

India Occupied Kashmir (IOK) Elections 2014: Future of Jammu and Kashmir Issue

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Abstract

The cost of the unresolved issue of Jammu and Kashmir has become intolerable for the people of Jammu and Kashmir as they are subject to the atrocities of the Indian Occupational Forces (IOF). The people of Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) have been constantly raising their voices against these atrocities and demanded for the right of self-determination. However, India is using more than 700,000 IOF personnel to crush these voices through bullet, besides implanting pro-Indian regimes to dominate political freedom of the people. This bullet-and-ballot policy has been prevalent in all the elections in IOK. Similarly, the 2014 elections have been largely viewed with skepticism and considered as illegitimate and futile. Furthermore, an uneven alliance between People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) indicated more detrimental future for Jammu and Kashmir. The broader aim of this study is to analyse the outcome of 2014 elections in IOK. The study attempts to evaluate the impact of pre-and-post elections policies of PDP and BJP, and its governance over the past 14 months.

Keywords: IOK Elections 2014, Common Minimum Programme, People's Democratic Party, Bharatiya Janata Party, Article 370, AFSPA, Hurriyat.

Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir is a core issue between India and Pakistan and one of the longstanding disputes in the world. The rate of violence in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) under the Indian Occupational Forces (IOF) has escalated since 1990s. The rampant violence has killed tens of thousands of Kashmiri Muslims and rendered millions homeless and an equal number of refugees. Violent incidents including bomb explosions,

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tortures, extra-judicial and target killings, abductions and rape remained frequent.

Besides such violence, over the years, the political approach was modified to win the hearts and minds of the people by presenting more rosy rhetoric. However, people of IOK have always rejected such rhetoric. The 2014 State Assembly Election campaigns were also carried out in this style.

The 2014 State Assembly Elections brought the Jammu and Kashmir at the crossroads of its political history. The PDP-BJP coalition government proved that desire of people of IOK to enjoy democratic rights through free and fair elections still remained a pipedream. Despite being in office for 14 months now, the coalition government failed to fulfil its promise and address the grievances of people of IOK.

The main argument of this study revolves around the fact that both PDP — a soft separatist party, and BJP — an ultra-nationalist party, have very little in common other than to rule over IOK. Despite huge difference on fundamental issues, PDP agreed to be a coalition partner of BJP. However, the coalition brought serious implications for the future of the people of IOK and Jammu and Kashmir issue.

With this backdrop, the main aim of this study is two fold. Firstly, the study assesses the 2014 electoral landscape and, PDP and BJP's aims and shift in their policies during and after the election. Secondly, while analysing the diverging political philosophies of both the parties and their governance of fourteen months, this paper evaluates the impact of this coalition on future of the people of IOK and Jammu and Kashmir issue.

To fulfil this aim, this study is divided into two parts. The first part analyses the electoral competition and its likely impact on composition of the assembly. It also canvases the political landscape in Jammu and Kashmir while exploring subtle policies of PDP-BJP. The second part of the study highlights impact of the coalition government on the future of Jammu and Kashmir issue.

Indian Occupied Kashmir Elections

Jammu and Kashmir has a history of political traditionalism that, for decades, was dominated by Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC). Widmalm (1997) and Singh, (1998) wrote that the first State Assembly Elections were held in 1951 in which JKNC won all 75 seats.¹Widmalm, (2014), Ahuja (1998) and Ramachandran (2002) argue that it is assumed that, over the time, genuine elections have been evolved in Jammu and Kashmir. However, the elections, throughout the history, in Jammu and Kashmir have been rigged and driven by malpractices.² All government machinery had been used in support of the ruling parties. Sayyid Mir Qasim Shah, Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir writes in his memoir that the election rigging and malpractices in IOK are prevalent and if the elections had been free and fair then victory of the Plebiscite Front could have been inevitable³. *New York Times*⁴ and *BCC*⁵ also described the elections as rigged and detailed the malpractices adopted. These two newspapers reported that the people were forced by the IOF either to cast the vote or show their presence to demonstrate the elections as free and fair to the world. Consequently, the elections in Jammu and Kashmir have always been heavily rigged by the authorities and highly monitored by IOF.

However, over the past 60 years, the electoral landscape of Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed multiple changes. Rather than being constructive, these changes were politically subtle, manipulated and complicated. With respect to the mass preferences, these changes showed grave lapses of the governments on many issues and also made good governance impossible that further deepen the grievances of the people.

¹Stein Widmalm, "The Rise and fall of Democracy in Jammu and Kashmir." *Asian Survey* (1997): 1007.

²Sudha Ramachandran, "How India lost hearts and minds," *Asia Times*, January 25, 2002.

³ Sayyid Mir Qasim, *My Life and Times* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1992).

⁴ "Kashmir still awaits free and fair election," *New York Times*, October 8, 1996.

⁵ "Kashmir Flawed Elections," *BBC*, September 14, 2002.

Election 2014 and Outcomes

The prevailing grievances, longstanding issues and crisis ridden years (2008-2010)⁶ created more competitive and disturbing milieu for the elections 2014. The election process proceeded in a quadrilateral setting where Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), a third generation ruling party, and Indian National Congress (INC) were losing their charisma. This started a great competition between PDP and BJP.

PDP and BJP emerged with high vote share as compared to the previous elections. PDP's success was apprehensible, however, BJP's success was uncertain and its aggressive entry into the politics of Jammu and Kashmir was unforeseen. The table below delineates the parties' gains from 2008 to 2014.

⁶Amarnath land transfer controversy was started on May 26, 2008, in which Government of India and State government of J&K extended an agreement to transfer about 99 acres forest land to Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB) in the valley to built shelters and facilitate the Hindu pilgrims.

Shopian Unrest started in the backdrop of rape and murder case of two young women by security forces. PDP also voiced for this case and demanded and protested for the punishment of the culprits.

The 2010 unrest started in June when the Indian security forces claimed killing of the three Pakistani infiltrates, however, later on it was exposed that these young men were from Baramulla District who were killed by Indian Security Forces in a staged encounter at Sona Pindi. Protests were demonstrated across the J&K citing human rights abuses by Indian Security Forces.

Table No. 1
Election Trends in IOK: 1951-2014

Year	Total Seats	JKNC	INC	PDP	BJP
1951	75	75	*	*	*
1957	75	68	*	*	*
1962	75	70	*	*	*
1967	75	8	61	*	*
1972	75	**	58	*	*
1977	76	47	11	*	*
1983	76	47	26	*	0
1987	76	40	26	*	2
1996	87	57	7	*	8
2002	87	28	20	16	1
2008	87	28	17	21	11
2014	87	15	12	28	25

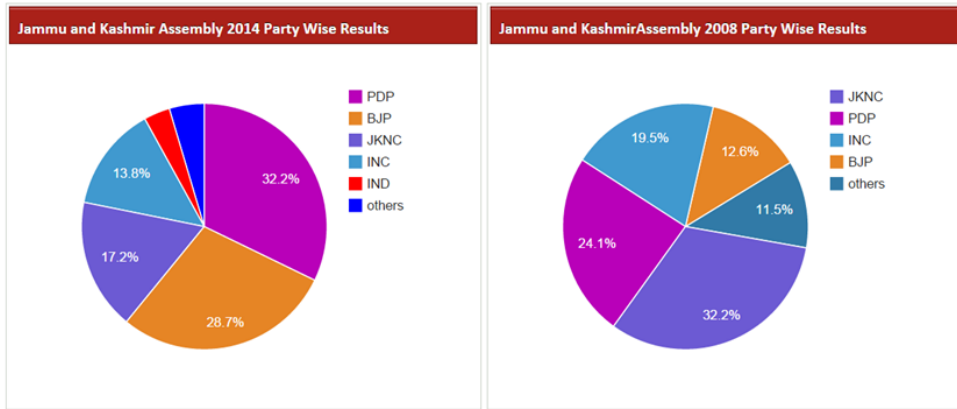
Source: Web sites of *Election Commission of India and Elections.in*
<http://www.elections.in/jammu-and-kashmir/>
http://eci.nic.in/eci_main1/election_analysis_ae.aspx

* Non-existing;

** JKNC merged into INC and it was usurped by the Delhi-sponsored politician and supporter of Sheikh Abdullah, who establish Plebiscite Front that remained intact till 1975, later Sheikh Abdullah dissolved this Plebiscite Front.

The PDP won 28 seats out of 87 seats most of which were from the valley whereas BJP secured 25 seats — all from the Hindu majority areas. The rise of PDP and BJP demonstrated the complex dynamics of the electoral politics in IOK rather than the people's narrative. The most striking feature of this electoral dynamics was BJP's entrance in the politics of Jammu and Kashmir for the first time. As BJP succeeded in securing some gains and managed to become a key constituent of the assembly, the composition of assembly underwent detectable transformation.

Jammu and Kashmir Assembly Vote Share of the Parties



Source: www.elections.in

The above figure shows that Jammu and Kashmir assembly have had visible change in composition. It is evident that BJP's share in this composition rose from 12.6 per cent to 28.7 per cent and PDP's from 24.1 per cent to 32.2 per cent.

The facts presented above demonstrated that the involvement of PDP and BJP in Jammu and Kashmir increased significantly. However, the apparent reason of this success is the 'voter's turnout'. This turnout varied from region to region. The demographic pattern shown below revealed the logic of overall verdict of the elections.

Table No. 2
Demographic Composition in Jammu and Kashmir

Division	Population	% Muslim	% Hindu	% Sikh	% Buddhist and other
Kashmir (53.9%)	5,476,970	97.16%	1.84%	0.88%	0.11%
Jammu (43.7%)	4,430,191	30.69%	65.23%	3.57%	0.51%
Ladakh (2.3%)	236,539	47.40%	6.22%	-	45.87%
Jammu and Kashmir	10,143,700	66.97%	29.63%	2.03%	1.36%

Source: Statistics calculated from 2001 census, district profile, Jammu and Kashmir Official State Portal, <https://jk.gov.in/jammukashmir/?q=demographics>

* In the above table Kashmir refers to valley region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Support for both the parties varied from Valley to Jammu and Laddakh due to the ideological and regional divisions which is also evident in the above figure. Therefore, BJP secured more votes from Jammu and PDP from valley. Completely ignoring the demographic composition of IOK and its ideological divide, India declared that this increased vote share shows that the people voted because they have shown faith in Indian democracy and their support for separatist leadership have declined. However, one of the reasons of this increased vote share was the demographic composition of IOK.

Election Policies of BJP and PDP and Voter Turnout

Since early 2014, all the political parties campaigned aggressively to secure more votes. Both PDP and BJP campaigned actively and attempted to benefit from widespread public discontent.

Modi's victory in India was already viewed with optimism and fear. The Hindu nationalist viewed the rise as valuable. It was believed that under Modi's leadership India would advance to become a Hindu nation because Modi had close association to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a right wing Hindu nationalist party. However, for the Muslims, it raised fears due to BJP's notorious history of acerbity towards the Muslims of India and people of IOK. The 2002 Gujrat violence not only claimed thousands of lives but also triggered anti-BJP and anti-Modi sentiment among the Muslims in India and IOK. Furthermore, non-revocation of AFSPA, LoC violations, abrogation of Article 370 etc., also clearly reflected his Hindu nationalist policies and actions vis-à-vis IOK. Mishra (2014) provides an in-depth analysis of the rising intolerance in India under Modi, particularly, against the Muslims and Christians.⁷The aggressive policies and increased anti-BJP sentiments raises question marks over the success of BJP.

⁷Pankaj Mishra, "In India new tolerance for intolerance," *Bloomberg*. December 21, 2014.

However, soon after coming to power in India, Modi started his campaign for IOK elections. In his election campaigns, he tried to achieve victory by focusing on the development agenda, Mission 44+. Kingshuk Nag penned the traditional concept of ‘cultural nationalism and Hindutva’ which defines political ideology of BJP⁸. However, Rekha Chowdhary, (2016) described that Modi deliberately did not focus on this traditional policy rather purposefully tried to remain relevant to the electoral processes of IOK.⁹ *Times of India*, and Greater Kashmir reported that during his election campaign, Modi wore a *pheran*,¹⁰ abstained from singing off the Vande Mataram and promised voters of jobs and justice to gain more votes.¹¹

PDP always assured people that it would meet their aspirations and, therefore, used ‘Self Rule’¹² doctrine for winning the elections. *Kashmir Images* described PDP’s selection manifesto as a framework based on ‘Self Rule’ to resolve all the issues that IOK confronts.¹³ The Eleven Point Inspirational Agenda of PDP for 2014 elections predominantly included the following important commitments:

- Political empowerment of the people of Jammu and Kashmir by using Article 370 of the Indian Constitution
- Intra- Kashmir free trade and travel
- Normalization of relations with Pakistan
- Talks with Hurriyat
- Revocation of Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA)¹⁴

⁸Kingshuk Nag, *The Saffron Tide: The Rise of the BJP*, (Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi 2014).

⁹. Rekha Chowdhary, *Politics of Identity and Separatism*, (Routledge, New York, 2016).

¹⁰.The overcoat which is draped by people of Kashmir over clothes during winters.

¹¹. “BJP sets ‘Mission 44’ target for J&K poll,” *Times of India*. July 23, 2014.

¹². Self Rule slogan of PDP states that key to power is with people.

¹³. “PDP releases its election manifesto,” *Kashmir Images*, November 29, 2014.

¹⁴.People’s Democratic Party, 2014 Manifesto, www.pdpfiji.com/index.php/about/manifesto-2014.

Cause of Success and Voter Turnout

Despite playing wisely, BJP failed to achieve an unprecedented victory: it secured votes from Jammu only which is a Hindu populous region. BJP succeeded primarily because: a), in its past manifestos, it openly stated about the India's sovereignty over IOK and remained committed to grab all the areas of IOK;¹⁵ and, b) it had strongly supported the Hindus on their position on different events such as Amarnath agitation.

Furthermore, *Indian Express*, and *Times of India* claimed that rise of BJP shows that support of the Separatist leadership has declined.¹⁶ The Separatist leadership, which generally holds the boycott call strictly, however, in these elections decided to reconsider the call and requested the voters to vote for the regional parties rather than BJP. This reconsideration was primarily based on the apprehension: if majority will not cast the vote it will benefit BJP. The emergence of a Hindu nationalist party like BJP was more detrimental for the Muslims. Henceforth, it was decided not to implement the call vigorously and support some regional party. Consequently, the people voted for PDP. *Voice of America* also reported that BJP picked votes from the Hindu dominant region and failed to make dent in the Muslim and Buddhist majority areas.¹⁷

Henceforth, PDP succeeded and its vote bank increased because a) BJP was directly participating in the elections, b) the people were distressed by the traditional political parties and their bad governance, and, c) PDP's stance on strengthening of Article 370 and revoking of Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) also gave some hope to the people and flocked them to polling booths to vote for PDP instead of letting BJP to gain majority.

It is clear that both PDP and BJP played tactically for winning the elections. Consequently, the elections results presented a fractured

¹⁵ Mallika, Joseph, "BJP manifesto: one nation's security and foreign policy," *Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies*. February, 8, 1998.

¹⁶ "BJP's much hyped entry changing J&K 'boycott' politics," *Indian Express*, December 10, 2014.

¹⁷ "India's Hindu Nationalist BJP makes electoral gains in Kashmir," *Voice of America*, December 23, 2014.

verdict. This fractured verdict brought PDP and BJP together to form a coalition government.

Post-election Developments

After months of negotiation, both PDP and BJP mended their differences, sealed the deal and agreed on Common Minimum Programme (CMP). The terms of the CMP engagement primarily rested on five points:

1. Governance Reforms
2. Political Initiatives
 - Enhancing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) across Line of Control (LoC)
 - Normalizing relations with Pakistan
 - Engaging Hurriyat leadership
 - No adjustment of Article 370
3. Initiatives on security matters
 - Revocation of AFSPA
 - Return of land from security forces to rightful owner
4. Social and Humanitarian Initiatives, and
5. Development agenda.¹⁸
 - Return of Power Projects

Under this CMP, the coalition partners agreed to engage to normalize relations between India and Pakistan. The coalition decided to sustain a dialogue with the internal stake holders – Hurriyat leaders. However, both the parties also stipulated to “examine” the need for de-notifying “disturbed areas” vis-à-vis revocation of AFSPA and sent back this issue in BJP’s court. This made most awaited CMP to be a conciliatory agreement through which BJP got a foothold in Jammu and Kashmir politics and PDP gained Power.

How PDP-BJP Alliance was Viewed

The Hindu reported that formation of the alliance surprised many since people voted for PDP not only to maintain distant from BJP but

¹⁸ PDP-BJP coalition government in J&K: Agenda of Alliance, full document available on <http://im.rediff.com/news/2015/mar/02bjp-pdp.pdf>.

also to resolve the contentious issues. Therefore, the alliance with a Hindu nationalist party like BJP — which had always shown acerbity towards Muslims and proclaimed the abrogation of Article 370 — created more fear among the masses.¹⁹ Nag (2014) claimed that IOK had always been the centre of BJP's strategy right from Jan Sangh's time, therefore, ruling over the Muslim majority region has always been its dream.²⁰

Alliance between PDP and BJP received mixed views from IOK, Pakistan and India. People of IOK viewed this alliance in despair. *Asian Tribune* reported that the people of valley called this alliance as 'unholy', while, Hindu majority Jammu termed it as a partnership between 'North and South pole'.²¹ According to *Daily News and Analysis* some also anticipated that BJP would respect their concerns, but this largely depends that how successful PDP emerges to change the BJP's controversial vision for IOK.²² Dulat and Sinha (2015) also wrote that a Kashmiri who understand the politics of IOK well, consider this alliance as more unstable and uneven.²³

Pakistan viewed this partnership with fear. This was primarily because of a) Modi's aggression towards Muslims; b) increased LoC violations by India; and c) BJP's efforts to downsize the role of Hurriyat leadership in resolving the issue of Jammu and Kashmir. *The Times of India*, reported that the alliance's Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh called Hurriyat leaders 'irrelevant' to state.²⁴ Such statements signalled more deteriorating future for people of IOK and further heighten the Pakistan's concerns for the alliance.

¹⁹ "Revoking Article 370 means burning the bridge between J&K and India," *Hindu*, May 8, 2014.

²⁰ Kingshuk Nag, *The Saffron Tide: The Rise of the BJP* (Rupa Publications India Pvt. Ltd, New Delhi, 2014).

²¹ "BJP assumes power in Kashmir: PDP'S unholy alliance and betrayal," *Asian Tribune*, March 2, 2015.

²² "BJP-PDP coalition unholy and opportunist," *Daily News and Analysis*, April, 13, 2015.

²³ A.S Dulat, Aditya Sinha, *Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years*, (Harper Colins, India, 2015).

²⁴ "Separatists irrelevant', says Jammu & Kashmir deputy CM," *Times of India*, May 2, 2015.

According to *The Hindu* and *The Indian Express* the elections were viewed by India as thumbing victory for Modi. They perceived the electoral process in IOK as 'free and fair' and considered the turn out as an indication that Indian Constitution had been accepted by People of IOK. The year was reflected as the unprecedented success year for BJP that emerged as a 'relevant' political force in IOK.

PDP-BJP Alliance Governance Analysis

The coalition has completed 14 months in office but the people are still dissatisfied with its governance. In this entire period people of IOK have faced many challenges and uncertainties. After Chief Minister (CM), Mufti Mohammad Sayeed died, state was under Governor's rule for three months till Mehbooba Mufti sworn in as first woman Chief Minister of IOK on April 1, 2016.

Since its formation, the coalition partners were not the best allies. Leaders of both the parties periodically made remarks that irked each other. The faith and hope that some of the people had in the alliance started tapering out since its very beginning. Greater Kashmir wrote that the alliance completed five months but it failed to deliver on any of their promises that they used in their election manifesto or was part of alliance agenda.²⁵ It raised several issues and controversies such as:

- New recruitment policy²⁶
- Separate colonies for Armed personnel's, Pandits, the Hindu students and beggars from India
- Failure to rehabilitate the affectees of 2013 flood²⁷
- Establishing of Indian Institute of management (IIMs), Indian Institute of Technology (IITs) and All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) which is creeping up the regional turbulence.

Unfortunately, these issues still persist. Short term agenda of the alliance was development and improvement of the economic sufferings of the people. *Kashmir Observer* on February 17, 2015 reported that

²⁵“Govt failed to meet peoples aspirations,” *Greater Kashmir*, Jul 5 2015.

²⁶ “PDP govt's new employment policy,” *Indian Express*, May 6, 2015.

²⁷ “Police flex muscles on Kashmiri Traders,” *Greater Kashmir*, May 25, 2015.

general expectation was that alliance would make progress on development, rehabilitation and smooth inflow of funds.²⁸ However, the alliance failed to make any progress in this regard. *The Tribune India* reported on April 14, 2016 that Chief Minister (CM) Mehbooba Mufti requested the Indian Union Minister Arun Jaitley to release funds and create separate windows for PM's package.²⁹ The alliance also promised to bring the NHPC (National Hydroelectric Power Corporation) project to IOK, but it failed to materialize it. In the meantime, inflation rose higher and edibles became quite expensive. On May 30, 2016, *Financial Express* reported that IOK government said that it was still working on the modalities to bring project back to state.³⁰

The people demanded of an upgraded banking and telecommunication system to improve and better utilize the cross-LoC trade. However, CM Mehbooba Mufti on April 14, 2016 demanded to replace the barter system with banking system.³¹ This shows that no progress has been made so far to meet the demands of the people and the promises that the parties made during the election campaign.

Given the current pace of brutalities inflicted upon the people by IOF, poor health facilities is yet another crucial problem for them. Shortage of doctors in hospitals and lack of proper machinery has created anxiety among the people. Greater Kashmir detailed the health scenario in IOK and stated that political turmoil was affecting all the aspects of life in IOK including health.³²

It is important to mention that the illegal and haphazard establishment of the separate and Sainik Colonies will increase the plight of the Muslims. Such projects were not only opposed by Kashmiris but also by the opposition. *First Post* on May 27, 2016 published that opposition parties criticized the alliance by stating that the alliance time in office till date has been wasted.³³

²⁸ "PDP-BJP Govt: Roadblock or Minor Hiccup?," *Kashmir Observer*, February 17, 2015.

²⁹ "Centre asked to create separate windows," *Tribune*, April 14, 2016.

"Working Out Modalities for return of NHPC Project," *Financial Express*, May 30, 2016.

³¹ "Centre asked to create separate windows," *Tribune*, April 14, 2016.

³² "Health Services Scenario in Kashmir," *Greater Kashmir*, May 17, 2016.

³³ "Opposition Slams Mehbooba Government," *First Post*, May 27, 2016.

The alliance is losing its credibility to implement its long-term agenda as it failed to revoke AFSPA. Furthermore, under this coalition many Separatist leaders including Masarat Alam were arrested. They were charged with provoking the supporters to wave the Pakistani flags and chant pro-Pakistan slogans in the public meetings. Moreover, *Wall Street Journal* published that many belligerent statements made by BJP leaders against the people like “whoever will stand on the Indian soil and will elevate the slogans of long live Pakistan will not be pardoned”.³⁴ However, the PDP government, despite agreeing to normalise the relations with Pakistan and engage Hurriyat leadership, remained silent over such statements.

The history of crackdowns in IOK, after the alliance formation, presents a clear intent of both, the central government and alliance in IOK. This has undermined the credibility of PDP to take genuine initiatives of reconciliation and CBMs across LoC. The facts demonstrated that even after completion of 14 months in office the coalition government has failed to implement wide ranging reform policies that it had promised. It also failed to address the issues and sufferings of people of IOK.

Impact of PDP-BJP Alliance on Jammu and Kashmir Issue

Since this alliance is in power, it has posed larger implications for ideological struggle of the people due to its ill-designed policies. The steps and policy initiatives taken by the alliance showed that PDP has fallen in the trap of BJP’s ideological tactics. On the issue of Masarat Alam, the coalition remained silent and virtually shut the doors to any move of reconciliation. The same approach is adopted on the issues of establishment of the separate colonies for Kashmiri, Article 370 and Article 35A. Modi’s close association with anti-Muslim organization, RSS, brought many fears for the region and its special status. The Hindu nationalist aggravated the crisis through challenging the Constitutional validity of Article 370 and 35A.

³⁴“India takes Al-Jazeera off air over Kashmir Map,” *Wall Street Journal* , April 22, 2015.

It is pertinent to mention that Article 370 not only grants the autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir but also protects the Muslims of the region. Voicing the abrogation of the Article by Modi was widely condemned by the people of IOK. Despite the widespread backlash from the domestic parties, BJP supporters advocated for abrogation of the Article.

Kashmir Monitor reported that Article 35A was also challenged by a RSS backed NGO — Jammu and Kashmir Study Centre. This article was challenged because it prevents non-residents of Jammu and Kashmir from buying property and protects the rights of permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir.³⁵ Therefore, the sole aim of this move was to terminate the special status of Jammu and Kashmir by settling the non-resident Hindus from India. Since this Article also prevents non-resident to vote in local and assembly elections, the Hindu extremist forces have always opposed this Article.

Despite resistance by the people, the alliance generated many controversies including, New Industrial Policy 2016, establishment of colonies and of Indian National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET) in IOK. These policies are intended to settle non-Kashmiris and harm the Muslim. The alliance through such initiatives is continuously engaged in changing the demographic patterns of Kashmir which forebodes serious implication for the people and future of Jammu and Kashmir issue. *India Every Day*, *DNA India* and *Daily Times* reported the protests of people of IOK against these policies that are solemnly aimed to dilute the Article 370.³⁶

Such policies indicate that the alliance failed to appreciate the fact that Kashmir has always been a different issue. This has also proved that despite being in alliance, BJP is consistent in its traditional stance to gander at Kashmir purely through a managed nationalistic view which was supported by PDP.

³⁵“JK Govt. receives SC notice on Article 35 A, Will reply according to our Constitution,” *Kashmir Monitor*, August 11, 2015.

³⁶“JKLF Opposes construction of Army Colonies in Kashmir,” *DNA India*, May 14, 2016.

Modi and others who favoured the abrogation of both the articles need to recollect the fact that these were neither designed to eliminate the plebiscite nor to abolish the issue of accession of IOK. Since Article 370 and 35A discourses the security and integrity of IOK as separate state, maintains and protects the rights of the people. Therefore, abrogation of any of these articles is unacceptable for the people of IOK. Moreover, with such harsh rhetoric and intentions dream of peace in the region is unthinkable. It is unlikely that Modi's leadership will suggest any possible solutions to the longstanding issues of IOK, rather it will pose serious threat to the future of Jammu and Kashmir. Additionally, PDP's silence over the issues is further deteriorating the situation.

Scenario for the Next Election

Most likely situation that seems emerging for the next election is that both BJP and PDP while attempting to achieve their ambitions to rule over IOK are working to deepen the polarization. Though BJP had tough time during the election, its moves to polarize and rule over Jammu and Kashmir indicate a strong hold of pro-Indian parties in IOK. This will not only complicate the situation for the next elections but will also heighten the longstanding grievances of the people of IOK.

The 2014-elections results showed that elections are not substitute of self-determination and has failed to pacify the pro-freedom sentiments in Jammu and Kashmir. A power vacuum in IOK politics exists. Since there is a power vacuum in IOK, the people will have to face similar forms of alliances in the future.

Way Forward

With the fast deteriorating situation, both PDP and BJP seem to be indifferent to the fact that peace is imperative for development. Endeavours to resolve the issue need a candid effort to deal with the realities of the situation and fully respond to the people's rights involved in it. Any process that neglects the aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and their struggle will not only prove to be an exercise in futility but can also cause incalculable human and political damage.

Although political rationales in IOK are changing, the key stand remains unchanged. Therefore, to resolve the long standing issues, it is very important to take the Kashmiris into confidence. Both PDP and BJP need to show a mature political leadership, aimed at delivering peace in IOK.

Over the past few years, the sense of alienations is prevalent in IOK. Henceforth, a responsible and upright leadership is required to address this alienation. In this regard, Hurriyat leaders need to move beyond the situation where they only become relevant to raise voice against the torture, suppression and killing at the hands of IOF. They need to take their resistance movement to political plane and should identify those candidates who truly represent the aspiration of the people and work with the people's mandate to negotiate a final settlement of the issue with India and Pakistan. This will also help people of IOK to shrink the political space for the political parties who promise them of false hopes.

Conclusion

Findings of this study show that despite various attempts the political parties failed to alter the ground realities in IOK. The facts also showed that the voter turnout was result of neither the rejection of demand of self-determination nor the decline of support for Hurriyat leaders.

The PDP-BJP alliance despite its success has not done anything tangible. Both are still trying to suppress the people. Despite being in office for fourteen months, attempts are being made to marginalize the people instead of engaging them constructively.

The current trust deficit between PDP and BJP shows that both the parties will further attempt to increase their power in Jammu and Kashmir. While the PDP's primary aspiration is to emerge as the key regional party, the BJP's interest is ternary a) to pose its agenda of Hindutva; b) to give an impression to the international community that BJP led government in IOK is safe for the people of Jammu and Kashmir; and c) these ambitions to rule over IOK have raised a new power struggle between both the parties. The risks of their goals and ambitions are higher which will further unfold the future strategy of both to be able manage the power gamble.

To conclude, such adventurous initiative in the coming days will further deteriorate the situation and will increase the sufferings of people of IOK. In case the coalition government succeeded to abrogate Article 370, it will entirely change the nature of the conflict. Such an attempt will not only intensify the humanitarian crisis in IOK but will also violate the UN resolutions, in which UN had rejected any legal claim of India over IOK.