

Riyasat e Jammu wa Kashmir wa Ladhak wa Tibet ha

The challenge in writing about J&K is not shortage of material or sources : it is about sifting the grain from the chaff -for so much has been written about the state from so many different perspectives so many times – that almost everything that one says about J&K is going to be contested . It includes the ‘&’, for many believe that Jammu & Kashmir became one political / administrative unit only after the Anglo Sikh war of 1846. Prior to this ,both Jammu and Kashmir had their own independent existence. One must also point out that the name which the state gave to itself was ***Riyasat e Jammu wa Kashmir wa Ladhak wa Tibet ha*** (Kingdom of Jammu , Kashmir , Ladhak and Tibet .It is also true that the greatest focus and contestation has been on the Kashmir valley, and other regions, including Jammu have not had their fair share of discourse and the views, concerns and interests of people inhabiting frontier regions- Ladhak, Chitral, Gilgit , Baltistan and Tibet – have been peripheral to the discourse .

However, if we were to talk about this physically contiguous region , one has to start with the oldest extant calendar anywhere in the world – the Saptrishi calendar is now in its 5097th edition ! According to *Rajatarangini*, a history of Kashmir by Kalhana (12th CE) ,Kashmir derives her name from Rishi Kashyap who established a vale by creating twelve streams(Varaha Mula , now Baramullah) . The settlement was called Kashyap- pura and identified as Kasperia by Ptolemy , Kaspatyros by Herodotus and Kaspapapyros by Hecacateus and Stephanus of the Byzantium. Etymologically , Jammu is derived from Jambupura , the settlement on the banks of river Tawi established by Raja Jambulochan in the 14th BCE , or perhaps earlier , from Jambudwip , the continent in which ‘Bharat’ is situated. Jammu was always with the Dogras either directly, or under the over lordship of Delhi or the Suba of Punjab. Kashmir became part of the Moghul Empire under Akbar from 1586 , though the Sufi tradition of Islam was brought in by Nund Rishi or Sheikh Noor -ud -Din Noorani , two centuries earlier.

However, in this and the next three columns, we are concerned primarily with the vain hope of the Ruler (Maharaja Hari Singh)to assert his Independence vis a vis both the Dominions (India and Pakistan), his procrastination in signing the Standstill Agreement with India , his inability to build a working relationship with his predominantly Muslim population, and his quick capitulation when he was unable to defend his people or his territory against the Kabailis (frontier tribals) with the support of the Pakistan Army .

Parallels can easily be drawn between Hyderabad and J&K – both were twenty-one-gun salute states , with a large territory and population . Both refused to sign the Instrument of Accession before 15th August , and harboured illusions of sovereignty . Both were amongst the richest of the Indian princes , but at a personal level, both were extremely ‘stingy ‘ and were quite parsimonious in their approach to expenditure .

While Nizam had leased out Berar to the British , the Maharaja had leased out Gilgit Baltistan Both denied representation and participation to the majority populations (Hindus in the case of Hyderabad and Muslims in the case of J&K). Both faced popular movements against their rule (Congress, Arya Samaj and the Communists) against the Nizam, and the National Conference and Muslim Conference against the Maharaja. The Press Attaché to

Mountbatten Campbell was asked by Mountbatten to visit both the states as his special representative to bring conciliation between the states and the Dominion. Most interestingly, Jinnah was not comfortable either with the Nizam or with Sheikh Abdullah, for he felt that his 'sole spokesman' status could be challenged. In both states, the 'Mulki' or local residents started an agitation seeking reservation of government jobs for locals. The Congress and the RSS – both wielded considerable influence – though did not have a strong organizational presence. In Hyderabad, they piggy backed on the Arya Samaj, and in J&K, they found their 'soul-mate' in Sheikh Abdullah. Both states saw a 'turnover' of the Prime Ministers – as they were responsible only to the whims of the Ruler rather than to the popularly elected Assembly.

In both situations, the Indian Army was called in to meet the strategic objectives of the Indian state: however, while they completed the task in Hyderabad, in J&K, they were hamstrung on account of Prime Minister Nehru's faith in the UN. Perhaps having learnt the lessons in J&K in 1947/48, India was better prepared to accomplish all the goals of Mission Polo. The majority population was in favour of the Dominion of India over Pakistan and that's what made the task for the Army much easier. Both the Nizam and the Maharaja were driven to the wall before they signed the instrument of Accession. Both became Rajpramukhs in 1950, but thanks to the internationalization of the dispute, J&K got Article 370, and its residents got dual citizenship, and these anomalies continued right upto 2019.

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