

Origin of Kashmir Conflict and its Complexities

Abstract

Kashmir has a long and chequered history which has been divided by the historians in different periods like Hindu, Buddhist and Muslim periods of rule. The paper attempts to trace out the roots of present trouble as the unrest of 2016 has once more shown that the entire phases of protest are embedded in the history of Kashmir. From Burhan Wani killing to annexation by Mughals there are many important historical milestones which fill the dots to understand the real picture of trouble. The present deep rooted resistance has its traces in the long period of subjugation in which people of Kashmir witnessed change of rulers but no change in the rules of subjugation. From the autocratic rules to the democratically elected governments, the sense of alienation has become a new norm of life in the present days and it is only getting expressed with more anger and violence on streets of Kashmir. Various authors have shown some important windows of history to understand this conflict in its totality and this paper has tried to connect some important milestones of Kashmir history to make readers understand some of the hidden aspects of the conflict.

Keywords: Mughals, Freedom Struggle, Dogra Rulers, Muslim Uprising, Two Nation Theory, Agenda of Alliance.

Introduction

Kashmir's sovereignty remained intact despite many upheavals in the past. It was Akbar's plans to annex all the principality around Mughal Empire that Kashmir was also pounced by Mughals. First they tied with military expeditions to annex Kashmir. Three attempts by Mughal army to take Srinagar were firmly repulsed by then rulers of Kashmir- The Chaks. Chaks were having a strong army of their own tribe which comprised of old Dardistan arch of undivided Jammu and Kashmir and was one of the finest armies to fight any external aggression. Mughals then worked on plan B, to befriend Chaks and bring them under pressure by continuous army aggression and finally bring them under kneels of great Mughal Empire. The last independent king of Kashmir Yousuf Shah Chak who was taken to durbar of Akbar was jailed and finally Mughals entered Srinagar and conquered Kashmir. Thus sovereignty of Kashmir was over and despite yearning of its country men to get back their freedom has eluded them so far. More and more efforts to revive the past has inflicted more tragedies and miseries on the people of Kashmir. The present unrest can be linked to the lost sovereignty to Mughals and the quest for sovereignty and freedom continues to live in the hearts and minds of Kashmiris even in the year 2017.

The unrest of 2016 and its spill over in the year 2017 in Kashmir valley is not a bubble created by Burhan Wani killing on July, 8. It is no isolated uprising but has beneath it veins and roots, nourished by its tragic history. The Kashmir problem in present context can only be understood when we go deeper into its history and try to trace the roots of this problem.

Aim of the Study

The aim of the study is to search for the context, for the present growing unrest and joining of local youth to militancy. The study is an effort to find the roots of the present problem of Kashmir and to throw light on such grey areas of the problem which hitherto have remained in oblivion. The study has tried to show the urgency and importance for the resolution of Kashmir dispute by dialogue and reconciliation and highlighted the ill effects of this pestering wound on the progress of entire South Asian region. The Indo-Pak stalemate in Kashmir has eroded the space for the pro-India politics in Kashmir and is virtually pushing the youth to the radicalization. The study has tried to show the real historical baggage of the problem and has attempted to show the real contours of the problem so that it helps in conflict resolution.

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Review of Literature

A number of books and articles have been written on the Kashmir conflict. This review of literature presents a snapshot of some important related works. 'India, Pakistan and the Kashmir Dispute' by Robert G. Wirsing (1994) looks at almost every detail of the Kashmir conflict, starting from the very context of the issue to boundary intricacies. A significant analysis, it however focuses less on the issue of self-determination of Kashmir. Another eminent author, a British historian Alastair Lamb in his book "Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1984-90" (1991) argues about the veracity of the Instrument of Accession and concludes that it was not signed by Maharaja Hari Singh of Kashmir on 26th of October 1947, a day before the Indian troops arrived in the Kashmir Valley to defend Kashmir against the raiders from the Northwest Province of Pakistan. Lamb argues that not only India's legal claim to the state of Jammu and Kashmir is fraudulent but that the accession was the outcome of a conspiracy between INC leaders, the Maharaja's government and senior Indian army officers including some British.

In 'Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace', Sumantra Bose (2003) analyses how owing its chequered history and the resonance of the clash of multi faceted interests and a distinct lack of political consensus, the state of J&K is no longer a simple issue, politically or ideologically. Whether it be the de facto sovereignty of India and Pakistan over their respective parts of the state, or the jurisdictions therein, or simply the grievances and aspirations of a politically alienated populace, only an accommodative compromise of hitherto fore unimagined proportions will see any meaningful end to this conflict. In his writings, Sumantra Bose has highlighted the plight of the state time and again. Pakistan's support, for instance has been documented in 'National Ideologies and the Kashmir Conflict' in 2009. Since the most powerful voice was that of Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference, which had secular credentials as a party, it would literally be the icing on the Indian cake; hence the Indian interest. This step taken at the nascent stages of nationhood by both countries has resulted in a conflict

Balraj Puri in a provocative article on "Kashmir and Rest of India: First Emotional Rupture" (2003) brings to light the first emotional rupture between the Kashmir and rest of India to the Sheikh Abdullah's arrest in August 1953. There was always a contradiction between Indian democracy and the regimented Kashmir, between monolithic Kashmiri nationalism and the regional aspirations of Jammu and Ladakh which exploded with the Sheikh's arrest. Sheikh had tactically handled the situation at the time of partition in India's favour when for the first and last time there was bitter feeling against Pakistan in Kashmiri sentiments. Puri clearly dissects the situation of the time and the bad move on the part of the Indian government to arrest the popular leader of Kashmir (Puri, 2003:5143).

The social nature of conflicts in diverse contexts of politics, history, and what lies at the core

of governance and institutions failing to deliver have been dealt with in a lucid and comprehensive manner by Louis Kriesberg and Bruce Dayton in their seminal work titled 'Constructive Conflicts: From Escalation to Resolution'. Drawing its analysis from the cyclical nature of conflicts, the book seeks to interrogate conflict in a multi-dimensional way. It has looked at conflict from every angle, and has gained its relevance from the episodes of violence, collective resistance, and incidents of violent mass protests such as those in Kashmir.

Victoria Schofield.(2003) in 'Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War' presents a vivid account of the genesis of the dispute. Starting from early Hindu rule to subsequent Muslim rule, the valley finally went under the tyrannical rule of Dogras. Maharaja Hari Singh signed the instrument of accession with the India following the tribal invasion, which has itself been the subject of controversy. Schofield elaborates that the will of the people of Kashmir to decide their own fate as mentioned in the instrument of accession was never ascertained.

Kashmir under Mughal Suzerainty

Although historically it was 1557 which is the basic milestone to understand the subjugation and the search for freedom among the people of Kashmir. In this period Mughals were able to annex Kashmir largely by deceit as the last independent king of Jammu and Kashmir Yousuf Shah Chak was taken to court of Akbar with honor and respect by Raja Bhagwan Das for an honorable settlement, was imprisoned subsequently released given the title of „Panch Hazari“, to look after Bihar province, where he died along with his poetess wife Habba Khatoon in wilderness (Aatish-e-Chinar, by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah) .The government of Jammu and Kashmir in mid-1970's was able to trace the grave of last independent king of Kashmir Yousuf Shah Chak along with his wife Habba Khattoon at Biswak, Bihar. Former secretary of J&K Cultural Academy Mohammed Yousuf Taing went to Bihar at the insistence of then Chief Minister late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to trace the grave of Yousuf Shah Chak. Finally J&K government installed an obituary on the stone at his grave showing the roots of the dispute and the endurance of Kashmiris to look for their lost freedom and liberty. (Interview of Mohammad Yousuf Taing with Noor-ul-Qamrain for DDK, Srinagar, 1994).

After the Mughals it has been only more and more subjugation with more iron fist than any accommodation of wishes and aspirations of Kashmiris. Courts changed from Delhi to Lahore to Kabul and finally to Jammu when Britishers sold Kashmir lock, stock and barrel to Maharaja Ghulab Singh for 75 lakh *nanakshahi* coins known as Treaty of Amritsar. When Dogras started ruling erstwhile entire Jammu and Kashmir political aspirations of the local population have become more profound. The resistance which was hitherto passive had started showing its visibility in the form of voices, grievances and finally street protests which forced the last Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh to flee Kashmir valley and do a hurried accession to India in a huff (Interview of

late Abdul Aziz Roshini, with Noor-ul-Qamrain for DDK, Srinagar as he was witness to the period especially from 1940-1947).

Kashmir under Dogras with shades of Jammu Dominance

In order to understand the current political unrest in Kashmir let us take the Dogra rule as a bench mark to understand the historical, political realities connected with it. The uprising of 1931 marked the beginning of search for political aspirations of subjugated Muslim population as it showed the religious overtones because they felt that Hindu –Dogra ruler was not providing them the space on religious spaces. Sumatta Bose in *The Challenge in Kashmir: Self Determination and a just peace say*, "The revolt of the politicized elements of a subjugated Muslim Population against a Hindu autocrat, bureaucracy and military ". While referring to 1931 public upsurge and subsequent killings he also gives a peep as to why local mosques emerged as a means of public mobilization by saying, "Total absence of any alternative channels of collective action and protests". There is no doubt that there was a huge role of religion in public mobilization against Dogra regime in 1931 till 1947, though the secular leader s of India could finally dominate the political narrative in Kashmir by having a close liaison and understanding with the most popular and towering leader of those times late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah.

Mridu Rai in her book ""Hindu rulers Muslim Subjects Islam, Rights, And the History of Kashmir" had summed up beautifully the historic connect between the current phase of unrest and the struggle during Dogra rule. "Today majority of Kashmir's Muslims largely believe that they are scarcely better off than they were through 101 years of Dogra rule. The personalized sovereignty of the Dogra-Hindu Monarchy and the paramount British power buttressing it disappeared in 1947. Yet, the redress of their economic, political, cultural and religious grievances eluded them even as the Kashmiris gained their „freedom“ in that year" (pp-288-289).

Two former Governors of Jammu and Kashmir B K Nehru and Jagmohan in their books have tried to show the roots of uncertainty and turbulence in Kashmir while throwing light on 'palace intrigues' enacted by New Delhi to play their own games in Kashmir. Jagmohan in his book 'My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir' while discussing the roots of the problem has largely blamed regional forces like National Conference for sowing the seeds of separatism in Kashmir. Jagmohan tries to emphasize on his understanding of roots to Kashmir unrest. He says, "The politics of deception and duplicity created different illusions for different actors of the drama. The central government particularly Jawahar Lal Nehru nursed one type of illusion while Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference entertained another type of illusion. There in lay the tragedy of Kashmir. The union leaders expected that in course of time Kashmir would get fully integrated in the union, disproving the two nation theory, while the Sheikh had an inner compulsion to act like a semi- independent monarch and establish a virtual, Sheikhdom with no one to question him" Jagmohan could be partially right while

tracing the roots, but he has tried to ignore the profound facts that Kashmiri Muslim still feels alienated and Hindu revivalism is the threat of country with emergence of RSS and BJP has pushed him further to the border of separation. Mridu Rai in her conclusion has beautifully connected Kashmir uprising to the past by saying, "The central contention of my book, then, is that it was the declining relevance of Kashmir's Muslim subjects to the Dogra states" search for legitimacy that left overwhelming numbers of them in the most abject state of helplessness. That they had no effectively powerful voice until the 1930's to protest their marginalization only compounded the problem.-----She further says this book has emphasized the need to come to terms with both the complexity of the uses made of religion by Kashmiri Muslims and the challenges this has posed to Indian secularism. This is indispensable in order to make sense of the Kashmiri past and its present; the ground was broken more than a hundred years ago for a regional people to register their protests in a religious idiom"

The Era of Muslim Aspirations

The undercurrents of religious identity overtook other aspects when in early 30's Muslim Conference was announced and late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah became its main public face. In the clash of identities regional, religious and cultural in entire Jammu and Kashmir State, coupled with overriding influence of leftists and secularists of Indian freedom struggle, in 1938 Muslim Conference was changed into National Conference. Kashmir made a huge departure from the religious politics, though it had started dominating in the entire sub-continent and resulted in partition on the same analogy in 1947. (Interview of Krishan Dev Sethi for DDK, Srinagar who has been part and parcel of these developments, by Noor-ul-Qamrain). Kashmir remained a beacon of hope for secularism, humanity and cultural bonding and even Mahatma Gandhi acknowledged that ray of hope when entire sub-continent was burning in the fires of communal frenzy. Unfortunately Jammu province could not be saved from the influence of Hindu rabids who were propped and instigated by Maharani Tara Bai, culminating in Muslim cleansing when over 4.5 lakh Muslims were killed and thousands of families and forced to migrate from Jammu (Kashmakash, Chowdary Ghulam Abbas). But Kashmir remained the last oasis of brotherhood and communal amity despite killings of Muslims in Jammu province. Late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah not only discouraged any communal backlash on Kashmiri Pandits and other Hindus in Kashmir valley but ordered his volunteers to give night vigils in all the clusters of the population where Kashmiri Pandits and Sikhs were residing to save them from the wrath of miscreants(Yaad-e-Rafta ,Krishan Dev Sethi).

Kashmir's quest with Secularism and Socialism

Riding on the moral high ground late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah took a bold, path breaking and against populist tide a decision which shook the entire subcontinent when he decided to connect the destiny of people of Jammu and Kashmir with secular India though Jammu and Kashmir was a Muslim majority state. It was huge relief to first Prime Minister of India

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru as he could stop migration of Muslim families from rest of India to the newly created country of Pakistan(Aatish-e-Chinar). Accession of Jammu and Kashmir with India was a real assurance to those Muslims who were still mulling to migrate to a country created in the name of Islam. Late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah not only rebuffed two nation theory but showcased Jammu and Kashmir State as a path breaker in an atmosphere in which Muslims of this state were yearning to be part of Pakistan. Against the huge popular undercurrents of religious nature Sheikh was able to give Jammu and Kashmir State a new beginning based on equality, humanity and secularism. Ground breaking reforms like land to tiller and new agenda for development on equality like Naya Kashmir were embedded in the socialism and secularism being preached in India (Yaad-e-Rafta by Krishan Dev Sethi).

When Punjab and Bengal were preparing to kill each other in the name of religion, late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah along with his party National Conference were busy to stop such influence reach Kashmir and were also preparing the draft of future for the people of this place. It was the long interactions with leftists like Rajendra Singh Bedi, Harkrishen Singh Surjeet and many other such stalwarts that huge agrarian reforms like land to tiller and agenda for future based on socialism and equality like Naya Kashmir could be drafted and implemented. Poor peasantry in entire Jammu and Kashmir State got the fruits of such reforms and their lives changed once and for all. (Yaad-e-Rafta by Krishan Dev Sethi).

Growing friction between Srinagar and New Delhi

Late Sheikh's romance with secularism and its fruits continued for few years and the problems started cropping up between Srinagar and New Delhi on many crucial issues. Jammu and Kashmir was having not only the special status guaranteed under article 370, but it was virtual country within a country. Jammu and Kashmir was allowed to have its own laws, constituent assembly, Prime Minister and its own President or Sadr-e-Riyasat. Nehru and his secular brigade were increasingly coming under pressure from two divergent political influences. On one hand Hindu Maha Sabha and other such right wing elements were opposing all West especially US to declare independence with Jammu and Kashmir (Aatish-e-Chinar). All these influences over Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru finally resulted in arrest of sitting Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir from the meadow of Gulmarg during the dead of night on August 9, 1953. The day marked not only the end of emotional relationship between Srinagar and New Delhi but also the end of semi sovereignty which was being enjoyed and cherished by people of Jammu and Kashmir. This action of government of India provided new blood to those communal veins in Kashmir valley which has always opposed the idea of connecting their destiny with Hindu India and supported annexion with Muslim Pakistan (Yaad-e-Rafta by Krishan Dev Sethi). Pakistan again became a visible factor in Kashmir politics post 1953 and their influence

grew and it resulted in enhancing of constituency to all those elements who were opposed to accession with India. Religious affinities became more prominent and it became almost evident now that the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir have to fight again for their political rights and have to struggle to come out from the subjugation unleashed by Indian state by arresting their most popular leader and prime minister (In Search of Future, the story of Kashmir by David Devadas.). It was followed by use of excessive force on street protests and arrest of hundreds of NC leaders and workers who were incarcerated for years. The hard line elements within NC mobilized a rebellion against government of India in different forms and manifestations. Finally Sheikh's close lieutenant Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg was able to resurrect plebiscite front or Mahaz-e-Raishumari providing Pakistan a new handle to beat India at all international forums especially at UN. The state of Pakistan became emboldened by the growing pro-Pak constituency in Kashmir and they started pumping money providing diplomatic support and raking up war hysteria to wrest Kashmir. It was because of this uncertainty and growing anti-India sentiment that Pakistan dispatched raiders and their army men into Kashmir under operation Ghiblator in 1965 and finally the troubles culminated in dismemberment of Pakistan war in 1971. Even the defeat of 1971 could not deter the state of Pakistan to make Kashmir as an instrument of their state policy and have till date continued their efforts overt and covert to bleed India and to separate Kashmir from its Union(In Search of Future, The story of Kashmir, By David Devdas).

1975 Accord and after

Momentarily Pakistan establishment dispatched messages to late Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to go for accord of 1975 which brought him back as a state chief minister with the support of Congress. For few years it seemed all was over but the military establishment of Pakistan was working on a different pattern, was thinking of how to avenge its humiliating defeat of its army and creation of Bangladesh. Pakistan used lot of army men from those 93000 strong surrendered forces who were sent back to them by India after the war. (My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, By Jagmohan Chapter Survey of History pp 105-110)

1987 Rigged Elections and Rise of Militancy

In early 80's, Pakistani establishment started testing waters in Kashmir valley and much to their surprise found a good chunk of support still intact. The cricket match in Srinagar between India and West Indies proved to them that they can work on covert operations and trouble New Delhi again on Kashmir front. The dismissal of elected government of Farooq Abdullah in 1984 by New Delhi with the help of then Government Jagmohan was the trigger to help separatist elements to get back their foothold. A disgruntled Farooq Abdullah after the dismissal of his government also helped separatists to enhance their support base, as he would openly talk anti- India and anti- New Delhi(My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, Jagmohan).After a brief political banishment, Farooq Abdullah and his party NC did something which eroded their base as they did an accord with

Congress in 1986 known as Rajiv-Farooq accord. In political shorthand it was a meek surrender by regional NC before center and it really created a vacuum in Kashmir valley which was later filled by the entire separatist element coming together under one platform under the name of Muslim United Front. MUF was the first and the last effort by the separatist elements of Kashmir to use ballot as the means to declare their intentions of Azadi on the floor of house. 1987 assembly elections of Jammu And Kashmir State proved water shed in the political journey of separatism. Elections were rigged those MUF candidate who were certain to win like Mohammad Yousuf Shah (Now UGC chief Syed Salahuddin) was dragged out of counting hall by police and taken to jail. Similar is the story of many militant commanders like JKLF chief Mohammad Yaseen Malik, late slain Peoples league supremo Sheikh Abdul Aziz and many others. Congress –NC coalition government post 1987 elections in order to quell the dissent, arrested hundreds of MUF activists and their leaders, resulted in a complete vacuum and silence. These all repressive means finally culminated in armed insurgency as most of the tortured youth after their release decided to cross over and get arms training and come back and essentially avenge their humiliation in police lockups (In Search of A future , the story of Kashmir, David Devdas) In early 1989 the attack on the house of a senior cop who was responsible for arrest and torture of youth Ali Mohammad Watali was attacked by armed rebel youth. In the encounter which was first of its kind in Kashmir valley Ajaz Ahmed Dar a JKLF armed rebel was killed, sending alarm bells to New Delhi to tackle a new insurgent phase of separatism in Kashmir. From mid-80's to 1990 Farooq Abdullah and his party National Conference realized their mistake of colliding with center and the consequences of a coalition with a centrist party like Congress. They not only lost the popular base but faced hate and anger of common people against them, mainly because Farooq Abdullah was being looked upon and dubbed by opposition as an agent of New Delhi out to torture the youth, who want resolution of Kashmir dispute. This realization finally forced Farooq Abdullah to resign as elected Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir state when New Delhi decided to crush the armed insurgency with heavy hand and dispatched the former Governor Jagmohan as a person to coordinate such operations and report directly to New Delhi(My Frozen Turbulence in Kashmir, Jagmohan). Farooq Abdullah was worried on two fronts one he did not want to be seen on the right side of New Delhi as he was very impatient to start killings to suppress the uprising, two he was more worried because at that point of time his bête noire Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was union home minister who tried his best that Farooq should stay in power (My Kashmir: The dying of the light, Wajahat Habibullah)

Before Farooq left Kashmir along with his top brass of NC and hundreds of important activists, he announced loud and clear that he has resigned only because New Delhi wants to start repressive

operations to counter insurgent movement which was having a huge popular support. Despite Farooq Abdullah's distancing from the military operations of New Delhi the hate and anger against his party was so deep that dozens of his party workers and leaders were killed by insurgents in the coming years. By the time Farooq and his party NC came back to power in 1996 with two third majority, his hundreds of activists and leaders were killed in the continued insurgency and he could come back to power only with the help of intelligence grid and counter insurgents who by their extreme repression and killings could instill, fear and allow a fringe of unionists parties to create an election mode in Kashmir valley (Kashmir the Vajpayee Years, A S Dulat)

End of Delhi rule and Farooq's new Innings

The political discourse in J&K state could not be changed nor the regional narratives. Soon after coming to power Farooq Abdullah constituted a high power committee headed by former Sadr-e-Riyasat Dr Karan Singh to fulfill his promise of restoration of autonomy. The autonomy committee after buying time of several years finally submitted its report to the government. By the time Farooq Abdullah was sensing the writing on the wall that if he would not be given any political concession by New Delhi, it would be curtains down on his political credibility in Kashmir. Farooq played a masterstroke; he passed autonomy resolution in Jammu and Kashmir constituent assembly, creating ripples in the central government corridors. New Delhi was taken by surprise by his autonomy resolution, when the Jammu and Kashmir government finally submitted to New Delhi it was thrown into dustbin mainly because of growing anger against Farooq. New Delhi started looking for political alternatives to NC and wanted to end the indispensability of Abdullah's. They were also shaken by the move of Farooq Abdullah to pass only autonomy resolution and feared that if NC stays in power with absolute majority it can create constitutional crisis (Kashmir the Vajpayee Years- A S Dulat)

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed having deep links in the union government and the former home minister was closely monitoring the moves of the center to replace Abdullah's and NC in. Mufti had always nurtured dreams to become politically relevant in Kashmir and he floated regional party known as PDP when he was convinced that center will not allow NC to come back in power and was privy to many crucial new Delhi decisions about how to do the engineering so that there is always a fragmented mandate in Jammu and Kashmir state so that there are only coalition governments in future. Had Farooq Abdullah sensed the mechanizations of New Delhi earlier he could have really created constitutional crisis but being straight forward he believed in Atal Bihari Vajpayee dispensation that will not temper or influence any election process in J&K state. By the time Farooq proved untrustworthy for New Delhi to carry on Kashmir policy, it was too late to react. But Farooq saved his face beforehand and decided not to be face of NC in the election of year 2002 and also opted out of contesting assembly elections. He

confide in many friends later that he was also knowing the intentions and game plan of New Delhi to replace him and his party and force them to be in opposition. Farooq was so much frightened that despite NC emerged as the single largest party in 2002 assembly elections he decided not to make any efforts to make a government with the help of independents or Congress. Farooq soon after the results told his party leaders that it was in their best interests to sit in opposition and pave way for the central government to make Mufti Mohammad Sayeed CM of Jammu and Kashmir state despite having only 16 seats (Kashmir the Vajpayee Years, A S Dulat)

In the period of year 2002 to year 2005 when Mufti Mohamamd Sayeed was the chief minister, Indo-Pak friendship bonhomie was at its peak and Kashmir was at such a stage that everyone was confident of a solution 'very soon'. Confidence building measures and irreversible peace process' between India and Pakistan were making even the people of Kashmir to feel that finally there would be a resolution to this dispute called Kashmir issue. India and Pakistan took a huge step in the confidence building arena when they opened Srinagar Muzaffarabad road and started Karvan- e-Aman bus service which till date is going on. The central government always faced problem of how to replace NC and Abdullahs with more viable and popular slogans so that it becomes a cadre based political party. So when PDP was born Mufti was given lot of field to talk about soft separatism including dual currency and self-rule for entire undivided Jammu and Kashmir to make him relevant. Not only soft separatism but mufti managed to get to election symbol as pen and inkpot 'qalam and dawat' which was the election symbol of MUF in 1987 elections and was still in the minds of the people as an election symbol of separatist's. Mufti even fiddled with a dangerous area as he befriended their families and ideologue Jamat-e-Islami . Mufti could make foothold in South Kashmir and win the assembly seats in the year 2002 election mainly because of tacit support of Jamat-i-Islami and many separatist elements. Mufti promised them level playing field after elections and kept his promise. He released Syed Ali shah Geelani from Ranchi jail and got him treated at TATA hospital Mumbai. He released all the separatist leaders who were taken to jail with warning from Farooq that he will rot them in jails. He became a liberal face of India in Kashmir and coined slogans Bandok se na goli se baat bane gi bole se. Mufti did not stop here he allowed separatists to move freely and propagate their ideology as he coined slogans like politics is a battle of ideas . Mufti was of the opinion that Farooq has made separatist constituency strong and its leaders popular buy his repressive policies and felt that if they were left to look for their own foothold they will become irrelevant (Kashmir the Vajpayee years, A S Dulat)

Farooq Abdullah was nursing his wounds and cursing his fate for once more believing in New Delhi. Before 2002 elections Farooq Abdullah had crossed all limits of sycophancy and to be on the right

side of New Delhi by blasting the houses of all those villagers where militants used to take shelter and arrested hundreds of hard core separatists before election including prominent leaders of Jamat-e-Islami. Farooq after the elections felt that he was deceived by New Delhi and wanted for their all unpleasant decisions his face to discredit him among his own people in Kashmir. Farooq became paranoid and was not even happy with his own family including his son Omar Abdullah who instead of becoming apolitical asset fast becoming his liability. Omar who was a junior minister in NDA government at center was one of the main factors to convince his father to carry out repressive policy and told that NDA government was having no plans to replace him in Jammu And Kashmir State. Time proved that Omar Abdullah at that time was young naïve bereft of any political wisdom and was more interested that his life and power in New Delhi should be disturbed even if his party had to pay a price for it(Kashmir the Vajpayee years, A S Dulat)The price was heavy, for the first time in Abdullah family the scion lost in the assembly elections at Ganderbal, the forte of his family and party for decades. Faoq felt humiliated by the defeat of his son Omar Abdullah and frustrated the way the people of Kashmir rejected his party. Farooq was only waiting for time .He was having a feeling that Mufti cannot carry on his romance with separatists and militants and was waiting for tripping point. Farooq was more than happy when center started doubting even Muftis intentions and were closely monitoring Mehbooba Mufti's connections with militant commanders and some separatists. Farooq was only banking on then Governor S K Sinha who dispatched dozens of confidential reports to New Delhi about how Mufti's policies and soft separatism was becoming instrumental for fanning of new wave of separatism and anti-India sentiment in Kashmir valley (Television interview of Farooq Abdullah before 2002 elections with Noor-ul-Qamrain).

Emergence of Mufti and efforts for Kashmir Settlement

To curtail the innings of Mufti Mohammad Sayeed in 2005 was a decision more crystallized by intelligence inputs and confidential reports of Raj Bahvan. GhulamNabi Azad replaced him as CM of Jammu and Kashmir State and all the pro-separatist policies and liberal decisions were kept on hold. Azad focused only on development and was in a hurry to give public postures for the national integration. His controversial speech of praising Mahatma Gandhi at a teachers convention and his free hand to these security agencies and intelligence grid to carry out their anti- militancy operations, closed the chapter of Mufti's vision to befriend separatists and make them irrelevant.

Beneath the surface of apparent calm there was palpable discontent especially among youth, growing as 'lava'. It finally exploded with Amarnath land row as entire Kashmir came on streets demanding freedom and demanding end to New Delhi's intervention to change the demography. PDP sensing the trouble in Kashmir valley tried to save their vote bank by pulling the rug out of Chief Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. PDP

withdrew support to Azad and it was curtains down on Congress- PD coalition in J&K state. Hate and anger against PDP and Congress was so overwhelming in Kashmir in 2009 assembly elections, Omar Abdullah and his party NC made a comeback and PDP was forced to sit in opposition. Congress decided to provide support to Omar Abdullah as CM but with caveat that their own face during the elections as Chief Ministerial candidate Farooq Abdullah to step aside. Farooq buckled under the pressure of his son Omar who was very desperate to get power in the state and also sealed a deal with congress without setting any agenda other than six years as chief minister for himself. NC and Congress did not sign any agenda of alliance to govern Jammu and Kashmir State it was a power deal only for the six year term for chief minister ship term for Omar Abdullah. (In search of future, The Story of Kashmir ,David Devdas)

Omar Abdullah started his innings on a shaky ground as in few months he faced a public storm in South Kashmir when two Kashmiri women were raped and subsequently killed allegedly by the security forces. PDP made him uncomfortable on the chair right from the start and they pinched and teased him by their shrewd political moves. On the floor of house when he was confronted with a CBI document with his name as an accused in the infamous sex scandal in which some politicians, ministers and bureaucrats were arrested, he announced to resign only to be pushed by his father to face such situations in public life.

Omar Abdullah was still struggling to understand the rough edges of sitting on chair as chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir that he was caught unawares when 2010 unrest engulfed entire Kashmir. Omar disappeared from the scene as Chief Minister was terrified to face angry mobs, refused to even meet his colleagues and activists. Omar Abdullah was under shock and had little control over the police and security forces as they used excessive force to control the unrest and killing 124 persons mostly the teenagers. Omar carried this blot throughout his tenure and finally the deluge of 2014 washed away all his hopes and mechanizations to come back in power. PDP in the opposition was waiting to exploit such situation and they came out whole hog to further shrink the base of NC in Kashmir valley. Omar Abdullah during his six year of tenure as chief minister of the state could not keep army on his right side and had lot of tiffs with army commanders. Army finally scuttled his large ditch before to lift AFSPA from Srinagar Jammu cities, as face saving for him to go back to people for votes. In the last months of his being in power he could broker deal with army through his father Farooq Abdullah as he was not sure that he can win from Sonwar assembly segment Farooq motivated army to clear the Tosa Maidan firing range so that his son could contest from bureau assembly segment in order to save his face. Omar visited the cleared Tosa Maidan with locals of bureau and could muster support from them to pave way for him to finally get elected for this assembly segment and lost Sonwar to PDP (Kashmir, the dying of the light by Wajahat Habibullah)

Post 2014 elections, the winds of change from Bihar started making its presence in Kashmir valley. Nitish Kumar, Laloo Yadav, Baghat Bandhan, encouraged Omar Abdullah to openly offer support to PDP to form the government in order to keep BJP away from Jammu and Kashmir state .Late Mufti after weighing his options took a dangerous and surprising decision to form an alliance government with BJP in J&K state for the larger interests of people. Little did he know that it was no Vajpayee time BJP and RSS was more than keen to undo history in Kashmir valley? Only in the first few months as Chief Minister late Mufti could realize the follies of his decision to go with BJP in spite of huge opposition from within his party. He was of the opinion that prime minister Narendra Modi with a clear mandate will go for reconciliation not only with separatists of Kashmir but also with Pakistan to usher the South Asia into peace and prosperity. Late Mufti Mohammad Sayeed died in Delhi hospital waiting for the promised flood package to come, Even the normal funds to J&K state were choked by the BJP government and have demonstrated on the political front that it would not be business as usual either for Hurriyat or Pakistan with New Delhi. Soon after the death of Mufti, Mehbooba Mufti decided to break the alliance and go to the people for fresh mandate with an aim to get the seats from the Muslim pockets of Jammu also. But her plans were scuttled by the men in shadows who were looking for options like PDP minus Mehbooba Mufti to continue BJP government in J&K state. Sulking Mehbooba woke up to the bitter realities of mainstream politics in J&K state driven mostly by pressures of unknown hands and was compelled to form the government with BJP again. She could maneuver little as she was not even informed when army with the help of police killed Hizb poster boy Burhan Wani in an encounter on July 8, 2016 plunging Kashmir valley into unrest and violence for months. Mehbooba is caught between devil and deep sea as she is facing hostile Kashmir with no headway on agenda of alliance with BJP to assuage their feelings. While the BJP is using the alliance with PDP only to consolidate the Hindu vote by exhibiting by the security measures that it is not business as usual with people of Kashmir. Free hand to Army and security forces by the central government has made position of Mehbooba mufti not only awkward but also an emerging hate figure after Abdullah's in Kashmir. Killing of 20 civilians including women and teenagers at the encounter site protests has really made PDP in Kashmir a party seen as an extension of BJP and RSS. This perception among the people of Kashmir is growing and can lead to another political vacuum as PDP is no longer a buffer between New Delhi and Srinagar. History repeats itself and it seems so far that late mufti Mohammad Sayeed's decision to shake hands with Prime Minister Modi will prove exactly like Farooq Abdullah shaking hands with Rajiv Gandhi for an accord and finally his coalition government with congress post 1987 elections.

Conclusion

Jammu And Kashmir State is caught in the deep waters of uncertainty as violence has embedded

itself deep down into the society. But the fire seems far from extinguishing and the political vacuum is becoming visible in absence of any dialogue process with separatists .There is no political buffer between New Delhi and Srinagar and the continuous muscular policy is making space less for all the voices of reconciliation here. It seems very uncertain where Kashmir will head from such a past of history. Will violence break the social fabric and make this place war torn like Syria? Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is repeatedly asking people of Kashmir whether they want to make it another Syria. Has she got some firm inputs as state chief minister or is she playing in the hands of intelligence agencies who always present a magnified and dreaded scenario to all chief ministers of Jammu And Kashmir State. Protests of months are continuing though on low scale. Kashmir is again on precipice. It is very interesting to watch the policy developments of year 2017 as Kashmir is on the brink. Will it come on the decades of uncertainty and be a grand peace by an interesting dialogue with New Delhi. But New Delhi so far has unveiled its Kashmir policy as to kill every active militant in Kashmir and to retrieve pak occupied Kashmir from Pakistan. Is it pipe dream of New Delhi? Will the weeding out of militancy finally silence those lakhs of people who are on the streets to say no any arrangement with New Delhi for future. What will happen to the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Will the muscular policy of New Delhi only curb the sentiment of azadi to some extent for some time or will New Delhi crush the sentiment and assimilate Jammu and Kashmir into the rest of mainstream?

Kashmir conflict has the potential of triggering not only Indo-Pak conflict but also has all the ingredients to destabilize entire south Asia. The present attitude of new deli shows the arrogance of an emerging power who don't want to even listen to what Kashmiris want. The bitter history of Jammu and Kashmir post 1947 shows that the sentiment of azadi has only grown and sadly is showing now its manifestation not only in violence but virtual death wish among the youngsters and the rest of the population. The Kashmir struggle has the potential to withstand all the curbs and means of suppression being used by New Delhi to end it. Perhaps a word of caution is profound in the recent write-ups of former

home minister P. Chidambaram who has said that he was sensing Kashmir is slipping out of the hands of New Delhi.

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