



Exploring The Forgotten Episodes of Kashmir History: Ahmadiyyas and the freedom movement

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Abstract

In this paper an attempt has been made to explore the history and role of Ahmadiyya Muslim Community in the freedom struggle of Jammu and Kashmir. It aims to highlight the role of this community in the various socio-political developments which happened in Kashmir after 1930's. An attempt has also been made to trace the, circumstances which attracted and motivated the community to join the Kashmir crises. Besides looking into the other relevant dimensions, this paper will also help us to understand the ability, skills and strategy of The Ahmadiyya Muslim community to manage the Kashmir crises under its second and most influential Khalifa, Mirza Bashir-ud-din Mahmood Ahmad. This paper will also show how Mahmood Ahmad skillfully utilized the various resources of the Ahmadiyya community to promote the Kashmir cause at the Local, National and International fronts. It also reflects the criticism that the community had to face from the opposition groups and Aftermath.

Keywords: Ahmadiyya, Alfazl, Dogra, Freedom, Kashmir, Khalifa, Qadian,

Introduction

The Treaty of Amritsar, signed on 16 March, 1846, was a black day in the history of Kashmir because this infamous Treaty sold the entire population of the Kashmir state to the tyrant *Dogras* who never considered its people better than cattle. Under the *dogra* autocracy, every section of the society suffered, life of a Kashmiri was no better than that of a Negro from Africa. The Muslim constitutes the 90% of the total population of the state but their living condition was very miserable. They had almost no share in the government services and no occupancy rights on land. All the cultivation processes was controlled by the state itself and the wages were also set by the government. If they had to pasture their cattle, they had to pay a tax for it. Except air and water, everything was taxed.¹ State could compel any person at any time for the forced labor called *beggar*² The Valley of Kashmir, substantially populated by Muslims was encircled by the other four Muslim States of *Bhimbar*, *Rajori*, *Karnah* and *Kishtwar*. With the helping hand of British, *Gulab Singh* succeeded in abolishing all the above States. After bringing those under his dominance he let loose a reign of terror in these areas. He used to award severe punishments to the Muslim subjects by drowning them into flowing rivers and wells or buried them alive in trenches or sometimes he pluck out eyes from their sockets. It is said that during his reign, when a Muslim chief from *Poonch* was brought before *Gulab Singh*, he ordered him to be fleeced alive. When his legs were being skinned, the son of *Gulab Singh*

could not witness this pathetic sight and wanted to withdraw. *Gulab Singh*, while holding the neck of his son admonished him saying: "If you show cowardice, how can you rule over your subjects³ *dogra* kings were very orthodox and bigoted they persecuted their Muslim subjects. All the religious places belonging to Muslims had been confiscated by the state and converted into store houses. Muslims were not allowed to say "Azaan" or celebrate their religious rituals. Besides Illiteracy, poverty and Unemployment they were morally and educationally backward. Their condition was no better than slaves.⁴ Moved by the pathetic condition of people, number of associations and organizations flourished and played an important role in social, political and economic well-being of the Kashmiri Muslims. But no other organization has put forward such wonderful efforts as the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community did.

The role of Ahmadiyya Muslim community in the freedom struggle is vitally a significant part of Kashmir history. But unfortunately due to religious prejudice and political factors it has mostly remained a neglected affair.⁵ Although a few historians like G.H.Khan(*Freedom Movement Of Jammu And Kashmir*) and Fidah Mohammad Hassnain(*Freedom Struggle In Kashmir*) have thrown some light over this subject, but that too is little and insufficient. Therefore the contribution of Ahmadiyyas in the freedom struggle of Kashmir have become the forgotten episodes of Kashmir history.so in this paper an attempt has been made to unveil these forgotten episodes.

Genesis of political awakening in Kashmir and the Ahmadiyya community

The Ahmadiyya community played not only a revolutionary role in the freedom movement but also contributed a significant share to the growth and development of the Muslim awakening in Kashmir. The Ahmadi leaders include Molvi Mohd Abdullah Vakil and Khawaja Ghulam Nabi Gilkar started a campaign of delivering speeches and lectures on various issues related to moral and social upliftment and aroused the people from deep slumber. Gilkar, had a deep concern for his countrymen, he was the first to raise his voice against the oppression of his people. His emotional appeal awakened the centuries old slaves and raised in them the ray of hope for living.⁶ At that time, It was a big crime in state to form any association, so he made use of the pulpits of mosques, shrines, public parties and other relevant places for this purpose.in 1925 he founded "All Kashmir Muslim Social Upliftment Association"⁷ which played a significant role in raising consciousness among the Muslim masses and made them aware of the conditions and causes responsible for their backwardness and helplessness. It also played a revolutionary role for the promotion of Muslim education in Kashmir and opened about seventy night schools for Muslim education in Srinagar.⁸ Gilkar, was the man of deep political insight. He believed that Muslims had been subjugated against their will and wanted to oust Maharaja from Kashmir. Therefore he administered oath to about one hundred youth to strive for the end of dogra raj.⁹ He was the actual brain behind the foundation of the famous Reading Room Party who worked day and night and attracted many educated youth to become its members.¹⁰ While as Molvi Abdullah Vakil and Mohamad-ud-in Fauq wrote articles about the plight of Muslims in Kashmir and published them in the newspapers of Punjab and Lahore. Initially they used to assemble at the house of Khawaja Sadr-ud-Din (secretary of the Anjuman-i-Ahmadiyya Kashmir) and discuss day to day social and political problems and reading newspapers like *The Alfazl Qadian*, *Muslim Outlook*, *the Siyasat*, *Inqilab*, *Kashmir-i-musalman* etc. the Reading Room Party was formally established on 9 May 1930, with Khawaja Mohd Rajab as its president and Khawaja Gulam Nabi Gilkar as its secretary. It's surprising to mention that in order to collect donations for running the reading room party Molvi Bashir Ahmad (son of Abdullah Vakil) took a worn out dress and begged for money on the day of Eid and collected an

amount of Ninety-Rupees.¹¹The members tried hard to encourage other educated Muslim youth to attend meetings and accordingly G.N.Gilkar approached Sheikh Abdullah who had recently arrived to Srinagar from the Aligarh Muslim university, and requested him to join the reading room party but sheikh Abdullah rejected the offer and it was only later in 1931 that he joined the party and was elected as its president.¹² The reading room party also had an “underground revolutionary cell” led by Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and Mohd Rajab¹³ Having succeeded in setting up a base camp for political activities in the shape of reading room party, its members established contacts with newspapers from outside Kashmir and these newspapers were published in thousands and smuggled through trucks and cars entering Srinagar from Rawalpindi. The Government imposed ban on these papers such as *Kashmiri mazloom*, *Kashmiri magazine* and *Maktoob-i-kashmir*. But the members went on publish newspapers with different names. Thus The Members of The Reading Room party played a Revolutionary role in arousing the Political awakening in Kashmir and eventually laid the foundations of Kashmir’s political struggle.

Secret treaty between Mirza Mahmood and Sheikh Mohd Abdullah

The head of the Ahmadiyya community Mirza Bashir-ud-in Mahmood Ahmad was far ahead of his times. Besides being an intellectual powerhouse, he was also the man of deep political insight He devised a well thought-out long term strategic plan to place the Kashmir’s at the forefront of the struggle. So in this connection he summoned 15-20 kashmiri’s to Qadian¹⁴ to discuss the Kashmir problem. And it was in this historic meeting that the delegation informed him about the potentialities of Sheikh Mohd abdullah, who could not leave the state in fear, that government would not permit his re-entry into Kashmir. On hearing this the *Khalifa* was impressed so much that he arranged to meet Sheikh Abdullah at the border town of Garhi Habibullah in the NWFP(Pakistan) thus, on the instructions of khalifa his private secretary Molvi Ab.Rahim Dard bring sheikh Abdullah who was hiding under the blanket in the back seat of the carriage. Eventually a secret meeting was held between Mirza Mahmood and Sheikh. In which the *Khalifa* Finally promised him that for publicizing the resistance internally his community would give Sheikh, a monthly allowance of rupees/238 and rupees/07 for maintaining an office. After the meeting was over, sheikh Abdullah was sent back into Kashmir in the same manner in which he had arrived.¹⁵ Sheikh Abdullah had close contacts with the Ahmadiyyas and he was very much benefited from them. It was actually Ahmadiyya community which raised him from a mere school teacher to the heights of a leader. It is very interesting to mention that the famous title “*sher-i-kashmir*” was actually coined by the Ahmadi *khalifa* Mirza Mahmood who constantly published sensational articles about sheikh in the paper, *The Alfazl* which referred to him as the “*sher-i-kashmir*” later other papers also became familiar with this title and sheikh Abdullah,s contribution to Kashmir cause was substantiated over time so “*sher-i-kashmir*” eventually became pseudonym of sheikh Abdullah. No doubt Sheikh Abdullah emerged as a popular young leader of Muslims as a result of the direct patronage from the Ahmadiyyas, however later it too created difficulties for him, as his enemies used it as a tool to malice his political image by labeling him as *Qadiyani* and he had to spent his rest of life in denouncing this allegation.¹⁶

The foundation of All India Kashmir committee and the devotional support of the Khilafat-i-Ahmadiyya

As per religious point of view, Kashmir played an important role in Ahmadiyya Theology. Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (the founder of Ahmadiyya community) claimed that after crucifixion, Jesus along with his mother Marry travelled to distant places and ultimately reached to Kashmir Where he lived a life of an ordinary man and finally died and is buried in a tomb at Rozbal Khanyar Srinagar¹⁷. In addition Alhaj Molana Hakeem Noordin (The first *Khalifa* of the Ahmadiyya community) had served as chief royal physician under Ranbir Sing and Pratap Singh for fifteen years from (1877-1893)¹⁸ Mirza Bashirudin Mahmood Ahmad also paid several visits to Kashmir and travelled to different parts in the valley so he himself had a privilege to observe the plight of helpless Kashmiri Muslims.¹⁹ He had a great zeal to end their miseries and was waiting for an opportunity to launch a full-fledged Movement in Kashmir which was provided in the form of 13 July 1931 Massacre, in which many innocent people were killed mercilessly. Mirza Mahmood, thought it as a ripe time to do something for the distressed Muslims of Kashmir and accordingly sent a circular letter to all the leading Muslim leaders of Hindustan and invited them to attend a meeting which was scheduled to be held at Shimla on 25 July 1931. The attendees of this meeting included, Mirza Mahmood (head of Ahmadiyya community), Famous poet, Sir Mohd Iqbal, leading Punjabi politician Sir Mian Fazl Hussain, Nawab of Maler kotla Sir Muhammad Zulfikar Ali Khan, Nawab of Kanj Pura Ibrahim Ali Khan, leading cleric of Delhi, s Bareilvi community Khawaja Hassan Nizami and a former teacher of the leading orthodox sunni seminary Darul-uloom Deoband Maulvi Mirak Shah etc²⁰ and it was in this historic meeting that the foundation of famous "All India Kashmir Committee" was laid, which later played a dynamic role in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir. Fazal Hussain wanted Dr. Iqbal, to lead the organization but on the Recommendation of Dr. Iqbal, the *Khalifa* of Ahmadiyya Community Mirza Basiru-din-Mahmood Ahmad was unanimously chosen as the president and another leading Ahmadi scholar Molvi Abdul Rahim Dard as the secretary of the committee.²¹ Muslims of different sects were the members of the committee including different politicians, intellectuals, lawyers, journalists, businessmen and religious scholars of different schools of thought. At no other time developed such a unity and harmony among the diverse Muslim population of Hindustan. The main office of the AIKC was established at Qadian, which was the Centre of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community²² the office was known as "*Daftar-ullah-Kashmir Committee*" Ahmadi *Khalifa* chalked out a comprehensive plan to popularize the Kashmir cause. In order to resolve the Kashmir crises, he tactically utilized the extensive resources and excellent contacts of his community. He used his position as head of his community to channel all the resources of his community towards Kashmir cause. Mirza Mahmood wanted to convert the crises into the international resistance and in response, he established "Publicity Committee" whose only motto was to popularize and publicize the Kashmir issue in the Indian press and aware the Muslims of the subcontinent by writing books and articles regarding the Kashmir. He met the viceroy of India Lord Willingdon at Shimla and presented the Kashmir problem before him. He also convened viceroy that the condition of Kashmiri Muslims is so much miserable that they did not even possess the basic human rights and appealed him to intervene in the Kashmir affairs.²³ The celebration of "Kashmir Day" was actually the idea of Mirza Mahmood and accordingly on his call the meetings were held in the big and small cities including Lahore, Calcutta, Patna, Bombay, Deoband, Karachi, Aligarh, Sialkot, Delhi, Lucknow, Meerut, Hyderabad, Deccan, Orissa, etc.²⁴ the Kashmir day meetings were also celebrated at the Ahmadiyya Mosques and mission houses throughout India and abroad especially in Qadian Punjab (headquarters of Ahmadiyya community) where it was celebrated with a great enthusiasm, by organizing a huge gathering which was presided over by Chowdri Fateh Mohd Siyal. In which Donations were collected and resolutions were passed against the oppressive Dogra rule followed by a lot of slogans and protests.²⁵ Inside Kashmir a lot of gatherings were organized protests and slogans were raised throughout the valley especially at

jamia masjid Srinagar, in which almost one lakh people participated. S.M. Abdullah, Chowdri Ghulam. Abass, Mistri Yaqoob Ali and Molvi Ab. Rahim gave their speeches. The Kashmir day celebration had significant consequences on the one hand it aroused the unity and co-operation among the people of different creeds and on the other hand the plight of Kashmiri people was highlighted in the entire Hindustan. Besides this Mirza Mahmood tried to internationalize the Kashmir cause by starting a propaganda campaign in America,²⁶ Sumatra, Java, Arabia, Egypt and Syria.²⁷ He instructed the publicity committee to bombard the national as well as international press with the articles and columns related to the crises in Kashmir. He sent Molvi Ab. Rahim dard to England to publicize the issue in the press. Kashmir matter was also discussed with imminent personalities and it was due to his noble efforts that Kashmir issue was raised and discussed in the British parliament.²⁸ It's interesting to mention that on the instructions of Mirza Mahmood the blood strained clothes of Kashmiri martyrs were also shown to the British parliament.²⁹ When Sir Muhammad Zaffarullah Khan attended the second round table conference in 1931 as a representative of All India Muslim League *khalifa* instructed him to hold the personnel discussions with the secretary of state regarding the Kashmir affairs, which he did accordingly. Again In 1932, Khan was appointed as the Member of the Viceroy's executive council³⁰ the Ahmadiyya Community got a privilege to discuss Kashmir problem directly and personally with the Viceroy of India and other imminent dignitaries.³¹

Within the community, Mirza Mahmood instructed all the followers of the Ahmadiyya community to come forward and give sacrifices for the oppressed Muslims of Kashmir.³² He established –“*Kashmir Relief Fund*” a mandatory charitable donation levied upon each earning Ahmadi to give one pai (1/192 of a rupee) on every rupee earned per month and every follower of the community was to contribute for it, as a result of which thousands of rupees were collected.³³ The jail incident of 13 July was followed by a reign of terror and repression in Kashmir. Thousands of innocent Kashmiris were wounded in firings and lathi-charge. Mirza Mahmood dispatched medical teams to Jammu and Kashmir to provide medicine and cure to the needy and distressed people.³⁴ In 1931-32, thousands of Kashmiris Muslims were arrested in fraud cases of murder, dacoit and rioting and their property had been wrongfully confiscated. In response to the call of their *Khalifa*, a number of highly qualified and efficient Ahmadi Lawyers' came forward and accordingly many attorney teams were sent to Kashmir to defend those detained wrongfully. They went to major cities in Jammu and Kashmir at their personnel expenses as the volunteers of the Ahmadiyya community .and it was by dint of their noble efforts that the hundreds of cases were overturned. These Ahmadi lawyers include Chowdri Sir Zaffarullah Khan, Sheikh Bashir Ahmad (later became a high court justice in Lahore), Chowdri Muhammad Yousaf Khan, Sheikh Muhammad Ahmad Mazhar, Chowdri Asadullah Khan (younger brother of Sir Zafarullah Khan) etc.³⁵ their hard work and dedication impressed people so much that they organized a congregational prayer meeting for them in Pathar Masjid Srinagar in which almost twenty-thousand Muslims participated and different dignitaries gave speeches and honored their noble task.³⁶

Dynamic Role of the Ahmadiyya Press

There was not a single newspaper published in the state of Jammu and Kashmir till 1924³⁷ the people had thus no paper of their own wherein they could express their feelings regarding various social and political issues so in order to express their self-expression the people of Kashmir had to depend on the Punjabi press. The Ahmadiyya community played a significant role by sacrificing its bulk of newspapers for the Kashmir cause. Some of the prominent papers which played a revolutionary role for the freedom of Kashmir were *The Alfazl*, *The Sunrise*, *The Alislah*, *The Akbar-i-farooq*, *The Paigam-i-suleh*, *The Noor*, *The Musleh* etc. it were these newspapers which told the world about the miserable conditions of the Muslims living in Kashmir. Thus the front pages of their official newspaper *The Alfazal* were dedicated and reserved for

the issues related to Kashmir. This paper has done a remarkable service to the Kashmir and its cause by highlighting the grievances of the people time to time and criticized the tyrant polices of the government. It highlighted the contemporary problems like poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, religious prejudice, economic distress, oppressive taxation, peasant discontent educational and cultural backwardness etc.it popularized the sufferings of people at the state level as well as at national levels.

In 1934 The Ahmadiyya community went further and started a new weekly paper called *The Alislah* from the *Ahmadiyya mission House Srinagar*, which was welcomed by many prominent personalities including S.M.Abdullah, G.M.Sadiq, Ab.Sami Pal (advocate j&k highcourt) Mr.Ab.Hamid Sahb Qureshi(editor,*Pasbaan*) jammu, etc³⁸. *The Alislah* introduced rear Muslim mouthpiece from within the valley that was created purely for the promotion of the independence movement. It became the chief instrument for carrying out the main political propaganda, education and propagation of public opinion in the valley. The main aim of this paper was not to make profit but to serve the people. It had a wide reach especially in the Muslim areas of Kashmir and raised the voice against the basic rights and needs of Kashmiri Muslims.³⁹It acted like an institution of opposition and criticized the unjust laws and policies of the government and the government on its part imposed sanctions to curb it.⁴⁰ Some of the main editors of this paper include Mohd Amin qureshi, Ghulam Ahmad mir, Chowdri Abdul wahid, Abdul Gaffar dar, Gh.Mohi-ud-in, M.Ab.Rehman.⁴¹ However it was Ch.Abdul wahid who played a dynamic role for this paper. Wahid even went on foot to the remotest rural areas of Jammu and Kashmir and ladakh and highlighted the plight of their sufferings⁴²*The Alislah* played an important role for the awakening of people by writing on contemporary issues and their solutions some important issues were like, *Needs of the kasmiri muslims*(18-Aug-1934),*Muslims of Kashmir and the Government jobs*(14-Aug-1934),*Economic crises in Kashmir and its solutions*(18-sep-1934),*How is Muslim development possible in Kashmir*(25-sep-1934),*The only solution to the Kashmir cause*(22-Aug-1940).It also played a significant role by encouraging the concepts of unity and brotherhood among Muslims and criticized the superstitious and meaningless rituals⁴³ Thus *Alislah* played a revolutionary role for the independence of Kashmir and Munshi Muhammad-ud-in fauq has rightly remarked that the people of Kashmir would always be in debt to its remarkable service⁴⁴

Another famous newspaper which played a notable role in the freedom of Kashmir was the weekly English paper, *The Sunrise*, published in Lahore and its editor was Mr.Malik Ghulam Farid (MA).the worth of this paper could be guessed by the fact that most of the newspapers used to copy its articles. This paper gave a wide publicity to the Kashmir cause by exposing the oppressive policies of the *dogra* rule in Europe. It also reached up to the members of the British parliament and the members of India office London. Mr.Natrajan the editor of "*Reformer*" in Bombay rightly observed that "*sunrise*, popularized and protected the voice of Muslims and defended the rights of Muslims in such a brave and efficient manner that no other Muslim paper could compare it."⁴⁵ Ahmadiyyas also used the other contemporary Muslim newspapers for its propaganda such as (*Inqilab-Lahore*) (*siyasat -Lahore*)(*Munadi-Delhi*)(*Himat-lucknow*)etc. It is interesting to mention that in August 1931 Mirza Mahmood established "*The Publicity Committee*" whose only motto was to publicize the Kashmir issue in the Indian press and aware the Muslims of the subcontinent by writing books and articles regarding the Kashmir. Its members include Mirza Bashir ahmad (MA),Sayed Zainul Abideen, Molvi Abdul Gani etc. the committee played a revolutionary role by producing some monumental works such as . "*The Situation in Kashmir*"⁴⁶ and "*Muslims of Kashmir and dogra raj*" by Mirza Bashir Ahmad (MA) which was later also translated into English by Malik Fazal Hussain, and when it was published in 1931 Mirza Mahmood, personally purchased 150 copies and dispatched them to Muzafarabad to

distribute them freely among the prominent Muslim leaders of that area.⁴⁷ Some other significant works include, Fazal Hussain's "*Kashmir issue and Hindu mahasabha*" and "*the memorial containing demands of Kashmir Muslims*" 19-oct-1931, etc.⁴⁸. Besides this the committee also published various pamphlets, hand bills and tracts etc.⁴⁹ Molvi Farzand Ali, the missionary in charge at *Ahmadiyya Fazal Mosque* on the instructions of the *Khalifa* organized the campaign in London. He published a book entitled "*Kashmir past and present*" and distributed it free of cost among the people in London. He also made contacts with several leading newspapers of London such as *Morning post*, *Sunday times*, *Daily telegraph*, *Nearest* etc. and published articles related to Kashmir affairs.⁵⁰ He successfully changed the British perception regarding the Kashmir to a great extent and therefore played a vital role for the freedom of Kashmir.⁵¹

Thus the Ahmadiyya press became a powerful mechanism of creating and reflecting public opinion, it highlighted the plight of the oppressed people of Kashmir at the national level as well as at the international fronts.

Cultural and Educational Role of Ahmadiyyas

Due to the discriminatory attitude of the government the Kashmiri Muslims were extremely backward in the field of education. The Ahmadiyya leaders contributed a lot for the promotion of education in Kashmir they used mosques, *maktabs* and *darsghahs* for this purpose. Molvi Mohd. Abdullah Vakil even used his own house to impart free education to the poor and needy people.⁵² Another famous leader who played a dynamic role in this regard was Ghulam Nabi Gilkar and it was under him that *Kashmir Social Upliftment Association* opened seventy night schools in Srinagar.⁵³ Mirza Mahmood, the Head of Ahmadiyya community himself visited Kashmir in 1909, He travelled to different parts of the valley and observed the plight of people. According to him illiteracy was the root cause of the backwardness of Muslims in Kashmir. He also gave public speeches at many places and urged people that if they really want to end their hardships they should achieve education.⁵⁴ He promised for the wholehearted support of his community in this regard and eventually took some important measures by providing stipends to Kashmiri youth and invited them to Qadian.⁵⁵ Where they imparted education and training and on their return to the valley, they played an important role by travelling distant places to make people aware about the advantages of education and learning⁵⁶ and due to their hard work and struggle they were successful in motivating not only the youth of their area but some elderly people also went inspired by their motivations and thus a fifty-year-old Khawaja Haji Umar Dar⁵⁷ learnt the art of reading and writing and played a significant role in bringing the educational revolution in his area and was instrumental in laying the foundation of "*Talim-e-Baaliga*" in Kashmir⁵⁸ in 1932. Ahmadiyya community also established a scholarship fund program for Muslim students studying in Kashmir⁵⁹ and enabled them an opportunity to pursue higher education.⁶⁰ Inside Kashmir Reading Rooms were established and highly educated Ahmadi members include Molvi Abdullah Vakil, G.N. Gilkar, Qari Noorudin, Chodri Abdul Wahid, Sayed Zain-ul-Abdin, Ab Gaffar Dar Molvi Ab. Rahim etc. were assigned to impart free education to the poor and downtrodden Muslims. Although all of them played a significant role in the development of education in Kashmir, but the contribution of Molvi Mohd Noorudin Qari⁶¹ is noteworthy. Qari, was a great scholar and prolific writer. Through his poems he advocated Kashmiri Muslims to shun ignorance and attain education one such poem was *taleem par, taleem Par* (Gain education, Gain education) which is still recited as prayer in schools in Kashmir. He translated Quran⁶² and several Islamic juristic books into Kashmiri language. He also wrote, *Hayat-un-Nabi* (the life of the prophet) to give a response to the conflicts over legal issues among Kashmiri Muslims and to unite the Muslim community he produced his monumental work "*Kashur Masal kitab*" a corpus of Islamic law or a book of juristic verdicts and which is considered as the first of its kind.

in Kashmiri language. The book contains three sections; beliefs, worship and rituals; and verdicts relating to issues in business, trade, agriculture and so on and is considered as a significant contribution to Islam in Kashmir. His another noted work "*Kashur Haar baghe*" is based on the division of property which aims to rid of the Kashmiri Muslim agriculturists of their dependence on customary laws of inheritance. Qari also composed numerous poems in praise of Islam and Prophet Muhammad (saw) which are still recited by the people of Kashmir.⁶³

Opposition from the rival groups

the Ahmadiyya *khalifa* had a complete control of the AIKC and the committee had achieved the unprecedented success under him therefore Many Muslim organizations and leaders may have viewed the rise of Mirza Mahmood as a challenge to their own leadership and feared that it would give Ahmadiyya community a credit and an opportunity to win the hearts among the general Muslim masses.⁶⁴ The main opposition to the Ahmadiyya supremacy in Kashmir was from the Ahrar party of Punjab. Earlier in 1932 Mirza Mahmood wrote letters to the Ahrar leaders to join the Kashmir struggle but they refused then he wrote letters to Iqbal, Ghulam rasool mehar and Molvi Ismail gaznavi to convince them to join AIKC and if their unwillingness was due to Mirza Mahmood of being as president, he was willing to resign.⁶⁵ The Ahrar opposition was not only on the religious grounds but also related to the political competition and leadership of Muslims in Punjab. Sir Sikander Hayat khan invited Mirza Mahmood and Chowdri Afzal Haq khan (Ahrar leader) to his house to reconcile between the two. But Afzal khan declined to cooperate with Ahmadis and stated that they have opposed me in every election and we have decided to eliminate the community in less than two years⁶⁶. Ahrars left no stone unturned to oppose the community by making false propaganda against them. They tried to hijack the movement and got succeeded in winning some of the influential members of the committee to their side and started to make hurdles in the work of AIKC⁶⁷ Another significant but unnoticed cause behind the opposition of the Ahmadiyya community by Ahrar party was the influence of Congress. The Ahrar party since from its birth was loyal and closely aligned to the Indian National Congress. The famous congress member Molana Abul Kalam Azad had played a vital role in the foundation of the party in fact the name of the party was suggested by him. While as on the other hand the Ahmadiyyas were pro-Muslim league. They had close contacts with the league and one of the famous Ahmadiyya leaders, Ch.Sir.Zaffarullah Khan⁶⁸ was the close confidante of Jinnah. This ideological clash further increased the enmity between the two groups⁶⁹. Inside Kashmir the religious leadership got divided Mirwaiz Molvi mohd yousaf shah joined hands with Ahrar party and strongly opposed Ahmadiyyas and stated a regular Anti-Ahmadiya campaign in the valley while as on the other hand Mirwaiz Hamdan group continued to cooperate with Ahmadiyyas. Finally the state government which had been already bothered by the Ahmadiyya community at national as well as at international fronts by clearly exposing its oppressive polices and intolerant nature also played a significant role to disrupt the unity among Muslims and disintegrate the leadership of the freedom movement. Ahmadis were held responsible for creating elements of revolution in Kashmir therefore the advisors of maharaja launched a drive to sow the seeds of dissention among the Muslims they employed traitors and publicized the reports that the president of the AIKC and his other associates were not true Muslims⁷⁰. It was also propagated by Hindu press that the main purpose of the committee was to preach Ahmadi sectarian views among the Kashmiris in the garb of helping them⁷¹ however the president condemned it and called it as a baseless allegation and requested Kashmiri Muslims to maintain the harmony.⁷² But with the passage of time dissensions started arousing in the working committee of the AIKC as a result of which Mirza Mahmood

had to step-down from the presidency of AIKC in 1933 and Dr. Iqbal was elected as its new president. However the move was condemned by all the prominent leaders of Kashmir including Sheikh Abdullah, Chowdri Ghulam Abass, Bakshi Ghulam Ahmad etc. The editors of *inqilab* and *siyasat* also regretted the change while the unionist leader of Punjab, Ahmad Yar Daultana remarked that Iqbal had never got things done in the past and would not be able to do so now⁷³ Iqbal tried to convene the meetings of the newly established committee but was failed to make it work like the old Kashmir committee. He was not comfortable with the Ahmadi members of the AIKC therefore he suggested the disband of the committee.⁷⁴ However Ahmadiyyas established another organization called as “All India Kashmir Association” many prominent religious personalities like Khawaja Hassan Nizami, Molvi Mirak Shah, Molana Hasrat Mohani, Molana Abu Zaffar, Molana Aqil-ur-rahman Nadvi, Molana Sayed Habib, editor (*siyasat*) Molana Ghulam Rasool Mehr, editor (*Inqilab*) Molana Ab. Majeed Salik and Mohamad-ud-din Fauq etc. joined the new organization patronized by Mirza Mahmood rather than joining hands with Iqbal.⁷⁵ The Ahmadiyya community continued its support to the cause of Kashmiris and played a significant role in the Middleton and Glanncy commissions. Some prominent persons who helped in this regard include Sheikh Bashir Ahmad, Asmat-ullah, Abdul Rahim Dard, Sofi, Ab Qadir Niyazi, Mohd Ismail Gaznavi, Sayid Mirak Shah, Molana Muhammad-ud-din and Chowdri Zahoor Ahmad etc. “Muslims of Kashmir and Dogra Raj” written by Mirza Bashir Ahmad was also presented before the Glanncy commission, when reports were accepted by the government Mirza Mahmood thanked Glanncy as well as the government.⁷⁶ He also commissioned Sayed Zain-ul-Abdin to visit the different places in Kashmir and verify whether the regulations of the commission were implemented properly or not.⁷⁷ When Sheikh Abdullah was busy to found a conference for Muslims in 1932 Mirza Mahmood sent Ab. Rahim Dard and Zainul Abdin to help him, both of them held discussions with the several important government officials personally and ultimately the permissions were granted and the Famous Muslim Conference was founded in 1932. For which Sheikh publicly thanked Mirza Mahmood while addressing in the first session of the conference held in 1932. He also read his message for the people of Kashmir.⁷⁸ Sayid Zainul-Abdin who played a revolutionary role in the foundation of the conference was highly honored and showered with flowers for his noble contribution.⁷⁹ But with the passage of time things moved fast, Sheikh Abdullah's interaction with Nehru changed the whole scenario he came close to the Indian National Congress which was against to the Ahmadiyya community for its pro-league attitude as discussed above, so it was possibly due to the influence of INC that he disassociated the conference from the Ahmadiyya members⁸⁰ and finally Ahmadiyyas claimed that they helped Muslims of Kashmir on humanitarian grounds but instead of getting appreciation they are being charged of having their own vested interests so they also distanced themselves from the struggle.⁸¹

However in 1947 when there was distress in Kashmir Ahmadiyya community again stood for the cause of Kashmiris and the world renowned Ahmadiyya leader Chowdri Sir Muhammad Zaffarullah Khan pleaded the cause of Kashmir with charismatic fervor and unprecedented devotion⁸²

Conclusion

As detailed above that the Ahmadiyya Muslim Community played a fundamental role in the freedom movement of Kashmir. But unfortunately due to political and religious upheavals their contribution was forgotten which is purely a communal exercise and against to the principals of writing history. They played a significant role in arousing the political consciousness, educational development and cultural ethos in the valley. They pleaded the cause of Kashmiri Muslims admirably and provided multidimensional support to the freedom struggle of Kashmir viz personnel, material and moral. The best feature of the struggle under Ahmadiyyas was that, it was based on the principals of peace and constitutionalism. They were responsible for raising the profile of the humanitarian situation in the region which resulted in the improvement in social status of Kashmiri Muslims. Without their support the freedom movement of Kashmir in its premier stage would have become negligent to say the least.

References and Notes

¹ Muhammad Yusuf Saraf, *Kashmiris Fight-For Freedom, Vol-1(1819-1946)*, edition,First.1977,Ferozsons.Ltd,Lahore, p.280

² “They fall on the road to perish of hunger and thirst, and thinly clad, as they are, destroyed in hundreds, at a time, by the cold on the snowy peaks. When a man is seized for this form of begar, his wives and children hang upon him, weeping, taking it almost for granted, that they will never see him more” see E.F.Knight, *Where Three Empires Meet*, Longmans,Green and Co.London,1916, p.68

³ *Hangama-i-kashmir*, Sagar Academy Lahore.Tibbe-awal 1963.Cited from Dost Mohd.Shahid.Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,vol-5,Nazarat Nashro-Ishsat,Qadian,2007, p.356

⁴ Zahoor Ahmad, *Kashmir Ki Kahani*,Vol-1,Nawai Waqt Printers Limited,Lahore.1969,p.28

⁵ Ahmadiyya Muslim community was founded in 1889 by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian in Gurdaspur district of Punjab. The community is having some main differences with the mainstream Muslims. They believe Mirza as the same awaited promised messiah and Mahdi as foretold by the Prophet Muhammad (saw) and also regard him as a “lesser prophet”. For detail visit the official website of the Ahmadiyya community (www.alislam.org). In 1974 Parliament of Pakistan declared Ahmadiyyas as infidels and a persecution drive was started against them. Besides physical abuse, torture and violence, all the good contribution of the community was erased from the textbooks of history. Later this policy was also followed in the other Muslim countries as well and eventually the role of Ahmadiyya community was also distorted in Kashmir history.

⁶ Shabnam Qayoom, *Kashmir-ka-siyasi inqilab*,Vol-1, Kashmir Book Depo,srinagar,1989,p.38

⁷ He also founded Anjuman-i-itihadul muslimin and Anjuman-i-Atfalul-muslimin(Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat;Op.cit,p.388)

⁸ Muhammad-ud-in Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Akwami Kashmir*,Vol-2,Kashmir Book Depo,Srinagar,2016,p.839

⁹ *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyya*,Op.cit;p.388

¹⁰ However Some writers have wrongly attributed its foundation to Sheikh Mohd Abdullah which is historically incorrect because sheikh Abdullah himself joined the party at the invitation of Ghulam nabi gilkar

¹¹ See Fidah Hassnain, Article on Reading Room Party, Greater Kashmir,14 March 2015

¹² Ibid.

¹³ *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat*,Op.cit; p.387

¹⁴ Qadian, is a town in Gurdaspur district, of Punjab. It’s the birthplace of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad (founder of Ahmadiyya Community) and the world wide Headquarter of the Ahmadiyya Muslim community. For detailed information visit, (www.alislam.org)

¹⁵ *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyya*,Op.cit;P.446

¹⁶ Qadiyani or Mirzai, is a derogatory term used for (Ahmadiyya Muslims) who believe in Mirza Ghulam Ahmad of Qadian.

¹⁷ Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, *Masih Hindustan Ma*, Nazarat Nasro-ishat,Qadian,2004,p.14

¹⁸ Muhammad Zafrulla Khan, *Hadrat Maulawi Nur-ud-Din- Khalifatul Masih-1*, Islam International Publications Limited, UK, 2006, p.54. According to Dost Mohd Shahid, He was later forced to leave Kashmir under seemingly unfavorable conditions(Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; pp.369-70)

¹⁹ However According to Ahmadiyya doctrines he was simply fulfilling the prophecy of his father Mirza Ghulam Ahmad(The founder of The Ahmadiyya Community) that “HE WOULD BE THE CAUSE OF LIBERATION FOR A PERCECUTED PEOPLE” see (Hazrat Sahibzada Mirza Bashir Ahmad, *Silsila-Ahmadiyya*,Vol-1,Nazarat,Taleef-wa-Tasneef,Qadian,1939,p.400)

²⁰ For the full list of members, See *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat* by Dost Mohd Shahid from pp-419-20

²¹ Khurram Mahmood, *Iqbal and Provincial Politics Of Punjab(1926-38)*Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad,2005 p.115 and *Kashmir Ki Kahani*, Op.cit; p.55

²² Samina Awan, *Political Islam In Colonial Punjab Majlis-i-Ahrar (1929-1949)*Oxford University Press Pakistan,2010,P.39 and *Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat*,Op.cit;p.106

²³ “I appeal to your excellency that you save millions of Kashmiri Muslims from atrocities, for they have been sold into slavery by the British government for a few coins.”(The Alfazal,Qadian,dt.18.july.1931)

²⁴ The Alfazal,Qadian.dt.27August1931

²⁵ A gathering of women was also organized and presided by Sayed Mariyam Begum, wife of Mirza Mahmood Ahmad, in which some resolutions were also passed and later sent to wife of the viceroy, lady lord willingdon (Ibid.dt,20.Aug,1931, pp.3-4)

²⁶ In America, Sofi Mati-ur-rehman, was assigned for this task and he played a significant role in this regard(Kashmir Ki Kahani, Op.cit; p.97)

²⁷ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit; p.499

²⁸ Kashmiris Fight-For Freedom, Op.cit; p.460

²⁹ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit;462

³⁰ Highest office an Indian citizen could occupy in the colonial times

³¹ Kashmiris Fight-For Freedom, Op.cit; p.460

³² Those Ahmadiyyas who live inside the Kashmir were also actively involved in the freedom movement. some important Ahmadiyya jammats include

Barramulla,Bandipora,Sopre,Hatchmarg,Ladroon,Hanjipora,Handwara,Srinagar,Islamabad,Verinag,Andoora, Asnoor,Korel,kulgam,Watto,Reshinagar,Shopian,Mandojan,Gagren,Manloo,Qalampora, check-yamrash,Bijbehara,Shurat,Kanipora,Hariparigam etc. for detail see, Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit; p.439

³³ Ibid.p.436

³⁴ Several such medical missions were sent to Srinagar, mirpur and bimer under the supervision of Dr. chowdri Asmatullah khan, Dr.shahnawaz and Dr.Mohd Muneer respectively,for details seeTarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit;pp.470-471

³⁵ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat has recorded the details of hundreds of such cases that were overturned by these lawyers with utmost devotion. for details, see (Ibid.pp.535-54)

³⁶ Siyasat,Lahore.dt.30sep,1932 and The Alfazl,Qadian.dt.18,nov,1932

³⁷ P.N.Bazaz, Inside Kashmir, The Kashmir Publishing Co.1941,pp-353-54

³⁸ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit; p.664

³⁹ If Ahmadiyya Community was only driven by its missionary intensions in Kashmir, as is claimed by some writers, then the paper Alislah would have become a best tool for them. Because according to Muhamad-ud-in Fauq (Tarikhi Akwami Kashmir) Alislah was a very popular and widely read paper which used to reach even to the remotest parts of the Kashmir valley. However it's interesting to mention that during its entire span of time from (1934-1947) not even a single article or column was published which was directly or indirectly related to the Missionary work of the Ahmadiyya community.

⁴⁰ Muhamad-ud-in Fauq, Tarikh-i-Akwami Kashmir,Vol-2,Kashmir Book Depo,Srinagar,2016,p.693

⁴¹ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit; p.668

⁴² Tarikhi Akwami Kashmir, Op.cit;p.693

⁴³ Rehbar,deccan, dt.Sep.02,1934.

⁴⁴ The Alislah, Srinagar, dt.Aug.12,1934.

⁴⁵ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit;p.434

⁴⁶ This pamphlet was overnight printed and sent to all the Ahmadiyya as well as Non-Ahmadiya Jammats in india.(yearly report,sigajaat,sadr-anjuman Ahmadiyya,01 May 1931,Lagyat 30 April 1932,p-92)

⁴⁷ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat,Op.cit; p.496

⁴⁸ Ab.Rahim dard and Chowdri Zahoor Ahmad played a dynamic role in compiling this memorial and It was by dint of this historical memorial that Kashmir Muslims achieved their basic human rights. For details see(Kashmir ki kahani, Op.cit; p.101)

⁴⁹ Some important pamphlets were as,

“presidentship of Mirza Mahmood and Hassan nizami”

“mirwayiz Kashmir ka batil sooz elaan”

“Appeal of distressed muslims of jammu”

“services of all india Kashmir committee”etc(Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; p.497)

⁵⁰ The Alfazl,Qadian.dt.21.feb 1932 and Kashmiris Fight For Freedom, Op.cit; p.460

⁵¹ Kashmir-ka-Siyasi Inqilab, Op.cit; p.55

⁵² Kashmir Ki Kahani, Op.cit; p.27

⁵³ Tarikh-i-Akwami Kashmir,Op.Cit; p.839

⁵⁴ One such gathering was organized at Asnoor (kulgam) in south Kashmir were hundreds of people belonged to different Islamic sects, participated and got inspired by his emotional appeal...(Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; pp.374-375)

⁵⁵ Mirza Mahmood also established a committee called “ Anjuman-i-Kushamra” whose main objective was to take care for the welfare of Kashmiri students who were studying in Qadian (The Alislah,Srinagar,dt.16,May.1946)and Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; pp.672-673

⁵⁶ Khawaja Ab Rehman dar (son of haji Umar dar), received education from Talim-ul-islam high school Qadian, and on the instructions of the khalifa he travelled to different places in south Kashmir to make people aware about the advantages of education. While as, Yaqoob Ali and Miyan Faiz Ahmad were assigned for the same task in the area of jammu(Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; pp.378-379).Here it is worthy to mention that he (khawaja Ab.Rehman dar) also represented the cultivators of Kulgam area and fought for 17 years to remit grazing-tax which was charged on the peasants in double rates. He always showed sympathetic attitude towards the peasants and liberated them from the clutches of the tyrant jagirdars. See(Twarikhi Akwami-Kashmir,Op.cit; p.601)

⁵⁷ Haji Umar dar was the resident of a village Asnoor(kulgam) he went to Qadian where he is said to have met the Founder of Ahmadiyya Community (Mirza Ghulam Ahmad) and accepted the Ahmadiyya faith he is regarded as the first Kashmiri to do so, later he went to mecca and performed Hajj also.

⁵⁸ Twarikhi Akwam-i-Kashmir, Op.cit; p.899

⁵⁹ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; p.448

⁶⁰ In 1934, Mirza Mahmood personally sent Rs/450 to "All india Kashmir association" for the promotion of higher education in Kashmir, see (Alfazl, Qadian, dt.14, june.1934)

⁶¹ Molvi Mohd Noorudin Qari (1894-1934) Qari was the son of mullah of a small means, who sent him to Qadian where he learned Quran and basic Islamic education under Molana Alhaj Hakeem Noorudin (the first khalifa of the Ahmadiyya community) later he went to Punjab university and received Munshi Alim degree. After that he returned to Kashmir and was appointed as an Arabic teacher at the govt high school, Srinagar

⁶² It was published in 1927 and is probably the first ever Kashmiri translation of holy Quran (kashur-tafsir) in the valley.

⁶³ C.L.Zutshi, languages of belonging, permanent black, Delhi 2003, p.218

⁶⁴ In order to mobilize the common masses Anti-Ahmadiyya campaign was started in the valley. Stereotypes were created that Ahmadiyyat is the grave threat to the Islamic identity of Kashmir. People were radicalized so much that Ahmadiyya-apartheid is still much more prevalent in Kashmir than the rest of India.

⁶⁵ The Alfazal, Qadian, dt.24, september, 1931

⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁶⁷ In 1933 AIKC was organizing its annual gathering at Sialkot. When President Mirza Mahmood came to dice to deliver his speech, Ahrar underlings tried to disrupt the jalsa by throwing stones over the people as a result many of them included Mirza Mahood himself got injured. See (Kashmir ki kahani Op.cit; p.85 and Self And Sovereignty, Op.cit; p.357)

⁶⁸ He attended all the three Round Table Conference's as the representative of "All india Muslim League". In 1931 Khan, was elected as the president of the league. He is also considered as the main architect of Lahore resolution (Pakistan-i-resolution). After freedom, He was elected as the first foreign minister of Pakistan.

⁶⁹ INC worried that the leadership of the Movement was in the hands of Ahmadiyyas who were pro-league therefore it would give league a chance to seek the support in Kashmir. so it was but natural for INC to support the rival party.

⁷⁰ Sayed Hussain shah (Religious leader of shia muslims) had already warned the people of Kashmir about such government sponsored propagandas. See, The Alfazal, Qadian, dt.27, Aug. 1931

⁷¹ In order to counteract this mischievous propaganda, a statement by 22 Muslim intellectuals was issued at Lahore, in which they condemned this act as mere conspiracy of the government to raise sectarian tensions among the Muslims so they requested Muslims to get united and do not pay heed to the rumours. see, Fidah Mohammad Hassnain. Freedom struggle in Kashmir, Rema publications, Delhi, 1988, p.60

⁷² The Alfazal, Qadian, dt.10, jan.1932

⁷³ Ayesha Jalal, Self And Sovereignty, Routledge, Tylor and Francis group, London and New york, 2002, p.364

⁷⁴ Iqbal, had family connections and personal contacts with the Ahmadiyya community. His father and elder brother sheikh Atta Muhammad were devoted Ahmadis (The Alfazal, Qadian, dt.18, july.1935) He once said "if someone wants to see the real islam, go and see it in qadian" and even sent his son (Aftab) to learn education there. He had sympathetic attitude towards the Ahmadiyya community and regarded the founder of Ahmadiyya community as the profoundest theologian among Muslims in the entire subcontinent. But after 1931 his views about the Ahmadiyya community undergone a dramatic change possibly because he was brainwashed by Ahrar leaders Afzal haq and Attaullah shah bukhari to whom he regard as his "pirji" or spiritual mentor. (Self And Sovereignty, Op.cit; p.364)

⁷⁵ For the full list of members, see (Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; p.662-63)

⁷⁶ The Alfazal, Qadian, dt.03, feb.1952

⁷⁷ Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; p.515

⁷⁸ And the message was "I hope the proceedings of the conference would be conducted with true patriotism, courage forbearance, gratitude and wisdom, so that your country attains progress". See Freedom struggle in Kashmir, Op.cit; p.77

⁷⁹ He was the significant force behind the foundation of Muslim conference is also evident from a letter, written by sheikh Abdullah to Mirza Mahmood, on 22, oct, 1932, in which sheikh expressed his gratitude for sending zain-ul-abdin to his help. (Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; p.516)

⁸⁰ Another significant reason behind this was, at that time the opposition to the Ahmadiyya community was rising very fastly. so sheikh realised that his association with the Ahmadiyyas would prove fatal for his future political career therefore he distanced himself from them.

⁸¹ Ahmadiyyas were labelled of being involved in their missionary activities in the valley. However there is no conclusive proof to admit it as true and valid even the contemporary census reports does not show any significant growth in the Ahmadiyya population of Kashmir.

⁸² In 1949, he gave seven hour long speech on Kashmir issue at the UN-security council which is considered as the most comprehensive and masterstroke. He stressed for demilitarization of Kashmir and also urged the council for solving the Kashmir problem in accordance with the will of the people of state. For detail see, Tarikh-i-Ahmadiyyat, Op.cit; pp.696-97