Education & Unrest in Kashmir

A Way Forward

A Study by CHINAR International
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CHINAR
International

Investing in Children & Youth

Report Released
for Public Consultation

Education and Unrest in Kashmir

A Way Forward

April 2017

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Foreword

A dear friend of mine from USA called me and asked – *"Mauj Kasheer kich che*? (How is mother Kashmir?*)* I responded – *"Mauj Kasheer che theek, Magar asi kur temis seith wariah galat"* (Mother Kashmir is fine, but we have not been fair to her).

Kashmir has centuries of history. It has seen multiple races, cultures, religions, faiths and traditions. That evolution is us - modern day Kashmiris. Humans have very small shelf life. However, Kashmir will survive all this and continue to exist till eternity.

The only thing we can attempt to do is leave our next generation a place where they can breathe freely with a secure and promising future. Are we doing that? We might be trying but obviously not hard enough and not in a unified way. Hence the comment about the motherland.

Kashmir situation is very complex – probably one of the most complex in the world. Death, destruction, *hartals*, loss of school days, loss of economy is a norm - 27 years has taken its toll. All aspects of society have been impacted significantly. **And the most disheartening thing is that there is no plan from any entity which will give hope to a common Kashmiri. Nothing!**

Total apathy, denial, despair, selfishness, "turning a blind eye" have crept upwards into our society which is extremely disheartening. And then there are those with utopian visions without a realistic plan. And worse, those who have completely resigned to their fate. Fear factor is ubiquitous.

The risk of inaction and status quo is huge. Sub-standard education will create a leadership vacuum in Kashmir. Students will have limited choices in terms of their aspirations. If we continue the way things are shaping up, we risk extremism, wide scale criminalization of youth, chronic unemployment, drug abuse, and psychological disorders as witnessed in other protracted conflicts around the world where education has taken a backseat.

We are already seeing clear signs of some of these traits in our youth for no fault of theirs. We never gave them an environment where they could blossom and rise to their potential. Drug abuse has risen significantly and protesters are increasingly bypassing the guidance of the leadership and gravitating towards extremism. Again, I don't blame them. We never provided them with an environment to lead with objectivity and vision. Youth leadership needs to be educated to lead Kashmiris in modern era learning from history.

CHINAR's mission is "Empowerment of vulnerable children and marginalized youth in conflict areas through quality education and socioeconomic initiatives". And hence the study.

In absence of quality data about impact of unrest on education - we decided to take a good hard look at the situation – objectively and with a prism of being self-critical. For resources and technical know-how required for a valley wide survey to be conducted within a tight timeline we engaged Jahangir Raina for the study. His knowledge of local landscape and his ability to conduct a dispassionate and unbiased research and analysis was the reason for his engagement.

A first of its kind in the valley, the report talks about all aspects of the problem. The good news is that all stakeholders are concerned about securing the future of children and youth of Kashmir. All acknowledge that education is key in making that happen. Most agree that syllabus curtailment, mass copying, lenient marking, lack of teacher accountability, and - most of all - the prolonged shutdowns have compromised the competency levels of students significantly below peer level. However there are some, albeit very few, who have the perception that education has remained immune to the unrest.

A friend of mine, who is a senior police officer, shared that his young son has the potential to be the next Parvez Rasool. But he is reluctant to send him out due to safety concerns and has instead suggested him to play cricket on video games. Totally unfair for a young talent.

As the research evolved, we gained deeper understanding of the complexity of the situation. We were not quite ready to release the study however we were urged by few main stakeholders to do so in order to start a dialogue. Hence the release for public consultation.
We will look forward to your comments and suggestions by June 30th, 2017. CHINAR will continue its research and will finalize the conclusions and recommendations by August 31st, 2017.

Please let go of your prejudices and egos as you read this report dispassionately. Please don't get fixated on the usage of a particular word or how a particular sentence is phrased. Look at the *"Niyat"* (Intention) with which the study was conceived, carried out and finally narrated.

Usually foreword is not this long. However, we don't live in normal times and I thought that this detailed backdrop was required before you go through the study.

I would like to thank Jahangir Raina, Afifa Lone, Javeed Hajam, surveyors and the whole CHINAR team for working extremely hard and countless hours on this report. Many thanks to all the students, parents, teachers, civil society, resistance groups and their leadership, academicians, Directorate of School Education Kashmir, Director Education at the time of unrest 2016 for their inputs and guidance.

CHINAR is an apolitical organization. We have tried to keep the narrative simple and arguments objectives.

I pray that this report unifies all of us to take care of our future. Ameen!

Irfan Shahmiri

April, 2017
Srinagar

Supported by our parent organization – CHINAR International USA, (Non-resident Kashmiris) which is also funding this initiative – it is a study of Kashmiri education in the midst of conflict, by Kashmiris and for Kashmiri children.

If we continue to do what we are doing;
If we continue to do the way we are doing,
We'll continue to get what we are getting.

If we want different outcome,
We must do different things and also differently
(Prof. Marmar Mukhopadhyay)

Preface

Conflict has had a significant impact on the education of children in Kashmir. Since 2008, the periodic and prolonged spells of unrest have dramatically impacted the schooling. Schools and colleges have remained shut for months. It is incumbent upon that stakeholders to evolve means to continue education despite civil commotion and unrest. That is a major challenge though given the context in which strikes are called by the resistance leadership. We are faced with a collective resolve of the population to defy a system they perceive as suppressing their political rights, and their preferred form of protest is complete strike, or hartal as it is referred to in local parlance. Hartal impacts all sectors including education. Hartal is self-inflicting and lethal.

The inability of the state in engaging resistance leadership in a sustained dialogue has afforded an extended lease of life to hartals. Both the resistance leadership and the state are morally bound to find a way out for education to continue. The solution has to be mutually evolved and both parties need to be on board while they figure out the solution to safeguard education without politicizing it. Rather than leveraging education towards political ends, let education become the means to initiate dialogue between the two.

Any framework for policy output along these lines must incorporate input from the primary stakeholders i.e. the students. It is very important to reach out to the student community and understand their viewpoint on this issue. Drafting policies within the confines of offices has two main shortcomings: it is based on guesswork, and the 'solution' so evolved does not have the ownership among the primary stakeholders. These are the considerations that led us direct to the horse. We surveyed students, parents and teachers and took their input on the subject before embarking upon identifying the way forward.

This report is being put in the public domain for consultation. Comments and suggestions are solicited before we finalize the conclusions and recommendations.

Jahangir Raina

Acknowledgments

This research report was possible thanks to my lead surveyors Tasir Khan (for central zone), Ishtiaq Reshie (for north zone), and Bilal Kumar (for south zone). Their commitment was essential throughout the data collection phase. They handled the process of data collection and surveying seamlessly across districts, without any hiccups, even though many survey questions were of sensitive nature.

Advice and guidance of Irfan Shahmiri, Global Executive Director of CHINAR International, has been very important throughout the study.

Afifa Lone, Education Lead, and Javed Ahmad Hajam, Finance Officer, at CHINAR International provided comments and support in terms of monitoring. Their reviews contributed to improve the final draft. Raashid Wani supervised the process of data entry, tabulation, and quality check in timely fashion.

Contributions of intellectuals, members of civil society, and those working in the administration are duly recognized for invaluable, qualitative input. Lastly but most importantly, the content in this report has faithfully been aggregated from free and frank input of the key stakeholders including the students, parents, and teachers.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

- Conflict has had a significant impact on the education of children in Kashmir since 1990. Schools and colleges have remained shut for months during periodic and prolonged spells of unrest. The various stakeholders including government, civil society, and resistance groups need to figure out a way to continue education respecting political sentiments.

- Through this report, CHINAR examines the student perception around unrest in so far as it impacts education in Kashmir. It explores the dynamics of unrest and the need for advocacy to rescue education from its negative impact. The report is based on a survey of around 3,000 stakeholders including students and parents from all income groups. This also includes qualitative input from teachers, administration, youth and community heads. Focused Group Discussions were held with the members of the civil society, resistance groups, Directorate of School Education Kashmir, and media persons.

- Following consultations with a select group of stakeholders regarding the scope of the study, we conducted a test survey of 100 students and parents in order to test the validity of our questionnaire. Based on the input from test survey, final questionnaires were drafted and three teams of surveyors commissioned for the three zones of Kashmir valley spanning all 10 districts. Surveys were conducted at concentration points including colleges, tuition centers, community schools, and winter schools. Participant reach was supplemented by conducting door-to-door surveys including the ones who came through the referral process.

- Data tabulation and statistical testing was followed up by interpretation and analysis.

- The purpose of this report is to enable and commence a productive discussion and dialogue, on the subject of 'Education and Unrest', among the key stakeholders and the members of the public. Consultation on the basis of this report is solicited before we finalize the conclusions and recommendations.

MAIN FINDINGS

- Students are aware and concerned that unrest impacts their education. An appreciable proportion of students (37.5 percent) considered leaving Kashmir during the unrest of 2016 for continuance of their education. Out of those who considered migrating, our survey estimates suggest that 12.3 percent actually ended up migrating during the 2016 unrest.

- Despite the concern that unrest impacts education, there is substantial support for hartal among the student community. That is a paradox. Only 25 percent of students said they were against hartals. There is no evidence that support for hartal is confined to a specific socio-economic profile or group.

- Student support for hartal stems from their political beliefs and the lack of belief in the education system. While the resolution to the conflict remains elusive, students also perceive education as a dead end. Kashmiri students are increasingly becoming aware that their learning levels significantly lag behind their counterparts in other states. Surveys conducted at national level have revealed that the state of Jammu and Kashmir has consistently been scoring low in terms of learning levels. In its last assessment carried out in 2013, NCERT assessed student abilities of Class III and VIII in 36 states and union territories in Language and in Mathematics. Only Bihar and Chattisgarh scored lower than the state of Jammu & Kashmir. According to DISE (District Information System for Education) Annual Report 2014-15 J&K ranks 29th out of 36 states and Union Territories in primary and upper primary education.

- When asked to guess the rank of their state in terms of learning levels, both students and parents in Kashmir reciprocated the assessment above. Around 60 percent of the respondents placed Jammu and Kashmir between the ranks 20 to 29.

- There is also a general disillusionment with the wider establishment that is perceived to be corrupt. That impacts the ability of students to pursue career goals and contributes to a broader support for boycotting the system during unrest.

- While students concede that unrest impacts their education, they fix the responsibility of that impact squarely on the state. Over 60 percent respondents said that their education was impacted the most due to restrictions by security forces (including curfews). There is an approximate split of 70:30 in population between rural and urban areas of the Kashmir valley. Curfews are usually confined to the urban areas, especially the inner townships. However, schools did not open in rural areas during the unrest, except for a handful of cases. During the unrest of 2016, there were 53 days of curfew. However for the remaining and cumulative period of approximately three months the educational institutions in townships did not open

either. This leads us to conclude that hartals impacted education more than the curfews. However, students seem to identify 'restrictions and curfews' as more damaging. There may be grounds for rationalizing such stance, however this also presents us with another paradox. Schools and colleges remained shut during non-curfew periods because teachers and students also subscribe to a certain political sentiment. Teachers also feared isolation from their respective communities.

- In terms of substitutes for formal schooling during times of unrest, e-Learning tools and channels with home access are feasible in Kashmir. The preferred media needs to be selected keeping in view the limitations of Internet access during unrest. Stored digital content with a user interface seems the easiest way forward. In our survey, over 78 percent students favoured an e-Learning channel that could be broadcast over TV or Radio. However when asked to compare and identify preferred media for e-Learning, 42 percent students favoured Internet.

- Community schools emerged as a stop gap arrangement during the 2016 unrest. However, the arrangements were not comprehensive enough to cater to a wider population of students. Only 15 percent of students among our survey respondents reported functioning of a community school in their locality during 2016 unrest. Footprint of community schooling was limited and participation minimal. Besides, there are scalability and infrastructure limitations with community schooling.

- Schools and colleges have traditionally remained shut during winters in Kashmir thus having its own impact on education. Winter schooling was conducted during 2016-17 to compensate loss of education. Our survey suggests that almost a quarter of the school children attended free winter tuition program and found it useful. There was certainly some student churn due to lack of proper heating arrangements. Nevertheless, the winter tutorial program was a success.

- During the survey, students proposed initiatives for the department of Education for improving their job prospects. Besides advocating job oriented courses, over 25 percent of students are in favour of setting up job placement cells within the institutions. There is also awareness about the need to incubate startups within the educational institutions.

- Students in Kashmir are willing to talk about conflict regardless of their political inclination. A third of the survey respondents are of the opinion that student politics will give vent to political views and keep tempers down.

- When asked which factor played the biggest role in ending hartals in 2016, nearly 44 percent respondents said that it was the student exams.

CONCLUSIONS SO FAR

All stakeholders are concerned about securing the future of children and youth of Kashmir. All acknowledge that education is key in making that happen. Education has, however, been impacted by unrest in Kashmir. There is a misleading perception in certain section of the society that education has remained immune to the unrest. Syllabus curtailment, mass copying, lenient marking, lack of teacher accountability, and - most of all - the prolonged shutdowns have compromised the competency levels of students significantly below peer level.

- When resistance leadership calls for hartal they do not specify that health sector, or other essential services, could be exempted. It is presumed that there is exemption since such services are essential even during unrest. If students, including their peers who participate in stone pelting and hartal vigilantism, value education and regard it as essential, they will grant the same exemption to education and facilitate the movement of teachers and students during unrest. There will be community wide efforts to keep schools and colleges open during unrest.

- The challenge is that there is student pessimism around their education, in terms of quality and outcome. Students perceive education as a dead end. Lack of quality education and lack of employment opportunities resulting from education have remained major contributing factors in reinforcing that perception. As a result, while the sense of loss in education during unrest is acknowledged, there is not enough motivation to address that loss. Students support closure of schools and colleges during unrest, and show support for hartal, even if it impacts their education.

- Support for hartal is not confined to students and parents only. A healthy proportion of teachers also support it. Those areas that were relatively untouched by unrest during 2016 and which were off the media scanner also witnessed almost zero attendance of teachers. While it is true that teachers fear isolation from the society if they attend duties, however we need to bear in mind that during unrest no one targeted the employees of other departments including health, power, public distribution, water works etc.

- There are certain inherent challenges in the quest for remedy. Hartal is successful when it spans all sectors. Protestors could therefore be disinclined to exempt education from hartal. State on the other hand may use education, and exams in particular, as leverage to end hartals. The state could therefore be reluctant to invest in contingency plans that dilute the leverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS SO FAR

The recommendations below lay down a framework for advocacy with government and resistance leadership. Both stakeholders need to be on board and both need to cooperate to ensure continuance of education in Kashmir during times of unrest. Suggested remedies include (a) substitutes to formal education during times of unrest, (b) addressing student expectations from education, (c) allowing student politics, and (d) advocacy with resistance leadership and the state, and (e) creating linkages with community leaders.

- Education should not be politicized. Participation in exams was politicized by the authorities. Union Education Minister stated that it was a 'surgical strike' against resistance group. Although students had participated in the exams, these statements of political nature alienated them. Politicization of education had, in fact, commenced much earlier during the unrest as the government repeatedly made attempts to open schools. Politicization of education inhibited the students' inclination to resume schooling.

- Resistance leadership could advocate exemption of education from hartal but that might only partially solve the problem. There could still be apprehensions about the functioning of educational institutions during unrest. Nevertheless, support from the resistance leadership on this front is a fundamental pre-requisite given the fact that they hold sway among the protestors, who almost invariably comprise of students. In order to plug the remaining contingencies (i.e. for areas that witness unrest despite the advocacy from the resistance group), there is need to supplement the proposed outreach by resistance group with certain compensatory solutions and substitutes.

- Schools and colleges have traditionally remained shut during winters in Kashmir thus having its own impact on education. With the success of stopgap winter schooling, such initiatives can go beyond the mechanism of compensation for loss of education as a result of unrest. This fallback mechanism can be strengthened and made part of regular schooling which would give students a chance to compensate the cumulative loss in previous years.

- e-Learning with home access could be explored as an alternative means of education during shutdowns. E-learning should be designed as a regular supplement to formal schooling. Its usage should not be limited to the periods of unrest. Non-Governmental organizations could be engaged to develop and distribute e-content using appropriate media. Local cable operators' network can be leveraged to broadcast such e-content. Government support will be required to facilitate use of mainstream broadcast media (TV& Radio).

- The government could formalize its policy around community schooling as a stop gap arrangement. Geographical mapping of teachers could be undertaken, and teachers asked to

strengthen schools/colleges in their vicinity at the times of unrest. Community schooling could follow cluster approach with selected schools, having adequate infrastructure, accommodating wards from multiple surrounding schools. For the purposes of scalability of community schooling across the valley, the role of government is critical. If needed, security arrangements could also be made at the cluster community schools.

- Students in Kashmir are willing to talk about conflict regardless of their political inclination. There is definitely a culture of political tolerance and pluralism in this regard among the students. Not many conflict zones afford such luxury. There is need to establish social and political forums that harness this outlook and channel it towards positivity. Contours of student politics could be explored. Students could be given social spaces to express their concerns about their education, about conflict, and various other issues.

- Civil society could facilitate dialogue on education between resistance leadership, government, teachers and students. Dialogue around an individual component of unrest is justifiable on its own and does not have to held ransom to the core political issue.

- Department of school education should invest in continuous monitoring of schools to ensure teacher accountability. Teacher accountability is the main factor in improving quality of education.

- Student expectations vis-a-vis career and job prospects need to be addressed within the existing education system as much as possible. This needs to be done to convince the students that education is an important stepping stone that can improve their lives. The perception that education is a dead end needs to be addressed. The state has to devise policies in this regard that go beyond skill development. Counseling and practical entrepreneurship within colleges/schools need to be explored.

- Flavours of entrepreneurship could be explored in higher secondary schools and colleges. Institutions mandated with entrepreneurship development could be integrated with the department of Education, along with the skill development component. If skill development, self-employment and entrepreneurship among youth are seen as being facilitated by education, such interventions could serve as means to convince the students that education can potentially improve their lives.

- Skill development should not be politicized and it should not be allowed to facilitate brain drain. Most importantly, the government needs to explore ways and means to ensure that skill development concludes with appropriate employment opportunities. There is also need for job placement cells inside colleges and higher secondary schools. A job plan needs to be formulated at the state level outlining the interventions government would undertake in

order to generate jobs in various sectors of the economy. The job plan must outline the role to be played by the schools and colleges.

- Besides career counseling and employment, there are other student concerns that also need to be addressed. Student politics, thus far banned on college campuses, could be permitted within defined contours. It is better to have a student talk about conflict inside a college rather than allow his/her radicalization outside it.

- There is an option for conducting schooling during early morning hours on hartal days. Transportation would also have to be facilitated in accordance to the timings.

- There is a Village Education Committee (VEC) in each village. Students could be given membership in such committees. There are also village Social Welfare Committees and other local level forums. Involving students in such committees can give students some social and political space. VECs could also be engaged in the geographical mapping and creation of an 'Unrest Teacher Volunteer' database for mobilization of teachers during unrest. Masjid Committees could also be engaged for the purposes of facilitating infrastructure needs during community schooling and raising awareness among the public to this effect. That will give the process a community touch.

- As a confidence building measure towards restoring student politics, the security personal could be moved away from schools and colleges and their visibility around them reduced. Security forces stay in schools during unrest times should be discouraged.

- Suggested model could have the following components:
  - Advocacy of resistance leadership with the protesters with the aim of adjusting time for schooling during periods of unrest
  - Promoting community schooling in areas that remain affected despite the advocacy by the resistance leadership
  - Supplement formal schooling through e-learning which is potentially unrest proof. Further supplementing conventional school calendar through winter schooling.

RISKS AS RESULT OF INACTION

- The risks associated with inaction are significant. Sub-standard education will create a leadership vacuum in Kashmir. Students will have limited choices in terms of their aspirations. If we continue the way things are shaping up, we risk extremism, wide scale criminalization of youth, chronic unemployment, drug abuse, and psychological disorders as witnessed in other protracted conflicts around the world where education has taken a backseat.

- Kashmir has already seen a significant rise in drug abuse over the last decade, as reported by eminent psychiatrists of the valley. According to a survey conducted by UN Drug Control Program survey in 2008, there are over 70 thousand drug addicts in Kashmir.
- Kashmir has suffered sustained brain drain since 1990 due to the conflict. Each spell of unrest causes a spike in that process.

STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

There are three main sections in this report. The first section attempts to analyse the student response to unrest, while the second section of the report identifies ways and means to compensate loss of education due to unrest. The report concludes with recommendations for various stakeholders.

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INTRODUCTION AND PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Background

During the Kashmir unrest of 2016, schools remained shut for five months from July till November. For the first three months of the unrest there was hardly any debate in the local media about the need to resume education. Towards the end of September, the state government announced that the exams would be conducted on time despite the fact that no schooling took place from July onwards. From that date onwards, till the end of November, hardly a day went by without an article or a news item on education in the local media. Exams were seen by the resistance group as means to end hartal that had impacted governance. Government was adamant and the resistance group blamed it for leveraging education towards political gains. Education was inevitably politicized. Unfortunately, it was the politicization of education that triggered the media debate on loss of education during the 2016 unrest. Till then, the loss in education sector did not attract any significant media attention. It is fair to mention that the attitude among general public was similar. The apathy towards education has evolved along with the conflict in Kashmir.

The unrest and public apathy towards education has compromised quality of education. Since quality education is the prime vertical of CHINAR International, it is incumbent upon the organization to explore ways and means to continue education during times of unrest. It is therefore important to (1) examine the impact of unrest on education in Kashmir, its dynamics, and (2) the need for advocacy to rescue education as much as possible from the negative impact of unrest.

We set out to establish the contours of this dual objective by knowing first hand from the stakeholders how the problem may be resolved. We surveyed around 3,000 stakeholders including students, teachers, and parents.

This survey report presents the perspective of Kashmiri students on the dynamics of unrest in so far as it impacts their education. It also discusses possible remedies. Although the focus is on the perspective of students, the primary stakeholders, we have also incorporated input from parents, teachers, and other stakeholders. The report faithfully presents the survey data in aggregated format. There is supporting interpretation and analysis. However our analysis is only restricted to providing context to the survey data.

Most of the content in this report is presented in form of charts and tables, which flow as part of the report analysis.

Research Methodology

Following consultations with limited stakeholders regarding the scope of the study, we conducted a test survey of 100 students and parents in order to test the scope of our questionnaire. Based on the input from test survey, final questionnaires were drafted and three teams of surveyors commissioned for three zones of Kashmir valley. Surveys were conducted at concentration points including tuition centers, community schools, and winter schools. Participant reach was supplemented by conducting door-to-door surveys including the ones who came through the referral process. Qualitative input was taken from teachers, administration, stone pelters and community heads. Focused Group Discussions were held with the members of the civil society, Directorate of School Education, members of media, faculty and researchers at Kashmir University. Data tabulation and statistical testing was followed up by interpretation and analysis.

Profile of Survey Respondents

Since the impact of 2016 unrest on education was valley wide, the survey sample had to be valley wide. Kashmir valley comprises of 10 districts. By convention, the districts have been divided into three zones. South zone comprises of the four districts namely Anantnag, Pulwama, Shopian, and Kulgam. The central zone includes the districts of Srinagar, Budgam, and Ganderbal. While as the North Zone includes Baramulla, Kupwara and Bandipora districts. The guiding principal in selecting survey respondents has been to provide all zones due representation in proportion to the populations in those zones.

Survey Respondents	Students		Parents	
District	Percent	Count	Percent	Count
Anantnag	6.5%	139	3.9%	20
Kulgam	2.2%	47	2.3%	12
Pulwama	6.4%	137	16.7%	86
Shopian	8.3%	177	11.3%	58
Srinagar	22.3%	477	17.3%	89
Budgam	19.3%	413	38.1%	196
Ganderbal	1.4%	29	0.2%	1
Bandipora	5.7%	121	0.0%	0
Baramulla	18.5%	396	9.5%	49
Kupwara	9.3%	199	0.6%	3
Other	0.0%	1	0.2%	1
		2136		515

Table 1.1: Survey respondents

Survey data of 2651 respondents, who participated in the survey in the first phase, was considered complete and tabulated accordingly. The first phase involved quantitative data

collection. Out of the 2651 responses that passed quality check, 2136 were students and 515 were parents. There are no families in the survey with more than one respondent i.e. if a student for a particular family was surveyed, the parent from the same family was not considered. This was done to avoid possible repetition of responses and opinions. Field surveyors undertook the survey work at concentration points such as tuition centres, winter schools, community schools, offices and also went door-to-door in certain localities, with the latter method especially implemented for the survey of parents. The second phase involved qualitative surveys of teachers, community heads, members of civil society, and officers in state government administration.

Although students have been the main victims of the unrest in terms of the impact on their education, we have surveyed parents as well, since in this part of the world students are comparatively much more influenced by their parents. Parents play a big part in the decision making of their children's education in Kashmir up to the intermediate and even graduate levels.

Survey Participants	Students		Parents	
Gender	Percent	Count	Percent	Count
Male	61.8%	1320	94.4%	486
Female	38.2%	816	5.6%	29
		2136		515

Table 1.2: Student/Parent/Gender split of survey participants

We were able to achieve a decent gender mix in case of students where over 38 percent student respondents were female. However, in case of parents it was mostly the males who volunteered to participate in the survey.

Female parents often referred the surveyors to their husbands since most females, majority of whom are housewives, preferred not to participate in the survey unfortunately. There is also - generally speaking - less interest in the subject among the female parents. Other than that reason, it is important to mention that parent survey was mostly conducted door-to-door and in line with the culture of the valley, visitors usually address the males in the house.

Average age for survey respondent in case of student was 19, while for parent it was 44.

Student respondent ratio was nearly 47:53 between pre-12th and post-12th grade students respectively. We had higher preference for older age students just in order to ensure that the respondent understood properly what was being asked.

Class enrolled for (during 2016):		
	Response Percent	Response Count
8th	0.8%	18
9th	1.7%	36
10th	13.2%	282
11th	13.8%	294
12th	17.4%	372
Undergraduate/Diploma	46.1%	984
Postgraduate	4.6%	99
Other	2.4%	51
		2136

Table 1.3: Student respondent split by grade

Total sample size in the survey stood at 3,010.

	Quantitative		Qualitative	
	Students	Parents	Teachers	Others (including Admin, Community Heads, Intellectuals, NGOs, Stone pelters, Police officials)
School and HSEC	1002	515	100	119
Colleges and Universities	1134			
Questionnaires rejected on account of incomplete data	42	14		
Test survey	63	21		
Total Sample Size (3,010)	2241	550	100	119
Sample Considered	2136	515	100	119

Table 1.4: Categories of survey participants

Socio-Economic Profile of the Respondents

36 percent of the student respondents belong to families with average monthly income of Rs.5000 or less. 24 percent families fell in the bracket of Rs. 5,000 to 10,000 monthly income. A good proportion of the respondents (students) did not know the income of the family and guessed it by the profession of the parent with some aid from the surveyor. In Srinagar the income per month tends to be higher.

Figure 1.1: Average monthly income of respondent's family

Almost everyone in Kashmir has been impacted by the 27 year long conflict. Naturally the opinions are unlikely to remain neutral. It helps to know that a huge proportion of the students and parents we surveyed knew, in person, someone who got injured during the unrest. As per various reports, 92 individuals were killed while over 19 thousand got injured on both sides during the unrest of 2016.

Do you personally know anyone who got injured during the 2016 unrest?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	57.5%	1229	47.2%	243
No	42.5%	907	52.8%	272
		2136		515

Table 1.5: Does the respondent personally know anyone who got injured during 2016 unrest?

The narrative on overall development, including education, is often subsumed by the narrative on overall conflict in Kashmir. Those who focus on the broader picture are moved by that aspect. However it is also a fact that there is a push to carry on, despite the conflict. Education is a sector where people are used to interruptions with intermittent hartals and other manifestations of unrest. However education in Kashmir carries on.

SECTION 1: THE STUDENT PARADOX

Section Summary

- Students are aware and concerned that unrest impacts their education. An appreciable proportion of students (37.5 percent) considered leaving Kashmir during the unrest of 2016 for continuance of their education. Out of those who considered migrating, our survey estimates suggest that 12.3 percent actually ended up migrating during the 2016 unrest.

- Despite the concern that unrest impacts education, there is substantial support for hartal among the student community. That is a paradox. Only 25 percent of students said they were against hartals. There is no evidence that support for hartal is confined to a specific socio-economic profile or group.

- Student support for hartal stems from their political beliefs and the lack of belief in the education system. While the resolution to the conflict remains elusive, students also perceive education as a dead end. Kashmiri students are increasingly becoming aware that their learning levels significantly lag behind their counterparts in other states. Surveys conducted at national level have revealed that the state of Jammu and Kashmir has consistently been scoring low in terms of learning levels. In its last assessment carried out in 2013, NCERT assessed student abilities of Class III and VIII in 36 states and union territories in Language and in Mathematics. Only Bihar and Chattisgarh scored lower than the state of Jammu & Kashmir. According to DISE (District Information System for Education) Annual Report 2014-15 J&K ranks 29th out of 36 states and Union Territories in primary and upper primary education.

- There is also a general disillusionment with the wider establishment that is perceived to be corrupt. That impacts the ability of students to pursue career goals and contributes to a broader support for boycotting the system during unrest.

- While students concede that unrest impacts their education, they fix the responsibility of that impact squarely on the state. Over 60 percent respondents said that their education was impacted the most due to restrictions by security forces (including curfews). There is an approximate split of 70:30 in population between rural and urban areas of the Kashmir valley. Curfews are usually confined to the urban areas, especially the inner townships. However, schools did not open in rural areas during the unrest, except for a handful of cases. During the unrest of 2016, there were 53 days of curfew. However for the remaining and cumulative period of approximately three months the educational institutions in townships did not open either. This leads us to conclude that hartals impacted education more than the curfews. However, students seem to identify 'restrictions and curfews' as more damaging. There may be grounds for rationalizing such stance, however this also presents us with another paradox.

Schools and colleges remained shut during non-curfew periods because teachers and students also subscribe to a certain political sentiment. Teachers also feared isolation from their respective communities.

1.1   **Concern for Education**

Chapter Summary: *Students are aware and concerned that unrest impacts their education. An appreciable proportion of students (37.5 percent) considered leaving Kashmir during the unrest of 2016 for continuance of their education. In the student age group related to 8th standard and above, our survey estimates suggest that around 35 thousand actually migrated during the 2016 unrest.*

On the 19th of November 2017, schools opened in Kashmir for a brief period of time. By then the schools had seen closure lasting five months due to unrest. During our survey we asked students how they felt returning back to school. Majority said they were very happy to return. This was the first instance during the prolonged five months of closure when resistance leadership conceded a full-day relaxation in their protest calendar. There was another reason for the students to celebrate the return. The government had announced mass promotion from fifth standard (age group 11) to the ninth standard (age group 15) and also for the eleventh standard (age group 17) in view of the prolonged closure. So the day they returned to school, they actually started their new academic year. Students of tenth standard and those beyond eleventh standard were engaged in examinations which had already commenced on November 14 under comprehensive arrangements of state security around examination centres.

How did you feel returning to school (for exams or classes) for a brief period after the unrest?

- Was very happy to return back to school — 63.4%
- Willingly went back to school — 20.8%
- Reluctantly went back to school — 15.8%

During hartals, which other aspect of your school did you miss the most apart from class work?

- Other (please specify) — 2.2%
- Extra curricular activities — 20.4%
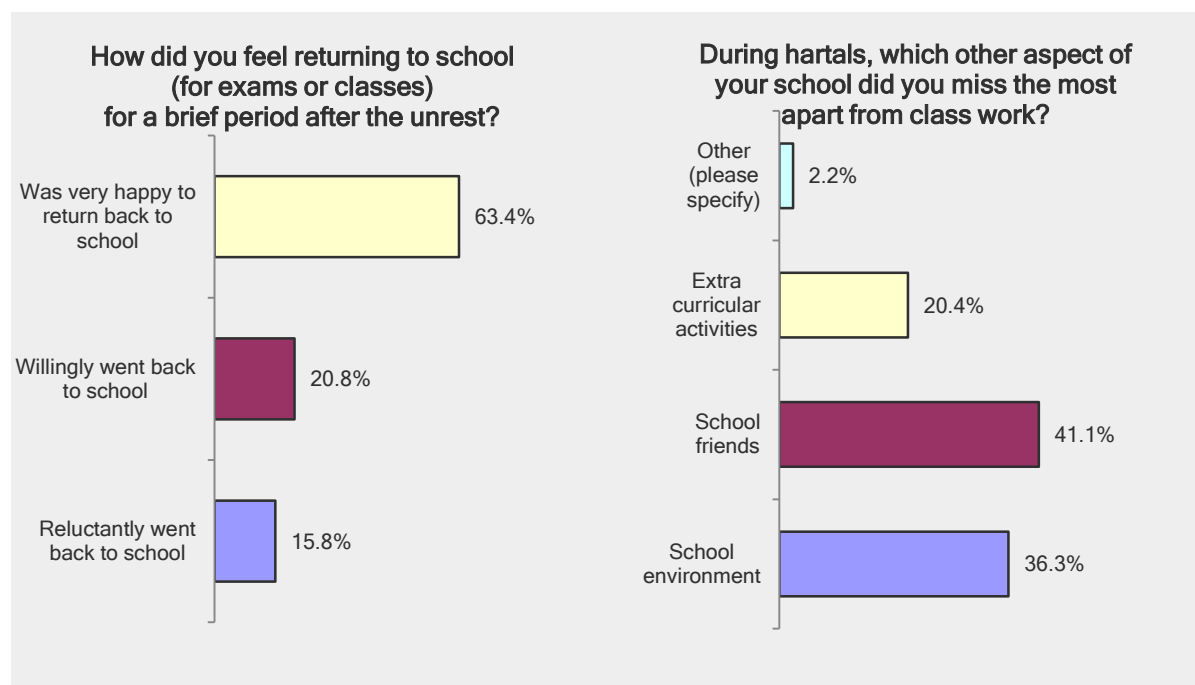- School friends — 41.1%
- School environment — 36.3%

Figure 1.2: Returning back to school

November 19th was a Saturday. Students attended school on the following day too even though it was a Sunday. Students had missed their schools not only because of studies but for other reasons too. Life of a student revolves around schools/colleges. It is one of the most important

components of their lives. Unrest had denied them this important aspect. In our survey, over 41 percent students said that they missed their school friends while over 36 percent said that they missed the overall school environment.

There were a few days of schooling during the months of November and December, as and when the resistance leadership relaxed their protest calendars. Except for those few days of schooling, educational institutions throughout Kashmir remained shut for five months in the first phase and for three-month the long winter holiday thereafter. Effectively, post unrest, the schools actually opened after winter vacations on 1st of March 2017. There was a long break of 8 months. Students effectively lost one full academic year.

As per official figures, around 15 thousand families migrated to Jammu, the nearby province, to ensure the continuance of education of their children during the unrest of 2016. Our survey reveals that as many as 37 percent students and 26 percent parents considered the option of leaving Kashmir for continuance of education. That is a substantial proportion. Kashmir has suffered a sustained brain drain since 1990 when the conflict began. The first two years of insurgency saw migration of estimated four hundred thousand individuals. It was a colossal brain drain. Kashmir was denied quality work force and quality teachers. Education department has immensely suffered due to sustained migration since the onset of conflict in 1990.

Did you, at any point during the unrest of 2016, consider leaving Kashmir for continuance of your (your son/daughter's) education?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	37.5%	802	26.4%	136
No	62.5%	1334	73.6%	379
		2136		515

Table 1.6: Leaving Kashmir for education

Not all students who considered moving out of Kashmir actually ended up migrating. Reasons ranged from 'financial constraints' to the 'inability of parents to accompany'. Out of those who intended to migrate, our survey points to an estimated 12.3 percent who actually did migrate. There is total student population of around 1.5 million in Kashmir. We assume that half of that student population i.e. 0.75 million relates to age group 8th standard and above that we have focused on during the survey. If 37.5 percent of that group considered migrating, that works out at around 0.28 million. Those who did actually migrate (12.3%) would then work out at an estimated 35 thousand students in that age group, which is a much higher figure than the official estimates. However, the estimates would include those who migrated to other parts of the country besides Jammu. Delhi is usually the other favoured destination in such scenarios.

The students took mid-term admissions in Jammu schools. Their families had to take up rented accommodations besides bearing other related expenses. Schools in Jammu arranged extra morning and evening classes to cater to such students.

Figure 1.3: Migration out of Kashmir for continuance of education

The aspect of student education that is seen to be most affected by the unrest is the long term career. Students are also aware that unrest has impacted the quality of teaching.

It seems that the job prospects and career development have been the main casualty as far as students perceive the conflict. That perception holds true for the prolonged conflict in general as well as for the unrest of 2016 in particular. That the students were very much aware of their career development and job prospects being impacted by 2016 unrest can be gauged from the answers to the survey question below. When it comes to the impact of 2016 unrest, students see maximum damage rendered to their career development.

Which aspect of student education was impacted the most due to hartals and unrest in 2016?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Daily routine and discipline	22.1%	472
Competitiveness/Performance	27.5%	587
Quality of teaching	16.8%	359
Career development	33.6%	718
		2136

Table 1.7: Which aspect of student education was impacted the most due to hartals and unrest in 2016?

Clearly students have intricately linked career/jobs and education. They expect the education system to deliver them to the doorsteps of the job market. Their expectations are falling short, however as we shall shortly see. And they are primarily falling short due to conflict as far as the students are concerned. The chart below highlights an important aspect. Students are very much concerned that unrest impacts their education. However they also point at the inability of the education system to prepare them for the job market.

What in your opinion is the biggest problem with the education system in the state? Please choose one (STUDENTS).

Category	Percent
Other (please specify)	0.8%
No alternative means to continue education in times of unrest	23.6%
Sub standard monitoring and supervision	6.7%
Lack of teacher accountability	11.8%
Outdated syllabus and curriculum	11.2%
Sub standard infrastructure and facilities	11.8%
Sub standard quality of teaching	10.3%
Not connected to industry and not job oriented courses	23.8%

Figure 1.4: Problems with education system in the state (student perspective)

The job prospects in Kashmir are minimal, to say the least. Private sector exists in a very disorganized form and is often faced with the challenges of hartals and other residuals of unrest. Job generation through the private sector has been minimal over the years. Government on the other hand is over-employed. The lack of jobs is justifiably traced back to the gaps in the education system. There are not many job oriented courses on offer. Universities and colleges are completely disconnected from the industry, partly because the local industry is not so mature and is merely sustaining itself in the valley due to prolonged conflict.

While 23.6 percent students as per the chart above say that the biggest problem with regard to education is the lack of means to continue it in times of unrest, there is an equal proportion of respondents (slightly higher actually) who point at the lack of job oriented courses and lack of industry connect as being the biggest problem with the education system. Although linking jobs to education is debatable, but this is the expectation that students in Kashmir have from their education system. They want education system to facilitate jobs for them.

Apart from the issues listed on the chart, students also mentioned other problems and challenges including underfunded education sector, over emphasis on examinations, and non-availability of teachers for certain subjects.

The parent perspective on this question varies only slightly in the sense that parents have put slightly less stress on the job oriented courses and have emphasized the quality of infrastructure and facilities as one of the top most concerns. This is not to say that parents are not concerned about the job prospects of their children. Job generation and job preparation may not be perceived by the parents as the mandate of the education department and that is perhaps reflected in this variance in opinion.

What in your opinion is the biggest problem with the education system in the state? Please choose one (PARENTS).

Category	Percentage
Other (please specify)	1.4%
No alternative means to continue education in times of unrest	21.6%
Sub standard monitoring and supervision	8.2%
Lack of teacher accountability	7.4%
Outdated syllabus and curriculum	11.1%
Sub standard infrastructure and facilities	21.0%
Sub standard quality of teaching	13.2%
Not connected to industry and not job oriented courses	16.3%

Figure 1.5: Problems with education system in the state (parent perspective)

From the chart above, it is quite evident that while analyzing the bottlenecks in the education system, both students and parents are concerned about the lack of alternative means to continue education in times of unrest. This can also be substantiated by the student perception regarding the manner in which the prolonged conflict in Kashmir has impacted the quality of teaching.

Please refer to the chart below. Students pointed out the inability of teachers to cover the syllabus as the prime manifestation of the impact of conflict on the quality of teaching.

In what way has the prolonged conflict impacted quality of teaching?

Category	Percentage
Teacher absenteeism due to security issues	1.9%
Conflict has affected teacher accountability	8.3%
Teacher recruitment process is not proper	9.1%
Teachers are underpaid and as such underperform	4.9%
Teachers have domestic pressures and not able to achieve work-life balance	8.1%
Conflict does not let teachers cover curriculum fully	22.3%
Conflict has psychologically affected teachers	18.7%
Conflict has impacted work motivation of teachers	15.9%
Conflict has impacted professional competencies of teachers	10.8%

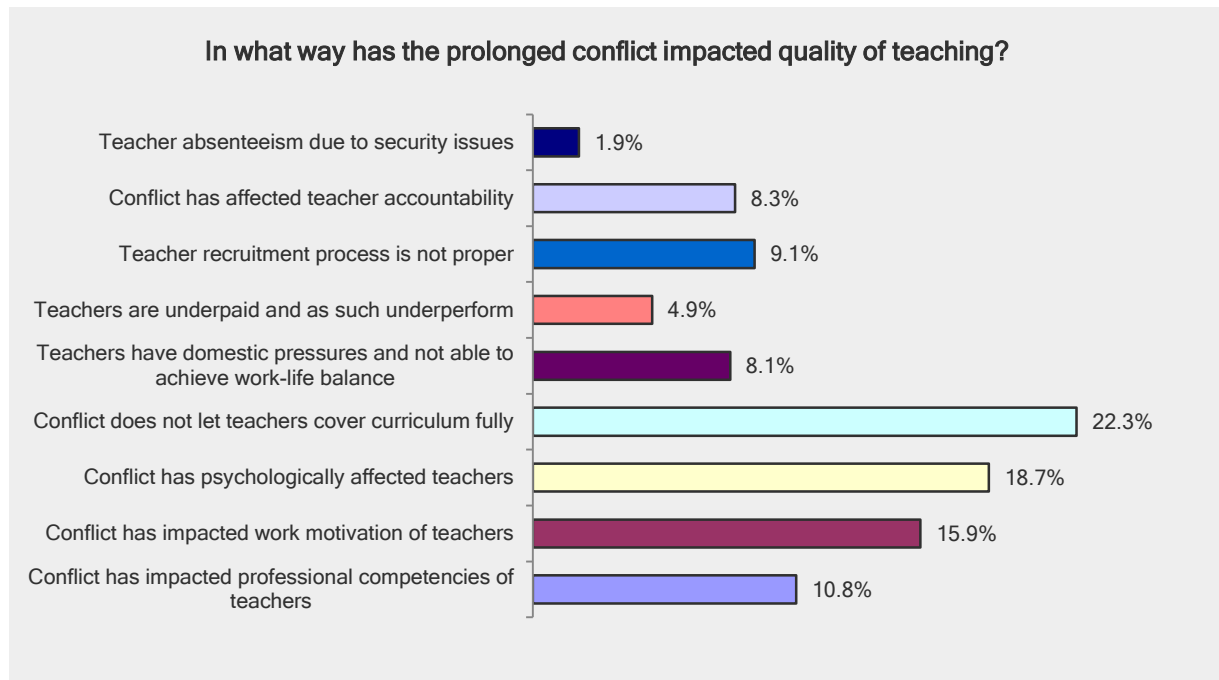Figure 1.6: Impact of conflict on quality of teaching

Quality of teaching is a major issue in Kashmir. If the standard and quality of teaching improves, students are likely to acquire a better perception about their education. It is a fact that majority of teachers in Kashmir do not take up the profession by choice. Teaching is a secondary choice of profession for most. That inevitably impacts the quality of education.

1.2   Student Support for Hartal

Chapter Summary: *Despite the concern that unrest impacts education, there is substantial support for hartal among the student community. That is a paradox. Only 25 percent of students said they were against hartals. There is no evidence that support for hartal is confined to a specific socio-economic profile or group.*

There is substantial support for hartal among the student community. Those students who are against the concept of hartal seem to be in minority. Majority of students either support hartal as means to highlight the political issues or are relatively neutral. If we look at the results in the chart below, only 25.1 percent (17.1% 'against'+8% 'under duress') are against hartals. It is also obvious that political issues are not the only basis for hartal. A good proportion observe hartal only because 'majority did the same.' The outlook of those students who are either neutral or follow others in observance of hartals, knowing fully well that hartals will have an adverse impact on their education, also needs to be placed in its context. The only interpretation one can evolve is that a vast section of students are complacent with regard to the impact on their education. The complacency may be a result of their perception that education might be a dead end for them, unable to improve their lives, unable to prepare them for their long term careers and jobs, which can be substantiated by survey data in the preceding section.

As a student, what was your response to the hartal calls during 2016? (STUDENTS)

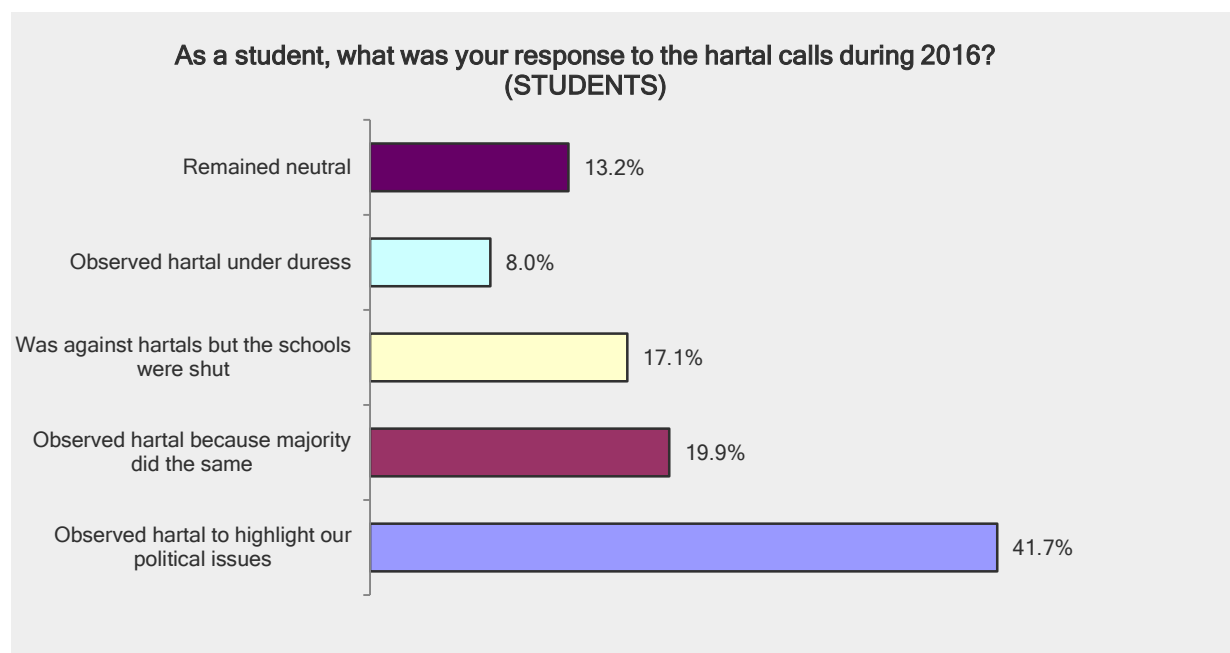| Response	Percentage
Remained neutral	13.2%
Observed hartal under duress	8.0%
Was against hartals but the schools were shut	17.1%
Observed hartal because majority did the same	19.9%
Observed hartal to highlight our political issues	41.7%

Figure 1.7: Student response to hartal calls

Support for hartal among the student community is further substantiated by responses captured in our next survey question. When we asked whether they expected the hartals to deliver results in terms of a political solution, over 40 percent of respondents (both students as well as parents) think that hartal will lead to results. While the effectiveness of hartals is debatable, the optimism

around hartal is a curious case and it lends some basis, from the respondent's point of view, for justifying support for hartal.

Do you think that hartals are effective? Do you think they fetch any results?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	45.6%	975	40.4%	208
No	54.4%	1161	59.6%	307
		2136		515

Table 1.8: Perceived effectiveness of hartals

Those who think hartals are effective identify the following aspects of hartal: That it highlights the political issue worldwide; that the governance, which is seen as denying political rights, is rendered dysfunctional; that hartal ensures continuity of the resistance movement. Rendering governance dysfunctional is the primary purpose of hartals. We will discuss that in more detail in section 1.4 of the report. Respondents also frequently pointed that hartal is the only feasible form of protest left for the protestors.

Although there is support for hartals, when it comes to stone pelting the student verdict is clear and comes with a resounding 'no'. 80 percent students said that stone pelting will not bring any results. Parents are even more equivocal about the subject.

As a student do you think that stone pelting will fetch results for the stone pelters?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	19.8%	422	4.3%	22
No	80.2%	1714	95.7%	493
		2136		515

Table 1.9: Perceived effectiveness of stone pelting

The question that arises at this stage is the following: If students are concerned that unrest impacts their education and long term career goals, why does a substantial proportion support hartals? This is a paradox. When we tried further to chart opinions about necessity of hartals, nearly 40 percent students said that everyone should observe hartals when needed. The opinion is not far from that held by the parents though the opinion is somewhat diluted in the parent sample.

What is your opinion about the necessity of hartals? (STUDENTS)

- Politicians should explore alternative means of protest (other than hartals): 14.3%
- There should not be any hartals: 10.2%
- Hartals calls should be made in exact same fashion as before i.e. in form of protest calendars: 6.1%
- Hartals calls should be made only occasionally: 8.6%
- Hartals calls should not be given by politicians: 9.6%
- Hartals should be voluntary: 12.1%
- Everyone should observe them when needed: 39.2%

What is your opinion about the necessity of hartals? (PARENTS)

- Politicians should explore alternative means of protest (other than hartals): 8.7%
- There should not be any hartals: 3.3%
- Hartals calls should be made in exact same fashion as before i.e. in form of protest calendars: 5.0%
- Hartals calls should be made only occasionally: 12.8%
- Hartals calls should not be given by politicians: 15.7%
- Hartals should be voluntary: 20.0%
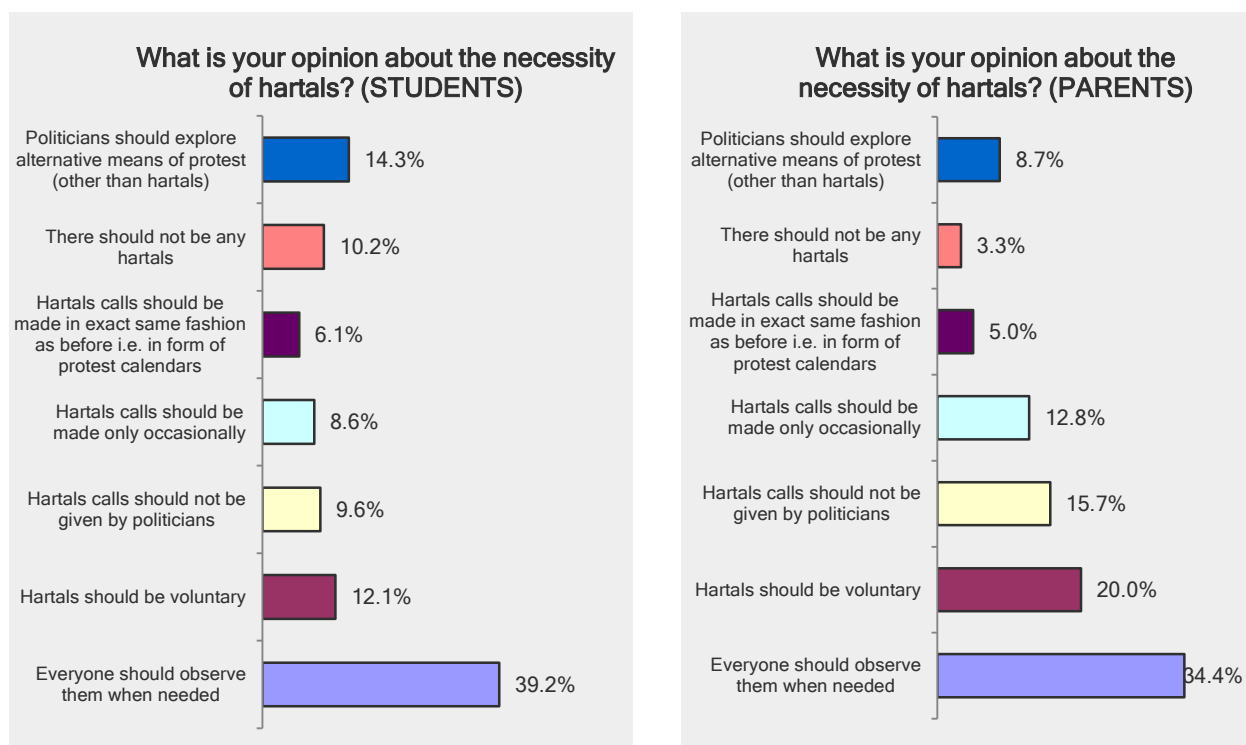- Everyone should observe them when needed: 34.4%

Figure 1.8: Perception about necessity of hartals

The support for hartal is not confined to students and parents only. A healthy proportion of teachers also support it. Several cases have been reported from rural areas of Kashmir which were relatively untouched by unrest where teachers are reported to have turned away the students from schools on account of hartal. While it is true that teachers fear isolation from the society if they attend duties, however we need to bear in mind that during unrest no one targeted the employees of other departments including health, power, public distribution, water works etc.

Neither is the support limited to any particular socio-economic profile. Survey data reveals that there is support across all sections of the society. Though stone pelting aspect of the unrest is such that only a sub-segment of protestors participate, our survey points to the fact that stone pelting has participation of youth from all backgrounds.
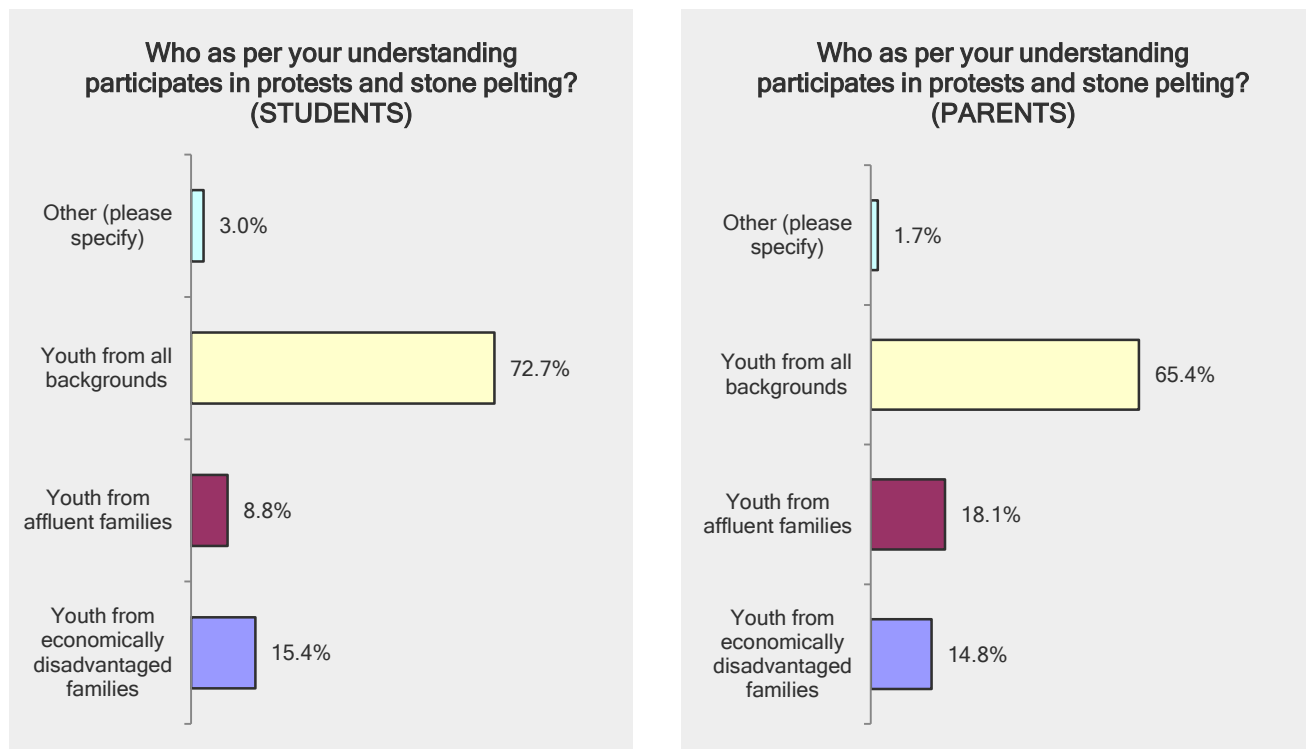
Who as per your understanding participates in protests and stone pelting? (STUDENTS)

- Other (please specify): 3.0%
- Youth from all backgrounds: 72.7%
- Youth from affluent families: 8.8%
- Youth from economically disadvantaged families: 15.4%

Who as per your understanding participates in protests and stone pelting? (PARENTS)

- Other (please specify): 1.7%
- Youth from all backgrounds: 65.4%
- Youth from affluent families: 18.1%
- Youth from economically disadvantaged families: 14.8%

Figure 1.9: Profile of youth who participate in stone pelting

This challenges the perception among the civil society and the establishment that there is class exploitation in stone pelting, that the support of middle class is limited to intellectual and moral support only. This is an area that requires further survey and research.

1.3   Explaining the Paradox

Chapter Summary: *Student support for hartal stems from their political beliefs and the lack of belief in the education system. While the resolution to the conflict remains elusive, students also perceive education as a dead end. Kashmiri students are increasingly becoming aware that their learning levels significantly lag behind their counterparts in other states. There is also a general disillusionment with the wider establishment that is perceived to be corrupt. That impacts the ability of students to pursue career goals and contributes to a broader support for boycotting the system during unrest.*

Students are willing to compromise their education because resistance has become part of the political culture in Kashmir. And hartal has become the pre-dominant manifestation of that culture. The language in which it manifests itself has been varied. Pre 1947 it was ethno-nationalism. From 1953 to 1975 it was largely about the resistance through Plebiscite Front. Post 1975 it manifested itself via the ascendancy of Jamaat-e-Islami, which subsequently culminated into armed insurgency during 1990s. During the most recent times and post 2008, the resistance has transition from armed insurgency into prolonged hartals and stone pelting.

During hartals, schools and colleges remain shut. However, hospitals continue to function, pharmacies stay open, factories operate at night, green grocers do their business during early hours of the morning, family businesses operate from the confines of their homes, horticulture and handicraft produce are shipped for trade out of the valley. Even some of the government offices function albeit with low attendance of the officials. Most essential services including electricity supply, water supply, and ration distribution function in near-normal fashion. There is margin to operate for all those activities during hartal. However, educational institutions remain completely shut throughout the hartal period. Supporters of hartal argue that open schools would project an image of normalcy. But then open greengrocers in the morning, functioning factories at night, and functioning of certain essential government services and offices also project the image of a certain level of normalcy. The question that needs to be asked is why the education sector is a demotivated sector and why the stakeholders i.e. the students, teachers or parents for that matter are so demotivated that they reconcile with – and even aid – the closure of the educational institutions.

If the essential services are allowed to operate and the educational institutions are shut down – even though both are part of the state apparatus – it implies that education is not perceived as essential. But why has education become so devalued in Kashmir?

Survey data presented in the preceding two chapters suggests that political issues are not the only basis for hartal. The outlook of those students who are either neutral or follow others in

observance of hartals, knowing fully well that hartals will have an adverse impact on their education, implies that a vast section of students are complacent with regard to the impact on their education. The complacency may be a result of their perception that education might be a dead end for them, unable to improve their lives, unable to prepare them for their long term careers and jobs. The remaining discussion below highlights the fact that not only is Kashmir lagging behind rest of the states in education, but that the students and parents are aware of the fallen standards.

In order to track the learning levels of school children, the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has been conducting National Achievement Surveys since 2001, for Class III, V and VIII. These reports work out national and state level scores based on student assessments.

In its last assessment carried out in 2013, NCERT assessed student abilities of Class III and VIII in 34 states and union territories in Language and in Mathematics. As per the assessment report for Class III, 15 states scored below the national average, of which at the bottom end were Chattisgarh, Bihar, Jammu & Kashmir, Rajasthan & Haryana. Only Bihar and Chattisgarh scored lower than the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Haryana students were ahead of Jammu & Kashmir in Language while in Mathematics they scored slightly lower than the latter.

Similarly the assessment report for Class VIII conducted in Language, Mathematics, Social Science, and Science shows that students from Jammu & Kashmir scored the least in Language throughout the country. The score was 'above average' for Mathematics, 'average' for 'Science' and significantly below average for Social Science.

According to DISE (District Information System for Education) Annual Report 2014-15 J&K ranks 29th out of 36 states and Union Territories in primary and upper primary education.

RANK	Student Percent	Student Count	Parent Percent	Parent Count
What is your understanding of where J&K is ranked among the states in terms of education throughout India? Guess by picking a rank from 1 to 29.				
1 to 9	12.4%	266	9.9%	51
10 to 19	29.6%	632	28.9%	149
20 to 29	58.0%	1238	61.2%	315
		2136		515

Table 1.10: Perceived ranking of J&k in education compared to other states

Students and parents in Kashmir are not oblivious to the ranking of their state among the other states in the country. We asked both students and parents to guess where Jammu & Kashmir state ranked in education in comparison to other states. Nearly 58 percent of the students placed J&K between rank 20 to 29 out of 36 states, while a slightly higher percentage of 61 percent

parents placed their state in the same range. It seems that the expectation is slightly more optimistic than what the NCERT studies indicate. At least at the elementary education bracket, J&K is placed last. In our survey 19 percent of students ranked J&K last.

This deteriorating state of education, about which both students and parents seem aware, is mostly attributable to the conflict of the last 27 years. It is also worth mentioning that as per census 2011 data, the average literacy rate in India is 74.04 percent, while as Jammu & Kashmir has a literacy rate of 68.74 percent placing the state at number 30 among all the 36 states and union territories.

Apart from awareness around fallen standards in education, there is also a general disillusionment with the wider establishment, beyond the education system, that is perceived to be corrupt. That impacts the ability of students to pursue career goals and contributes to a broader support for boycotting the system through hartals.

Costs of education have grown substantially in Kashmir over the years. Private tuitions have expanded their reach but the fees have multiplied almost ten times since early nineties. Admission fee for professional colleges have grown at even higher rates. Whereas admission to an engineering college (within or outside the state) would cost around 30 thousand rupees in early nineties, today the average admission fee has gone up to several hundred thousand rupees. Admissions to courses such as medicine are out of the league for vast majority of Kashmiri families. Although the government offers student scholarships to professional colleges under Prime Minister's Special Scholarship Scheme (PMSSS), it does not cater adequately to an ever growing pool of aspirants. In 2016, over 3500 students from J&K got admission in professional colleges all over the country under PMSSS. There are several other scholarship programs offered by the government.

We asked the respondents to identify two biggest challenges in pursuing their professional career. 'Financial constraints' and 'corruption in the system' are seen as the main challenges in achieving the career goals. Lack of career opportunities is also a perceived challenge. In South Kashmir 61 percent students said that financial constraint is the biggest challenge.
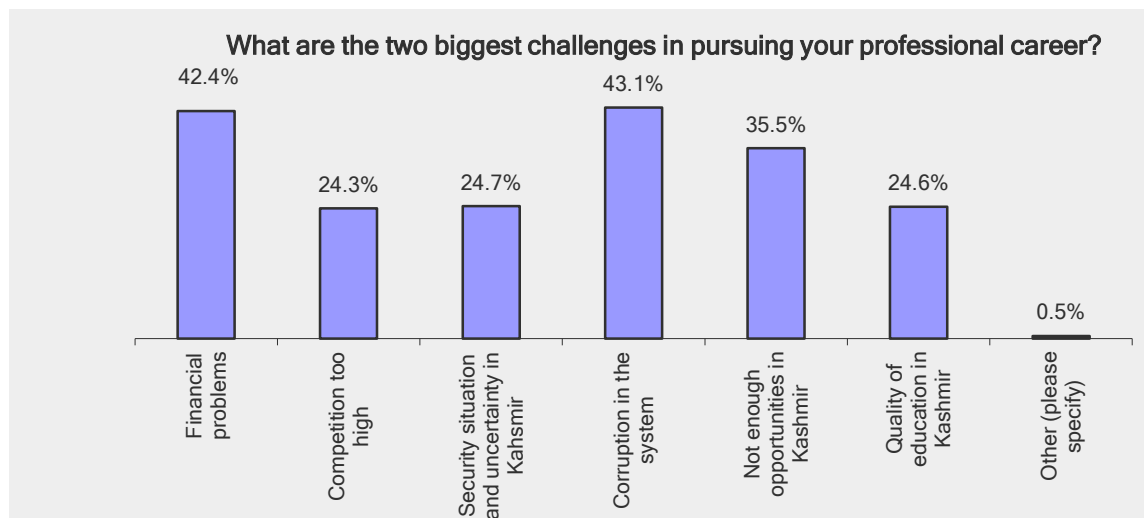
What are the two biggest challenges in pursuing your professional career?

- Financial problems: 42.4%
- Competition too high: 24.3%
- Security situation and uncertainty in Kahsmir: 24.7%
- Corruption in the system: 43.1%
- Not enough opportunities in Kashmir: 35.5%
- Quality of education in Kashmir: 24.6%
- Other (please specify): 0.5%

Figure 1.10: Challenges in pursuing professional career

The pessimism in this regard is higher among the parents. Nearly 71 percent of South Kashmir parents said that financial constraints were the biggest challenge with 51 percent selected corruption as the biggest challenge. When you aggregate responses at the state level, however, parent perception is almost identical with that of the students. There is remarkable similarity in the pattern of opinions on this subject among the students and parents.

There were also some other factors mentioned by the respondents in response to this question. These include the issue of language. Kashmiris speak Kashmiri, but Urdu/English is the medium of education. It is true to state that the hold on English/Urdu is not great. Language issue is indeed a major issue and it can impact one's ability to pursue his/her professional career. Appropriate parenting and the expected career counseling are also a major handicap. Parents may not succeed in putting their children in the right direction. Career counseling is missing in the system in general.

It is interesting to note that security and unrest related challenges are not seen as problematic as the financial constraints. One would have thought that for students who lost almost one full academic year to unrest, the biggest challenge would be the unrest itself. This gives us a wider picture of the framework of student preferences and perceived challenges. There is a general disillusionment with the wider establishment, beyond the education system, that is perceived to be corrupt. That impacts the ability of students to pursue career goals and contributes to a broader support for boycotting the system through hartals. There is this perception that people get admissions to universities and jobs through unfair means.

1.4   The Blame Game and the Unrest Tornado

Chapter Summary: *While students concede that unrest impacts their education, they fix the responsibility of that impact squarely on the state. Over 60 percent respondents said that their education was impacted the most due to restrictions by security forces (including curfews). There may be grounds for rationalizing such stance, however this also presents us with another paradox.*

We encountered the first student paradox in section 1.3 above. That paradox stated that students support hartals despite being fully aware that hartal impacts their education. There is another student paradox to battle with: Students are aware that hartal impacts their education but they hold the state restrictions responsible for the impact. The second paradox supplements the first one in the sense that students further rationalize their support for hartal by fixing responsibilities of the negative impact (on their education) squarely on the shoulders of the state.

When it comes to fixing responsibility of the negative impact on education, there are multiple factors at play. Both hartals (called by resistance leadership) and restrictions/curfews (imposed by authorities) played a role in keeping the schools and colleges shut during unrest. However these, and other contributing factors including stone pelting, are interdependent. We asked our respondents that if these factors could be isolated in theory, which one determined the maximum impact on education. Our presumption was that hartals would be the main component since hartal shuts the schools. There is a similar pattern in the responses from the two respondent groups. Both consider 'restrictions by security forces and curfews' as being the outweighing factor. Parents however assign slightly higher weightage to hartals compared to students.

Which of the following impacted your education the most during 2016? (STUDENTS)

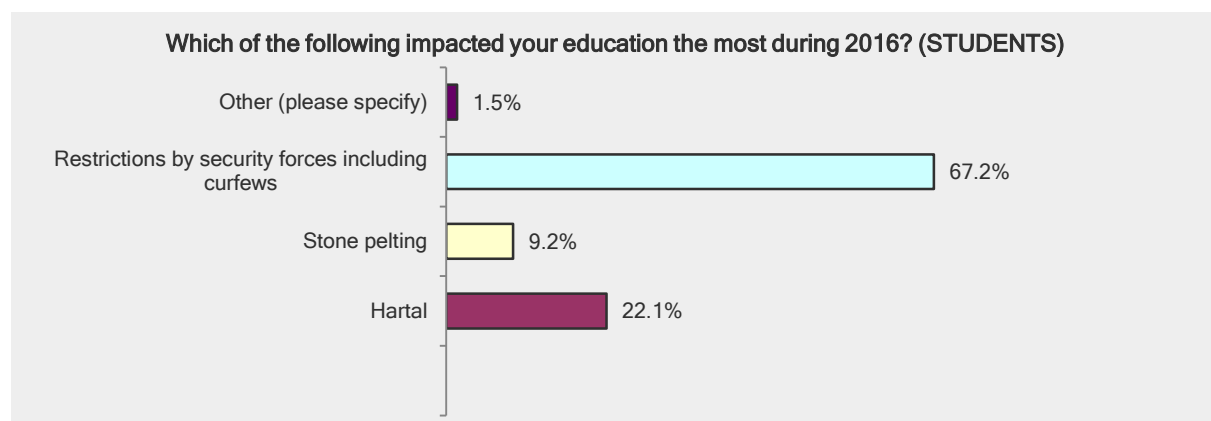| Factor	Percentage
Other (please specify)	1.5%
Restrictions by security forces including curfews	67.2%
Stone pelting	9.2%
Hartal	22.1%

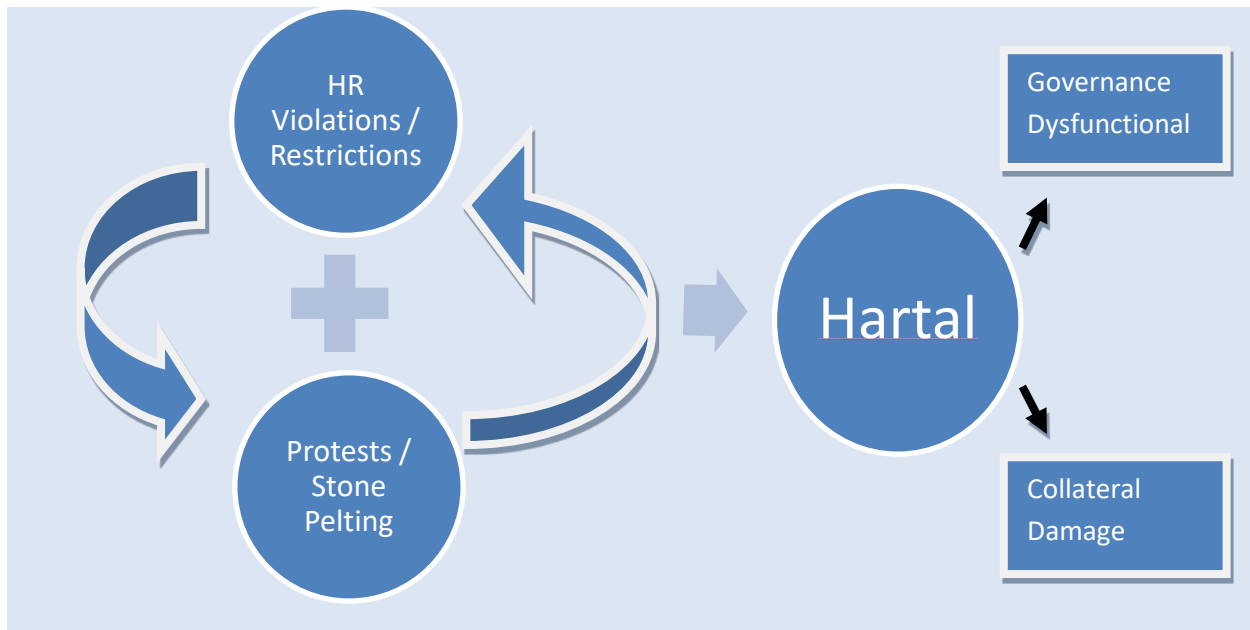Figure 1.11: Unrest factors impacting education (student perception)

There is an approximate split of 70:30 in population between rural and urban areas of the Kashmir valley. Curfews are usually confined to the urban areas, especially the inner townships.

However, schools did not open in rural areas during the unrest, except for a handful of cases. During the unrest of 2016, there were 53 days of curfew. However for the remaining and cumulative period of approximately three months the educational institutions in townships did not open either. This leads us to conclude that hartals impacted education more than the curfews. However, students seem to identify 'restrictions and curfews' as more damaging. There may be grounds for rationalizing such stance, however this also presents us with another paradox. Schools and colleges remained shut during non-curfew periods because teachers and students also subscribe to a certain political sentiment. Teachers also feared isolation from their respective communities.

Some interesting information emerges after filtering the survey data: Students from higher income group blame state restrictions more than those in lower income groups. It would not be a wrong assumption that the middle class in Kashmir has become anti-establishment and that has many implications. 54 percent respondents in the monthly income group Rs. 25,000 to Rs. 50,000 laid blame on government and security forces as opposed to only 30 percent in income group 5,000-or-below. Here is another piece of data to substantiate this: 13 percent of all students said they remained neutral during hartals while as only 7 percent students in high income group said that they remained neutral (reference Figure 1.7 above). Students from middle class families are becoming more opinionated and more political along the lines of resistance politics. This seems like a definite trend. The consequences are significant.

Let's circle back to the discussion on the second paradox. Again, students are aware that hartal impacts their education but fix the responsibility on the state restrictions. As mentioned earlier, what students are basically doing is rationalizing their support for hartal. The basis for that rationalization is not actually weak because the various components of unrest are interlinked. One leads to the other. State restrictions and human rights violations lead to hartals and there are other dynamics in the equation. So the rationale is not completely flawed after all.

If we analyse the dynamics of post-2008 unrests in Kashmir, prolonged hartal is a residue of a vicious cycle, the unrest tornado. The whole process of unrest gets instigated by an unpleasant incident. Resistance leadership mobilizes public opinion in favour of protests, which can either be a mass demonstration (called 'chalo' in local terminology) or a hartal. Government responds by imposing restrictions denying the mass demonstrations, which leads to more protests, specifically in the form of stone pelting by the youth. Stone pelters engage with the security apparatus. Police and security personnel, being ill equipped to deal adequately with mob control, give in to pressure and sometimes retaliate with firing. There are casualties, which leads to calls for more mass demonstrations. More restrictions follow. A vicious cycle of state restrictions and stone pelting sets in and sustains over a period. Hartal is a residue of this vicious cycle and gets a prolonged lease of life in proportion to the life span of the vicious cycle just defined. The trend that can be observed through the three prolonged periods of unrest in 2008, 2010, and 2016 points to this established pattern in instigating and sustaining unrest. In 2008 the trigger point was the land transfer to Amaranth Shrine Board. In 2010 it was the fake encounter at Machil, Kupwara. In 2016 the trigger was the killing of militant Burhan Wani. Prolonged hartals trigger 'protest calendars'. These are daily and weekly schedules of protest issued by the resistance leadership.

In 2016, hartals lasted for over five months making it the longest stretch of hartals in the history of Kashmir conflict. During that period more than 90 people lost their lives and thousands were injured.

From the resistance group's viewpoint prolonged hartals are an effective form of protest. It renders the governance, against whom the hartals are directed, largely dysfunctional. Once the

hartal is observed in the name of violation of rights, the stone pelters expand the scope of hartal across sectors and geographies through vigilantism. As such there is an intricate interplay of factors and it is difficult to fix responsibility on any one of the factors.

So when students point out that 'restrictions and curfews' impact their education the most, the rationalization is not completely out of context. The basis for that rationalization is not actually weak because various components of unrest are interlinked.

1.5.1   Stone Pelter Case Study 1

Faisal Ahmad (name changed) was born during the militancy years of early nineties. He is the eldest among the two brothers and a sister. His father has been involved in handicrafts trade and is a shawl weaver by profession. Mother is a housewife. The family lives in downtown Srinagar. Faisal went to a private school in Srinagar where he completed his matriculation. He went on to graduate in Commerce.

Faisal started working while he was still at school during his 11th standard. His first job was with a telecom company, which involved recharge and field work. He earned a salary of Rs. 4,500 per month. His second job involved part time data entry work that earned him a salary of Rs. 12,000 per month. It was during this work tenure that Faisal was arrested on charges of stone pelting. That was in the year 2010 when Kashmir was hit by a major unrest, one similar to the 2016 unrest.

It is not uncommon for youngsters from downtown area to work while studying. In Faisal's friend circle all had a work life while studying at college. What prompted Faisal to work part-time was his desire to have a motorbike which his family could not afford. Faisal's family had suffered a house burglary during 2003 in which all the work material, including all the shawls, belonging to his father were stolen. This had put a lot of strain on the finances of the family. House renovation had also drained resources. To top it all, Faisal's father had developed a health problem and was not able to stay productive at work.

Going for part-time work was solely the decision of Faisal because he wanted to meet some of his own expenses. Faisal grew up at his maternal home, oblivious to the financial difficulties his family faced. When at the age of 18 he moved back to live with his parents and siblings, he was made aware of the situation. Towards latter years Faisal started contributing in family expenses. When Faisal failed in one of the subjects at the college, his parents tried to convince him to leave his data entry job and instead concentrate on his studies. Faisal took some time off work only to return to it a few months later.

Faisal was exposed to the conflict at a very early age. He had several distant relatives involved in militancy. He remembers his mother's cousin taking refuge at their house. The cousin was on the run after having been severely tortured and fed with insects in the custody. Several neighbours in the locality were also militants.

During 2008, the year Kashmir saw a new version of unrest accompanied with prolonged hartals, Faisal started spending regular time in the local mosque where he would hear about the history of Kashmir conflict and about events during related to the nineties. Faisal was in 9th grade in the year 2008. He recalls in June of that year when there was a mass public procession followed by

hartal. Faisal witnessed daily stone pelting in his locality. He remained a spectator during the stone pelting incidents of 2008, but he had his practice with the fleeing part when, upon police chases, he would run back to his house and bolt the door from inside. He recalls that there were several 'spectators' like him who watched stone pelting in the locality. He also recalls that all spectators showed support for stone pelting. Spectators would inform stone pelters of presence and movement of police parties handling the situation in the area. Faisal says if there is no support of spectators there will be no stone pelting. There was also sloganeering among the spectators.

When elections were held towards the end of 2008 Faisal witnessed voting, which he deemed completely at odds with the prolonged hartals that had just concluded. He witnessed females being brought in to vote in Faisal's own school which was set up as a polling booth. Faisal rebuked the voters, went home and wept profusely. When he later visited the polling booth again he saw two male voters. He checked their fingers for the voting sign. Upon seeing the sign, he thrashed both of them.

That was in 2008. During 2009 Faisal along with his friends would frequent Hurriyat offices twice a week, where they were given books on Kashmir conflict. Faisal recalls that he was unable to read them since they were all in Urdu. They would also receive moral teachings while at the Hurriyat offices. During 2009 Faisal also visited Rajauri Kadal and Saraf Kadal localities of downtown Srinagar every Friday to watch stone pelting. He spent half the day playing cricket at Eidgah and the remaining half watching stone pelting.

Faisal himself swung into action and flexed his muscles during the unrest of 2010. During the early period of the unrest Faisal used to follow media channels that would report on daily incidents. There was one particular incident of a stone pelter being dragged and badly beaten by about a dozen policemen. This was a video that went viral. That incident prompted Faisal to finally pick the stone. As dead bodies reached the SMHS hospital from various parts of Kashmir valley, Faisal as a volunteer witnessed first-hand information on the killings.

During the 2010 unrest Faisal was very active and participated in stone pelting almost every day. Photos of Faisal engaged in stone pelting appeared in newspapers. Police raided his residence several times - even during the nights. Faisal escaped with the help of information from friends and relatives. Faisal also spent some time at his aunt's house at a different locality during the unrest, thus evading arrest. During these raids, police personnel were occasionally abusive towards Faisal's family. An elderly neighbor was slapped. His brother was held in custody pending the surrender of Faisal himself. These events infuriated Faisal.

Faisal was finally arrested with the help of an informer. He was picked from a restaurant and taken into custody. Faisal was badly cut due to torture in custody and denied medical care for

two days. He spent nine days in custody. By the time he was released he had injuries and torture marks all over his body. Faisal was arrested for a second time in 2010 after he was found using petrol bombs. He had learned the art of making petrol bombs and would use it every now and then throwing them on bunkers and police vehicles. He was kept in custody for 45 days and tortured thrice during this time. Though Faisal had several FIRs registered against him, in 2012 the state government withdrew cases of 443 stone pelters. Faisal also got lucky.

According to Faisal, he never received any moral teachings from police, which to him was a big disappointment. He reports use of drugs at the police station. Some of his friends got addicted to drugs while in police custody. Faisal has a poor opinion about J&K Police. He has, however, a favourable opinion about the army, which is rather uncommon. Faisal worked on a data entry project with the army for several months through his employer.

There was not much pressure from the family's side to dissuade Faisal from being a 'spectator' during stone pelting. However, when the family came to know about his stone pelting credentials they got concerned. There was a lot of pressure on Faisal to give up stone pelting but Faisal completely ignored the opposition and objections. Faisal justifies it by pointing out that his family - including his maternal home – have been supporters of mainstream political party, National Conference. Faisal considered both sides as supporters of wrong politics. For his ideology, Faisal relied upon what he had learnt at Darsgah: that the National Conference and its founder were all collaborators.

One of the relatives of Faisal is an elected legislator, a sitting MLA of the legislative assembly of J&K.

Faisal recalls that in 2008, when he counted himself among the ranks of spectators rather than participants in stone pelting, certain politicians offered money to him and his friend circle to stone a political rally of the opponent party. That was the only occasion when money was offered to him. Faisal has not had such offers during the unrests of 2010 and 2016 and does not agree that stone pelters are paid by any agency. He does however entertain the possibility of a local political party getting involved in such scenarios, as he himself indeed had experienced in 2008. Faisal stayed away from stone pelting during the 2016 unrest, except for one incident when two of his friends got picked up by police for no reason. Faisal, who managed to escape, picked stone after a long time on that particular day. In the evening when they approached the police station they were asked to bring stone pelters in exchange for the two friends. The police wanted a straightforward exchange.

Faisal mentions how he managed to work and study simultaneously. According to him, he never attended any classes during his undergraduate years except for Shorthand and Typing, a skill which Faisal utilized in his job. College in those days did not work out attendance shortages. Faisal

passed his undergraduate exams by relying on 'guess papers'. He preferred private tuition over regular college.

Faisal fancied himself as a professional cricketer when he was at college. He had the requisite backing and encouragement from his family to pursue his dream. However, his work schedule did not allow him to pursue cricket and he gave up in 2012. Faisal had a good arm throw and that is also one of the reasons why he enjoyed stone pelting. Faisal maintains that if cricket is encouraged in Kashmir stone pelting phenomenon will go down. "The pelting addiction will evaporate," as he puts it.

During his 'stone pelting career' Faisal has participated in protests at 15 different locations of the valley including Sopore, Bandipora, and various parts of Srinagar. He is done with the stone pelting. However he is very clear in his mind when he says that if Ram Mandir is constructed in Ayodhya, he will recruit himself for arms training and fight Jehad.

1.5.2   Stone Pelter Case Study 2

Sahil from Neva (name and village changed) plays many roles on the stone pelting forefront. He gives pep talk to deserters from front line to send them back to fight. He attends the injured. But more often he is at the front line himself, fighting it out with the police and security personnel.

Sahil's co-fighters include his cousins, whose father (Sahil's paternal uncle) happens to be a policeman. The cousins are radically opposed to the state and by all measures outclass Sahil on the fierceness and anger they take out on the men in uniform. They don't see any contradiction in the fact that their own father serves in police. Another co-fighter works at the army cantonment but is a regular stone pelter like Sahil who has participated in stone pelting since 2008. Sahil feels a dilemma though. Not on account of his uncle's job, but because of the fact that after years of waiting he has finally secured a government job. The fact that he shall himself be serving in J&K police, the very outfit he has fought all these years, has not diluted his political sentiment. However, his stone pelting spell has come to an abrupt end. He ponders upon his response to future stone pelting, about being on the other side. One thing he is certain about is that as a policeman he will not retaliate, should he ever face such a situation. He promises himself that he will withdraw from any confrontation with the stone pelters and never harm anyone from the community he himself hails from.

Though very well informed on the history of Kashmir conflict, he traces his own radicalization to his poor luck in securing a job. Sahil is a post-graduate and until recently had to sit on the sidelines while most of his peers got government jobs. Sahil's friends include professionals, some of whom are doctors and teachers. Though he has their respect but he has had to remain on standby all these years as he was rejected for job after job while his friends - who in the estimation of Sahil were not as meritorious during college and university days – got those jobs. While he waited and wondered in frustration about his ill luck he took up employment as a teacher at a private school and as supervisor at a distribution company. They were essentially private sector jobs, for which Sahil and most Kashmiris have very little respect.

Aged around 29, Sahil lives with his extended family of parents and his brother's family. Both his father and his brother are government employees. Sahil had a stable upbringing and grew up in a household environment that may be regarded as financially stable.

Sahil regards voting as total sell out. When in 2008, an election candidate turned up at his house for campaigning, he invited him inside, presented him with a cup of tea and then plainly refused any support in terms of vote. He told the contestant that even if he were offered millions of rupees, he would not vote. Sahil holds militants in high regard because thinks the present age militants are educated and relatively disciplined. He think the present age militants are not able

to deliver 'results' because the informer network is vast and equipped with better means of communication as compared to the scenario in nineties.

Sahil does not see much contradiction when asked why stone pelters apply for jobs in police and army. He points out that in the neighbouring village 6 youth got inducted into police in 2015. "It is common. There is a lot of unemployment," he maintains.

Sahil will be thirty this year. His stone pelting spree might have ended but he remained involved for a long period. When asked how he managed to remain an active stone pelter right up to his thirties, he claims that even 50 and 60 year olds participate in stone pelting in the nearby town. Youngsters get a kick when they see the oldies in action.

1.5.3   Stone Pelter Case Study 3

Hameed (name and address changed) has recently completed his graduation and hails from district Budgam. He lives in an extended household along with the families of his brothers. Both his brothers drive passenger vehicles for living. Hameed is exploring a career in walnut business.

Hameed lost his cousin to police firing during the 2016 unrest. He recalls early summer morning, when police came around and started bashing the windowpanes of the houses from outside. A dozen odd youngsters, including Hameed, decided to confront the police. As they pelted stones on the police party, the latter returned fire, killing Tariq (named changed) on the spot. Hameed recalls how miraculously he himself managed to escape unhurt. But the loss of his cousin, Tariq, has been unbearable for him.

He refuses to acknowledge that stone pelting and unemployment are correlated. "It is an issue of denial of rights," Hameed claims. "They are criminalizing our actions by stating that unemployment will stop us from pelting stones. We are not here for employment. Neither is our stone pelting funded by any agency."

Indeed, Hameed was offered employment in police a few years back. He rejected the offer. He had the opportunity to work on a contractual basis within the state Agriculture Department, which could possibly have graduated into a permanent employment. Again he chose to forego the opportunity. Hameed perceives state government as a machine of oppression and refuses to take employment of such an establishment.

Though Hameed started stone pelting in 2008, somehow he avoided the police arrest up until last year. He spent one month in custody during 2016 though. He says that police was rather abusive at times but there was not any torture as such. A policeman from the station where Hameed was lodged was posted for poll duty near Hameed's locality recently. It was polling day for Srinagar parliamentary constituency and Hameed along with his friends had been successful in closing a polling booth peacefully. "The policeman at the polling station recognized us. After peacefully closing down the polling, he asked for permission to pray in the local mosque. We said we are not at war with you today. We accompanied him to the local mosque," says Hameed. Seven youth lost their lives in district Budgam on that fateful day in several attacks on polling stations.

Apart from by polls for parliament seat, the government is also planning to hold Panchayat elections later this year. As a peer group leader, Hameed has had some offers already. Workers from one of the political parties approached Hameed to urge him to contest Panch elections. As per Hameed he was offered 300 thousand rupees but he refused. "They are targeting me because if I get corrupt, the whole locality gets corrupt. "Hameed is seen as a community leader in his village.

There are close to 300 stone pelters in the cluster of villages where Hameed comes from. "India will prolong this conflict to its own detriment. Previous generation used to run away from bullets. Present generation goes after bullets. Youngsters will become more and more radicalized by each passing day."

Age group of stone pelters in Hameed's village varies from 8 to 30 years. Tariq, Hameed's cousin who fell to bullets was in his twenties. An 8 year old kid recently told Hameed that he wants to become a martyr. The kid said he had already informed the family. "Bury me next to Tariq," the kid had asked Hameed. "Does an 8 year old kid want a job?" Hameed asks but is unable to comprehend this unprecedented radicalization among children.

SECTION 2:   QUEST FOR REMEDY

Section Summary

- Remedial measures need to be taken to address the negative impact of unrest on education. The framework for remedial measures must satisfy certain criteria in order to succeed. First and foremost, the initiatives must have all stakeholders on board including the state, the resistance group, students, and the teachers.

- Suggested remedies include (a) substitutes to formal education during times of unrest, (b) addressing student expectations from education, (c) allowing student politics, and (d) advocacy with resistance leadership and the state.

- In terms of substitutes, e-Learning tools and channels with home access are feasible in Kashmir. The preferred media needs to be selected keeping in view the limitations of Internet access during unrest. Stored digital content with a user interface seems the easiest way forward. In our survey, over 78 percent students favoured an e-Learning channel that could be broadcast over TV of Radio. However when asked to compare and identify preferred media for e-Learning, 42 percent students favoured Internet.

- Community schools emerged as a stop gap arrangement during the 2016 unrest. However, the arrangements were not comprehensive enough to cater to a wider population of students. Only 15 percent of students among our survey respondents reported functioning of a community school in their locality during 2016 unrest. There are scalability limitations with community schooling.

- Schools and colleges have traditionally remained shut during winters in Kashmir thus having its own impact on education. The mandate of winter schooling goes beyond the proposed mechanism of compensation. However, winter schooling could be strengthened as a fallback mechanism while addressing the loss due to unrest. Our survey suggests that almost a quarter of the school children attended free winter tuition program and found it useful. There was certainly some student churn due to lack of proper heating arrangements. Nevertheless, the winter tutorial program was a success.

- Student expectations vis-a-vis career and job prospects need to be addressed within the existing education system as much as possible. This needs to be done to convince the students that education can be an important stepping stone and that it can improve their lives. The perception that education is a dead end needs to be addressed. The state has to

devise policies in this regard that go beyond skill development. Counseling and practical entrepreneurship within colleges/schools need to be explored.

- During the survey, students outlined proposed initiatives by the department of Education for improving their job prospects. Besides advocating job oriented courses, over 25 percent of students are in favour setting up job placement cells within the institutions. There is also awareness about the need to incubate startups within the educational institutions.

- Students in Kashmir are willing to talk about conflict regardless of their political inclination. There is definitely a culture of political tolerance and pluralism in this regard among the students. Not many conflict zones afford such luxury. There is need to establish social and political forums that harness this outlook and channel it towards positivity. Contours of student politics could be explored. Students could be given social spaces to express their concerns about their education, about conflict, and various other issues. A third of the survey respondents are of the opinion that student politics will give vent to political views and keep tempers down.

- As far as advocacy with the resistance leadership is concerned, their support for exempting education from hartals could help the situation to a large extent since they hold sway among the protestors.

- There are certain inherent challenges in the quest for remedy. Hartal is successful when it spans all sectors. Protestors could therefore be disinclined to exempt education from hartal. State on the other hand may use education, and exams in particular, as leverage to end hartals. The state could therefore be reluctant to invest in contingency plans that dilute that leverage. When asked which factor played the biggest role in ending hartals in 2016, nearly 44 percent respondents said that it was the student exams.

2.1   A Criteria for Working out the Remedial Measures

Chapter Summary: *The framework for remedial measures must satisfy certain criteria in order to succeed. First and foremost, it must have all stakeholders on board including the state, the resistance leadership, students, and most importantly the teachers.*

Below is a list of suggested criteria for remedial measures to succeed:

- All stakeholders need to be taken on board to realistically hope for results. Stakeholders include the state, the resistance leadership, the students and the teachers
- While setting up the framework for remedies, the policy makers should consider the political sentiment in the backdrop
- Stakeholders should resist temptations to politicize the education by leveraging it towards their political ends
- Suggested remedies should pass the fundamental test of infrastructure limitations in Kashmir
- Remedies designed should have due considerations for students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds because such students are unable to arrange resources compensating the loss of education due to unrest.
- Remedies should consider geographical location of existing government and private school/college teachers to better plan for contingencies
- The policy makers should consider that there will be more impact of unrest in areas which are more significant media wise and deemed as symbolic for protest purposes. That leaves out a significantly large sized territory where schooling is feasible during unrest provided the teachers are motivated enough.
- Remedies should take into account that neither the state not the resistance leadership has full control over unrest situations so even if both state and resistance take up advocacy protestors, there can be still be areas that remain impacted. Contingency plans need to identify such areas and deal with those geographies accordingly.
- Remedies should consider the fact that there are teacher accountability issues and that there is need to motivate teachers to contribute towards contingency situations.
- The policy makers need to engineer the remedies keeping in view that they need to address the negative perception of students regarding education.
- Lastly, the remedies need to be designed such that they contribute and continue to supplement existing education during times of normalcy. Remedies should not have exclusively an unrest bias in the sense that they should not be solutions for unrest only. The guiding principal should be to devise an unrest-proof education model.

Since CHINAR International has a specific focus on education of children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, it serves our mission to consider the impact of unrest, specifically, on such students.

There is a generally held view that students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds suffer the most during unrest. We also tested the hypothesis during the survey. The perception on the issue is clear that education of students from poor families suffer more during hartals. Our understanding is that such group does not have the means to compensate the loss. They do not have the requisite resources to arrange private tuitions to mitigate lost opportunities of education. While working out the details on substitutes stakeholders have to keep such factors in mind. The substitutes could evolve in the manner that some of those focus more on students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.

In your opinion, whose education suffered the most due to unrest?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Students from economically disadvantaged families	42.6%	911	15.7%	81
Students from government schools	16.2%	345	24.3%	125
Students from private schools	8.5%	182	13.8%	71
Students from rural areas	13.6%	290	17.1%	88
Students from urban areas	19.1%	408	29.1%	150
		2136		515

Table 1.11: Whose education suffered the most due to unrest

To categorize, suggested remedies include (a) substitutes to formal education during times of unrest, (b) addressing student expectations from education, (c) allowing student politics, and (d) advocacy with resistance leadership and the state.

2.2 e-Learning with Home Access

Chapter Summary: *In terms of substitutes, e-Learning tools and channels with home access are feasible in Kashmir. The preferred media needs to be selected keeping in view the limitations of Internet access during unrest. Stored digital content with a user interface seems the easiest way forward. In our survey, over 78 percent students favoured an e-Learning channel that could be broadcast over TV or Radio. However when asked to compare and identify preferred media for e-Learning, 42 percent students favoured Internet.*

Among the remedies, the principal substitutes we tested during our survey were e-Learning, community schooling, and Winter Schooling.

As part of analyzing how an e-Learning channel would be received we asked the students to share with us their time utilization during hartals. Students spent plenty of time on TV and phone/laptop which they can equally spend on an e-Learning channel (with home access). Students seem to have spent a great deal of time sitting idle. Average time spent by a student on TV/Newspapers/Magazine during hartal was reported to be around 3.16 hours per day. Most students report having avoided outdoors.
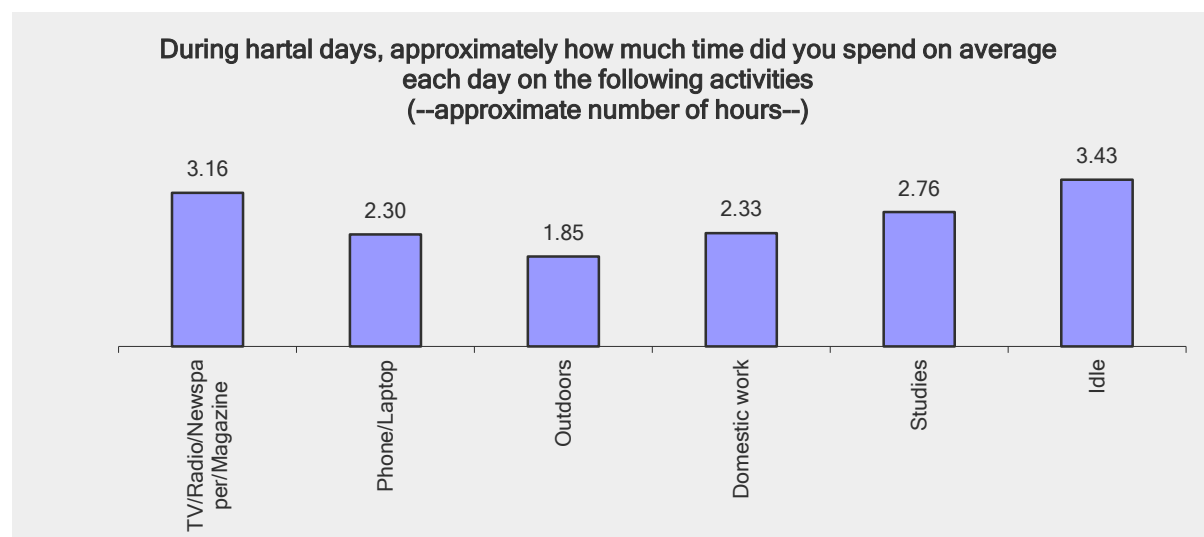

Figure 1.12: What students do during hartal

If the state government, or indeed NGOs or private entrepreneurs, invest in such a venture it can prove to be a vital asset to fall back on during unrest. It can also complement formal schooling during normal times. The state board text books would however need to digitalized using proper multimedia technologies.

Video-on-Demand (VoD) channels would have been ideal mode of delivery in this case, but VoD and Time-shifting technologies which require a certain type of set-top box and associated service

penetration (via satellite TV service offerings) in the valley in minimal. e-Learning over Internet has a potential flaw in the context of Kashmir. There is low internet penetration in the valley and the Internet is cut off during unrest. Nevertheless, alternative media such as TV and Radio can also be explored for such a service. Radio is ubiquitous and an inexpensive medium. Indeed storage media can also be used which has already proven popular during the 2016 unrest. At community level one can, for instance, involve a panel of teachers, make video lessons and distribute these lessons on USB pen drives. A user interface to the content can be designed in form of a mobile application to make it user friendly.

Charts below show overwhelming support for e-Learning channel on TV/Radio.

Would it be useful to have an e-Learning channel on TV or radio that broadcasts teaching lessons (and related content) to students of different classes in Kashmir?
(STUDENTS)

No — 21.8%

Yes — 78.2%

Would it be useful to have an e-Learning channel on TV or radio that broadcasts teaching lessons (and related content) to students of different classes in Kashmir?
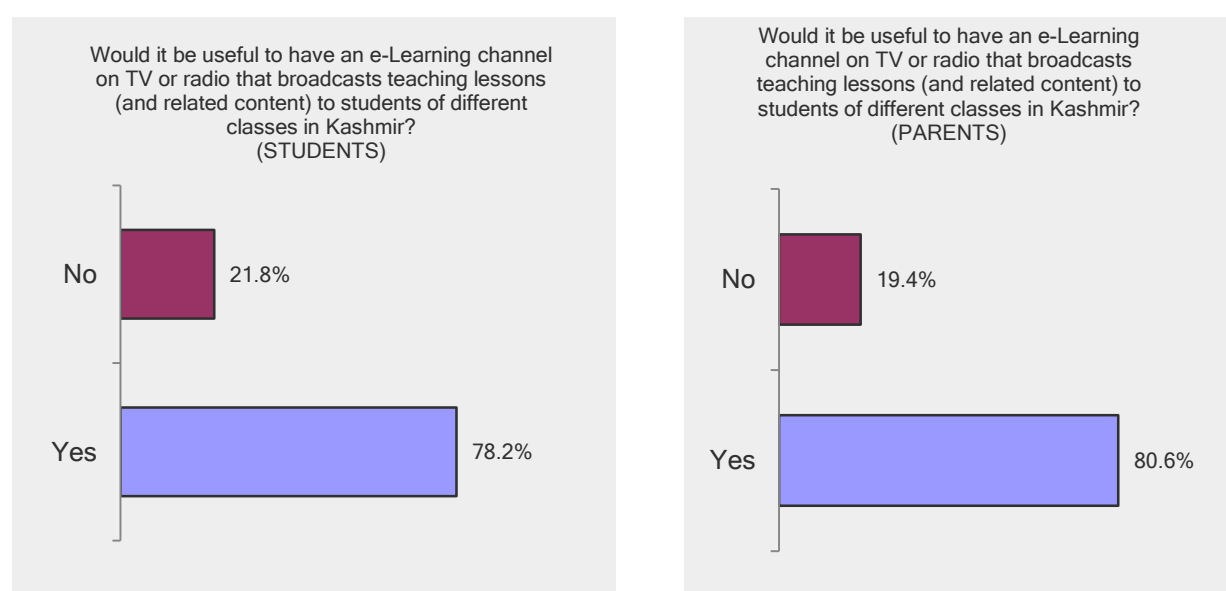(PARENTS)

No — 19.4%

Yes — 80.6%

Figure 1.13: Would e-Learning channel over TV/Radio be useful?

There is already a model of e-Learning followed by the Education Department in the state. At the centre of this model is the in-house smart classroom. The teaching faculty is being trained on e-learning according to the department reports. Smart classroom technology is being used for training and these are in-school e-tools for learning. There is no home access for students, which is the relevant part in the context of unrest, since during unrest students are not able to reach schools. The option of e-Learning that we have tested during our survey is modeled around home access utilizing multiple media for download/broadcast/access including Internet, TV, Radio, and even using simple storage devices. Obviously Internet is a much more flexible medium and can facilitate user generated course content in addition, which can improve the user experience. The

chart below shows that while students prefer Internet enabled e-learning, parents point at TV as the 'best medium' for such a service.
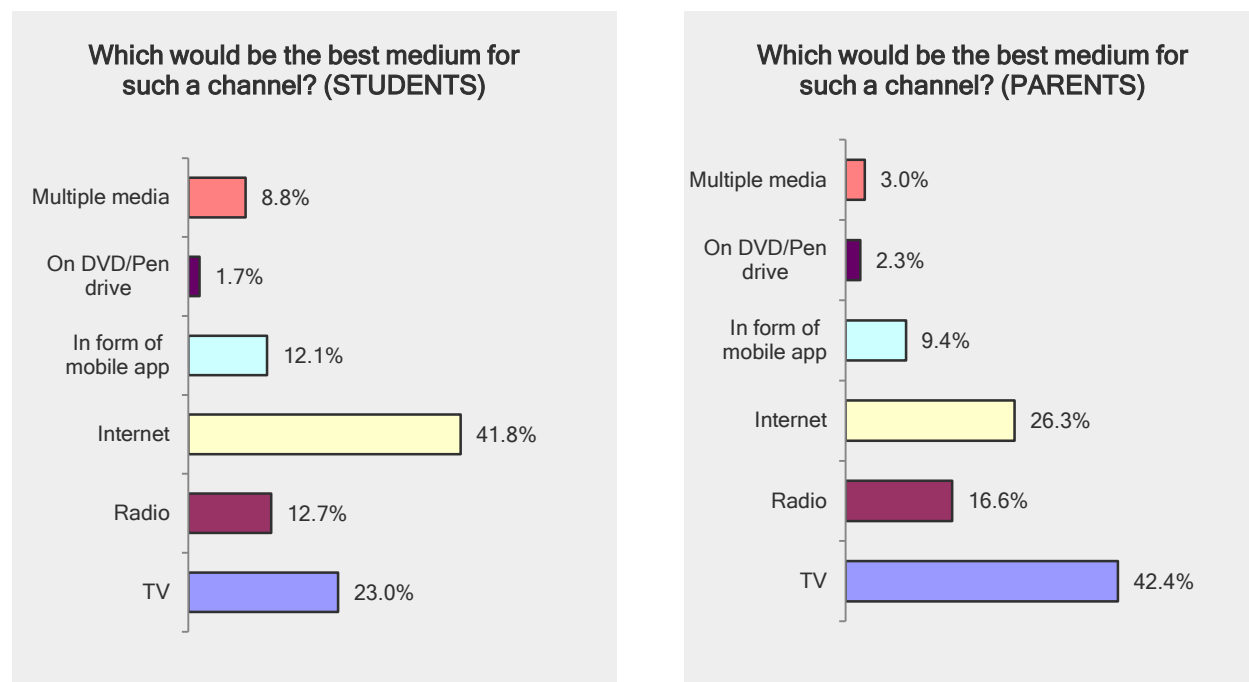

Which would be the best medium for such a channel? (STUDENTS)

- Multiple media — 8.8%
- On DVD/Pen drive — 1.7%
- In form of mobile app — 12.1%
- Internet — 41.8%
- Radio — 12.7%
- TV — 23.0%

Which would be the best medium for such a channel? (PARENTS)

- Multiple media — 3.0%
- On DVD/Pen drive — 2.3%
- In form of mobile app — 9.4%
- Internet — 26.3%
- Radio — 16.6%
- TV — 42.4%

Figure 1.14: Best perceived medium for e-Learning

Radio is obviously the cheapest medium and the most ubiquitous one to use. Mobile application could also be a popular option with stored content at the back and a front-end user interface that lets users toggle through the content. Offline application could work better with possibly periodic online notifications for updates on content. The challenge here is that this application cannot be made downloadable since the size of content would be huge – unless students are given the option to download content pertaining to their particular class only. Government should consider distributing low cost tablets to students if invests in e-Learning.

In October 2016 DD Kashir, the state TV network, resumed their earlier e-learning program called Tele class. The program had received good response and students would call in with questions. The program had a one-hour time slot per week, which was clearly not enough. The e-learning option, once launched, has to be comprehensive and has to scale across all classes and subjects. Provided the service offering is comprehensive and caters to all students, the usage is expected to be high. Majority of the respondents say that they will watch such a channel on a daily basis.

How often do you expect to use such channel? (STUDENTS)

only during hartals — 8.5%
Rarely — 2.4%
Monthly — 2.8%
Weekly — 20.9%
Daily — 65.4%

How often do you expect your son/daughter to use such channel? (PARENTS)

only during hartals — 3.5%
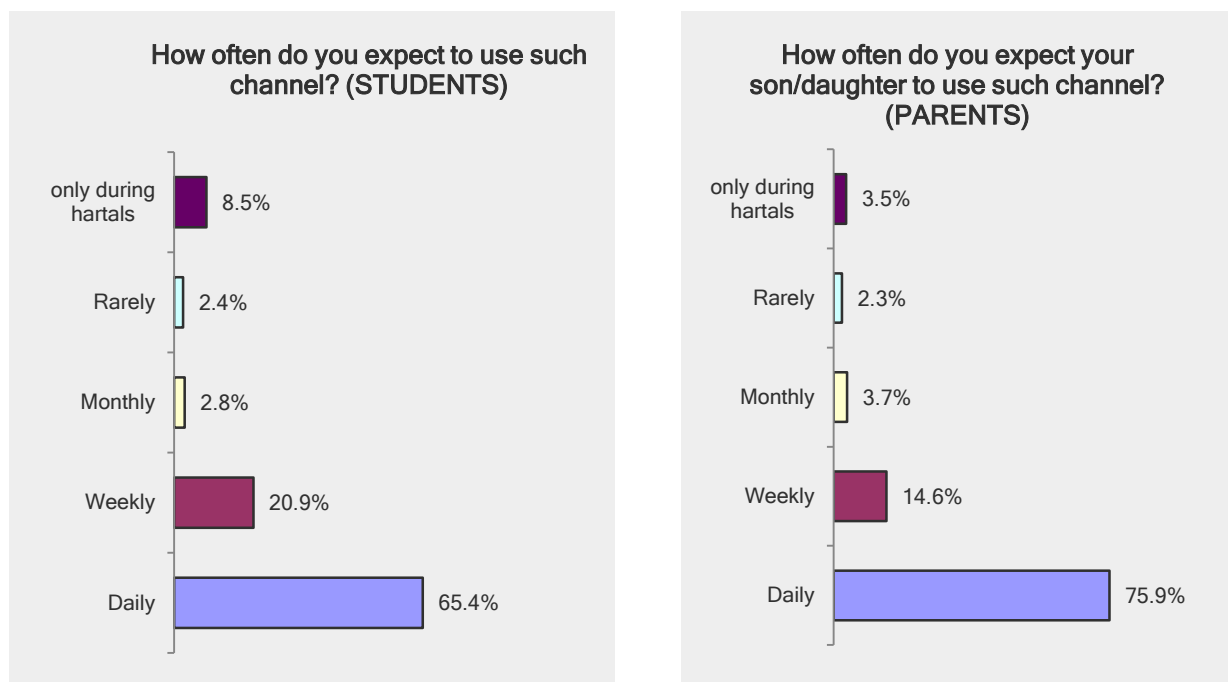Rarely — 2.3%
Monthly — 3.7%
Weekly — 14.6%
Daily — 75.9%

Figure 1.15: Expected frequency of use in case of proposed e-Learning channel

If we compare e-Learning with worksheets as is reported to have been tested in conflict areas like Palestine, worksheets are said to have yielded better results in terms of maintaining and improving competence just because of a greater degree of involvement from student's point of view. TV is admittedly a more passive method of learning. With worksheets students can take a break and manage things in their own time. In Palestine, teachers volunteered to distribute worksheets. Worksheets during unrest will perhaps yield better results in Kashmir as well. However the question of distribution of worksheets is an issue during the unrest times. Besides, e-Learning content can be beefed up with wider content creation. It can scale up significantly. Worksheet option has scalability issues. The other aspect we need to bear in mind is that in case of e-Learning it is not just the elementary schooling needs that we need to plug during unrest. We are talking about a full-fledged channel for all classes till 12th and possibly catering beyond that level for undergraduate subjects as well.

While conducting this study, several stakeholders suggested to study the Palestine case and identify options. However, Palestine is a different example altogether. Palestinian schools face threats of shelling whereas unrest in Kashmir has a different dynamic altogether. Kashmiri schools and colleges do not shut during on account of warfare. They shut on account of hartals, which may prolong for months. Kashmir presents a different challenge with regard to continuance of education during unrest.

To conclude the discussion in this section, e-Learning with home access could be explored as an alternative means of education during shutdowns. E-learning should be designed as a regular

supplement to formal schooling. Its usage should not be limited to the periods of unrest. Non-Governmental organizations could be engaged to develop and distribute e-content using appropriate media. Local cable operators' network can be leveraged to broadcast such e-content. Government support will be required to facilitate use of mainstream broadcast media (TV& Radio).

2.3   Community Schooling

Chapter Summary: *Community schools emerged as a stop gap arrangement during the 2016 unrest. However, the arrangements were not comprehensive enough to cater to a wider population of students. Only 15 percent of students among our survey respondents reported functioning of a community school in their locality during 2016 unrest. There are scalability limitations with community schooling.*

Although community schools and private tuition arrangements emerged as a stop gap arrangement during the 2016 unrest, the arrangements were not comprehensive enough to cater to a wider population of students. Only 15 percent of students among our survey respondents reported that there was a community school functioning in their locality during 2016 unrest. If we discount the Darsgahs, community schools imparting religious education, we will be left with very few examples of such schooling during the unrest.

The experience with the community schools during 2016 points to the fact that this option has a fundamental issue of scalability. Besides it cannot be an alternative to formal schooling beyond certain period.

Was there any community school functioning in your locality during the unrest of 2016?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	15.0%	320	12.8%	66
No	85.0%	1816	87.2%	449
		2136		515

Table 1.12: Footprint of community schooling during 2016 unrest

Community schools already exist in Kashmir, mostly in form of Darsgahs where religious education is imparted. Community schools in general do not have proper infrastructure and facilities. If this option has to be employed valley wide during unrest, the community has to first battle with the question of infrastructure. There are community centres but not in all villages. Community centres are also owned by the Rural Development Department of the state government, the use of which the public might be averse to, at times of unrest. There is an option of housing the community school at someone's residence but that also becomes a challenge in terms of how to decide in whose house the community school will run. There has to be a comfort level for all residents of the locality with the residence where the community school is housed.

Community schools, if linked to the Masjid Committees, are likely to have religious interference. There is a risk that such schools might split along sectarian and denominational lines. That can potentially undermine education. One of the critiques of present education set up in Kashmir is that it lacks the multi-cultural angle, denying an important aspect of education to the students. There is also the issue of recognition of community schools. If you do not take due precaution the government can brand the undertaking as 'unregistered tuition centre'.

Nevertheless, the 2016 unrest witnessed some efforts by various members of the community to facilitate continuance of education. Individual mentors and tutors played principal role in running hundreds of these schools up and down the valley. NGOs including CHINAR International, Pratham, Chotay Taray, and others catered to over 5,000 students through community schooling at multiple locations. Some of these setups were through the local Darsgah but there were other arrangements too. The experience of these individuals and organizations suggest that during unrest times it is best to provide remedial teaching only thus making community schooling more casual.
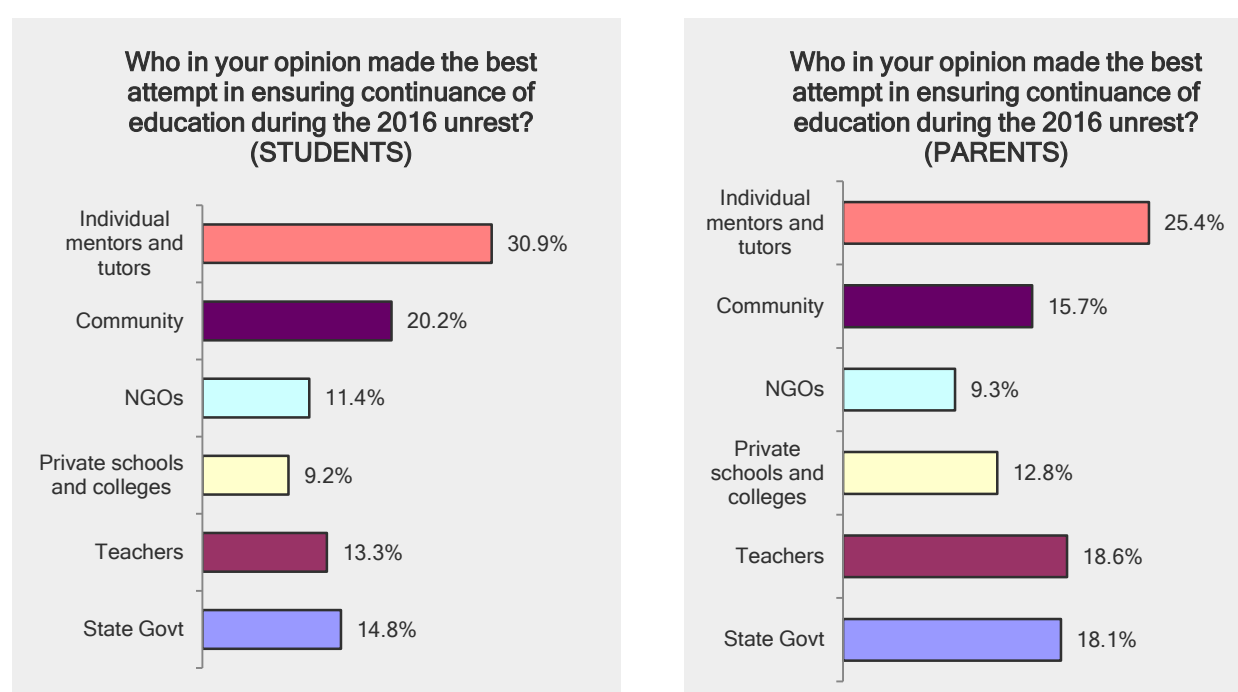

Figure 1.16: Who contributed towards continuance of education during 2016 unrest

Proponents of community schooling hold that such schooling is grounded in the social ethos, and that it can potentially fill up the philosophical void and context which the current education set up lacks. They advocate widening of the scope of these community schools to include reading rooms, sports facilities, and even entertainment in order to make them viable. However that will

require significant community resources. Critics, besides pointing out the scalability issue, also point out that children are psychologically affected and they need counseling more than education at these times. In community schools while the unrest is live, there is more need of counseling. So that is another drawback of community schools. Children who are psychologically challenged will not respond adequately to substitutes and alternatives unless the environment is conducive.

Another shortcoming of community schooling is that it does not go beyond 12th standard, which leaves out a major student population of universities and colleges.

In general, there is aversion to community schools even as a stop gap arrangement.

There can be a potential compromise however. There can be a government sponsored augmentation to community schooling. Though widespread community schooling undermines the formal education system of the government, the latter is not completely averse to the idea as a stop gap arrangement during unrest. There is a precedent in this regard. In certain districts, the authorities allowed a regular school to be transitioned into a community school when people raised concerns of security in government schools. Furthermore, in September 2016 government passed on directions to teachers to strengthen community schooling in their localities. A compromise can be worked out whereby centrally located schools – whether government or private - can be used during unrest times. These schools can be given the necessary support including security. This also requires geographical mapping of teachers who could be mobilized to run these 'cluster community schools'. This alternative would have to be mediated by the government since they only have the resources to scale it across multiple districts. The timings of such schools can also be brought in line with the requirements during unrest.

However the government supported community schooling also has its challenges. During unrest it was observed that students in certain areas preferred to attend community schools when their formal schools were very close by. They went back to school only because of exams.
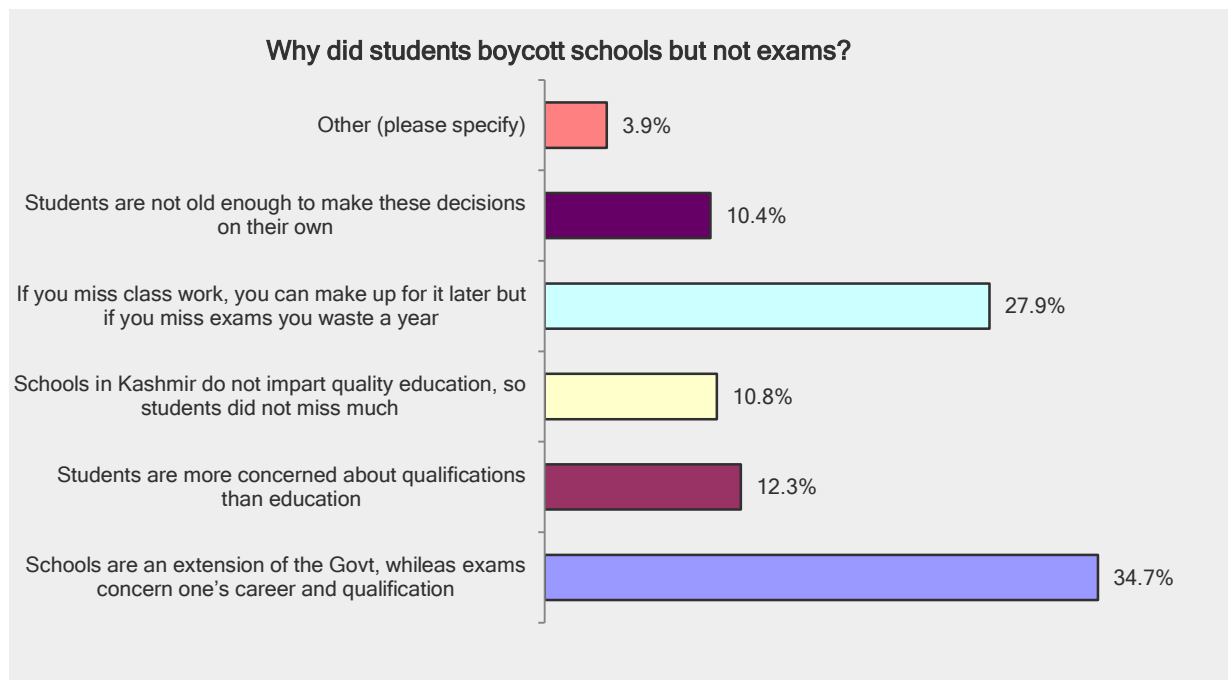
Figure 1.17: Why students boycotted schools but not exams

2.3.1   Community School Case Study 1

It took around 10 volunteers to run the Darsgah Hamadaina Community School during the unrest of 2016. The school operated out of a two room facility above the Darsgah at Hamadania Colony in Chanapora, Srinagar. Set up initially by Nadeem, an employee at a telecom company, the school catered to local students from LKG to 12th standard. The school worked in two shifts, with the morning shift catering to classes LKG to 7th standard while the afternoon shift had classes for students from 8th till 12th.

The volunteers who made it happen included two existing teachers, some fresh graduates, and employees from the private sector. Among the teachers was Huzaifa Pandit, an English teacher at the Delhi Public School (DPS), Srinagar. When it was evident that the hartal would prolong, Huzaifa made attempts to reach his school (DPS) during curfew days where he tried his hand at digitalizing his course content for all classes he taught. He made PowerPoint slides and with voice-over turned them into multimedia files. Other teachers at the school also did the same for their respective subjects. Huzaifa sought permission from his school principal to share the multimedia content at the newly established community school at Chanapora. The principal agreed to share the content.

By this time Nadeem had approached the head of Darsgah to make arrangements for community schooling at the local Darsgah. Towards the end of July, on a Friday, the Imam of the mosque associated with the Darsgah made an announcement after the prayers about the initiative. Over 80 students eventually benefited from the endeavor. Students came from the Chanapora and Baghat localities. Students from Chanapora locality mainly included children from families of transporters who were badly hit by the unrest. As per Huzaifa, most of these kids would have gotten involved in stone pelting had there not been timely intervention in form of the community schooling.

The school ran till mid-November and the volunteers who taught the students covered the entire syllabus of all the classes prior to their exams. There was no interference from the management of Darsgah. However they asked the school volunteers to maintain an attendance register just in case anyone from the authorities enquired. Except for a police visit once instigated by the local stone pelting, there were no unpleasant incidents at the school. However the anger and frustration was visible on the faces of the students.

Huzaifa has in the past participated in many peaceful demonstrations and has, in fact, had several narrow escapes. He has also suffered physical abuse at the hands of security forces. He candidly admits that he suffers panic attacks upon seeing police personnel.

Huzaifa maintains that community schooling can never match formal schooling because schooling is more of an experience than pedagogy. However he is confident that the volunteers

gave better quality education to the students at the community school. Needless to mention, all students in the senior classes passed their board examinations. Huzaifa says they faced some infrastructure related issues. The two rooms dedicated to the schooling were not enough to accommodate 40 students in each shift. There were only two boards to write on and this proved to be a handicap. Younger students needed more motivation which the volunteers were unable to provide at times due to lack of professional expertise. There were students who were studying two different boards (CBSE and JKBOSE) which also consumed a lot of time.

Huzaifa also regrets the fact that the nearby residents belonging to the teaching profession did not volunteer at the community school. The school faced shortage of teachers in many subjects. He recalls that they faced a lot of hassle in arranging a teacher for 11th and 12th grade for teaching Accountancy. The other aspect Huzaifa regrets was that there was no support from the Mohalla committee.

Huzaifa resents the 'hypocrisy' of middle class Kashmiris (he defines middle class as the government employees mainly) who support hartal but are not willing to nurse the negative effects of hartal. He resents the fact that no one comes forward to aid the working class whose livelihood is impacted during the unrest. The fact is, he maintains, that there is a define class exploitation during the unrest and only the youth belonging to poor families come out on streets for stone pelting.

Huzaifa feels that he has gained enough experience in community schooling and that he shall be ready next time the unrest hits Kashmir again. "But there has to be some support from Mohalla committee and the civil society," he concludes.

2.3.2 Community School Case Study 2

Muhammad Ibraheem, a government teacher at Primary School Hazarpora Aripanthan in Budgam district, ran a community school for over five months during the 2016 unrest. The venture started as a summer school in the first week of July. A week later Kashmir was engulfed in an unrest that lasted five months. The summer school continued as a community school operating beyond the vacation period.

The accommodation provided by a parent comprised of two rooms of 10x10 feet each. 36 children from class 2nd to 5th attended the school.

Ibraheem had to commute from the neighbouring town called Magam each day. As per Ibraheem, he was never obstructed by stone pelters at Aripanthan in reaching his community school. He was however cautious around the period when killings took place at Aripanthan involving four youth who were gunned down by the security forces. The community school remained shut for 10 days around the period when that incident took place.

The school ran from July 1st right up to the commencement of winter vacations around mid-December. All students were local. Ibraheem was the sole volunteer teaching all subjects at the community school. According to Ibraheem learning levels of students actually improved during this phase. In particular language skills improved a great deal.

In the month of September 2016, instruction were passed to the teachers by the government to aid community schools within the existing school buildings but there was flexibility to explore the option of operating from private accommodations since private accommodations would not attract any untoward incidents. Soon after a good proportion of primary schools started functioning however the high schools and higher secondary institutions did not open as the students and parents did not feel safe.

Ibraheem regards community schooling as a good alternative provided the facilities and infrastructure matches that of a formal school. However he hastens to add that it is just a compromise and a stop gap arrangement to preclude loss in education. Ibraheem advocates a government sponsored framework for facilitating community schooling during unrest. He thinks it is important to raise awareness to this effect among community heads, parents, and local teachers. He advocates mobilizing local teachers during unrest. He thinks that mobilization of local teachers to volunteer at the local schools was the main component missing in the September 2016 directive from the department of Education. Furthermore Ibraheem is of the opinion that teachers from private schools should also be involved in the exercise.

Masjid committees, according to Ibraheem, would be challenged in administering the community school because it requires specific experience and skills which the members of such committees may not have. However help from Masjid committees can be taken to mobilize and raise awareness among parents besides facilitating infrastructure and facilities.

It was not an easy going for Ibraheem though. When he started the school he received threats from elements he was unable to trace. "They were not the stone pelters. They were most probably miscreants who are part of certain political outfits," says Ibraheem. According to Ibraheem, schools are not shut due to stone pelters but due to unidentified miscreants. "If schools remain open, even the stone pelters will attend."

Ibraheem's regret is that he was the sole volunteer at the school and even when there were several teachers who lived nearby, none volunteered to teach at the school. Some teachers did contribute, however, after the directions pertaining to community schooling were issued by the department of education in September. "If teachers are compassionate towards the issue of loss of education during unrest and compassionate towards the future of our students, a lot of our problems will be solved."

2.4   Winter Schooling

Chapter Summary: *Winter schooling could be strengthened as a fallback mechanism while addressing the loss due to unrest. Our survey suggests that almost a quarter of the school children attended free winter tuition program and found it useful. There was certainly some student churn due to lack of proper heating arrangements. Nevertheless, the winter tutorial program was a success.*

Schools and colleges have traditionally remained shut during winters in Kashmir. For three long months there is no academic activity. This has been one of the biggest inhibiting factor for education in Kashmir. The state government has made attempts recently to continue education during winters. During the winter of 2016-17 and after the unrest there was a need to leverage winter schooling in order to compensate for the loss of schooling during summer. According to authorities more than 100 thousand benefitted from winter schooling during the winter of 2016-17. Our survey suggests an even higher number got benefitted. 23.4 percent students in our sample reported to have attended the free winter tuition program and found it useful. There was certainly some churn due to lack of proper heating arrangement. However, in general, the winter tutorial program was a success.

We discussed earlier in the report that education of students from economically disadvantaged families may suffer more due to unrest, mainly because they may not have the means to pay for private tuition in order to compensate for the loss. Winter schooling is a good fit for students from such socio-economic background.

What was your response toward the winter tutorial program organized by the education department?

Attended and found it useful, 23.4%

Did not attend, 55.7%

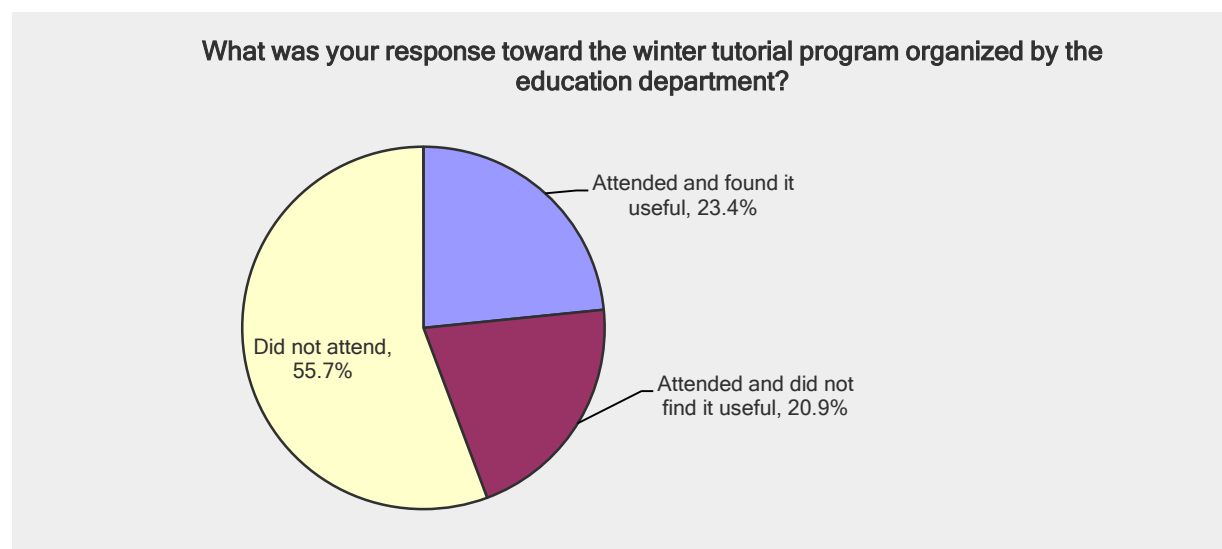Attended and did not find it useful, 20.9%

Figure 1.18: Response to winter tutorial program

The 2016-17 winter was the second such winter when selected schools remained open for tuition. Government announced incentives for teachers who participated in the winter tutorial program. Over a thousand in-service teachers and retired teachers were engaged for the program. There are two major handicaps in running schools during winter. One is the lack of heating arrangement at the schools and the other is the accessibility issue due to snow and inclement weather. The latter is particularly an issue with the rural areas. The state government employed limited means to fund the heating arrangement in winter schools during the winter of 2016-17. However unless the arrangements are comprehensive and reliable, winter schooling is unlikely to benefit a wider student population.

Winter schooling should not be seen only from the prism of compensatory mechanism i.e. as a solution to counter loss during unrest. If established, winter schooling in Kashmir can potentially change the landscape of education. This fundamental handicap which has been literally displacing formal schooling in Kashmir since decades needs greater attention, more planning, and more resources.

2.5   Addressing Student Expectations

Chapter Summary: *Student expectations vis-a-vis career and job prospects need to be addressed within the existing education system as much as possible. This needs to be done to convince the students that education can be an important stepping stone and that it can improve their lives. The state has to devise policies in this regard that go beyond skill development. Counseling and practical entrepreneurship within colleges/schools need to be explored.*

We discussed earlier in this report that the student support for hartal also stems from the lack of belief in the education system. There is need to convince students that education can improve their lives. Not only does the government need to take progressive initiatives in this regard, but it also has to be *seen* as taking those initiatives. The department needs to dedicate resources for awareness campaign. Our survey reveals that students are mainly aware of those government initiatives that help them achieve their career goals such as the CM-Super 50, a fast track program to train students for entrance tests to professional colleges. Awareness is low about those initiatives that make education a more meaningful exercise.
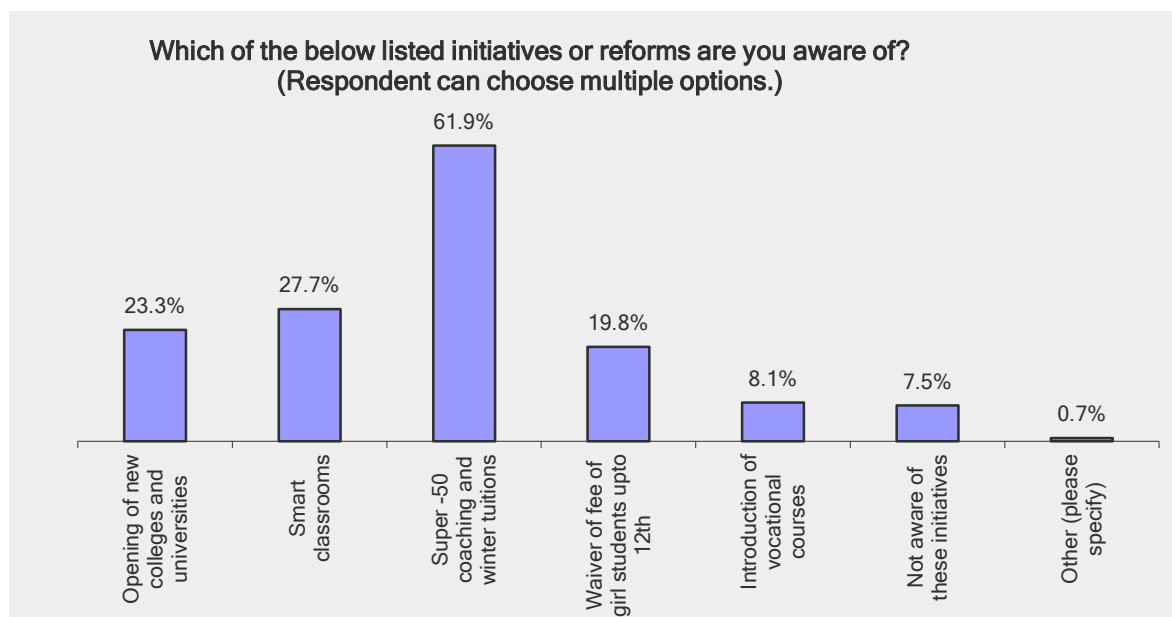

Figure 1.19: Awareness about government interventions in education

Students are concerned about their job preparedness prior to leaving formal education. However the awareness about vocational courses is very little. Only 8 percent of students are aware that the government runs vocational courses or skill development courses at the educational institutions.

The state runs two flagship skill development programs: Udaan and Himayat. Both are a result of recommendations from Rangarajan Committee that was set up in the backdrop of 2010 unrest. Udaan is skill development scheme for graduates while Himayat caters to 10+2 pass-outs. Both have been criticized on the basis that they promote brain drain since these schemes facilitate jobs and skill training out of state. There are broader issues with the skill development in Kashmir though. During the 12th Five Year Plan the state of J&K had set target of providing skill development to 0.8 million youth. Around 0.28 million of these had to be trained through vocational education at institutions like ITI, Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) and the Polytechnics. There were targets of 100 thousand for Himayat skill development program and 40, 000 for Udaan. The 12th Five Year Plan finished in 2017. From 2012 to 2017 only 0.13 million target was achieved as against the set target of 0.8 million. Udaan and Himayat, the two high profile skill development schemes which facilitate trainings and jobs out of state achieved around 15,000 and 40,000 targets respectively. Firstly the targets were not met and secondly – and perhaps most importantly - only 5 percent of those 0.13 million trained and upskilled actually ended up getting jobs.

In order to adequately address the student expectations from the education system, the policy has to go beyond just skill development. Students expect the education system to not only to prepare them for jobs but also to facilitate job placements for them. Parents lay more stress on job placement cells than the job oriented courses.
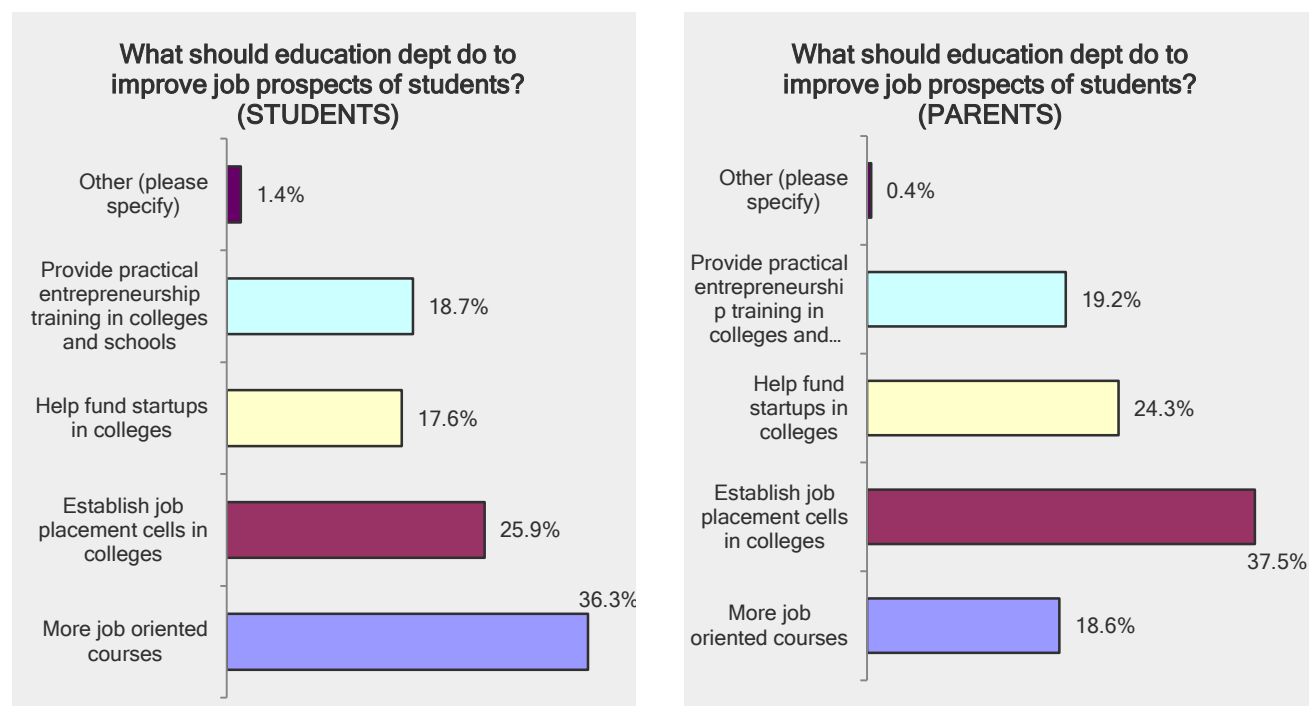

Figure 1.20: Improving jobs prospects of students

For people who want to pursue entrepreneurship at an early stage in their career, there is no orientation at the colleges. There has to be some sort of startup culture inculcated at the college level and even at the secondary school level. And the best way to do that is to provide practical entrepreneurship opportunities in form of startups or in form of similar initiatives within the colleges and schools.

Some progress has been made on this front through the incubation centres set up at technical institutions. However, the development is still in its infancy and at the level of announcements only. Success stories have to emerge from colleges in order to encourage students to consider an entrepreneurial career. The other issue is that the current startup eco-system worldwide is driven by equity financing while as the business community in Kashmir is used to debt financing options only. In order to be in sync with the startup developments outside the valley, equity financing options have to be introduced and applied at the earliest. Colleges could be a starting place for such initiatives.

Students need to be made aware that entrepreneurship is one of the best ways to create wealth and jobs. As observed earlier, the state government is over-employed. Jobs have to be created by the private sector. A vibrant startup culture, with adequate financing options, could give boost to the stagnant private sector in the valley in the long run. Just to place the foregoing discussion in context, the lack of job opportunities can also radicalize students and not just the political issues. The chart below articulates that message somewhat. Needless to mention, the state of J&K does not have a comprehensive job plan in place.
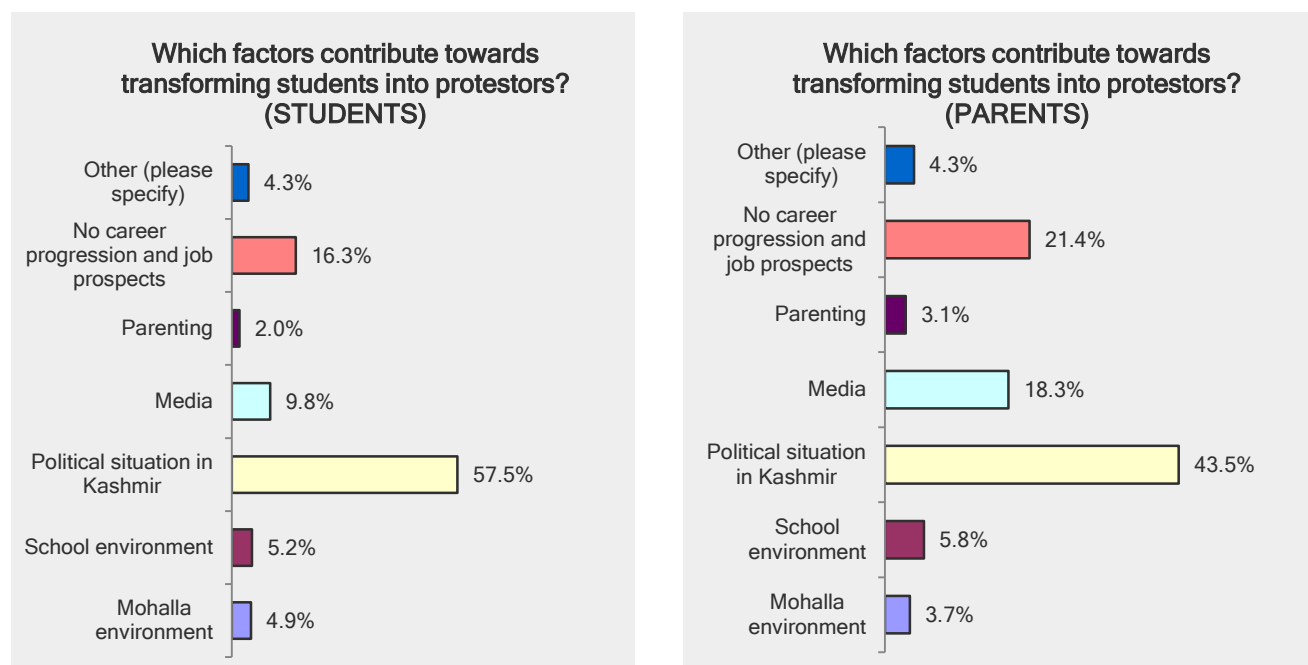

Figure 1.21: Factors contributing towards transforming students into protestors

The above discussion deals with the available options within the education system to address student expectations. There are certain expectations that need to be met outside the education system as well. Student politics is an important component of that, which shall be discussed in the next chapter. Apart from student politics there is also need to address the prevailing student perception about the system being highly corrupt. As discussed earlier in the report (Figure 1.10 above), students regard 'corruption in the system' as the biggest challenge in pursuing their professional goals. Efforts have to be made in order to create the perception that meritorious people will prevail overtime (if indeed they will).

Efforts also need to be made in strengthening the Juvenile Justice System in absence of which holding minors in custody has become a grey area. This has increased alienation among the student community. The Juvenile Justice system in J&K has not properly been ironed out yet. One of the issues was that a minor under the state law was until recently considered 16 or below, while as the international convention is 18.

Lastly, and most importantly, there is a genuine grievance from the student community as well as the parents that while dealing with the stone pelters, police does not restrain itself. Indeed this has resulted in undue violations, which needs to be addressed. It is these violations that feed the vicious cycle of violence during unrest. The state police needs to invest in proper riot gear to be able to handle the protests without inflicting any casualty.

While dealing with the stone pelters, do you think police restrains itself?	Student		Parent	
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	17.5%	374	9.5%	49
No	82.5%	1762	90.5%	466
		2136		515

Table 1.13: Perception about how police deals with stone pelters

2.6   Student Politics

Chapter Summary: *Contours of student politics could be explored. Students could be given social spaces to express their concerns about their education, about conflict, and various other issues. A third of the survey respondents are of the opinion that student politics will give vent to political views and keep tempers down.*

While conducting this survey, which included some very sensitive questions, we had two minor incidents where respondents were somewhat agitated while responding to those sensitive questions. All the remaining respondents (99.9 percent) were willing to talk about such issues regardless of their political inclination. There is definitely a culture of political tolerance and pluralism in this regard among the Kashmiri students. There is a culture of expressing opinions on sensitive issues openly and agreeing to disagree. Quite often our surveys led to open discussions with a group of students.

Not many conflict zones afford such luxury. There is a need to establish social and political forums that harness this sentiment and channel it towards positivity. Open debates can be held in schools on sensitive subjects. Student politics could be encouraged to a certain extent. They need to be engaged in a dialogue even on the sensitive topics.

Unfortunately, student politics has been banned in the state. Government fears that student forums might be high jacked by the resistance apparatus. Nevertheless, there can be ways and means to make student politics a meaningful exercise, especially if it helps keep the tempers down. Students have to be given a vent. Maybe one of the reasons why students are radicalized is because they have no forums to express themselves. They have no forums where they can talk about conflict.
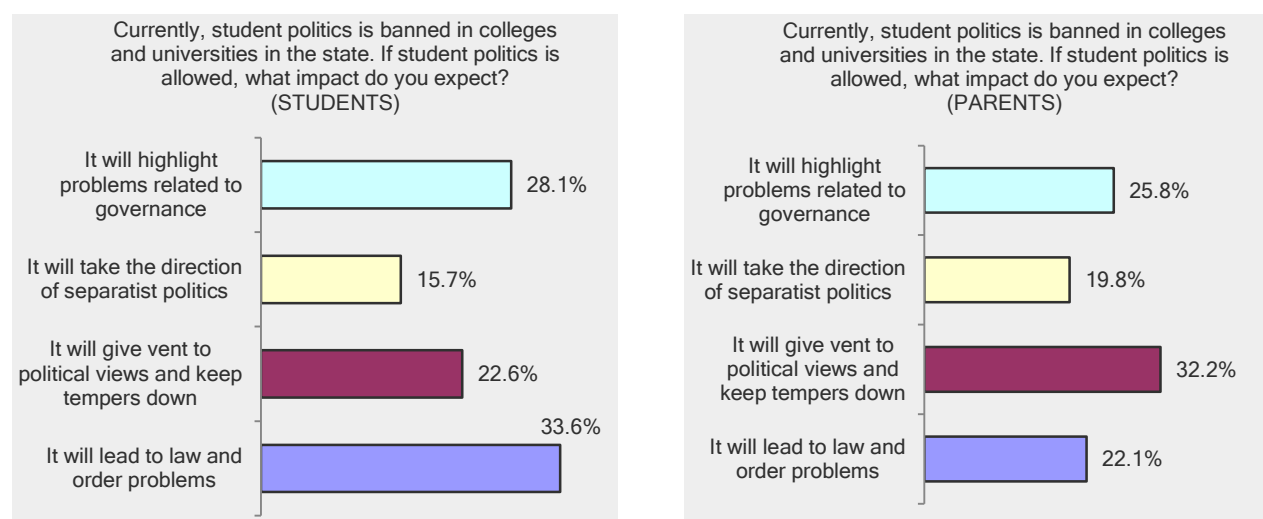

Figure 1.22: Impact if student politics is allowed

Survey data suggests that the respondents feel positive about allowing student politics. Students have shown some measure of apprehension though. Government, while allowing student politics, may define contours of socio-political activities undertaken by student bodies in order to ensure that there are no untoward developments. It is pertinent to mention that the student protests of April 2017 remained peaceful for the duration they were held within the college campuses. The protests turned violent when students came out of the streets. As long as student politics is conducted within the confines of the colleges there is less apprehension of violence. Furthermore, as a confidence building measure towards restoring student politics, the security personnel should not be allowed inside colleges. Where there are security installations near the colleges, they could be moved away from schools and colleges and their visibility around them reduced. Security forces stay in schools during poll duties and during unrest times which should be discouraged. ******

While defining the acceptable contours of student politics, government has enough leeway to negotiate with the students. For instance, government can exempt students from the Public Safety Act (PSA) in return for pledges to take up advocacy with the stone pelters and hartal vigilante. Elected student bodies can be granted due recognition which drives their participation and ownership in the system. If thought through carefully and with honest intentions, it is feasible for student bodies to secure mandate of both the government and the resistance camp. Student bodies can potentially become conduit for a sustained dialogue between the two.

There is a Village Education Committee (VEC) in each village. Students could be given membership in such committees. There are also village Social Welfare Committees and other village level forums. Involving students in such committees can give students some social and political space. VECs could be given mandate including that geographical mapping and mobilizing of teachers during unrest. So rather than government mediating directly, VECs could be given that mandate. That will give the process a community touch.

What allied forms of engagement will bring positivity in students?

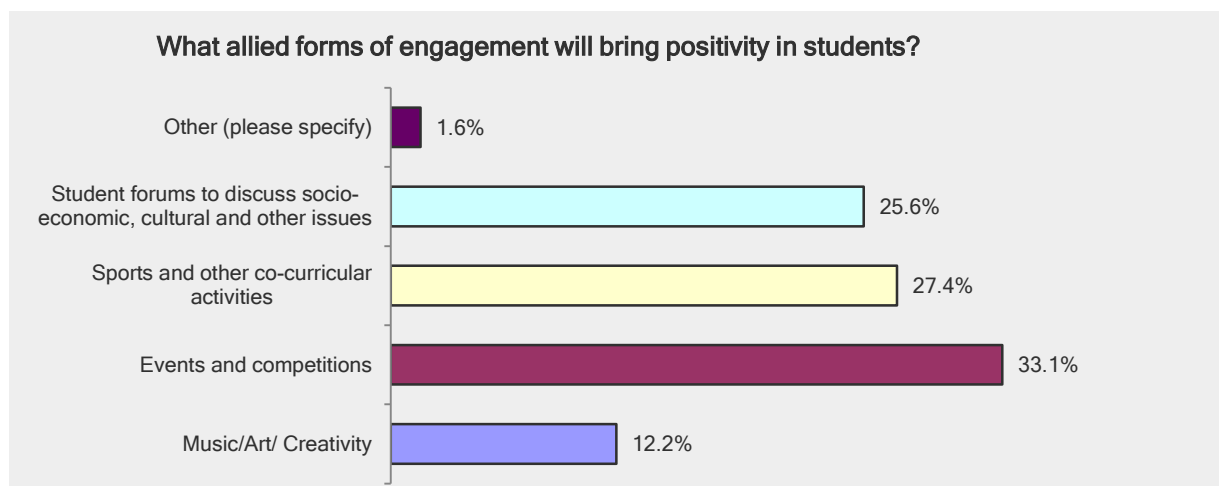| Category	Percentage
Other (please specify)	1.6%
Student forums to discuss socio-economic, cultural and other issues	25.6%
Sports and other co-curricular activities	27.4%
Events and competitions	33.1%
Music/Art/ Creativity	12.2%

Figure 1.23: Allied forms of engagement that will bring positivity in students

Besides student politics there should be content in the curriculum that helps student to understand and overcome difficulties posed by conflict. There can be two approaches to this. One could be via a dedicated subject on Peace and Conflict. The other is to re-orient the whole curriculum. For instance, students are taught very little about Kashmir's history and geography. Even in the Kashmir Administrative Service (KAS), the state civil service cadre which carries the tag Kashmir, wherein the students prepare themselves to take exams on various subjects including geography and history, very little content is included about Kashmir. At least a chapter each should be included about Kashmir in various subjects. This is what is meant by re-orienting the whole curriculum. The contextualization of education in Kashmir is missing.

The other problem in the system is lack of counseling. Those who pass 10+2 often struggle in terms of finding out what to do, and what they should study. Stone pelters in the age group of 16 to 18 are very vulnerable. They become more vulnerable in absence of career counseling. Counseling in schools and colleges could assume a broader role. In unrest children are psychologically disturbed. The foremost thing is psychological relief. Psychological counseling in schools is also very important.

Lastly, while it is true that Internet can be leveraged to propagate wrong information, its ban during unrest denies students a major social space. Internet and social media is an important outlet in the face of restrictions. During the unrest of 2016, only wireline broadband connections were functioning in Kashmir. These connections were also blocked on certain sensitive occasions. Mobile Internet (on prepaid and postpaid connections) remained suspended throughout the unrest with Internet on prepaid remaining shut for some extended time later. Communications blockade is a norm in Kashmir during unrest.

Apparently Internet shutdowns are common in India. As per Software Freedom Law Centre, a legal service provider, there have been 62 shutdowns of Internet in various states of India since 2012. Kashmir has faced 27 shutdowns since 2012. The shutdown is implemented to avoid any untoward incident which as per the authorities is exacerbated by Internet and mobile communication.

2.7   Advocacy

Chapter Summary: *As far as advocacy with the resistance leadership is concerned, their support for exempting education from hartals could help the situation to a large extent since they hold sway among the protestors.*

There are certain inherent challenges in the quest for remedy. Hartal is successful when it spans all sectors. Protestors could therefore be disinclined to exempt education from hartal. State on the other hand may use education, and exams in particular, as leverage to end hartals. The state could therefore be reluctant to invest in contingency plans that dilute that leverage. When asked which factor played the biggest role in ending hartals in 2016, nearly 44 percent respondents said that it was the student exams.

Resistance leadership is the only stakeholder who holds some sway over the protestors and could take up advocacy to facilitate exemption for education during hartal, just like other essential services are granted that exemption. However, the resistance group does not concede that education has suffered due to hartal. They concede that schooling was affected but not the education. According to them stone pelters come out to fight for their political rights, and that is the highest level of education one can have. This is effectively the perspective of the resistance group.

Resistance group defends stone pelters and resent any attempt to criminalize their actions. Stone pelters, according to them, fight for the collective rights of Kashmiris and therefore exhibit "the highest level of education because that is what education teaches us i.e. not to accept injustice."

Resistance group also alleges that there are activists among them who oppose hartals and advocate that hartals be stopped or that a political process be initiated. There is a section among the resistance camp that alleges that the state government is conspiring in continuing hartals. Some of them also claim that whenever they have solicited consultation on hartals and protest calendars, the state agencies depute people at the meetings who threaten resistance leadership to call off hartals.

Admittedly, unrests are not up to the resistance camp to control. Indeed they might not be in full control of the hartal process either. As an example when relaxation in protest calendars are announced the hartal vigilante often violate those deals. Certain section among the resistance group have in the past discouraged stone pelting yet youth ignore their directions. That deviance is increasing by the day. However, by and large, students and youth do follow the protest calendars of the resistance leadership. Protest calendars in many ways reflect what the protesting youth want. In absence of a political dialogue, resistance leadership has little incentive to deviate from projecting these aspirations.

It may be difficult to divorce the issue of education and unrest from the core political issue. However, regardless of the perspective, resistance leadership needs to concede that unrest impacts education/schooling and that ways and means need to be explored to exempt education/schooling from hartal.

However, the challenge is that hartal is successful when it spans all sectors. It is quite possible that resistance leadership may therefore be disinclined to exempt education from hartal. State on the other hand may regard education as a leverage to end hartals, and there are such precedents. The state may therefore be reluctant to invest in alternative means of education during unrest.
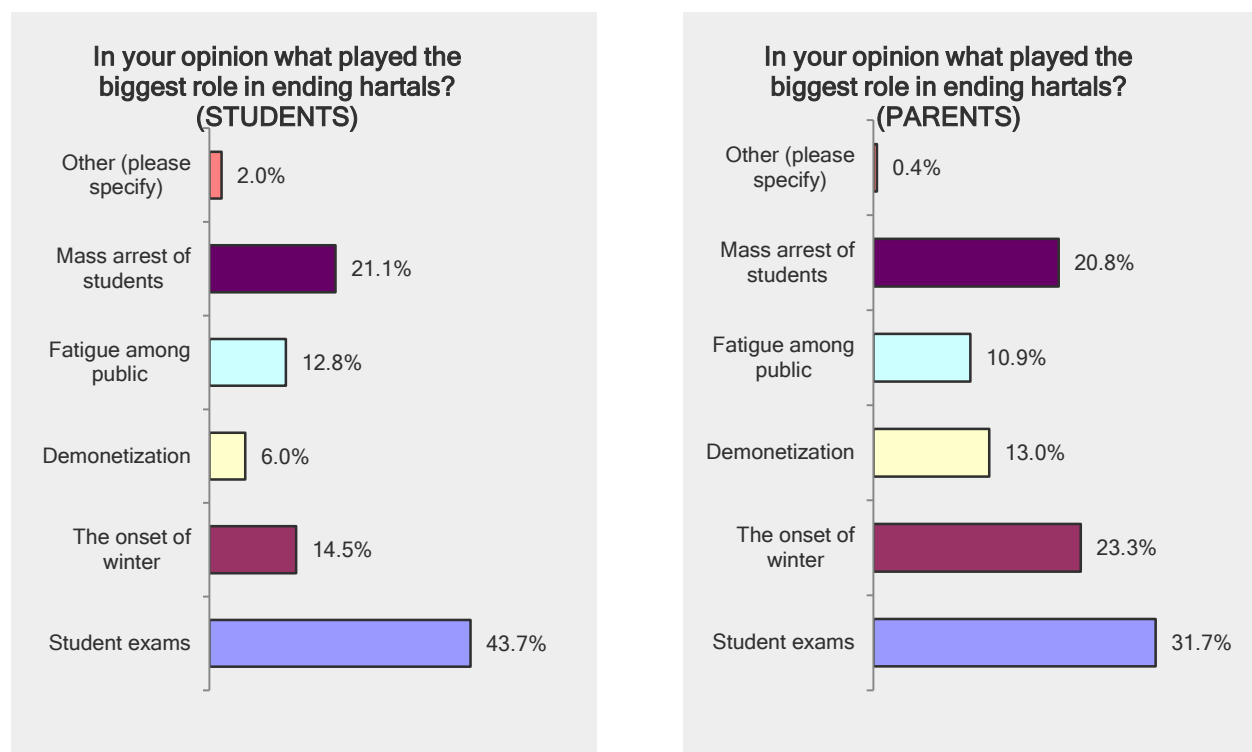

Figure 1.24: What played the biggest role in ending hartals

On November 14th, exams commenced and were conducted successfully. Government provided security at the examination centres. An overwhelming majority of students sat in the exams even though the government had tactfully offered them the opportunity to appear for exams in March 2017 as well. On November 19th resistance leadership, conceding shift in the dynamics of the unrest, announced the first full day of relaxation. Thereafter the protest calendar was diluted. Indeed exams played principal role in ending the hartal and unrest of 2016.

Participation in exams was cashed and politicized by the authorities and projected as compliance to the status quo. Union Education Minister stated that it was a 'surgical strike' against resistance group. Others, including the Prime Minister also chipped in with similar statements. Exams, and education in general, were politicized. Although students had participated in the exams, these statements of political nature alienated them.

Do you think it was a correct decision to hold exams on time?		Student		Parent
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count	Response Percent	Response Count
Yes	33.8%	722	23.9%	123
No	66.2%	1414	76.1%	392
		2136		515

Table 1.14: Was it a correct decision to hold exams on time?

Politicization of education had, in fact, commenced much earlier during the unrest as the government repeatedly made attempts to open schools. 32 schools in the valley were burned during the unrest. As the momentum gained around conduct of examinations, media politicized the issue even further. The collective politicization by politicians and media resulted in schools being made the target.
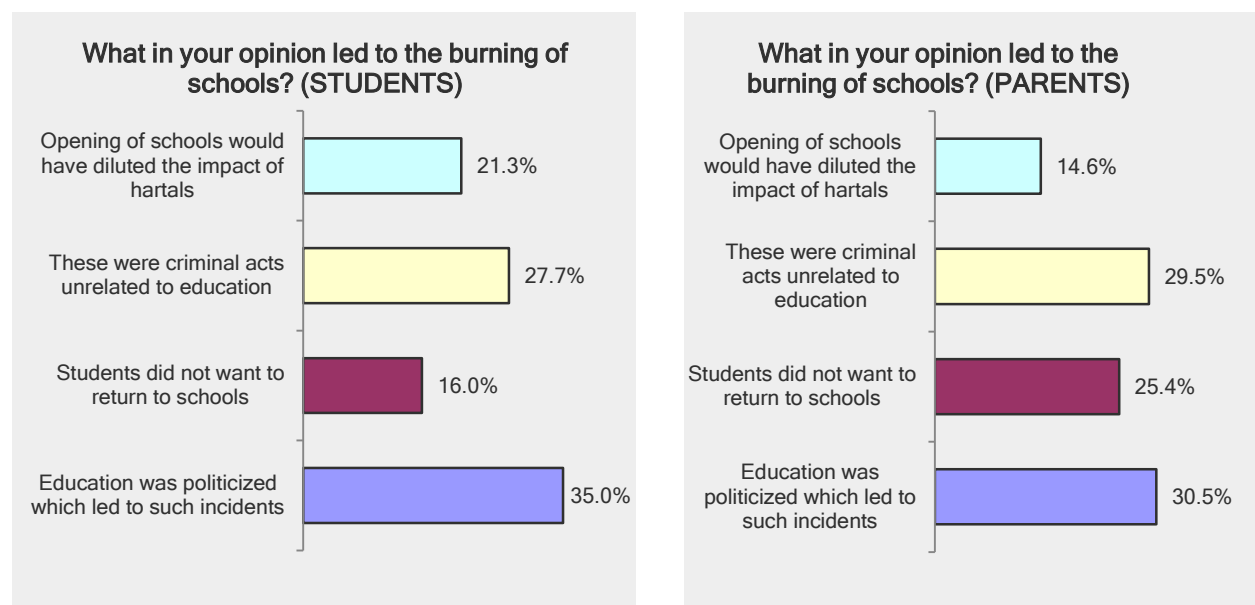

Figure 1.25: Factors that led to the burning of schools

Though officials in the education department happily transitioned some of the schools into community schools during the unrest, there was not a department wide concerted effort to

replicate it everywhere, even though such options were discussed. The reasons were simple: the government did not want to cannibalize formal schooling and effectively render the education apparatus dysfunctional. Same logic goes with the options like e-Learning. The government has invested heavily in smart classrooms but it may think twice before making e-Learning accessible from home, precisely because once you make the content accessible from home (over the Internet or through some other media like TV) students would have no incentives to go back to school during unrest. e-Learning would be a comfortable substitute to formal schooling during unrest.

A government teacher from the education department reported that last year while working as a volunteer, he approached two cable operators in Srinagar and Bandipora to seek help in enabling some of the local teachers broadcast lessons over their cable TV channels. The Bandipora cable operator apprehended threat from the government citing the latter's preference to discourage alternative means of education during unrest which would preclude opening of schools. Another teacher from Anantnag reported that community schools were threatened by the police personnel there.

Getting the state to encourage alternatives during unrest is a challenge. In fact, there is a definite push from the government to bring the whole education sector under tighter regulation so that government may be able to exercise maximum control. Post unrest the government has issued instructions to extend the syllabus of the state board from upper primary classes up to matriculation. This is a move to gain greater control over the school and examination schedules and could again risk politicization of education if leveraged towards that end.

Conclusions and Recommendations

CONCLUSIONS SO FAR

All stakeholders are concerned about securing the future of children and youth of Kashmir. All acknowledge that education is key in making that happen. Education has, however, been impacted by unrest in Kashmir. There is a misleading perception in certain section of the society that education has remained immune to the unrest. Syllabus curtailment, mass copying, lenient marking, lack of teacher accountability, and - most of all - the prolonged shutdowns have compromised the competency levels of students significantly below peer level.

- When resistance leadership calls for hartal they do not specify that health sector, or other essential services, could be exempted. It is presumed that there is exemption since such services are essential even during unrest. If students, including their peers who participate in stone pelting and hartal vigilantism, value education and regard it as essential, they will grant the same exemption to education and facilitate the movement of teachers and students during unrest. There will be community wide efforts to keep schools and colleges open during unrest.

- The challenge is that there is student pessimism around their education, in terms of quality and outcome. Students perceive education as a dead end. Lack of quality education and lack of employment opportunities resulting from education have remained major contributing factors in reinforcing that perception. As a result, while the sense of loss in education during unrest is acknowledged, there is not enough motivation to address that loss. Students support closure of schools and colleges during unrest, and show support for hartal, even if it impacts their education.

- Support for hartal is not confined to students and parents only. A healthy proportion of teachers also support it. Those areas that were relatively untouched by unrest during 2016 and which were off the media scanner also witnessed almost zero attendance of teachers. While it is true that teachers fear isolation from the society if they attend duties, however we need to bear in mind that during unrest no one targeted the employees of other departments including health, power, public distribution, water works etc.

- There are certain inherent challenges in the quest for remedy. Hartal is successful when it spans all sectors. Protestors could therefore be disinclined to exempt education from hartal.

State on the other hand may use education, and exams in particular, as leverage to end hartals. The state could therefore be reluctant to invest in contingency plans that dilute the leverage.

RECOMMENDATIONS SO FAR

The recommendations below lay down a framework for advocacy with government and resistance leadership. Both stakeholders need to be on board and both need to cooperate to ensure continuance of education in Kashmir during times of unrest. Suggested remedies include (a) substitutes to formal education during times of unrest, (b) addressing student expectations from education, (c) allowing student politics, and (d) advocacy with resistance leadership and the state, and (e) creating linkages with community leaders.

- Education should not be politicized. Participation in exams was politicized by the authorities. Union Education Minister stated that it was a 'surgical strike' against resistance group. Although students had participated in the exams, these statements of political nature alienated them. Politicization of education had, in fact, commenced much earlier during the unrest as the government repeatedly made attempts to open schools. Politicization of education inhibited the students' inclination to resume schooling.

- Resistance leadership could advocate exemption of education from hartal but that might only partially solve the problem. There could still be apprehensions about the functioning of educational institutions during unrest. Nevertheless, support from the resistance leadership on this front is a fundamental pre-requisite given the fact that they hold sway among the protestors, who almost invariably comprise of students. In order to plug the remaining contingencies (i.e. for areas that witness unrest despite the advocacy from the resistance group), there is need to supplement the proposed outreach by resistance group with certain compensatory solutions and substitutes.

- Schools and colleges have traditionally remained shut during winters in Kashmir thus having its own impact on education. With the success of stopgap winter schooling, such initiatives can go beyond the mechanism of compensation for loss of education as a result of unrest. This fallback mechanism can be strengthened and made part of regular schooling which would give students a chance to compensate the cumulative loss in previous years.

- e-Learning with home access could be explored as an alternative means of education during shutdowns. E-learning should be designed as a regular supplement to formal schooling. Its

usage should not be limited to the periods of unrest. Non-Governmental organizations could be engaged to develop and distribute e-content using appropriate media. Local cable operators' network can be leveraged to broadcast such e-content. Government support will be required to facilitate use of mainstream broadcast media (TV& Radio).

- The government could formalize its policy around community schooling as a stop gap arrangement. Geographical mapping of teachers could be undertaken, and teachers asked to strengthen schools/colleges in their vicinity at the times of unrest. Community schooling could follow cluster approach with selected schools, having adequate infrastructure, accommodating wards from multiple surrounding schools. For the purposes of scalability of community schooling across the valley, the role of government is critical. If needed, security arrangements could also be made at the cluster community schools.

- Students in Kashmir are willing to talk about conflict regardless of their political inclination. There is definitely a culture of political tolerance and pluralism in this regard among the students. Not many conflict zones afford such luxury. There is need to establish social and political forums that harness this outlook and channel it towards positivity. Contours of student politics could be explored. Students could be given social spaces to express their concerns about their education, about conflict, and various other issues.

- Civil society could facilitate dialogue on education between resistance leadership, government, teachers and students. Dialogue around an individual component of unrest is justifiable on its own and does not have to held ransom to the core political issue.

- Department of school education should invest in continuous monitoring of schools to ensure teacher accountability. Teacher accountability is the main factor in improving quality of education.

- Student expectations vis-a-vis career and job prospects need to be addressed within the existing education system as much as possible. This needs to be done to convince the students that education is an important stepping stone that can improve their lives. The perception that education is a dead end needs to be addressed. The state has to devise policies in this regard that go beyond skill development. Counseling and practical entrepreneurship within colleges/schools need to be explored.

- Flavours of entrepreneurship could be explored in higher secondary schools and colleges. Institutions mandated with entrepreneurship development could be integrated with the department of Education, along with the skill development component. If skill development,

self-employment and entrepreneurship among youth are seen as being facilitated by education, such interventions could serve as means to convince the students that education can potentially improve their lives.

- Skill development should not be politicized and it should not be allowed to facilitate brain drain. Most importantly, the government needs to explore ways and means to ensure that skill development concludes with appropriate employment opportunities. There is also need for job placement cells inside colleges and higher secondary schools. A job plan needs to be formulated at the state level outlining the interventions government would undertake in order to generate jobs in various sectors of the economy. The job plan must outline the role to be played by the schools and colleges.

- Besides career counseling and employment, there are other student concerns that also need to be addressed. Student politics, thus far banned on college campuses, could be permitted within defined contours. It is better to have a student talk about conflict inside a college rather than allow his/her radicalization outside it.

- There is an option for conducting schooling during early morning hours on hartal days. Transportation would also have to be facilitated in accordance to the timings.

- There is a Village Education Committee (VEC) in each village. Students could be given membership in such committees. There are also village Social Welfare Committees and other local level forums. Involving students in such committees can give students some social and political space. VECs could also be engaged in the geographical mapping and creation of an 'Unrest Teacher Volunteer' database for mobilization of teachers during unrest. Masjid Committees could also be engaged for the purposes of facilitating infrastructure needs during community schooling and raising awareness among the public to this effect. That will give the process a community touch.

- As a confidence building measure towards restoring student politics, the security personal could be moved away from schools and colleges and their visibility around them reduced. Security forces stay in schools during unrest times should be discouraged.

- Suggested model could have the following components:
    - Advocacy of resistance leadership with the protesters with the aim of adjusting time for schooling during periods of unrest
    - Promoting community schooling in areas that remain affected despite the advocacy by the resistance leadership

o   Supplement formal schooling through e-learning which is potentially unrest proof. Further supplementing conventional school calendar through winter schooling.

RISKS AS RESULT OF INACTION

- The risks associated with inaction are significant. Sub-standard education will create a leadership vacuum in Kashmir. Students will have limited choices in terms of their aspirations. If we continue the way things are shaping up, we risk extremism, wide scale criminalization of youth, chronic unemployment, drug abuse, and psychological disorders as witnessed in other protracted conflicts around the world where education has taken a backseat.
- Kashmir has already seen a significant rise in drug abuse over the last decade, as reported by eminent psychiatrists of the valley. According to a survey conducted by UN Drug Control Program survey in 2008, there are over 70 thousand drug addicts in Kashmir.
- Kashmir has suffered sustained brain drain since 1990 due to the conflict. Each spell of unrest causes a spike in that process.

Annexure: Student Questionnaire

1. STUDENT PROFILE
a. Name of Student: b. Gender: c. Cell number:
d. Age: e. Class enrolled for (during 2016):   f. Name of School/College:
g. Profession of father: h. Profession of mother:

2. Average monthly income of the family:
    i)   Up to 5,000   ii)5,000 to 10,000iii) 10,000 to 25,000   iv)25,000 to 50,000
    v)   50,000 to 1 Lac   vi) more than 1 Lac

3. Ownership of assets by the family

Asset	Y/N	Asset	Y/N	Asset	Y/N
Land		Computer/Laptop		Hamaam	
House		Scooter/ Motor Cycle		Bukhari	
Refrigerator		Car		AC	
Washing Machine		Invertor			

SECTION 2: IMPACT OF CONFLICT ON EDUCATION
4. What is your understanding of where JK is ranked among the states in terms of education throughout India? Guess by picking a rank from 1 to 29.

5. What in your opinion is the biggest problem with the education system in the state? Please choose one.
i) Not connected to industry and not job oriented courses
ii) Substandard quality of teaching
iii) Substandard infrastructure and facilities
iv) Outdated syllabus and curriculum
v) Lack of teacher accountability
vi) Substandard monitoring and supervision
vii) No alternative means to continue education in times of unrest
viii) Other (please specify)

6. In what way has the prolonged conflict impacted quality of teaching?
i) Conflict has impacted professional competencies of teachers
ii) Conflict has impacted work motivation of teachers
iii) Conflict has psychologically affected teachers
iv) Conflict does not let teachers cover curriculum fully
v) Teachers have domestic pressures and not able to achieve work-life balance
vi) Teachers are underpaid and as such underperform
vii) Teacher recruitment process is not proper
viii) Conflict has affected teacher accountability
ix) Teacher absenteeism due to security issues

7. On a scale 0 to 10, how would you rate your School/College in terms of:
    i)   Student: Teacher ratio
    ii)   Quality of teaching
    iii)   Infrastructure including building, toilet facilities, water supply
    iv)   Classroom facilities including furniture, black/white boards
    v)   Support facilities such as library, computer lab,
    vi)   Facilities related extra-curricular activities including playground, sport, art and creativity
    vii)   Accessibility and location

viii)   Safety measures including fencing around the building, first aid, fire safety

8. Which professional career do you wish to pursue in life? What is the likelihood that you will be able to succeed in that?

9. What are the two biggest challenges in pursuing your professional career?
  i)   Financial problems
  ii)   Competition too high
  iii)   Security situation and uncertainty in Kashmir
  iv)   Corruption in the system
  v)   Not enough opportunities in Kashmir
  vi)   Quality of education in Kashmir
  vii)   Other (please specify)

SECTION 3: IMPACT OF 2016 UNREST ON EDUCATION
10. Which aspect of student education was impacted the most due to hartals and unrest in 2016?
i) Daily routine and discipline   ii) Competitiveness/Performance   iii) Quality of teaching   iv) Career development

11. In your opinion, whose education suffered the most due to unrest:
i) Students from economically disadvantaged families
ii) Students from government schools
iii) Students from private schools
iv) Students from rural areas
v) Students from urban areas

12. Do you personally know anyone who got injured during the unrest?
i)   Yes   ii)   No

13. Did you, at any point during the unrest of 2016, consider leaving Kashmir for continuance of your education?
i) Yes   ii) No

14. If the answer to the above question is 'Yes', what was your course of action?
i) Could not leave due to financial constraints
ii) Could not leave because parents were unable to accompany
iii) Could not leave because accommodation out of state was a major challenge
iv) I left Kashmir and continued education outside for sometime

15. Which of the following impacted your education the most during 2016?
i)   Hartal
ii)   Curfew
iii)   Stone pelting
iv)   Restrictions by security forces
v)   Other (please specify)

16. During hartal days, approximately how much time did you spend on average each day on the following activities (please mention approximate number of hours):
i)   TV/Radio/Newspaper/Magazine
ii)   Phone/Laptop
iii)   Outdoors
iv)   Domestic work

v)   Studies
vi)   Idle

17. What in your opinion led to the burning of schools?
i) Education was politicized which led to such incidents
ii) Students did not want to return to schools
iii) These were criminal acts unrelated to education
iv) Opening of schools would have diluted the impact of hartals

18. As a student, what was your response to the hartal calls during 2016:
    i)   Observed hartal to highlight our political issues
    ii)   Observed hartal because majority did the same
    iii)   Was against hartals but the schools were shut
    iv)   Observed hartal under duress
    v)   Remained neutral

19. As a student do you think that hartals are effective? Do you think they fetch any results?
Yes   No
If Yes, please elaborate …………………………………..

20. As a student do you think that stone pelting will fetch results for the stone pelters?
Yes   No
If Yes, please elaborate …………………………………..

21. What is your opinion about the necessity of hartals:
    i)   Everyone should observe them when needed
    ii)   Hartals should be voluntary
    iii)   Hartals calls should not be given by politicians
    iv)   Hartals calls should be made only occasionally
    v)   Hartals calls should be made in exact same fashion as before i.e. in form of protest calendars
    vi)   There should not be any hartals
    vii)   Politicians should explore alternative means of protest (other than hartals)

22. How did you feel returning to school (for exams or classes) for a brief period after the unrest?
i) Reluctantly went back to school
ii) Willingly went back to school
iii) Was very happy to return back to school

23. During hartals, which other aspect of your school did you miss the most apart from class work?
i)   School environment
ii)   School friends
iii)   Extra-curricular activities
iv)   Other (please specify)

24. Do you think it was a correct decision to hold exams on time?
Yes   No
Please elaborate

25. In your opinion what played the biggest role in ending hartals?
i)   Student exams
ii)   The onset of winter
iii)   Demonetization
iv)   Fatigue among public

v)   Mass arrest of students
vi)   Other (please specify)

26. Why did students boycott schools but not exams?
i)   Schools are an extension of the Govt, while as exams concern one's career and qualification
ii)   Students are more concerned about qualifications than education
iii)   Schools in Kashmir do not impart quality education, so students did not miss much
iv)   If you miss class work, you can make up for it later but if you miss exams you waste a year
v)   Students are not old enough to make these decisions on their own
vi)   Other (please specify)

SECTION 4: GOVERNMENT RESPONSE
27. Which of the below listed initiatives or reforms are you aware of? Respondent can choose multiple options.
i) Opening of new colleges and universities
ii) Smart classrooms
iii) Super -50 coaching and winter tuitions
iv) Waiver of fee of girl students up to 12th
v) Introduction of vocational courses
vi) Other (please specify)
vii) Not aware of these initiatives

28. Are you aware of any attempts made by Govt to restore normalcy in education sector during 2016 unrest?
i) Yes   ii) No
If Yes, please elaborate…………………………………………

29. Would it be useful to have an e-Learning channel on TV or radio that broadcasts teaching lessons (and related content) to students of different classes in Kashmir?
Yes   No

30. If the answer to question above is 'Yes', which would be the best medium for such a channel:
i) TV   ii) Radio iii) Internet   iv) In form of mobile app   v) On DVD/Pen drive   vi) Multiple media

31. How often do you expect to use such channel?
i) Daily   ii) Weekly   iii) Monthly   iv) Rarely   v) only during hartals

32. What was your response toward the winter tutorial program organized by the education department?
i)   Attended and found it useful
ii)   Attended and did not find it useful
iii)   Did not attend

33. Who in your opinion made the best attempt in ensuring continuance of education during the 2016 unrest?
i) State Govt
ii) Teachers
iii) Private schools and colleges
iv) NGOs
v) Community
vi) Individual mentors and tutors

34. Which of the below is closest to your opinion about the decision of private schools to charge fee during hartal months?
i)   Justified, since they have to pay salaries to the staff
ii)   Not justified, since there was no class work

iii)   They should have waived off the fee and asked teachers to share the loss
iv)   They should have waived off the fee and absorbed the losses

35. Was there any community school functioning in your locality during the unrest of 2016?
i) Yes   ii) No
If Yes, please provide details ………………………….

36.Why did students in certain areas attend community schools when their formal schools were very close by?
Please comment …………………………………………………………………………………………

SECTION 5: STUDENT WELFARE AND POLITICS

37. Currently, student politics is banned in colleges and universities in the state. If the student politics is allowed in colleges and universities, what impact do you expect? Which of the below is the closest to what you expect?
        i)   It will lead to law and order problems
        ii)   It will give vent to political views and keep tempers down
        iii)   It will take the direction of separatist politics
        iv)   It will highlight problems related to governance

38. Which of the below mentioned factors contribute towards transforming students into protestors:
i) Mohalla environment
ii) School environment
iii) Political situation in Kashmir
iv) Media
v) Parenting
vi) No career progression and job prospects
vii) Other

39. Who as per your understanding participates in protests and stone pelting?
i) Youth from economically disadvantaged families
ii) Youth from affluent families
iii) Youth from all backgrounds
iv) Other (please specify)

40. What is your reaction when a student is taken into detention under PSA?
Comments …………………………………………………………………………………………………..

41. While dealing with the stone pelters, do you think police restrains itself?
i) Yes   ii) No   (Please elaborate)

42. What should education dept do to improve job prospects of students?
i)   More job oriented courses
ii)   Establish job placement cells in colleges
iii)   Help fund startups in colleges
iv)   Provide practical entrepreneurship training in colleges and schools
v)   Other (pls specify)

43. What allied forms of engagement will bring positivity in students:
i)   Music/Art/Creativity
ii)   Events and competitions
iii)   Sports and other co-curricular activities
iv)   Student forums to discuss socio-economic, cultural and other issues
v)   Other (pls specify)

44. What should be done to shield education from conflict and hartals?

………

………

………

………..

Date: _____   Name of surveyor: Signature:

Student Survey- Central Zone

Parent Survey-South Zone

Review of Research Report Draft

Round Table Discussion- Civil Society Organizations

Round Table Discussion-Department of Education

Round Table Discussion- Civil Society Organisations

Mission

Empowermenmt of Orphans, Vulnerable Children and Matginalized Youth in conflict areas through education and sociaeconamic initiatives.

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