

A HISTORICAL EVALUATION OF THE KASHMIR ISSUE

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ABSTRACT: *The research titled A Historical Evaluation of the Kashmir Issue purpose to draw out the historical events of Kashmir and the conspiracies around it in chronological order. The prior need for the research is to create awareness about the root cause of the Kashmir issue.*

This research is based on the historical analysis of data from the Vedic period till the resolution passed by United Nations (UN) in 2010. The data is mainly drawn from the secondary sources like reviews, books and historical recordings of the events. This paper focuses on the restraints faced by Kashmiris due to the internal affairs and disputes of the Indian, Chinese and Pakistani Governments. This research will also argue about the areas occupied by India, Pakistan and China and the treaties signed on this regard in the due course of the paper. Further, this research will put a spotlight on the less attention given by the public and Governments on resolving the real conflict in Kashmir.

Key Words: *Kashmir, Kashmiris, History, Analysis, Restraints, Conflicts, Government, India, Pakistan, UN*

I. Introduction

The state of Kashmir covering, a total surface area of 2, 22,236 km² shares its border with India, Pakistan and China. The state comprises of a huge population ranging about one crore and ten lakh people in it. The total area of the state of Kashmir is occupied by the neighbouring countries like India, Pakistan and China. India occupies nearly 48% of Kashmir; Pakistan has got 35% of land in their hands and 17% of the land falls into the hands of China.

This paper deals with the historical analysis of the Kashmir and the conspiracies behind the occupancy of the state by its neighbouring countries which led to a contentious restrain among the Kashmiris. This less spotlighted subject turned the international attention since the announcement of accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947 (post Indian independence). Pakistan continued to claim that it should have been their possession as it is of Muslim majority. The rise of the Poonch or Punch region against this decision led to the 'Azad Kashmir' which comprises a cent percent Muslim population in it. The political conspiracies behind the accession of Kashmir led to the prevailing restrain of the common people living there. The Chinese occupancy in Kashmir took place after the Indo-Pak war in 1965 which was gifted to them by Pakistani Government for their help during the war period. The dispute for occupancy in the state of Kashmir between India & Pakistan continues to be the root cause for the problems among the people in Kashmir.

The Kashmir issues have its root from the agreement which was signed by Raja Hari Singh under the provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947. The agreement was made to save himself from the people of the region who rebelled against him for the sudden increase in taxation. On imposing this act, the Kashmiris felt their rights were denied by Raja Hari Singh. This unlawful act faced by them, reflected in 'Quit Kashmir' Movement led by Sheikh Abdullah in the year 1946. Later in the year of 1947, a group of people in the region accepted to join with India which saw an huge opposition from another set of people who protested against the clubbing of the state with Indian sub-continent. As a solution for this issue and in order to solve the outrage among the peoples within the state, Lord Mountbatten suggested to conduct a referendum (Plebiscite). Keeping in mind the majority of the Muslim population Raja Hari Singh rejected the idea of referendum and made an agreement with India. Instead of reducing the problem, it increased the outrage among the rebels of the region. This made the rebels from North Kashmir to declare their region as 'Azad Kashmir'. The incursion of other neighbouring countries started in 1948 when Pakistan slowly occupied the parts of Kashmir. Due to this incursion, many wars took place in the region shaking the livelihood of the residents of Kashmir. The Indian army could not stop the Pakistani army from occupying the state. It made the then Indian Prime Minister Nehru to take this problem in his hand and highlighted the issue in the United Nation (UN) which led to their involvement in the issue. From the time of the UN

involvement in Kashmir issue, the people from that region are demanding for self-determination which is refused to be given to them by the international community.

The armed conflicts between countries that occupied Kashmir has led to unrest in the state over the years. Moreover, special laws are imposed for the Government in Kashmir and the people of the state which has continuously disturbed the normal life of Kashmiris.

II. Objective

The two objectives of the study are:

1. To understand the problem of Kashmir through its history and
2. To understand role of the neighbouring countries involvement and occupancy in Kashmir

III. Methodology/Research Design

Historical Analysis is the research methodology used for this paper as Historical analysis is an integral component for the study of history as it involves interpretation and understanding of various historical events, documents and processes. History is best understood as not a series of facts, but rather as a series of competing interpretive narratives.

The analysis has been done based on the secondary resources like documented articles, papers and books. The sources which are related to the prevailing conspiracies and conflicts on Kashmir are analysed. This research paper deals with the chronological history of Kashmir from the Vedic period which comprises the information collected for reliable sources based on the historical analysis method as this helped in understanding the historical reasons behind the restraint faced by the people currently.

The paper also focuses not only focuses on the treaties and the acts passed based on the Kashmir issues but also on the influence of religion, dynasties, political parties and their part.

IV. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Conflict In Jammu and Kashmir by M Amarjeet Singh, 2011 is a National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) Backgrounder book which discusses about the years of armed conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir and the painful issues which claimed the lives of tens of thousands of people. The dispute between India and Pakistan regarding the accession of Jammu and Kashmir continues to be the stumbling block in the relation between the two neighbouring countries. Through the book the author talks about the human rights issue prevailing in Kashmir, divisions within the people in the state, etc. The book explains the historical events which took place in Jammu and Kashmir in a chronological order highlighting the reasons for restraints in Kashmir today.

Can India Give Up Kashmir: An Option or a Risk? By Sandhya Wilhelm, 2010, this article studies the historical experiences of Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims, the roles that their respective religion had played in shaping their histories (and the current state of affairs). The article also discusses the main issues that make the conflict-rife region such a challenge at present. Kashmiri Hindus and Muslims co-existed with little or no inter-communal relationship for more than 500 years. The article explains the historical occurrences in Jammu and Kashmir in a sequential order with its main focus on the religion.

Kashmir Question: Article 370 by A.G. Noorani, 2014, this article was published in Kashmir Times website too speaks about the history of article 370 and historical events which took place in Jammu and Kashmir in a chronological order.

Kashmir: Understanding Article 370 by Ram Puniyani, 04 December, 2013, this article published in the website of Counter Current discusses about the relationship of India and Kashmir and about Pakistan's involvement in Kashmir. It mainly highlights on the Governmental policies of India towards Kashmir and what the common people in India think about Kashmir. The article shows that there is a serious need for awareness among the common people regarding the Kashmir issue.

V. FINDINGS

People of Kashmir are known to be worshipers of nature during the Vedic period, later after the origin of Buddhism and during the rule of King Ashoka Buddhism slowly spread in the region. From the ninth to thirteenth century Saivism became the major religion of Kashmiris and only in the thirteenth century Islam slowly entered the region and started to grow among the people of Kashmir. Later, it became the major religion of the people in the region. Between thirteenth and fifteenth century, Saivism was totally abolished from the region and more than half of the population had converted to Islam. In that due course of time, Islam absorbed Saivism into it and became a Sufi philosophical tradition. This Sufism is the tradition followed by the Kashmiris till date. Majority Muslim populated background of the Kashmiris came into the existence after this point of time. (*Mohibbul Hasan, 1959, Kashmir under the Sultans*)

The first Islamic rule in Kashmir came in 1339 and the rule continued for the next five centuries in Kashmir. Later, the kingdom was captured by the Sikh dynasty and the rule was passed into the hands of the Sikhs. Raja Ranjit Singh was the first Sikh king of Kashmir. He became the king in the year 1819 after defeating the Sunni Muslim rulers in Kashmir. During 1846, the first Anglo Sikh war started in which the Sikhs lost their kingdom to the British. Then, the region was handed over to Raja Gulab Singh by the British, under the Amritsar Treaty during the British period. As per the treaty, Kashmir was considered as a princely state and Raja Gulab Singh's dynasty were ruling the kingdom till 1947. Raja Hari Singh was the last king of this dynasty and the contentious problems faced by the Kashmiris had its roots during his period. Due to the increase in the taxation during this period the people from the Poonch or Punch region rebelled against their king. For the sake of his pride and in order to save his kingdom from the rebels, he decided to join his kingdom with India or Pakistan at the time of rebellious outrage. As nearly 77 percent of the population in the region was Muslims, he did not want to take a quick decision on the issue. He created a 'Standstill Agreement' in the year 1947 with India and Pakistan for trading and business purposes. According to this agreement, Kashmir had a trade relationship with India and Pakistan. Pakistan signed in the agreement whereas the Indian Government suggested for a discussion regarding the agreement but in the same year people from Kashmir protested against the king. On October 24, 1947, people from Poonch region declared their region as 'Azad Kashmir' as the king did not take any decision whether to join Kashmir with India or Pakistan. After this incident, more than 5000 soldiers marched towards Srinagar from North Pakistan to capture the state of Kashmir from Raja Hari Singh. In order to save his kingdom, Raja Hari Singh asked help from India and India offered to help if only Kashmir would join them. Raja Hari Singh readily accepted to it as his pride was at stake thereby they made an agreement which was accepted by Lord Mountbatten. Due to this agreement, a war started from October 22, 1947 and extended till December 31, 1947. During the period of this war, Pakistan possessed more power and India could not resist losing some of their regions to them. Lord Mountbatten suggested Nehru to take this problem to United Nations to make them involve in the issue and resolve it. The problem was finally taken to the United Nations which resulted in the end of the war in January 1, 1948. On January 20, 1948 a resolution was passed by UN by which, the Commission for India and Pakistan was created with 3 Members from UNCIP in it and the next resolution was passed in April 21, 1948. As per the next resolution of 47, it ensured to restore peace in the state. Later, the committee suggested conducting a referendum on June 3, 1948. The Commission visited the palace and ordered to act quickly regarding the issue. In 1949, under the surveillance of the UNMOGIP, a treaty named Karachi treaty was made and later on March 1950, the bench suggested for the independent referendum in the next meeting.

By 1951, the UNCIP dissolved from its duties. Sheikh Abdullah played a major role in the history of Kashmir politics during this time. He started his party named the Muslim Conference in the year 1932. At the early period, he demanded for self-determination for the nationality of the Kashmiris. Later he changed the party's name into National Conference in 1939 and started the Quit Kashmir Movement for which he was imprisoned for three years and was released in 1947. Later, he was made as the Executive Chairman of Kashmir during the time of emergency. In 1948, he became the Prime Minister of Kashmir and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad became the Deputy Prime Minister at that time. At the early stages, Abdullah accepted to join with India but later he demanded for the self-determination in 1953. Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah got dismissed by Sadr-e-Riyasat and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad became the Prime Minister in 1953. (A.G. Noorani (2006) "Nehru's legacy in foreign affairs", *Frontline*).

Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg started a party named 'Plebiscite Front' due to which he got arrested in the year 1958 and was released in 1964. He then went on to become the Chief Minister of Kashmir due to the Indira-Sheikh agreement in 1974. He continued to reign as the Chief Minister of Kashmir till his death in 1982.

The first democratic election was started in 1951 and the UN declares that it will not be a replacement of the referendum. Indira-Sheikh agreement played a key role in the present day violence and restrains sustaining in the state. Due to this agreement, the people of Kashmir could not ask for referendum and in 1990, the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) was passed in Kashmir. UN had suggested India to remove this act as it was against the Human Rights.

Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF) party was started in 1976 and continued to work towards an independent Kashmir free from both India and Pakistan. In order to show their opposition against both the countries, the party made guerilla wars against the armed forces of India and showed their opposition in various ways. This led to the migration of nearly one lakh Kashmiri Pandits from Kashmir. The further backlash after these incidents from the armed forces of both the countries led to insurgency and terror acts prevailing in the state of Kashmir.

VI. CONCLUSION

The goal of the paper was to provide a detailed account on the historical analysis of the conspiracies and reasons behind the conflict in Kashmir. The mere pride and quick decision of the king who ruled the state of Kashmir made drastic changes to the life of its residents. The occupancy rate of the neighbouring countries like India, Pakistan and China in the total area of Kashmir is still being the key cause for the conflicts and wars prevailing in the region. The restraint of the Kashmiris is so obvious that the issues are contentious and still there is no resolutions being passed regarding it. Although, the conflicts and other issues on Kashmir have the international attention, the smooth negotiations and political conspiracies around the issue makes everything vanish easily. The sheer faith in humanity can only be the final option of resolutions to put an end to the issues like Kashmir conflicts and wars.

There is a need for awareness and clarity among the common people for the proper interpretation regarding the situation of the issues prevailing in Kashmir. The words Azadi have different meanings for different people. A plausible resolution on the issue can only be achieved based on a serious or clear discussions and disclosure of reality towards the common people to make them think alike sensibly.

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