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1 Why Union Territory Status For Ladakh?

Memorandum To Members Of Parliament

By Tsering Samphel

Ladakh was once an independent Himalayan Kingdom. The political history of Ladakh dates back to 930 A.D. when several small, sovereign principalities outlying the Western Himalayas were integrated and given a unified polity by Lha-Chen-Palgigon.

Ladakh as an independent kingdom gained political status during 15th-16th century when the Namgyal dynasty came into power. The reign of the Namgyal dynasty lasted until 1842 when a Dogra General, Zorawar Singh, annexed Ladakh into the Dogra Empire. After 100 years of Dogra rule, Ladakh alongwith Jammu and Kashmir became an integral part of India in 1947.

From the very outset Ladakh's political merger with J&K did not form any natural cohesion and proved to be a folly throughout. Except for the Dogras' suzerainty as a commonality, Ladakh is fundamentally different from Kashmir in all respects - culturally, ethnically and linguistically. Over the years the successive governments of the state have adopted a policy of discrimination and subversion towards the region with the sole objective of stifling its people and marginalising its historical, religious and cultural identity.

In the modern times, when the whole subcontinent has passed through the process of decolonisation to enjoy the fruits of national independence, we, the people of Ladakh, and our land still continue to suffer under the old concept of colonial administrative structure, which suited the imperial interests and feudal rulers under the name of the pseudo-state of Jammu and Kashmir. Gandhiji and other national leaders emancipated the Indian masses from the oppressive alien domination, exploitation, feudal and colonial rule, but we, the people of Ladakh, with a distinct identity of our own have been pushed under an oppressive political domination of Kashmiris and denied the fruits of freedom and national independence.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, the territorial limits of which never formed a natural geopolitical entity in its real sense, still suffers from geopolitical crises and disorder. Frederic Drew who served as Governor in Ladakh in the 19th century remarked that "the territories of Jammu and Kashmir have no other bond of cohesion than the fact of Maharaja's rule, no simple name for it exists."

The degree of heterogeneity among the three regions is very high not only in form but also in sharpness. In the case of Ladakh this heterogeneity is expressed not only in terms of its totally different physiographic setting but also manifest in its ethnic composition, language, religion, philosophy and culture. In the last 52 years of independence, we, the people of Ladakh, not only have suffered rampant Kashmiri political domination but also severe drive of separatism.

In the absence of any study which has analysed Ladakh's problems from a nationalistic and political perspective, our endeavour is three-fold. Firstly, we intend to highlight the emergence and assertion of national identity, patriotism and national integration among the Ladakhis towards our motherland. Secondly, we want to have an objective assessment of the political exploitation of the people of Ladakh and the Ladakhi's resistance towards Kashmiri sub-nationalism. Thirdly, we are determined to mobilize public opinion and national consensus in order to evolve a new perspective towards the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir State.

The history of modern Ladakh can be considered as the history of the emergence and assertion of nationalism and integration with modern India. Nationalism became the mass ideology propagated and perpetuated by the leadership of Ven. Kushok Bakula. Nationalism remained a dominant ideological creed and became a rallying force among the Ladakhis to fight back the Pakistanis and the Chinese who made frequent bids to conquer our land in 1948, 1962, 1965, 1971 and 1999 wars. The jawans of Ladakh Scouts played an exemplary role in decisively foiling the enemy's misadventures. The people of Ladakh always stood for national unity and integrity of the country. We always supported the Government in Delhi, irrespective of the political party in power.

At the time of the British plan to partition India we made our stand clear vis-a-vis our position within the State of J&K through our memoranda to the Maharaja of J&K and to the Prime Minister of India.

Based on bitter experience that the people of Ladakh had during the period of a century, their growing apprehensions for future were communicated by the Ladakh Buddhist Association on behalf of the Buddhists of Ladakh and adjoining areas to the Maharaja through a memorandum in the State Praja Sabha. It consists of three alternative proposals:

- (1) The Maharaja should govern Ladakh directly without tagging it on to Kashmir valley.
- (2) Our homeland be amalgamated with the Hindu majority Jammu and should form a separate province in which adequate safeguard should be provided for distinctive rights and interests of Ladakhis.
- (3) Ladakh should be permitted to join East Punjab.

However, the Maharaja's inability to reply due to sudden developments in the State leading to the relinquishment of his position as a party in respect of our proposals at (1) to (2) made us choose a path independent of him. After mature deliberation it was decided by our people to merge with India straightaway. This historic decision was communicated through a memorandum submitted by Shri Chhewang Rigzin, President, Ladakh Buddhist Association, to Prime Minister Nehru on behalf of the people of Ladakh on 4 May 1949. The memorandum concludes as under: "Ladakh is not prepared to go to Pakistan whatever the result of the plebiscite may be". The memorandum further put forth a poignant appeal to India:

"We seek the bosom of that gracious mother (India) to receive more nutriment for growth to our full stature in every way. She has given us what we prize above all other things - our religion and culture. The Ashoka wheel on her flag, symbol of goodwill for all humanity, and her concern for her cultural children, calls us irresistibly. Will the great mother refuse to take to her arms one of her weakest and most forlorn and depressed children - a child whom filial love impels to respond to the call?"

Ladakhis have since then consistently been demanding separation from Jammu and Kashmir State and asking for the status of Union Territory. The Government of India, however, never responded favourably to our sincere conviction; instead they made us to be governed by Kashmiris during these decades to our utter ruin. In the post - Independence period we have been reduced to the status of slaves in our own homeland. The impact of oppressive rule unleashed by the J&K Government over us has obliterated our cultural and social ethos.

Sheikh Abdullah's Government divided Ladakh on communal basis in 1979 by creating two separate districts of Leh and Kargil with Buddhist and Muslim majorities respectively. Subsequently they encouraged communalisation of Ladakh's political, social and cultural life. Such policies have severely challenged our age-old communal harmony and secular credentials. Therefore, our major struggle in the post - Independence period has been to have an administration in Ladakh to be controlled directly by the central government.

The history of our struggle goes back to 1964 when the first organised effort of Ladakhis against Kashmiri domination and exploitation, under the leadership of Ven. Kushok Bakula manifested itself in a demand for NEFA type Central administration. A similar agitation was launched in 1974 under the leadership of Ven. Lama Lobzang, Thupstan Chhewang and Tsering Samphel demanding Central administration for Ladakh. Again in 1982 a movement was led by Sh. P.Namgyal, M.P. (who subsequently became a Union Minister) demanding Regional Autonomy. But instead of satisfying our democratic rights and aspirations the successive Kashmiri rulers severally suppressed the democratic movement of peace loving Buddhists through the State police. The agitation being carried out since 1989 by the Ladakh Buddhist Association is by now quite well-known. This was a result of the cumulative alienation of our people. At a time when anti-national activities were gaining momentum in the Valley, resulting in total boycott of Independence Day celebrations, the Farooq government instead of nipping the secessionist movement in the bud, chose to let out his anger on the peaceful demonstrators in Leh resulting in loss of lives. In view of the increasing anti-national activities elsewhere in the State and,

therefore, keeping in mind the larger national interest, the Ladakh Buddhist Association suspended its demand for Union Territory and accepted the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) somewhat on the lines of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council as a compromise under the tripartite agreement reached between the State government, the Central government and the LBA on 29 October 1989. It is however, most unfortunate that the government did not actually allow any quantum of autonomy to be exercised by the democratically elected LAHDC and also starved it of funds. It is ironical that the same government is now pleading for, greater autonomy, for the state.

Under these circumstances we are left with no choice but to reiterate our long-standing demand for granting Union Territory status to Ladakh, which would guarantee us an administrative set-up to run our own affairs and safeguard our interests.

We are followers of the Buddha. Taking to arms and violence is against our basic philosophy. In fact, our entire movement has throughout been peaceful and democratic. We are also against the violent path followed by people elsewhere in the country. Our main objective is to convey our apprehensions which are related not only to our own problems but also to national security issues. We appeal to the national leaders, intelligentsia and the common people to support our demand for Union Territory status and also help us in our struggle against all forces which are trying to bring destabilization in this frontier region. Their moral and material support to our demand will greatly help in creating a stable and strong national frontier.

It is absolutely erroneous to equate Kashmir valley with the rest of the state. Ladakh constitutes 69.6% of the total J&K territory with a distinct geo-political and geo-cultural identity of its own. The aspirations of the people of Ladakh and their national outlook are different from those of the people of Kashmir. Leaders of Kashmir valley can never be leaders of our people and our assimilation with the people of the Valley is next to impossible. The need of the hour is, therefore, to tackle all the problems relating to Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in totality. Any attempt at handling the Kashmir issue in isolation by ignoring the problems of Jammu and Ladakh will not only be shortsighted but also counterproductive. Therefore, a realistic solution to the problems in J&K can only be found if the State is reorganised on linguistic and ethnic basis, as was done earlier in the case of other states.

****The author is President Ladakh Buddhist Association***

2 *Sheikh's View Of 'Dixon Plan'*

Some time back 'The Kashmir Times' and 'Muslim India' published a letter written by Late Sheikh Mohd. Abdullah to Col. Nasser of Egypt in 1965. The letter provides us an insight into Sheikh's interpretation of Sir Owen Dixon's proposal on a 'possible and acceptable' solution of Kashmir. That this view appears to be at variance with the actual proposal called as 'Dixon Report' makes it more intriguing. For the benefit of our readers we reproduce both the documents-Sheikh's letter to Nasser and Dixon's Report to judge for themselves.

--Editor

The Dixon Report

Text of the summing up and concluding portion of the report of Sir Owen Dixon, UN Representative for India and Pakistan on Kashmir, submitted to the Security Council in September, 1950

It will be seen that two main lines have been pursued in the attempts which have been made to settle the dispute between the two countries about the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The attempt to find a solution by taking a plebiscite over the whole state and so decide by a majority to which country the entire state shall go has its origin in the first proceedings before the Security Council. It would be recalled that by the Resolution of 21 April 1948 the desire of both India and Pakistan that the question of accession of the state to one of them should be decided by free and impartial plebiscite was noted with satisfaction. In the agreed resolution of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan, January 5, 1949 there is a recital of the acceptance by the Government of both countries of the principles that the question of the accession of the state to India or Pakistan would be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite.

From the date of this resolution until the present there have been continual efforts to bring about conditions in which the preparations for taking a poll might go forward. No one has supposed that they could even begin while much of the respective territories on either side of the cease-fire line were occupied by opposed armies and their base units. There are in addition many other obstacles to the holding of a free and fair plebiscite which must be removed before the state would be ready for the organisation and machinery which the taking of a poll would make necessary. Unfortunately all this has been made to depend upon the agreement of the parties. It is enough to refer to paragraph 2, 6(a) and 10 of the Resolution of 5 January 1949 and to the provisions of the Resolution of 13 August 1948 upon which these paragraphs hang.

There is, I believe on the side of India a conception of what ought to be done to ascertain the real will of the people which is not that tacitly assumed by me. Doubtless it is a conception which Pakistan does not share. The resolution of January 1949 contains some rather general provisions in relation to the holding of the plebiscite and the antecedent steps, and about these more general provisions the parties were able to agree. But to apply propositions of this kind a programme of practical acts and physical events must be agreed on. Without that it is impossible for the Plebiscite Administrator to begin the extensive and difficult work of organising the taking of a poll. It is the practical measures which have proved the obstacle, not the mere general propositions.

Pakistan has complained of India's failure to agree on the practical measures which must precede the preparations for the actual taking of a poll, and has maintained that this failure is the result of a deliberate policy. But the fact remains that under the resolutions the agreement of India to the course to be pursued in these matters is a condition-precedent to carrying out a plebiscite of the state, and there is no such agreement. Moreover, the United Nations Commission failed in its efforts to secure an agreement upon them; I failed in mine; neither party put-forward any other proposals and both appeared to concur in the view that the possibility of agreement has been exhausted.

The contention of Pakistan that it was incumbent on India to agree did not advance the matter practically. It was in these circumstances that I decided to turn away from a plebiscite of the whole state, an "over all" plebiscite, as a method of solving the problem of Kashmir. Partition of the whole state between the two countries is of course an obvious alternative. **But unfortunately the Valley of Kashmir cannot itself be partitioned and it is an area claimed by each side.** Pakistan claims it not only because it is predominantly Muslim but also because the Jhelum river flows from it and Pakistan will not readily give up her claim. India is just as insistent upon her claim and has the advantage of possession. Some method of allocating the Kashmir valley to one party or the other is, therefore, essential to any plan of partition.

I am inclined to the view that no method of allocating the Valley to one or other of the contending parties is available except a poll of the inhabitants. By the inhabitants I mean those of them who fulfil whatever may be fixed as the test of eligibility to vote. The difficulty of using the expedient of a plebiscite appears to lie entirely that the plebiscite is held in conditions which make it an effective means of ascertaining the real will of the people independently formed and freely expressed and, on the other hand, certain conceptions or preconceptions of the Indian government. These are based, in part, on what India conceives to be the origin and course of the fighting in 1947 and 1948 and part on her unwillingness to have any interference to the civil administration. In addition, it may be, as I have suggested that a different conception exists of the process of ascertaining the will of the people. Although I myself found no reconciliation of this conflict possible, it may be that with India's help some resolution of the conflict may be discovered. She may come to realise the necessity of practical measures which will really secure the freedom and fairness of a plebiscite which must be paramount over these conceptions. At all events I have formed the opinion that if there is any chance of settling the dispute over Kashmir by agreement between India and Pakistan it now lies in partition and in some means of allocating the Valley rather than in an overall plebiscite. The reason for this may be shortly stated (emphasis added).

The State of Jammu and Kashmir is not really a unit geographically, demographically or economically. It is an agglomeration of territories brought under the political power of One Maharaja. That is the unity it possesses. If as a result of an overall plebiscite the state as an entirety passed to India, there would be large movements of Muslims and another refugee problem would arise for Pakistan who would be expected to receive them in very great numbers. If the result favoured Pakistan a refugee problem, although not of such dimensions, would arise of India, because of the movement of Hindus and Sikhs. Almost all this would be avoided by partition. Great areas of the state are unequivocally Muslim. Other areas are predominantly Hindu. There is a further area which is Buddhist. No one doubts the sentiment of the great majority of the inhabitants of these areas. The interest of the people, the justice as well as the permanence of the settlement, and the imperative necessity of avoiding another refugee problem all point to the wisdom of adopting partition as the principle of settlement and of abandoning that of an overall plebiscite. But in addition the economic and geographic considerations point in the same direction. **The difficulty in partitioning the state is to form a sound judgement where the line should be drawn.**

While what I have said ideals broadly with the state as a whole, it is by no means easy to fix the limits on each side. That is because it is necessary that the territory allocated to each side should be continuous in itself and should be continuous with that country, because there are pockets of people whose faith and affiliations are different from those of people by whom they are cut off, because the changes in the distribution of population as the result of the troubles cannot be completely ignored and because geographical features remain important in fixing what may prove an international frontier.

I shall not deal with the matter with more particularly, and I say so much only in case the Security Council should be of opinion that it should take further steps to effect a settlement between the parties. But for myself I doubt whether it may not be better to leave the parties to themselves in negotiating terms for settlement of the problem how to dispose of Jammu and Kashmir between them. So far the attitude of the parties has been to throw the whole responsibility upon the Security Council or its representatives of settling the dispute notwithstanding that except by agreement between them there was no means of settling it.

When actual fighting was going on between them it was natural, if not necessary, that the Security Council and the Commission as its delegate should intervene between them and propose terms to stop the hostilities and the question came to be how to settle the rival claims to Kashmir, the initiative was still left with the Security Council and the Commission. The whole question has now been thoroughly discussed by the parties with the Security Council, the Commission and myself and the possible methods of settlement have been exhaustively investigated. It is perhaps best that the initiative should now pass back to the parties. At all events I am not myself prepared to recommend any further course of action on the part of the Security Council for the purpose of assisting the parties to settle between them how the state of Jammu and Kashmir is to be disposed of.

The continued maintenance of two armies facing one another across a ceasefire line is another matter. A danger to peace must exist while this state of things continues. Except for mutual distrust and fear, one of another, there is no reason why the two countries should go on maintaining armies separated only by the ceasefire line. It is a boundary which might be kept by check posts and the like in the same way as any frontier between countries at peace. It is hard to believe that the Indian and Pakistan chiefs of staff would have any difficulty in arranging for a concurrent reduction of forces or in effecting the necessary changes in the manner in which the ceasefire line is held, if they were instructed by their respective governments to meet for the purpose.

Before leaving the subcontinent I addressed to the Prime Minister severally a request that this should be done. It is a matter in which the Security Council is directly concerned because it involves a proximate danger to peace.

I recommended that the Security Council should press the parties to reduce the military strength holding the ceasefire to the normal protection of a peace-time frontier.

In the meantime it is my recommendation that the party of United Nations Military Observers be retained on the ceasefire line. They cannot continue their indefinitely but after a time the question of their withdrawal might be settled in consultation with the two governments

Sheikh's Letter

“The dispute between India and Pakistan with regard to the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir has strained the relations of the two countries for the last 17 years and now and again has been leading to (such) an aggravating situation that at any time its continued tension may burst into a shooting war leading to devastating consequences in that region of the world. Moreover this situation has saddled both the countries with huge military expenses which has crippled both economically. Yet another tragic aspect of this situation is the continued agony for the 5 million people of the state, whose economy and will-being is completely paralysed, due to the resultant uncertainty and insecurity.

The urgency and importance of an early settlement of this dispute cannot therefore be over-emphasised. Many statesmen and friendly countries have during the past 17 years, made a number of proposals, suggesting a peaceful settlement of the dispute. No doubt the best and most democratic solution could be through a plebiscite should this not be feasible, there are other practicable solutions, suggested in the past. One such solution was made by Sri Owen Dixon, the UN Representative appointed to negotiate a settlement between India and Pakistan. Broadly speaking, Sir Owen Dixon proposed that:

- (a) The southern parts of the state comprising Kathua, Jammu and parts of Udhampur districts (now being predominantly Hindu areas) may be annexed with India.
- (b) The area, now known as Azad Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan being exclusively Muslim be annexed with Pakistan.
- (c) The Valley of Kashmir along with the adjoining areas across Banihal (i.e. the district of Doda and the Niabat of Arnas, Gulab Garh) to be allowed to decide its future through a plebiscite. Leh is to follow the result of plebiscite, held in this territory (Kargil being exclusively Muslim in population to go with the Valley).

“Sir Owen Dixon took a detached view of things and considered this as the best practicable solution under the circumstances. It appears to be a fair method of resolving the present tangle. In order to avoid a number of complications, that might arise by holding a plebiscite immediately in the territory referred to in clause (c) above, a reasonable way can be found in keeping the said territory under UN Trusteeship for a specified period (i.e. 5 to 10 years). The people of the territory can be given an opportunity for the exercise of the right of self determination in a suitable way, after that period. In the interim period, it is hoped that tempers will cool down and much of the emotional factor, now surcharging the situation, will die out. Further, the interim period can be utilised for the development of these areas towards which the two countries, as well as the UNO will suitably contribute.

The above proposal can be a very good basis for discussion between India and Pakistan and Kashmir.. It is hoped that friendly countries, interested in a settlement, will take up this proposal levels, as well as the international conference.

Needless to say that as earnest effort in this direction will be the greatest service to the cause of peace in the world.

3 Muslim Precedence in J&K

Its Genesis and Evolution

By Prof. M.K. Teng

After the accession of the State to the Indian Dominion in October 1947, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir State was reconstituted to give effect to the transfer of power to the people in accordance with the practice followed by the Government of India in the princely States. The transfer of power in the State was aimed to end the rigours of the princely rule and ensure the exercise of authority in accordance with the democratic process and the acceptance of administrative responsibility. However, the transfer of power in Jammu and Kashmir assumed a different direction. No sooner did the National Conference leaders constitute the first Interim Government, they abandoned their commitments to all secular norms and set out to reorganise the State on the basis of the communal precedence of the Muslim majority. The rapid transformation of the whole economic organisation of the State, which upturned the property relations, the Dogra rulers had established and which the Interim Government accomplished, ostensibly to eliminate exploitation and poverty, led directly to the emergence of a new Muslim middle class, which in the years to come, formed the mainstay of the Muslim separatist movements in the State. The first Interim Government secured the exclusion of the State from the constitutional organisation of India, mainly to secure the social, political and economic interests of the Muslim majority in the State. In their parleys with the Indian leaders, the Conference leaders insisted upon the institution of a separate constitutional framework and sets of political imperatives to safeguard the basic right of the people in the State, independent of the fundamental rights, the Constituent Assembly of India had evolved. More particularly, the Conference leaders vehemently opposed the acceptance of all rights to equality and protection of minorities, which the Constitution of India envisaged, on the ground that such rights conflicted with the economic reforms, the Interim Government had undertaken. The Interim Government secured the abdication of Maharaja Hari Singh and after that, did not taken long to assume total control over the authority on the State. In less than a year, the Hindus were eliminated from the economic organisation of the State, its government and administration. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the Prime Minister in the Interim Government, who virtually became the ruler of the State, headed the Auqaf-Islamia, the Muslim Endowment Trust, but demanded the dissolution of the Dharmarth, the Hindu Endowment Trust, which the Dogra rulers had established. The Interim Government forged a new Muslim ruling elite, which ruled the State in the decades which followed, relegating the Hindus to a conditions of abject servitude.

The Interim Government packed the Constituent Assembly with Muslims. Seventy-three of its seventy-five members were returned unopposed and without contest and the remaining two seats in the Assembly, were also bagged by the National Conference after their opponents were driven out of the contest. In the Assembly, around three fourth of the members were Muslims. The whole delimitation of the constituencies was based upon disproportionate distribution of population, ensuring the Muslim majority province of Kashmir a heavier weightage than the Hindu majority province of Jammu. When Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah denounced the Delhi Agreement in 1953, and demanded the separation of the State from the territorial jurisdiction of the Union of India, the handful of the Hindu members in the Assembly stood against him and supported the second Interim Government headed by Bakshi Gulam Mohammad. Few of the Muslim members of the Constituent Assembly offered their support to the second Interim Government, during those critical days after the dismissal of the Interim Government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Later they were bought by Bakshi, for a fairly high price, which was paid at the cost of the Hindus.

Bakshi did not end the Muslim precedence in the government and the society of the State and in spite of the partial application of the fundamental rights, envisaged by the Constitution of India to Jammu and Kashmir, the process of the elimination of the Hindus from the political and economic organisation of the State continued unabated. Bakshi Gulam Mohammad also continued to head the Muslim Endowment Trust, the Auqaf-Islamia. After the Constituent Assembly completed its labours and a separate constitution was promulgated in the State in 1957, Bakshi packed the first Legislative Assembly, on the

basis of the constituencies delimited for the elections to the Constituent Assembly. The Muslims of Kashmir were ensured perpetual heavier weightage in the elections to the State Legislature than the people in Jammu and Ladakh. During the last four decades, legislative majorities were predominantly Muslim. The demand of the Hindus of Jammu for a review of the delimitation and the four decades long struggle of the three lakhs of Hindus and Sikh refugees for the citizenship of the State, was never met.

The scourge of the Muslim precedence spread wider. Not only were legislative bodies and the political instruments dominantly Muslim, the entire administrative organisation was Muslimised rapidly within days after the Interim Government was saddled in office., The rapid process of summary removal of the Hindus from the State services was initiated on the pretext of communal imbalances in the services which the Conference leaders alleged, characterized the administrative organisation of the State. The allegations were baseless. Glaring imbalances characterized the administration of the State, but the imbalances were not communal in character. The State was virtually governed by the British and their officers in the Indian Political Department, who were posted in the state to conduct its administration. The Dogra ruling elite was not Hindu, it was constituted of the small agrarian middle class, which was equally Muslim. The services of the State were dominated by the British and the men of the Indian Civil Service, besides the clansmen of the ruling dynasty and a section of Dogra ruling elite, almost half of which was constituted by the Muslims. The ranks of the State army were divided in a ratio of 55 per cent Hindus and 45 per cent Muslims, mostly drawn from the non-Kashmiri speaking subjects of the Dogra rulers. The Hindus of Kashmir and Jammu, who had taken to English education far ahead of their Muslim compatriots, were employed in subordinate services, on petty posts, and they licked the mud for the Raj as well as the British empire.

The Interim Government, removed the senior Hindu Officers of the State government on charges of having supported the Dogra rule, replacing them by the henchmen of the National Conference and political adventurists. A virtual embargo was imposed on the employment of the Hindus of Kashmir in the state services apparently to rectify the alleged communal imbalances but in reality to Muslimise the various instruments of authority as well as the lines of its control.

The partial application of the Constitution of India in 1954, and the promulgation of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir in January 1957, upheld the precedence of the Muslim majority. The application of the fundamental rights envisaged by the Constitution of India to the State by virtue of the Presidential Order of May 1954, was restricted by numerous exceptions and reservations. This armed the State government with arbitrary powers to effect reservations for classified sections of permanent residents of the state, which the successive State government used ruthlessly to promote Muslim interests.

The following facts reveal the extent of domination and precedence the Muslims, particularly the Muslims of the Kashmir province, enjoyed in the government and politics of the State.

(a) The imbalances in the delimitation of constituencies in the two provinces of Jammu and Kashmir and the exclusion of two and half lakhs of Hindu refugees, living in the State from 1947, was mainly aimed to reduce the weightage of the Hindus in the legislative processes of the State, ensuring a three-fourth majority for the Muslims in the State Legislative Assembly. The representation of the Hindus was maintained at an average 31 per cent of the seats in the Legislative Assembly. The entire Sharnarhi population was deprived of any representation in the local legislative bodies. In the delimitation of the electoral constituencies, gerry maundering was meticulously used to neutralize the decisive Hindu and Sikh weightage in, at least, three constituencies viz Habbakadal, Anantnag and Baramulla in the Kashmir province and three constituencies in the Districts of Doda and Udhampur in the Jammu province. Consequently in Kashmir, the Hindus and the Sikhs did not have even a single non-Muslim majority constituency, where-from a representative of their choice could be elected to the Legislative Assembly of the State. **Generally, the Hindus and other non-Muslim representatives, elected to the State Legislative Assembly from Kashmir, were mercenaries and men of small virtue, who never enjoyed the confidence of their community The records of the proceedings of the Legislative Assembly reveal how the Hindu representatives supported the legislation aimed to exclude Hindus and other minorities from the organisation of the State government and its political function and impose**

limitation on their entry to the educational institutions of the State. It will not be out of place to mention here, that when controversy raged over the passage of the Resettlement Bill, which the National Conference Government, headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, introduced in the Assembly, to open the flood-gates for the re-entry into the State, of the Muslims from Pakistan and the Occupied Territories, the Hindus representatives did not voice their disapproval of the Bill, which they were repeatedly told would prove disastrous for the State. None of the Hindu legislators, except those from Jammu, who were elected by the opposition, raised the issue of the thousands of Hindus refugees uprooted from the territories of the Kashmir province occupied by the Pakistan.

(b) Right from 1947, the Muslims adorned the office of the highest political executive of the State. The four Prime Minister of the State, who headed the political executive till 1965, were Muslims and the six Chief Ministers of the Congress, the National Conference Governments, who followed, were also Muslims. In the Councils of Ministers, during the last four and half decades, the Hindus, Buddhists and the other minorities held an average of 26 per cent of the ministerial offices, the rest being held by the Muslims.

(c) In the various decision-making clusters of the various political party organisations, including the National Conference and the Congress, which ruled the State during the last four decades, Hindus of Kashmir were always left unrepresented.

(d) The maximal parliamentary patronage was appropriated by the Muslims of Kashmir and the Muslims in the Jammu province to the disadvantages of the Hindus;

(e) In the decision-making units of the State administration, the representation of the Hindus of Kashmir was always negligible. The decisional units of the State government were always dominated by the Muslims of Kashmir province, excluding the Hindus completely. Almost all the Heads of the Departments in the State administration, were Muslims. An unwritten instrument of instruction operated to eliminate the Hindus from the various decision-making bodies and governed the appointment of the heads of the administrative divisions and staff agencies. An average of less than 26 per cent, including the lent officers of the Government of India, and the officers of the Indian Administrative Services, were Hindus. An average of 68 per cent higher posts in the State government were always monopolized by the Muslims. The major public enterprises, state corporations, educational institutions of higher learning and colleges, imparting technical education in the Kashmir province, were invariably headed by the Muslims.

(f) In the administrative organisation of the State, the Hindus of Kashmir with 88 per cent literacy shared an average of 4.8 per cent of the State services, including the services in the public enterprises, corporations and government undertakings.

(g) In the services of the Central government, including the Jammu and Kashmir Bank, the services of corporate undertakings of the Central government, the defence services, the Beacon organisation and the communication system of the Central government, the Kashmiri Hindus shared only 12 per cent of the available employments, whereas the Kashmiri Muslims shared 38 per cent of the available employments.

During the period 1980 to 1990, when the Muslim fundamentalist movements assumed ascendance and the secessionist forces tightened their hold on the administrative organisation of the State, the recruitment of Kashmir Hindus to the State services and services in other corporate bodies, was reduced to an average of 1.7 per cent. Several communal government orders were struck down by the Supreme Court of India and the High Court of the State. But ways and means were devised by the State government to circumvent the judicial decisions to enforce the exclusion means of the Kashmiri Hindus from employments which otherwise were their due. The embargo on the recruitment of the Kashmiri Hindus, was extended to their employment in the teaching staff of the higher secondary schools, colleges and post-graduate departments of the University of Kashmir as well as the Agricultural University, the Medical College, the Engineering College and the Institute of Medical Sciences in spite of the fact that the Hindus possessed not only adequate but higher qualifications and professional excellence.

The elimination of the Hindus in Kashmir from all political processes and functions, was extended to the admission of the Hindus to educational institutions in the State, and grant of scholarships and nomination

for training and higher studies outside the State. It is a little known fact that during the last forty-seven years the admissions of Kashmiri Hindus to various academic institutions, institutions of higher learning, Universities, technical colleges, including the Regional Engineering College, the Institute of Medical Sciences, Government Medical College and the University of Kashmir, were restricted to an average 8 per cent of the total admissions made every year. Incidentally, the Kashmiri Hindus constituted more than 8 per cent of the population of the Kashmir province. A bare 2 per cent of Kashmiri Hindus were awarded nominations and State grants for higher studies and trainings outside the State.

Communal government orders were issued from time to time, implementing classification undertaken by the State Legislature to define, socially and educationally backward classes to ensure the Muslims a wider reservation for admissions to the educational institutions. Many of these communal government orders were struck down by the High Court of the State and the Supreme Court of India. Undeterred by severe censure by the highest courts of the land, the State government refused to change its policy and the scourge of reservations continued to ravage the Hindus. A computation of the data regarding admission of Hindus to the technical colleges, training courses and post-graduate classes in Kashmir, during the last forty-seven years, shows that they were subject to gross discrimination in spite of the meritorious grades secured in their qualifying Board and University examinations. On an average basis, only 7 per cent of Hindus were admitted to the technical colleges, though 63 per cent of the Hindu applicants possessed a first class with 60 per cent or more marks, whereas 76 per cent of the Muslim candidates were admitted to the technical colleges, though only 31 per cent of Muslim applicants possessed first class with 60 per cent or more marks in their respective qualifying examinations. In the admissions to the technical training colleges, 12 per cent of the Hindu candidates were admitted though 66 per cent of the Hindu applicants possessed a first class with 60 per cent or more marks in the qualifying examination, whereas 82 per cent of the Muslims, were admitted to the technical training colleges, though only 28 per cent of the Muslim applicants possessed first class with 60 per cent or more marks. In the admissions to the post-graduate courses, only 14 per cent of the Hindu candidates were admitted though 41 per cent of the applicants possessed first class with 60 per cent or more marks, whereas 78 per cent of Muslim candidates were admitted to the post-graduate classes, though only 14 per cent of the Muslim applicants possessed first class with 60 per cent or more marks.

Apart from the wide range of the state patronage, the Muslims enjoyed, and the extensive hold they exercised over the instruments of the authority of the State government, their interest articulation was phenomenally high. With the financial support and patronage provided by the Muslim middle class and the State government, besides the funds received from abroad, a wide-spread network of media-means was established over the years for the interest articulation of the Muslims in the State and their political expressions. The Muslims in Kashmir owned more than 72 daily newspapers, news journals, weekly news-magazines and other periodicals. In contrast the Hindus owned, 4 newspapers, news-magazines, journals, one of which was in English and which were hardly published with the regularity and effect the newspapers owned by the Muslims were published. Evidently, the impoverished Hindu community could not sustain their publication. The state patronage was monopolized by the newspapers owned by the Muslims and the Hindus enjoyed no financial backing from any sources inside or outside the State.

The vernacular newspaper, owned by the Muslims, were mainly committed to religious propagation, promotion of Muslim separatism and communalism, the justification of the autonomy of the State and the exclusion of the State from the Indian political organisation. Most of the vernacular newspapers continued a sustained attack on the secular social organisations of India, demanding freedom for the Muslims of the State to opt for "*Nizam-e-Mustafa*" or the Islamic political order and their liberation from the clutches of India. Many of the newspapers preached Muslim communalism openly, a policy which earned them greater approbation of the bosses of the political parties, including the parties which were ostensibly committed to secularism, the Muslim middle class and the third generation English-educated youth, brought up under the influence of the secessionist movements. More popular of the dailies published invectives against the Hindu minority, particularly, the Kashmiri Pandits. A large-scale and sustained attack, was maintained, in many of the vernacular dailies and news-magazines against the culture, the

history, the social mores and tradition of the Hindus of Kashmir. The ancient history of Kashmir was denigrated as a past, which the Muslims of Kashmir refused to own.

No restraints were ever imposed on the publication of these newspapers; even secularism were not invoked against them. Many of them preached secession of the State from India openly and with candid frankness. But their freedom to preach treason was never questioned.

****The writer is a renowned Political Scientist and author of many books on Kashmir.***

4 Reorganisation: Protecting Secular Identities

By Dr. Ajay Chrungoo

The mindset behind the critique on reorganisation (trifurcation or quadri-partition) needs to be understood. Our formal interaction with the Regional Autonomy Committee, before its chairman was unceremoniously removed is revealing in this context. The only definitive question which we were asked repeatedly and which became the theme of the debate was. "If Panun Kashmir demand of carving out a Union Territory, North and East of river Jhelum for rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits is conceded where will the Muslims who live in this area go?"

We clarified that the Panun Kashmir demand in fact wanted a dispensation within Kashmir valley where the 'Constitution of India' applies in letter and spirit without any reservations and fetters. Where does the question of Muslims having to leave the area arise in this proposition? "But Muslims will not live in such a dispensation," we are again asked. We counterpoised the proposition. In 1947 India chose to remain secular while Pakistan became a chosen place for Muslims. There were Muslims who remained in India and there were Muslims who chose to move to Pakistan. The Regional Autonomy Committee chose to interpret the argument as our support for the transfer of population. The real question as to why living under the free flow of Indian Constitution is visualized as not compatible with the aspirations of Kashmiri Muslims is never asked by anybody who defends the special status of the state and opposes re-organisation.

Perhaps for the fear that answer may invariably lead to the conclusion that so-called unfulfilled aspirations are 'essentially' communal in content and divorced from the 'secular nation building vision' of India. The inevitable consequences of such a conclusion is that the solution of Kashmir lies in the policy which envisages the secularisation of social milieu of Muslims and not fortification of Muslim identity.

"Liberal-left' avoids any discourse which will confront them with the reality that the crises in Kashmir has its roots in the flawed secular vision applied to the state besides the geo-politics in the region. This vision treats the support to accession with India as the only yardstick on which secular behaviour of the polity should be judged. It treats those forms of Muslim communal politics which avoid questioning the accession of state with India as essentially secular. It builds compulsions for the nation state to patronise such varieties of Muslim communalism.

The actual fall out is the building of a symbiotic relationship between Muslim identity politics which does not question accession and operates with the patronage of the state and the Muslim identity politics which is frankly secessionist in its expression and operates with the help of international vested interest. This symbiotic relationship has formed the substratum for subversive process in the state.

'Left Liberal' mind is not oblivious of such a fallout but continues to support the paradigm for furthering its own ideological agenda. It views India as a collection of nationalities yet to be reconciled. It seeks to redefine the principles of Indian Federalism for this reconciliation. And it visualises the Muslim sub-nationalism with its support structures and damaging potential as the most potent instrumentality which can force the change upon India.

The opposition to the principle of re-organisation of Jammu and Kashmir state emanates not from the concern for secularism but because the re-organisation of Jammu and Kashmir would decisively weaken Muslim identity politics and render separatism full of stakes for the future. It will also reverse the genocidal processes unleashed on the Hindu-Sikh minorities in the state. Arguments that re-organisation of the state is 'cutting the pie with communal knife are basically endeavours to keep the pie brimming with communal poison.

The process of fortification of Muslim communalism did not end with granting the state of Jammu and Kashmir with a 'special status'. It heralded the beginning of the campaign for a 'Greater Muslim Kashmir'. Participatory democracy was decisively destroyed in Kashmir valley. All such legislative constituencies, which had potential of throwing up of a mandate against the dominant politics, were

broken and reshaped. Carving out of districts and legislative constituencies on communal consideration in Jammu was the beginning of the assault on the secular identity of Jammu. Creating Kargil as a separate district in Ladakh spread the ambit of communal assault to the entire state. That lesser voters are required to determine the assembly or parliamentary constituencies in Muslim majority Kashmir valley than in other two provinces only underlined communal aggression subjecting the people of entire state to the hegemony of Muslim communalism.

Retrieving the situation in Jammu and Kashmir requires confronting Muslim communalism in all its forms.

It requires decisive steps to protect secular identities in the existing state from the militarized communal aggression. It also requires a decisive bluff to all machinations which have provided a cover to the communal processes in the state. Re-organisation of the state through quadri-partition will ensure all these imperatives.

5 Splitting J&K: What the RSS said

Excerpts from the trifurcation resolution announced in Kurukshetra

The Akhil Bhartiya Karyakari Mandal (ABKM) expresses its grave concern over the fast deteriorating situation in recent years in the J&K state due to the separatists and terrorist activities. This situation has been aggravated by the slogan of autonomy for the state...

About two lakh Hindu adults are voters for the Parliamentary elections but not for the State Assembly; the duration of the State Assembly is six years and not five as in other States, a discriminating law that makes a woman marrying a man outside the State of J&K, in other parts of the country, lose her right in her father's property and status of a state subject whereas a woman marrying a man hailing from Pakistan getting the right to make her husband its citizen, and harassment of Hindu citizens by asking them proof of their citizenship of the State while conferring it on the known foreign terrorists and settling them in and around Jammu speak volumes of sinister motives of the present National Conference Government under Dr Farooq Abdullah. However, the ABKM notes that there is a ray of hope...There are saner people in the state who do not want the cover of Article 370, who are against any sort of autonomy and who want full integration with Bharat.

The ABKM, therefore, resolves as under:

- i) The people of Jammu think that the solution of their problems lies in the separate statehood for Jammu region. This has been demonstrated by the agitation spearheaded by the Jammu-Kashmir National Front and other organisations. To brand this demand for a separate statehood for Jammu region, which includes the Muslim majority districts of Poonch, Rajouri and Doda as communal, is either crass ignorance or motivated prejudice.
- ii) The ABKM supports the demand for UT status for Ladakh region.
- iii) ABKM offers all its support to the forces in the Kashmir valley that are for full integration with Bharat.
- iv) The ABKM feels deeply concerned about the fate of Kashmiri Hindus who have been hounded out of their homes by the Jehadi Muslim elements. The ABKM calls upon the governments, both Central and State, to have a dialogue with these unfortunate people and find a way for their safe and secure rehabilitation in the Kashmir valley.
- v) It is also very important that every precaution be taken to ensure free and fair elections in J&K. In view of the past experience the present NC government cannot generate confidence that it will help conduct free and fair elections.

6 J&K: Divide and Rule Better

By Joginder Singh

Kashmir has been the cause of wars with Pakistan in 1948, 1965, 1971 and 1998. The present Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan was negotiated by India, after it defeated Pakistan in 1971. Bangladesh was the direct result of this victory, which was a war of liberation, essentially fought by the Bangladeshis. The LoC is the core of Shimla Agreement, signed between the then Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, and the Pakistani Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, on July 2, 1972.

Broadly speaking the agreement enjoins both sides to respect the LoC. This is without prejudice to their respective positions on the status of Jammu and Kashmir. This agreement converted the LoC into an international border though this was not specified in words with a view perhaps to pander to sensibilities of the people back home - more in Pakistan than in India. It was reported that - according to some members of the then Indian delegation, among them, Principal Secretary to the PM, PN Dhar - Bhutto wanted this part of the understanding kept out of the formal agreement. He feared it would meet with a huge opposition in Pakistan. He wanted some more time to sell the idea to his people.

The proposal was never formally accepted. Our Parliament has passed a resolution claiming the entire territory of J&K, including the so-called Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The question of making the LoC the international border comes up in various quarters from time to time. After India and Pakistan went nuclear, J&K Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah publicly supported it. This was swiftly repudiated by the External Affairs Minister, who reiterated the Indian claim to PoK. The LoC as an international border is not a workable solution by itself for Pakistan: It leaves a large - and the most coveted - part of J&K with India.

It seems J&K will remain a headache for a long time to come. Management experts say that the best way to solve a problem is to divide it into parts and tackle one part at a time. Dividing a problem into parts and conquering each part separately are not only less time-consuming, but also cost effective.

Figures tell a grim story about J&K. Between 1990 and February 2000, 20,365 A-K rifles, 8,825 pistols, 958 UMGs, 757 RPGs, 308 sniper rifles, 615 rocket launchers, 1,687 rocket boosters, 75 LMGs and 25,000 kg of RDX have been recovered. In the same period, the death toll has been 7,284 civilians, 9,864 terrorists and 2,579 security personnel. Political parties too have not been spared; 205 members of the National Conference have been killed; the Congress has lost 49 people; the BJP nine; the CPI (M) five; the Janata Dal 10; and the Awami League five.

Violence has affected the Valley the most. The government in Srinagar is hardly able to pay attention to the other parts of the state. Over 70 per cent of the resources allocated by the Centre are supposedly spent in the Valley. The result: A demand to make Ladakh and Jammu separate states/units. The supporters of this proposal feel the Valley itself can be constituted into a separate state. The proposal has found unexpected but welcome support from the RSS. The latter has backed the demand to convert Ladakh in to a Union Territory, as desired by the Ladakhis. The people of Jammu think and feel that the solution to their problems - better administration and development - lies in separate statehood.

Trifurcation - Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh - is also justified on the grounds that the three regions have separate cultural and religious identities. Jammu is largely Hindu, the Valley entirely Muslim after the ethnic cleansing of Hindus and Sikhs by terrorists, and most of Ladakh Buddhist. The demand has near-total acceptance in Jammu and Ladakh. Local people argue that they are politically and administratively discriminated against, in favour of the Valley. While Jammu can be made into a separate state, Ladakh is keen on Union Territory status. There have been huge demonstrations in both regions from time to time, pressing for their respective demands and claims.

The rationale behind dividing J&K is valid on other grounds. Jammu and Ladakh are rich in resources and with much potential for tourism as the Valley. But it is the latter that is singled out for development. Jammu has a larger population than the Valley does. But it has been given fewer seats in the J&K Assembly.

The greatest threat to India are double-speaking politicians ruling roost in the Valley, who speak one language in New Delhi and another in Srinagar. One disruptive feature is the autonomy report - or is it a 'separation from India' report? - of 1999-2000 which the Farooq Abdullah government passed in the State Assembly. The report and the Assembly resolution aimed at pre-1953 status for J&K. Put simply, it meant granting autonomy to the State in all spheres except defence, foreign affairs and currency. But the responsibility for funding it was left to the Centre!

The justification was that the recommendations were in accordance with the original instrument of accession signed by Raja Hari Singh. The Farooq Abdullah dispensation has complained off and on that, over the years, the Centre has eroded the State's autonomy and imposed its own writ on Kashmiris. Its rhetoric is nothing if not secessionist. Fortunately, the Centre rejected the Assembly resolution. It clarified that the demand was secessionist and that reverting to pre-1953 status would mean ending the jurisdiction of the Reserve Bank, the Election Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Supreme Court, as well as deleting Articles 356 and 357 of the Constitution. **The double game of leaders claiming to be nationalists for the sake of power not only in J&K, but also in Delhi, needs to be exposed.** The Chief Minister who wanted India to go to war with Pakistan shed tears when he could not be accommodated as President or Vice-President. His son, a Union Minister, called it a great betrayal.

Some people fear trifurcation may lead to the State's communal division. Attention is drawn to the J&K's secular character, essential for preservation of India's composite culture. Critics of trifurcation say it will justify the two-nation theory that formed the basis for the birth of Pakistan. This criticism is both ill-conceived and ill-founded. If in one state Muslims become the majority, that does not mean India has ceased to be secular. There are a number of States in Northeast where Christians, are the majority. Punjab is a Sikh majority State. This has not compromised Indian secularism. Formation of a separate State in the Valley does not mean its secession, nor a violation of our multi-religious ethos. The truth is that doomsday pundits treat any new idea as anathema. They are afraid to concede that they may be wrong. Ethnically, all three parts of J&K are separate and distinct identities. Article 370 can be extended to all the three regions, while having better administrative units at the same time.

There is nothing wrong in recognising realities and redressing the grievances of two-thirds of J&K. The State Administration will find it easier to deal with divisive and disruptive elements in a focused manner. As also to isolate terrorists in the Valley and eliminate them at their entry point it will make tackling their harbourers in the Valley less difficult. The idea has a lot of merit and should not be dismissed just because RSS has floated it. It should be pursued to its logical end, given that it seems the only way to satisfy popular aspirations.

****The author has remained Director of CBI.***

7 ‘Celebrated Celestiacies’

The unique combination of one Bachlor President alongwith another Bachlor Prime Minister both of whom currently stand at the helm of affairs in India cannot but only augur huge inconveniencies for this country if one goes alongby any of the religious and other spiritual standards set forth in this regard.

Both the occupants of these two biggest chairs-one heading the state and other the executives in this country, do fall short of that lively life, where the basic realms of a family are practically absent from their private and personnel itineries. The normal and natural course of even some smaller tits and bits which revolve around any fullest form of life are thus unfortunately out of their comprehensions. While the physical feelings about a wife, a family and its offshoots makes a person nostalgic at times, the same nostalgia can not possibly reverberate anywhere around these two most important men of our country. While the common norms say that a Raja must be having all the normal prepositions of his or her subjects (Prajā), the same becomes more important when put through the religious and other ritual angles-that too in a country where sacrosance of a family has always been kept at a very high social pedestal. Vedantic scholars then must be having a tough time in performing the spiritual ceremonies and chanting of prescribed religious ryhms which may to some extent absolve and dilute any ill effects of the coming together of the present top combination where not just one but both the slots of presidency and premiership in this country has been occupied by those two men who had long before gaining the present status, taken to a protracted celebacies. The celebracy for someone among the general masses could be taken as a subject of one’s own compulsions or conveniences but the celebrated celebacies about those people ruling the country of more than 1 billion people (who do come from millions of families) may perhaps sound against the nature’s simple and just choice.

Isn’t it ironical that the normal schemes of generational continuities stop in our country when any numerical accounting procedures for the one billion souls reach the residential addresses of our present singular Prime Minister as well as the newly elected singular president. This is surely a Pardoxx and God forbid it does not even sound very auspicious for the nation itself. Perhaps the first ever visit outside the Rashtrapati Bhavan for the new President was to bereave the family members of late Mr Krishan Kant.

This is true that the presentation of such blind theories may sound narrow mindedness in today’s modern and scientific life but that modernity and that scientific revolution has also not supeseded the nature’s system of plurality till date. Infact what nature has presented and dauntingly established is a system in continuity and not a full stop type of human structures. The present top most human structure in our country therefore goes against the nature’s system also. His system of procuring and productivity is seemingly absent from the lives of Raja and Maharaja of this spiritual land. God only shall save this country if tomorrow the Praja decides to follow the deeds of their Rajas in letter and spirit.

8 *Muslim Precedence Politics - How it operates in Ladakh*

By Special Correspondent

In a polity, where promotion of religion-based identity is the chief aspiration for the ruling class, communal governance is a natural corollary. Its impact is disturbing more so in an area where the locals have to combat historical deprivations with geographical backwardness.

Ladakh, the northern frontier of India is a strategically crucial region for India. A Central government should have normally been more alert to see that Ladakhis not only receive their due but also have a feeling that the nation values their patriotism. This is not how myopic and self-serving political leadership of the country looks at nation-building. Spread of terrorism to Jammu and Ladakh could have been pre-empted had central leadership acted to consolidate the nationalist groups in Jammu and Ladakh.

Ladakh constitutes 69.6% of the total land area of J&K State (1,38,942 sq. km.) Politically it is the most marginalised region. A number of strategies have been used by the Kashmir-based political leadership to marginalise Ladakhis. Kashmir leadership blatantly discriminates between Buddhist Ladakh and Shiite Kargil. Rise of communalism in Ladakh in the last two decades is the fallout of this.

Numerous instruments used to perpetuate discrimination against Ladakhis can be enumerated as:

A. Political Manipulation:

Inflating the voters lists in Kargil:

It is aimed to deprive Ladakhis of electing a representative of their choice. In the 1981 census population of Leh district was 68,380, while that of Kargil was 65,992. But the number of voters has been higher in Kargil.

No. of Voters 1985 1987 1989

Leh District 39,485 43,455 46,432

Kargil District 48,503 51,646 52,934

This is the most vulnerable evidence of political manipulation. Ladakhis allege that the authorities indulge in malpractices in the preparation of electoral list in Kargil district. They have demanded a sample survey by the Central Election Commission to expose this manipulation.

Delimitation of Zaskar Constituency:

Another glaring and serious instance of political manipulation to harm the interests of the Buddhist community was the delimitation of the Zaskar Assembly Constituency. Zaskar, a desolate sub-division of Kargil is demographically and culturally a Buddhist area. For eight months in the year it remains cut off from the world. Its peculiar problems of development could be taken care of by a representative of Zaskar only.

To deprive Zaskari Buddhists of their representation, three Patwar circles of Kargil Sub-Division, viz., Panikher (170 kms away from Padam), Lankarchi and Barsoo (both 200 kms. away from Padum) were included in the Zaskar constituency. These are thickly populated by Muslims. Thus, the objective of this step was clearly to prevent a Buddhist from getting elected to the state assembly. It has been a persistent Zaskari demand to exclude these three Patwar circles from this constituency.

B. Discrimination in Services:

Indian Administrative Services:

So far only four Ladakhi officers have been inducted into the IAS cadre by the State government. Intriguingly all of them have been Muslims and not a single Buddhist.

KAS/KPS:

After a gap of 15 years, examination for recruitment to KAS/KPS was conducted during 1997-98 by the State Public Service Commission. Extreme discrimination against Buddhists by the State government is obvious from the following figures relating to Ladakh region:

50 State Employees have been inducted into KAS under technical quota and not a single Buddhist included in the share on 30.8.2000.

Community	No. of qualifying the written exam.	No. of selected for KAS/KPS
Buddhists	23	1
Muslims	3	3
Christians	1	1

State Secretariat:

The State Secretariat cadre has a strength of about 3,500 employees. Not a single Buddhist employee even in class IV position has been recruited during the past 52 years.

Assembly Secretariat:

Not a single Buddhist employee recruited since 1947.

Recruitment:

Number of State Government Employees before 1996 when Dr Abdullah took over was 2.54 lakhs. The number rose to 3.58 lakhs in 2000 (26-1-2000) out of 1.04 lakh employees recruited during this brief period, only 319 employees (0.31%) were from Ladakh. Its share should have been at least 2% and even more if legitimate weightage were given to this extremely backward area.

Public Sector:

There are 21,286 employees in the State Public Sector. Except for 2 or 3 Buddhists in J&K SRTC, the remaining 8 PSUs have not employed a single Buddhist.

Recruitment in Police:

3 Battalions of J&K Police were created in September 2000. There was no share to Buddhist community. In the backdoor entry recruitment to Excise and Taxation Department from Leh and Kargil all the four posts-Inspector 2 (August 99) and Sub-Inspector 2 (March 99) went to Muslims. The appointment of Assistants in State Cadre Accounts service in August 2000, statistics are revealing:

District	Muslim	Buddhist	Christian	Total
Kargil	3	--	--	3
Leh	2	1	2	5
Total	5	1	2	8

C: Discrimination in Education

Engineering Course:

During 1997-98 and 1998-99 selection each year was 8 out of which 7 seats went to Muslims and only 1 to Buddhists.

MBBS Course:

During the same years the number of seats reserved for Ladakh was 8 out of which 6 went to Muslims and only 2 to Buddhists.

Polytechnic Institutions:

In April 2000 the total number of students admitted from Ladakh was 25 out of which 23 were Muslims.

Neglect of facilities in Schools:

An instance of utter neglect of facilities and administration in Govt. Schools in Leh district is that number of students appearing in the examination has dropped from 1683 (1997) to 709 (1999) and pass percentage even dropped to 4.90 (1998). In 1999 it was 7.33. During the Governors' rule the position in schools was somewhat better. In 1994 the pass percentage even rose to 17.97%. At no point of time the number of students appearing in Class-X examination was less than 1150.

Many middle class Ladakhi families are now forced to send their children to schools outside Ladakh for better schooling.

D. Misuse of Liberal Assistance:

Though the per capita central assistance for J&K has been nearly ten times (Rs 3,010) what other states get, yet Ladakh has remained a victim of neglect and discrimination by the State government. Leh district is thrice bigger in area than Kargil district, yet the two districts get equal funds for the District Plan: Rs 42-crores each during 2000-2001

The Wazir Commission constituted to make recommendations to the State government for delimitation of new Blocks in the 14 districts of the State recommended two new Blocks each for Leh and Kargil districts. Whereas the State government promptly created two new Blocks in Kargil District, the recommendation of the Wazir Commission has not been implemented in Leh District so far. Consequently, Leh District is deprived of legitimate Central Assistance to the tune of Rs 2 crores per year. Leh District has at present only 5 Blocks while Kargil District has 7 Blocks.

The State Plan's major share (65%) goes to the State Sector and the rest is allocated to the districts. All major roads and bridges in the other districts are funded from the State Sector, but not a single road or bridge has been funded from the state sector in Leh District.

Conversions of Buddhists and other grievances:

Ladakhis allege that conversions of Buddhists is being practised as a policy to change the social demography of this frontier region. With the intervention of Ministry of Home Affairs an agreement was reached in 1992 between Ladakh Buddhist Association and the Ladakh Muslim Association. This agreement stipulated that all the recently converted persons would be restored to their old faith by the respective organisation. This agreement has been consistently violated. During the period 1992-98, 28 Buddhist girls of Leh District were converted to Islam and majority of them were allured to Kargil. Twelve villages/hamlets populated by Buddhist majority comprising 651 families (population about 5000) and located at 40 to 60 kms from Kargil town are the worst hit Buddhist population where so far 72 boys and girls have been converted to Islam as per survey conducted by LBA.

There are other religious grievances also. A Gompa comprising three rooms in Kargil town constructed 40 years back is lying in shambles as Muslims of Kargil never allow LBA to repair. Cremation of a dead Buddhist is not allowed at Kargil and the dead body has to be moved to a Buddhist area. There is not a single room by way of a Sarai for Buddhists at Kargil town despite a demand for the same for the last 35 years. Six new mosques have been constructed at Leh town during 1989-99 around Buddhist habitations and more than 540 Muslim families settled at Leh, majority of whom were brought from Kargil.

Buddhists in Kargil, who constitute 20% of population in the district face grim prospect. A few glaring examples of discrimination are:

1997 - 24 Patwaris appointed, with only one Buddhist and the rest all are Muslims.

1998 - 40 Class-IV employees were appointed in Education department with only one Buddhist on his conversion to Islam, while all the rest were Muslims.

(The facts and figures are based on surveys conducted by LBA and published from time to time.)

--Editor

9 A regional minority perspective

Political Reorganisation of J&K State

By K.N. Pandita

Indian Constitution recognises region alone as the sub-national identity for sharing of political power. This concept has provided unbridled leverage to regional majority social groups in projecting themselves as the chief articulating agency for the aspirations of the people in that particular region. As such exclusivist precedence of this group acquires formal validity. Consequently, the interests and aspirations of regional minorities receive a raw deal. The situation becomes ludicrous when regional minority groups put together gain numerical superiority over the regional majority group.

The acceptance of region as the only sub-national identity generates and then subserves the politics of subnationalism. It tends to build exclusivist regional identity based on ethnicity, caste or religion only for narrow group interests. Thus social fragmentation not only retards the process of social and national cohesion but also imperils the positions of regional minority groups. The peculiar social behaviour of Jat Sikhs in Punjab, Jat Hindus in Haryana and Western Uttar Pradesh, Yadavs in Bihar and Eastern UP, Nepalese in Sikkim and the Sunni Muslims in Kashmir Valley are some of the instances of regional majority dominance giving rise to the question of unrepresented minorities in the region.

In a multi-cultural society like ours, the absence of an intense debate on federalism, instantly linking autonomy with subnationalism, the case of regional minorities, particularly the non-territorial groups, is being relegated to the backyard. It is the regional majority groups which weigh heavily with the Indian State. Indian social scientists and intellectuals must perforce find out why the deepening of the process of federalism has not led to the corresponding strengthening of participatory democracy at the regional level. Regional minority groups have a valid reason to voice their strong opposition to the politics of autonomy and instead demand a strong central authority capable of maintaining the cohesion of the nation-state. They feel this politics does not only end up in blackmailing the centre in garnering more concessions for the elite of the regional majority but is also, and primarily, used to subject the regional minorities (ethnic, religious or linguistic etc.) to the blatant violation of political rights and social safeguards of regional minorities.

National political consensus, guided mainly by the distorted federal vision, has been vehemently protecting the interests of regional majority groups at the cost of further marginalisation of regional minorities. Autonomy to Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu regions in J&K State is justifiable but the legitimate aspirations of minority groups within the regions e.g. Kashmiri Pandits, Shias, Gujjars Muslims, Zanskaris and others are being underplayed, even subtly scuttled. Legitimate minority interests are made hostage to the parochial politics of regional majority groups under the misinterpreted principles of populist federalism.

Strong ethno-political movements forged by various regional minority groups in the regions of Ladakh, Kashmir and Jammu, seeking political re-organisation of the state by linking federal autonomy to the interests of regional minorities need to be understood in this context. The segmentary character of the society and narrow social basis of major political parties of the state have forced the affected regional minorities to seek durable safeguards as part of this envisaged re-organisation.

Profile of J&K Minority Groups

In Jammu division, Gujjar Muslims, Kashmiri speaking Muslims and Jats constitute the major regional minorities. While Gujjars are thinly spread all over the Jammu division, Kashmiri speaking Muslims have major concentration in the district of Doda which was carved out of Jammu division after accession and primarily because of its Muslim predominance. Jats, with a population of about 2.5 lakh, are mostly refugees uprooted in 1947 and 1971 from parts of the erstwhile J&K State.

In Leh district, Buddhists with 88 percent of the district population form the overwhelming majority, while the Shiite Muslims and Argon Muslims form the regional minority groups. Argons are reported to be originally Kashmiri settlers, who settled in Ladakh some decades back. In the Kargil district, the main

regional minority groups are Zanskari Buddhists, pagan Brokpas and Darad Sunni Muslims. Shiite Muslims comprise nearly 75 percent of Kargil population.

It is in Kashmir province that the problems of regional minorities have been acute. Sunni Muslims of Kashmiri origin account for only 46 percent and the rest fall in the category of minority groups like Shias, Gujjars, Pandits, Paharis, non-ethnic Sunnis like Bhotrajas, Pathans, Tibetans, Darads and others.

Deprivations

Gujjars: The 1.6 million strong liberal minded Gujjar community is the third largest solid ethnic group in the state. It has several grievances against the Kashmir political leadership. For more than four decades, Kashmiris held nearly all the higher appointments in the police, revenue and judicial departments and in the political and administrative spheres in general. A recent survey shows that out of a total of 325 deputy inspector generals of police, superintendents and deputy superintendents, there are only five Gujjars. There is not a single Gujjar among the 14 deputy commissioners and several assistant commissioners in the state cadres. Gujjars have no representation in the State Public Selection Service Commission, and the State Subordinate Selection and Recruitment Board which are the official agencies to fill all the gazetted and non-gazetted positions in state service. Even the Centre has been indifferent to their aspirations. No Gujjar from J&K has ever been made a member of the Union Cabinet nor anyone has one been inducted into diplomatic services.

It is to be noted that the Gujjar representation in the state assembly, too, has been grossly incompatible with their numerical strength. The Gujjars of Jammu region, however, were slightly more fortunate than their Kashmiri chapter in regard to assembly seats.

Kashmiri Speaking Muslims

For obvious reasons, this group could control political power in the State of Jammu and Kashmir as it lays claim to its historical role for a struggle against the rule of the Maharajas. In the process it has become the ruling minority group with over-representation in state services. In Doda district, it has been returning no fewer than five legislators out of six assembly constituencies despite the fact that its population in the district is not more than 30 per cent. The group has been regularly represented in state and union cabinet. Even some diplomatic appointments have also been held by the members from this very group. Recently two new assembly constituencies were created with barely 35,000 voters in Gool Gulabgarh and Bani areas in district Udhampur of Jammu region. The normal criteria for a delimitation of a constituency in Jammu region is 93,000 whereas in Kashmir region it is far less.

Jat Refugees: By virtue of their being the "outsiders" in Jammu context, this group of 2.5 lakh people constitutes a regional minority. It comprises thousands of displaced persons from PoK and West Pakistan as a result of tribal attack on the State in 1947. This chunk of refugees from the original territories of the J&K State have suffered much owing to the callous and communally motivated policies of successive state governments. Even after half a century since the day of their displacement, these patriotic citizens have not been given full citizenship rights in the state. This debar them from participating in state elections and from enjoying proprietary rights on the land allotted to them. This is glaring example of depriving a people of their fundamental right to a place where they live and the territory on which they have made their habitation. It is quite natural that they should be demanding the rights that ensure their future prosperity as the citizens of India and state subjects of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. It is amusing that while the framers of the State Constitution thought it proper to reserve 15 seats in the State Assembly for the people of PoK (considering PoK as legally belonging to the original State of Jammu and Kashmir with its summer capital in Srinagar and winter capital in Jammu) they did not find it necessary or obligatory to ensure the political rights of the people who belonged to the state but were forced out of their homes and to seek shelter in Jammu region.

Argon Muslims: The manipulation of this minority by the Valley leadership has acted as a catalyst for destabilisation of peace and amity in Ladakh. Favours bestowed selectively on Argons is evident from the fact that Buddhists, forming 88 per cent of the district population have only 52 percent representation in

the services in different state departments of the district. Many Argon officers have been patronised by the Valley leadership to acquire higher ranks in the state echelons.

Kargil Buddhists: The Buddhists of this region have not only marginal representation in state services but they are also discriminated socially and politically. Though forming 20 percent of the population in the district, they are denied even a Gompa or a cremation site even the district headquarters. Balti areas have been added to the new ethnic assembly constituency through very dubious machinations. The ulterior motive is to deprive ethnic Zanskaris from electing their popular candidate.

Darad Sunnis: Though an unprivileged minority, Valley political leadership has been quick to realise the strategic importance of Darad group of Sunni Muslims. A special electoral constituency of state legislature for only 6,000 voters has been delimited for Gurez tehsil in Bandipore. This has been done to provide them political space.

Shias: One million strong Kashmiri Shia community inhabiting the Valley, have a strong diaspora in the Mandi block of Poonch district across the Pir Panchal. They have only marginal representation in higher and middle ranks of state services, and no representation in State Public Services Commission or other similar bodies. The 1994 selection list for admission to MBBS did not show single Shia candidate from the Valley. In the state secretariat, the strength of Shia employees is not more than a hundred, out of a total of 3000 employees. Population-wise, they should have been occupying more than 700 positions. According to available data, there are barely 67 Shia engineers in the entire technical staff of the state engineering departments. No Kashmiri Shia has ever been elected as Lok Sabha member or given a berth in the Union cabinet despite committed pro-Congress stance of its popular leadership since mid-sixties. Hardly any Shia has been appointed as ambassador or governor. After 1975, no Kashmiri Shia has even been nominated for Rajya Sabha. It need to be reminded that leader of Kashmiri Shias, Mian Iftikhar Hussain Ansari had submitted a memorandum to the then Prime Minister India in 1983 listing in minute detail all the deprivations Kashmiri Shias were subjected to.

Kashmiri Pandits: The case of internally displaced Kashmiri Pandits is altogether of a different category. They are the major sufferers of externally abetted Islamist insurgency raging in the Valley since 1989. Their complete destabilisation has made them a community sans territory sans home. The undoing of economic or administrative discrimination, with roots going down to the days of accession of the state, is no more a priority with them. It is the question of secured rehabilitation in the Valley on which their entire attention is riveted. The gimmicks like 'constituencies in exile' or 'return with honour and dignity' etc. no more humour the victimised community of Pandits.

Though the Union Government showed utmost urgency in getting Presidential ordinance issued to enable the internally displaced Pandits to cast their vote through postal ballot, it chose criminal silence to get a similar ordinance issued for getting the forcible occupation of Pandit property vacated by illegal occupants. The resulting distress sale of their property may prove to be yet another move to thwart their return and bring religious cleansing exercise, begun in 1989, to its logical conclusion.

Even in the Jammu region, they have been at times subjected to politically sponsored ethnic hatred besides general neglect which is invariably the share of internally displaced persons in any part of the world. The state government's treatment of the displaced community was most atrocious, particularly of the bureaucracy, creating all conceivable hurdles in their way of having some respite in a situation of trauma. Themselves groaning under serious political deprivations, a section of Jammuites finds it expedient to project the fugitives as extension of Kashmiri ruling class because this section finds a support structure among the Valley Sunni bureaucracy, a formidable instrument in the suppression of minority interests in the state. Let it be said that Kashmiri bureaucracy and political heavyweights have played an important role in deepening the schism through their moles in the civil society of Jammu.

Since almost all political parties have failed Pandits and no one seems to have any serious concern for their return, the intelligentsia of Pandit community has taken a lead over the moribund traditional Pandit leadership and raised a powerful demand for a homeland in Kashmir Valley with Union Territory status but minus Article 370. Despite divergence of opinion on other tactical issues, the overwhelming mass of

the exiled community is veering round to the view that only the new pocket of tolerance will be able to maintain the social and psychological cohesion of the traumatised community in the new Islamised socio-political structure.

Manipulation: In the overall scenario of regional minority deprivations in the state, deprivations of minorities in Jammu division and Leh district have been relatively milder for two reasons. First, the majorities in these regions belong to non-ruling class, hence better toleration of their respective regional minorities. Second, the Kashmiri Sunni political leadership has selectively cultivated, particularly after 1975, certain minorities e.g. Argon Muslims in Ladakh and Kashmiri-speaking Muslim diaspora in Jammu division, as part of 'Greater Kashmir Plan' and to scuttle political resurgence among Ladakhis and Jammuites. As an extension of the same process, the so-called 'Pahari identity' is being raked up to deny the Gujjar Muslims their due share.

If the claims of Maulvi Iftikhar Hussain Ansari and Mian Bashir, the popular ethno-religious minority leaders of the state for the leadership of the State PCC(I) were overlooked, it was because the Congress leadership in Delhi was so obsessed with status-quo, that it could not extricate itself from a mindset that considers J&K synonymous with the Sunni elite of the Valley.

Nearly all the minorities in Kashmir have been the victims of a fraudulent delimitation carried out by that evil genius who presided over the revenue department of the state throughout his tenure in the office. The master stroke came in 1979 when the Sheikh had realised that as a result of the war of 1971, his hopes of the Sheikdom were dashed for all times to come. To Mirza Afzal Beg goes the credit of institutionalising communal discrimination in J&K Gujjar, Pandit and Shia dominated constituencies were realigned in such a way that out of 42 assembly constituencies in Kashmir, Kashmiri Sunnis are able to send their own candidate to 40 constituencies and influence the selection of the remaining two. Even recently Mian Iftikhar Hussain Ansari accused his party chief Mr. G.R. Kar of transferring Shia votes from his constituency. Even from non-ethnic Sunni dominated areas of Uri and Karnah (in Kashmir region) it is the Kashmiri Sunni settlers (Khojas) who manipulate their successful election.

In order to consolidate their grip further on the political structure, politically alert Sunnis of the Valley have been exercising effective control on all political organisations of the state such as Congress, National Conference, Janata Dal, CPI, CPI(M) and Jamaat-e-Islami. Through this total away over the legislature and government, Kashmiri Sunnis have been able to 'swamp' the State secretariat, the police, revenue, education, finance, industry and judicial departments; dominate professional and technical institutions and universities; control trade and commerce and over develop the Sunni-dominated areas".

Political attitudes: Yet despite this precedence and more than matching appeasement, separatism and militancy have remained exclusively Kashmir Sunni Muslim phenomenon. While Gujjars have been fiercely opposing every form of separatism, the Shias are not enamoured of 'aazadi' or even autonomy in view of apprehension of further erosions of their rights in a phenomenon where accountability is minimal. Their past experience of political behaviour of Kashmiri Sunni leadership and increasing politicisation of the sectarian strife in Pakistan, besides the changing role of Iran at the regional level has sensitised them to the dangers of a political dispensation in which Kashmiri Sunnis would hold unbridled power.

Even in the past, the traditional Gujjar and Shia leadership has remained either pro status-quoist or has opposed such political formations that have been seeking exclusive precedence of Kashmiri Sunnis. The considerable success achieved by the special task force of police today testifies to the strongly patriotic role of different regional minorities of the state.

Gujjar and Shia communities, embarrassed by the menace of on-going militancy in Kashmir Valley reject autonomy as a solution to the impasse. They, instead, advocate a political structure that takes into account their economic and political privations and guarantees justice and equity. It is to be noted that although the union government has conceded the Gujjars of J&K State the status of Scheduled Tribes, yet the Sunni domination of state administration creates innumerable hurdles for them in their pursuit of enjoying the benefits that should accrue to them.

Solution: Since the region is the only subnational identity recognised for sharing of political power, the solutions emanating from adverse quarters at home or abroad have recognised the need for guaranteeing regional autonomy to Jammu and Ladakh. But this arrangement does not satisfy the aspirations of minority groups, who remain obstructed from real participation in democratic power and the nation building process.

To ensure the participation of these mainstream minority groups, genuine democratisation of the states' political structure and strict secular governance are desirable. There is a need for conventional, constitutional and institutional guarantees for the regional minority groups to break the phenomenon of sectarian and communal majoritarianism. Even handed treatment of all ethno-religious communities leads to genuine democratization of the polity. Realignment of constituencies in all the regions of the state by application of uniform set of principles will put an end to political disabilities hitherto experienced by different minority groups. Creation of hill constituencies for the Gujjars and reservation of seats for the Gujjars and Jats will be a step forward in this direction.

In so far as the displaced Pandits are concerned the broad-basing of the Panun Kashmir demand has opened new vistas for return of Pandits as well as for resolution of Kashmir dispute.

Since Panun Kashmir is no longer perceived as a demand for an exclusive 'Hindu Homeland' it will provide an alternate political structure to all those Kashmiris, irrespective of religion and faith, who support secular integration with India and feels that Art 370 has served the interests of only a small acquisitive class. The creation of an alternate political structure in the Valley will strength the forces of integration, pluralism and democracy. Benefits of fuller integration with India through Panun Kashmir will exercise a healthy impact on the other 'Autonomous Kashmir'.

The option of providing two alternate political structure sin Kashmir, one without Article 370 and the other with Article 370 infact, will help forge a national consensus on Kashmir.

Also the very location of Panun Kashmir, besides providing foolproof link to Ladakh region will release district of Doda from the baneful influences of sectarian and fundamentalist politics of Kashmir valley. It will help the region in evolving a distinct secular personality of its own, a healthy and futuristic personality.

Finally, creation of Panun Kashmir under the hegemony of mainstream secular nationalistic politics will pre-empt all those conspiracies which have or are likely to destabilize Kashmir valley in future. The resolute opposition by the separatists - disguised or committed - to this demand, is to be seen in this context.

10 Restructure Jammu and Kashmir

Dr. T.H. Chowdary

At the time of Independence, two 'native' states posed special problems for India. One was Hyderabad ruled by the Nizam, having 92 per cent Hindu population. The Razakars, a rabidly Muslim rag-tag organisation held the Nizam in thrall. It proposed the idea that Hyderabad should be an independent Muslim kingdom and that it should be allied with Pakistan and the Nizam favoured it. Even after signing a 'standstill' agreement which gives him enough time to decide whether he should accede to India or Pakistan as wanted by the Viceroy, he sent his emissaries to the United Nations complaining about India's aggression against his State. Sardar Patel knew what danger the Nizam and Razakars could pose. Despite objections from the British officers in the Indian Army and the hostility of Jawaharlal Nehru to any military action, Sardar Patel ordered the Indian army to march into the Nizam's territory. Within four days, the Nizam surrendered and unconditionally acceded to the Union of India. Sh. Patel put an end to their separatism and treachery to India and the oppression of the Hindu subjects. In the next few years the state was broken-up and its three linguistic parts were merged with Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh. There was no preservation of a legacy i.e. the Nizam acquiring some territories and wanting to preserve its uniqueness the Hyderabad culture or the Nizamat or the Deccani ji-huziriyat.

Another state that posed threat was the J&K. Here, the population was predominantly Muslim but the ruler was a Hindu, late Hari Singh, scion of the proud Dogras. Jawaharlal Nehru disliked him strongly. Within the state, the National Conference, which formerly was Muslim Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah, was waging a struggle against the Maharaja for representative government. Sheikh Abdullah was in jail. The Maharaja would have liked to accede to the Union of India. Pakistan was deadly against it. The then British Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten tried to discourage such a move. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the President of Pakistan sent emissaries to Hari Singh offering him extraordinary favourable terms if he acceded to Pakistan. The Maharaja was wavering. Jinnah wanted to force his hand. His government unleashed armed tribals as well as Pakistan soldiers camouflaged as tribals to invade J&K. The Muslim soldiers of the J&K State deserted the Maharaja's army and joined the invaders. They came almost up to the gates of Srinagar. The Maharaja wanted Indian forces to intervene. India said that unless he acceded to the Indian Union, no forces could be sent. The Maharaja very reluctantly acceded to the Indian Union. The then Minister for State Affairs, Sardar Patel was not allowed to look into the affairs of J&K.

The then Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, claiming to be a Kashmiri came forward to deal with the issue. He got Sheikh Abdullah released. Not only that, he also gave the uncalled for public announcement that the accession was subject to ratification by a referendum when peace returned to J&K. When the Indian forces were able to repulse the invaders and were about to go on the offensive to liberate the areas already occupied by the invaders, Jawaharlal Nehru succumbed to the advice of Lord Mountbatten, the Governor General of India and referred the case to the United Nations! That was an excellent opportunity for England and America who were dominating the United Nations to play their game for control of both India and Pakistan. A ceasefire was implemented and since then i.e. from 01-01-49 we have been having armed 'truce' and two subsequent wars in 1965 and 1971 with Pakistan.

When the Constitution of India was being written, a special provision was made-Article 370, which was of a temporary nature providing for autonomy to J&K. What was supposed to be temporary became, more or less, permanent by its non-withdrawal in the last 52 years. Unlike any other state in the country, J&K is having its own Constitution! Unlike any other state in the country, no Indian can buy land and own it in J&K. Unlike in no other state in India, a J&K woman marrying an Indian gets disinherited.

Sheikh Abdullah wanted to become independent and carve out a Sultanate for himself with India having the liability to defending it from Pakistan and pouring billions of rupees for enjoying the privilege of defending Sultanate of Kashmir from Pakistan. He had to be deposed to prevent secession of J&K from India.

Sardar Patel solved every problem including the Hyderabad issue but Jawaharlal Nehru left behind the J&K imbroglio. We have poured and continue to pour billions of rupees into J&K. It has received the

highest per capita development investment and yet, on and off, the political parties including the ruling Abdullah dynasty revive the demand for greater autonomy, for reversion to the pre-1952 status (but not the pre-1947). They also talk of “Kashmiriat” saying that it is entirely different from Indianness or Hindutva or even Pakistaniat. The National Conference, which in effect means the Sheikh Abdullah dynasty’s pocket party, says it is “secular”. It is not that every region in what is J&K under India is having Muslim majority. Jammu has predominantly Hindu and Ladakh has predominantly Buddhist population. 70 per cent of the revenue of the state comes from Jammu but less than 20 per cent is spent on the Jammu region. The Hindus and Buddhists constitute about 40 per cent of the population but in the J&K State government, they get less than 15 per cent of the jobs. All top posts are held by the Muslims belonging to Kashmir valley. Jammu and Ladakh want autonomy but the National Conference and its government deny it, while demanding autonomy for the J&K as a whole. Claiming to be secular, the National Conference government did nothing to stop the ethnic cleansing of Hindus and Sikhs from the Muslim majority Kashmir valley. When they talk of the will of the Kashmiri people, the will of the Hindus and Buddhists does not count. Whether it is National Conference or Hurriyat Conference or several other outfits, J&K for them means only Muslims. How then can Jammu and Ladakh be in peace with the Muslims there?

When India was to be partitioned, Mohammed Ali Jinnah wanted Punjab and Bengal provinces as East Punjab was a Hindu-Sikh majority area. In the western part of Bengal majority of the people were Hindus. The Congress wanted that there should be a referendum in all the provinces that were to form part of Pakistan as proposed by Jinnah. Jinnah dismissed the idea as sheer nonsense. He said Muslims were a separate nation and it was Muslims who want to separate. If there was to take a referendum, it should be one wherein Muslims-only vote and not Hindus. “Pakistan was the demand of Muslims, not of Hindus, why should then Hindus vote? The Congress was stumped. It was then suggested by Mountbatten, the Congress demanded the partition of Punjab as well as Bengal provinces so that the Hindu majority areas could be part of the remnant India.

It is an undeniable fact that India was partitioned totally on the basis of religion and nothing else. The Muslim majority areas formed Pakistan. If in 1947, had the J&K also been divided, just like Punjab or Bengal, into the western Muslim dominated Kashmir valley and the eastern Hindu Buddhist majority area comprising Jammu and Ladakh, the former would have acceded to Pakistan and the latter to India. And now there could not have been a J&K problem. Unfortunately Jawaharlal Nehru did not allow any solution and the Indian Independence Act which Mountbatten was implementing did not envisage the possibility of breaking up of, what were called Indian States on the basis of religion just like the rest of India.

By keeping J&K together, injustice is being done to Jammu and Ladakh. **Not only have all Hindus and Sikhs been expelled from the Muslim majority Kashmir valley but Muslims from that area and even from across the Line of Control (LoC) have come to settle down in Jammu as well as Ladakh to convert them into Muslim majority areas. This type of demographic aggression is a standard weapon in the armoury of Muslims.** When Lebanon gained independence from France in 1945, the Christians were in a slight majority. But within the next 30 years, the Muslim population increased so fast that they outnumbered the Christians and the constitution which distributed power between Christians and Muslims reflecting the then demographic content, was done away with Muslims resorted, backed by the Muslim Syria, to civil war. Now the Christians are reduced to a hopeless and powerless minority. They have been immigrating in large numbers to the US and Europe. In Malaysia, Muslims were less than 45 per cent at the time of its independence. But in the next 24 years, they had grown to 60-65 per cent and declared Malaysia as an Islamic state. Within what is now India, Muslims were seven per cent in 1948. But now they claim to be anywhere between 15-20 per cent. That they have been furiously growing is very well known because many a city and district are turning to be Muslim majority. Therefore, the fears of non-Muslims in Jammu and Ladakh are very real and they face an immediate danger. **It is therefore absolutely necessary in the interest of their preservation and continued habitation in their own land for millennia, that Jammu and Ladakh should be reconstituted into separate states.** We have

reorganised Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh to carve out Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Uttaranchal for the distinct ethnic groups of population in those areas. We have reorganised Assam into several small States-Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura. Such restructuring has not posed any threat to the integrity or unity of India. **Restructuring J&K to reflect the ethnicity of different regions is logical and most necessary. The fact that no minority can be safe in a Muslim majority state is proved by the ethnic cleansing of Hindus and Sikhs from Muslims majority Kashmir valley despite the state being the part of India and guarded by the Indian armed forces.** Hindus and Sikhs have been totally kicked out of Pakistan.

From East Pakistan, now Bangladesh, the Hindu-Buddhist population has been decreased from 35 per cent to below 10 per cent. The ethnic cleansing continues. It may be recalled that in 1947-48 when millions of Hindus were being squeezed out of **East Pakistan, Sardar Patel went to Calcutta and warned Pakistan that if such type of expulsion continued, he would liberate a part of East Pakistan and settle down all Hindus from East Pakistan in a safe area so liberated for Hindus.** Pakistan became really scared because they know that, unlike Nehru, Sardar Patel was a man of action and that he demonstrated it with regard to Hyderabad. He would not fail to implement his words, if Pakistan failed to stop the harassment of Hindus. Unfortunately, to our bad luck Sardar Patel died soon thereafter and India became a Dharmshala into which all the Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists could be kicked by Pakistan. Muslims from Bangladesh are also infiltrating into India facilitated by their vote-seekers especially the Communist parties.

From every historic experience and the imminent danger, the demand for reconstructing J&K into four areas is right. Jammu could be a full-fledged state just like Andhra Pradesh, or Rajasthan or Himachal Pradesh. Ladakh and a part of the Kashmir valley, a safe zone created for the return of Hindu-Buddhists who had been cleansed out of Kashmir Valley, could be two Union Territories like Chandigarh or Andaman and Nicobar Islands or Pondicherry. Remnant Kashmir valley could be the fourth state. The continuance of Article 370 can only help in burning the fire of separatism forever.

11 Statehood demand neither communal nor voice of RSS

Statehood status to Jammu, Kashmir Union Territory to Ladakh and homeland for displaced Kashmiris is the need of the hour, hence, this demand is neither communal nor voice of RSS or VHP (although they are supporting trifurcation and quadripartition) but the voice of a suppressed and depressed, the voice of the mitigated, of the neglected and discriminated people of Jammu, Ladakh and displaced Kashmiri Hindus against the anarchy of Kashmiri elite with the patronage of successive Central governments whose apathetic attitude towards these people has multiplied manifold the socio-political and economic backwardness of these two regions.

BJP, which has been boasting of being the saviour of the people of Jammu and Ladakh (just to woo voters) has kept a criminal silence on this sensitive issue at state level and even the central BJP leaders have outrightly rejected this demand. They can discuss autonomy which is just a step short of complete 'Azaadi' and devolution of 'more' powers to Valley based political elite who is already ruling the roost.

Our political parties have lost the credibility to face the people of state especially BJP because they have betrayed the trust of the people rather their hopes and have made them canon fodder for the Pakistan sponsored terrorists for their vested political interests.

BJP has no locus standi in the state and their activities are 'Tout au Contrarie'.

The terming of statehood demand as "communal" is totally baseless, fabricated and malicious propaganda let loose by NC along with NDA (of which BJP is an important constituent).

Jammu and Ladakh region are true picture of secularism and communal harmony having a mixed population in which Muslims are still predominant where as in the garb of Kashmiriat, secularism has been brutally murdered leading to religious cleansing of lakhs of Kashmiri Hindus, ravaging of Temples by Islamic fundamentalist in Kashmir. Lakhs of Hindus, Sikhs and Christians have become refugees in their own country.

The threats issued by certain segments that statehood to Jammu will lead to a situation similar to 1947, whole of the India will disintegrate and so on carries no weight at all.

Three states of Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh along with UT status to Chandigarh have been carved out of 'Greater Punjab' and these are the most progressive states in the whole of North India without any bloodshed.

Chattisgarh, Uttranchal have not led to disintegration of world's largest democratic country i.e. India then how can the reo-organisation of Jammu and Kashmir is so different that a booming democracy like India can fall if the state is reorganised keeping in view the different ethno-cultural-geographical regions.

Vicious campaign has been launched against statehood to Jammu by spreading various types of illogical apprehensions to demoralise and distract the people from their just demand.

Media is also not lagging behind in demoralising the people of Jammu and Ladakh. Media has been biased and does not protest the sufferings and neglect of these two regions at the hands of Kashmiri and Delhi rulers.

Accession of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh has taken place at the same time, but socio-political and economic conditions of Kashmir region are thousands times better than the other two regions.

The Chief Minister of J&K from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to Mir Qasim and then dynastic rule from Sheikh Mohd Abdullah to Farooq Abdullah and now Omar Abdullah (the CM designate) along with its jumbo ministry have always been from Kashmir region.

All heads of state departments, bureaucrats and lucrative jobs are a distant dream for Jammu and Ladakh. All developmental projects big or small start and end in Kashmir. Thousands of crores of Rs pumped by Centre find their way across the tunnel and Jammu and Ladakh are left high and dry.

Representation in government jobs is negligible e.g. in civil secretariat less than 10 percent of the employees are from Jammu and Ladakh and more than 90 percent of the staff is from Kashmir.

This example is only tip of ice berg. More revenue and tax collection from Jammu region and less of basic amenities are provided to it.

Tourism is not tapped for these two regions but ironically terrorism has been promoted at the behest of our high ups. Commission and Committees are set up but whatever is suitable to Kashmiris is picked up and chosen.,

The districts in Kashmir were created with the stroke of a pen but Wazir commission report recommending districts of Reasi, Kishtwar and Samba has been kept in cold storage while on Godbole's report wine shops have been opened at every nook and corner of Jammu region to fleece the people and make them insane, knave and drunkard, a distasteful and heinous step.

Selection list in professional colleges is mind boggling. The decline of candidates selected from Jammu and Ladakh after independence has reached its 'nadir' which is frustrating and suicidal for our young generation.

There are lakhs of discrepancies and discriminations which have no solution excepting statehood.

People should take the lead with conviction and not to be befooled by false propaganda of our politicians especially NC, BJP which are the two sides of the same coin.

--**Jyoti Jamwal**, Jammu

(Source: Views Today)

12 Restructure J&K

For once the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) deserves to be congratulated on its boldness in publicly demanding that the J&K State be restructured into a full-fledged Jammu State which will be like any other state of the Union, a Centrally-administered Buddhist-majority Ladakh and an area in Kashmir valley cleared of all terrorists for the secure resettlement of the Hindus who were kicked out of the Valley, also Centrally administered; and the fourth, an autonomous unit in the Kashmir valley. National Conference and the congenital, compulsive splitters of India, namely, the Communists are illogical, in demanding autonomy for J&K because it is Muslim-majority but denying the same dispensation for the Hindu-majority Jammu and Buddhist-majority Ladakh. If the Indian parties and governments are sincere in their belief that the territory of J&K is an inalienable and integral part of India, then just as Pakistan, holding the contrary belief, has settled Pakistanis and demobilized armed services personnel in Kashmir under its occupation, India also should remove all barriers and all restrictions between J&K and the rest of India, just as we have reorganised the north-east, carving different states for different ethnic groups, so should J&K be reorganised to create safe and secure states and governments for its different ethnic constituents. Not doing so is what is perpetuating alienation, separatism and secessionist terrorism in the state. We should follow the example of Communist China which suppresses all secessionist demands and is settling in the sparsely populated but Muslim-majority Sinkiang province and Buddhist-majority Tibet the Han people from all over China in proof of its conviction that every part of China is its national territory where any Chinese citizen can settle at any time without any separateness and distinction. If we do not restructure J&K, then surely Jammu and Ladakh will be colonised by the furiously proliferating Muslim population, spilling over into Jammu and Ladakh to change the demographic composition.

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II

Long ago Assam, which covered vast areas with different ethnic groups, was reorganised into a number of new States - Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh. The unity of India was neither lost nor is its sovereignty compromised. People of different ethnicities and languages are happier now than they were before. From out of East Punjab, two new states of Haryana and Himachal Pradesh were created. We have now Jharkhand out of Bihar, Uttaranchal out of Uttar Pradesh, Chhatisgarh out of Madhya Pradesh. So the States, restructuring is neither a disaster nor a new urge. J&K, like the north-east, has different and distinct regions on the basis of ethnicity, language and geography. The demand for its trifurcation into Jammu, Ladakh and Kashmir valley is an eminently acceptable and desirable urge. But this is not sufficient. Just as Pakistan has cleansed out Sikhs, Hindus and Buddhists, just as Bangladesh is cleansing itself of all Hindus and Buddhists by discrimination and terror, the majority in Kashmir valley has made itself a party to the kicking out of Hindu Pandits. Some area in Kashmir valley contiguous to the proposed Jammu state should be set apart as safe and secure resettlement area for Hindus and such other minorities as have been terrorised into exodus. This and Ladakh may be Union Territories. It may be recalled that when Sardar Patel was alive and Hindu exodus from East Pakistan was at its height, he declared that India would liberate a few districts from East Bengal and resettle all the Hindus and Buddhists in safety and security there. That declaration drove sense and fear and the terrible exodus stopped, though briefly. The cleansing was resumed with the death of Sardar Patel.

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III

RSS and VHP, both have suggested trifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into three states of Jammu, Kashmir valley and Ladakh. Although the Dy PM has dismissed the idea, maybe due to complicated coalition politics, the suggestion deserves consideration on merit. These three regions are very much

different from each other in their language, culture and geographical conditions. Even Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh which were created as separate States in 1966 are not so divergent, as Jammu, Kashmir valley and Ladakh. VHP has also demanded creation of a separate zone in the Kashmir valley for Kashmiri Pandits, which needs serious consideration, as it has not been possible to re-settle them for the last 15 years.

--Anand Prakash

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(Source: Organiser)

13 *When Nehru suggested Swiss model for Kashmir*

By V.P. Bhatia

In his Urdu autobiography *Aatish-e-Chinar* (The flames of the Chinar), dictated to an aide named Mohammad Yusuf Teng a few years before his death, Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah says at one place, “On return from New York after attending a Security Council debate in January 1948 (on India’s complaint against Pakistan-sponsored tribal raid in October 1947), the impressions that I had brought from the functioning of the UNO seemed to tally with those of Gopaldaswami Aiyengar, Nehru’s Minister for Kashmir affairs (who too had gone to present India’s case alongwith the Sheikh). When we were coming back by an aeroplane from New York, Aiyenger Saheb who was sitting close in the next seat to me, gave me a paper, asking me to read it. I found that in it he had expressed his view on the future of Kashmir, saying that keeping it independent was the best solution of this tangle because the boundaries of Kashmir were so long and extensive and touched so many countries that India could not bear the headache of the burden of a defending them.” (P.481).

In a nutshell, it meant that India could not hold Kashmir for long on its own, which seems to be the official view even now.

The Sheikh’s extensive 961-page autobiography has been selectively condensed by Khushwant Singh into a 176-page English translation, but the latter does not contain this original reference. Meanwhile, the self-serving autobiography, highly controversial in parts and sprinkled with blatant lies, has been awarded a Sahitya Akademy award against all norms. It is particularly full of venomous charges against the Dogra rule and Dogra Maharaja’s role in those days particularly the latter’s ‘flight’ from Srinagar to Jammu on October 25 in the wake of imminent danger of tribal takeover. As pointed out by Dr Karan Singh in his autobiography *The Heir - Apparent*, apart from Balraj Madhok in *The Bungling in Kashmir*, the Maharaja in fact left Srinagar reluctantly at the advice of V.P. Menon, the special emissary of the Centre to save him from falling into enemy hands. But the Sheikh calls it treachery to the people though he himself too had run away to Delhi. He, in fact, seems to be particularly chagrined that his arch enemy, the Maharaja escaped alive along with the Maharani and their staff in a night-long road journey to Jammu.

However, while the secularists reviewers have generally lauded the Sheikh’s posthumous political story, setting himself up as the only hope of secular India in those dark post-partition days, a Muslim writer Kamal Ahmed Siddiqui has a different tale to tell. As the chief producer of All India Radio at Srinagar station for long, claiming proximity to the Sheikh ever since those early days of his ‘undemocratic’ installation and dismissal in 1953, he punctures the Sheikh’s balloon on quite a few counts.

In an exhaustive 127-page review of the Sheikh’s assertions and inconsistent versions in an Urdu literary quarterly (*Asri Adab*, January to April 1990) which I came across only recently, Siddiqui says that “Jawaharlal wanted to make Kashmir as the Switzerland of Asia”, while Patel considered it as the root cause of India’s future problems because of the communist nature of the ‘Naya Kashmir’ manifesto of National Conference. No wonder, Nehru was Sheikh’s ideal and fully posted with G.M. Sadiq’s mission to Pakistan in mid October, 1947. Sadiq talked there as Sheikh’s emissary, when all the Muslim leaders of National Conference, including Sadiq, Beg and Bakshi favoured accession to Pakistan. But they got clear hints Pakistan would have liquidated them especially the Sheikh. That scared them no end into the lap of India.

Siddiqui’s own counter version of the above-mentioned incident of Gopaldaswami Aiyengar passing on to the Sheikh a piece of paper containing the latter’s view in support of independence of Kashmir is however most startling. With inside knowledge, he says that the paper was in fact passed on to the Sheikh from Pandit Nehru at the Delhi airport just minutes before his plane left for New York for the UN meet in January 1948.

According to Siddiqui, “when the Sheikh was going to participate in UN meeting at Lake Success as a member of the Indian delegation, then a few minutes after the plane took-off, the leader of Indian delegation gave him a piece of paper, which he read and passed on to another member Janaki Nath Zutshi.

It was written on the paper that existence of Kashmir as an independent state could also be one of the solutions, if both India and Pakistan agreed to guarantee its independence,” However, the Sheikh put it in his book in a different sequence, telling. Siddiqui when questioned, that “such an unsigned piece of paper could have no significance”. Siddiqui says, that later when the Sheikh tried to make light of the matter thus, he reminded him that Gopalswami Aiyengar was Nehru’s Minister for Kashmir Affairs and you (Sheikh) were the Prime Minister for Kashmir. You know perfectly well that no Union Minister could pass on such a suggestion to you without the express approval of his Prime Minister. Moreover, such aidememoirs are generally unsigned. Moreover, while Nehru had kept the charge of foreign affairs with himself, you were also incharge of your own foreign affairs.” “Nehru had wanted to make Kashmir Switzerland of Asia, as buffer, but no post-Nehru regime dare tell the people of India about it,” he says.

Siddiqui’s comment in the whole context is that Sheikh would plead ignorance of many things he had revealed earlier, after the withdrawal of the conspiracy case against him. Still he chose to mention this Nehruvian note in a rather round about way as emanating from Gopalsawami Aiyengar and not from Jawaharlal Nehru. So it would appear that Nehru knew the Sheikh’s mind and agreed with him on keeping Kashmir independent. In this way the two agreed with another ace Kashmiri, Pt. Ramchandra Kak, who was dismissed by the Maharaja in August 1947 as his PM for hobnobbing with the British.

At another place, the writer says quite bluntly that after an undemocratic installation, Sheikh confirmed himself in power by a rigged “100 per cent unopposed” election of the State’s Constituent Assembly in October 1951. For, all the opposition candidates were kept out either by wholesale rejection of nomination papers or plain physical coercion. He describes the Peace Brigade set up by National Conference as a band of goons who terrorised the people, particularly the opponents, into submission. “It was like Gestapo of Nazi rulers”.

However, another interesting fact revealed in this context is the total volte face of the Sheikh’s pro-accession stand which Nehru expected him to endorse in his inaugural speech at the State’s CA in November 1951, as a fulfillment of the Indian promise of plebiscite to scotch the mischief for ever. Obviously, the public pressure had become too great. So, in the written speech prepared for the Sheikh for reading at the session, there was a sentence describing the Constituent Assembly as perfectly entitled to decide the future of J&K as representative of the epeople. The Sheikh was supposed to say that the accession document was signed at his behest and that he now sealed it politically with his endorsement on behalf of the elected Assembly of the people. Now the two leaders reversed their roles.

However, says Siddiqui, the Sheikh did not read this part of the script which had been shown to Nehru earlier. The Sheikh changed his mind at eleventh hour at the advice of Mirza Afzal Beg who told him that he would be finishing his own importance and indispensability to India, at a time when his stock was going down. In fact, his administration was already becoming very unpopular because of repression, corruption, rising prices and unemployment aggravated by ban on Indian enterprise and investment in the state. But his dismissal in 1953 raised his stock again as anti-Centre crusader. Thus, the Sheikh wanted India to continue its “Platonic love” with Rs one crore daily expenditure in the state at the cost of Indian economy while he claimed his own independence and freedom to flirt with Pakistan, says the writer.

PERHAPS the most interesting part of K.A. Siddiqui’s long review is reconstruction of the events leading up to the Sheikh’s dismissal, particularly the Praja Parishad movement and the role of late Rafi Ahmed Kidwai who acted as “Nehru’s biggest trouble-shooter”. The following dialogue between Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and the Sheikh in Nehru’s room in New Delhi was related by Sheikh himself to him, says Siddiqui:

Scene: Nehru’s room. **Time:** A little before dinner.

Character: J.L. Nehru, S.M. Abdullah, R.A. Kidwai.

Kidwai and Abdullah are seated on a sofa while Nehru is absorbed in a file at his table a little away. The dialogue proceeds as follows:

R.A. Kidwai: Sheikh Saheb, how is the situation in Kashmir?

Sheikh Abdullah: Alhamad-dullah (Everything is OK by God's grace)

Kidwai: But the papers tell as different story.

Sheikh: Do you take press reports to be true?

Kidwai: You can't ignore newspapers in a democracy.

Sheikh: That is for you to see.

Kidwai: But you are also concerned with it.

Sheikh: You need not worry much about me. I can take care of myself.

Kidwai: Alright. If there is a plebiscite today, who will get more votes?

Sheikh: That is for me to see because it is my headache, but the agitation in Jammu is having a bad reaction on the Muslism of the Valley.

Kidwai: Which means, the verdict for India is not certain.

Sheikh: That may be the result, if the Jammu agitation continues.

Kidwai: But Jammu is also under your rule.

Sheikh: But the intriguers there are getting help from the territory under your control.

Kidwai: India is a democratic country; we can't suppress the opponents.

Sheikh: It is for you to see. Keep their intrigues confined to the territory under your charge.

Kidwai: Then stop the agitation, otherwise its impact on Kashmir will be very bad.

Kidwai: Then we have a remedy for that also.

Sheikh: What is ti?

Kidwai: Like in other parts of India, the refugees from East Pakistan can be settled in Kashmir as they have been settled elsewhere.

Sheikh: (Provoked) Kidwai Saheb, what are you saying? Instead of stopping your under cover support for Jammu agitation, you want to turn Kashmir into a Muslim minority region. This cannot happen in my lifetime. I will lay down my life for Article 370. I will not allow the right to vote or acquire property to any non-state subject.

(Jawaharlal pretends to be startled, although he has heard the whole dialogue)

Nehru: What is the matter?

Then Nehru puts his hand on the Sheikh's shoulders and takes him to the dinner table.

Obviously, Nehru and Kidwai (who died in 1954, a year after Sheikh's dismissal) were made of different mettle even though Nehru had been forced to dismiss the Sheikh by Kidwai's almost single-handed coup against Abdullah. But Kidwai regretted that "Nehru did not use it for complete absorption of the state into India for good." He even sent the Sheikh to Pakistan to negotiate support for independence of Kashmir in 1964. But Abdullah had to cut short his parleys with Ayub Khan because of Nehru's sudden death

(Organiser, Nov. 6, 1994)

14 A cure for Kashmir's inequities

By J.K. Dutt

Mohammad Ali Jinnah is credited with having introduced the infamous Two-Nation theory on the basis of which partition took place, with Jawaharlal Nehru humouring him on this theory because independent India's first Prime Minister had his own axe to grind. Jinnah's axiom was "Hindus and Muslims cannot co-habit". Many of us ridicule him over his belief - notwithstanding the fact that Jinnah used this as a powerful manifesto to obtain his Pakistan -by periodically, reflecting that India has much more Muslims than Pakistan.

But we have conveniently forgotten that it is India, not Pakistan, which has abundantly proved Jinnah's axiom, and no greater proof of this exists than Kashmir. Nehru, in his weird concept of secularism, conjugated that since Muslim-majority Kashmir had "graciously" acceded to Hindu-majority India, we had to do everything possible to ensure the "integrity and well being" of Kashmir's Muslim population. The contribution of the other states of India towards our secular credentials had no value for Nehru.

Thus began the unwarranted pampering of Kashmir under Article 370 that many cynics compare with Aurangzeb's pattern of life-style: summer and winter capitals, own laws and rules, heavily subsidised living, unchallenged blowing up of funds that India religiously provides, and, most of all, instituting a psychological divide between "We" (Kashmiris) and "They" (Hindustanis, as the Kashmiris disparagingly call us). Nehru, himself a diehard Kashmiri, invariably identified more with his clan than with the rest of the country. His blanket stipulation was, India's mission in life was to keep sacrificing for Kashmir so that the latter could reap the benefits without contributing anything in return. Nehru was caught out in his duplicity by Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, with dire consequences for this son of Bengal.

Nehru also consolidated the country's Muslim votes through Kashmir very successfully. His deliberate creation of the Kashmir problem was a masterstroke of Machiavellian skullduggery. Muslims apart, Kashmir also has a minority Hindu community that by their own definition claims to be of a higher brand than the Hindus living in India. To differentiate between the two - the higher Kashmiri and the lower Hindu - the Kashmiri Hindu adopted the term "Pandit" to replace the word Hindu to their context. While serving in Kashmir, I made the grave of addressing a Pandit as a Hindu and was roundly criticised for it, being categorically told, "We are Pandits, you are Hindus and don't you dare equate the two."

The most ludicrous thing about it all is that a Hindu from Hindu-majority India is debarred from buying property and settling in Kashmir lest Kashmir's pristine purity gets soiled; and yet some 200,000 of these very Hindu majority people have been protecting Kashmir from the Pakistani threat for the past 55 years. The Indian security forces comprising both the regular Army as well as the paramilitary forces have been shedding blood for the Kashmiris even while being treated as second class citizens in that state!

Historically, the Indian Hindu has been subjugated by a succession of outsiders like the Mongols, the Mughals, and lastly the British. Worse, the Hindus resignedly accepted the treatment of being kept one-down by the Kashmiris. However, the worm eventually turned and the resultant fallout of this Great Divide began to appear in the shape of rising Hindutva.

A fillip has been progressively given to Hindu communalism as a defiance to being dominated by Muslims, the inference to Kashmiri Muslims acquiring lodestar proportions. This insidious movement has now permeated all parts of the country with nary a differentiation between Kashmiri and other Muslims. Encouraged by our ersatz secular politicians, a horrific backlash started to burst on the national scene in the form of pogroms in areas far removed from Kashmir. Gujarat is one such case.

Unable to even the scores in Kashmir proper with the resident Muslims plus the Pandits who have refused to adjust with Indian Hindus, this levelling is seen to be wrought elsewhere. Today it is Gujarat, tomorrow it may be some other state. Surely it is unimaginable that Nehru and his mentor MK Gandhi were unaware that such a destabilizing wave would engulf India if Kashmir's inhabitants were not brought at par with those in the rest of the country. Yet not only did these two founding fathers of our Independence abjure from removing inequities between the two segments of our motherland but

encouraged the Great Divide solely for their political expediency. The nation is paying dearly for it now. More astounding is the attitude of the powers that be to terrorist acts being perpetrated in Kashmir especially on the Hindus. The latest one at Rajiv Nagar was crowned with the inauguration of a golf course costing 90 crores on the banks of the Dal Lake, aptly captioned by the media, "Golf blooms where guns boom!" This must do Nero proud! In an earlier incident at Chhatisingpura where thirty six Sikhs were massacred in a single terrorist strike, our man of the moment variously described as Kashmir's NRI chief minister casually dropped by at this hapless village surrounded by his commandos, aired the usual hyperbole about how a bad Pakistan was doing incorrigible things to an innocent India, and rushed off to keep a social engagement with the then US President Bill Clinton who had just arrived in India on a formal visit. Hindutva has noted these omissions and has spared no pains to employ these as adverse propaganda for creating an anti-Muslim mindset among its cult's growing disciples. The by-line most visible is, "When Kashmir sneezes, India panics!" and this is quoted as a living example of the tail - aka Kashmir - wagging the dog - aka India.

A development oriented society, as India is trying to be today, **is not going to tolerate this bizarre set up much longer. Our educated youth in particular have not taken kindly to such machinations. How should the matter be addressed in its totality? For starters, the Kashmir problem needs to be physically isolated. This can best be achieved by trifurcating the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir into three separate states of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh respectively much like as we have done with the formation of three new states ex-Bihar, MP and UP. This step will halt Srinagar's inequities in administration from adversely affecting the development as well as the security of Jammu and Ladakh. The trifurcation should be carried out well before the October elections.** Second, Article 370 must be scrapped as this political weapon has caused immense damage to India's polity. Surprisingly, the current government in New Delhi had promised to rescind this destructive article once they came to power but have quietly fallen in line with Kashmir's vice like grip on the article in question. Third, the Kashmiris must be served with an unequivocal diktat to shed their pseudo supremacy stance (some unflattering scribes refer to it as Kashmir's version of Hitler's Aryan race upmarketism) and join the national mainstream as Indians first and Indians last. They must also be made accountable for every paisa that India shells out to them, golf courses withstanding of course. And lastly, if the Kashmiris still want autonomy, it should be given to them with an explicit term of reference - they can have their autonomy provided they fend for their own security and release the Indian Army from this thankless task.

**The author is a retired Lt. Col. of the Indian Army.*

15 Resolution adopted by the House (Margdarshan-91) organised by Panun Kashmir 28/12/1991 at Jammu, J&K, India

The terrorist violence which has ravaged the state of Jammu and Kashmir for the last four years is the culmination of the long secessionist movement carried on by the fundamentalist forces in Kashmir since 1947 and overtly and covertly supported by the Pakistan. Terrorism in Kashmir is a Muslim religious crusade aimed at the secession of the State from the Republic of India and its merger with Pakistan. It is founded on an ideological struggle of which the main tenets are:-

i) that Kashmir which has a majority Muslim population should become a part of Pakistan on the basis of religion;

iii) that the rich cultural traditions of Kashmir hallowed over more than five thousand years of the history be demolished and replaced by Islamic fundamentalism; Pakistan is deeply involved in its attempts to subvert the constitutional and administrative machinery of the state of Jammu and Kashmir in order to strain and snap the relations between the State and the Republic of India. Its abetment in the terrorist violence by lending moral, political and military support is common knowledge. The terrorists operative in Jammu and Kashmir are being trained in camps raised for this purpose in Pak held Kashmir and the neighbouring states of Pakistan and then pushed into India to cause large scale anarchy, destruction, arson, murder, molestation and rape.

The Kashmiri Hindus have become the first victims of terrorism as a result of which they had to flee the place of their abode. The Hindus in Kashmir have, right from the dawn of freedom faced and fought communalism and fundamentalism. They are a part of the Vedic heartland of India and have lived in Kashmir from times immemorial. In fact, they are the original inhabitants of the Valley of Kashmir, now reduced to an ethnic minority, with a history of more than five thousand years dating back beyond the "Neelmat Era" almost contemporary to the Vedic civilization of India. The Hindu religious precepts have borne the message of universal peace, brotherhood and coexistence of all creeds and faiths. The Hindus of Kashmir are the progenitors of "Shakti" and Shaivite Monism and Hinyana and Sarvastvadin Buddhism which spread to Central Asia, Tibet and Western China. They propounded the great Shaivite doctrine of Trika and the theory of recognition. Kalhana, Jonaraja, Praj-Bhat, Shuka and Shrivara, the great masters of history compiled the historical chronicle of Rajatarangini. The Hindu Kingdom of Kashmir reached its zenith with the ascendancy of the Karkotas when Kashmir commanded respect and tribute from its neighbouring Kingdoms till the fall of Utpalas. The ascendancy of Muslim Sultans in the thirteenth century witnessed fierce religious persecution and attempts at conversion of Kashmiri Pandits who resisted it with will, and determination, preferring death to surrender.

The Kashmiri Pandits have played a major role in the liberation struggle against the British and their colonial imperatives in the State. The secularisation of the various communal movements which rocked the State in the aftermath of the growth of Muslim separatism in India was achieved, mainly due to the efforts of Kashmiri Pandits. They authored and sponsored the famous declaration of National demand in 1938, which later became the secular national movement in the state. The political movement for National self-government received its ideological content from the Kashmiri Pandits who gave the first call for self-government.

Since the independence of India and accession of Kashmir to the Indian Union, the Kashmiri Hindus have continued to fight the religious precedence as well the separatism which accompanied the rise of Muslim communalism. They were reduced to a plight of slavery, misery and servitude but they did not react against Muslim communalism as a communal minority. In spite of the forces arraigned against them viz Muslim fundamentalists, the Muslimised State-apparatus and the secessionist group, the Hindus suffered at the stake to save the secular and democratic image of Kashmir and India. While resisting the orchestrated moves fostered by Muslim communalists inside the state and their mentors in Pakistan to Islamise the State and snatch it from the Union of India, the Hindu became the victims of communal hatred and faced hostility, ridicule and privation. The Indian leaders, on the other hand, served their petty personal interests and party objectives leaving the field open for the fundamentalists to carry out their

nefarious designs. The Kashmiri Hindu was the main obstacle in the attainment of the goal of fundamentalists and was branded as the agent of the Government of India. Even a leader of the stature of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah charged them of acting as the fifth column of India. They, thus became the victims of a dangerous irony, where on the one hand they were persecuted because of their adherence to the values of secularism and democracy enshrined in the Indian Constitution and on the other hand they were jettisoned by the rulers of India.

The Hindus of Kashmir, because of their minority and almost negligible representation in the State legislature and bureaucracy, became helpless onlookers to the manouvering, manipulation and distortion of the established democratic, constitutional and legal institutions of the State which gave rise to Muslim majoritarianism. Under the system Kashmiri Hindu faced a deliberate, steady and relentless squeeze of his constitutional, political and legal rights and was forced into a slow exodus. In the process nearly three lakh Hindus have already left the Valley during the last four decades.

Muslim majoritarianism is inherently communal in nature. The Indian partition was not an accident of history nor was it contrived by the British to contain the Indian freedom movement. It was the culmination of the Muslim struggle for separate Muslim majority State where the pre-eminence of Muslim Ummah was recognised. During the last forty years of the history of Pakistan the Hindus who constituted nearly thirty percent of its population at the outset are reduced to only one percent as on today. The operative design of Muslim communalism in Kashmir has almost been similar-the Hindus of Kashmir who formed about nine percent of the population of Kashmir in 1947 are almost wiped out of the Kashmir valley by now. As a part of the grand strategy for the attainment of the Islamic and fundamentalistic State of Kashmir, communal elements and terrorist are bent upon annihilating the Kashmiri Hindus as a result of which their exodus has been made inevitable.

The terrorist violence has taken a heavy toll of unarmed, peaceloving and tolerant Hindus of Kashmir valley. Hundreds of Hindus-men, women and children, were brutally murdered and hundreds were subjected to inhuman torture and suffering. The community was driven out of Kashmir valley by force or on the pain of death. The properties left behind by them have been looted and their houses burnt or destroyed by dynamite. Right at present a scorched-earth policy is being followed by terrorists by systematically burning the Hindu localities, Hindu houses and Hindu shrines and temples.

The Kashmir history is replete with the contribution of Kashmiri Hindus to the nation's march in general and that of Kashmir in particular. Kashmiri Hindus have served as a beacon light to the entire national polity and are the real founders of secularism and democracy in Kashmir. In the modernization of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, the Hindus have contributed much more than their share and have imparted to the Kashmiri society its scientific, progressive and humane outlook. Throughout their history, more specifically in the modern times., they have tried their utmost to live at peace with their Muslim compatriots. The secular facade, which Kashmir has worn all through the last forty three years, has been provided mainly by Kashmiri Hindus. They have not reacted to Muslim communalism, instead they have faced the rigours of Muslim dominance with the fervent hope that the thrust on universal education and scientific progress in the State would pave way for the free flow of democratic thought, recognition of the human rights, the genuine urges and aspirations Kashmiri Hindu minorities, religious tolerance equity and justice.

This hope is now shattered. Neither his Muslim brethren in Kashmir nor the Indian government which swears by secularism came to the rescue of Kashmiri Hindus at the time when they were being butchered and hounded out of their homes and hearths, nor at this moment when they have been uprooted and thrown into wilderness to face a life and death struggle for survival. All the constitutional guarantees for the protection of their limb, life, property, their status and dignity have been trampled with impunity. The Hindus of Kashmir, wherever they are, therefore, unequivocally declare that:-

i) With their deep and firm commitment to social unity, religious coexistence, democracy and secularism they will not accept a society which is communalised, obscurantist, intolerant and medieval. They will not submit to any authority in the State which does not recognise their right to

life, equality, faith and protection against discrimination. They will not be a party to the present struggle launched against secular and democratic India.

ii) With their history of having lived and died for freedom and their open espousal of the cause of tolerance peace, amity and brotherhood between various ethnic, social and religious, groups, they cannot accept the pre-eminence and predominance of any single religious community at their cost,

iii) Having been the original inhabitants of Kashmir from ancient times and being the inheritors of a glorious cultural tradition of more than five thousand years, Kashmiri Pandits have as much right to live in Kashmir as any other religious group. Preservation of this community in its natural and historical habitat is a political necessity.

iv) The present crusade by the terrorists against Kashmiri Pandits to drive away the last remnants of this proud community from its rightful place is a shame for the secular India in particular and the world community in general. Any measure taken to rehabilitate this community outside Kashmir valley will only result in the dispersal of this community leading to its dissolution and extinction. This will be a tragedy, as the only relic of a small but distinct race with an outstanding culture will be destroyed.

v) Because of their equal rights to the land of their birth they stake their claim to be an equal party to any future deliberations in the process of normalisation and ultimate solution of Kashmir problem.

The Kashmiri Hindus, therefore, demand:

a) The establishment of a homeland for Kashmiri Hindus in the Kashmir Valley, comprising the regions of the Valley to the East and North of river Jehlum;

b) that the constitution of India be made applicable in letter and spirit in this homeland in order to ensure right to life, liberty, freedom of expression, faith, equality and rule of law;

c) that their homeland be placed under central administration with a Union Territory Status so that it evolves its own economic and political infrastructure;

d) that all the seven lakh Kashmiri Hindus, which includes those who have been driven out of Kashmir in the past and yearn to return to their homeland and those who were forced to leave on account of the terrorist violence in Kashmir, be settled in the homeland on equitable basis with dignity and honour.

Jammu and Kashmir

16 Trifurcation, Reorganisation and Autonomy

By Prof. Bal Raj Madhok

Jammu and Kashmir state, when it acceded to India on October 26, 1947, had a total area of 84,471 square miles. It got bifurcated between India and Pakistan on January 1, 1949 when unilateral ceasefire ordered by Pt. Nehru left about 30,000 square miles area of the state including whole of Gilgit (about 15,000 square miles), Baltistan minus Kargil and Drass belt (12,00 square miles) and the Punjabi and Pahari speaking belt along the Jehlam river including Mirpur and Muzzafrabad districts and a major part of Poonch Jagir (about 3,000 square miles) in the defacto control of Pakistan.

It did not include any part of the Kashmiri-speaking valley of Kashmir. It is therefore wrong to describe Pak-occupied territory as "Azad Kashmir. Communist China occupied about 15,000 square miles area of the Ladakh region of the State around 1959. As a result, Jammu and Kashmir State got trifurcated among India, Pakistan and China leaving only about 30,000 square miles area of this vast State under de jure and de facto control of India. It is unfortunate that political leaders and the Indian media have virtually forgotten this forced trifurcation of the state.

Part of State that remained with India includes Jammu, the homeland of Dogras and the base from which Raja Gulab Singh operated to build this vast kingdom, Kashmir valley, The homeland of Kashmiri speaking- people of the state and truncated Ladakh. Besides these three distinct regions Punjabi-Pahari speaking Uri-Titwal belt that divides Kashmir from PoK and Balti-speaking Dras-Kargil belt which divides Ladakh from Pak-occupied Baltistan are also under Indian control. For administrative purposes, Uri-Titwal has been tagged on to Kashmir and Dras-Kargil to Ladakh. With maximum length of 80 miles and maximum width of 40 miles Kashmir is the smallest and Ladakh is the biggest of these three regions.

The Kashmir Valley is surrounded on all sides by high Himalayan ranges which remain snow-bound for many months. All these three passes in the Pir Panjal range which link Kashmir valley with Jammu - Banihal, Nandi Murg and Sinthan - are about 10,000 feet above sea level. The only pass that links it with Ladakh-the Yojila Pass - is about 13,000 feet above sea level. Because of this geographical seclusion, Kashmir all through the history, has remained either a separate kingdom or separate province of the empire built by Ranjit Singh till 1846 when it was acquired by Gulab Singh. Kashmiri, the language of Kashmir, is a developed language drawn from Vedic Sanskrit like most other languages of India. Its distinct socio-cultural identity is often described as Kashmiriat. Its capital city, Srinagar, built by Emperor Ashok in about 250 B.C., was made summer capital of his vast kingdom by Gulab Singh in 1846.

Ladakh lying to the East of Kashmir across the Himalayas is also known as *Little Tibet*. It has become the biggest center of Lamaist Buddhism since the occupation of Tibet of China. It attracts pilgrims and tourists from all over the world. Its people speak Bodhi language which is written in Tibetan form of Devnagari script. Their representative organisation - the Ladakh Buddhist Association - submitted a memorandum to Prime Minister Nehru soon after State's accession to India for separation from Kashmir and direct rule from Delhi.

Jammu region extending from Punjab planes to Pir Panjal range is inhabited by Dogras who are known for their martial qualities and constitute an important constituent of the Indian Armed Forces. Quit Kashmir movement launched by Sheikh Abdullah in 1946 was aimed against them and their Dogra ruler. That added to the distrust of the Dogra people of Jammu for Abdullah and his Kashmiri followers. Jammu Praja Parishad first raised the demand for delinking of Jammu from Kashmir and devolution of power to the people of Jammu as early as 1948.

It is thus clear that demand for reorganisation of the State on the basis of unalterable geography and ground realities and devolution of power to the people of the three regions goes back to the time of accession of the State to India. To hand over the administration of whole State to Sheikh Abdullah who had no *locus standi* outside Kashmir valley was a grave blunder. His demand for special status for the whole State was not acceptable to the people of Jammu and Ladakh. That is why opposition to

incorporation of temporary Article 370 in the Indian Constitution began from the day one. The refusal of the Indian government to pay heed to this demand added to the distrust of people of Jammu and Ladakh about the bonafides of Sheikh Abdullah.

Opposition of Farooq Abdullah to the reorganisation of the State on the basis of geography and devolution of power to the people of Jammu, Ladakh and the Kashmir valley is a legacy of Sheikh Abdullah. During a great famine in Kashmir, around 1900 thousands of Kashmiri Muslims had migrated to the Doda area of Jammu across the Pir Panjal range. They multiplied fast and now constitute about 50 per cent of the population of Doda district. They have emotional and linguistic links with Kashmir and want to be a part of it. But geographical hurdle of Pir Panjal mountain stands in the way. Farooq, therefore, wants to make it a separate region of the state through division of Jammu region on communal lines. His approach is totally communal, parochial and anti-secular.

Due to over-representation given to the Kashmir valley in the State Assembly, Kashmiri Muslims have developed a kind of imperialistic tendency to dominate Jammu and Ladakh. Process of Islamisation of not only Kashmir but also Jammu and Ladakh has been going on side by side. As a result, Ladakh is on the verge of losing its distinct Buddhist identity. The growing grip of Kashmiri Muslims on the administration of Jammu is a major factor in extension of Islamic terrorism to Jammu. This has made the people of Jammu including its non-Kashmiri Muslim population desperate.

They now want complete administrative de-link of Jammu from Kashmir through reorganisation of the state and formation of separate Jammu state. It would be bigger in area and population-wise and economically more viable than Uttaranchal Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh. People of Jammu and Ladakh do not want any kind of special status and more autonomy. But they would not oppose special status for Kashmir valley within the framework of the Indian Constitution. Farooq Abdullah cannot be allowed to impose autonomy of his conception on Jammu and Ladakh. To describe reorganisation of the state on the basis of geography and ground realities given above as trifurcation of the state on communal lines is to betray a communal, anti-secular and anti-national mindset.

The problem of resettlement of about half a million Kashmiri Hindus who have been driven out from Kashmir during the last 50 years particularly since 1989 and a new set-up for Punjabi speaking-Uri Titwal belt which has little in common with Kashmir's ticklish. Kashmiri Pandits cannot go back to their original homes scattered allover the Valley. Their demand for a well-demarcated secure area in the southern part of the Valley is reasonable and justifiable. A high-powered commission must be set up to find a workable solutions of this problem. Uri-Titwal can be made an autonomous district or a Union Territory.

The developing situation in and about Jammu and Kashmir demands that policy-makers and opinion-makers of India adopt a positive, secular and feasible approach regarding the demand for reorganisation of the State and rehabilitation of Kashmiri Hindus in Kashmir.

17 VHP and RSS differ on Reorganisation

By Special Correspondent

HISTORIC RESOLUTION

Vishwa Hindu Parishad, the organisation that represents millions of Hindus in India and abroad stole march over other sister organisations of Sangh Parivar, by declaring in unambiguous terms that quadripartition of J&K State was the only strategic option left to defeat the Islamist conspiracy to slice off J&K from India. At a special session at Hardwar on June 23, its Kendriya Margdarshak Mandal (Central Advisory Board), declared.

“Farooq Abdullah government was conducting itself as Muslim Sultanate and treating Hindus shabbily. Five Hindu-dominated districts of Jammu should be made a separate state, a union territory be carved out of area north-east of Jehlum river in Kashmir valley for settling Hindus there and Ladakh be given status of union territory”.

The historic resolution also charged the Farooq Abdullah government with attempting to change the demographic pattern of the state and islamising it by harassing Hindus, bringing in Pakistani citizens and resettling Kashmiri Muslims in Jammu and Ladakh. It said, **“The state government was settling Muslims in areas dominated by Hindus and Buddhists to change their demographic character., The Farooq Abdullah government wanted to settle Muslims crossed over to Pakistan in 1947 in the state, but has done nothing to bring back the Hindus who left the Valley in 1990. Hindus in the state are feeling helpless”.** VHP resolution also demanded carving out of a five-km security belt on the border and abolition of Article 370 supporting the demand for homeland for Displaced Kashmiri Hindus, VHP said in the background of three Indo-Pak wars, Kargil aggression and persistent threat of Islamist terrorism, Kashmiri Pandits cannot survive without a territory of their own. Mr Ashok Singhal, President VHP warned, **“conspiracies are afoot to convert J&K heaven on earth into Muglistan, which will not be allowed to succeed”.** When asked whether BJP would support the resolution, Dr Praveen Togadia, VHP’s international general secretary, thundered **“we don’t care for the stand of political parties. We have assembled here to express the sentiments of millions of Hindus”.**

DEMOGRAPHIC THREAT

Elaborating the context in which VHP was demanding political re-organisation of J&K state, Mr Ashok Singhal said subsequently in Jammu that the NC has **“a gameplan to change the demographic character of Jammu and turn the Hindu majority into minority”.** VHP’s fire-brand leader observed that statehood for Jammu was must to protect dignity and honour of Hindus. He alleged, **“there was a nexus between terrorists and J&K Police and singling out of pro-terrorist elements from the state administration is not possible in the present set-up”.** Mr Singhal accused that through its several ill-advised moves Farooq government has supplemented the machinations of Pakistan to Islamise the entire J&K State, by creating a situation where Hindus feel insecure and forced to vacate and migrate to other parts of the country.

Mr Singhal told the press, **“the latest move of the NC government is to transfer 643 canals of forest land, in the outskirts of Jammu city to JDA for setting up a colony for Kashmiri Muslim migrants is a sinister one. It is gameplan of NC to change the demographic character of Jammu region including Jammu city”.** However, he warned that if statehood was granted to Jammu, a commission of inquiry will be constituted to probe how forest land was allotted to a particular section of the society.

RSS DEMAND TRIFURCATION

RSS too followed in the footsteps of VHP, by demanding trifurcation of J&K state at its Kurukshetra conclave. Political Pandits and the patriotic opinion look at RSS posturings more as a manoeuvre to revive the sagging fortunes of BJP in Jammu region rather than any concern to stem the Islamist onslaught on Jammu and strengthen nationalist consolidation in Kashmir. BJP’s alliance with National Conference and the cosy relationship Union Home Minister, Mr LK Advani shares with Dr. Farooq Abdullah, has put the nationalist resistance in total disarray and increased the marginalisation of Hindus.

BJP's electoral constituency feels they are not supporting NC by default by voting for BJP. There are also allegations that central BJP has already entered into secret electoral understanding with NC. Significance of Mr Advani's decision to torpedo the demand for Governor's rule before elections and appoint one of his close confidants as Central interlocutor to discuss autonomy issue with National Conference have not gone amiss here. How short-sighted this policy is, Mr OP Modi, an astute columnist observes, **"it will be unjust and ill advised to make any commitment to the NC for Autonomy or more powers; whatever it may be. Only when the new state government is installed should the Centre deliberate upon the complex issues dogging the state's three regions. The Autonomy demanded by the NC is not supported by either Jammu or Ladakh region. Even in the Valley no one takes the demand seriously. To concede a high constitutional change, just two months ahead of the Assembly poll, will not only be against the principle of fair elections it will be unwise and short sighted."**

In the recent Parliamentary elections it was not only rigging and in-fighting within local BJP that cost BJP its Parliamentary seat, but the total indifference of its support base. Its supporters ask what has the BJP done to prevent recurring massacres of Hindus, in countering terrorism internally and stopping the ruling NC government from pursuing patently anti-Hindu policies.

JAMMU STATE MORCHA (JSM)

All this has forced RSS to do rethink and salvage whatever little remains of sinking BJP ship in Jammu. Formation of Jammu state Morcha directly under the convenorship of its Sar Sangchalak Shri Kumar to contest assembly elections on the plank of statehood for Jammu is a part of this strategy. Describing it as a double-edged strategy, Mr OP Modi notes, **"If after raising the pitch so high for a separate state for Jammu the Morcha quietly walks away from the election field the oft repeated charge that Jammu has always been let down by its leaders will prove to be correct once again. If on the other hand due to the wrangling of the Sangh Parivar on the statehood issue the majority of the voters sitting on the fence, vote for NC or the Congress the loser obviously will be the BJP"**. Already, JSM has started issuing confusing statement. Mr Shri Kumar in a statements has said, **"our aim is not to enter the assembly but to prepare the people of Jammu to fight against the Kashmir rulers."**

DISCRIMINATION AS BASIS

In trying to argue the case for trifurcation, RSS seems to underplay the terrorist threat and is linking reorganisation only with discrimination. The resolution passed at Kurukshetra say, **"The blatant discriminatory attitude of the state government towards Jammu and Ladakh regions and the consequent dissatisfaction among the people has led to demands for trifurcation of the border state"**. At Bhubneshwar on August 6, Mr K.S. Sudarshan, RSS chief too spoke in same vein, saying, **"The state should be divided into separate states of Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh so that their development could be hastened. It would also be much easier to handle militancy"**. A day before RSS spokesperson M.G Vaidya, even while accusing Farooq Abdullah of continuing with 'anti-Hindu' and 'anti-India' policies, refused to commit how Farooq Abdullah was pursuing these policies. He just made a reference that these policies "resulted in marginalisation of Hindus in Valley". Not a single leader of any consequence from RSS, since the passing of Kurukshetra resolution, has talked about the terrorist and the demographic threat to Jammu. RSS has also been careful not to say anything disparaging that could strain BJP's cosy relationship with National Conference.

VHP STRESSES ISLAMIST THREAT

VHP has been more explicit on this issue. State president of VHP, Dr Ramakant Dubey implored Delhi to **"understand the implications of the hidden agenda of the National Conference"** and added that urgency in VHP's demand was only the outcome of **"our worry against the NC plan for Islamisation of the state"**. Alleging that NC was implementing its secret agenda of carrying out further ethnic-cleansing in parts of Jammu region on the pattern of Kashmir valley, Dr Dubey said demand for autonomy was the first step towards independent Kashmir. VHP leader explained that time was running out and quadripartition of J&K was the only way to foil the NC gameplan of carving out a sovereign Muslim state of Kashmir.

BJP ROLE

Despite BJP's all-round blundering on Kashmir, RSS is silent on its role. Any full-scale debate on spill over of terrorism to Jammu would invite comprehensive review of BJP government's performance. Even on the issue of criticism of trifurcation demand by Advani and other Central leaders, RSS sounds apologetic. Mr M.G. Vaidya remarked, **"The government is free to take its own decisions. We only make suggestions for the good of the nation and the Hindus. And that is our specific role"** RSS leadership, however, extracted a commitment from BJP that regional aspirations of Jammu and Ladakh people would be kept in mind. Mr Venkiah Naidu stated, **"When we talk of devolution of powers, we shall keep in mind the regional aspirations of Jammu and Ladakh. The feeling of alienation of the people of these regions should be addressed on priority by the State government and the Centre"**. In a television interview Mr. Seshadri Chari, editor of *Organiser* later claimed that Mr Arun Jaitley was appointed interlocutor to discuss trifurcation issue. He added, **"The trifurcation is one of the methods that the RSS has suggested to resolve the conflict areas in J&K because for long-time Jammu has been let down by the governments in Srinagar"**. Mr Jaitley was even quoted by RSS spokesperson of having said that the Centre can even consider creating a regional council to redress the grievances of the people of Jammu.

VHP CRITICISES BJP

VHP, however, fixes the blame on BJP government and openly indicts Farooq government for worsening security scenario and demographic threats to Jammu. While consoling victims of Rajiv Nagar massacre, VHP President Ashok Singhal lashed out at BJP saying, **"The way Pan-Islamic terrorists have been executing massacres of Hindus in J&K is a clear indication that policies formulated by the Centre have failed to nail militancy Rather than taking decisions on its own, Union government is looking towards western countries to fight its own war...Instead of keeping a check on the anti-national activities of Farooq Abdullah, the Union government has been succumbing to his pressure tactics."** He implored BJP government **"to come out of its stupor as Akrosh (anger) of the people has been snowballing into a big movement"**. The VHP leader warned, **"The BJP has been enjoying power only owing to the support of Hindu Samaj (society) and we can throw them out when we wish"**.

PANDIT QUESTION

RSS's skewed agenda on Kashmir which gives precedence to discrimination over security threat, has also forced it to put on hold all those strategic plans which have the potentiality to ensure holistic and permanent return of displaced Hindus to Kashmir. RSS resolution remains non-committal on the future settlement of displaced Pandits. It just asks governments both at the Centre and the state to find a way for their "safe and secure" rehabilitation. RSS's imploring to state government sounds ludicrous in view of the sentiments expressed by displaced Pandits from time to time that the ruling NC government was itself pursuing genocide and was creating obstacles for their return. To express sympathies with Kashmiri Hindus, RSS resolution rehashes the old worn out rhetoric, "the national executive feels *deeply* concerned about the fate of Kashmiri Pandits, who have been hounded out of their homes by the Jehadi Muslim elements."

VHP's stand on Kashmiri Hindus and their future is more forthright. It recognises the civilisational legacy Kashmiri Hindus carry and the specific threats to their return. Identifying strongly with Displaced Pandits, Mr Ashok Singhal remarked. **Though it is the duty of the ruling dispensation to get the Hindus back to their native places but VHP will not remain a mute spectator of their miseries. History and culture of Kashmir is associated with Kashmiri Hindus, so that their return to Kashmir valley is necessary to restore the glory of the crown of India. Kashmiri Pandits are the real inhabitants of Kashmir and the land of Kashmir belongs to them"**. VHP supremo argued, **"The demand of Kashmiri Hindus (Pandits) for their safe and secure settlement in a part of Kashmir to preserve their socio-cultural heritage and identity in the Valley is also justified as the government has failed to resettle them back at their native places"** Dr Ramakant Dubey, State President of VHP observed

that since the Kashmiri Hindus had no guarantee for honourable living in the Valley, **“our demand for a separate homeland, which will be centrally administered is justified”**.

BACKGROUND

Why are the views of two major organisations of Sangh Parivar on a sensitive issue such as Kashmir at gross variance? This has aroused the interest of common man and the observers alike. It is said RSS has a legacy of committing serious errors on Kashmir. **In early fifties, when it should have been emphasising discrimination dimension, it over played security issue. Presently, when priorities demand emphasis on security threats, RSS is looking for discrimination factor.** Four years back at a RSS meet in Jammu, Mr HV Sheshadri, RSS Stalwart frowned at trifurcation demand raised by members present and said it amounted to “gaddari” (treachery) and asked people of Jammu to sacrifice their own interests for those of nation. It was only in March 2001 that RSS leadership veered round to the idea of supporting trifurcation.

Late Dr Shyama Prasad Mukerjee, in his letter dated 17/2/53 to Nehru had offered to withdraw the ongoing agitation in Jammu and accept the Delhi agreement if the principle of autonomy would **“apply in principle to Jammu as a whole and of course also to Ladakh and Kashmir”**. Jammu and Ladakh were getting then what they are demanding now, recalled a former Praja Parishad activist. After Dr Mukerjee’s death, RSS reverted back only to integration and stopped talking of re-organisation. It was only in 1984 that BJP National Executive in a meeting at Jammu raised the demand for Regional Council for Jammu. Both Mr Vajpayee and Mr Advani had attended this meeting. Presently Central BJP is trying to play a delicate balance between RSS and its compulsions to stay on in NDA government. This role has played havoc with the interests of non-Muslim groups in the state. Such is the alienation that Kashmir unit of BJP (Displaced) has also decided to boycott the forthcoming elections as mark of protest against BJP’s rough-shodding of displaced Pandits’ aspirations. Even the Congress has started talking about special zone for Pandits in Valley.

VHP’s urgency in demanding reorganisation of J&K state is being attributed by observers to **a) spill over of terrorism to Jammu proper b) demographic threats to Jammu province c) National Conference’s dangerous agenda - Regional Autonomy Report, Resettlement Bill and Autonomy besides poaching on Jammu. Dilating upon it, Muzamil Jaleel, staff correspondent of *Indian Express* writes: “In fact, the NC’s poll strategy in Jammu is working. Over the years, it has played the communal card in the Muslim dominated districts of Doda, Rajouri, Poonch and parts of Udhampur. In fact, the regional autonomy plan which forms a core political agenda for the party in Jammu region has managed to secure it the Muslim vote bank. The party successfully tested the strategy and ensured its victory in the recent elections for the Jammu Lok Sabha constituency”**.

Whatever be the differences between RSS and VHP on reorganisation issue one thing is clear that for the first time concrete solutions are being proposed to resolve the Kashmir issue and change the terms of debate on Kashmir.

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