

Notification Number: 558 /2024

Date of Notification: 10-05-2024

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Thesis Title: Inter-Group Conflicts in Kargil: Historical Analysis of Yogma pa – Gongma pa and IKMT – ISK Conflict

Keywords: IKMT, JUIAK, ISK, Yogma pa, Gongma pa, Shia, Islamist, Political Islam, Quietism in Islam, Kargil

Abstract

This thesis examines inter-group conflicts within the Shia Muslim community of Kargil through an intersectional framework that connects local dynamics with a broader global ideological divide among Shia scholars. It focuses on two conflicts: the Yogma pa – Gongma pa division in the Suru Valley and the Imam Khomeini Memorial Trust (IKMT)–Islamia School Kargil (ISK) rivalry. The study situates these conflicts within the larger doctrinal split between proponents of “political Islam,” which advocates active engagement in politics, and “quietism,” which emphasizes religious practice with minimal political involvement.

The thesis argues that while this global ideological divide provides an important analytical lens, local factors—such as sectarian leadership, economic interests, electoral politics, identity markers (ethnic, regional, and lineage-based), and historical developments—play an equally significant role in shaping these conflicts. The Yogma-pa faction largely aligns with political Islam, especially after the influence of the Iranian Revolution, whereas the Gongma-pa faction exhibits a more quietist orientation, though not uniformly. Similarly, the IKMT represents a politically assertive religious movement inspired by revolutionary Shiism, while the Islamia School reflects a comparatively cautious or traditional approach.

Historically, events such as the millenarian movement in the 1960s intensified divisions between Yogma and Gongma factions, while post-1979 developments and institutional competition shaped IKMT–ISK tensions. Over time, these groups evolved into socio-political actors engaged in electoral and institutional struggles. Despite persistent rivalry, the conflicts are characterized more by social fragmentation, symbolic contestation, and political competition than by large-scale violence.

Ultimately, the thesis concludes that inter-group conflict in Kargil cannot be reduced to theological differences alone; rather, it emerges from the complex interplay of global ideological currents and deeply embedded local socio-political realities.