

UNIT-III

Programme and Role of National Conference

The Conversion of Muslim conference to National conference was the outcome of large number of consequences and it was a gradual process.

From the very beginning the leaders of Muslim conference requested the non-Muslims to join the movement and to form a common platform & launch a united struggle against the autocratic Dogra Raj. The leadership of the conference also led to the conversion of Muslim conference into National conference on 11 June 1939. Non-Muslims joined the movement e.g. P.N.Bazaz, Sardar Bodh Singh, Jia lal Kaleem, keshap Bandhu etc.

In the first session held on October 1939 National conference demanded responsible government in the state and in response Maharaja Hari Singh conceded some reforms. National conference followed the politics of Indian National congress. During world war II (1939-45) there was shortage of food stuffs and national conference rescued the people from the scarcity.

On February 1945 the National conference produced a draft of future constitution known as "New Kashmir plan" and was presented by Sheikh Mohd Abdullah to Maharaja. The "New Kashmir plan" was based on socialistic pattern of society and democratic pattern of society and democratic government. In 1946 Maharaja announced that two minister would be included in his cabinet and National conference selected a member, but the government did not cooperated with him. So in response the members of National conference resigned and launched "quit Kashmir movement" In May 1946 for the transfer of power to the people. Shiekh

Mohd Abdullah put the demand before "Cabinet Mission of 1946" and said that Maharaja of J&K should end autocracy in the state. On his return he was arrested. R.C Kak the new prime Minister let loose a reign of terror and arrested thousands of National conference workers. Bakshi Gulam Mohd and G.M.Sadiq two important leaders left the state to direct the movement from other parts of the country.

On 26 oct. 1947 with the departure of Maharaja Hari Singh to Jammu the whole valley remained without a government and it was National conference which fill the vacuum. It organized companies of volunteers to restore peace and order.

In 1948, an emergency govt. with S.A.Shiekh as its head was set up.

II. Ideological Scenario of Kashmir on the eve of Partition:

On the eve partition of India, there were many political parties in Kashmir. But the most important and popular was national conference, which was an organ of Indian National congress. The aims, objectives and methods of political work of national conference were similar that of Indian national congress. The National conference was supported by people particularly workers. During conversion in

"APNAY BE KHAFAY BEYGAN BE NAKHUSH"

1939 it was expected that Hindus will join the movement or party but only few Hindus joined it, at this move sheikh Mohd Abdullah says, "

According to P.N.K Bumzai, "Bazaz introduced Sheikh to Nehru with impression that he was the Sole leader of the people of J& K where as his leadership was confined only to the Muslims of the valley". Later on we see Bazaz became severe critique of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah and said that no doubt few Hindus joined the national conference but they were Hindu Nationalists who forced sheikh towards Indian National congress.

They criticized the speeches of national conference. When in 1946 Sheikh Mohd Abdullah was arrested Jawahar Lal Nehru who had friendly relations with Sheikh rush to Kashmir but Maharaja issued a ban order against his entry. After refusal of ban by Nehru, he was arrested which created a great sensation in the country. In July 1947 Gandhi came to Kashmir and on his return he said, "It was difficult for one to know whether it was predominantly Hindu or Muslim"

The another party was Azad Muslim conference which was an organ of Muslim league of Jinnah. It constituted of the Maulvi dynasty & their followers. Jinnah began his efforts to convert the leaders of this party to his way of thinking and support the 'Two Nation Theory'. In 1944 he spent about 6 weeks in Srinagar .He presided over the annual session of the Azad Muslim conference and condemned the National conference as "Band of gangsters" He also convey that, "Muslims have one platform, one kalima & one God. I would request the Muslims to come under the banner of Muslim conference and fight for their rights.

There were other parties like P.N.Bazaz's Kisan socialist party. It supported freedom of Kashmir, later they showed gravitation towards Pakistan. That is why Bazaz & his followers were exiled. R.C kak's party also demanded Independence of Kashmir. So there were different parties with different ideologies.

a). National Conference

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference: As has been mentioned in previous topics, the State's first political organization, the Muslim Conference was converted in to the National Conference in 1939 to broaden its social base and to throw it open to the cross sections of the society. The National Conference soon came very close to the Indian

National Conference because of its ideological proximity with the organization. But the closeness caused rifts within the party and many of its leaders resigned and revived the erstwhile Muslim Conference. In 1944 the organization adopted a comprehensive socio-economic programme for the state, known as New Kashmir Manifesto. Soon afterwards Sheikh Abdullah launched what is known as Quit Kashmir Movement for the ouster of Dogra Maharaja from the state. The movement was suppressed and the leadership including Sheikh tried in the court of law. Thus, on the eve of partition, National Conference was in confrontation with state and also with the Muslim League and Muslim Conference. However, because of its secular ideology it was very close to the INC. With regard to the future affiliations of the state the party stand was very ambiguous. Its leadership even failed to anticipate the partition when its prospects were as bright as the day light, and thus were caught unprepared in 1947.

b). Muslim Conference

As mentioned above some leaders of the National Conference who were not happy with the political affiliations and activities of Sheikh Abdullah in alliance with others joined and revived the erstwhile Muslim Conference. They held that conversion of the Muslim conference into the national conference was a conspiracy of the pro establishment and some non-Muslim elements of the state who under the guidance of the Congress leadership executed the conspiracy to derail the Muslim politics in the state and to cause the fissures in the movement. The Muslim conference leadership therefore, forged a strong alliance with Mohammed Ali Jinnah's Muslim League. The organisation created a strong social base among the urban middle class educated Muslims in the state. Jinnah's visit to the valley in 1944 boosted the morale of the organisation in the valley and in

other non-Kashmiri speaking Muslim regions of the state. On the eve of British withdrawal, the organisation pledged their support to the Maharaja if the latter would work to carve out an independent Kashmir. However, later on considering Maharaja's indecisiveness, Muslim Conference asked the Maharaja to accede to the dominion of Pakistan.

c). Socialist Democratic Party

Communist and socialist organisations:- After the world war second, many communist and socialist activists moved to the state in order to escape the persecution in British India. Many such activists started influencing the policies and programmes of the state's largest political organisation, the National Conference. Within few years of time, the socialist ideology attracted the attention of students, teachers, artists, poets and activists in the state and finally culminated in the established of organisations like Kisan Mazdoor Sabha etc. like the Muslim Conference, the communists earlier pleaded for an Independent Kashmir through the right to self-determination and later on supported the cause of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan.

Pro establishment Organisations In all the regions of the state, particularly in the Jammu province, few sections of the society had developed a status-quo mentality for their stakes in the state. This ideological setting was represented by organisations and individuals like Hindu Dharma Sabha, jagirdars, religious groups and personalities, few traders, officials etc. since they had developed strong interests in the establishment, they would leave no stone unturned in thwarting the growth of democracy in the state. These groups were used by the state as a counter argument by the state to block the democratic voices.

Therefore, on the eve of 1947, Jammu Kashmir state was ideologically polarized both within the pro freedom camp as well as within the pro establishment dispensation. The ideological divide was visible also at inter and intra-regional levels. This ideological polarization created a very complex situation in the state at a crucial juncture of decolonization.

d). Kisan Mazdoor Conference

Kisan Mazdoor Conference were held at Achhabal on 6th and 7th April. A resolution was adopted in these meetings advising the Maharaja of Kashmir that after establishing friendly relations with both the Congress and the Muslim League he should declare the independence of the State and that simultaneously he should introduce complete responsible Government in the country. Things have moved with lightening rapidity during past five months. On 3rd June the British Government announce a plan of India's independence which has been accepted by both the Congress and the Muslim League.

The Working Committee of the Kisan Mazdoor Conference has fully and carefully considered the developments of the last five months. It has also consulted the majority of the members of the General Council of the Conference. The Committee is of the opinion that there is now no alternative before the State but to join Pakistan. If she does not do so, the country and its people shall have to face immense trials and tribulations.

Hundreds of the States have already acceded to either the Indian Union or Pakistan in accordance with the principle on the basis of which the subcontinent was partitioned. At present only two of the

States...Kashmir and Hyderabad...remain which have taken no decision yet. Recent developments show that these two states also cannot remain aloof for a long time and soon they shall have to decide about their future.

III. Independence, Accession and the Birth of Kashmir Question

The Issue of Accession.

The Accession of the state of Jammu and Kashmir to India, signed by the Maharaja (erstwhile ruler of the State) on 26th October, 1947, was completely valid in terms of the Government of India Act (1935), Indian Independence Act (1947) and international law and was total and irrevocable. The Accession was also supported by the largest political party in the state, the National Conference. In the Indian Independence Act, there was no provision for any conditional accession. The Instrument of Accession executed by the Maharaja was the same as the ones executed by over 500 princely states in India. There has been no complication in any of the other cases. There would have been none in this case either, except for Pakistan's action in sending in tribal invaders first (in October 1947) and its own regular troops later (May 1948). Lord Mountbatten's acceptance of the Instrument of Accession was unconditional. He said: "I do hereby accept this Instrument of Accession". The Instrument of Accession was complete with the offer and acceptance. There can, therefore, be no question of negotiating on the question of accession of the State of Jammu & Kashmir to India.

Q: -Kashmir Question?

Ans: -Kashmir question is a controversial issue. During British rule there were two types of states.

1) British Indian states: - The states directly administered by the British were known as British Indian states or British India.

2) Princely states: -The states ruled by princes and pay tribute to British were called Princely states. They were subordinates of British.

As far as Jammu and Kashmir is concerned, it was largest princely state on the eve of partition. According to partition plan, 1) British India is divided into two Dominions I.e. India and Pakistan.

3) Princely states were also set free. They had given the right to decide to join the Dominion of India or Pakistan or remain free.

4) While exercising the choice the princely states should think about geographical location and choice of people.

The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir with his prime Minister R.C. Kak (Ancient Monuments of Kashmir) decided not to join any of the dominions and concluded a standstill agreement with both India & Pakistan .India accepted the agreement but Pakistan turned it down because Indian leaders had a hope that in future it will be part of India and the reason was that they had close relationship with National conference, the main political organization of Kashmir. Under Sheikh Mohd Abdullah, a mass leader. Nehru and Sheikh had friendly relations also.

Despite, the agreement Pakistan encouraged the tribesmen to attack Kashmir on 24 oct.1947and Pakistan army participated in the invasion. Under these circumstances the Maharaja of Kashmir with the help of Sheikh Mohd Abdullah appealed to the government of India for help on 26oct. 1947 and signed the letter instrument of accession in favour

of India. There after the Indian troops entered into the state and drive the tribesmen and Pakistani troops from Kashmir and peace was restored.

After this Jinnah invited Mount batten and Prime Minister Jawahar lal Nehru to Lahore. Lord Mountbatten went Lahore alone and after a long discussion he suggested that a plebiscite be held under the auspices of the United Nations. But Mr. Jinnah rejected the idea.

To restore fully peace in Kashmir India offered various proposals but none was accepted by Pakistan. So the Kashmir question was brought before the UNO in January.1948 by Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru but UNO also failed to resolve the problem & till day it is bone of contention between India and Pakistan.