

UNDERSTANDING SHIEKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH: POLITICS & ROLE

Maqsood Hussain Para

Abstract

Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah, the saint politician of valley, was one of the famous leaders of modern India. He was not only the most dominating political figure of modern Jammu & Kashmir State, but he played a significant role in shaping the post 1947 sub-continental politics. His contribution as a political leader is so great and the impact of his personality is so immense that it needs volumes to record it. He was the most enigmatic and one among the complex leaders ever produced by the state. However, his role is often viewed in Black and white terms. The present paper is a modest contribution towards estimating the role of Shiekh Mohammad Abdullah in pre and post-independence era of Jammu & Kashmir.

Key words:- Shaikh Abdullah, Sub-Continental, Saint, Revigionist, Modest.

Introduction

Kashmir society and personality, like other societies of the world, has been from very beginning directed and molded by some extra-ordinary characters. Be it great rulers like Lalitadatiya Avantivarman, Zain-ul-Aabideen or religious and social reformers like Lala Ded, Meer Syed Ali Hamadani and famous Shaikh Noor-u-Din (R.A). All of these have influenced the history of Kashmir and had molded its psyche from time to time. Likewise the considerable part of nineteenth century was influenced by greatest of all political stalwarts, Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla, who spearheaded the social, political and economic modernization in the state. M J Akbar, rightly regards Shaikh Mohammed Abdullah as the architect of modern Kashmir saying: "The modern history of Kashmir begin with the greatest Kashmiri of modern times, Shaikh Abdullah".(Akbar, 1993, xii). It quite difficult to make an appraisal of the role of a towering personality like Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla who held sway on political scene of the continent for more than half a century. He had a multidimensional personality and a quite few leaders especially in Jammu & Kashmir had acquired such a halo as he did. He was a great political leader, but at the same time he was a socialist democrat, educational reformer and a crusade against oppression and injustice. However, notwithstanding his abiding contribution, Shaikh Abdulla as a leader remained quite controversial due to various factors. Firstly Shaikh Abdullah's own split personality. His frequent U-turns and adherence to various divergent ideologies and agendas has made it all the more difficult to analyse his historical role. One more reason behind it was he as a leader quite often differed about his view which he expressed publicly against private discourse.

Role as Muslim Leader & Emergence of Muslim Conference

Shaikh Mohammad Abdulla emerged as the unquestionable leader of Muslims in Jammu & Kashmir because of his untiring efforts to organise the Muslims of state under one banner for liberating the Muslims from what he terms as "clutches of Dogra rule". (Kaul, 1995, 287). He brought political consciousness among the Muslim masses in the state. Every movement has its objectives and aims and also its character. It was this character of Kashmir movement led by Shaikh Abdulla which got manifested in the first formal political party All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference in 1932. Muslim Conference after its establishment spearheaded the struggle for freedom in state for about seven years and during this period it performed an

appreciable role in the political life of the state. It made people conscious of their rights by the means of imparting to them the political education through instrumentality of press, platform and electioneering. (Wani, 2017, 153)

Role as Muslim Conference President

By the formation of Muslim conference it was not only Abdulla's fame which grew rapidly, but his thinking also began to grow mature at even faster pace (Akbar, 2002, 219). With the establishment of Muslim Conference Shaikh Abdulla succeeded to give his movement a proper shape. In his first address to the Conference, he besides other things emphasized on three main issues. Firstly, he called on Muslims to unite and to end all secretarian strife (Shafiq, 219). Secondly he emphasized that this movement is not communal, besides he went to accuse the administration of holding views. (Ibid). Thirdly, Abdulla firmly believed that socio-economic and political lot of Kashmiri masses could not be improved unless there is a 'qualitative Structural Change' within government, if not its complete end. The movement launched by Shaikh Abdullah in 1931 under the auspices of Muslim Conference remained quite progressive in its outlook. His demands for modernization of administrative machinery, freedom of press, platform and religion, improvement in education and health care all indicates matured political mentality of Shaikh Abdullah. Undoubtedly, in his formative phase he had relied much on Punjabi Muslim Organizations and Public opinion and used Islamic institutions and symbols to create a mass base and a pressure on state but it should not be counted as a lacunae since mass psyche was such that nothing except religion would have much influenced their mind. Also, with the development of political consciousness, Shaikh Abdullah too switched on to use economic and other non-religious issues to propagate his political philosophy. He also distanced himself from the Punjabi organizations once he realized that these were turning more communal and were more concerned for their own betterment and less of Kashmiri masses.

Conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference

The freedom struggle launched by the Kashmiris in 1932 with the formation of the Muslim Conference and under the leadership of Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah reached to its next and very crucial stage in 1939 when the movement was reoriented to give it secular sense so that all marginalized sections of the Kashmir could be accommodated irrespective of their religious and sectarian affiliations. The secularization of the freedom movement in Kashmir at the end of 1930's should not, however, be taken as the beginning rather it was the culmination of a process which was moving on along the movement from its very inception. Shiekh Abdulla in a statement said "communal politics does not suit the temperature of the people of this state. It cannot help us in removing the evils of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and above all over slavery". (Wani, 2017, 153) Like all anti-colonial movements launched around the same period or before, the Kashmir movement was also launched on progressive lines to end the oppression but its progressive character was overshadowed, at least during its initial phase by the circumstances under which it was born and by the violent propoganda which was made against the movement by the Pro-establishment elements who felt threatened by the uprising. Since the vast majority of the Kashmiris were Muslims, and since the Muslims, collectively enjoyed fewer civil rights and economic opportunities than the minority Dogra's, Pundits and Sikhs, (Copland, 1981, 233) and since the mosque was a customary rallying place for Muslims and one where they were relatively free from prosecution for unlawful assembly, the democratic movement which had emerged in Kashmir in 1931 had come to assume a communal and to some extent, Islamic character. This had been especially marked when some Hindus in Srinagar, Jammu, Kotli, Seri and Mirpur were killed and at different places their property looted or destroyed.(Copland, 1981, 233).It was under these circumstances that state's first real political party was formed to be named as Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference. However, the Kashmiri non-Muslims with the help of Hindu press in British India had left no stone unturned to project the movement launched by the Muslims as a

communal one. By identifying themselves with Government, the uppermost in their minds was to see the forces of revolution destroyed, to protect the Hindu Raj and to safeguard their economic interests. (Bazaz, 1969, 153). The non-Muslims particularly Kashmiri Pundits failed to understand the true nature of the movement which was, "aimed at the achievement of democratic rights without driving their ruler out" (Kulkarni, 1953, 82) and they "played a historic role of anti-revolution to a finish" (Bazaz, 1932, 122) but with little success. They did not hesitate in criticizing the emerging leadership and to brand them self-styled who wanted to establish a Muslim dictatorship in the state in which 'the Hindus could live only as Muslims or at their mercy' (Statesman, 1931, Oct. 31). One more reason attributed to the conversion of Muslim conference into National Conference is that Congress never accepted a theory or a reality that any party other than Congress itself could represent and protect too, the interests and aspirations of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. The Congress never reconciled to the fact of the existence of the League and its vast Muslim following. The Congress always tried to prove to the League that the latter had fewer number of Muslims with it than the former. Therefore, if the Kashmir movement could be hooked on to the Congress, then Congress a Muslim majority region could be brought under the influence of the Congress thus strengthening its claim of leadership over the vast majority of Muslims. (Kaul, 1985, 287)

Role in Quit Kashmir Movement

The movement launched by the National Conference in May, 1946, had its slogan 'Quit Kashmir', meaning that the autocratic rulers should surrender power to its real owners. It was launched by Shaikh Abdullah and his colleagues to oust the Dogra Monarchy. In its initial years the 'Quit Kashmir movement' could not receive as much support as was expected by Shaikh Abdullah and his colleagues. In a memorandum, 'the Quit Kashmir Memorandum' to Cabinet Mission, Shaikh Abdullah and his party besides other things demanded absolute right to freedom from the autocratic rule and the establishment of responsible government. Launching the struggle for a decisive victory of National Conference on 15th May, 1946, Abdullah reiterated in Srinagar, the demand that the princely order should quit the state is a logical extension of the policy of Quit India. (Naqash et al., 1997, 60) Abdullah mentioned that when the freedom movement demanded complete withdrawal of the British power, logically enough the stooges of British imperialism should also go and restore sovereignty to its real owners, the people. He also maintained that the dynasty has no right, its future should be decided by the people. He called today the people of Kashmir cannot be pacified with only a representative system of governance. They want total freedom from the autocratic rule. They want total freedom from the political and moral status of this 'sale deed', this instrument of accession, subjugation handed over by the East India Company to a bunch of Dogra's. (Ganai & Deviam, 2016, 118) Shaikh Abdullah, being a mass leader appealed people to contribute one Rupee each towards a collection of Seventy Five Lakh, so that they could buy back Kashmir's Independence. He expressed it publically that the time had come to tear up the treaty of Amritsar, Quit Kashmir is not a matter of revolt it is a matter of Right. (Akbar, 1985, 227-228) He in May 1946, was sentenced to nine years in prison for having led the seditious Quit Kashmir movement against the Maharaja regime

Accession & Abdullah

Abdullah was essentially a Kashmiri patriot inspired by socialist rather communal aspiration who would have preferred independence for his state had it been possible or falling to it, or retain it as a semi-independent identity under the protection of Nehru's India. (Para, 2013, 24) In Jinnah's Pakistan there was no possibility of enjoying special position or powers. However, with Poonch revolt shaking the basis of Dogra Raj in August-September 1947, (Birwood, 1956, 50-51) and the tribals thundering towards Srinagar shouting slogans against the National Conference and creating panic in its rank and file, it became a case of India or death of Shaikh Abdullah. His hasty slogan "freedom from accession" was rendered irrelevant due to the force of circumstances. It was against this backdrop that Sheikh Abdullah provided his

“fullest support” to the accession offer made by the defeated Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, to the Indian dominion. (Poplai, 1959, 75) Nehru was fully aware that Shiekh Abdullah had waded through blood to shake hands with India. Thus, in the instrument of accession which was subsequently signed, Shiekh Abdulla remained Nehru’s prime concern. By lending hid true support to the accession, Shaikh Abdulla got three things in in return; (a) control over state administration; (b) a provisional accession and (c) its limited character. Furthermore, Shaikh Abdulla later become the true successor of Hari Singh and prime concern for India with unbridled powers, backed by democratic India. (Butt, 1981, 46-47). He also become the champion advocate of Kashmiri’s secession with India both within state and at the international fora. He would project accession as the ultimate goal and logical culmination of Kashmir’s freedom struggle. (Para, 2013, 24)

As Head of Emergency Administration & Prime Minister of State

On 30th October 1947 after signing instrument of accession, Maharaja Hari Singh in accordance with the wishes of the government of India, appointed Shaikh Mohammad Abdullah once his fiercest enemy, as Head of Emergency Administration to work with his own Prime Minister Dewan Mehar Chand Mahajan. There was no clear demarcation of the powers between the two Mahajan and Abdullah. However, Abdullah soon over shadowed the administration because he derived his real powers from popular support, compulsions of the political situation and by the backing of Jawahar Lal Nehru. (Lamb, 1993, 184) Whereas as Prime Minister Mehar Chand Mahajan was backed by Maharaja Hari Singh whose own position had turned very weak after the Poonch revolt, tribal invasion and by signing the instrument of accession with India. Satisfied with his role New Delhi decided to mark an end to the dual administration and accordingly on 5 March, 1948 Sheikh Abdullah was nominated to the office of Prime Minister and was made all set to control the full authority of the state administration. Accordingly the Emergency Council was converted into a regular council of ministers. (Naqash et.al., 91) Below is the description of various reforms brought out by Abdullah government in the state during his short tenure of less than six years.

(i) Reforms & Reconstruction

For the peasant masses in Jammu and Kashmir after 1947, the arrogance and authoritarianism of the new ruling elite-the revolutionaries of the National Conference-led movement- were compensated for by the rapid fulfillment of a key point of the Naya Kashmir program - the agrarian reform. Perhaps the three most significant goals enunciated in the Naya Kashmir, geared to the interest of the state agriculturists were the abolition of landlordism, land to the tiller, and co-operative association. The new state took its first concrete steps towards agrarian reforms in 1948 with the abolition of *Jagirs*, *muafis* and *Mukararies* grants, except those granted to religious institutions. The rights of 396 Jagirs/muafis involving an annual land revenue assignment of Rs. 5,66,313 were abolished. Besides, fixed cash grants known as Mukararies (2,347 in all) to the tune of Rs. 1,77,921 per annum were also abolished. (Sisir, , 395). In October 1948, Abdulla government amended the State Tenancy Act, 1924, providing for a maximum rental payment by a tenant was now liable to pay not more than a quarter of the produce in case of wet land and not more than a third of the produce in case of dry land in respect of tenancy holdings exceeding 12^{1/2} acres, while in the case of holdings not exceeding 12^{1/2} acres, the landlord was entitled to no more than half of the produce. Also through this amendment, tenants were protected from arbitrary eviction without court procedure. Moreover, 6250 acres of *Khalisa* (state-owned) land were distributed free of cost to land laborers. On 13 July 1950 the National Conference government headed by Shiekh Abdullah, in accordance with ‘Nay Kashmir’, introduced the most sweeping land reform in the entire subcontinent and probably most radical in any non-communist state world over. To give the programme a legal shape, the government enacted, on 17 October 1950, the *Big Landed Estates Abolition Act*. The Act has been described as the Magna Carta of the peasants, which “revolutionized the whole agrestic organization of the State”. (Malaviya, 1954, 415). This legislation set a maximum limit of 22 ³/₄ acres on the holdings of land holdings of landowners.

Proprietors could, however, retain orchards, grass farms, and fuel and fodder reserves beyond this ceiling and would have full freedom to choose which acres of their holding they would keep for these purposes. Land in excess of this amount was transferred in ownership right to the tiller without compensation to the original owner. "As a result of this enactment, 9,000 and odd proprietors were expropriated from 4.5 lakh acres of land and out of this 2.3 lakhs acres were transferred in ownership right to the tillers free of all encumbrances, and the remaining land vested in the State. Between 1950 and 1952, 7090,000 landless peasants, mostly Muslims in the Valley but including 250,000 lower-caste Hindus in the Jammu region, became peasant-proprietors. However, corruption in the administrative machinery and some loopholes in the scheme such as exemption of orchards from the ceiling limit and making no distinction between the 22.75 acres of dry or irrigated/ fertile land, and other such limitations mitigated the effectiveness of the reforms in real practice. The transformation of rural Kashmir, as a result of those "sweeping land reforms", had far-reaching political consequences. Hundreds of thousands of newly empowered families would henceforth regard Shaikh Abdullah, seen a principle agent of this transformation, as a *messiah*, and he earned the name *Bab* (father) among the rural masses. (Bose, 2003, 28). These peasant masses tirelessly backed Abdullah throughout his period of political wilderness after his dismissal in 1953. In order to improve the state of agriculture, an Irrigation Department was set up to tackle the problem of irrigating dry lands and consequently ten old and new canals were either restored or constructed. One of these canals, the Awantipura Canal which was completed at the cost of about Rs. 8,22,000, irrigated an area of 4,000 acres of land.

Great emphasis was put on the cooperative movement, "with the object mainly of bringing the entire village life within its fold." Its main purposes were to scale down debts outstanding against members to the extent of their own repaying capacity, spread out the reduced debt over a number of years, take surrenders of lands and lease them back to members of the societies for cultivation, finance crops, encourage repayment in kind; and Supply necessities of life. In 1948 there were 222 multipurpose Cooperative Societies in the state with 25,673 members; in 1949 the figures rose to 347 and 56, 499 respectively. (Korbel, 1954, 216). Statistics for 1950 give the figures of 1,731 agricultural cooperatives, 386 purchase and scale cooperatives, and 378 non-agricultural credit cooperatives. The operational side of the scheme was not, however, as bright as the above sited statics. In practice the cooperative movement turned into an instrument of the National Conference party politics. Moreover, as the government itself had to admit in the summer of 1953, the cooperatives completely collapsed because of "corruption and maladministration" of governmental officials. (Sisir, 1995, 397)

In accordance with the "Naya Kashmir", the National Conference government directly involved itself at in the development of industrial sector and the expansion of trade and commerce. The turmoil of 1947 had given a big below to the timber trade in the state. The government claimed, however, to have restored the timber trade to the extent that it in 1949 it yields 5.5 million rupees to the state treasury in comparison with 2.9 million in 1947. Motor transport was made available at cheap rates so that the timber could be carried to the nearest new rail link at Pathankote within two or three days as compared to several months taken by floating. Similarly considerable government support was given to the silk industry through the importation of silkworm eggs from foreign countries, which were distributed among rearers and through three government owned silk-weaving factories. (Korbel, 1954, 209). Other industries include manufacture of wood, sports goods, drugs and carpets. The government organized and subsidized the cottage industries and helped new entrepreneurs to start small scale manufacturing units. Among the major industries which were established during the period include Joinery Mill and a ply board factory at Pampore, a cement factory at Wuyan, and the Drug Research Laboratory in Jammu. (Bazaz, 1954, 47-48)

A special care was given to the development of Public Health in the state. As a result of setting up of an Isolation Hospital, an Epidemiological Laboratory and mobile dispensaries, the mortality rate went down in the state. A campaign to register T.B. affected patients was launched and as a result 10,000 were attended in 1948-49. The B.C. G. campaign was also

started with the help of the International Tuberculosis Organization. Besides attention was given to improve the infrastructural aspects in the hospitals with this purpose, X-ray, Electro-Therapeutic, Electro-Cardiogram and Ultra Violet Lamps apparatus has been imported to equip the hospitals in the State.¹⁴ As a result of above discussed socio-economic reforms there was a marked improvement in the living standard of the common people in the state. Even Prem Nath Bazaz, who was by now most vocal critique of the Shaikh Abdullah's administration agrees that: "After a long period of dismal poverty and semi-starvation the Kashmir's were witnessing the dawn of a new era of prosperity which was being shared more or less by all classes and communities; there was an all-round rise in the standard of living through some sections in the cities and towns profited by it in far larger proportion than those living in the rural areas".

The Abdullah's government attached great importance to education and according to Joseph Korbil, "much has been done in this field." (Korbil, 1954, 209). Almost a total of 35% of annual budget was spent for the expansion of education and the development of educational infrastructure. The Jammu and Kashmir University was established in the year 1948. New schools were opened, some 60 of them for children from three to five. Two intermediate colleges were opened in Anantnag and Sopore and an intermediated college exclusively for girls started in Srinagar. This was, besides the Gandhi Memorial College established in Jammu. In order to end the feudal character and traditional nature of the educational system in the state, the Abdullah government introduced a new structure of educational system. Its main feature was a four year's courses for secondary education, where besides the ordinary subjects special care was given to impart scientific knowledge, with agricultural technical and industrial bias suited to the needs of the country and its industry.

(ii) Crises in Governance

The post 1947 governance in Jammu and Kashmir particularly under National Conference government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah produced a series of consequence namely deficit of peace, intolerance of opposition and installation of cliental governments. The political creed of Shiekh Abdullah was from the mid 1940's of a distinctly socialist ting, which was outlined by his organization, in its New Kashmir Manifesto, which called for what amounted to a one party Government in the state of Jammu and Kashmir dedicated to social reform along the lines pioneered by the Soviet Union. But as Sumantra Bose mentions "the manifesto was clearly based on a Jacobin concept of popular sovereignty" it tends to be in tension with liberal-democratic norms of political pluralism, accountability of those in power, and tolerance of dissent and opposition. (Bose, 2003, 27) Thus, in accordance with the set norms in the Manifesto, the Sheikh Abdullah used the enormous powers, which he enjoyed to govern Kashmir as a party-state. Indeed, "the National Conference's slogan was "one leader, one party, one programme"- meaning Abdullah, the National Conference and the 1944 Naya Kashmir agenda.

The Abdullah regime ironically, suppresses all the opposition against its views in the state, no healthy opposition was allowed to grow. The intolerance of opposition was shown during the elections of Constitution Assembly 1951 in which National Conference won all the 75 seats, mostly unopposed, as no one dares to file nominations against the Abdulla and his party candidates. The state government promulgated an Ordinance entitled the 'Enemy Agents Ordinance' allocating for the arrest and summary trials of those suspected of pro-Pakistan leanings. Some of the political leaders who had earlier shown their reservations to bye the views of the National Conference were arrested or thrown out from the state. Political leaders like, Aga Showket Ali, Mohammad Noorudin, Khawaja Gulam Nabi Gilkar, Mohammad Abdullah Shopyani, Khawaja Abdul Gani, Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz, Jagar Nath Sathu, Khawaja Abdul Salam Yattu- the president of Kissan Mazdoor Conference and his colleagues were arrested; later on all these leaders excepting Pandit Prem Nath Bazaz and a few of his colleagues were taken to Jammu where from they were pushed into Pakistan. Listening to Radio Pakistan was banned in the state; and any person doubted of listening to it, was arrested

along with the radio-set. The government also suppressed papers and periodicals that did not agree with Shaikh Abdullah. (Bazaz, 2009, 207-232). In doing all this Shaikh Abdullah was helped by his deputy, Bakhshi Gulam Mohammad, the iron man of National Conference, who was an effective executive with little concern for democratic and legal procedures. In 1947 before NC came to power there were more than 48 newspapers and periodicals published from Srinagar, Jammu and other big towns, propagating different views and belonging to all shades of political opinion. But soon after NC took over it became a thing of past. More than half of these journals, including all critical, bold and independent were banned by highhanded methods. *The Statesman*, a prominent Indian newspaper which consistently supported Shaikh Abdullah's policy, observed on 1 March, 1949: "there are signs of establishment of a police state- futile notices in restaurants forbidding political conversations when everybody talks politics; more 'public safety' prisoners than are healthy", and some eighteen months later, sir Owen Dixon observed during his mission that "the state government was exercising wide powers of arbitrary arrest." (Korbel, 1954, 208). The administration was reduced to a handmaid of the National Conference, and its office holders became virtually masters of public fate. The economic blockade from Pakistan, caused an acute shortage of essentials in the state particularly, there was acute scarcity of salt, green tea, sugar and kerosene. Thus the entire distribution was kept in the hands of the National Conference office bearers. And those who were suspected for having any affiliation with the non-National Conference parties were denied these commodities. To enforce its totalitarian policy the NC government created officially national militia comprising of more than 6000 men, 500 detectives and unofficially a peace Brigade of 300 men, storm troopers of more than 5000 men.

Kashmir Accord-1975 & Abdullah's Return to Power

The Kashmir Accord (Indira-Abdullah) of 1975 concluded between Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, was the culmination of the process of reconciliation between the two which had begun at around 1968 after the Sheikh's release from around ten years imprisonment from different Indian jails, but it was only after Bangladesh War of 1971 that the process was converted into a serious dialogue for a permanent settlement. This accord also marked an end to two decade long political battle of Sheikh Abdullah to achieve the right to self-determination for the people and the permanent autonomous status for Jammu & Kashmir state to maintain its separate personality.

It was after spending long years in Indian jails and intense diplomatic activity, that Sheikh Abdullah finally realized to come in terms with New Delhi. Firstly, from the very dismissal of Abdullah, and the subsequent political developments in the state [like, rigged elections and erosion to the state's autonomy] Indian state was under tremendous criticism, both within and outside, and many observers had even challenged the very basis and legitimacy of the state's accession with India. Secondly, by the entry of new elements, like Jammāt Islami, in the state's political space and its grass root structured political activity, Sheikh felt threatened for he might lose his hold on the people he claimed to represent. Thirdly, there was factionalism within the plebiscite movement with groups divided sharply on some fundamental issues e.g., whether to accede with India or Pakistan. Fourthly, the fatigue caused in the movement due to long periods of unsuccessful struggle with mighty Indian State. And finally the immediate cause for compelling Sheikh for a compromise was the 1971 Indo-Pak war which resulted in a convincing Indian victory and the division of Pakistan. It made accession to Pakistan lesser appealing and Sheikh lost his bargaining ploy.

Both Sheikh Abdullah and Mrs. Indira Gandhi had chosen their representative to negotiate the terms of accord. Sheikh Abdullah declared in clear terms on 23 June, 1972, at Hazratbal Srinagar, that he had given Mirza Afzal Beigh "full authority to discuss with any representative of Mrs. Indira Gandhi a greater autonomy formula for the state". He told his followers "not to look towards Pakistan or any other power" to help them in "their struggle to attain a respectable place in the world". (Akbar, 2003, 270). Mrs. Indira Gandhi chose as her

negotiator was the clean, soft spoken men of few words, G. Parthasarathi. (Ibid, 271). However in the final settlement key roles were played for India by D.P.Dhar and P.N.Haksar, both kashmiripandits, who were very close to Indira Gandhi. Thus a formal protracted dialogue between the two representatives began to jointly explore the areas with all sincerity for reestablishment of relations, which lasted for a period of about three years and finally come to the conclusion with the signing of an agreement on 13 November 1974 which has become famous as Kashmir Accord. Thus after a long period of ups and downs the negotiations between Mirza Afzal Beigh and G. Parthasarathi concluded on 13 November 1974. Its contents however formally accepted by Abdullah on 12 Feb 1975 and were presented before the Indian Parliament by Mrs. Indira Gandhi 24 Feb 1975, as the "Kashmir Accord". (Statesman, 1975). The negotiated terms to accord are, (i) The State of Jammu and Kashmir which is the constituent Unit of the union of India, shall, in its relation with the union, continued to be governed by article 370 of the constitution of India. (ii) the residuary powers of legislation shall remain with the State, however parliament will continue to have power to make laws relating to the prevention of activities directed towards disclaiming, questioning or disrupting the Sovereignty and territorial integrity of India or bringing about secession of a part of territory of India from the union or causing insult to the Indian National Flag, the Indian National Anthem and the Constitution. (iii) Where any provision of the Constitution of India had been applied to the State of Jammu & Kashmir with adaptations and modifications, such adaptations and modifications can be altered or replaced by an order of the president under Article 370, each individual proposed in this behalf, considered on its merits, but provisions of the Constitution of India already applied to the state of Jammu and Kashmir with adaptations or modifications are unalterable. (iv) With a view of assuring freedom to the state of Jammu and Kashmir have to have its own legislature on matters like welfare measures, cultural matters, social security, personal law and procedural laws, in a manner suited to the special conditions in the State, it is agreed that the state government can review the laws made by the parliament or extend to the State after 1953 on any matter reliable to the Concurrent list and may decide which of them, in its opinion, needs amendment or repeal. Thereafter, appropriate steps may be taken under article 254 of the Constitution of India. The grant of President's assent to such legislation would be sympathetically considered. The same approach would be adopted in regard to the laws to be made by the parliament in future under the provision to clause 2 of that Article; the State Government shall be consulted regarding the application of such law to the state and the views of the State Government shall receive the fullest considerations. (v) As an agreement reciprocal to what has been provided under Article 368, a suitable modification of that Article as applied to the State should be made by Presidential Order to the effect that no law made by the legislation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir relating to any of the under mentioned matters shall take effect unless the bill, having being reserved for the consideration of the President, receives his assent, the matters are; (a) The appointment powers functions duties, privileges and immunities of the Government; and (b) the following matters relating to Election, namely, the superintendence, direction and control of election by the Election Commissioner of India, eligibility for inclusion in the electoral rolls without discrimination, adult suffrage, and composition of the legislature council, being matters specified in Sections 138, 139, 140 and 50 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir. (vi) No agreement was possible on the question of nomenclature of the Governor and Chief Minister and the matter is therefore remitted to Principals. (Najar, 1988, 50-53).

It seems apparent that if pre 1953 constitutional position of the state was restored and article 370 of Indian constitution made permanent as a guarantee to protect the internal autonomy of the state from any future erosion, sheikh Abdullah was willing to resume office and stop pressing for plebiscite in the state. He further demanded that since the extension of union laws to Jammu and Kashmir during the last 19 years had been made through unrepresentative channels in violation of the spirit of the Article 370 of the constitution, these enactments should be declared void. The other demands which Shiekh Abdullah and his representative

Afzal Beigh pushed for acceptance as it appears from the correspondence between the concerning parties and the statement made by Indira Gandhi in the parliament on 24 February 1975 includes, (i) Transfer of provisions relating to fundamental rights to the state constitution. (ii) Removal of supervision and control of Election Commission of India over election to the State legislature. (iii) Modification of Article 356, to require State Government's concurrence before imposing President's rule in the State. (iv) The Jurisdiction of the Supreme Court in relation to the State should be curtailed. (v) The State Governor and the Chief Minister be designated as pre-1964 nomenclatures of Sadr-i-Riyasat and Wazir-i-Azam, respectively, to uphold residuary sovereignty of the state. (Butt, 198-206)

The accord of 1975 brought several far reaching changes in the political setup of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In the accord Sheikh Abdullah could not achieve his ambition of return to the exact position as it had been prior to his dismissal in August 1953 leadership, rather he had to make a substantial compromise on his part and his ratification to the accession of Jammu & Kashmir State to India as final along with much else which India has done for the State since 1953. (Lamb, 1993, 307). Within the State the signing of accord by Abdullah created a backlash of adverse public opinion as ordinary Kashmiri masses felt or were made to feel that Abdullah had bartered the rights of the State people and surrendered parts of Kashmir autonomy just to obtain crumbs of power, an impression which Sheikh failed to remove till the end of his life. People started believing that the accord was made only to pay way for Sheikh to return to power. While some are of the opinion that the accord had later become the main reason of breakdown of several insurgent moments in the State. The accord was as Ajit Bhattacharjee has put it "wordy and full of assurances, but in effect the clock stated were it was". To Balraj Puri, the Accord "was not on Abdullah's terms but on those of Mrs. Indira Gandhi's which his representative Afzal Beigh signed". It is important to mention here, that Kashmir in 1975 was a world apart from the Kashmir of 1947. The two decade long plebiscite movement had created unprecedented political consciousness and a secessionist psyche in the Valley. People were more educated now. The corruption deliberately promoted the political class during the period had created severe tension in the society which sustained the plebiscite movement and its abandonment by Sheikh left a void upon which the later separatist movement build up on. The people felt cheated when the Sheikh and his associate Afzal Beigh disowned the two decade long movement by calling it *siyasiaawaragardi* [political waywardness]. Therefore it should not surprise any that once the most popular leader of Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah's grave is protected by the police to save it from the very people he proudly claimed to represent. Accord of 1975, in retrospect, was a complete failure and the root cause of separatist movement in the state beginning from 1989. However, the 'Accord' was followed by the Shaikh Abdullah's assuming charge as the chief minister on February 25, 1975- an office which was a relegated one compared to the one Shaikh occupied prior to his dismissal on August 9, 1953.

Conclusion

Sheikh Abdullah was without any question the dominant figure in the Kashmir from 1930's until his death in 1982. He was the harbinger of national consciousness and instrument to introduce political mobilization in the state. He identified himself with the popular movement and derived his authority from the common masses, as against the traditional elite which identified itself with the feudal state. He remained instrumental in state's accession with Indian Union. With his appointment as the Prime Minister of State the people of state, particularly of Kashmir valley witnessed the first dose of self-rule. He derived his authority from the people and his tenure (1947-1953) enjoyed a considerable popular sanction. He introduced radical reforms which within a shorter span of years changed the face of state, carried people with him, despite strong negative waves within and without. However, he could not stand where he was before 1953 and substantially compromised his stand to return to power in 1975. The man the people expected to struggle after having been set free ostensibly chose to occupy the seat of power in 1975. Within the State the signing of Kashmir

Accord by Abdullah created a backlash of adverse public opinion as ordinary Kashmiri masses felt or were made to feel that Abdullah had bartered the rights of the State people and surrendered parts of Kashmir autonomy just to obtain crumbs of power, an impression which Sheikh failed to remove till the end of his life. It is believed that the accord was made only to pay way for sheikh to return to power. While some are of the opinion that the accord had later become the main reason of breakdown of several insurgent moments in the State. The need of the hour is to revisit the role of Shiekh Mohammad Abdulla in the light of present political scenario of Jammu & Kashmir so that many complexities related to it are better understood.

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