

Post Independence Era: Jammu and Kashmir on the path of Modernisation

In the chapters so far we have learnt about some of the processes and events that are critical to the understanding of the modern world. In this chapter we will shift our focus from global histories to the regional history. In this context, the chapter would highlight economic and social changes that occurred in Jammu and Kashmir between 1947-1963. It traces the trajectory of governance, planned economy, state building, reforms in Agrarian, Education & Health Sectors and other developmental programmes that were initiated under the Naya Kashmir Manifesto. The chapter further shows how the developmental programs that were initiated under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah were given a more practical shape when Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad took over the charge of the governance as the second Prime Minister (the term used for the head of the state till 1965) of Jammu and Kashmir.

NAYA KASHMIR MANIFESTO: AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT

On September 29, 1944, National Conference, the then most popular political party of the state, adopted the Naya Kashmir Manifesto in a meeting of the political activists of the party at Sopore. It was a comprehensive plan for economic, social, political and cultural reconstruction of the region. B.P.L Bedi was considered as the author of the Manifesto. The Manifesto was divided into two parts-one dealing with the constitution of the state and the other with the national economic plan. It further envisaged the establishment of the councils for national education, cultural upliftment, women's right, communication and health to ensure an equitable development of all the areas of the state.

The National Economic Plan was the most significant part of the manifesto and had a heavy socialist tune. It advocated the socialization of all instruments of production and the reorganization of property relationships. When the constitution of Jammu and Kashmir was adopted on 17th November, 1956 during the Prime Ministership of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, the Naya Kashmir Manifesto became the basis of the Directive Principles of State Policy.

END OF DOGRA RULE AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW GOVERNMENT

After the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the dominion of India, Maharaja Hari Singh appointed Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, as the head of the Emergency administration on October 30, 1947. Sheikh Abdullah functioned as Chief Emergency Officer till 5th March, 1948 when the Maharaja

NEW WORDS:

1. Envisage- Foresee
2. Socialist welfare state- A form of government in which the state protects the economic and social well-being of its citizens

appointed him as the Prime Minister of the state. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah took oath on 25th March 1948 and had the freedom to choose his colleagues in the cabinet. In June 1949, Maharaja Hari Singh handed his powers to his son Yuvraj Karan Singh; who subsequently became the first Sadar-i-Riyasat of the State in 1952.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's regime promoted the composite culture and secular Kashmiri identity that existed in Kashmir from earlier times. The idea was to bridge the existing linguistic, religious and communitarian cleavage.

Meanwhile there came a paradigm shift in Sheikh Abdullah's political thinking. In the later years of his rule, many of his speeches asserting self-determination for Jammu & Kashmir and his ties with some western Diplomats created apprehensions within the Indian Government. As such the Government of India started losing faith in Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and as a result he was arrested in 1953 and imprisoned for a period of eleven years. There after, his Deputy Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad became the next Prime minister in 1953 which heralded the dawn of a new era in the history of Kashmir.

Sadar-i-Riyasat: In 1952, the Dogra's hereditary position was abolished completely and was replaced by a Constitutional head of the state referred to as Sadar-i-Riyasat. Sadar-i-Riyasat was elected by the Constituent Assembly for a term of 5 years.

PRIORITY OF THE NASCENT STATE

A. ECONOMIC REFORMS

1. LAND REFORMS:

The new regime was too enthusiastic to translate its New Kashmir Manifesto into a reality. In 1948 the Government headed by Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah abolished *Jagirs*, *Muafis* and *Mukararies* [except those granted to religious places] and discontinued the abatement in land revenue given to the *chakdars*. In the same year, to tackle the problem of the shortage of food

grains in the region, the Government launched the **Grow More Food** scheme to bring cultivable waste lands under cultivation by allotting land to the landless peasants. To protect the interests of the tenants the new Government, in Oct 1948, amended the **State Tenancy Act of 1924**. The new Act came to be known as the **Tenancy Amendment Act, 1948** and guaranteed the fixity of tenure to the tenant and also fixed the maximum rent payable by him to the landlord. Furthermore, to alleviate the distress of the poverty-stricken people, the state enacted the **Distressed Debtors Relief Act of 1950** to relieve them from indebtedness. For this purpose, five Debt Conciliation Boards were appointed in the districts of Anantnag, Baramulla, Kathua, Jammu and Udhampur. This relieved the agriculturalists, artisans and the village menials of the burden of their accumulated debts.

The most important phase of Land Reforms was introduced in 1950 by passing of the **Big Landed Estates Abolition Act, 1950**. Through this Act, Landlordism in the State was abolished by transferring land to the tiller without giving any compensation to the expropriator. This Act came to be called as the **Magna Carta** of the peasant rights in the state and its most important provisions were fixation of ceiling on the holding of proprietor at 182 Kanals (22.5 acres) and transfer of land to tillers with ownership rights.

NEW WORDS:

1. Jagir: A land grant given by state to an individual in lieu of services; the individual held right to collect revenue from the land
2. Muafis: A land grant exempted from payment of land revenue, given by state to an individual or religious place.
3. Mukraris: Fixed cash grants
4. Chakdar: A native land tenant acting as intermediate in position between the proprietor and cultivator

Under the Distressed Debtor's Relief Act of 1950, debts of peasants amounting to Rs. 290 lakhs were settled and reduced to Rs. 98 lakhs only and 60 percent of the claims against the peasants were disposed of through conciliations.

How far do you think the Big Landed Estates Abolition Act benefitted the agriculturist class? Collect information from some readily available sources and jot it down in your note-book or scrap book.

IMPACT OF LAND REFORMS

These land reforms ended the privileges of the landlords, secured the position of the peasant and restored his confidence by making him the owner of the land. Visiting Jammu and Kashmir in mid-1950s, Daniel Thorner, an Agrarian Historian and Economist, observed that despite certain defects in implementation, the land reforms programme succeeded in removing fear from the peasantry. Land Reforms injected the elements of dynamism in the agricultural setting of the state and encouraged the peasant to make investments in land by making him the direct beneficiary of any such investments. The economic emancipation of the peasant paved way for his social advancement by motivating him to educate his children and avail facilities of better health and cultural advancement. These reforms also aimed at reducing the taxation which was the primary reason for the discontent among the masses during Maharaja's period.

However, it is to be noted that the land reforms did not do much in improving the conditions of landless laborers as the land appropriated from the landlords was distributed among the tillers of his estate.

The land reforms had far-reaching political consequences as well. On the one hand, it created an everlasting support base for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah but on the other hand these reforms antagonized the landlord class of the society who launched a rigorous campaign against him.

2. AGRICULTURAL EXPANSION: DEVELOPMENT OF IRRIGATIONAL PROJECTS

The development of irrigation received impetus after 1950s. The government took concrete steps to tap water resources for irrigational purposes. A separate department of irrigation was established out of the **Public Works Development Organization**. Irrigation was given priority consecutively during the first, second and third Five Year Plans. As a result of these measures, the average annual growth rate of food production increased from 82.56 lakh mounds in 1951-52 to 166.10 lakh mounds in 1964-65.

3. ERA OF COOPERATIVES

Greater emphasis was put on the Cooperative Movement with the object of bringing the entire village life into its fold. The Cooperatives remained instrumental in tackling debt issues, financing of crops, providing lands for cultivation on lease and encouraged the repayments

in time. However, owing to the mismanagement and mal-administration, the Cooperatives could not contribute much to revive the economy of the State.

You have also studied about Cooperative Societies in your Economics text Book for class Xth. Name a few Cooperatives of your region.

STATE BUILDING POLICY: MAJOR HIGHLIGHTS

In his determination to keep Jammu and Kashmir self-sufficient, autonomous and financially independent, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah rarely accepted funds from the Government of India. However, there came a shift from the previous stand during Bakshi's regime (1953-1963) as his economic vision was different from that of S. M. Abdullah's. He viewed economic integration with India necessary to promote the overall aim of Naya Kashmir Manifesto. Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad in order to go forward with his modernizing agenda sought financial aid from Government of India.

Thus, the Government of India provided Jammu & Kashmir with loans to implement its state building policy. In order to create economic betterment for peasants, workers and artisans, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad was able to fulfil a number of developmental policies which were initially started under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah. Thus, the state entered in the age of large scale modernization including agricultural reforms, industrial development, infrastructural growth, tourism and increased employment opportunities. Introduction of modern irrigation techniques like lift irrigation, application of fertilizers and popularization of China paddy with greater yielding capacity further modernized the state agriculture. Additionally, two important production programmes- Community Development Programme (CDP) and Intensive Agricultural Development Programme (IADP) were also initiated during the period of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad.

4. INFRASTRUCTURAL DEVELOPMENT: ROADS AND BUILDINGS

The construction of roads and buildings received huge impetus after 1947 especially under the Government of Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad. Apart from constructing educational institutions, hospitals, buildings for Government departments, hydroelectric projects, housing colonies and stadiums, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad also significantly contributed to the establishment of a vast network of roads within the State. Construction of Banihal tunnel designed by German engineers was considered to be one of the greatest achievements of the time. The tunnel accommodated two-way traffic and resulted in greater flow of trade between Kashmir and rest of India. Further, in order to bridge up the rural urban divide the city bus service was started which connected the remote towns and villages. Electrification of the villages and anti-flood measures were also taken up. These developments gave boost to the tourism and the fruit industry. Besides boosting economic growth and creating job opportunities, the road connectivity also increased cultural interactions within and outside the state.

5. INDUSTRIAL GROWTH SPED UP

During the pre-1947 era, there was hardly any industrial base in the region and traditional occupations like handicrafts and handlooms were the only significant non-agricultural pursuits of livelihood to the people. However, after 1947 the Government made concerted efforts for the promotion of industrial sector. For this, industrial estates were established at Gandhi Nagar (Jammu), Barzulla (Srinagar) and Anantnag at a total capital outlay

NEW WORDS:

Paper Machie- A craft using waste paper to form beautiful articles. It is a popular art in Kashmir.

of 5.26 million. Many new industries were established with technological and monetary assistance from the Government of India. Handicraft industry got impetus because of the training of artisans and craftsmen in shawl making, carpet weaving, wood carving, paper mache and silverware. The silk and woolen factories were modernized. Subsequently, the State held its first Industrial Exhibition in 1955 which opened greater avenues for Kashmiri goods in the market outside the region. All these advancements also proved instrumental in generation of employment opportunities in the State.

6. KASHMIR CHALO CAMPAIGN: BOOST TO TOURISM AND INDIAN FILM INDUSTRY

The *Kashmir Chalo Campaign* by the Bakshi's Government boosted tourism and film industry in the region. Advertisements were used to publicise the state achievements in the sphere of education, healthcare and industry. The entire administration was mobilized to take part in the campaign. Department of Information took the lead in propagating these developmental ideas to multiple audiences.

The Government led by Bakshi took important steps to promote tourism which included opening up publicity wings all over the country, improvements in air services, abolition of permit system, construction of youth hostels and revitalizing hotel arrangements. A series of travel guides were printed and distributed through organizations like school, universities and media throughout India and elsewhere. The Government also built a Tourist Reception Centre in early sixties.

Thus, Kashmir came into media gaze about its beautiful landscape and handicrafts. Many block buster movies were shot in Kashmir & places of natural attraction like Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Sonamarg, Kokernag, Verinag and Achabal became favourite destinations for the people of the country as well as world. This also brought economic dividend to the valley.

Discuss with your friends the benefits of the growing tourism industry in the State? Do you think it also generates any environmental concern?

With the help of internet try to find out the names of some recently released films whose shooting has taken place in Kashmir?

Financial Support and the State Building Project

The State of Jammu and Kashmir was among the poorest regions of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and therefore, it could not think of launching ambitious development plans without financial support from outside. In the post-1947 era the state received huge financial support from the Central Government. About 90% of the State's Five Year Plans were funded by the Centre. The State was categorized as a Special State and received the Central assistance in the form of 70% Loan and 30% Grant which was unlike the other Special Category States which received financial assistance in the form of 90% grant and 10% Loan. Thus, whereas the Central financial assistance helped the state in carrying out its developmental projects but at the same time, it increased the dependence of the state on the Centre and also led to its indebtedness.

B. SOCIAL REFORMS

1. GROWTH OF MODERN EDUCATION

During Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's regime, education was accorded top priority and viewed as the most important tool for meeting various challenges of the time and as an instrument for social and economic transformation. About 35% of the annual budget was spent on the expansion of education and development of education infrastructure. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah pleaded for changes in the outdated syllabi and for making agricultural education compulsory in village schools. He standardized the education from top to bottom. Job oriented courses were introduced and special arrangements were made for female education. An

intermediate college exclusively for girls was established in Srinagar and Gandhi Memorial College for Women was established in Jammu. The University of Jammu and Kashmir was established in 1948. The new Government also constituted a Textbook Advisory Board in 1948, with the Prime Minister of the State as its Chairman, to prepare new textbooks to meet the contemporary challenges.

This vision of modern education received further impetus during Bakshi's reign with the full financial backing of the Central Government. Following were the main highlights of the State Government's education policy during this period:

- ❖ The salaries of the teachers were significantly increased and education from primary to University level was made free.
- ❖ A network of educational institutions for primary, middle and the higher education were opened and job oriented education was also incorporated in the curriculum.
- ❖ Textbooks were provided to the poor students and steps were taken to develop languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, and Bhoti apart from other regional languages.
- ❖ System of scholarship was constituted for poor students.
- ❖ Women education received special attention and there was an unprecedented increase in women schools and colleges.
- ❖ Medical and Engineering Colleges were established in Srinagar. National Institute of Technology and Government Medical College were founded during Bakshi's regime.

In 1955, G.M. Sadiq as the Education Minister under Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad drafted the Educational Policy of the State. Emphasis was laid on progressive education that was primarily to meet the economic goals of the State. Mobile schools were also set up for the tribals like Gujjars and Bakkerwals. The far sighted vision behind such a comprehensive educational policy was to give a practical shape to the State's goal of an equitable society.

- What do you mean by Mobile school?
- Who are the people teaching in these schools?
- How far do you think that the opening of these schools benefitted the tribal people of the State?

2. NEW SPACE FOR WOMEN

Women Education led to their greater mobility and women began to step up outside the four walls of their homes. Women education and later their employment resulted in their active presence in the public sphere. The achievement of the women during this period was so high that it altered the gender landscape of schools, colleges, office, courts, hospitals, hotels and business establishments; thus women began making a mark in every field.

3. HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

A number of steps were taken by the Dogra rulers and the successive Abdullah Government to provide better health services. However, the available resources were insufficient to do anything substantial to address this problem. It was only after the assumption of power by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad in 1953 that concrete efforts were taken to meet the growing demand for effective health services. The Bakshi Government chalked out, with the help of outside experts, an elaborate health programme and increased the budget for health services by more than 50 percent. The number of hospitals increased from 2 to 19 and those of the dispensaries from 87 to 401 by the end of 1960s. The most important step taken by the Government to make health services accessible to the common people was to abolish the operation fee levied in the State hospitals.

C. CULTURAL POLICY

The programmes of economic and social reforms were supplemented by a cultural policy that aimed at promoting a liberal, modern and tolerant outlook. Besides, promoting and preserving the composite culture of the state, it also tried to promote a bond between Jammu & Kashmir and India. While the

process started under Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, it was further expanded under Bakshi's rule who was able to materialize the cultural aims of Naya Kashmir. The Bakshi regime is distinguished for promoting entertainment industry under state patronage.

1. CULTURAL FRONT

Cultural Front was an organization which contributed to the development of a syncretic cultural ethos. Writers affiliated with cultural front travelled throughout the region holding drama and theatre, programmes and activities on themes pertaining to social change, proletariat life, status of women and Hindu Muslim unity, in villages and small towns. Cultural Front was renamed as Cultural Congress in 1949 and began to publish its literary journal *Kwang Posh*. Important writers of the time were Dina Nath Nadim, Rehman Rahi, Dinoo Bhai Pant, Som Nath Zutshi, Prof. Ram Nath Shastri and Amin Kamil.

Dina Nath Nadim was a prominent progressive Kashmiri poet of the 20th century who introduced the trend of staging operas in Kashmiri language. There is a long list of his poems but the most celebrated poem in the form of an opera is '*Bomber Te Yemberzal*' which was a satire on the misrule in Kashmir.

Prof. Ram Nath Shastri infused a new life into its literary movement through the Dogri Sanstha. A prolific writer, critic, poet & short story writer. Recipient of many awards and honours, he got Sahitya Akademi Award in 1976 for his book titled- '*Badnami Di Chhan*', a collection of short stories in Dogri. He was bestowed with **Padamshree** for his rich contribution to Dogri Culture and literature.

Rehman Rahi was also one of the leading poets of the time. His most popular poem '*Maefi Nama*' was a satire on the Government policies in Kashmir.

Dinoo Bhai Pant was a trendsetting writer & poet who laid the foundation of Modern Dogri poetry. His outstanding '*Gutlun*,' *Shehar Pehlo Pehl Gae*' proved an instant hit in 1944. In 1985, he won Sahitya Akademi Award in Dogri for his book '*Ayodhya*'. Some of his other works are:- '*Mangu De Chhbeel*'- a collection of Dogri poems and '*Sarpanch*'- a tragic drama.

2. LALLA ROOKH PUBLICATIONS:

Lalla Rookh Publications was established in 1955 as a non-profit organization. It collected, compiled and produced literature related to Kashmir and sold and distributed the same outside the region. Besides, it also published literature pertaining to Kashmir's cultural heritage. However, due to political compulsions, Lalla Rookh publications was disbanded in 1957 and incorporated back to the Department of Information.

Find out the names of some important literary journals of the period? What was their unique contribution in the promotion of culture in the region?

3. JASHN-I-KASHMIR:

In 1956, the Jammu and Kashmir Government hosted first ever festival of Jashn-i-Kashmir which was held throughout the region. It intended to bring to light many aspects of Kashmiri culture and served as a vehicle of contact between Kashmir and the rest of India. It showcased regional theatre, music, poetry, dance of Kashmir as well as of various other Indian States.

4. J&K ACADEMY OF ART, CULTURE AND LANGUAGES:

Furthermore, Government established the J&K Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in both the regions of the State in 1958. The scope of Cultural Academy was broader than the Lalla Rookh Publications as it also incorporated music, drama, theatre and dance in vernacular languages for further promotion of regional languages of the State. All cultural activities in the region effectively came under the purview of Cultural Academy which also developed ties with Sahitya Akademi, New Delhi. Though Bakshi's Government relied on writers and poets to promote its narratives of progress as conceived in Naya Kashmir but in the later years of his period, the cultural intelligentsia (writers and poets) including the great poets like Dina Nath Nadim and Rehman Rahi, critically evaluated the developmental campaign during Ghulam Muhammad Bakshi's period. Through humorous satire and irony in their writings, they exposed the inefficacy of some of the policies and programmes initiated during Bakshi's regime.

CONCLUSION:

The policies and programs of the State Government during this period improved the peoples' standard of living, increased financial and economic integration with India and allowed massive financial aids from Delhi. All these measures improved agriculture, industry and created employment in the state. However, it was a short term economic planning, done mainly in political context, with over reliance on aid from the Centre. As a result, the original agenda of Naya Kashmir of building a self-reliant state largely remained unfulfilled. The Governments during this period were also somewhat intolerant of their critics and tried to muzzle the voice of those who differed with their political Ideology.

Sahitya Akademi is an organization dedicated to the promotion of literature in India. It was formally inaugurated in 1954 under the aegis of the first Prime Minister of the Independent India, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

Collect picture of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and paste them on your scrap book. Also pen down some information about their important achievements.

TEXTUAL EXERCISE:

LET'S RECALL

1. Match the following:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| a. Naya Kashmir Manifesto | Magna Carta of Peasant's Rights |
| b. Mukraris | Land grants in lieu of services |
| 3. Jagirs | Economic Reforms in Kashmir |
| d. Big Landed Estates Abolition Act | Custodian grants |

2. Fill in the blanks:

- _____ was the most popular leader of Kashmir during the early Post-Independence period.
- _____ was appointed as the second Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.
- _____ was the literary journal of Cultural Congress.
- In 1955, _____ as the Education Minister under Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad drafted the Education Policy of the state.
- _____ was the most celebrated progressive Kashmiri poet who wrote '*Bomber Te Yemberzal*'.

3. State whether True or False:

- The Naya Kashmir Manifesto had a heavy socialistic tune. ()
- In 1957, Lalla Rookh Publications was disbanded and incorporated back to the Information Department. ()
- The first Prime Minister of Kashmir was Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad. ()
- The Jammu and Kashmir University was established in the year 1948. ()
- Banihal Tunnel was constructed in the year 1960. ()

LET'S DISCUSS

4. Right in brief:

- Briefly discuss the major economic reforms introduced by the post-1947 Governments in the State.
- What was the impact of land reforms on rural society?
- Highlight the Education Policy of the Government in Jammu and Kashmir during Bakshi's period?
- Write a short note on Jashn-i-Kashmir and Cultural Front.
- Discuss the role of state in the promotion of tourism.
- Write a short note on the development of roads and buildings during Bakshi's regime.