FAROOQ ABDULLAH’S IDEOLOGY IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLITICS:
AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts Farooq Abdullah’s ideology in Jammu and Kashmir politics. Farooq Abdullah saw various ups and downs during the Chief Minister of State. Farooq Abdullah had faced a critical situation during 1980-1990. With the ascent of militancy and the status economical, social and political condition were very weak. Farooq Abdullah explains its ascent on the Kashmir question by stressing on autonomy with his Pro-Indian ideology. By adopting secular ideas on his postures and communication with public and other governmental activities. In the state assembly election in 1996, Farooq Abdullah returned to power, when his party won the state assembly elections and led the state government since then. Jammu and Kashmir National Conference during the government of Farooq Abdullah was in full support to achieve permanent negotiations to resolve the problems between India and Pakistan and the State of Jammu and Kashmir, making all three regions equally competent in progress and development.

Key words: - National Conference, Farooq Abdullah, ideology, Jammu and Kashmir, Congress, Autonomy, leadership, violence, politics.

Methodology:

The present study makes an attempt to examine the leadership and ideology of Farooq Abdullah in Jammu and Kashmir. It is primarily a fact finding study based on the exploratory method. This study is based on secondary sources of data which includes, Daily News Papers, Manuals, Periodicals and Articles published in Journals etc. hence this study is based on the Descriptive and Historical approach.
Introduction:

Farooq Abdullah is a famous political leader hailing from Jammu and Kashmir. He was elected as the President of National Conference in August 1981. He served as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir many times since 1982. In 2002, he was elected as a member of Rajya Sabha and was a Cabinet Minister in the UPA government.

A popular leader, Farooq frequently made demands that Jammu and Kashmir be given greater autonomy within the Indian union as a way toward resolving the long-running problem of militancy in the state. Farooq Abdullah was born to a distinguished political family in the Kashmir region of the Indian subcontinent.

Ideology of National Conference Farooq Abdullah:

The basic ideology of National Conference as history has witnessed was revolutionary in nature and aimed at making Kashmir self-reliant. Jammu and Kashmir National Conference is a regional political party of Jammu and Kashmir. Its mass base is primarily in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The National Conference operates on the ideology of Moderate Separatism, and the re-unification of Kashmir. His political party which is pro-India and favors the policies and schemes of the Indian government. As a political party in the country, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference abides by the sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic principles and ideals of the Constitution of India. It propagates the true values of socialist doctrines and the legacy of the freedom struggle of India to the people, irrespective of any social and political differences.

Policies and Schemes:

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference have constantly worked for the restoration of internal peace between the different factions within the State. It strongly objects the formation of any wall between the two halves of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference are in complete support of attaining a lasting arbitration to solve the problems between India, Pakistan and the State of Jammu and Kashmir, making all the three regions equally capable in progress and development. Sheikh Abdullah had initiated the policy of single-line administration in the State. This concept was people centric, involving people in the day to day administration of the State, and takes the government to the people, and not the people to the government.

After years of hard work, when Farooq Abdullah was persuaded to head a democratically elected National Conference government in 1996, he initiated an era of reconstruction, the restoration of Autonomy, peace and stability and enormous measures to provide a better life for people. All those gains have been squandered away. There is more uncertainty now than ever before. Peoples' faith in peace, law and order that was so strenuously resorted stands eroded completely. People have lost faith in the system and it sounds like a tall order to restore it. A new Pir -Panchal of mistrust seems to within the four walls of inaction not of the people, for the people or by the people. Every floor of the civil secretariat look likes a different entity and each table a different isle while norms and rules are blowing outside like pieces of trash. The umbilical cord between the rulers and ruled so essential in a democratic setup has totally snapped. The hurricane of unemployment is gathering its momentum dangerous and what we have seen recently was only an initial light fall. There were over five hundred thousand unemployment youths without prosperous future. It is under this type of unwelcomed scenario the National Conference went back to people urging them to respond their faith once again in
the party and its leadership aware of its legacy that it’s the only aspiration. The seventy seven years of its unparalleled fight as an evil buster and a crusader against injustice continues unabated. It continues to be fired by Sheikh Abdullah “Sheri Kashmir’s” imagination, his unfulfilled mission, prolonged struggle and enormous sacrifices of his comrades, the revolutionary reforms and historic achievements whenever in power. This party has never deviated from a path of democracy, unflinching faith in people power and uncompromising pro-people agenda which is a testimony to the fact that only this party can retract the State from the crisis.

The Restoration of Autonomy:

The restoration of State autonomy continues to be the bedrock of the policy and agenda of Farooq Abdullah. Under the provision of the instrument of accession, the federal constitution and the Nehru-Abdullah Accord, popularly known as the Delhi agreement of 1952 Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed a guaranteed quantum of autonomy till 1953. The autonomy that was and should have been, is only now in the archives. The way unanimously passed resolution by the two houses of the State legislature was treated deepened the mistrust further. Farooq Abdullah’s National Conference party will be continue to strive for the complete restoration of the special status that formed the basis of Srinagar- Delhi relationship after prolonged deliberations impeding issue between India, Pakistan and the State, if a better, lasting and acceptable solution emergence the National Conference will not only facilitate it but will willingly accept it. After having impeded it for years, there are some shady characters that is vainly trying the hijack our agenda and camouflaging. In a way Jammu and Kashmir will strive for a solution that reflected the urges and aspirations of the people and gives due consideration to the genuine concern of India and Pakistan. People of Jammu and Kashmir strong feeling that for a meaningful and lasting solution of the imbroglio all sections of society, including the separatist and extremists shall have to be taken on board. Talks have to be broad bases and not selective. Unless we accommodate all the view points in a cordial, free, frank and democratic manner a solution might elude us.

Kashmiri Pandits:

Farooq Abdullah’s government has done little to secure the return of Pandits to the Valley, much the same way as the Centre’s gubernatorial administrations between 1990 and 1996. There had been expectations that a return to civilian rule would stabilize the security situation and pave the way for a return. However, beyond calling periodically for Pandits to return, the State government has done little to reassure Pandits that their future in the Valley can be secured. The central government has taken a few positive steps. V.K. Dhar has been appointed to the National Commission for Minorities, and A.N. Vaishnavi as an associate member of the Committee of Kashmiri Pandits in the National Human Rights Commission of India. The Election Commission of India made sure that Kashmiri migrants could submit postal votes in Delhi for the 1999 Lok Sabha election.

Kashmiri pandits are important components of our secular identity, our composite culture and civilization; it was during the period when Delhi ruled the State that they were forced to abandon their homes and hearth. National Conferee will strives heard politically and administratively to ensure their safe and honorable return. Jammu and Kashmir all feel the pangs of separation that any brother would feel for another.
FAROOQ ABDULLAH ADMINISTRATION

National Conference has the distinction of being, the torch bearer of women Empowerment and their equal rights. Sheri Kashmir had devised a charter in 1975 that reflects party’s deep commitment to uplifting, the strong and important segment of Kashmir society. As a corollary Dr. Farooq Abdullah formed an independent women’s commission with a view to address all problems of sexual harassment, discrimination, domestic violence and other crimes our women are generally subjected to. This important commission was made defunct. Jammu and Kashmir pledge to make it operational once again with full authority so that it works as an umbrella for our mothers, sisters and daughters.

To provide higher and quality education to women, we will establish a women’s University in the State so that even families with social taboos, find it easy to send their female children for higher education. Our women have proven that they are as competitive as men in any given field. At that they need is the right environment. We will encourage them to be equal partners in the development and progress of this State.

Tourism continues to be the largest source of matter to a large number of our people in all the three regions. While this sector has brought affluence to many, efforts shall have to be made to explore and development neglected areas that can match the existing ones in natural beauty and virgin landscape.

Panchayat Raj is one important facet of our democratic system that descends from the mountain tops and settled on the low surfaces of our villages and rural settlement. This is another empowering tool where our rural folk identity their problem, offer a solution and find the resources. At the moment our Panchayat has no role. We propose to make the system once again functional and vibrant. We will no more allow our rural. The Panchayati Raj institutions in the State have been greatly improved by the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference provided that empowerment to many lakhs of Kashmiri residents. Allocation of funds is made to the local administrations, such as the revenue department, food department, etc., in order to ensure their smooth functioning. The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference had an important role to play in its say against the AFPSA being implemented in the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

The great hopes were pledged the State Government took some immediately steps, for revival of administration and weeding out corruption, the administration was reactivated and campaign against corruption and vigilance raids conducted on governmental functionaries for the first in the history of Jammu and Kashmir were undertaken. An Apex body was setup to resolve problems of migrants and talk were initiated with migrants’ leaders for exploring possibilities of their safe return. Rs.660 crore packages were sanctioned for improving condition in migrants’ camps. On that period Dr. Farooq Abdullah inaugurated personal bonds of good behaviour comprehensive plan was prepared for reconstructing damaged schools, bridges, culverts, dispensaries and water supply schemes etc. Several bridges were launched and work commenced on more bridges. Recruitment process was expedited by strengthening public service commission and service selection board with the induction of more numbers.

The two high profile development projects have been initiated; the Uri Hydro electric project and the Jammu- Udhampur Railway extensions are longer term infrastructure project and also have Indian strategic interest involved. Neither has gone down well in the Valley. The matter relating to inclusion of Dogri language in 8th schedule of the constitution of India was taken up with the Prime Minister for early election.
For the first time relief to Government employees and pensions was granted. Upper age limit in Government services was raised from 33 to 35 years. Rs. 11 crore was distributed to the migrants for their gutted houses, incentive of Rs. 1 Lakh per family for those who would return was also announced. The another step took Dr. Farooq Abdullah's Government ICDS and Mid-day-meals schemes was introduced in all the 119 blocks.

Main Issues during his Chief Ministership

In September 1982 the Sheikh Abdullah died and was succeeded by his elder son, Farooq Abdullah has been constantly maintained that the State's agreement with India is final and irreversible. Moreover, he also maintains secular postures in his dealings among the people and through regard to other governmental deeds. But seeing as the total political culture of the State from the very commencement has developed on certain odd position anyone would like to reduce upon such considerations after entering public life. When placed in a direct challenge with the Congress during the 1983 Assembly elections, the first election in the State under Dr. Farooq Abdullah's leadership, he also tried all sorts of factors like religion, region, and family. The Congress, which dubbed Farooq Abdullah and his party as shared in 1983 and anti-national in 1985 reached a treaty with the similar Farooq Abdullah and also entered the election conflict from the similar stage in 1987. When the Congress government in Delhi disconnected the mainstream government of Farooq Abdullah from power, it supported and made Mr. G.M. Shah the new Chief Minister of the State. His communal leanings were well known in the State and it was perhaps for the first time in its modern history that Kashmir had experienced a large scale communal violence in 1986 when he was the Chief Minister.

The role of the National Conference Farooq Abdullah and the Congress factions in the State was now responsible for instigating this communal surge. The issue of leadership involves a number of conflicting positions. In this case with most of the other regional parties of India, it also remains a single-leader oriented party and as political evidence of the party in the last two decades revealed, the direction of politics has been extremely frequently oriented towards the personality of the leader rather than the ideology of the party. The disagreement between the two has posed the major challenge to the party, the coalition of the party with the Congress in 1986 or its alliance with the NDA in 1999. In both the cases, the party, under the leadership of Farooq Abdullah, had to suffer serious corrosion of its popular base. His supposition the party needed the support of the center rather than the people of Kashmir for its endurance in power had serious implications for the political fortune of the party. Farooq's style of leadership can be compared to that of Sheikh Abdullah, whose personality and build led him to have a complete control over the party. He was known to be an authoritarian leader, not giving much democratic space to other leaders. Even while shifting his political position from being a leader related to the Plebiscite Front to that of the mainstream politics of National Conference, he tried to carry people along with him and remained a thoroughly popular leader. As against this, Farooq Abdullah, though enjoying the charisma, failed to carry people along with him. On the divergent, his political campaign guided by his political insecurity, which he skilled right in the opening of his political career, confused the people from the party. This also has had the impact of hollowing the party of its ideological content on the one hand and making it more dependent upon the personality of leader, on the other. Ambitious by the contingencies of real politics, Farooq Abdullah often took politically incompatible positions leading to decrease of the ideological posture of the party.
The reality that the socio-economic culture basic the New Kashmir Manifesto is no more the guiding principle of the party and the agenda of the economic reconstruction of society has been clearly missing from the political dialogue of the party. The increasing role of the religion, politics both in the broader Indian perception as well as in the local framework, the party has reserved the flag of secularism and pluralism floating in the State, particularly in a difficult period of last 15 years. The party still swears by 'Kashmiriat', phrase construed to represent the secular ideology of Kashmiri regionalism and pluralism entailing reverence for differences as well as comprehensive politics.

Leadership of Farooq Abdullah:

Farooq Abdullah has been a leading figure in Kashmiri politics since the early 1980 son and heir of Sheikh Abdullah, the Nationalist Kashmiri leader who did so much to end feudalist Dogra rule in Kashmir during the 1930 and 1940. Farooq Abdullah has a different reputation of his father. There have been allegations of corruption and during the 1980 and 1990 he had something of a playboy image. This period also saw the feeling of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley to live like refugees in their own country. Farooq Abdullah clarifies his stand on the Kashmir issue as pro-autonomy as well as pro-India. He is a self-proclaimed secularist with his children married to non-Muslims. He advocates the need to preserve the Urdu language and even suggested to the Central Government to grace it with the "second State language" status.

During the Farooq Abdullah's Leadership, the autonomy of the National Conference and the location of its politics, in the popular support could not be sustained after the death of Sheikh Abdullah, although Farooq Abdullah, who hereditary the covering of leadership from his father, required to carry on the tradition by entering the coalition of national and regional opposition at all India level. Farooq Abdullah's government saw many ups and downs during the ascent. In fact, their party in coalition with the Congress was dismissed many times and replaced by a Pro-Congress Governor. There were rumors that he rigged the 1987 elections, which his party won. In the given context of the Indian politics of the time that was defined by the declining fortunes of the Congress and its efforts to compensate for its loss through the strategy and intervention in the susceptible States, National Conference became vulnerable to its intrigues. After giving it a tough fight in 1983 is one of the most brutally fought elections in the State, it submitted to the pressures of Congress and entered into an alliance with it, after the latter connived, the unceremonious overthrow of the Farooq led National Conference government in 1984. That period led the party leadership to conclude that the sustenance of the National Conference in power is more related with its relationship with the centre rather than with its popular base. The simple reason that the party followed hereafter was to remain on the right side of the centre.

The proximity of the National Conference with the centre led to corrosion of its authority and created a political void in Kashmir that was filled by religious and separatist forces. The Muslim United Front a new corporation of religion-based parties led by Jamaat-I-Islami, that staked its claim in Kashmir's politics in 1986-1987 periods, was successful in evoked political emotions in favor of its violent anti-centre politics bordering at times with separatist sentiments. It was the political environment that the tragedy of the 1987 assembly election, which was perceived to be heavily manipulated in favor of the National Conference and Congress combine, took place.

The onset of militancy in 1989 and the popular support that it could obtain in the initial period was a direct fall-out of this election. While weakening the authority of the Indian State and its political institutions, the popular disillusionment with the 1987 assembly elections caused severe damage to the
legitimacy of the National Conference and erosion of its popular base. Consequently, it was forced to abandon power in early 1990. Moreover the popular resentment against the party, it was rather difficult in maintaining the political order that led to withdraw not only from governance but also from the political scene. The imposition of the president rule in January 1990, the party went into hibernation. The crisis that underlay the situation during that period, however, National Conference withdraws the political scene. It concerned almost a total fall down of political processes. With arms militancy gaining ground, normal political activities were brought to a pause.

Meanwhile, an impulsive popular response in favor of the demand for Azadi (Liberation) manifested itself in the valley. The Valley soon slid into violence from 1988, and in January 1990, Farooq Abdullah resigned when New Delhi appointed Jagmohan as Governor once again. He spent much of the intervening time back in London. In September 1996 Farooq returned to power when new State assembly elections were held, and he has led the Indian State government ever since. The assembly election of 1996 could not attain legitimacy, despite the fact that there was a reasonable level of competition and substantially higher voter turnout. There were widespread allegations of coercion, not only by the security forces, but also by the counter-militants. On the contrary, it was perceived by many as an act antithetical to the movement. This explains the perennial crisis that was faced by the National Conference government throughout the six-year period of its rule, despite a heavy mandate in its favor both in terms of seats as well as votes. Despite its limitations in restoring the primacy of the mainstream politics in the Valley, the 1996 assembly election, in its measured outcome proved to be a turning point in the politics of Kashmir. Besides providing some semblance of political order, it also provided opportunities, however limited, for the initiation of the process of political mediation. The post-1996 period, therefore, witnessed the gradual opening of some space for democratic politics. Such a space emanated from the increasing inclination of people at the ground level for a political mechanism for dealing with their day to day problems. The importance of the small but gradually increasing democratic space in the post-1996 period cannot be undermined because the political response that has been generated now, in 2002, is directly related to that, especially the linkage between the political actors and the people. The role of the cadre of the National Conference, meanwhile, was also not inconsequential. Working at the ground level, anonymous workers of this party brought politics back on the ground level. That this cadre had the potential of stimulating the politics of Kashmir can be gauged from the fact that it posed serious threat to the militants. This explains the targeted killings of hundreds of anonymous National Conference workers in all these years. His party Jammu and Kashmir National Conference gained more interest among the masses in Jammu and Kashmir since the contemporary period of a new age.

The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference stand for the values of individual liberty and nonviolent peaceful dissent. It claims to represent the voice of the peasants, farmers and marginalized, oppressed sections of the society. The affection of the people of the State is primarily according to the aims and objectives of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The party has led the development of State from the pillar to the past; governance and policy implementation were very grave. The State has got development during the tenure ship of Farooq Abdullah. The State was one of the remarkable steps towards working for the restoration of internal peace between different factions within the State. Farooq Abdullah has been launched single line administration in the State. This concept was people centric, involving people in the day to day administration of the State and takes the government to the people, and not the people to the government.
Farooq Abdullah maintains secular identity, policies and schemes for the Kashmiri Pandits as well as Maulvis (Preacher). Work can be seen when there was least developed in the State and his emergence as the premier and Chief Minister made it possible every corner of the State. It has build Colleges and Universities for women and reserved categories of the population, thereby paying attention to the issue of minority rights.

Farooq Abdullah worked for the welfare of the State by construction bridges, schools, hospitals and also established a reservation policy of Muslims. His contribution was not limited to the above mentioned fields, but also launched a new industrial policy. Jammu and Kashmir National Conference providing empowerment to many lakhs of Kashmiri resident, Allocation of funds was made to the local administration such as the revenue department and food department during the tenure ship of Farooq Abdullah. He worked for the development of minorities and weaker section of the population, and also developed and promoted tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. He took efforts for women empowerment and provided electricity in 1109 villages. These schemes were benefited to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Conclusion:

Farooq Abdullah played a vital role during the tenureship as Chief Minister of the State. Farooq abdullah led the State development from the pillar to the past; governance and policy implementation were very grave. The State was one of the remarkable steps towards working for the restoration of internal peace between different factions within the State under the Chief Minister of Farooq Abdullah. The entire problem concerned in society, economy, unemployment and religious activities were solved successfully and whose personality and figure led him to have an absolute control over the party in Jammu and Kashmir. Farooq Abdullah had strong ideological base and a cadre located in the grass roots, the issue of leadership involves a number of conflicting positions. As is the case with most of the other regional parties of India, it also remains a single-leader oriented party. And as political record of the party in last two decades reveals, the direction of its politics has been very often oriented towards the personality of the leader rather than the ideology of the party. It is the divergence between the two that has posed the major challenge to the party, be it the alliance of the party with the Congress in 1986 or its organization with the NDA in 1999. In both the cases, the party, under the leadership of Farooq Abdullah, had to bear serious corrosion of its popular base. His assumption that the party needed the support of the centre rather than that of the people of Kashmir for its survival in power had serious implications for the political fortune of the party. This also has had the impact of hollowing the party of its ideological content on the one hand and making it more dependent upon the personality of leader, on the other. Driven by contingencies of real politics, Farooq Abdullah often took politically inconsistent positions leading to diminution of the very ideological stance of the party. That explains as to why the discourse of autonomy, though being the most relevant one for Kashmir, did not attract much popular attention. Farooq's style of leadership can be compared to that of Sheikh Abdullah whose personality and figure led him to have an absolute control of Jammu and Kashmir.
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