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Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and His Charismatic Leadership: A Story of His Visits to Jammu and Kashmir

Abstract

This study is based on the two visits of Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, first, he visited Jammu and Kashmir in 1924 and met with the leadership of Anjuman-i-Taufiqul Islam. They drew the attention of Jinnah toward the hardships and misfortunes faced by the Kashmiri Muslims. Second, he visited in 1944 at the request of Sheikh Abdullah for the arbitration among the different factions of the Kashmiri Muslims. This second visit of Jinnah was the final visit to Kashmir which created some prominent controversies, especially, Jinnah and Sheikh Abdul's rift on the unconditional support of the Muslim Conference of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. During these years, Jinnah was fully aware of with the carnages of the Kashmiri Muslims. He raised his voice in the favour of his Kashmiri Muslim brethren. Whenever the Kashmiri Muslims asked for his support and political assistance, he played a decisive role as the charismatic leader of the Muslims. For this noble cause, he had to face many challenges from his own community and other minorities in Kashmir. During and after these two visits, apart from some bitter memories, he did not leave alone his Kashmiri Muslim brethren. He tried his level best to solve the Jammu and Kashmiri issue through constitutional means which were badly violated by his opponents. The methodology of this study is based on historical, descriptive and analytical methods. All the information is arranged in chronological order.

Key Words: Jammu and Kashmir, Jinnah, Muslim Conference, National Conference, Dogra Raj.

Introduction

According to the Constitution of India and the political parties, no one was allowed to interfere in the matters of the States in India. But the Muslim League and the other political parties always show their concern regarding their respective communities. The All India Muhammadan Educational Conference drew the attention of the Maharaja of Kashmir towards the illiteracy among the Muslims of Kashmir.¹ In September 1913, Allama Muhammad Iqbal along with the members

of the All India Muhammadan Educational Conference met with the Maharaja of Kashmir in Srinagar.² The sole agenda of this deputation was the modern education of the Kashmiri Muslims. In 1921, again this deputation led by Allama Iqbal along with some noted Muslims met with the Maharaja of Kashmir in Lahore and they tried to convince him of the need of imparting education to his Muslim subjects, unfortunately, he did not show much interest in this matter.³ In 1931, the All India Kashmir Committee was formed and Allama Iqbal played a very vital role in it. Later on, in 1934, he became its president. This organization used to hold poetical symposia in which Iqbal recited some of his famous poems and couplets on Kashmir. He also played a vital role in the formation of the new organization, the All India Kashmir Muslim Conference.⁴ It was the initiative of the Lahore-based Kashmiris and Allama Iqbal was one of them. He became the general secretary of this newly established organization. The main objective of this organization was to work for the betterment of the Kashmiri Muslims, whether they are inside the State or outside of it.

Muslim League and the Kashmir Affairs

Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah was fully aware of with the atrocities of the Kashmiri Muslims. In 1924, he visited Kashmir for the first time. On his return, after some time, he held the meeting of the All India Muslim League in Lahore. It was the 15th annual session of the Muslim League, held on the 24-25th May 1924 in Globe Theatre, under the chairmanship of Jinnah. A delegation led by the president of Anjuman-i-Taufiqul Islam from Kashmir met with Jinnah and the leadership of the Muslim League. They drew the attention of Jinnah toward the hardships and misfortunes faced by the Muslims of Kashmir. Jinnah took serious action and passed a resolution against the unsympathetic attitude of the Maharaja of Kashmir towards the Muslims. Under Jinnah's leadership, Muslim League passed the Resolution No. XIII in their third sitting of the session as under:

That the All India Muslim League greatly deplores the continued unsympathetic and indifferent attitude of the Kashmir Darbar towards the political and educational needs and aspirations of the Muslims of Kashmir State, and a committee of the All India Muslim League be formed to find out ways and means for uplifting the poor and down-trodden and Muslim community of that State, and to bring home Lakshmi the bar the paramount necessity of providing special facilities of educating and to bring home Kashmir Darbar the paramount necessity of providing special facilities of educating the Muslims of the State and ameliorating their present helpless condition, and to give the Muslims of Kashmir, who form 95 per cent of the population of the State, their rightful place in the public service and in the administration of the State.⁵

This resolution was proposed by Pir Tajuddin and seconded by Mr. Muhammad Sadiq. The policy of the Muslim League was non-interference in the internal affairs of the native states. But when the question of safety, national aspirations and the demand of the Muslims, the League expressed strong feelings in favour of the Muslims.⁶ Jinnah was continuously receiving information about the atrocities of the Muslims in princely states. Later on, Jinnah and his colleagues decided to form a new branch of the Muslim League which is called as All India States Muslim League. The main concern of this branch was to look after the matters of princely states where Muslims were in a sizable majority.⁷ This was the first resolution passed under the charismatic leadership of Jinnah. When there was practically no political awakening in the modern sense of the term in Jammu and Kashmir. In this early phase, the Muslims of Kashmir could not form a political party or an association and were authorized to publish a newspaper.⁸

Political Consciousness Among Kashmiris

From 1924 to 1931, the situation of Kashmir and Muslims went through many drastic changes. The Dogra regime manipulated their social, political and religious freedom.⁹ On 14 October 1924, the Viceroy Lord Reading came on a visit to Kashmir and Muslims decided to present a memorandum to him about the abject situation of the Muslims in the Dogra regime. In this memorandum they demanded property rights over their agricultural land, the number of Muslims in the State council should be enhanced, due representation in services, a commission should be formed against the corruption of top officials, scholarship for Muslim students, forced labour should be abolished and illegal possession on the Muslims land should be returned.¹⁰

It was the true representation of the ongoing atrocities of the Kashmiri Muslims. After the death of Raja Ranbir Singh, Hari Singh ascended the throne in March 1926 with great royal pomp and show.¹¹ He proclaimed that from a religious point of view, he was Hindu, but as a ruler his religion was justice. With the passage of time, he came under the influence of his advisors and the upper class. Who had spoiled his legacy and turned his political system into an oligarchy. He turned against the Kashmiri Muslims and forbade their recruitment into the army. These policies created a feeling of resentment among the Muslims against the government. Maharaja was fully unaware of the rising wave of Muslim political consciousness. There was a wide gap between Maharaja and his people, especially, the Muslims.

On 9th June 1931, Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas formed a deputation to meet with Prime Minister, Mr. Wakefield and apprised him of the demands of the Muslims. He warned the government about the continuous sacrilege of the Holy Quran in

the State.¹² Just one day before this meeting around thirty thousand Muslims protested against the sacrilege of the Holy Quran and the State's policies.¹³ This situation turned into a religious movement which had a prime objective of "freedom". On 13th July 1931, an upsurge was started in the State which turned the situation into chaos. There were incidents of killing and arrest widely reported in the State. The brutal methods had been adopted by the State to crush the freedom struggle of the Muslims.¹⁴

In October 1932, Sheikh Abdullah from Kashmir formed the first Muslim political party, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Political Conference. Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas was appointed as the General Secretary from Jammu. The Kashmiri Muslims were constantly receiving moral and material support from the Muslims of British India and Punjab, especially, Allama Iqbal had been set up to devise ways and means to support the Kashmir Muslims.

Jinnah and the Kashmiri Muslims

After the Lahore Resolution, in March 1940, now the Muslims had a clear-cut task to achieve the objective of a separate state on the basis of the "Two Nation Theory". According to Professor Sikandar Hayat, "on 23 March, a resolution to that effect was moved, and on 24 March 1940, it was adopted as the Lahore resolution. Jinnah's formula became the 'creed' of the Muslim League soon."¹⁵

The idea of a separate state for the Muslims was quite attractive to them and they acknowledged it as the ultimate solution to their atrocities. It received large support from the different factions of the Indian Muslim society. This move also bolsters the movement of Kashmiri Muslims. On 25 October 1940, a discriminatory law against Muslims was passed and they didn't allow to keep firearms. Maharaja Spread lies against the Kashmiri Muslims that they were a non-martial race and cowards.¹⁶

On 26 January 1941, Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas resigned from the National Conference in despair and decided to reorganize the Muslims Conference. On 17, 18 and 19 April 1941, the annual session of the Muslim Conference was held in Jammu. It was inaugurated by the famous personality the editor of *Zamindar* from Lahore, Maulana Zafar Ali Khan. In this session, the Muslim Conference openly announced to support the All India Muslim League and its policy about the separate homeland for the Muslims.¹⁷

Now it was clear to all, the Muslim Conference had adopted the policy of the Muslim League. Jinnah and Muslim Conference were not ready to accept that Kashmir was a Hindu State. Both believed that the destiny of the Kashmiri Muslims could not be tendered on the mercies of Hindu India.¹⁸ If an attempt was made against the Muslim interest the Muslims of the State would draw a line of

cancellation over such a verdict. Now the National Conference of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah and the Muslim Conference of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas were on adverse treks.¹⁹

In April 1942, Muslim Conference again supported the demand of Pakistan and after this, they were the constant target of the Kashmiri Hindus, backed by the Congress and Hindu Mahasabha. National Conference made an alliance with Maharaja against the Muslim Conference and Muslim League. They tried to crush the activities of the Muslims Conference.²⁰ But the Muslim youth in Kashmir hailed the League policy and the slogan of Pakistan. The National Conference of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah denounced the demand of Pakistan. On 19 April 1940, Prof. Muhammad Amin Shamim, brother of K. H. Khurshid, issued a statement in favour of the Lahore Resolution. He assured that Muslim students of Jammu and Kashmir would fight along with Jinnah and the Muslim League for the creation of Pakistan.²¹ On 1st March 1941, Punjab Muslim Students Federation organized a “Pakistan Conference” at Islamia College, Lahore, which was presided over by Jinnah. At this conference, Muslim students from Jammu and Kashmir were invited. The collaboration between the Muslim Conference, Kashmiri students and Muslim League had started at every level. On 21st June 1940, the Muslims Students Federation in Jammu and Kashmir called the “Pakistan Conference” and condemned the idea of *Akhand Bharat*. The General Secretary of the Kashmiri students was the Mr. K. H. Khurshid, who later on became the Private Secretary of Jinnah in 1944.²² The Dogra regime Prime Minister of Kashmir, Kailash Narayan Haksar, tried to suppress the Muslim Conference and pro-League activists. Muslim Student Union protested against the pro-Hindu policies of the Haksar, restrain the leaders of the League in Kashmir and welcomed the pro-Congress journalists as the guest of State. In May 1942, on the appeal of Jinnah for funds, the Muslims of Kashmir sent some funds to the Muslim League.²³

On 21st April 1943, Muslim Student Union observed Iqbal Day in Islamia High School and paid tributes to the poet of the East. The students from Sri Pratap College collected an amount of fifty rupees and sent it to Jinnah along with a heart-touching letter, explaining that the Muslim students were poor and couldn't collect a huge amount for donation. This letter was deeply felt by Jinnah and he responded back, “why do you say we are poor? I thank you for your efforts and wish you success.”²⁴

In November 1943, the annual session of the Punjab Muslim Students Federation was called in Jalandhar attended by Jinnah. A delegation from Kashmir under the leadership of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, the President of the Muslim Conference and K.H. Khurshid, the General Secretary of the Muslim Students Union, attended

this annual session. Jinnah bestowed a special banner, inscribed with a crescent, to the K.H. Khurshid. In May 1944, Jinnah visited Kashmir and K.H. Khurshid met him as the correspondent of Orient Press, and Jinnah selected him as his Private Secretary.²⁵ On 08 May 1944, Jinnah addressed the Muslim Conference and Muslim Students' Federation:

If the Kashmiri Muslims want to achieve their ends, they should muster under one observation and one banner". Further he clarified the policy of the League, "our policy is of non-interference in States, but when we see that Muslims of any State are terrorized, we cannot remain idle and indifferent spectators. It will be our duty to come to your rescue because all Muslims whether they live in China or Palestine are brothers". Moreover he supported their cause of responsible government. He criticized the policies of the Maharaja, "I want your ruler to allow his people to manage their own affairs. In this question, we will not interfere, but if the Muslims of this State are mal-treated then certainly Muslim India will come to their help."²⁶

At the invitation of the National Conference and Muslim Conference, Jinnah reached Jammu on 09 May 1944. On this eve the Muslim League had become a popular party and the slogan of *Pakistan Zindabad* rented the air in Jammu and Kashmir. Muslims of Kashmir warmly welcome him and the Hindus abstain from this occasion.²⁷ On 10 May, Jinnah entered Kashmir, where Clashes between National Conference and Muslim Conference were observed. Ismail Sheikh received injuries and he rushed towards the rest house of Jinnah. Where his bleeding mouth was cleaned with the handkerchief of Miss Fatima Jinnah. Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah tried to prove that there was the only party in Kashmir, the National Conference. This created a very bad impression on the mind of Jinnah and he observed that Sheikh Abdullah wanted to oppress the other parties. Jinnah thanked the National Conference for his royal reception of the leader of the All India Muslim League. The same evening Jinnah addressed the Muslim conference and said, "the Allah of Muslims is one their Prophet and Quran are the same and therefore, their voices should also be one"²⁸

On 23 May 1944, Jinnah talked with the Kashmiri Journalists in Srinagar. He thanked the Kashmiri press and advised them to serve the public interest. Further, he stressed upon the unity of the Muslims and avoid sectarian issues. When he asked the question that Muslims alone could achieve a responsible government in Jammu and Kashmir. He answered, "I think they can...if each community were to organise itself." He suggested that Muslims should secure the rights of minorities in Jammu and Kashmir.²⁹

On 19 June 1944, Jinnah delivered a comprehensive speech at the session of the Muslim Conference in Srinagar. The proceedings started after a short speech by Chaudhary Ghulam Abbas, the president of the Conference.³⁰ He expressed the gratefulness and fullest support of the Kashmiri Muslims to Jinnah and the demand for Pakistan. He spoke in Urdu for an hour and he said:

I cannot find proper words to express my feelings of gratitude for the honour done to me. I have been in Kashmir for more than a month and in spite of the fact that I came here to take a rest after continuous work for 8 years, I have been seeing Muslim brethren, who came to see me. I have found that 99 per cent of the Muslims of the Jammu and Kashmir regard the Muslim Conference as their representative organization.³¹

Now, indirectly he advised the Muslims of Kashmir to organize their strength under the banner of the Muslim Conference. This session was attended by around one lakh people of all classes and creeds. Further, he stressed upon the unity of the Kashmiri Muslims and argued that without unity they couldn't be able to achieve their goals.³² He pointed out the rift between the Muslim Conference and National Conference. He added, "Does it not mean that you have divided the Kashmiri Muslims and blocked progress. This is impossible and you can never succeed in this way." He cited the example of Congress which adopted this policy for forty years and failed to deliver. Further, he urged, "I say to the Hindus in minorities here that the Muslims will always treat them justly and generously". He encouraged the Muslims to work hard, "responsible government is not a cake which the Maharaja and his advisors would bring to you and ask you to eat. You must try your best to achieve your end. I and the All India Muslim League are at your back and you enjoy our fullest moral support."³³ Now, Jinnah openly announced the moral and political support of the Muslim Conference. Later on, this became the prime reason for the rift between Jinnah and Sheikh Abdullah. He concluded the session in these remarks, "we pray for your success and you should pray for ours. I would advise you in every matter I can, because it is my duty to serve you.... I have no doubt that success will be yours."³⁴

On the same day, he addressed the Muslims Students' Union and advised them, "I would advise my young friends to pay attention to your studies first, and not to take part in practical politics."³⁵ Moreover, he advised them to work with Muslim Conference and carry its message to their Kashmiri Muslims door to door. During his stay in Kashmir, Jinnah was constantly writing to Gandhi and C. Rajagopalachari on the issue of the Rajagopalachari Formula. Later on, this correspondence paved the way for the Jinnah-Gandhi talks at the residence of Jinnah in Bombay.

On 25 July 1944, before he departed from Kashmir, he issued a press statement:

I have been here now for some time, and I have seen all classes of people, and had the opportunity of hearing different views and also press reports which are unkind and unjust; but, on the whole, I am very thankful for the kindness that has been shown to me, especially by the Muslims.³⁶

He again firmly conveyed that it was not the policy of the League to interfere in the matters of States. But League and Indian Muslims were deeply concerned with the grave issues of the Kashmiri Muslims.³⁷ Jinnah expressed his grief, “I must say that even a casual visitor cannot but be shocked to see the condition of the people in the State even in the matter of elementary needs.” More interestingly, during this visit Maharaja remained away and did not meet with Jinnah. Another regret expressed by Jinnah, “I, after careful consideration, suggested that Muslims should organise themselves under one flag and one platform, not only that my advice was not acceptable to Sheikh Abdullah, but he indulged in the language of most offensive character in attacking me.”³⁸ Sheikh Abdullah turned into the anti-Jinnah fanatic and he suggested one of his speech, “if Jinnah does not give up the habit of interfering in our politics, it will be difficult for him to go back in an honourable manner.” This attitude also infuriated Jinnah and he prolonged his Kashmir visit, he stayed in Kashmir for almost 78 days and took a keen interest in the affairs of Kashmiris.³⁹

He started his second journey to Kashmir on 09 May and ended on 26 July 1944. In the end, he advised the Kashmiri Muslims to remain as non-violent and peacefully achieve their goals.⁴⁰ He assured the Kashmiri Muslims he would take a keen interest in their affairs and progress. The next day, Jinnah started his journey towards Rawalpindi, where he addressed a public meeting on 27 July 1944.

Conclusion

During these visits, Jinnah clearly studied the whole political situation of Jammu and Kashmir. He was constantly receiving information regarding the atrocities of the Muslims. During his final visit, he examined the social, economic and political conditions of the Kashmiri Muslims. He was disappointed with the treatment of the Dogra rule and the miseries of the Muslims. He was also disappointed with the treatment of some prominent factions of the Muslim community in Kashmir. Especially, the political rivalry between the Muslim Conference and National Conference. He potentially heard the arguments of prominent Kashmiri Muslims and finally decided to support the cause of the Muslim Conference. He believed that the policy of the National Conference was against the interests of Kashmir and their policy did not bring fruit. He tried his level best to unite the Kashmiri Muslims under one banner, but the clashes among the Kashmiri leaders became a

great hurdle in this noble cause. Jinnah linked the National Conference with the Indian National Conference, both were playing against the interests of the Muslims. Sheikh Abdullah tried to convince Jinnah and argued that his party was actually a Muslim party. Apparently, his organization wanted the support of Hindu and Sikh elements in Jammu and Kashmir. Jinnah disapproved of his method and called it “not the right way for a Muslim”. This reply of Jinnah highly displeased Sheikh Abdullah and he openly denied to accept the political methodology of Jinnah. He arranged meetings against Jinnah, especially, called his activities against the State and democracy. In most of his public speeches, he used “filthiest” words against Jinnah and Muslim Conference. In one of the “demagogic” speeches, he advised Jinnah to leave Kashmir. His irresponsible behaviour was widely criticised, Sheikh Abdullah was the person who invited Jinnah for the arbitration among the Kashmiri Muslims, but when he declared his verdict, he turned against Jinnah. Sheikh Abdullah demanded that Jinnah should declare the National Conference as the sole representative of the Kashmiris and abandoned the support of the Muslim Conference. It was impossible for Jinnah to meet such conditions which were against his main standings in Indian politics, especially, the Two-Nation Theory. It is a fact that Jinnah announced Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas as an “honest” Kashmiri leader, who wanted to serve the Muslim community so passionately. During his visit to Jammu and Kashmir, the Hindu press played a negative role and launched a propaganda against his presence in Kashmir. Apart from these bitter realities and incidents, these visits created political awareness among the Kashmiri Muslims. They restructured the freedom struggle of Kashmir and became able to win the elections through their unity as per advised by Jinnah.

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