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Origin of Muslim Conference and Its Process of Transformation into National Conference – A Case Study (1932-1953)

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Abstract:

The present paper examines the origin of Muslim Conference and its process of transformation into National Conference – A case study (1932-1953). The sample for this study was after the conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference when Nehru began to take interest in Kashmir politics.

Keywords: Muslim Conference and its process of transformation into National Conference.

1. Introduction

In October 1932, Sheikh Abdullah founded the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim conference. On 11 June 1939, it was renamed as the All Jammu and Kashmir National Conference. The National Conference was affiliated to the All India States People Conference. Sheikh Abdullah was elected its president in 1947. In 1946, the National Conference launched an intensive agitation against the State government. It was directed against the Maharaja. The slogan of the agitation was “Quit Kashmir”.

2. Need and Importance

Theoretically the Muslim Conference was an organization aimed at safeguarding the interests of Muslim Community alone. But practically it worked like a true secular and progressive political organization with an agenda to represent the cause of the deprived sections of society. It did not work for the unity of the Muslim community alone. But, it persistently strived for the unity of all communities to fight for common issues. As a matter of fact the formation of a common platform was the inherent desire of the Muslim Conference leadership, which ultimately culminated in the conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference. Such a programme not only served the interests of Muslims, but non-muslims were also equally benefitted. In the second session of Muslim Conference held at Mirpur in December 1933, Sheikh Abdullah asked the non-muslims to support his movement for the rights to all whether he is a muslim or a non-muslim. As such, one appeal to the non-muslims that they should stand shoulder with us so as to take part in our struggle for the emancipation of the people, freedom of the nation from the degradation, poverty and slavery.

3. Objectives of the Study

The following objectives has been formulated for the proposed study:

1. To highlight the advent of main political party, i.e Muslim Conference of Jammu and Kashmir framework of Muslim Conference which led to the emancipation of Kashmir.
2. To highlight the conditions that was responsible for the conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference.

4. Hypothesis

The following hypothesis is formulated for the proposed study:

1. Muslim Conference’s conversion into National Conference made it possible to create a social and communal harmony and people of all seats without any discrimination raised voices for freedom.

5. Review of Related Literature

1. Sheikh Mohamad Abdullah, M.Y Taing 1985:-Theoretically the Muslim Conference was an organisation aimed at safeguarding to interests of the Muslim Community alone, but practically it worked like a true secular and progressive political organization with an agenda to represent the cause of the deprived sections of society. It did not work for the unity of the Muslims alone, but it persistently strived for the unity of all communities to fight for common issue the formation of a common platform was the inherit desire of the Muslim Conference leadership, which ultimately culminated in the conversion of Muslim Conference into National Conference such a programme not only served the interests of the Muslims but non-muslims were also equally benefitted.
2. Dr. Jan Asifa 2006: The National Conference as its manifesto the “Naya Kashmir” (New Kashmir) plan proved to be immensely popular in Kashmir as it was the blue print for a warfare state for in advance of its times. The demand for democratic rights was held by the Muslim Conference, of which Sheikh Abdullah soon assumed leadership. Sheikh Abdullah developed strong links with leaders from Jammu like Choudhary Ghulam Abbas and there from Muzafarabad and Poonch making the Muslim Conference a powerful party of the whole of Jammu and Kashmir state and not restricted to Kashmir valley alone. He became an important player in India politics and developed close links with leaders of the Indian freedom movement including Nehru and Gandhi.

6. Conclusion

The Muslim Conference had stressed on Hindu-Muslim Unity from its very beginning. Sheikh Abdullah, though bred on a platform of Muslim fundamentalism was intolerant towards non-muslims. Unfact, he was trying to his platform as broad based as possible by feeling all sections of the population of the state that the cause of struggle was common and they should not be scared of the mere name of his organization, the Muslim Conference.

In January 1938, Sheikh Abdullah met Pt. Nehru in Peshawar. Pt. Nehru suggested to Sheikh Abdullah that he should change the name of the party so the non-muslims have no excuse in joining the freedom struggle against the Dogras. Finally, on 11th June 1939, “Muslim Conference” was renamed as “National Conference”, and before it was actually converted into a secular body. The Muslim Conference had already set its boat to sail on the waves of nationalism, democracy and responsible government. The aims of Muslim were:

1. To foster Unity among muslims.
2. To work for the protection of their political rights.
3. To strive for their educational and economic upliftment.

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