher of Halbwach, whereby they do not see an individual's representation as necessary when studying memory. Some historians

differ from this viewpoint as they also seek interest in an individual's account of memory. (Kansteiner 181) This study adopts Halbwach's anti-individualistic approach and focuses on the collective memory of the people of Kashmir instead of individual accounts.

Pierre Nora traces the history of memory by giving a three-stage model: pre-modern, modern, and postmodern. During pre-modern times, natural memory constituted local community rituals and traditions, forming a sense of self. In the modern period, after industrialization and the emergence of nation-states, elites took over representations of the past by inventing memory to safeguard the nation-state's future. They did this through language and monuments, forming concrete representations of memory to preserve it. For Nora, this was the 'fall from memory grace.' In the postmodern period, with the growing pace of media culture and consumption, natural memory no longer represents a shared past and traditions; it now forms identities. (Kansteiner 183) The collective memory of the people of Kashmir serves to develop identity rather than preserve traditions of the past. This research has studied how this collective memory shapes the collective identity of the people of Kashmir.

Pierre Nora traces the delicate relationship between history and memory; he writes that modern times have deepened the gulf between the two. History has eradicated memory and has taken over it. He uses the term 'acceleration of history' to differentiate between real memory, which is unviolated and preserved by archaic societies, and history, which is an organization of the past by modern communities that have forgotten their tradition and have embraced change. He writes that these two terms are not synonymous (08).

Nora defines memory as follows: continues to change constantly, is susceptible to the cycle of recalling and forgetting, is unaware of the changes it undergoes over time, is easily manipulated and appropriated, and is prone to going dormant for a while before coming back to life. Memory is life, and living societies found it. (03)

Gedi and Elam have viewed Nora's treatment of memory critically, and they write that his characterization of memory is not the same as historians, and they would disagree with it. Historians view memory as an unreliable source, a fallible, a personal account, and a human faculty. Historians verify these sources to substantiate them. Nora views authentic memory as a living entity that historians distort through their critical methods. Nora writes about collective memory, the remnants of collective experiences. The phrase "collective memory" in and of itself presents problems for Gedi and Elam because "they are conceived of as having capacities that

are in fact actualized only on an individual level, that is, they can only be performed by individual" (34).

Schwartz writes, "Collective memory's fallibility is well documented; its powers less so" (09). Researchers are more interested in highlighting the invalidity and fallibility of memory that its power is underestimated. A better conceptualization of memory studies will allow people to view its distinctive features and the lines of inquiry it opens. Currently, the study is in an ambiguous state where most researchers are more interested in the deficiencies of collective memory. In doing so, the ability of collective memory to deconstruct past realities is underestimated. (09) This research will focus on the deconstructive aspect of collective memory by using it to study a deep-rooted conflict. It will study collective memory's role in political conflicts with different sides and narratives.

There is a debate within memory studies regarding the location and function of collective memory. Two opposing sides have been constructed. Pierre Nora believes collective memory is located in *lieu de mémoire*, translated as a place of memory or sites. He argues that "memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects…these sites are *lieux* in three senses of the word - material, symbolic, and functional" (Nora 18-19). Susan Crane, however, opposes this notion and argues that memories exist in individuals and not in sites in her article, *'Writing the Individual back into Collective Memory*.' She proposes relocating the collective back to the person articulating it to redefine collective memory and demonstrate that it is not just a historical artifact. (Crane, 1375). By doing so, the individuals will speak for themselves and not for others. This research studies the memory of the individuals or the people of Kashmir by exploring the individual accounts of the conflict. The collective memory of Kashmir can be traced back to the individuals who articulate it.

2.2. Cultural Memory

Cultural theorists have dominated memory studies, notably Jan Assmann and Aleida Assmann. Jan Assmann has studied memory culture and early civilizations, giving four case studies of Israel, Greece, Hittites, and Egypt, while Aledia Assmann has applied memory culture to Western societies. Marek Tamm has studied their work on memory culture, and he writes that memory or a shared past of a community is shaped by cultural mediation. Collective memory is

rooted in the culture and the traditions of the study. This is why memories vary from culture to culture. (461)

Jan Assmann defines cultural memory as the contents of this memory are one of the outer aspects of the human memory, which we first prefer to think of as entirely internal. This memory is housed within the individual's brain and is a topic of sciences but not historical or cultural studies. However, the information stored in this memory, how it is arranged, and how long it lasts are typically determined by external factors, such as social and cultural contexts, rather than internal storage or control. (05)

According to Assmann, memory culture is universal; it is linked to a particular group and the social obligations of members of that group. The group forms its identity and image by remembering the past and keeping memories alive. The central element is the memory they do not want to forget as a group, which has a deep-rooted meaning in their history and shapes their current identity. This memory gives them a sense of community. Assmann studies cultural memory through various case studies, including the Israelites' nationhood. They have preserved their memory, which binds them together and differentiates them from other communities. (16) This research has applied the concept of cultural memory to the global South. It has studied how the people of Kashmir have used their collective memories to keep their past alive, construct their own distinct identities, and form their image.

Jan Assmann has studied three themes and their connection to one another: memory, identity, and cultural continuity. He writes that every culture has a connective structure that binds people together; it creates a symbolic universe or an imagined community through shared past experiences and memories integral to the culture's identity and self-image. (03) The collective memory of the people of Kashmir is integral to their identity. Their idea of separatism and nationhood is rooted in their collective memories. Their shared representations of the past form their symbolic universe or imagined community. They identify as a separate community, and their nationalistic movements are based on their distinct identity. This study aimed to emphasize the significance of collective memory in nationalist movements in Kashmir and their idea of imagined community.

Marta Karkowska writes in her article *'In the Usefulness of Aleida and Jan Assmann's Concept of Cultural Memory for Studying Local Communities in Contemporary Poland'* that

Assmann differentiates between the types of collective memory: communicative and cultural. According to Assmann, cultural memory is created by authorities and institutions to build group solidarity and unity based on a shared past. This cultural memory is selected elements and contents from the history passed on from one generation to another so that one interpretation is passed on to the next generation. Thus, cultural memory is supra-generational, unlike communicative memory. (370) The concept of collective memory passed on from generation to generation has been studied in this research. This cultural memory is passed on in Kashmir to keep the past alive. It is also a means to form a single interpretation of the conflict throughout generations. Cultural memory, thus, serves two-fold functions in conflicts. By developing one interpretation, the next generation's conflict behavior is guided by the memories of their ancestors.

Memory studies are transdisciplinary. It incorporates segments of cultural studies to study contemporary issues, conflicts, and political debates. This strand of research began with the holocaust and its impact on individuals, which shaped cultural memory. These areas of research became very influential as it is now used to study the effects of past experiences and struggles in the present, studying contemporary challenges faced by individuals in conflict zones who were exiled, are living as refugees, or are from war-torn areas through their collective memory. (Radstone 32) The contemporary challenges and situation of people in Kashmir cannot be studied without considering their collective memory. This research has used collective memory as a lens to examine the challenges faced by Kashmiri people, their present struggles, and the way forward for them.

To begin exploring the intricacies of past/present interactions as they are mediated by the processes of social and cultural institutions and practices, terms like "cultural," "public," and "social" have been appended to memory. However, the creation - the imagining - of "cultural," "social," and "public" memory may also be connected to the politics that underpin much memory research, to the need to show the persistent and political importance of issues that might otherwise be relegated to the individual or the family. In addition to highlighting that the political is personal regarding memory, focusing on the cultural, public, and social spheres of memory may help prevent the confinement of memory-related concerns to the private and the personal. (Radstone 33) This research focuses on the collective aspect of memory and not the individual

element to argue that in conflict zones, the social, political, cultural, and collective part of memory becomes more significant than individual memory.

Astrid Erll, in her book *Memory in Culture*, discusses two levels of memory: biological memory and symbolic order. In the first level, Erll writes that memory is not purely individual but shaped by sociocultural contexts, media, the people we interact with, and shared experiences. This range of external factors forms a schema through which the past is interpreted. The second level of cultural memory is more symbolic as the word 'memory' here is used metaphorically. Whereby authorities, institutions, and media construct memory. According to the moment's demands, memory is created and recreated from selected versions of individual memory. Thus, a shared past is constructed. (05) The manipulation, construction, and instrumentalism of memory have been studied in this research in the context of the Kashmir conflict. The role of political institutions, media, and schools in the construction of memory has been highlighted in this study. These institutions construct a shared past by using their medium. They instrumentalize collective memory to serve their agendas.

Agnes Heller studies the role and significance of collective memory in forming identity. She writes that creating a shared cultural memory is integral to the existence of a community, and they exist if they have a shared cultural memory. They cultivate their identity by remembering the past. She supports this argument with the example of the Chinese communist government's occupation of Tibet, where they destroyed all remnants of Buddhism, statues, and memorial sites to destroy the cultural memory of Tibet. Thus, an ethnic group can be destroyed by destroying their cultural memory. (139)

Drozdzewski studies the significance of cultural memory and identity in war zones and conflict areas. The author writes that after a foreign occupation is ousted, all evidence of occupation is removed by renaming streets and burning literature. In the former Eastern bloc of the USSR, traces of occupation were removed similarly. However, some form of identity remains through places of memory that serve as physical reminders of the past. These reminders can lead to a future conflict, as with Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. Historically, collective cultural memory has been used to wipe away ethnic groups and deny their existence by taking away their memories. (02) This is why people in Kashmir pass on their memories to

the next generation, as it is a means to keep their identity and community alive. For the existence of a community and its identity, the safeguarding of collective memory becomes essential.

1.3. Collective Memory

Halbwachs distinguished between collective memory, historical memory, and autobiographical memory. The term "autobiographical memory" refers to the recall of one's own experience, unlike historical memory, which is a memory that only comes to us from historical records. History is the recorded past that was once significant but that we no longer have an "organic" relationship with. In contrast, collective memory would be the living past that shapes our identities and our lives. Inevitably, when we lose contact with our pasts, memory gives way to history. (Olick 111) This study has explored collective memory and the ways it shapes memories.

A thorough understanding of society and culture is frequently lacking in historical memory, whose fragmented inclination is to focus on individual recollections. Memory as the study of the collective mind fills this void. Looking at the average person allowed the historical memory to differentiate itself from philosophical history. This involved looking at things ordinary people created (like popular literature) and how ordinary people reacted to high culture items. (Confino, 1389)

The study of collective memory examines the shared identity that unifies a social group, such as a family or a country, whose members have various goals and reasons. In historical memory, what matters most is not how the past is portrayed but rather why it was accepted or rejected. Every society creates representations of the past. However, choosing a certain past is insufficient to impact society. It must influence feelings, spur action, and be accepted; in other words, it must adopt a sociocultural mode of activity. Why do some pasts succeed while others don't? Why do people favor one historical image over another? (Confino 1390) Some historical memories leave impressions that last for decades. These memories are deliberately passed on while others are discarded. These memories play an influential role in defining a group, its functions, actions, beliefs, and identity, which is why it is kept alive. This study has explored the connection of collective memory with the goals and interests of the people of Kashmir. It has studied the relationship between collective memory and the identity of the people of Kashmir. These memories must be kept alive and passed on in Kashmir because they define their group

and make their collective identity. This is why, while some memories are discarded, the memories of the history of the conflict, their position in this dispute, the way they have been treated, and their suffering have been kept alive in Kashmir. These memories are passed on to the next generation as it is essential for their goals and interests as a group.

Kurt W. Foster studies the relationship between the history of art and collective memory in the works of Aby Warburg. Aby Warburg used the idea of social memory but never really developed it. His research was on how primordial and ancient motifs were transmitted to subsequent societies, mainly how they affected and had meaning in Florence during the Renaissance. Warburg claimed that all human creations, particularly artistic creations, were manifestations of human memory that had been passed down through symbols from earlier eras. He eventually concluded that uncovering the collective memory, primal ideas, and responses— which continued to impact our environment through common symbols—was the key to understanding art and culture. Warburg's research focused on what is now known as the collective memory. (170)

Confino has used Aby Warburg's studies and the connection he established between culture, art, and memory for the study of collective memory. This link is crucial to understanding memory because it reverses a recent tendency in which a depiction of the past is not situated inside the symbolic universe accessible to society (for instance, a monument, a film, or a memorial). Confino believes that memory results from the interaction between a specific previous representation and the whole range of symbolic forms available in a particular culture. According to this viewpoint, society is a single, global entity—social, symbolic, and political— where various memories interact. Memory research thus examines the link between the entire and its constituent components. This method also aims to recreate the meaning of a particular collective memory through the use of an intertwined, dual move: setting it in a global historical background and a global representational universe while also examining the beliefs, values, and practices that are embedded in and symbolized by its specific imagery. (1391) The texts reveal in this study that the collective memory of a group cannot be studied in isolation. Their collective memories are based on their experiences as a group. This group should be viewed as a single, global entity with its beliefs, values, experiences, aspirations, and goals. A group's social, symbolic, and political aspects are intertwined with their memories. Keeping Kashmir in focus, this research has studied the collective memory of the people of Kashmir while viewing it in the

backdrop of its historical context, the history of the conflict, and the position of Kashmiri civilians in this conflict. The collective memories of the people of Kashmir cannot be studied without studying it against this backdrop and historical context.

According to a study by Wertsch, there is a significant difference in collective and individual memory. When comparing individual memory to collective memory studies, there are two distinguishing characteristics. First, it is assumed that memory may be investigated separately from other areas of mental life, and second, accuracy is a fundamental measurement for evaluation. It is compatible with theories that see memory as a capacity or specialized ability, sometimes in conjunction with assertions about particular brain regions or neural networks, to assume that memory may be researched independently. Psychologists believe that in terms of accuracy, individual memory is the frontrunner, compared to collective memory. However, the situation is a little different in the collective memory research. Most study traditions on this subject have presupposed that collective memory can only be comprehended as a component of a broader whole. Rather than attempting to approximate reality, the greater image of which collective memory is a part is typically framed in negotiation and conflict. These conflicts and negotiations take place in the "memory politics" social and political realm and are done so to provide a useful past that supports some identity projects. However, it does imply that accuracy is of secondary significance and may be surrendered to the extent necessary to fulfill other responsibilities. (650) Thus, the difference between individual memory and collective memory lies in their accuracy and the functions they serve. In this study on the Kashmir conflict, collective memory is focused on because, in disputes and negotiations, collective memory serves an important function. The group uses their past for their identity project and to make sense of their situation. This study will consider the collective memories of the people of Kashmir to study their function in identity formation and in forming a perception of the conflict.

2.4. Collective Cultural Memory in Conflict Zones

There is general agreement that individuals from a social organization or community, whether a country, an organization, or a family, can have a collective memory, even though there is no agreement on the exact meaning of collective memory or who is its owner within or between disciplines. The features of the community in which a significant event occurred and in which memories for the event were afterward produced, shared, transferred, and modified must

be taken into consideration to comprehend the processes, practices, and results of the social sharing of memory, which can be called as collective memory. To put it another way, it's essential to consider the social, cultural, and historical context of how people remember things. (Wang 305)

A community's group goals must generally be functionally tied to the formation and maintenance of collective memory, and the memory's content and structure must show meaningful connections to these goals. Collective memory upholds a community's identity and continues its social existence and cultural cohesiveness. Collective memory has always been essential to community development, whether a large group like a country or a small group like a family. The social practices of collective memory allow community members to maintain a sense of their past, and this sense of who they were leads to a certainty about who a group is now. Developing a shared identity involves a proactive, positive process that could exacerbate memory errors. This frequently manifests in situations like nationalism, instrumentalism, and political manipulation at the group level. Individually, people tend to recall positive experiences and activities by their group more vividly than bad ones, and this positive tilt in memory accessibility is especially pronounced in those closely identified with their group. (Wang 307) Collective cultural memory leads to forming group identity and creates a sense of the group's goals and interests. In conflicts, it can dictate conflict behaviors, perception formation, and attitude, as studied in this research. This study shows that collective cultural memory varies at the group and individual levels. Negative memories become more prominent at the group level as they contribute to a group's identity. These negative memories can then be used for other purposes like gaining political legitimacy, gaining mass support, and creating political vigor in people. This research has studied how collective cultural memory is manipulated and used as an instrument by political elites and institutions like schools and media for activism.

Memory is often used as a tool or an instrument in politics. Politicians use the past strategically, using historical analogies and manipulating memory to serve their means and agendas. This has increased interest in memory studies, especially after the World War, causing a memory boom. The past is no longer restricted or limited to the past; memories of war and crises in the past have consequences on the present and the future. The political aspect of memory studies raises essential questions about the event of the past and their effect on the present. Thus, it has become a crucial area of research in memory studies. (Verovšek 02) This

research will study the political consequences of the Kashmir conflict by studying fiction that recollects memories of victims.

Maurantonio writes,

> Understanding collective memory as a dynamic entity subject to reinterpretation in time and space invites inquiry into how meaning is made and how it functions … If conceptualized in this way, memory is a communicative process that occurs in terrain that is simultaneously contested and negotiated. Memory is political. (03)

McGrattan and Hopkins have studied the role and function memory plays in post-conflict societies. In societies where people are silenced through legal means or power, memory plays a vital role in building social cohesion and integration in the victims of the conflict. Their collective memory provides a distinct identity that differentiates them from their oppressors. "The promotion of inclusive political cultures is a feasible hope of any post-conflict reckoning with the past…recognition of the ongoing silences or 'gaps' in the dominant historical narratives that are continually being produced and adorned" (497). The research by McGrattan and Hopkins traces the change from contention to the integration of post-conflict societies through memory. To better understand how memory contributes to identity development and societal cohesiveness, this study will examine the conflict in Kashmir.

Gilliland studied the consequences of memory politics in Northern Ireland. He studied memory's function and influence on the contemporary political scenario. He concluded that memory significantly impacts the relationship between different parties during a conflict. It can play a dual role, dividing and reconciling a community. He has studied the conflict in Northern Ireland, a society with a layered and complex history. His research highlights the role memory plays in reconciling a divided community. Gilliland's research focuses on the peace-building function of collective memory. (05) This research also studies a conflict with a layered history where collective memory integrates the Kashmiri people. Their shared past brings them closer and creates a cohesive force among them. While it unites them, it also divides them from their enemies in the conflict. Their collective memory constructs a boundary that both unites them amongst themselves and differentiates them from other identities.

James W. Booth's work '*Kashmir Road: Some Reflections on Memory and Violence*' studies memory politics and its central role in forming a marginalized community's identity. The

researcher has used a Northern Irish case study to explore the function of memory and its consequences. He writes that identities are formed from memories, and they are what divide groups into 'us' and 'them.'He has concluded that the past is remembered according to the present generation's contemporary situations and is mainly tied to past injustices. A traumatic past and its memory bind a community together as they seek retribution for it. (365) In this research, Booth has studied collective memory in relation to identity and collective trauma using a Northern Irish case study. This study will explore the injustices on the Kashmiri civilians and how they are tied to their collective memory and identity, keeping Kashmir in focus.

2.5. Collective Memory and Kashmir Conflict

Collective memory has been studied before in different contexts and conflicts. Various studies have kept Kashmir in focus to study collective memory and narratives. One of these studies includes research on collective memory and trauma in Kashmir by Tamanna Maqbool Shah. She has studied how Kashmiri citizens preserve their collective memory through various means, including oral history, theatre, and narrative telling. The preservation of their heritage gives them a national identity. This preservation of collective memory is done to create more awareness of their history, a history of collective trauma. This trauma is relived through their collective memory and allows them to vent their emotions when they are held as prisoners in their state. Shah has concluded that their collective memory and trauma give them a distinct national identity. (14) This research by Shah is similar to this study as it studies collective memory and the formation of identity through it. The gap in Shah's research, which this study will fulfill, is that it will study the consequences and influence of collective memory on identity and perceptions of the conflict that guides conflict behavior.

Kamila Shamsie, in her review of *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed, writes in The Guardian, "Waheed is too subtle a writer to draw an explicit connection between the isolation of the 19-year-old and the isolation of Kashmir as it enters the third decade of a war forgotten or distorted by the rest of the world" The book is so much more than an individual story of a boy. "It is perhaps because his story suggests so many other stories that, even though it is almost entirely focused on one man, it is the opposite of myopic." It reflects and gives insight into the lives of many other Kashmiri boys who are caught in the crossfire and have difficult choices to make.

The Kashmir conflict is much more than a conflict of a disputed territory between India and Pakistan. The fictional accounts of the Kashmir conflict focus on the plights of Kashmiris and their everyday struggles as they strive to survive in a conflict zone. Such works include *The Collaborator* by Mira Waheed. In research, Hanif and Ullah have studied the collective memory with the collective trauma of the Kashmiri civilians through Waheed's fiction, *The Collaborator*. They aimed to explore the trauma of the Global South in this research and underlined how the pain of the Kashmir conflict is comparable to that of the Global North and merits the same attention. The fictional accounts of Kashmir reflect the everyday reality of its people. The research by Ullah and Hanif focuses on the cultural and collective trauma of Kashmir by highlighting the injustices of the people preserved through collective memory. (06) This research will focus on the functions of collective memory, its role in forming collective identity, and how collective memory and collective trauma acts as a coalitional glue in the group, binding them together.

According to Mir and Mohindra, *Curfewed Nights* by Basharat Peer is a literary representation of "the Kashmir Valley, its culture and customs, trade and tradition, economy and commerce, life and death, pupil and people, situation and circumstances etc." (21) Pallavi writes that Peer's memoir builds a historically compelling narrative that dissects the core of the ongoing conflict in the valley to give a collective portrayal of political forces influencing the daily lives of people in Kashmir. (146) Chatterji, in his review of the book, praises Peer's memoir and calls it a love song for one's country, a lost paradise where the author spent his early years.

Shakeel and Ahmad's study of the power struggle in Kashmir focuses on examining the traumatic effects of oppression and violence on the Kashmiris shown in Basharat Peer's memoir *Curfewed Night*. Using violence as a coercive tactic prevents individuals from committing acts of dissent against India physically and psychologically. Shakeel and Ahmad's study uses trauma theory to study people's collective memories in Kashmir to study the impact of violence on them. They conclude that oppression and violence against Kashmiris has toned down separatist sentiments and is a strategy to control rebellions. (2486) This study focuses on collective memory and its relation to collective identity. This study explores how collective memory and collective identity create sentiments of nationalism and how Kashmiri civilians view the idea of fighting for freedom. Their collective identity and social cohesion act as a counter to coercion tactics used by Indian forces.

CHAPTER 3:

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The method used for this research is textual analysis. Textual analysis studies what the text says and the impact it creates. According to Catherine Belsey, the textual analysis explores ideas that have yet to be directly put forward in the text. The textual analysis adds original ideas or expands ideas that have been explored before, looking at them from a different perspective. When using textual analysis as a research method, it is essential to get to know the work well and examine the specifics without adding more assumptions than necessary. (156)

The texts selected for research are novels by Kashmir-based authors. The criterion for selecting texts was that these texts should be a recollection of memories written in fiction or non-fiction. The novels include multiple accounts of the conflict by Kashmiri civilians. This strategy provided this research with more recollection of memories to explore the research themes by studying the lives of people living in the Kashmir conflict. According to this criterion, the texts chosen for research are *Curfewed Nights* by Basharat Peer and *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed.

Curfewed Nights by Basharat Peer is a non-fiction work, a firsthand account of a Kashmiri citizen as the author traces his whole life and the impact of the Kashmir conflict on it. His work is not only restricted to his autobiography but also includes many interviews he conducted as a journalist. He adds various factual accounts of atrocities and recollections of memories of different people who became victims of the conflict. Peer's memoir gives an insight into the lives of Kashmiri civilians and how they deal with the conflict. From childhood to his journey as a journalist, he recalls events that affected him and Kashmiri Muslims.

The second text selected for this research is *The Collaborator* by Mirza Waheed. This work is a chilling account of a boy forced to collaborate with the Indian captain; he lives under constant fear as the war reaches his hometown and is left alone with his family. These texts have been analyzed for different themes. The role and function memory plays in these texts in forming identity, perception, and attitudes have been studied in this research.

This research uses fictional and non-fictional narratives so that the non-fictional narratives based on factual information can be used to validate the findings of this research. The purpose of

choosing fiction and non-fiction literary texts is to discover that fictional narratives accurately depict Kashmir's reality, as portrayed by Peer in his memoir.

For research, I read literary texts and then thoroughly studied memory studies. I combined the works of different researchers to form a theoretical framework. Then, I made a list of arguments based on this framework. My arguments were divided into two sections based on two parts of my research, further divided into sub-sections. I studied the texts again, annotating and highlighting the textual evidence that supported my arguments. While writing my analysis, I gave my interpretation of the text based on my theoretical framework and supported it with textual evidence from my chosen literary texts.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical underpinnings used for this research are Zheng Wang's work on identity, conflict, and political memory. Zheng Wang is a Chinese author and the Center for Peace and Conflict Studies Director. He has viewed historical memory as a variable to study its influence and impact on identity, perception, policy-making, and education. His extensive work in this field has provided researchers with a theoretical framework to study memory and conflicts. His study of the influence of historical memory on national identity and perception has been used in this study.

3.1. Collective Memory and National Identity:

Zheng Wang has argued that when people study political memory, they focus on the manipulation and strategic use of historical analogies to mobilize the masses; it is seen as a weapon of the political elite. However, collective memory plays other vital functions, including its influence on national identity and integration among people. It works as a raw material for ethnicity and national identity. (11)

3.1.1. Collective Memory and Instrumentalism

This research studies the role of collective historical memory in forming identity by using the framework provided by Wang. Wang writes that there are three approaches to forming collective identity by political memory: Primordialism, Constructivism, and Instrumentalism.

According to primordialists, ancestral links such as blood, kinship, language, and shared history are the foundation for collective memory and identity. Memory is so passed down through the

generations. Contrarily, constructivists highlight that identity and ethnicity are social constructs, and that identity is made rather than predetermined. The motivational factor behind the mobilization of ethnic groups is explained by instrumentalism. History is frequently utilized "instrumentally" to further personal or group objectives. Competing elites use history as a popular tool to consolidate their positions of power and win over the public. (12-13)

The instrumentalism of collective memory is done through official narratives and propaganda, whereby memory is manipulated and changed over time; politicians use it as an instrument for their agendas and goals. Memory is manipulated to mobilize groups by using it as a motivational force. By exploiting historical memory, social and political institutions incite hostility against opponents. This is done through state education and media. They manipulate ethnic categories to create a distinct identity, drawing a line between two groups. Thus, historical memory is a popular tool or an instrument for constructing identities. (13)

According to Wang, history and memories is a tool that is used as a strategy to motivate people and gain mass support. For this purpose, history is interpreted subjectively, and memories are manipulated to be used as an instrument according to their designs. Wang uses Stuart J. Kaufman's *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War* for this argument, where Kaufman writes that leaders use symbolic politics in ethnic war to gain domination. "People are taught ethnic hatred, not born into it. Ethnic groups in current conflict have not hated each other for hundreds of years; rather, people exaggerate historical events to suit the current narrative" (Wang 13).

This research studies the influence of collective memory on identity formation in Kashmir. It has explored how collective memory is used as an instrument or a tool to gain mass support and solidify power. Instrumentalists contend that a group's political strategy uses narrative and historical resources. State education aims to create obedient citizens with a sense of community by instilling dominant social ideals. (13). This research focuses on an instrumentalist approach to identify how media, state education, official narratives, and interest groups achieve their goals by constructing a distinct identity using collective memory.

3.1.2 Group Affiliation and Historical Enmity

In deep-rooted conflicts, historical memory is passed down from generation to generation. This creates historical enmity and deepens the divisions between groups. Historical

enmity with other groups also solidifies group affiliation among the members of a group, according to Wang. When a group faces ethnic domination and becomes a victim of the conflict, their enmity grows. This historical enmity formed from historical memory forms a group's distinct identity.

When there has previously been friction between groups, individuals frequently assess one another based more on group membership than individual traits. Additionally, conflict can support the creation and maintenance of social identity. A deeply ingrained conflict may produce a deeply ingrained social identity at least as much as a culturally entrenched conflict produces warring social identities. (Wang 14)

In this research, I have studied this phenomenon and the impact of historical enmity on group affiliations. This research will study the impact of conflict on clashing identities and the effect of clashing identities on the conflict, as the two go hand in hand. Conflicts give rise to social identity, which then clash, further deepening the conflict and taking it beyond the point of resolution. From the perspective of the Kashmir conflict, this research studies the formation of groups and identities from historical memories. It also studies the impact of the clash of these identities on the conflict.

3.1.3. Collective Memory and Social Identity Theory

A person's sense of self is impacted in part by the groups to which they belong, according to Tajfel and Turner. In their Social Identity theory, they argue that along with their unique selfhood, a person has multiple selves and identities linked to their affiliated groups. The more intense the conflict, the more probable it is that rival camp members will respond to one another according to the group they belong to rather than according to their individual traits or interpersonal ties. (34) They identify three processes involved in constructing social identities in conflicts: Social categorization, identification, and comparisons. Social identity is formed when people are categorized into different groups based on their differences. This categorization then leads to identification. One group identifies itself as distinct from the other group. These groups then begin to draw comparisons, which leads to social identity formation. "We can conceptualize a group … as a collection of individuals who perceive themselves to be members of the same social category, share some emotional involvement in this common definition of themselves, and

achieve some degree of social consensus about the evaluation of their group and their membership of it" (40).

In the Kashmir conflict, collective historical memory categorizes Indians and Muslims into different groups and forms their collective identity. This research studies the collective identity formed and the collective action it dictates based on their memories. It explores the categorization, identification, and comparison processes in the Kashmir conflict that construct social identities from collective memories.

3.1.4. Types of Identity Content

The categorization, identification, and comparisons people form according to their distinct identities. Based on their identities, people form an 'us' versus 'them' concept. This social identity theory has been used in this research combined with Wang's framework of different types of identity content to study the influence of collective memory on the identity of people living in Kashmir. Their memory is what politically differentiates them from other factions. Wang has given a framework for studying different identities according to their content. These different types of identity content have different functions of collective memory (19). These are as follows,

Constitutive Norms	Norms that define group membership categorize people based on specific characteristics. These groups then identify themselves differently and attach their self-esteem, pride, and trauma to their group.
Relational Comparisons	Comparing oneself to other identities, identifying enemies by drawing social comparisons, and social mobilization if other groups dominate.
Cognitive Models	Understanding the conflict and forming an outlook of the world based on collective memory
Purposive Content	The group performs socially appropriate roles according to their collective memory.

These different types of identity content and collective memory's role in them have been studied in the context of the Kashmir conflict. According to this model, the research observes collective memory's influence on Kashmiri civilians. It studies the functions collective memory performs in categorizing Kashmiri Muslims and forming their identity, and it also studies how self-esteem and trauma are attached to this identity. The research focuses on how Kashmiri Muslims draw comparisons and identify their enemies. Their mobilization against their enemies and their social mobility ignited by their collective memories has been studied in this research. How collective memory affects the general perceptions of Kashmiri Muslims of the conflict and the world and their roles according to their identity is a point of interest in this research.

3.1.5. Chosenness-Myths-Trauma Complex

Johan Galtung gave his Chosenness-Myths-Trauma complex, which he calls collective megalo-paranoia syndrome, in his article *'Are There Therapies for Bad Cosmologies?'*

According to Johan Galtung, historical events can unite people through three forces, which he calls the Chosenness-Myths-Trauma complex.

Chosenness is the concept of being a group selected by transcendental powers and endowed, even ordained, to be a light for others, with the right and even the responsibility to govern them. Trauma is the hurt a group faces by another dominant and far superior group. This trauma leads them to see the other group as the enemy, the perpetrator, and the antagonist. The myth is of recreating a glorious past. (Galtung, 172)

He writes that these three forces are rooted in history or memories of a group and religion. They form the collective megalo-paranoia syndrome. Collective feelings of grandeur are brought on by being chosen in comparison to everyone else. The present is then placed between the beautiful past and the wonderful future in the fantasies of past glory to be rebuilt. Traumas can also be used to support the notion of being a chosen person: "We have suffered so much; surely there is a deeper purpose to that pain to be revealed in a good, even wonderful future." Then, with a mixture of terror and the lustful expectation of self-fulfilling predictions coming true, new tragedies are anticipated for the future. (172)

According to this complex, losses, defeat, and humiliation impact a group's collective identity. The group believes that higher transcendental forces have chosen them for a higher

purpose. They look for reasoning in their suffering and form their identity from it. They attach myths to this identity. Their trauma, defeat, or suffering at the hands of a dominant group binds them together and forms their collective identity. (173)
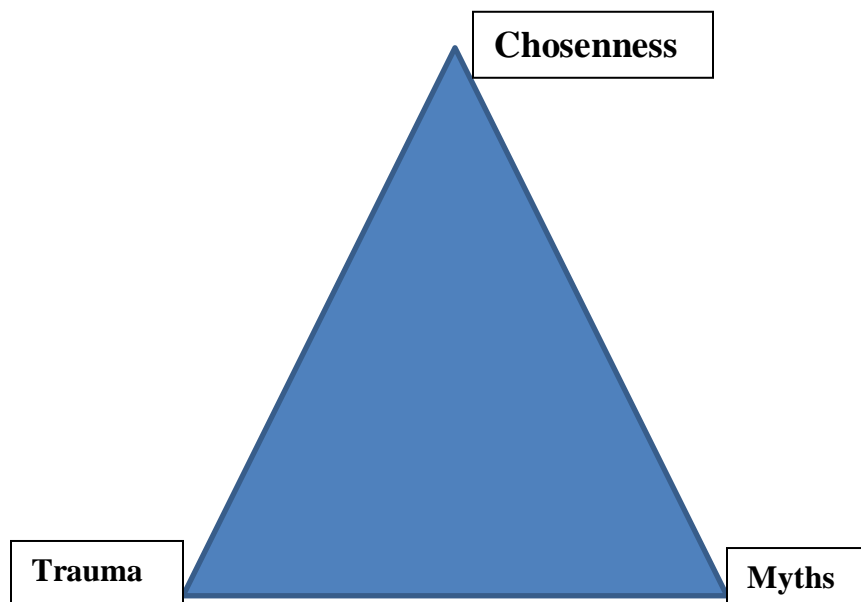
From the perspective of the Kashmir conflict, this research studies the collective megalo-paranoia syndrome in the Kashmiri Muslims. This research studies how Kashmiri Muslims believe they have been chosen for this journey and see their fight for freedom as 'jihad' and their deaths in the line of fire as martyrdom. Their trauma of defeat and humiliation strengthens their group identity.

3.1.6. Chosen Trauma

Vamik Volkan writes in '*Transgenerational Transmissions and Chosen Traumas'* that a group's traumas collectively impact their collective identity as they form mental representations and interpretations of this memory. Vamik Volkan uses the term 'transgenerational transmissions' for trauma. He writes that trauma is passed down generationally as memories are passed on. The memories of one's ancestor's suffering shape the identity of the present generation. Volkan works on conflict zones to study their collective trauma and its effects on national identity. His research shows that both traumas and glories of a group are passed down. This is done through ceremonies, tributes, or interactions between parents and children. (87)

The failure of the previous generation to grieve the losses of people, land, or status is linked to the transgenerational transmission of a collective traumatic event. It signifies a significant group's inability to undo the harm and humiliation caused by some other large group, typically a neighbor, though in certain instances, between religious or ethnic groupings inside the same nation. (Volkan, 87)

Volkan uses the term 'chosen trauma' to explain the mental representations of a historical event passed on to the next generation. People make this choice unconsciously, where they only transfer specific traumas and not all. These traumas then shape the collective identity of a group. Such traumatic events and the inability of the group to fight against the opponent inflict severe injury to the group's self-image and esteem. This injured self-image is then passed on to the next generation, hoping their children can reverse the humiliation. (88) The process continues as memories are deposited in the upcoming generations so the loss can be mourned. "With time, the chosen trauma changes function. The historical truth about the event is no longer important for the large group, but what is important is that by sharing the chosen trauma, members of the group are linked together" (Volkan 88). These traumatic memories bind a group together and form their collective identity as the details and truth of the event fade away, and the psychological effect of that trauma remains.

In this way, their interpretation of historical memory forms enmity, which is passed on. This memory of hopelessness and victimization by a dominant group becomes the group's most serious threat. It causes reverse injury to their pride and self-esteem as they cannot mourn their past generation's humiliation. This historical memory and past traumatic events are psychologized as they give rise to a burning desire for revenge in the group. In this way, traumatic events and collective historical memory shape the group's identity and increase their group affiliation. (87)

The framework provided by Volkan has been combined with the study of Wang on collective memory in this research. This research applies Volkan's theory of Chosen trauma to study the shadows cast by past traumatic events on the self-esteem of Kashmiri Muslims. This research studies the psychological effects of historical traumatic memories. The impact of this collective trauma on the group identity has been the main focus of this research.

3.2. Collective Memory and Perception of a Conflict

Wang writes that historical and collective memory is used to view a conflict situation. The memory guides the conflict behavior by influencing the attitudes and perceptions groups form regarding the conflict. Comparing new situations to previously experienced ones retained in memory is one method humans use to make meaning of new events. (28). Memory is a means through which groups involved in a conflict make sense of their situation and interpret the conflict.

3.2.1. Collective Memory and Shared Beliefs of a Society

In his book *Shared Beliefs of a Society*, Daniel Bar Tal identifies themes in collective memories of a conflict. Groups engaged in a conflict can use their memory to justify the outbreak; through their memories, they make sense of their situation and position.
Society may be tuned by collective memory to focus on some information and perceive it in a certain way while ignoring other pertinent information. For instance, collective memories of the traumas associated with past acts of war, atrocities, or occupation may alert society's members to signs of potential threat and danger. (90)
The dominant group believes they have a good reason for their behavior, and the victim in the conflict uses their memories to justify their retaliation actions. Another theme identified by Bar Tal is the use of collective memories to portray a positive image of self and to glorify one. Collective memory is used to justify one's actions and delegitimize the opponent by seeing themselves as the victim. (90) These themes of Bar Tal have been applied to literary texts to study how collective memory forms different perceptions of conflict. Keeping this theory in perspective, this research studies how Kashmiri Muslims and Indians, the two groups in the conflict, justify their positions through their memories. This research also focuses on the self-glorification and self-justification of Kashmiri Muslims and Indians through their memories. Using their collective memories, they present themselves as the victim, which has been looked into in this research.

3.2.2. Framing and Reframing of a Conflict

A conflict has disputants that construct frames that differentiate them from other groups. In the Kashmir conflict, the disputants are the civilians and the Indian armed forces, which differ

significantly according to their beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes. The disputants use their collective memory as a lens to view the conflict and interpret it in their own ways.

In the midst of a dispute, groups construct frames to aid them in comprehending its causes, the behaviors that contribute to it, the motivations of the participants, and the appropriate course of action. As a conflict develops, frames serve as sieves. People use these sieves to acquire and examine information, and perspectives, including means, priorities, and solutions, are established. (Wang 28)

As different disputants have different memories, their sources of the conflict are different, and thus, their perception of the conflict is different. This perception is used for interpretation of the conflict, forming judgments, guiding emotions, and justifying one's actions, and it can serve as motivation for a step. (29)

An underlying framework of beliefs, ideals, and experiences is the frame's foundation. Strong societal memories of previous battles are frequently crucial sources of framing. The frames that disputants create frequently diverge significantly. As a result, disputants are divided not just by disparities in interests, views, and values but also by variations in how people view and comprehend the world, consciously and unconsciously. (Wang 29)

In the Kashmir conflict, through the literary texts, this research explores how collective memory serves as a frame to view the conflict and form perception. This study also examines the effects of framing conflict from collective memories on actions, mobilizations of people, their sentiments, their judgments, and their interpretations.

According to Wang, resolving a conflict requires reframing the conflict. The process of framing from collective memories makes negotiation and resolution difficult. One must create new memories, narratives, and identities to reframe a conflict. These perceptions then affect their future action regarding the conflict. Reframing a group's collective memory is complex, which is one of the key reasons many deeply ingrained conflicts are difficult to negotiate. A group's collective memory takes a long time to develop. Numerous influences, such as the state's manipulation, societal narratives, educational systems, and popular culture, have shaped and influenced this memory. (32)

The Kashmir conflict has historical enmity between these disputants. Their differing memories and collective traumas make the group more integrated and cohesive. Wang writes that this historical enmity is a political tool to gain popular support during a conflict. This study uses

Wang's framework of 'framing and reframing of collective memories' to study the Kashmir conflict, its disputants, and the perceptions formed by their memories.

3.2.3. Collective Memory and Nationalism

Wang writes that the feeling of nationalism in a group is formed by their traditions, heritage, and collective memories. It is crucial to recognize the relationship between cultural memory and nationalism's emergence since the myths, memories, customs, and emblems of ethnic background are what give nationalism its force. (31) People believe they have a common destiny due to their shared past. Collective historical memory binds the group together as they view themselves as a separate national identity. Their memories of identity violence by another dominant group strengthen their nationalist movements.

Both the people and the elites understand the present and make political judgments through the prism of historical memory. This relationship between collective memory and nationalism is based on group differentiation or an 'Us vs. Them' approach. When individual memory becomes collective memory, social cohesion increases, and nationalistic sentiments are formed. Their common past creates a narrative; it differentiates them from their enemies and gives them a distinct identity. (Wang 31)

According to Wang, in some instances, collective historical memory becomes a favored tool of the political elite as they use it to form a master commemorative narrative of freedom. They use collective memories to gain mass support and mobilize people for nationalist movements. There is also a significant connection between political legitimacy and historical memory. The endeavor of nationalist groups to develop a master commemoration narrative that stresses a shared history and promises a shared future is the finest example of this connection. (31). This is done by drawing analogies with the past to incite hostility in people. These historical comparisons frequently serve as the foundation for political and foreign policy discourse. Political leaders frequently exploit historical analogies to convince and sway the general public. They use parallels with history to gain support and mobilize the masses. "These ready-to-use analogies could make people believe everything is doomed, and therefore not make strong efforts to uphold peace and to create new opportunities for reconciliation" (Wang 33). Thus, collective memory is used to gain political legitimacy. This aspect of perception forming and nationalism has been studied through the literary texts in this research. This research

explores how Kashmiri Muslims form their identity, freedom struggle, and nationalist movements from their collective memories.

3.2.4. Collective Memory and Three Causal Pathways

In the book *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Analytical Framework*, the authors Robert Keohane and Judith Goldstein have provided three causal pathways formed by historical memory, which are Road maps, Equilibrium, and Institutionalization. (04)

According to their definition, "ideas" are either "individual beliefs held" or "cognitive substance of collective identity." Historical memory frequently solidifies a group's perceptions of its allies, its enemies, and the conflict. Keohane and Goldstein identify three ways in which ideas or collective historical memory influences political outcomes, policies, and conflict resolution. They call these ways 'causal pathways.' (04) When ideas become ingrained in political institutions, when they affect the results of strategic circumstances where there is no equilibrium, when they affect the results of strategic situations, or when they give road maps that strengthen actors' understanding regarding goals or ends-means linkages, these ideas have an impact on policy. (Wang 35)

The first pathway is when collective historical memory paves the road or guides behavior and decision-making. How people interpret or evaluate the situation may be influenced by their preconceived notions, which may restrict the options open to them by excluding factors or disqualifying information, suggesting an alternative course of action. Historical memory restricts policy options and decision-making by eliminating alternatives. Memories form beliefs that significantly impact the moral or ethical reason for action. In this way, in a conflict, a collective memory dictates action and guides behavior. (Wang 35)

Road Maps	Collective memory affects a group's decision-making process, influences their interpretation of the conflict, provides motivation, and guides behavior.
Equilibrium	Collective memory can create cooperation and cohesiveness within a group, creating difficulty in conflict resolution, which creates an equilibrium.
Institutionalization	Social and political institutions embed collective memory within them, using it to form perceptions and narratives.

The second causal pathway is equilibrium. According to Wang, by coordinating collaboration and group cohesion, ideas or identities can operate as causal elements in shaping policy action, yet, they can also influence outcomes oppositely, producing conflict and disorder. When a group is integrated and cohesive, conflict resolution with an opposing group becomes difficult; this creates equilibrium. (35)

The third causal pathway is institutionalization. Institutionalization is the process of enforcing particular beliefs and standards within an organization, social structure, or society. These concepts may influence future generations after they are established. The influence of memory can be extended for decades or even generations when institutions step in. (Wang 35)

This research examines these pathways in the Kashmir conflict by analyzing the literary texts. Collective historical memory serves as a road map and guides behavior, acts as a coalitional glue among the group, and causes disorder in the conflict. The way institutions in Kashmir institutionalize collective memory has been analyzed in this research.

CHAPTER 4:

Interplay of Collective Memory and Identity Construction in Fiction from Kashmir

4.1. Collective Memory and Identity

Collective memory is preserved through various means; literature is one of them. Authors write about conflicts and their impact on people through fictional accounts and memoirs. This memory serves as raw material through which ideas of ethnicity are generated. Ethnicity is based on the history of an ethnic group, the history that binds them together. According to Wang, historical memory is one of the prime constituents that forms ethnic and national identity apart from the territory, myths, and culture. (12) Kashmiri's identity is based on this collective memory, among other things. People living in conflict zones are more integrated through collective memory because their memory is of collective loss and suffering. They grieve together and can connect through these memories.

Individual memories of dealing with living in an area that has witnessed a war for decades collectively form a distinct identity. People lose their loved ones; they escape death daily and live under constant surveillance. This naturally creates enmity between opposing camps of a conflict. This enmity is passed on from one generation to another. In his memoir, Peer writes about his firsthand account of Indian atrocities. As a kid, he saw many events that psychologically affected him. These memories stayed with him through the years. He writes, "I had been too young to understand how brutal brutality could be. But as I grew up and began to understand, the memory stayed with me, haunting me over the years" (Peer 121). Witnessing brutality at a young age, seeing your loved ones either die or flee to safety, and sharing these memories as a group create historical enmity. This enmity forms the core of their identity. Historical enmity creates group affiliation and binds people together. Group affiliation based on this collective identity is not because of individual characteristics but because of historical enmity. Wang writes, "When there has historically been conflict between groups, the individuals tend to judge one another not on individual characteristics but rather on group affiliation. Conflict can assist in generating and sustaining social identity" (14). In Mirza Waheed's *The*

Collaborator, the protagonist's father refuses to leave the village even after all other residents have left for a safer area. He "just wanted to hold on to the fantasy of a still functioning village" (Waheed 04). He is unwilling to let go of his roots and the place of his memories. He was living with the fantasy that things would return to pre-conflict times. He chose to think of collective benefit and protect everyone's belongings over his safety. This group affiliation is because of historical enmity. Their hatred is shared towards one opposing force. Thus, they are more integrated.

4.1.2 Collective Memory and Types of Identity Content

Social Identity theory by Tajfel and Turner studies the emergence and influence of identity on social behavior. This theory states that identity emerges when a group categorizes themselves and other groups based on their differences. They then identify with their group based on similarities and shared memories. The social group draws comparisons with other groups, influencing social behavior accordingly. (34) In the Kashmir conflict, Kashmiri Muslims identify as separate from Indian nationals. This categorization is based on, among other things, different memories associated with the conflict. Each group has its collective memory and identity. Their perspective of viewing the conflict is different. These memories categorize them and lead to different identifications. According to Tajfel, categorization, identification, and comparisons form a social identity distinct from other identities. Peer writes in *Curfewed Nights*, "I had a sense of the alienation and resentment most Kashmiri Muslims felt and had against Indian rule. We did not relate to the symbols of Indian nationalism, the flag, the national anthem, the cricket team" (11). Kashmiri Muslims categorized themselves as different from Indian identity because they resented Indian domination. They shared a collective memory where Indian rule had dominated them and alienated them. This categorization leads them to think of their social group as 'us' versus 'them.' Disparities are attached to pride, trauma, and self-esteem in conflict zones. "Sometimes, I think the LoC is like a fireworks exhibition for them, you know, where they compete to decide who has the better display, who shoots the highest, who lights the brightest, who burns the furthest. Sometimes I think it is just that and the poor boys who get caught up in the fiery frenzy are just tinder" (Waheed 115). Waheed's protagonist sees the Kashmir conflict as a competition between two nations divided by a line of control, and the Kashmiris are mere collateral damage in this conflict. They compare their identity with others

involved in the conflict that dominates them and treat them as 'tinder.' This comparison affects their self-esteem and pride. Thus, their social identity is formed by categorizing themselves as a distinct group, identifying with their group based on their shared collective memory and collective trauma, and drawing comparisons with opposing groups in conflict. Their shared collective memory forms the 'Us' in the 'Us vs. Them' concept.

There are four categories of identity content, according to Zheng Wang. These include constitutive norms or rules, relational comparisons, cognitive models, and purposive content. Constitutive norms or the rule for group membership is the type that categorizes people based on specific characteristics and interests. Collective memory specifies and defines a group's characteristics and interests. This collective memory is based on the group's trauma, pride, and self-esteem. (19) Kashmiri Muslims constituted one group according to certain norms in the Kashmir conflict. Peer writes in *Curfewed Nights* that they were sometimes identified based on appearance. Their beard and facial hair would make soldiers suspicious, and they would be stopped at checkpoints. They were labeled and marked as militants if they had a beard. Collective memory is the basis of a group's sense of pride and trauma, constituting them as one group and giving them a collective identity. In *The Collaborator*, Waheed writes about his protagonist's friends who fled their hometowns one by one to cross the border or join militancy. They left their belongings and abandoned their lives because their identity threatened them. They were scared and avoided soldiers or officials when they were outside of their homes. They were at threat because of their identity. This created a negative impact on their self-esteem and pride. They were deprived of the right to decide their life course for themselves. Thus, their collective trauma, alienation, resentment, and fear made them into one group.

The second type of identity content is relational comparisons. Wang, in his study of collective memory and its relation to identity, writes that collective identities are distinguished from other identities by comparisons and references to others.

Exclusiveness, prestige, and animosity are some relationship traits of communal identities. It establishes how far possessing one social identity precludes retaining another. You are not permitted to belong to Group Y if you are also part of Group X. Relational qualities establish the identity's relative standing concerning others, designating Group X as dominant on

Group Y. This dichotomy of superiority and inferiority intensifies the antagonism displayed by other identities. (Wang, 18)

This dichotomy is visible in Peer's memoir, *Curfewed Nights*. Peer writes about the unfair treatment of the Indian military. He gives multiple accounts of events with house raids, bomb blasts, rape, massacres, land mines, and torture camps. He relates one gut-wrenching event where paramilitaries stop a marriage party when they depart from the bride's home. They fired at their vehicles and raped the bride. Such an event where one group dominates another group leads the inferior group to make comparisons and identify with one another. The dichotomy creates hostility and enmity between the groups. Due to their shared collective memories of decades when Kashmiri Muslims faced inferior treatment from Indians, they have created a collective identity and are hostile toward Indians. According to Wang, these relational norms are also used to mobilize people. (20) Since everyone can relate to these events and is a victim in one way or another, political leaders use this collective memory for social mobilization. In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist remembers how he and his friends would idolize freedom fighters. Each of his friends had tales of hostility against Indians, which sowed separatist sentiments in them. They would talk about freedom fighters' heroic deeds, and many would drop out of school to join them. Kashmiri Muslims were mobilized against Indian paramilitary forces because of their memories of inferior treatment. The only way to social mobility and change for Kashmiri teens was to fight against them by joining militancy. Distinct communal identities are formed, and their traits are exclusiveness and prestige. Kashmiri Muslims attached a notion of prestige to freedom fighters. Collective memories of inferior and unfair treatment have created this dichotomy, which leads to animosity between the groups.

The third type of identity content is cognitive; it is how collective memories affect the interpretation of the conflict and the world in general. As memories of Indian hostility are passed on generationally, Kashmiri Muslims interpret the conflict as one sided where they are oppressed. In his memoir, *Curfewed Nights*, Peer writes about the right denied to the Kashmiri population for self-determination. He states that the Kashmiri Muslims live under the thumb of the Indian military with little to no freedom. They must always keep their identity cards with them and can be searched for weapons at checkpoints. This hostility and memories of unfair treatment influence the interpretation of the world and the conflict. They see the conflict as between armed soldiers and unarmed civilians rather than a territorial conflict.

The fourth type of identity content, according to Wang, is purposive content, where "the group attaches specific meanings and goals to its identity; this is similar to the idea that who we think we are determines what we want" (Wang 19). Thus, the group forms a purpose per its interpretation of the world. This group purpose gives people appropriate roles to perform and group identity. They take collective action to achieve that group purpose. They have a common interest in reaching that goal and a common fate. From the perspective of the Kashmir conflict, Kashmiri Muslims have a collective identity that they derive from their collective memory. This identity entails having certain dos and don'ts or rules of behavior. Peer writes in *Curfewed Nights*, "We followed every cricket match India and Pakistan played, but we never cheered for the Indian team. If India played Pakistan, we supported Pakistan; if India played the West Indies, we supported the West Indies; if India played England, we supported England" (11). They never supported the Indian team because their identity and memories did not allow them to cheer for them. Even though they do not have a team to support in cricket, they know, as a rule, that they must not support the Indian team. It is a norm that comes with their collective identity whereby they cannot side with India, even in sports.

Similarly, other roles are attached to their identity, which include having hideouts, giving refuge to one another with open arms whenever there is a shootout, having their identity cards with them at all times, and all precautionary measures that come with living in a curfew. In Waheed's *The Collaborator*, the protagonist begins working with Indian captain Kadian. He hears stories from him of freedom fighters being killed as pests and villages burned to the ground. "There are always a few protests and dharnas here and there, then it is back to normal" (83). These protests have become a role that comes along with the Kashmiri identity. People have been enraged for decades and come out on the streets whenever a prominent figure dies. They raise questions and invoke the international media. Their group's purpose is freedom, and their collective action is to actively take up arms against their enemy or protest against injustice.

4.1.2. Instrumentalism and Identity

Collective memory is the force that drives people to take action against the injustice they are facing. When a group of people face mistreatment and live under the domination of a select group, they are naturally enraged against them. They hear stories of decades of violence and never-ending war. This collective memory integrates them, gives them a collective identity, and

forms a motivational force that mobilizes people. Individual memories cannot produce the same effect as collective memories. According to Wang, political elites and leaders realize this potential of collective memory and use it to gain mass support and incite hostility. "History becomes a popular tool for competing elites to solidify power and gain popular support. A dominant group also typically manipulates ethnic categories to maintain power and justify discrimination against the other groups." (Wang, 13). He calls it instrumentalism, where collective memory is used as a tool or instrument.

In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist remembers attending a Friday prayer after his mother's insistence. There the Molvi Sahib was delivering a sermon after the prayer; he said, "Hundreds of us fall to the bullets of the oppressor, to the guns of the kafir every day. We die in hundreds, no, thousands, all across the land. The cruel infidel kills, tortures, insults, treats us like dirt, and then throws us into jail if we protest" (Waheed 27). Molvi Sahib used his power and influence to create anti-Indian sentiments by talking about the testing times they have gone through because of them. He differentiated their identity from the Indians by calling them infidels and kafir. He drew a line between them, creating ethnic categories, one the perpetrator and the other the victim.

Different means are adopted to instrumentalize collective memory and history. Media is one of the ways through which a narrative is created. (14) In Peer's *Curfewed Nights*, he recalls hearing a radio to keep track of deaths in their area. "Every day we heard reports of scores of deaths there on BBC World Service radio … the fatal sound of bullets would play on the radio for a few seconds, and Jameel's stoic voice would follow, 'yet another unidentified body has been found in the river Jhelum in Srinagar" (Peer 42). Media is a means to preserve memory and give the unheard voice. It sensationalized reports of death to create an effect and incite hostility. It is used to expose the ethnic domination of Indians and counter their propaganda by putting forward a Kashmiri perspective.

Wang writes that state education and schools also serve as the means for the instrumentalism of collective memory. In conflict zones, student politicians use schools as their playgrounds to propagate their own beliefs. (14) When children from different backgrounds and identities study in one institution, they form gangs and rivalries. Similarly, in Kashmir, Peer writes, "Every other week, there were shootings on campus, and rival gangs would beat up

members of other gangs. When the student politicians were not scuffling with rivals, they nourished dreams of making it in Indian politics. I mostly hung out with Kashmiri students. We shared stories of our war experience back home" (67). Thus, educational institutions are used to gain mass support and solidify power. These rivalries are formed based on different memories, both individual and collective memories of a group. The Kashmiri Muslims formed a group because they could relate to each other's experiences. Their group affiliation is based on their collective memories. Their purpose is different from other students. A school is a tool to fulfill that purpose, form groups, discuss ideas, and gain support. "We began drawing maps of Kashmir on our school notebooks and painted slogans like 'War till Victory' and 'Self-determination is our birthright' on the school walls" (Peer 22). This is why many school students prioritized joining militancy over completing their education. Their purpose in life, guided by their collective memory, was freedom, which was more important than their education. They wanted to contribute to the group's goal of freedom and victory. Their dream of independence to them could only be fulfilled by taking up arms. Peer recalls how he, at one point in his school life, wanted to join groups like JKLF, but his parents encouraged him to finish his education and join the government sector where he could make a difference through proper channels. This is the power schools and state education holds. "Nobody threatened to dismiss us from the school. They knew our world had changed, and so had the rules governing it" (Peer 23). They were not reprimanded for disobedience when they refused to chant the Indian national anthem. This instrumentalism of schools incites separatist sentiments driven by their collective memories of suffering.

In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist recollects encounters with boys from Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front. Their attire symbolized heroism and bravery among the young boys of Kashmir. The protagonist and his friends looked at them with awe as they were inspired to one day become like them. Their clothes "either said 'Power' alongside a thick blue arrow or 'Action' with a ball inside the O. One of these front runners also carried a green cloth banner that said 'Pakistan ka matlab kya? Lailaha Il-Allah and Kashmir Banega Pakistan' under a bold silver citation of the holy Kalimah" (Waheed 65). This attire speaks volumes as they highlight their ideology to merge Kashmir with Pakistan. There is instrumentalism in religion as they are telling people to mobilize so that they can become part of

a theocratic state. The words' action' and 'power' motivate people. This strategy works as many of the protagonist's friends leave one by one to join militancy.

According to Kaufman's *Modern Hatreds: The Symbolic Politics of Ethnic War,* history and memories are a tool in the hands of politicians and leaders, used to gain mass support and domination, which he terms symbolic politics. In this way, collective memory is used to justify actions taken in conflicts by both opposing groups. The militant separatist organizations operating in India all have the same design: separatism. In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist, a Kashmiri Muslim, collaborates with Indian army officers against his people fleeing Kashmir. During this task, he interacts with the Indian officer Kadian, who detests Kashmiris and does not hesitate to kill them. Kadian believes that he is on the right side of history as Kashmiris are the ones who are ungrateful towards Indians. "Poor lying Kashmiris … pests, all they do is complain; you take all the money and aid from India to yourselves with truckloads of rice and mutton, but you still complain all the time" (Waheed 83). He believes he is justified in killing Kashmiris because Indians have been generous towards them; they provide them with food and aid, but Kashmiris betray them by siding with Pakistan. His perspective differs from the Kashmiri perspectives, who believe that they have been oppressed historically and that the only way out is to either leave Kashmir or join militancy. Kadian's perspective has been formed by the narrative created by his superiors and leaders. They have created this narrative that they are justified in their treatment of Kashmiris because they have historically betrayed them. They see Kashmiri Muslims as ungrateful for their kindness and as traitors who switched sides towards Pakistan. This is symbolic politics, where history, memories, and narratives created by them serve as political perspectives. Waheed gives an insight into both points of view in this text. Both groups have their collective memories of the conflict, convincing them their collective action is justified.

4.1.3. The Chosenness-Myths-Trauma Complex

Historical events or memories of struggle, suffering, defeat, past losses, being wronged, and humiliation shape a group's identity. According to Johan Galtung's Chosenness-Myths-Trauma complex, the collective megalo-paranoia syndrome is formed by a group's memory and history. A group forms its identity and the perception of a conflict through these three forces. (172)

Keeping the Kashmir conflict in perspective, the people believe their war against Indians is a crusade against evil; transcendental forces have chosen them for this journey. Their warriors who die during this struggle are martyrs and will be rewarded for their sacrifice hereafter. Their parting notes are "God's Gift" (Waheed 09). They believe this is a challenge, a test of their patience; they have "God is true with those who are patient" (Waheed 09) written on their doors. They are destined for this journey, which serves a higher purpose. This is why boys voluntarily joined militancy, giving up on the comfort of their homes. In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist's friend's father helps his son flee to join a militant group because he believes they are chosen for this journey and their children must contribute.

According to Galtung, the second force that forms the identity of a group is collective trauma. (172). Vamik Volkan uses the term 'transgenerational transmissions' for trauma. He writes that trauma is passed down generationally as memories are passed on. (87)

According to Volkan's concept of 'Chosen trauma,' the mental representations of a historical event shape a group's collective identity. Memories of traumatic events of ancestors are passed on generationally in Kashmir. Since their ancestors could not fight back and the events caused injury to their self-esteem, these memories serve a purpose. They are passed on in the hopes that the upcoming generations will carry the burden of these memories; they will make their ancestors' injuries their own and be able to reverse the damage and humiliation inflicted on them. This purpose binds the people in Kashmir, giving them a collective purpose.

As memories and enmity are passed on, the generations born into conflict see war and gun culture as usual. They did not witness a pre-war period or life without war and fear. "My cousin, born in the early nineties on a day a gun battle was raging outside the hospital, played a game called 'army-militant'" (Peer 83). This is the effect of chosen trauma. The trauma they have inherited from the earlier generation dictates their identity. Even their games are based on these memories and traumas buried in their subconscious. Their world does not exist outside of war, conflict, and fear. Their interpretation and perception of the world are based on this conflict and its memories.

This chosen trauma or past horrors cast a shadow on the future. Future decisions and choices are made based on these memories of trauma. The event is psychologized as it becomes part of the group's most profound and darkest threats. The hopelessness that comes with the

inability to mourn inflicts reverse injury to self-esteem. Waheed writes about an encounter between his protagonist and Shaban Chacha, a former freedom fighter who had endured physical and psychological injuries. "The man who had braved frostbite and ambushes and shelling and crossfire and wildlife and terrible terrain sat before my father sobbing like a little girl with his head hung down" (179). This is what conflict and war do to you. Shaban Chacha broke down in front of the protagonist's father and his father as he retold his sufferings in the conflict. Old wounds are reopened as he recalls the events. He feels close to fellow Kashmiris and knows they will understand and relate to him the most, making him more vulnerable. This whole ordeal awakens the desire for revenge in the protagonist. He has seen his friends, family, and neighborhood suffer at the hands of militants. He feels helpless. This trauma is caused by the collective memories of the conflict that binds them together and forms their collective identity.

Peer writes, "I fail to remember who told me about aazadi, who told me about militants, who told me it had begun. I fail to remember the date, the names, the place, the image that announced the war of my adolescence, a war that continues" (14). People born in the Kashmir conflict are not given a chance to pick a side; their side is picked for them by the memories of conflict passed on by their elders. They have historical enmity against their opponent despite not facing its brutality. They may not have a clear, detailed memory of the conflict, but they are conditioned to loathe them due to their chosen trauma. The historical truth about the conflict has faded; not everyone remembers how, when, and why it started; all they remember is that they are against another group that has wronged them for decades. This memory of traumatic events of the past shapes their collective identity. Thus, the relationship between memory and identity is such that even if the specifics of memory fade away, identity and enmity remain.

These memories are passed down in the form of tales and myths. While other children read fairytales, children in conflict zones hear stories of heroes and men courageous enough to stand up to evil. "The tale of Kashmiri rebellions, their brutal suppression by the rulers, and honoring the dead as martyrs is old. In Srinagar, people still visit the graves of men who stood up to rulers and were killed for their defiance centuries ago" (Peer 128). Galtung's Chosenness-Myths-Trauma complex highlights the importance of myths in studying memories of a conflict. Memories and traumatic events are passed on in the form of tales and myths; the event is sensationalized, even exaggerated at times, to pass on the glories or traumas of the past. (172) The heroic deeds of specific individuals are glorified to create the same sentiments in the next

generation. People in Kashmir mourn past heroes; they pay respects at their graves and remember their rebellion because these events give them a passion and a desire to recreate these glories.

4.2. Memory and Perception of Conflict

Collective memory binds people together and helps them make sense of their situation. Their individual and collective memory of the conflict forms their perception of the conflict. They extract events from their memory or memory passed on to them by older generations and draw comparisons with them. This memory shapes the outlook of their standing in the conflict. Wang writes that a people's past significantly impacts how they view the world, and historical memory frequently serves as a critical information processor. Actors' perceptions and comprehension of the outside world and specific circumstances are influenced by historical memory. (28). Thus, conflict actors see the world at large and their conflict at home through the lens of their historical memory. They will see the world as cruel and unjust if they have been historically wronged. This affects their decision-making or a motivational tool during a conflict.

4.2.1. Formation of Beliefs through Collective Memories

Bar Tal has analyzed the factors that affect societal beliefs in his book *Shared Beliefs in a Society: Social Psychological Analysis*. He writes that two factors form societal beliefs about security. One is a political ideology, and the other is collective memory. A group makes inferences and identifies and evaluates a threatening situation according to their shared collective experiences. "Collective memories of past traumas involving war, genocide, or occupation may sensitize society members to look for information that indicates possible threat and danger" (Bar Tal 109). He analyzes four different ways in which collective memory can affect the perception of a conflict,

> (1) Collective memory can justify the outbreak of the conflict and the course of its development; (2) In intractable conflicts, a group's beliefs of collective memory present positive images of the group itself as the group engages in intense self-justification, self-glorification, and self-praise; (3) The beliefs of collective memory delegitimize the opponent; (4) A group's beliefs of collective memory present its group as being a victim of the opponent. (Wang, 28)

People perceive their situation from collective memories and shared experiences in the Kashmir conflict. They see themselves as historically wronged and as a victim of the opponent. They join militancy and become freedom fighters because they believe this is the only way to attain freedom. They justify their actions using their collective memories. Because of these memories, they see themselves as the victim, not the perpetrator. Waheed writes, "I had heard stories of how hundreds of young men – excited, idealistic teenagers; hurt, angry boys wronged by police or army action; vengeful brothers with raped sisters and mothers at home; firebrand youth leaders conjuring up paradisiacal visions of freedom and an independent Kashmir" (20) left their homes to become militants and freedom fighters. They see themselves as freedom fighters and not terrorists because of their perception of the conflict, which their collective memories have formed. They share memories of how they were physically and psychologically injured, lost their homes and loved ones, and were interrogated or wronged by the police; these memories justify their actions according to their perception of the conflict.

Waheed remembers an event where sixteen boys left their village to receive training and arms to fight against Indian soldiers when several women were raped. Such memory not only justifies their action but also glorifies it. These boys are seen as heroes when they are alive and as martyrs when they pass away. They are perceived as fighting for a higher cause as they are on a righteous path. They believe that they were brought to this point where they had no option but to fight, and they were triggered into this fight. These memories delegitimize the opponent by victimizing the people of Kashmir. They see a positive image of self and as a victim of the opponent. According to Bar Tal, these memories justify their actions and present a positive image of self, where they are glorified, and their acts are seen as heroic. (109) Their collective memories during this conflict lead them to self-praise. "Young men like you are fighting. They are laying their lives down for Kashmir … your brave friends who have picked up the gauntlet and gone, gone to fight cruelty with bravery, avenge blood with blood, answer bullets with bullets, not cry like weaklings" (Waheed 143). The people believe they are retaliating against Indian cruelty; their actions are in response to a preemptive attack from the opponent. They are brave for not bowing down and giving up. They are settling the score by fighting and avenging the people they have lost. Their collective memories remind them of the people who have died at the hands of Indian brutality. These memories are passed on, and men vow to avenge their blood. This self-praise and self-glorification are done to justify their actions using collective memories.

Bar Tal identifies another theme recurrent in collective memories of intractable conflicts: delegitimizing one's opponent by believing they do not have legitimate authority or status. (109) People in Kashmir believe they were not given the right to self-determination. Indian authorities are occupying their land illegally. They seek freedom from this occupation. Waheed writes, "If we want to escape from the clutches of India, we have to fight these beastly bastards who slay our children and sully the honor of our women … they are part of the movement now, the first freedom fighters from among us, they will be part of history" (143). They see Indian occupation as beastly bastards, clutching them away from freedom because their memories witness this illegitimate authority. They believe anyone who fights against these clutches is doing a great deed and will be remembered as a legend in history. This is their perception of the conflict where they see Indian occupation as illegitimate and keeping them away from freedom.

Basharat Peer, in his memoir, recalls different events where Indian forces victimized the Kashmiri people. In one event, when he was little, their village was caught in the crossfire between the militants and the Indian forces. During this time, Peer and his family cleared their house, seeking shelter in a nearby neighborhood. "I hoped that father would hear about the attack and stay away; I hoped that nobody was killed in the attack and the soldiers would not set our house on fire" (Peer 45). Throughout his life, this memory stuck with him, the hopelessness and the realization that he might lose his house and father because of this attack. This event and many others had a psychological effect on him. People in Kashmir lived through these raids and humiliation every day; these memories made them believe that they were a victim of the opponent. Peer recalls many instances where he felt this hopelessness and victimization. In one instance, he was brought out of a classroom in the school to be interrogated. A ninth-grade student was interrogated on school grounds about his friends who had joined militancy. "The anticipation of interrogation is worse than interrogation" (Peer 54). He was scared and was praying for his life. This event left a mark on him as he realized the hopelessness of his and his fellow Kashmiris state. During this time, he realized they would always be under surveillance in Kashmir. They can be interrogated anytime, and their house can be raided under suspicion. These perceptions of the conflict were formed from his cruel memories and the memories passed down to him by his parents. These memories revealed to him that they were helpless.

Bar Tal identifies victimization by the opponent as another theme present within memories of conflict areas. (109) According to Peer's memoir, these memories helped justify

their conflict actions. Their reason to join militancy and fight back was provided to them by their memories. Through these accounts, they built a positive image of self, an image of a hero, a martyr, a freedom fighter, or someone part of the movement who will make history. Their memories justify this self-glorification and self-praise. They do not only establish their legitimate authority through their memories but also mark their opponent as wrongfully occupying and dominating them. They believe their hostility against Indians is justified because they have a long history of discrimination and memories of brutality. The Indians have historically victimized them. This perception of the conflict is formed and passed down generationally through memories. Memories here act as a tool that helps them to make sense of their situation and justify their actions in the conflict. They interpret their circumstances and the conflict according to these memories. Thus, as Bar Tal writes, collective memories help form societal beliefs and perceptions about security, conflicts, and the world.

4.2.2. Framing and Reframing a Conflict through Collective Memories

According to Sanda Kaufman, framing is the concept where people see a situation through frames; this helps them make sense of their situation and the conflict. Kaufman writes in *Beyond Intractability* that interpretation and perception of a conflict are formed through frames where complex information is understood and categorized. (01) Wang writes that memories are essential in framing a conflict. Memories act as a frame through which a conflict is perceived and interpreted. When a dispute is present, groups construct frames to assist them in comprehending its causes, the critical conflict-related behaviors, the motivations of the parties, and the appropriate course of action. A frame serves as a sieve through which data is gathered and processed, positions are established, and action plans are constructed as a conflict develops. (Wang 28)

These frames are based on a group's beliefs, experiences, and values. Thus, collective memories also serve as frames through which a group interprets the conflict, makes sense of it, and takes action accordingly. (Wang 29) In the Kashmir conflict, both groups have different memories of the conflict, and this memory forms their perception of it. They frame the conflict using collective memories as a source. People in Kashmir frame the conflict differently. They believe that they are living under Indian occupation.

In contrast, Indians believe that they have a rightful claim to Kashmir. The conflict between the Indian soldiers and paramilitaries in Kashmir is also viewed differently by both groups. While Kashmiri Muslims believe that they have been forced to retaliate and join militancy, Indians believe that people in Kashmir are choosing terrorism by waging war. Thus, their perception differs, and their collective memories form this perception.

Similarly, many situations in the conflict are interpreted and analyzed differently through different frames. Kashmiris use their collective memories as a frame, while Indians use their collective memories as a frame. The disappearance and missing people are examples of different perceptions of the groups engaged in conflict. "The government has refused to set up a commission of inquiry into the disappearances and claims that the missing citizens of Kashmir have joined militant groups and crossed for arms training to Pakistan" (Peer 135). The Indian government believes these disappeared people are traitors collaborating with Pakistan against them. They mark them as terrorists or militants instead of looking into their disappearance despite demands by affected families. Their collective memories serve as frames here. They are not treating each disappearance individually but seeing it in the context of many people who have joined militancy or crossed over to Pakistan over the decades. They interpret each case as the same because their collective memories act as a sieve through which they see this disappearance as an act of terrorism against them. They take their position and action according to these frames. Their memories are from their perspective, and they also use them to justify this perspective.

On the other hand, people in Kashmir have a different interpretation of these disappearances. "Many Kashmiris believe the disappeared men were killed in custody and cremated in mass graves. Wives of many such men have given up hope and tried to move on. Others obsessively fight for justice, hoping their loved ones will return (Peer 135). They believe these disappeared people did not cross over to Pakistan; they were killed during interrogation or in custody. Marking them as terrorists is a cover to hide their crimes. Not setting up a commission to look into these cases is used to close the case. They interpret these cases by framing the situation according to their collective memories. They remember people disappearing after being taken into custody or killed during interrogations. They believe their loved ones were unlawfully killed and then marked as terrorists. Their memories guide this

interpretation, and they take positions accordingly. Collective memory serves as a lens through which both groups form different perceptions and interpretations of their conflict.

Memories act as frames or lenses in various ways. They help form a perception of the conflict, symbolize yearning, and remind them of what they have been through. In *The Collaborator*, the protagonist sees the conflict through the frame of his childhood memories with his friends. They enjoyed their childhood by playing games and swimming in the river. These memories have become a sad reminder of why his friends had to leave him and these days behind. They grew up too early and joined militancy because of the conflict. They could not live everyday life as they did in childhood. The conflict took over their lives, and they had to decide to leave everything behind to play their part. The protagonist stands across the river and thinks, "After all these years, I want to know if it still recognizes me. It would be nice to know again that feeling of years ago when we would jump into it all together" (Waheed 15). He sees his situation through the frame of his childhood memories. It reminds him of the people and friends he has lost because of this war. By framing the conflict from his memories, he sees himself as a victim. "This stream, my personal Hades, has seen everything but knows not what to say (Waheed 15)". It reminds him of his dead friends and those who sacrificed their lives and freedom to become freedom fighters. It symbolizes all the sacrifices his people have made during this conflict. He thinks of how different their lives could have been if they were not born into this conflict.

According to Wang, collective memories act as a frame to form various perceptions and attitudes, among which are victimization and justification. (29) Waheed's protagonist sees himself as a victim when he frames the conflict. He believes "my friends are here, lying among hundreds of other boys from all over this sad paradise on earth (Waheed 15)". His perception of the conflict from his childhood memories is that they have been victimized; Kashmir, the sad paradise on earth, has seen bloodshed and many dead bodies flowing in its rivers. He believes that because they have been victimized, they were motivated to fight back, which is why his friends had to abandon their lives. "It is perhaps only fair; they did leave it, abandon it, for a higher cause" (Waheed 15). After framing the conflict from his memories, he interprets that all these people lying in the river abandoned their lives for a higher cause. Their fight is justified, and it is fair. His memories form this perception that their sacrifices are justified and motivated.

They framed the conflict from these memories and chose to take position and action as freedom fighters. The conflict not only victimized them but also justified their actions in it.

Disputants see the conflict through the sieves or frames of their beliefs, values, and experiences. Their emotions and judgment are attached to these frames. The values and beliefs of people in Kashmir are based on their religion and culture. They have a caste culture, which significantly impacts their perception and actions taken during the conflict. Waheed's protagonist is a Gujjar, and they are perceived as traitors in Kashmir. The Gujjar clan is considered an outcast and not part of the Kashmiri struggle. "While thousands of boys from all of Kashmir were increasingly being drawn into the vortex of a euphoric freedom struggle, my parents assumed their only offspring was safe because the romance did not lend itself to Gujjar life, because we didn't have an issue with India and because they valley people didn't think of us as Kashmiris anyway" (Waheed 22). The protagonist has memories of being treated as separate from the freedom movement; they were labeled collaborators and blamed for being affiliated with Indians. These memories stuck with the protagonist, acting as a frame from which he perceived the conflict. He did not join his freedom in the freedom struggle and became a collaborator instead. His actions were based on this attitude against his caste. His interpretation of the conflict differs from his peers because he views the conflict from a different frame. He believes that the conflict will never end; fighting and laying down their lives for a struggle that will bear no fruit is hopeless. "In 1947, they went almost down to Srinagar, but what happened then? Nothing! Nothing but loot maar and rape" (Waheed 22). His frame of conflict is different from the general perception of the conflict among the Kashmiris. This difference is because of Kashmir's beliefs, values, and culture that form the frame and act as sieves through which the protagonist understands the world. He has become pessimistic about the conflict and the world.

Apart from culture, religion plays an essential role in forming the beliefs of the Kashmiri people and how they perceive the world. Religion acts as a frame through which people in Kashmir form their interpretation of their conflict with the Indians. It helps them make sense of their situation and dictates their behavior accordingly. They believe their fighting is justified because it is a fight against evil, and they will be rewarded for it in the future. "He is fighting a war; he is a freedom fighter. Even if he is martyred tomorrow, I would be a blessed man, father to a shaheed. Not a word from my mouth, sir, not a word. Except for Ameen," (Waheed 140) says Khadim Hussain. He considers it an honor for himself and his family as he boasts about

how his son is blessed to be among the fighters. He states that he will not lament his death because he will be the father of a martyr. His belief in martyrdom gives him courage and the motivation to send his son away for war. He chooses to fight instead of living as a victim.

Indians and Kashmiris, the disputants in the Kashmir conflict, view the conflict from their frames based on their different religions. Indians see Kashmiri militants as terrorists, while Kashmiri people see themselves as freedom fighters. This contrast exists because of the difference in their frames of conflict. Khadim Hussian believes that "for someone who does not even know what martyrdom means … there is no chance of valor" (Waheed 141). This is his way of justifying his conflict behavior and actions. He believes the protagonist has not become a freedom fighter yet because his faith is weak. For him, dying with honor is more significant than living as a victim. This is how he perceives the world and the conflict. His interpretation, emotions, judgment, and justification of the conflict are all tied to his beliefs.

Wang writes that reconciliation of a conflict requires a reframing of the conflict. The people must see the conflict in a new light, which is difficult because their frames are based on collective memories. Their national identity is based on these collective trauma memories, so it is difficult for them to reframe and move on. "A new narrative or national story of the past conflicts is first not easy to be created, and then the change of "stories" and "narratives" would almost mean to re-create a nation and would take a very long time. It is not realistic to expect a brand-new master narrative or national story to be created out of nothing" (Wang 32).

Thus, reframing a conflict would require new narratives and memories, which is why conflict resolution is not easy for conflicts ingrained deeply into memories. "Farooq was wondering if the conflict would ever be resolved, what could be a possible way out for a just and lasting peace. It was a question most Kashmiris, like Farooq and me, were talking about. None of us knew the answer" (Peer 125). Kashmiris see no way out of this conflict. Their collective memory hinders them from seeing the conflict through a different frame. The collective trauma they have lived through dictates their perception of the conflict. Reframing requires forming new interpretations of the conflict, which is difficult for the disputants involved in the Kashmir conflict. That would mean recreating new memories, new narratives, and a new nation.

4.2.3 Memory and Nationalism

According to Wang, A group can promote social cohesion, create and protect social identification, and defend existing attitudes and demands by using socially shared memories of the past. Leaders frequently attempt to arouse people's recollections of prior tragedies during conflicts to motivate them and strengthen the group. The spirit of nationalism is based on myths, traditions, customs, heritage, and, most importantly, memories. (31) Collective memories and traumas can ignite historical enmity against another group to unite them under one banner. They see themselves as a nation separate from other identities because of their collective memories.

Kashmiri people identify as a separate nation because of their collective memories and a shared past. These memories drive their mass support as they unite to gain freedom. Peer remembered his childhood when he joined a protest that demanded freedom from Indian occupation. He remembers the adrenaline rush and his passion during this protest, even though he was too little to understand what nationalism and freedom meant. The crowd chanted 'Azaadi,' and he joined in. "I felt a part of something much bigger, unknowingly making a journey from I to We. I let myself go and fly with the crowd. Azaadi! Throughout the winter, almost every Kashmiri man was a Farhaad, ready to dig a stream of milk from the mountains for a rendezvous with his Shireen: freedom!" (Peer 17). The group differentiated themselves from Indians because they could relate to each other's suffering. They had all been oppressed by Indians in one way or another. Nationalistic sentiments are contagious; they spread like wildfire as everyone joins in. The cause of the protest fades away, and the purpose becomes essential. Their purpose was to gain freedom. The movement gained mass support quickly because everyone understood this purpose. In this way, their individual memories become collective memories, and they begin to see themselves as a nation.

Additionally, there is a significant connection between political legitimacy and historical memory. The endeavor of nationalist groups to construct a master commemorative narrative that stresses a shared history and promises a shared future serves as the best example of this connection. "Political leaders often use historical memory to bolster their legitimacy, promote their interests, encourage a nationalistic spirit, and mobilize mass support. The politics of memory has proven to be central in the transition to democracy throughout the world" (Wang 31). This relationship becomes more evident in conflict situations where politicians and elites use

collective memory to trigger a nationalist movement that serves their interests. Some conflicts go beyond the point of reconciliation because politicians refuse to come to the table and negotiate. They use collective memory as a tool to gain mass support and show people dreams of a common destiny. "Wily politicians repeating their lies about war and peace to television cameras and small crowds gathered by the promise of an elusive job or a daily fee of a few hundred rupees" (Peer 120). These politicians based their careers on the history of the conflict. They gained support by exploiting these memories. They made promises of war and peace, whatever suited their intentions, and people followed them like a moth to a flame. People were hopeless in this regard; some dreamed of peace, while others wanted revenge for their sufferings. Some politicians promised them a future without war, a separate homeland, and a peaceful life where their children would live without fear. Other politicians created a narrative of war, bloodshed, and revenge. They promised to avenge the ones that were killed; they promised to go to war to gain independence. A shared past brought them together under one banner, and they dreamt of a common destiny. These narratives based on collective memories of people did bring some solace to people; it gave them hope and provided political legitimacy to nationalist movements.

Peer writes in his memoir that these politicians only used people and their collective memory as a tool to gain political legitimacy. Their promises of a better future and a separate homeland were merely empty promises. " I thought of the separatist leaders giving statements to crowds of journalists in their mansion-like houses … They spoke of the sacrifices of the people of Kashmir; they spoke of the struggle for freedom" (Peer 146). These separatist leaders incited hostility among people using their collective memories; they motivated them towards separatism while they lived in the comfort of their homes. They used collective memories of suffering and collective trauma as an instrument to form a narrative of separatism that helped them gain political legitimacy. This shows the hypocrisy of political leaders, who used people's torment to gain support for their political agendas. They failed to resolve the conflict and negotiate terms with opponents because they did not reframe it. Their political support was based on people's memories, so they were not inclined toward resolving the conflict. "The contrast in his and their life was stark … they cannot even imagine what being tortured is like" (Peer 146). They talked about how people in Kashmir suffer and have been wronged when they have not experienced it.

Problem-solving, decision-making, perception, memory, imagination, sentiments, reasoning, and communication are all significantly influenced by analogies. By drawing

analogies, politicians make conflict resolution difficult, according to Wang. (33) They form a narrative from this analogy, creating hindrances in attaining peace. Understanding history is essential to studying deep-rooted conflicts, and resolution requires a thorough understanding. However, historical memories or horrors of the past also make it difficult for victims to move on and negotiate. Peer writes in *Curfewed Nights that* the actions of militants created an impact on Muslims living in India. When Peer moved to India for higher studies, he could not rent an apartment because he was a Kashmiri Muslim. An attack on the Indian parliament had created resentment against Kashmiri Muslims, and he had to live through official and unofficial restrictions. Officially, he had to pass through checkpoints and declare his identity, and unofficially, the enraged general public refused to accept him, and he lived as an outcast. "Hardliners inside and outside the Hindu right, the BJP, claimed that December 13 was India's 9/11" (Peer 89). Hindu extremists drew the historical analogy of the attack on the Indian parliament with the September 11 attack on the World Trade Center. This interpretation of the event drew a line between Hindus and Muslims, where they labeled Kashmiri Muslims as terrorists. These sentiments were passed down to the general public, and the masses picked up the narrative. Consequently, Kashmiri Muslims faced the impact of this analogy; many arrests were made based on suspicion of conspiring in the attack, and the Prevention of Terrorism Ordinance became law.

4.2.4. Memory and Three Causal Pathways

Robert Keohane and Judith Goldstein, in their book *Ideas and Foreign Policy: An Analytical Framework*, identifies three ways in which ideas or collective historical memory influences political outcomes, policies, and conflict resolution. They call these ways 'causal pathways.' These are road maps, equilibrium, and institutionalization. (04)

The first pathway is when collective historical memory paves the road or guides behavior and decision-making. It acts as a road map for the people of Kashmir, influencing them and dictating their conflict behavior. In the Kashmir conflict, Kashmiri Muslims are labeled terrorists, creating a perception against them.

"In newspaper advertisements, people warned against possible attacks by Kashmiri militants. Security checks and barriers outside theatres, railways stations, and markets added to the paranoia. I was scared of saying I was a Kashmiri … I carried my

press card with me all the time. Even then, I avoided busy markets and entertainment complexes" (Peer 87).

This labeling guided Peer's behavior and influenced his decisions. His identity came with restrictions, and he had to behave accordingly. He writes that there was paranoia attached to his identity. This identity is formed by the historical memory of the conflict, which serves as the roadmap for interpreting the conflict.

Apart from their daily activities, like avoiding busy markets, even their major life decisions were guided by their perception and historical memory of the conflict. "Young men in Kashmir did not wish to become writers. You found a job and worked towards getting a better one, getting a car, getting married, and living in your house with your wife" (Peer 101). They do not aspire to have goals as they do not have the luxury of being ambitious. Their situation decides the roadmap they have to follow and their life trajectory. Their day-to-day survival is more important since they are constantly scrutinized. Being a victim of conflict poses restrictions and limits your options. Their identity entails their actions and behaviors. "You always switched on that light so the soldiers could see you. We drove through empty roads and streets, stopped at check posts; I showed my identity card and opened my bags" (Peer 103). This guided behavior and their identity lead to victimization and trigger sentiment against enemies. Their identity makes them hopeless, forcing them to follow this lifestyle. They are not free to take an alternative course of action, choose careers, or even drive on a busy road without being stopped.

The second causal pathway is equilibrium. Without a unique equilibrium, historical memory can affect the outcomes of a conflict. Memory can operate as focal points for defining collaborative approaches or as coalitional glue to support the cohesion of certain groups. Thus, historical memory can either lead to cooperation among groups or disorder. In the Kashmir conflict, the horrors of the past act as coalitional glue between Kashmiri Muslims because they can relate to each other's sufferings. This memory also creates disorder among Indians and complicates settling the conflict. "By the summer of 1990, thousands of young Kashmiri men crossed the Line of Control for arms training in the Pakistan-controlled part of Kashmir. When they returned as militants, they were heroes, people wanted to talk to them, touch them, hear their stories, and invite them for a feast" (Peer 24). Their historical memory created equilibrium as they cooperated and viewed themselves as a distinct group. They chose fighting over the

settlement of the conflict because their memories create this pathway. They are seen as heroes within their community and are praised for their bravery, while they are seen as terrorists by Indians. Their historical memories create this difference in perceptions and pathways.

The third causal pathway is institutionalization, according to which historical memory can become deeply entrenched in the institutions of a group. In deep-rooted conflicts like the Kashmir conflict, social and political institutions embed historical memory within them. These institutions include schools, media, and religion. They play a vital role in forming the perception of the conflict. In Kashmir, Waheed writes that when students refused to sing the Indian national anthem, the administration did not rebuke them; they stayed silent and supported their decision.

Similarly, the media motivated and mobilized people, the politicians encouraged people to fight for their rights, and the religious leaders declared their fight as a fight against evil. When memory becomes a part of social and political institutions, it creates a pathway for people. It brings them closer and dictates their actions. This memory then lives on for generations.

Historical memory, thus, forms the perception of a conflict by providing three different pathways. It can act as a road map by guiding behavior and influencing decision-making. It can also serve as equilibrium by bringing the group closer, giving them a distinct identity, and acting as a coalitional glue while creating disorder with the other group. This historical memory is embedded in institutions; they impact the outcomes of the conflict, making it difficult to resolve.

CHAPTER 5:

Conclusion and Recommendations

Literary texts based on the Kashmir conflict have been critically examined in this study to explore the impact of collective memory on identity and perception of the conflict. It can be concluded from this research that collective memory plays a vital role in conflict zones. In the Kashmir conflict, collective historical memory forms the people's identity, differentiating them from other groups. Collective memory serves as a motivational tool and incites hostility against enemies. The collective identity binds the group together and creates social cohesion.

This study set out to investigate how collective memory functions in forming collective identity in literary texts from Kashmir. As portrayed in literary texts, collective memory plays a significant role in forming collective identity. In the Kashmir conflict, because of collective memories and historical enmity, group affiliation becomes stronger. The horrors of the past and traumas of ancestors are passed on to the next generation. Their collective identity is shaped by the past generation's failure to mourn their losses and the reverse injury to self-esteem. The memories are psychologized as they bind the group and form their collective identity. Due to their collective memories, they categorize themselves as a separate group, identify themselves as a social group, and draw comparisons with other social groups. The primary research objective of this study was to examine how collective memory influences collective identity. The analysis of fiction from Kashmir revealed that collective memory plays a significant role in shaping collective identity, forming group cohesion, and differentiating one group from another.

This study sought to elucidate how collective memory influences the characters' perception of the Kashmir conflict and their conflict behaviors as portrayed in the selected narratives. The analysis of these texts reveals that collective memory paves the way for interpreting the conflict. Kashmiri Muslims formed their perception of the conflict from their collective memories and collective trauma. They justify their actions and glorify their struggle through their collective memories. They believe they have been historically victimized, so their desire for revenge and retaliation is justified.

This research aimed to study the impact of collective memory on the perception of the Kashmir conflict. The texts have revealed that people in Kashmir use collective memory to make sense of

their situation and interpret the conflict. They use their collective memories to justify the outbreak of the conflict, create a positive image of self, and establish themselves as the victim of the opponent. Their beliefs, values, and experiences serve as a lens through which they view the conflict, analyze their situation, set priorities, and plan their actions. Thus, collective memory influences the perception of the conflict, which serves as a road map for conflict behavior for people in Kashmir.

The overarching aim of this research was to study conflict behavior in tandem with conflict perception and how collective memory influences them. The research analysis highlighted that collective memory guides conflict behavior and is a motivational and mobilizing force. It influences the interpretation and decision-making of the people of Kashmir.

This study concludes that collective memory serves as the frame through which Kashmiri civilians view their conflict and form their perception. Their emotions, judgments, and motivations are based on these collective memories. The disputants in the Kashmir conflict have different memories and frames, which is how they justify their actions and positions. This study also sees the reframing of the conflict as a solution. Reframing the conflict will require creating new narratives, which is why conflict resolution is complex. This research has studied the relationship between memory and nationalism and has concluded that from collective memory, nationalist movements are born. Collective memory is a tool and is used as an instrument to create narratives and gain mass support.

This research has been significant in applying the field of memory studies to a conflict in the Global South. This research adds to the existing knowledge of memory studies by using collective memory as a lens to study its impact on the Kashmir conflict. This research studies the positive and negative impacts of collective memory in the Kashmir conflict by exploring how it is used as a manipulation tool and how it binds people together.

Future researchers can explore collective memory's role in resolving a dispute. This research recommends studying the role of the instrumentalization of collective memory and its manipulation of conflict resolution as an area of research. This study has concluded that collective memories are used to create narratives and gain political legitimacy; the negative impacts of this on conflict resolution can be studied in the future. Future researchers can also compare the collective memory of Kashmiri civilians as depicted in literary works with official historical narratives to strengthen their research.

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