

Introduction

There has been a great deal of negative propaganda in Kashmir over the years about the stepmotherly attitude shown by New Delhi towards Kashmir and Kashmiris. It is part of the consistent cross-border campaign to show India in a bad light among the people of Kashmir and to tarnish India's image at home and abroad. This has been so because of various reasons. An atmosphere of distrust and pessimism has been created in Kashmir, which has helped spoilers to spawn damaging accounts of India, and a conducive environment has been created at the same time at the international level to propel such narratives.

During the Cold War period, when Pakistan cosied up to the West, there was a visible tilt in the perception of the liberal world towards the Pakistani position on Kashmir. It was regarded as natural that a Muslim-majority region would accede to Pakistan. What the policymakers and analysts in the liberal world forgot was that India did not accept partition along religious lines, and the decision was taken with a very heavy heart to avert violence and bloodshed in undivided India. What they forgot further was that India developed itself as a secular liberal democratic state, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), after their horrifying experience with the tribal *lashkars* from Pakistan in October

1947, had helped Indian soldiers in repulsing the invaders. Later, they participated enthusiastically in the first constituent assembly elections in 1951 following which in 1954, the elected assembly ratified the state's accession to India. The constitution of the state came into force in January 1957 and endorsed the accession.

While Pakistan insisted on communal logic, India went ahead with its experience of secular democracy, where state identity was not to be defined in terms of one religion or another. Rather than accepting such a liberal ideal, there was sympathy amongst the liberal democratic countries of the world (who identified themselves as the 'free world') towards the Pakistani logic that a Muslim-majority Kashmir ought to have merged with Pakistan, which claimed to be an Islamic State, a state where both religious and ethnic minorities have been treated with disdain.

Pakistan went ahead with the propagation of its communal logic in Kashmir as well, gradually infecting the local mindset with its acerbic anti-India propaganda. In the process, the seeds of secessionism were sown in the minds of the Kashmiri people, who had valiantly repulsed the tribal lashkars sent in by Pakistan to forcibly secure Kashmir's accession to Pakistan. In the aftermath of the tribal invasion, almost one-third of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir remained under Pakistani occupation. India's bid to get it back through United Nations (UN)-led international mediation and pressure came to nought because the most powerful of the permanent members of the UN Security Council bought the Pakistani argument that India was sidestepping the rationale of partition on communal lines and usurping the rightful claim of Pakistan to Kashmir.

While the situation gradually started taking a turn for the better after the end of the Cold War, the inertia of those years has continued to colour the visions of powerful nations about Kashmir.

All this has, inevitably, had ramifications inside Kashmir. There was a continuous effort to drum up anti-India sentiments and incite innocent people to violence. Pakistan even resorted to the use of war in 1965 as a catalyst for insurgency in Kashmir, believing that there would be a spontaneous outpouring of sympathy for Pakistan amongst the Kashmiris in 1965 and the armed insurrection would assume such a shape that India would be forced to surrender Kashmir to Pakistan. In 1971, Pakistan resorted to a similar tactic and failed, losing control of territories north of Turtuk to India.

In 1999, it launched the Kargil war and had to withdraw, resulting in heavy casualties on its side, with its soldiers dying unsung and their bodies lying unclaimed. Such repeated failures of the Pakistani strategy of engaging India in direct or indirect war have not stopped it from using terrorism as a strategy against India. Added to this is the information warfare it has unleashed to bring down India's reputation in the comity of nations.

A section of Kashmiris has repeatedly fallen prey to the Pakistani disinformation campaign over the years. Pakistan's military establishment has exploited every type of media, including frontline conventional and new age (social) media, to that end. The often repeated propaganda trope of the Pakistani establishment and their local partners in Kashmir has revolved around the narrative of victimisation at the hands of India, often peddling false statistics and half-baked facts to claim that the poor socio-economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir is a result of the apathy shown by the government in New Delhi. Their oft-repeated narrative, is predicated on the baseless accusation that India's policy has been to deal with the Kashmiris through a communal lens, as a majority of the population is Muslim and hence this is the basis for denying the people of J&K the right to manage their affairs on their own.

Unfortunately, many a time, the local political actors—who have been part of the electoral politics in J&K—have also, over the years, fanned negative emotions about India. They have accused New Delhi of not extending liberal financial packages to the region and creating a situation in which the state is perpetually dependent on the Central Government.

In this context, the findings presented in this book suggest that the reality in J&K is vastly different. The data-laden exhaustive analysis in Chapters II–IV clearly disproves any claim whatsoever that the Indian government has pursued a discriminatory policy to deliberately ‘underdevelop’ Kashmir over the years. On the contrary, Kashmir has always received disproportionate attention in the sense that the per capita investment by India in Kashmir has been way above its investments in other important states bordering J&K. The central grants to Kashmir are also far in excess of the revenue the state has collected year after year.

Jammu and Kashmir was given special status, so that the state could handle all local governance functions in an autonomous way, within the broader ambit of the Constitution of India. However, this was misused by successive local political leaderships to create a culture of nepotism and corruption, often exploiting the statutory protection of Article 370 to escape the oversight of the national accountability mechanism of the country.

It also emerges from the findings that the state had witnessed rapid developmental activity every time there was Central Government rule. However, even those years were mostly wasted in terms of the generation of human capital in the state. This was because a culture of anarchy and violence was carefully constructed by vested interest groups in the state, with aid from outside. This overpowered the imagination of the people, mostly the youth, and they were consequently influenced by the resultant politics of hatred and ignominy.

The state and its people have suffered heavily for allowing themselves to be used as cannon fodder by forces outside Kashmir across the border and being unable to see through their pretension of sincerity and devotion to the so-called 'cause' of Kashmir.

The data collected in the book also wakes us up to another important reality that has hardly ever been discussed in Kashmir. The first chapter in the book dwells on the economic history of the Kashmir region over centuries, when the Kashmiris were seen to be operating under the yoke of oppression even if the rulers changed from the indigenous ones to the Mughals, the Pathans and finally, the Dogras. The data shows how the taxation system imposed on the people was one of the most repressive and alienating, and the rights and dignity of the individual were sacrificed at the altar of the state that was ruled with an iron hand by kings and monarchs of bygone eras. In contrast, the experience of democracy and liberty immediately after Kashmir acceded to the Indian Union was certainly like a breath of fresh air for a people long subjugated to tyrannical rule. The people experienced freedom and human rights under the Indian Constitution, and the revenue system that was introduced was certainly far more progressive than any other system that was in vogue in the past.

The transformative impact of the democratic and developmental administration in Kashmir after it joined the Union of India has not been valued by the people of Kashmir, because they have not reflected on it deeply and have not also compared it with the experience of the people living under illegal occupation in Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK). The author of this book had dwelt on this in his last book, *The Two Kashmirs*, published in October 2022, wherein data was presented from both sides of Kashmir. This clearly showed how lopsided the economic situation was in PoJK compared to

Kashmir in India. The lack of political freedom and economic alienation in PoJK came out starkly in the findings.

The present book may be considered an extension of or a sequel to that book. It seeks to bring out data on the resources allocated and to the developmental initiatives undertaken by the Central Government over the years and to show that the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Parliament on 5 August 2019 has not impeded the process of allocation of developmental funds to the state. In fact, there has been greater allocation of funds and a clear spurt in developmental activities in J&K, which is visible in terms of superior infrastructure and investments in roads, power, health, education, tourism, agriculture, skill development, and other sectors.

Various projects languishing in the state for over 10 to 20 years were completed with investments of more than Rs 2,000 crores. A total of 17,601 km of road was constructed under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojna till March 2022, which has connected 2,074 destinations. On 20 February 2024, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Banihal-Sangaldan Railway Line and flagged off the first electric train in the Kashmir Valley from Baramulla station. This line, constructed with an expenditure of Rs 15,863 crores, is set to revolutionise transportation in Kashmir.

In the educational sphere too, the state has taken giant strides. The state has witnessed the establishment of two new All India Institute for Medical Sciences (AIIMS), seven new medical colleges, two State cancer institutes and 15 nursing colleges with a capacity of 854 seats. J&K has also seen the operationalisation of the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Jammu and the Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu. The number of government degree/engineering colleges has gone up from 96 to 147.

Between 2020 and 2022, power projects with a combined