

## Unit \_II

### I. Political Awakening

#### **Q: -Political Awakening: Causes.**

**A:** -Political Awakening in Kashmir discusses the key aspects and facets of Kashmir politics comprehensively, analytically and dispassionately. The promising land of Kashmir lost its independence when the Mughals annexed and joined it with their Empire of India in 1586 A.D; and thus, from that time it served as the north most point of an empire whose power pedestal was situated in Delhi. After their departure it came under Afghans (1753-1819), Sikhs (1819-46) and then under Dogra's of Jammu (1846 -1947).

Thus, over the centuries the Kashmiri's lived under the yoke of foreign dynasties. Their policies were always against the inhabitants as it was a guiding principle to rule longer. It helped in arousing consciousness among the inhabitants and resulted in the rise of political awakening in the Kashmir. Although it emerged very late in comparison to Indian subcontinent, but they were enough conscious of the exploitations prior to their counterparts. They resisted throughout ages but the oppression continues. The chief organization which helped the people at the odd hours was the Sheik Abdulla's Muslim Conference which within a passage of time changed its nomenclature as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. It initially accommodated the divergent religions i.e. Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs but within a passage of time fizzled out of mission.

With the formation of the Jammu and Kashmir state in A.D 1846, the Dogras deemed the land and the people of the Kashmir as their personal property. The government apathy and policy of alienations and suppression on the Muslim majority resulted in awakening the inner

consciousness of the people of Kashmir which resulted in the formation of the associations like Reading Room Party and Muslim Conference. Although these mini- parties aimed at the safeguarding the interests of their co-religious people i.e Muslims, but with founding the National Conference under the leadership of Shiekh Abdullah, the horizon of the party was somewhat broadened which paved the way of entry for non-Muslims as well. This soon fizzled out as both (Muslim and non-Muslim leadership) lacked the broader vision of handling the situation around 1946. Sheikh Abdulla emerged as a sole monopolistic decision maker impressed by the ideology of J. L. Nehru shaped the rest history of the state of J&K. His organisation could not remain stick with the primary goal of accommodating the other religions. Thus, the experiment failed.

### **1931 Unrest**

The year 1931 was the beginning of an original freedom struggle initiated by Kashmir Muslim against the autocratic rule. The up-rising of 13<sup>th</sup> July 1931 was not merely protest against the excesses of certain officials regarding religious practices of Muslims but it was vehement expression of deeply felt resentment of Muslims who had failed in the past to persuade the rulers to do them justice.

The spark was sullied by the arrest and trail of Abdul Qadir a religious fanatic from Peshawar who had come to Kashmir in the service of an European official. On 21 June 1931 at the end of Khanqahi Mualla meeting organized by Kashmiri leaders, he delivered an emotional speech against Govt. He was arrested and on the day of his trail on 13<sup>th</sup> July 1931, a large crowd gathered outside the prison (central Jail) walls. When the

session judge and other officials arrived the mob becomes uncontrollable and some of the Muslims forced their way into the outer compound of the Jail. The District Magistrate, who had also come by this time, ordered the arrest of some of the ring leaders of the mob. The arrest angered the crowd who demanded the release of their leaders and when the demand was not met, the crowd became restive and threw stones. The Magistrate on duty ordered to open fire, which resulted killing of masses of 21 Muslims and scores injured. This was the most important day in the annals of Kashmir history. From this day the struggle for independence and freedom in the most modern sense started openly.

The incident of 13<sup>th</sup> July 1931 shook the whole state including the administration. Soon after the incident, the arrest of Muslim representatives added fuel to the fire of wild excitement, which held the people in its grip. This day saw the beginning of the gigantic force behind the mass movement. A hue and cry was raised in the whole sub-continent particularly in Lahore. The Lahore press sent a wave of anger all over India resulting in protest meetings and processions in every city, town and important village expressing sympathy and solidarity with the Muslims of Kashmir and calling upon the British Govt. to depose Hari Singh and take the state under its direct administration.

In order to coordinate these activities in various parts of India, Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Amir of Ahmadiya took initiative and convened a meeting of leading Muslims at Simla on 15<sup>th</sup> July 1931 in which foundation of All India Kashmir Committee was laid. Kashmir Day was celebrated both within and outside the valley on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1931.

### Glancy Commissions

The Maharaja appointed a commission on 12<sup>th</sup> November 1931 under the chairmanship of the Sir. B.J. Glancy of the foreign and political department of India and it submitted its recommendations on the report of the commission on 10<sup>th</sup> April 1932. The commission besides the president had four members one Hindu and one Muslim from Kashmir province. The following orders were passed by the Maharaja.

**Religious: -**

- i. That the recommendations of the commission in respect to the restoration of sacred buildings, mosque etc should be restored to the Muslim community.
- ii. That there should be no interference with religious observance.
- iii. That all officers concerned should make it their duty to see that the severest notice is taken of any provocative action of insult to religion irrespective of the community.
- iv. That the people to changed or intend to change their religion should not harassed by police or officials or non-officials.

**Education: -**

- i. The education department should devotee its attention to the expansion of primary education.
- ii. That the department should draw up programme in regard to Middle and High Schools and further expansion in this direction should take place.
- iii. Special Mohammadan Scholarships, free studentship orphanage scholarships etc.
- iv. The number of Muslims employed as teacher's inspectors and clerks in the education department should be increased as soon as possible.

**Services: -**

- i. Minimum qualification for appointment should not be pitched unnecessarily high.
- ii. Muslims, who form greater majority of the population, should be given greater share, in matter relating to the employment in state services.
- iii. Measures should be taken to provide a system of appointments and to prevent the due interests of any community from being neglected.
- iv. All vacancies should be effectively advertised and similar action should be taken in regards to scholarships intended to provide equipment for Govt. services.

**Land Revenue: -**

- i. Proprietary rights should be conferred in respect to all lands of which the ownership is held by the state and occupancy rights are enjoyed by private persons.
- ii. No restriction should be imposed on cutting of wall nut trees, mulberry trees.
- iii. Action should be taken to define the inter provincial boundary for the purpose of Kahcharai collection and no Kancharai should be demanded from butchers and other persons when they bring goats and sheep's within the Menial limits for purpose of slaughter.
- iv. That the recovery of the state Malikana should be discontinued throughout the state territories.

**Miscellaneous: -**

- i. All officers should be warned that corrupt practices are not to be tolerated and exemplary punishment should be awarded to the erring officials.
- ii. The practice of recovering Darumarath dues in kind should be replaced as soon as practicable by cash recoveries in all cases.
- iii. Improvements to Srinagar city in the matter of drainage and the widening of the streets should continue to receive attention. The provision of a proper approach road to the Muslim cemetery at Jammu should be duly considered.
- iv. The infant marriages should be prevented and no harassment and abuse should be adopted.

The president of the constitutional reforms conference, Mr. Glancy recommended an unwieldy legislative Assembly comprising 60 members of whom 33 to be elected 22 nominated and five appointed by the Maharaja. It was also recommended that the tenure of the proposed assembly be of three years and it should meet twice a year, in autumn at Srinagar and in spring at Jammu. It was further recommended that the assembly should be presided over by the Prime Minister or any other Minister as may be nominated by the Maharaja. The assembly was proposed to be vested with the powers to legislate on all the subjects except foreign relations and the control of the Armed Forces. It was also recommended that powers be reserved in the Maharaja to certify any bill.

## **II. Foundation and Role of Muslim Conference with special reference to Naya Kashmir Plan**

### **Foundation of Muslim Conference & its role**

The most popular, intelligent, impressive and active member of the Reading Room party was Sheikh Mohd Abdullah with M.sc chemistry from Aligarh University was responsible for organizing meetings in various parts of valley. He collected funds from the people for the preparation of annual session of Anjuman-I Nusrat-ul- Islam in December 1931 but was arrested on 20 Dec.1931. The arrest of Sheikh evoked widespread resentment among the people and Hartal was observed in every nook and corner of Kashmir”

The open revolt of the people continued and the government left no stone unturned to suppress it. The Mirwaiz of Kashmir Mohd Yusuf Shah gave a call for jihad and people came out with axes, swords & whatever tools they were available in their homes.

Encouraged by the mass support the Muslim leadership thought it better to launch an organized struggle by forming a political organization, So they consulted Jammu leaders of Kashmir committee who provide them full support. So a committee was setup which drafted a constitution and decided to name it as All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference. It also adopted a flag consisted of green cloth with crescent and a star representing Muslim community and a piece of white cloth representing the minorities. The first session of the conference was held on 14, 15, 16 October 1932 at the historic pather Masjid Srinagar & was presided over by Sheikh Mohd Abdullah. It was a unique gathering where all the Muslims irrespective of social distribution sat shoulder to shoulder on the same platform and the party headquarter was known as Muja hid Manzil. The flag hoisting ceremony was performed on 14oct.1932 by walliullah- Zain-ul Abdin, a representative of the All India Kashmir committee.

**Role of Muslim Conference: -**

The national consciousness that had developed among Kashmir is as a result of modern education ultimately culminated in the formation of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference which played a dominant role in the politics of Kashmir from 1932-1939.

**1) Nature:-**It is said that Muslim conference was safeguarding the interests of Muslim community alone, but it is not true, Muslim conference worked like a true secular organization which represented the cause of the deprived sections of all the communities. Muslim conference struggle for the welfare of peasants only, but it was meant for all the communities. The demands of Muslim conference were not revolutionary in nature but close resemblance with early nationalists of Indian national congress can be seen. The only difference was that Muslim conference had a great faith on the role of masses.

**2) Social welfare program me's:-**The Muslim conference realized the importance of education and demanded the promotion and creation of schools in different areas of the valley, besides the leaders of conference appreciated the importance of higher and technical education. It is because of the role of Muslim conference that in 1933 the peasants got proprietary rights in land and were exempted from grazing tax and the confiscated religious places were also restored. The Muslim conference also fought for providing medical facilities to the people.

It was because of the struggle of the Muslim conference that the govt. granted the rights to form political associations and freedom of press and platform was granted. On this achievement, Shiekh Mohd Abdullah in 2<sup>nd</sup> session of in Muslim conference on December 17, 1933 says , “That the state could no longer deny the natural rights of the people.....Today you have the full right to form associations”.

**3) Programme of constitutional reforms:** - Constitutional reforms formed an integral part of the programme and activities of the Muslim conference from the beginning. In response the govt. appointed a franchise committee under the chairmanship of Barjour Dalal. The conference demanded immediate establishment of the constituent Assembly. It also rejected the franchise committee report, on various grounds .e.g. Boatmen were not included in voter list, out of 75 member 34 were Muslims i.e.80% of Muslim conference captured 19 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslims.

In 1933 Muslim conference started civil disobedience Movement and observed a responsible government day on 8 May 1936.

**4) Economic Programme:-** It was the fundamental feature of the Muslim conference. In its first annual session the conference demands the grant of proprietary rights in land, reduction in land revenue, abolition of Nazraana, education of agricultural science and importance of fertilizers etc. It also expressed its disappointment over the recruitment policy of the state, deplorable conditions of peasants, collection of revenue and methods of assessment, Dharmrath etc.

**5) Methods of political work:** - Muslim conference organized demonstrations and hartals, but the most important were convene annual session where problems of people were discussed. The conference adopted moderate methods but at certain occasions it also adopted extremist methods. It centered elections and fight the government.

**6) Split of the conference:** - In 1933 Mirwaiz Mohd Yousuf shah parted his ways with the Muslim conference and started a separate organization called the Azad Muslim conference. It was the policy of govt. which create dissensions among the Muslim leadership. The Dogra govt. rewarded the Mirwaiz with a jagir. The followers of Mirwaiz were called Bakra and

those of sheikh Mohd Abdullah as sher and the clashes between the two became the order of the day.

At last we can say Muslim conference did its best for the welfare of people and freedom of Kashmir.

### **Role of National Conference**

National Conference played a significant role during the struggle for freedom in Kashmir true the freedom movement of Kashmir was represented by other ideological groups but National Conference was the single largest party struggling for the freedom of Kashmir.

The first session of the National Conference was held in October 1939 and the conference passed a resolution demanded responsible Govt. The conference no doubt had a concrete programme for the freedom and economic uplift of the state throughout its carrier and no doubt the conference followed a concrete programme for the achievement of economic and political welfare.

**The National Conference between 1939 to 1944 demanded and worked on the following points: -**

- i. Establishment of a responsible Govt. in the state.
- ii. Reduction of land revenue and the revision of assessment of land
- iii. Welfare of the labor class like daily wagers, peasantry and artisans
- iv. Preventing people from wasteful expenditure on marriage and other ceremonies and preventing them in dragging each other to courts on litigation matter and advising them to resolve their disputes friendly.
- v. United the people of Kashmir irrespective of caste and creed in order to have a common platform against the anti-people policies of Dogra rule.

National Conference called different parts of the state in which the above-mentioned points were stressed up to 1944 and went a long way in persuading the govt. to lessen the burden on peasantry and other oppressed classes. It was because of these efforts that the conference became the most popular party during the struggle for freedom. In 1944, it adopted a programme of socialistic pattern as its goal. It laid down a plan for an all sided advance along all avenues of human activity in a democratic manner. The plan covered agriculture industry, transport, distribution, utility service, currency and finance. The new ideology gave meaning to the common man's struggle for freedom and assured his unstinted loyalty to the conference and its leaders.

**The National Conference played a very significant role in proposing Naya Kashmir manifesto: -**

- i.** The Naya Kashmir proposes a constitution in which a single citizenship is established for all citizens of J & K, Ladak and frontier regions including Poonch and Chinani. The equality of the rights of all citizens irrespective of their nationality, religion, race or birth in all spheres of life political, economic and social.
- ii.** Freedom of conscience and of speech Shall be granted to all citizens
- iii.** In conformity with the interests of the people for the purpose of promoting political awakening the National consciousness all citizens shall be guaranteed by law
- iv.** Freedom of speech, freedom of press, assembly, meetings processions, demonstrations with interests of the people and for the purpose of developing self-expression through the organization of political activity of masses. All citizens shall ensure the right of

combining in public organization, trade unions, cooperative societies women and youth organization

- v. The privacy of the homes shall not be violated.

In May 1946, the National Conference launched its Quit Kashmir movement for the transfer of power to the people. The movement was against the Maharaja and his family strong measures were taken by Kak against the leaders and very soon the movement fizzled out. But before the iron hand of Kak could pounce upon Bakshi Gulam Muhammad and G.M. Sadiq, they had left the state to direct the movement from the rest of the country, and by the efforts they kept the people fully posted with the real aims and objects of the movement.

### **Convergence of Muslim Conference into National Conference: Causes**

The Muslim conference was a secular and progressive organization. The leaders of conference came forward in the Muslim name but their programme and manifest was as broad as that of any progressive political organization of the Indian subcontinent. The leaders made no distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims while pleading for aberration of the conditions. The Muslim conference made persistent efforts to ensure a joint struggle of the Muslims and non-Muslims. It did not miss even the smallest opportunity to strive for this cherished goal. In all its annual sessions the conference stressed on forging Hindu-Muslim unity.

There were lot of factions among Muslims in the state. The young and the dynamic personalities diminished the importance of the religious and conservative group represented by Moulvi Muhammad Yousuf Shah. S.M. Abdullah was immensely influenced by the charismatic leadership of both Gandhi and Nehru and by the secular nature of the disobedience

movement launched by Gandhi and also S.M. Abdullah was advised by Nehru to do so. The Sheikh made it clear to Pandit Nehru that Muslim conference was a secular organization. But the congress leader suggested him to broaden the sphere of the movement in such a way that the non-Muslim would have no excuse in joining it.

In 1935, a long debate continued among the Muslim conference leaders on the issue of reorganizing the Muslim movement. Many Hindus and Sikh leaders were invited to attend the annual session of Muslim conference as a special initiative. From this period there were gradual change in ideology of freedom movement and its was becoming more secular.

In 1938, Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues of Muslim conference met Nehru, who advised these leaders to convert Muslim conference into National Conference. During the same year, the political atmosphere in Kashmir was changing rapidly, the Hindus of Kashmir founded of new organization namely 'Hindu Progressive Party' and also supported to the Hindu Muslim Unity and the struggle for responsible govt.

The working committee of Muslim conference met at Srinagar on 28<sup>th</sup> various political parties which was signed by S.M. Abdullah Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, G.M. Sadiq Jai Lal Kilam, Shyam Lal Saraf and Sirdar Budh Singh. It stated that the ultimate goal of the people according to this demand was to bring about complete change in their social and political outlook and to achieve responsible Govt. under the patronage of the Maharaja. The recommendation of working committee of Muslim committee was accepted by General Council and thus the change of name took place, Muslim conference become National Conference as all Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.

