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Pakistan's Policy towards Azad Jammu and Kashmir: An Overview

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Abstract:

Pakistan Occupied Kashmir consists of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan (referred to as the 'Northern-Areas' till August 2009). Pakistan Occupied Kashmir is part of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and hence an integral part of India. Pakistan Occupied Kashmir has been under the illegal control of Pakistan since October 22, 1947 when the tribal raiders supported by the government of Pakistan invaded the princely State of Jammu and Kashmir. India succeeded in repulsing the invaders from the valley; but, when the Indian army sought to clear the state of these raiders, it was confronted with regulars from the Pakistan army. The Government of India complained to the United Nations in the hope of a fair solution which would put an end to external aggression and army confrontation between the two states. During the period, Indian hopes of fair play were shattered when some of the major powers in the United Nations Security Council sought to equate an aggressor state (Pakistan) with the victim of aggression.

Keywords (Instrument of Accession, Treaty of Amritsar, Rules of Business, Constitution of AJK, Partition Plan)

1. Introduction

The imperial history of Kashmir begins under the rule of Emperor Ashoka in the Third Century B.C. From that time onwards Kashmir was known as an independent valley.¹ The early history of Kashmir is recorded by Kalhana in *Rajatarangini* (river of Kings). Pandit Jonaraja who tells us about the historical background of the valley down to the early years of the fifteenth century also continued the work of Kalhana. The British and the European scholars have made a remarkable contribution to the knowledge about the past of Jammu and Kashmir with the help of available material.²

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the people of Kashmir looked towards the newly emergent Sikhs for some relief from exploitation and harassment of the Pathans who controlled the area after the exit of Mughals.³ In 1819, the Sikhs under Maharaja Ranjit Singh liberated Kashmir from the corrupt rule of Pathans.⁴ The Sikh rule in Kashmir lasted from 1819 to 1846. Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of the Dogra dynasty, joined the Sikh army in the wake of the annexation of Jammu by the Sikhs. In 1820 he was given the principality of Jammu due to his active military service and loyal political support.⁵ In 1834 Maharaja Gulab Singh mounted an offensive strategy against the kingdom of Ladakh. He succeeded in this and got control of Ladakh and Baltistan.⁶

The Sikh ruler Maharaja Ranjit Singh died in 1839. He was succeeded by his eldest son Kharak Singh. Maharaja Kharak Singh was weak and irresolute and the politics at the Sikh Court, which had remained secure under the iron grip of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, rapidly lost its direction and its stability. Maharaja Kharak Singh's life was short-lived. He died in 1840. After that the empire fell into turmoil. In 1845, the British increased their strength along their borders with the Punjab and also reinforced it to Ferozapore, Ludhiana, Ambala and Kasuli.⁷ But the Sikhs were continued to fight among themselves. In December 1845 the Sikh armies crossed the Sutluj and war broke out between them and the British.

The first Sikh war was ended in March 1846, the Sikhs ceded to the British all the hill country between the river Beas and Indus.⁸ On 16 March 1846 the British government signed the Treaty of Amritsar with Maharaja Gulab Singh. Under the Treaty of Amritsar, Kashmir came under the direct control of Maharaja Gulab Singh. To gain Kashmir he paid 75 lakh rupees to the British government.⁹ By the terms of the Treaty of Amritsar, Maharaja Gulab Singh gained possession of the land to the west of the Indus including Hazara.¹⁰ According to British historians, Maharaja Gulab Singh was an able, just and active ruler. The living standard of the people in his country improved a lot under his leadership. He brought peace and order in the areas where he ruled. Maharaja Gulab Singh laid a strong foundation of personal rule in those areas, which were known as the most difficult one in the region.¹¹ Maharaja Gulab Singh's health began to fail after the mid 1850s. He was suffering from diabetes since 1851. So, in order to prevent power struggle in the Royal Family, he installed his son Ranbir Singh as Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir on 8 February 1856. But Maharaja Gulab Singh retained full control over the affairs of the state until his death on 7 of August 1857.¹² Maharaja Ranbir Singh after his ascension to the throne sent a large force to Gilgit under General Devi Singh. The Dogra forces under General Devi Singh captured Yasin and Punial and made Uzmat Shah and Isa Bahadur Governors of the two regions respectively and also conquered Gilgit.¹³ The British government changed their strategies due to the backdrop of Russian expansion in Central Asia in mid 1860s. In the context of this the Gilgit Agency was set up in 1877. This was to counter the Russian military activities and intrigue in Central Asia.¹⁴ Maharaja Ranbir Singh for the betterment of the administration and the interests of the state constituted a State Council, the members of which, for a period of five years will conduct all the affairs of the state.¹⁵ The first meeting of the Council was convened on 18 April 1889 for adopting certain rules and procedure to regulate the appointments to the Council, distribution of business among the members, conduct of business in its meetings and the procedure of its work.¹⁶ In 1889, the newly created State Council of Jammu and Kashmir changed the court language from Persian to Urdu. This change created so many new vacancies in the administration. These vacancies were quickly filled up with the Punjabis.¹⁷ In 1896, some changes were introduced in the business of the State Council. According to these changes the Maharaja was supposed to receive references made to him by the individual members of the council for report and disposal. But, if he did not agree with any decision taken, then refer the cases back to members concerned for reconsideration.¹⁸ By 1900, the whole military administration in Gilgit and some other tribal areas of the Kashmir was brought fully under the control of the British government.¹⁹ Under the name of Gilgit Scouts, a new force was setup in 1913 and was given the responsibility for both internal and external defense.²⁰ Maharaja Pratap Singh made a representation to the Government of India in October 1918, appealing for reconsideration of his case and the restoration of the powers of Government to him. As a result of this Maharaja was permitted to exercise the powers of sanction, veto and revision in all cases within the framework of the existing rules for the transaction of the state business. In September 1920, the Maharaja again appealed to the Government of India for the restoration of the powers which were still exercised by the British Resident. Finally, the Government of India agreed to restore the powers of the government to the Maharaja on some terms and conditions. The Maharaja without any hesitation accepted the conditions and also agreed to give the confidential undertaking demanded by the Government of India. On 4 February 1921, the British government restored full powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh.²¹ According to the 1921 census the total population of valley rose to 1,407,086 due to the welfare measures adopted by the government.²² The massive increase in the population was due to the influx of job seekers from outside the State. The people of the state were certainly unhappy with this. This resulted in the initial steps in the community formation of Muslims in the state. On this P.N.K. Bamzai observes:

The Kashmiri Muslims were thus a frustrated community and in 1924 when the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited the State, some of the leading members of the community submitted a memorial to him demanding the grant of proprietary rights in land to the peasants, a larger representation of Muslims in government service, improvement in the condition of Muslim — education in the state and the restoration of mosques in possession of the government.... There are some demonstrations in the state owned silk factory in Srinagar and also ... in the city.²³

Maharaja Pratap Singh ruled over Jammu and Kashmir after the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh (1855 to 1885 AD).²⁴ When Maharaja Pratap Singh died in September 1925, his nephew Hari Singh succeeded him. Maharaja Hari Singh's Rajtilak ceremony celebrated in Jammu in 1926.²⁵ Maharaja Hari Singh was worried by the continuing presence of 'outsiders' in government services. The presence of the 'outsiders' within the state and increasing day by day posed a great threat. Due to this, a movement known as 'Kashmir for the Kashmiris' emerged under some educated Kashmiri Pandits. In 1927 a law defining 'Hereditary State Subject' was passed which forbid the employment of those who were not the permanent inhabitants of the state; those people who were not the permanent resident also not allowed purchasing land in Jammu and Kashmir.²⁶ The condition of the Muslims in Kashmir, due to various reasons, was generally bad. The deplorable condition of them was consistently highlighted by the newspapers published from Lahore and they were circulated widely in Jammu and Kashmir. The awareness regarding the backwardness of Muslims led some of them to form organizations to address that. Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas was one of the pioneers in this regard. He reorganized the *Anjuman-i-Islamia* into the Young Men's Muslim Association of Jammu and worked for the betterment of the Muslims.²⁷

On 15 July 1931, a group of young educated Muslims tried to present a list of their grievances to Maharaja Hari Singh. But, unfortunately this attempt resulted in a massive riot in the downtown Srinagar. Twenty-one people were killed in the consequent police firing.²⁸ In November 1931, Maharaja appointed a commission under B.J. Glancy an official of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India, to inquire into the causes of unrest and propose a strategy of reforms. The Glancy Commission emphasized the need to initiate reforms in the administrative structure and the system of education, land tenure and taxation in order to improve the status and life of the Muslim masses. The commission also recommended having freedom of the press and public expression in the state.²⁹ The first political party in Jammu and Kashmir, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was founded in October 1932. Chowdhary Ghulam Abbas from the Jammu region and Sheikh Abdullah from Kashmir were its main leaders. The proposed aim of the organization was political and social change. Muslim Conference published a manifesto in 1938 entitled National Demand which called for the implementation of substantive reforms to bring about a "responsible Government".³⁰

In the Muslim Conference some dedicated and energetic leaders like Sheikh Abdullah, Maulana Sayeed Masoodi, and Ghulam Mohammad Bakshi wanted to see the transformation of the Muslim Conference's struggle into a secular movement for political, social, and economic reforms. These leaders were headed by Sheikh Abdullah.³¹ In June 1939, at a special session, the Muslim Conference was rechristened into the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The struggle of the Muslim Conference workers like Sheikh Abdullah and some other leaders changed into a secular people's struggle, and the party known as All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference.³² The National Conference leaders were invited to the annual session of the Indian National Congress in 1939. The Congress leaders acclaimed the struggle of the state's people for self-government and extended whole-hearted support to Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and his colleagues in their quest for freedom. The state leaders participated in a number of closed door conferences, in which Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other senior congress leaders and the leaders from the princely states took part.³³

By the end of Second World War, the National Conference under the leadership of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah had gained a lot of appreciation from the Indian National Congress. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru chaired a session at the annual convention of the National Conference held at Sopore in 1945. Apart from Nehru other Congress leaders like Maulana Azad and Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan also attended the conventions of the National Conference.³⁴ When the All India Muslim League embarked on their "Direct

Action” Programme in August 1946 communal violence erupted all over India. The aim of the “Direct Action” Programme was to create a communal crisis and to make a case for Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh failed to foresee the impact of this on Jammu and Kashmir.³⁵ In the last quarter of 1946 Maharaja Hari Singh saw unease among the people and signs of communal tension in Jammu, Poonch and Muzaffarabad. The first communal violence hit both Jammu and Srinagar in September 1946, a month after the “Direct Action” Programme was launched by the All India Muslim League.³⁶

The Partition plan was announced on 3 June 1947 by the British Government.³⁷ According to the Partition Plan the princely states have to join either with India or Pakistan. There was no question of independence to the princely states. Knowing this very well the Muslim League and the Muslim Conference had urged Maharaja Hari Singh to declare independence, promising full support.³⁸ The views of National Conference and the Indian National Congress on the proposed Partition Plan were very different. The National Conference demanded that the people, not the princes, represent Indian states in Independent India’s Constituent Assembly but on the other hand the Congress decided to postpone the issue of accession until the powers were transferred from the Dogra rulers to the people, whose main motto had become “Freedom before Accession”.³⁹ It is interesting to note that the opinion of Sheikh Abdullah was totally different. He strongly opposed the partition because he did not believe in the two nation theory, yet he did not want to accede to India because he felt that “Pakistan can’t accept our choice, and we have to face a strong opposition from India and Pakistan”.⁴⁰

The population of Jammu and Kashmir was divided between the Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists. Muslims form the majority (77 percent) and the Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists together form the rest (23 percent).⁴¹ Pakistan tried to include Jammu and Kashmir within it due to this Muslim majority status of the state. But this was complicated because of two factors specific to Jammu and Kashmir: firstly, the predominance of the National Conference and secondly, the unique situation of a Hindu King who ruled a Muslim majority population.⁴² Maharaja Hari Singh made a ‘Standstill Agreement’ with the Government of Pakistan on 12 August 1947.⁴³ The main objective behind this was only to ensure that those services which existed for trade travel and communication would carry on in the same way as they had with the British India. Pakistan retained control of the rail and river links.⁴⁴

In October 1947, the Pashtun tribesmen from North-Western Frontier Province (NWFP) started a “Holy War” against the Hindu ruler Maharaja Hari Singh.⁴⁵ This was supported by the Pakistan military. According to Navnita Chadha Behera the conflict developed further as follows:

The revolt broke out in Poonch against Dogra forces, and armed irregulars from Pakistan gradually infiltrated Poonch, as well as Mirpur and Muzaffarabad. Next, Pakistan cut off their all essential supplies entering Kashmir by road and rail, and on October 22, 1947, armed tribesmen and irregular soldiers of its army invaded Kashmir.⁴⁶

On 24 October 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh made an urgent appeal for help to the Government of India. However, the Governor General of India Lord Mountbatten advised to Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and some other leaders that not to send Indian troops to Jammu and Kashmir without securing the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India.⁴⁷ Maharaja Hari Singh, then signed the Instrument of Accession on 26 October 1947 with the Government of India.⁴⁸ The Indian troops were airlifted to Srinagar in the early hours of 27 October after signing the Instrument of Accession. Lord Mountbatten assured Maharaja Hari Singh that once law and order has been restored and the invader expelled the accession should be ratified by a referendum of the people.⁴⁹ The tribal raiders supported by Pakistan had reached near Mirpur in the beginning of November. But the actual attack by the raiders

started on 22 November 1947. On that day the raiders and a battalion of Pakistan forces attacked Mirpur city in full strength.⁵⁰ The increasing support of Pakistan army to the raiders compelled India to take some hard steps and send more troops to Kashmir to complete the military task. On 8 November, Baramulla was taken back. After that India set up Divisional Headquarters in Kashmir.⁵¹

The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) stepped into the conflict between India and Pakistan and set up the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) on 13 August 1948.⁵² According to the UNSC resolution, Pakistan agreed to withdraw its forces from the State of Jammu and Kashmir and also agreed to withdraw non-regular combatants and non-residents of Jammu and Kashmir. All these efforts were made to ensure normalcy, and India was to maintain its military presence to help ensure this. But the most unfortunate thing was that UN did not name Pakistan as the aggressor in spite of evidences.⁵³ The military representatives of both India and Pakistan signed an agreement in Karachi on 29 July 1949 for defining the ceasefire line in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.⁵⁴ The result of 1949 ceasefire was that the State of Jammu and Kashmir was divided into two regions. Firstly, Pakistan held the Gilgit Agency, Baltistan, a narrow portion of Kashmir province, Poonch and Mirpur in Jammu. Secondly, India controlled Ladakh, a portion of Poonch and a portion of Kashmir province and Jammu.⁵⁵

Pakistan occupied 86,023 sq. kms of the State's territory, which constitutes the Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). After that POK is divided into three regions, Firstly Northern Areas which covers an area of 72,495 sq. kms., Secondly, 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir ('AJK') which constitutes 13,297 sq.kms of territory, and thirdly, the area Pakistan illegally ceded to China in 1963 from Northern Areas which amounts to 5180 sq.kms.⁵⁶

On 28 April 1949, Pakistan and 'AJK' signed the Karachi Agreement by which the latter agreed to place all affairs relating to Northern Areas in the hands of Pakistan.⁵⁷ The 'AJK' is divided into Muzaffarabad and Mirpur divisions, which are divided into eight administrative districts. The Muzaffarabad division comprises Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Bagh, Poonch, and Sudhnuti districts and the Mirpur division comprises Mirpur, Kotli, and Bhimber districts. The capital of 'AJK' is Muzaffarabad.

Pakistan has fought three full scale wars with India and has been exporting terrorism across the border in order to expand the boundaries of Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (POK). Pakistan has been using terrorism as its state policy as well as a tool of its foreign policy. However the support extended to various organizations by Pakistan has not only affected its own politics but has also resulted in unending threat perceptions and tensions between India and Pakistan. Along with this, the direct and indirect involvement of Pakistan in exporting terrorism has made it an object of suspicion in the eyes of the international community. In spite of all this, Pakistan failed to succeed in its objective of expanding its boundaries.⁵⁸

Pakistan has entered into many agreements with India which include the acceptance of the August 1948 UN Resolution, the Karachi Agreement of 1949, the Tashkent declaration of 1966, and the Shimla Agreement of 1972 among others. And by illegitimately occupying a portion of Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan has violated the international law.⁵⁹ As per the UN resolution of August 1948 on Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan is supposed to vacate the area which it has occupied. The continuing occupation of parts of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan is a blatant violation of International law. The United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) ceased to exist in 1957.

When the Karachi agreement was signed in 1949 between the Government of Pakistan, Muslim Conference and the 'AJK' President, 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir could not find enough space to work independently because under the agreement full control of 'AJK' was in the hands of Islamabad.⁶⁰ On Karachi Agreement Seema Shekhawat writes:

Besides providing broad rules for the governance of 'AJK', the agreement empowered Pakistan to exercise full control over eight items including defence, foreign policy, negotiations with United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) etc. Despite the claims by the 'AJK' as well as government of Pakistan, and the prefix Azad in 'AJK', provisions such as President, prime Minister and legislature, neither any nation nor international organization recognizes it as a territory administered by local authorities until the Kashmir problem is solved.⁶¹

The United Nations resolutions on the future of the 'AJK' as an entity are clear but neither the Government of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir nor the Government of Pakistan and United Nations have tried to define the international legal status of the state in formal terms.⁶²

Pakistan's policy towards the Occupied Kashmir is also found in the different resolutions which were drafted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and also in the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is neither a sovereign state nor a province of Pakistan rather a 'local authority' with responsibility over the area assigned to it under the ceasefire agreement.⁶³

After the formation of 'AJK' as an entity, for administrative convenience 'AJK' was divided into two divisions i.e. Muzaffarabad and Mirpur and seven administrative districts i.e. Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Bagh, Poonch, Kotli, Bhimber and Sudhnuti with Muzaffarabad city as its capital.⁶⁴ The administrative set-up of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is divided into divisions, districts and sub-divisions etc. In 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir there are 2 divisions, 7 districts, 19 sub-divisions, 202 Union Councils, 1646 villages, 10 town committees, 5 development authorities, 11 Municipal Committees, 2 Municipal Corporations, 30 Markaz Councils and 42 Working police stations.⁶⁵

The cabinet of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir formulates the policy and supervises the civil administration on "Azad Kashmir" area. The day to day administration of 'AJK' is carried out by the executive officers i.e. the heads of departments who are also the secretaries to government for their respective departments. The government of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir has two secretaries besides the heads of departments i.e. the secretary of the department of finance and a cabinet secretary. Noted expert on POK, Samuel Baid writes the following regarding the 'AJK' cabinet:

Firstly, the Hon'ble President has to work as an Commissioner-cum-Secretary to control the law and order including jails and police. Secondly, the minister for civil supplies has to serve as a Director of food and civil supplies and also a secretary to civil supplies department. After that the revenue and finance minister has to work as an Commissioner-cum-Chief Secretary and to control over revenues and public works. Apart from this, the revenue and finance minister acting as finance secretary to control the finance department and the minister for rehabilitation was appointed as the Director of Rehabilitation and Secretary Rehabilitation department. Then, the health and education minister was appointed to control over the Director of Health Services and Secretary Health Services.⁶⁶

'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir maintains a dual judicial system. The judicial officers at the district level, high courts and in the Supreme Court include Islamic judges dispensing the *Sharia* law. And the other criminal and civil cases are dealt by the regular judges and magistrates.⁶⁷

After discussing the administrative set up of AJK, it is important to discuss how far has it been successful for its people. The present position of the 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is very deplorable. 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir suffers from extreme poverty and neglect, with enormous deficiencies in basic literacy, healthcare, lack of democratic structures and major deficiencies in the rule of law and justice etc.⁶⁸

The primary factor responsible for this is that the government of Pakistan failed to fulfill its obligations to introduce meaningful and a representative democratic structures in 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir. The continuous absence of Kashmiri representation in the Pakistan's National Assembly proves the above mentioned point. The fact is that the 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is governed by the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in Islamabad. The Pakistani officials have complete dominance over the Kashmir Council. This is evident from the fact that the Chief Secretary, the IGP, the Accountant General and the Finance Secretary are all from Pakistan.⁶⁹

For the improvement of the condition of the people of 'AJK', there is a great need that the government of Pakistan revisits its concept of democratic accountability, minority and women's right in 'AJK'.⁷⁰ The interference and control by the government of Pakistan in the politics of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is also increasing day by day because of the division of power and authority between the 'AJK' Legislative Assembly and the Government of Pakistan. The real power of the whole administration of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir is kept under the control of Islamabad and the political leaders of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir have to work as the titular heads of the territory.⁷¹

There is another important thing which shows the dominant position of the Government of Pakistan over 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir. All major civil and police administrative posts of 'AJK' are controlled by the Pakistani civil and military officials who are "on deputation" from Islamabad. 'AJK' is financially dependent on the federal government of Pakistan.⁷²

Primarily, the power in Azad Jammu and Kashmir is exercised by the Pakistan army's General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi, and its Corps Commander based in Muzaffarabad. The Corps Commander has the power to summon the Prime Minister, President and other government officials of 'AJK' to outline the military's views on all political and governance issues in the territory.⁷³

The government of Pakistan also tried to politically situate the so called 'AJK' separately from the 'Northern Areas'. This confines the territorial limits of the conflict only to the 'AJK'. The government of Pakistan encourages Islamabad to make a proper hold on the power of 'AJK'. Pakistan has also been successful in changing the attention of the whole world to the Indian part of Kashmir through its media. The Pakistani media focused only on the happenings in the Indian part of Kashmir without publishing any news over the developments in the 'AJK'. That is why there is a great need to focus on the economic and political developments in 'AJK', to analyze the socio-economic status and the political relationship between Islamabad and Muzaffarabad.⁷⁴

The autonomy and independence of 'AJK' can be easily gauged from the act of land transfer between Pakistan and China for the construction of Karakoram Highway in 1963. It is interesting to note that Pakistan never wanted to transfer Gilgit-Baltistan to 'AJK' due to the presence of a major military base in Skardu.⁷⁵

The government of Pakistan also imposed some restrictions over the freedom of speech in 'AJK'. Every person of 'AJK' has to take an oath of loyalty before the officials of Pakistan government. The wording of the oath is as follows: "I will remain loyal to the country and the cause of accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan".⁷⁶

The government of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir continuously imposed ban over the books that it considers to be prejudicial to the "ideology of the state's accession to Pakistan. It includes all those books that discuss the discourse of the Kashmiri nationalist with its emphasis on independence for a United Kashmir."⁷⁷

According to the document "Azad Kashmir in more Details", the social infrastructure of 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir includes the health and education facilities and the airports. In 'AJK' there are approximately 1572 hospital beds available. This amounts to 0.49 bed per 1000 people. In 'AJK' the total number of doctors including administrative doctors and dentists is about 572 and out of them 330 were the medical officers, 47 were dental surgeons, 135 specialists and 60 health managers giving an average of 0.179 per 1000 population.⁷⁸

In the field of education the participation of the primary age group (5-9 yrs.) in public sector schools is 80% for boys and 74% in terms of girls. A careful estimate of overall enrollment shows that it would be more than 95%. The 'AJK' government in collaboration with the Pakistan's Civil Aviation Authority has constructed two small airports at Muzaffarabad and Rawalkot cities in order to provide easy and fast mode of travel. This facility is also expected to be extended in other cities of 'AJK' i.e. Mirpur and Kotli.⁷⁹

There is another area which shows the growth of physical infrastructure in 'AJK' is roads and transport. In the year 1947, the road length in 'AJK' was only 265 kms (100 km metalled road and 165 km fair-weather road). In 2002 the road length was 8651.5 kms which included 3104 km metalled road and 5547.5 km fair weather road.⁸⁰

In terms of power, the present position is that the installed grid capacity in 'AJK' is 250 MVA. And, the transmission line has been extended to 1444 villages out of 1646 and about 45817 consumers have been provided with connections. In 'AJK' the per capita electricity delivered for consumption is 276 KWH. Electricity was non-existent in 'AJK' in late 1940s. As far as the pipe water supply, which was totally non-existent, is concerned at present 77 percent of the urban population and 62 percent of rural population of 'AJK' has been provided with piped water supply through house connections and public taps.⁸¹

The construction of Mangala dam in 1967 and the subsequent increase in its height caused considerable hardship to the people of 'AJK'. When the dam was constructed, the then Pakistan's President General Ayub Khan visited the dam site and met the local people and promised that a good package would be given to them in order to compensate for the loss caused due to the dam construction in which more than 80,000 people from Mirpur city and nearby areas suffered. Among them thousands of people

migrated to UK and rest of the displaced persons settled in the Pakistan's Punjab and Sindh provinces but they have not yet got possession of land allotted to them.⁸²

The government of General Parvez Musharraf proposed to raise the height of the Mangla dam by 40 feet from the present 380 feet to increase the storage capacity. Due to this in the Mirpur district only 40,000 people are feared to be affected and according to the official estimates of 'AJK' government 7,000 houses would come under water after the execution of the project. After that an anti – Mangla Dam Extension Committee was formed in Mirpur. In UK also the Mirpuri people raised their voice against the government of Pakistan. Due to strong protests, the government had to defer the project.⁸³

The promises made by the government of Pakistan during the time of the construction of the dam were not fulfilled. The royalty of the Mangla dam was never paid to the people of 'AJK'. The promised townships and New Mirpur city were left halfway. In fact, the New Mirpur city was largely built with the remittances sent by the Mirpuri diaspora in UK and Middle East.⁸⁴

In terms of financial support both 'Azad' Jammu and Kashmir and Northern Areas are heavily dependent on Islamabad. Ironically only a small part of the financial aid is devoted to development. The total outlay of the 'AJK' budget is 13.2 billion but the 'AJK' government allocates only Rs.3.8 billion for the crucial task of development. The non development expenditure, estimated at Rs.9.3 billion, makes a major claim on the budget.⁸⁵

'AJK' is suffering seriously from religious fundamentalism and terrorist camps. According to a report there are 29 terrorist camps in PoK of which 26 camps are in 'AJK'.⁸⁶ When US attacked Afghanistan all the terrorist camps went into hibernation but after sometimes these camps were again revived and the Government of Pakistan backed them. These camps have a mixture of cadres from *Lashkar-e-Taiba*, *Hizbul Mujahideen*, *Al-Badr*, *Harkat-Ul-Ansar*, *Harkat-Ul-Mujahideen*.⁸⁷

In the 1990s, 'AJK' was full of camps of militant organizations which were fully operating under the supervision of the Pakistani army. The infrastructure of terror is still intact. That poses a great danger to the survival of 'AJK' in the future.⁸⁸ The HRW Report clearly illustrates how the Pakistan government facilitates the militants as follows:

Tight controls on freedom of expression have been a hallmark of the Pakistan's government's policy in Azad Kashmir. This control is highly selective. Militant organizations have had free rein-particularly between 1991 and 2001 to propagate their views and disseminate literature. However, those supportive of independence for a United Kashmir, or otherwise critical of the Pakistani government, have faced continual repression.⁸⁹

The people of 'AJK' and the Northern Areas have been the victims of the policies of Pakistan's military bureaucratic establishment. They all were deprived of democratic rights for more than six decades. No economic development has been there in the area. All these things show that 'AJK' has a bleak future.⁹⁰

When, the earthquake hit Muzaffarabad on 8 October 2005, more than 87,000 people were died and around 1,00,000 had been injured. This made the task of relief teams reaching the scores of places almost impossible. Thousands of people were without homes in a cold weather. It was surprising that the government of Pakistan and military did not come to their rescue soon after the earthquake. The response of the government of Pakistan's military and the POK government was very slow.⁹¹

Given the nature of Pakistan's policy towards 'AJK' anybody can come to the conclusion that it is unviable and unsustainable geographically and politically. The 'AJK' is kept in suspended animation by Pakistan to make a claim on Jammu and Kashmir

2. Endnotes

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