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Indian national congress Jammu and Kashmir politics

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Abstract

It was with the beginning of the freedom movement in Jammu and Kashmir the leadership in Congress party particularly Nehru and Gandhi started developing interest in the areas of the state particularly in relation to its freedom movement. This role and influence became more pronounced through the proximity that Nehru as an important figure in Indian National Congress developed with the Kashmir freedom movement particularly its leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Through the influence of Nehru, the freedom movement in Kashmir started gaining greater ideological proximity with that of Indian National Congress. This gradually prompted Muslim Conference leadership to change the nomenclature of Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1938. This had far-reaching impact on the politics in Kashmir particularly when British decided to leave the sub-continent and Indian sub-continent got divided into two independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947.

Keywords: Indian National Congress, Jammu and Kashmir, politics etc

Introduction

The integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) is a governmental program implemented by the Gender The study of the Kashmir politics cannot be complete without studying the role of Indian national Congress in the politics of the state. The party which was founded by Allan Octavian Hume in December 25, 1885 had a great importance in shaping the politics of the Indian sub-continent and that of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It was under this organisation that the Indian National freedom Movement was carried out against the British colonialism. Its first session was held on December 25, 1885 at Bombay. Womesh Chander Banerjee was elected its first president. The first session of Congress was attended by 72 representatives representing different parts of India. However, its operation remained mainly confined to the areas that were directly under the British control known as the British India. It considered it politically inexpedient to get into the princely states till the beginning of the State People's Conference in 1927. The Indian National Congress was not prepared to give up its official policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the native states on the grounds that the states were independent entities under the British law. It thought that its interference could damage the causes of the states. Under this policy, Congress had debarred the peoples of the states to organise and establish the congress units in the states, though they were free to become the members of the Congress and its committees. However the Congress began to change its policy in 1935 following the birth of All India States People's Conference in 1927. In its annual session at Calcutta in 1935 Congress announced to extend full support to the princely states and finally in the Haripora session of February 1938 Congress deleted the policy of non-interference from its programme and decided to support the states people's Liberation movements which had been going on for the attainment of their legitimate objectives and goals. The party thus helped the political forces and parties operating within the Princely states working for agendas of socio-political emancipation in their respective states. This is how congress started getting involved in Jammu and Kashmir as well. The state was under the autocratic rule of Dogra Shahi. During the period of Dogras, the people of the state suffered miserably. The Muslim masses remained in abject poverty. The reasons for the economic backwardness of the Muslim masses were due to the very character of the state, its institution of the jagirdari system, the system of revenue, heavy taxation and corrupt administration. The Jammu and Kashmir was a feudal state with some variations. The feudal character of the state was evident in the claim of its ruler that all lands in Kashmir belonged to him. The Maharaja was thus the biggest jagirdar at the apex of chain of Jagirdars subordinate to him. Most of the state was divided into a number of Jagirs

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(estates) and these estates were granted by Maharaja to the member of the royal family, to their relatives, to the person who belongs to the same caste and religion as professed by the ruler as well as his throne. The Maharaja also enjoyed unquestioned power to deprive any person of the estate granted to him. The feudal fetters hardly allowed any growth of the agriculture, trade and industry in the state. Since the ownership of the land had vested with either the state or land agents of the state, the cultivators greatly suffered due to heavy taxation collected either by officials or through middleman. According to Walter Lawrence their position was worst than Tier-Ekat, before the French revolution. Economically the Muslims were in worst possible conditions. The Jagirdari system accompanied by the revenue taxation, corrupt administrative system and all the jagirs belongs to the Maharaja made their plight even worse. The most pernicious method of oppression which breaks the cultivator's heart was the system of Begar or forced labour. Under this system many thousand Muslims has been driven off every year to toil as carriers of burden on the most dangerous and risky roads and Non-Muslims were exempted from begar system. No mercy was shown to the Muslim farmers treated as convicts and criminals. The officials exploited the begar to meet their personal needs. Though in 1893 the begar was abolished on the recommendations of Sir Walter Lawrence yet it continued in practice and the press wrote against it even in 1920. The people's resentment to such unreasonable measures were vigorously suppressed by the rulers. It were the complaints of this ruthlessness that Henry Lawrence, the then president and agent to the Governor General at Lahore was sent by the British government to Kashmir to verify the facts. He warns the maharaja that the British Government cannot tolerate tyranny in Kashmir and if such atrocities were repeated, the later might think of making some different arrangements for the protection of the hill people. According to Sir Albion Banerjee, (Foreign and political minister of Maharaja Hari Singh) the Kashmiri Muslims were like "dumb-driven cattles" who had no say in the state administration, which was conducted mostly by Kashmiri Pandits, Punjabis, and by the Dogras of Jammu. The Muslims in the State politically suppressed and socially downtrodden were also educationally backward. In the rural areas where they constituted more than 80% of population their illiteracy was almost hundred percent. The cause of their backwardness in education were manifold their own ignorance, the conservative outlook of their religious leaders, the unsympathetic attitude of non-Muslims towards the Muslim students in the government schools and the discriminatory policies of the Dogra administration. Politically also the people were deprived of all basic Rights and civil liberties. There existed no public opinion in the state. The right to freedom of speech, freedom of press and platform and freedom of association were made unlawful. Even the holding of a private meeting or a religious meeting was prohibited.

The period from 1850-1930 may be considered as a harbinger of change in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. During this period people became conscious about the evil effects of the alien rule which had rendered people helpless, humiliated and hence demoralized for centuries together. The period is described as the period of renaissance in the state and the evolution of the national movement can be traced to this period. The last decade of the 19th century in

Jammu and Kashmir State witnessed the birth of socio-religious reforms and political movements which ultimately brought about a revolution within the socio-economic fabric of the state. The architects of this revolution were influenced by similar movements in British India whose aim was to lift up Indian society from the abyss of superstition, obscurantism and stagnation into which it had fallen. Prominent among these movements are Arya Samaj Yuvak sabha, Dogra Sabha, Dharam Sabha, Fraternity society etc. This wave of renaissance among non-Muslims had made a healthy impact on the Muslim subjects of the state. Their social reform movements had paved the way for Muslim community to take similar steps in bringing about social consciousness among its members.

It was with the beginning of the freedom movement in Jammu and Kashmir the leadership in Congress party particularly Nehru and Gandhi started developing interest in the areas of the state particularly in relation to its freedom movement. This role and influence became more pronounced through the proximity that Nehru as an important figure in Indian National Congress developed with the Kashmir freedom movement particularly its leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Through the influence of Nehru, the freedom movement in Kashmir started gaining greater ideological proximity with that of Indian National Congress. This gradually prompted Muslim Conference leadership to change the nomenclature of Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1938. This had far-reaching impact on the politics in Kashmir particularly when British decided to leave the sub-continent and Indian sub-continent got divided into two independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947.

Thus the greater proximity of leadership of Indian National Congress with the local leadership on issues in ideology and politics allowed Congress to play quite important role in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. This proximity turned to be very significant when an abnormal situation was created in Kashmir as a result of tribal invasion of the state and the resultant accession of Maharaja Hari Singh with Indian dominion. It is because of this proximity that the accession was endorsed by the popular leadership particularly Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. This was particularly required because the congress position on the issue of accession of the princely states was that the choice of the people of princely states has to be paramount on issues of accession with either India or Pakistan.

After the accession Congress as the government in power in Delhi played cardinal role in negotiating the relationship with the state and in working out a special provision in the constitution of India that in a way granted special position to the state under the article 370 in consultation with the newly installed popular leadership in the government of Jammu and Kashmir. The Congress being the only dominant party in Delhi had significant role in dealing with a number of forces activated for and against the special position granted to the state. This added to its complex process of balancing divergent positions on the issue. The opposition to the Article 370 gradually vitiated the relationship between the Indian National Congress and the state leadership headed by Sheikh Abdullah. In 1952 when Sheikh Abdullah was provoked by a Praja Parishad agitation in Jammu for total elimination of state's autonomy, he publicly resurrected the idea of plebiscite already promised by the Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. This vitiating of relations

ultimately resulted in the dismissal and arrest of Sheikh Abdullah in August 1953. Thus the Congress had a role not only in granting a special position to the state but also undermining the same. It has a paradox role in both of promoting and undermining the democratic functioning within the state. While as on the one hand it showed magnanimity by inviting Sheikh Abdullah to form government in 1975 at the cost itself losing power. On the other side the party undermined the democratic form of government of Dr. Farooq Abdullah in 1984 and this action of Congress had a strong bearing on undermining normal politics within the state by contributing the emergence of militancy in 1990's. Since 2002 it had been a constant source and support for the working of coalition politics within the state. The party representing mainly the Jammu region has remained a constant factor in the government as a kind of king maker with backing from Delhi. On the other side the political divide in the valley between the PDP and the NC has in a way marginalized both in terms of their capacity to bargain from a position of any strength. It is because of this factor that the NC in spite of being single largest party in the Assembly remained outside the power between 2002 to 2008, After 2008 elections the Congress entered into an alliance with the NC leaving the earlier coalition partner PDP to fend as the main opposition within the legislature. Because of this a sense of powerlessness, marginality, deprivation and neglect has deepened in the valley. In the light of all this it is difficult to have a proper comprehension and understanding of the politics of the state without studying the role of the Indian national congress.

Objectives

To look into the impact of policies and programmes of Indian National Congress on the politics of Jammu and Kashmir in its different facets of:

- a) Congress and secularisation of politics in the state.
- b) Grant of special status, promotion/undermining the democratic process in Kashmir.

Methodology

The topic under study is such in its span and complexity that it required multi-varient approach in dealing with different aspects of the problem. The topic involved historical descriptive study of the available sources both in published as well as in archival form. In the absence of the handy written comprehensive source material, the scholar looked into the different aspects of material from different primary and secondary sources. These sources included the party manifestoes, official documents, writings, speeches, autobiographies and correspondences of some of the important political functionaries like Jawaharlal Nehru, Mir Qasim, Indira Gandhi, B. K. Nehru, Farooq Abdullah, Karan Singh etc. In order to meet the deficiencies in the published material the scholar conducted interviews of the people who were or are somewhat witness to the role of Congress party in Jammu and Kashmir. Further the Books, press clippings, articles and journals have been important source of information. For the completion of my work I have visited different libraries and institutes in Srinagar and Delhi. Prominent among them are, State Archives, Srinagar, Regional Congress office, Srinagar, Alama Iqbal library, Kashmir University Srinagar, Departmental library of Political science and History, K.U. Srinagar. In Delhi I have visited Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, Sapru House,

Indian Defence and strategic analysis (IDSA), National Archives of India, British Library, Delhi University and Jawaharlal University.

As we have seen previously that Indian National Congress was not prepared to give up its official policy of non-interference in the internal affairs of the native states on the grounds that the states were independent entities under the British law.

Therefore, the Congress interference could damage the causes of the state's development in British India ultimately that could have affected the destinies of the states. This policy of Congress had debarred the peoples of the states to organise and establish the congress units in the states, though they were free to become the members of the Congress and its committees. The Congress however changed its policy through state people's conference towards states only after 1935 by deleting the policy of non-interference from its programme and decided to support the states people's Liberation movements which had been going on for the attainment of their legitimate objectives and goals. The party thus helped the political forces and parties operating within the Princely states working for agendas of socio-political emancipation in their respective states. The Congress also welcomed in the states such movements as were likely to develop more quickly on broader basis and drawing strength from the people of the states without relying on outside help and assistance or on the prestige of the Congress. Much before they gave up their policy of non-interference Nehru was keen to extend full support to the freedom movement launched in Jammu and Kashmir as because of their non-interference approach he was not able to have a direct contact with the state. Although he was in touch with Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz who was acting as a bridge between the two parties to come close to each other and on the other hand was persuading the Kashmiri leadership particularly sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to open the doors of the Muslim Conference to other non-Muslim communities as well. In this connection many meetings were held between the two leaders one among them was on July 1932 in Cheshma Shahi in

which the two leaders resolved that Kashmir Freedom Struggle will be conducted on the secular, progressive and democratic lines. The two continued to keep in close contact with each other. Again in October 1935 in a meeting of Muslim Conference in Pather Masjid Srinagar an appeal was made to the Non-Muslims to come forward to join hands with the party so as to get rid of the irresponsible government for a responsible one. The meeting was also attended by prominent non Muslim leaders such as Prem Nath Bazaz, Kashap Bandhu, Jai Lal Kilam and Sham Lal Saraf. On the other hand the experience of six years of inception of the Muslim Conference in 1932 adequately revealed to the Muslim leadership that Muslim solidarity alone would certainly be no remedy for all the ills of large scale poverty, economic hardships and exploitation faced by the people in Jammu and Kashmir. As its president Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah declared, "Our country's progress is impossible so long as we do not establish amicable relations between different communities." So the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah tried to change the mass opinion of Muslims in favour of nationalism and secularism. The unity meetings, the revolutionary and secular role of the leftist forces within the Muslim Conference, the factional politics

among the Muslims were contributory factors which also led the leaders of the Conference to reshape the movement on national and secular lines. Besides, the changing situations at the national and international level compelled the Muslim Conference to get closer to the force where voice of weak and oppressed people could be heard. While these deliberations were going on in state the Congress on the other side amended their earlier attitude adopted till February 1938 and in its Haripora annual session All India National Congress stood for full support to the state's liberation movements. In this Annual meeting Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz participated as representative from Jammu And Kashmir State. This resolution of the Haripora session of the Congress with regard to the states not only encouraged, inspired and prompted the people of the states to organise themselves and conduct their struggle for freedom but it also created unswerving confidence amongst the state's peoples in the Congress. The Congress party was now definite, clear and unambiguous, aiming at the active participation in and sympathy with the people's struggle for freedom in the states. Jammu and Kashmir was not an exception to it. With the object to bring the Kashmiri Liberation movement more close to Indian National Congress and its liberation struggle a strong base was already prepared by the congress through Prem Nath Bazaz already mentioned above. The first open and serious move in this respect was the publication of a weekly paper "The Hamdard" on August 3, 1935. The inauguration of the paper was performed by Dr. Saif-u-Din Kitchloo (congress leader) in a big public meeting at Hazuri Bagh, Srinagar.⁹ In his inaugural address he acquainted the people with the underlying ideas of the movement in the light of congress ideological contents. He laid emphasis on Hindu- Muslim unity. He advised the Kashmiri people that their freedom struggle should be against the British Indian government who were the main enemies of the people. The weekly „Hamdard“ became the mouthpiece of the Congress party politics in the Jammu and Kashmir state. Within this perspective central congress party started to take active part in the politics of the state. It also took deep interest in what was happening in Jammu and Kashmir. Again on December 28, 1936 a public meeting was held at Amira Kadal Srinagar to celebrate the 50th birth anniversary of the All Indian National Congress. The meeting was presided over by Prem Nath Bazaz. There had been a large gathering of leaders of the Muslim Conference together with non Muslim communities who acknowledged the services rendered to the Sub- continent by the Indian National Congress. This proved to be a foundation step for the Congress to launch their policies, objectives vis-à-vis the ongoing liberation movement of Jammu and Kashmir State.¹² One can gauge and say that the foundations of the leadership at the centre could be found jostling with the Kashmir organisations like Yuyak Sabha, Dogra Sabha, Khalsa, Young Men's Association, Muslim Conference etc. Again in 1936 some congress leaders visited the state to create an intimate relation with the leaders of different communities. Consequently the visits by the congress leadership opened a new chapter in the relations between the two Movements. In August 1936 Jawaharlal Nehru sent Parashottan Das Tandon to Kashmir. He was strictly instructed to see Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and Prem Nath Bazaz It was followed by two prominent Congress leaders Khan Abdul Gafar Khan and R.K.M. Ashraf who came to Kashmir in 1937 to bring Kashmir freedom movement closer to Indian National

Congress. For this purpose many talks were held between them and the Kashmiri leaders. Dr. K. M. Ashraf delivered many speeches in favour of nationalism and joint action by Hindus and Muslims against the Maharaja. The formation of the youth league, Mazdoor sabha, Kisan Sabha, Dogra Sabha etc and the publication of Newspaper namely "Hamdard" galvanised the spirit and emotions of the people in Jammu and Kashmir and new dawn consolidation of the movement was prominent to emerge on the political horizons of Jammu and Kashmir. These public meetings organised by Hindus and Muslims affected the Muslims to such an extent that they began to wear Khadi dress to show their preference for secular politics.

Nehru's visit to Kashmir:-

In order to have a greater proximity the National Conference leadership on 19 May 1940 extended invitation to the president of All India National Congress Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who came along with Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan to Kashmir. The party accorded them a very warm welcome. They were welcomed with a massive public reception and splendid boat procession on the Jhelum- a traditional and most popular method for welcoming the guests in the state was arranged. In his address Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan accompanying Jawaharlal Nehru called the Sheikh a „Gift of God“ and advised people to follow him or otherwise they will lose track. Hence Jawaharlal Nehru pledged the support of All India National Congress to National Conference for the fight against the autocratic rule of Dogra Shahi in the state. Again he advised Non-Muslims to join National Conference in large numbers to achieve the objectives and the freedom. It was in Sheetal Nath Temple in Habakadal Srinagar, that Nehru again advised the non-Muslims to follow Sheikh Abdullah and strengthen his hands against the conservative and communal forces.

Jinnah visits to Kashmir

It was in 1940 at the Lahore session that the Muslim League passed the Pakistan Resolution and demanded for a separate homeland for the Muslims. Having already received Nehru, the party could not ignore the request from Jinnah to visit Kashmir. So on 8th May 1944 he reached Kashmir. He was greatly received by National Conference. It was in Pratap Park Srinagar that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah presented the address of welcome. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah called the Quaid-I-Azam as "the beloved leader of the Muslims of India." In his brief address Jinnah said: "I thank you for all the royal welcome accorded to me, but it was not meant for my person, it was meant for the All India Muslim League of which I am the President. By it you have honoured the Muslims of India and their Party Muslim League."

Revival of Muslim Revival of Muslim Conference

Some sections of the Muslims especially those in Jammu were not happy about the secular development of National conference and its orientation towards Indian National Congress thus on 23rd March 1940 revived the Muslim Conference. In 1940 a weekly newspaper, "Paigham" owned by late Mohd. Yousf Qureshi and edited by Nazim-ud-Din started publication from Srinagar and campaigned for the revival of Muslim Conference. Consequently, 12 political workers met on 10 Oct, 1940 at Srinagar and decided to revive the Muslim Conference.

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Naya Kashmir Programme

It was against this background that the National Conference announced the New Kashmir Plan which is the most important document in the modern history of Jammu and Kashmir. It was similar to the concept of government as exposed in a latter report on an economic programme prepared for Congress by Nehru. Most significant was the fact that the plan underlined a liberal secular approach thereby differing from the Muslim league policy which was based on the Muslim cause. Naya Kashmir plan was presented by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to Maharaja Hari Singh in Srinagar. Later on the National Conference in its annual session held in Sopore on 29th September 1944 adopted the plan as the manifesto of the party for the future reconstruction of the political structure, state economy and social development in the state. It had three sections.

Sheikh Abdullah with Nehru and Badshah Khan (Centre) at Nishat Garden in 1945: In order to offset the Jinnah's growing influence and to explore the minds of the Congress leadership regarding the Kashmir as well as other allied problems in the state the National Conference on the 3rd annual session held on 3rd august 1945 decided to invite the Congress leaders as well as the leaders of the State People's conference to Kashmir to participate in the session. In the last week of July 1945, the following top brass leadership of the All India National Congress and the members of All India State People's Conference came to Kashmir: Pandit Nehru, Mian iftikhar-ud-Din, Ashraf Ali, Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffer Khan and Jai Narayan

Vyas, the General Secretary of the state People's Conference. In view of the impending partition and the weakening position of sheikh Abdullah, Congress was prepared to do anything to win support from Kashmir.

Fall of Bakshi

Now Bakshi's days were numbered as he inaugurated regime which was not popular and did not ascertain the civil liberties and people were groaning under the nepotism and corruption. The so called peace brigade, acted as terror brigade came into being to victimise and harass the pro Pakistani elements and lashed out at any person found inimical to the regime in power. Further Nehru was not happy with Bakshi as having a strong grip over the government after sweeping the 1962 polls he began to show signs of going beyond what had been assigned to him by the government in New Delhi. Secondly his reluctance to permit New Delhi to make further constitutional inroads into the state autonomy and his disapproval for the attempts to abrogate Article 370 of the Indian constitution ultimately put him to lay down the reins of power under the facade of what is known as Kamraj Plan in August 1963. Under the integration policy, recruit the best scheme was introduced by the Congress in India. This was done to provide the security and defence to Indian Territory because Chinese invasion made India conscious of many sensitivities and weaknesses. Dr. Karan Singh (Sader-i-Riyasat) observes: “Unfortunately over the years Bakshi had become authoritarian and his regimes increasingly corrupt. The more enlightened section of the intelligentsia had been alienated and lumpen elements were largely dependent upon.”

Change of nomenclature from the ruling National Conference to Pradesh Congress Party

Another breath taking step to integrate the state was taken on January 3, 1965 when the Working Committee of the National Conference under the leadership of G. M. Sadiq announced to dissolve and merge the National Conference into India's ruling Congress party and act as a provincial Branch of the same. Thus accordingly on January 10, 1965 the Congress party's Working Committee unanimously accepted the merger offer. Before this the state virtually had a monopoly of the National Conference. Pandit Nehru during his life time never allowed people to formally organise the congress party in the state as he regarded the “National Conference as the Pradesh Congress for all practical purposes” because in the post-53 period National Conference did all what the union government wanted her to do. It was only after his death that the unit was launched in the state. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became furious for obliterating the National Conference from the politics of the state. He gave a call for boycott of the Congress. The newly formed Congress party remained in power for a decade i.e. from 1965-1975. Abdullah described the merger as a threat to the entity of Kashmiri Muslims and said: “A Muslim who becomes a member of the Congress party will dig his own grave, not only of himself but of his family and whole nation.” It was here that he lost all hopes for getting justice and fair-play for Muslims from India. He declared every pro-India Muslim to be a traitor. Now after the formation of unit of the Indian National Congress in the state it was very easy for the centre to extend many other provisions of the Indian constitution to the state which helped to erode autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir and brought the state

almost at par with other federating states of India.

The drastic step taken by the Congress regime was the sixth Amendment to the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in April 1965 that introduced drastic changes in the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir. The amendment abolished the office of the Sadr-e-Riyasat and incorporated a provision in the state constitution which provided for a Governor to head the state. It also abrogated the provisions of section 27 of the constitution which laid down the procedure for the election of the Sadr-e-Riyasat and his recognition by the president of India. The provisions of section 27 were replaced by fresh provisions which stipulated that the Governor of the state would be appointed by the president of India. The sixth amendment also abolished the office of the Prime Minister, replacing it with chief Minister to be head of the government. It thus changed the very character of the government.

Now unlike other Governors of the Indian states, the Jammu and Kashmir Governor had draconian powers under section 92 of the Jammu and Kashmir constitution. Originally the elected Sadr-e-Riyasat responsible to the state legislature was entrusted with wide powers under section 92 of the constitution.³⁰ Under this provision, in case of failure of the constitutional machinery, „the Governor may by proclamation assume to himself all or any of the functions of the government of the state and all or any powers vested in or exercisable by anybody or authority in the state“. Further, any law made by him in exercise of that power will „continue to have effect until two years have elapsed from the date on which the proclamation ceases to have effect, unless sooner repealed or re-enacted by an act of the legislature. Further, any reference in the constitution to any act of a law made by the legislature shall be construed as including a reference to such law.“ In short like an absolute Monarch, he was transformed into supreme executive, supreme legislature and supreme judiciary under section 92 of the constitution of Jammu & Kashmir. Thus the transfer of such powers to a nominee of centre, who holds his office at the pleasure of president of the Indian union, was usually a factotum of the ruling party at the centre. It was a gross violation of Article 370 and destroyed the republican character of the Jammu and Kashmir government. This only precipitated the bitterness and alienation of the people of the Jammu and Kashmir state from the Government of the state in particular and with the rest of India in general. Further these amendments and Acts of the Parliament has brought the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir at par as the Indian constitution is applicable to other states of India.

The people of Jammu and Kashmir whose expectations had been aroused by the post-Bakshi policy of liberalisation, restoration of civil liberties and offers of autonomous status for the state, reacted sharply to the cold attitude and indifference of New Delhi. There was complete lack of personal rapport between the Kashmiri leaders and the successors of Nehru. There were people's reaction in the shape of demonstrations and strike. The Plebiscite Front President Afzal Beg and Awami Action Committee Chief Mirwaiz Mohammad Farooq gave a joint call to observe a protest day in Kashmir on January 15, 1965 against the „unconstitutional and undemocratic measures adopted by India to grab Kashmir completely.“ Addressing the protest rally at Hazratbal in Srinagar Abdullah said that India had started process of tightening its tentacles over Kashmir and „thus reverted from the path of late Pandit Nehru who

believed that Kashmir issue be settled peacefully and honourably.“ The intentions of the new rulers in Delhi were not honest. He added that it was futile to expect anything from them or to appeal to them on grounds of justice, humanity or morality. „Time for such things had passed,“ he declared. He believed that the ruling group of India was going ahead with steps to deprive completely the Kashmiri Muslims of their freedom on the presumption that „They have no courage and are weak.“ The Sheikh resolved „to wage a peaceful struggle as a result of which half of our difficulties will be solved and therefore we will have other methods to think of.“ On another call given by Jammu and Kashmir Action Committee- a joint front of all pro-plebiscite parties- protest day was observed on both sides of the ceasefire line of the state. The president of Pakistan held part of the state Khan Hamid Khan said in a protest meeting at its headquarter Muzaffarabad that „extension of articles 356 and 357 of Indian constitution to Indian part of state was outrageous and fraught with grave danger. Pakistan Foreign Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto told in a press conference at Karachi on February 3, 1965 that Pakistan had started taking measures to stop Indians from „annexing occupied Kashmir“. Pakistan president Ayub Khan declared that „neither Pakistan nor world opinion would recognise

Internal Developments in Jammu and Kashmir

While the matter was discussed at the international level the events moved swiftly in Jammu and Kashmir and momentous changes took place. With the accession of the Jammu and Kashmir State to Indian union Sheikh Abdullah was first appointed by the Maharaja as the head of the Emergency Administration on October 29, 1947. On March 4, 1948, he was appointed first Prime Minister with a Cabinet of Ministers. He came to acquire practically all the executive powers of the government. The council of Ministers was to function on the „principle of Joint Responsibility“. It was enjoined to convene a „National Assembly based on adult Suffrage“ to frame a constitution. The assembly was to submit the constitution through the Council of Ministers for acceptance. The National Conference leaders demanded the removal and abdication of Maharaja Hari Singh which evoked sharp reaction from the non-Muslims in the Jammu province and a wide spread agitation broke out against the Interim Government in the entire province. The Conference leaders came down upon the agitation with a heavy hand and charged the Maharaja of having incited the trouble. They introduced a new element in their strife with the Maharaja and called for the abolition of the institution of Dogra monarchy. In February 1949 the Indian leaders decided to advice Maharaja Hari Singh to leave the state for some time. Hari Singh was called to Delhi in the last week of April 1949. On April 29, 1949, he was told by Sardar Patel that the Government of India desired him to leave the state for some time and handover his charge to his son Yuvraj Karan Singh. Hari Singh accepted the proposal. He wrote to Patel:

„The contrast naturally fills me with poignant feelings. However once again putting my complete trust in your judgement and benevolent intentions towards us, I might be prepared to fall in with your wishes and to absent myself from the state for a period of three or four months in consideration of the fact emphasised by you namely complications created by the reference to the United Nations Organisation and the Plebiscite issue.“

Thus on June 20, 1949 the Maharaja issued a proclamation vesting all his powers in Yuvraj Karan Singh and left the state to Bombay. He never returned home. He lived in Bombay as a lonely and forlorn man till he breathed his last on April 26th 1961.

On 27 May 1949 the Indian Constituent Assembly decided to fill up the four seats allotted to Kashmir on the basis of nomination by the head of the state in consultation with the cabinet and four Kashmiri representatives including Sheikh Abdullah took their seats in the Constituent Assembly on June 16, 1949. Though there was politico-ideological affinity between the National Conference and the Congress party (Sheikh Abdullah and Pandit Nehru) the leadership of the former did not want an instrument of accession that would obliterate their regional- cultural pride. Thus they favoured accession with autonomy. After discussions and debates it was agreed to grant special status to the state by way of article 370 incorporated in the Indian constitution. According to this article the law making power of the union parliament in regard to Kashmir would be specified by the president in consultation with the state government.¹³² On January 26, 1950, the President accordingly promulgated the constitution (applicable to Jammu and Kashmir) order 1950, specifying in two different schedules the powers of the union and the applicability of the constitution. The central subjects applicable to the state were Foreign affairs, Defence communication. On May 1st 1951, Yuvraj Karan Singh issued a proclamation and ordered the convening of the Constituent Assembly in the state. The elections to the Constituent Assembly were held on October 15, 1951. All the Seventy five seats were won by the National Conference. On October 31, the Constituent Assembly met under the chairmanship of Maulana Masoodi and commenced its deliberations. The Constituent Assembly was inaugurated by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah on November 5, 1951. In his inaugural address the Sheikh Abdullah made many interesting observations. He declared that the Constituent Assembly was a sovereign body and drew its powers from the people of the state.

Conclusion

It the beginning of the freedom movement in Jammu and Kashmir the leadership in Congress party particularly Nehru and Gandhi started developing interest in the areas of the state particularly in relation to its freedom movement. This role and influence became more pronounced through the proximity that Nehru as an important figure in Indian National Congress developed with the Kashmir freedom movement particularly its leader Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Through the influence of Nehru, the freedom movement in Kashmir started gaining greater ideological proximity with that of Indian National Congress. This gradually prompted Muslim Conference leadership to change the nomenclature of Muslim Conference into the National Conference in 1938. This had far-reaching impact on the politics in Kashmir particularly when British decided to leave the sub-continent and Indian sub-continent got divided into two independent states of India and Pakistan in 1947.

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