

Project Report

The Tribal Leaders of Jammu & Kashmir and the Freedom Struggle of India

Submitted by

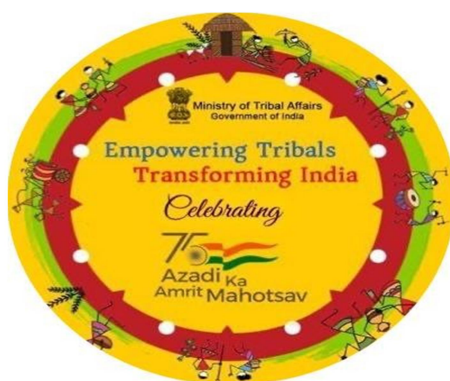
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Abstract:-

Tribals have a rich history of their own. However, it is on record that their histories were neglected and/or underplayed until the recent past.

More often, the state and/or government policies (particularly British) disintegrated the tribal society, culture and politics. Thus, to protect their interest, the tribals launched relentless rebellions and movements against the oppressors under the tribal-people leaders who challenged the oppressive policies and the oppressors itself. Therefore, we must not forget the gems of the tribals whose share have shaped our politics, society and culture in past, and henceforth, continued shaping in present. In India the socio-economic tribal movements started in the early 19th and 20th centuries. The tribals challenged the oppressors both on socio-economic and political front. These movements are very significant in shaping the social history of modern India.

It is in this perspective that a research question on the role and contribution of tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir on the socio-economic and political awakening of the tribal-people has been developed.

[1], Research Question:

Setting up a preliminary concept note on, ‘recognizing the socio-economic, socio-religious and socio-political’ role of the tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during the freedom struggle of India.

[2], Research methodology:-

To explore, formulate and design the proposed theme and domain of research proposal assigned under title: both theoretical (‘textual/historical material’) and oral (‘interview’) research methodologies have been objectively used in proper manner.

[A] Theoretical methodology here reflects the study and use of textual sources both the primary and secondary. The primary sources to be used are often called contemporary sources with regard to the proposed theme in time and space. Textual sources to be studied and used other than the primaries are called secondary. Thus, textual sources accessible and available have properly been used as guiding reference points to corroborate and analyse the research question(s) and objective(s) of the study viewed. These could help in analysing and disseminating historical factual data so far has remained unexplored.

[B] Whereas, oral research methodology here reflects, a method of conducting historical research through ‘recorded interviews’ between a narrator with personal experience of historical significant events and a well-informed interviewer, with the goal of adding to the historical record. This research method within the context has equally been used to acquire the proposed target.

[3], Relevance of the proposed study for policy-making:-

- ❖ The proposed research study as a document will ensure the policy makers (and otherwise) understanding of the past knowledge-with regard to the role and contribution of the tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during the freedom struggle of India.
- ❖ The proposed research theme is expected to disseminate and translate the potential characteristics of the unsung heroes of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ The proposed study, as a research document, is also expected to play an important role in preparing, designing and formulating a 'new lesson' on the so far unrecognised or underplayed characteristics of the tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ It is expected, the study as a contentwise material in principle will remain at foundational help to the academicians for designing/ formulating significant biographies of the unsung tribal heroes of Jammu and Kashmir in the humanities or social sciences text books for school children.
- ❖ The study could be used to encourage and promote an idea for establishing museum-in order to commemorate the role played by unsung tribal-people heroes' of Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Moreover, the proposed study in purpose is expected to seriously engage and (re)engage society over to rethinking and recognising the role played by tribal-people leaders during the freedom struggle of India against the colonial and/or autocratic-dynastic rule.

[4], Innovation/path breaking aspect of the research:-

The Jammu and Kashmir tribal-people leader's social, political and socio-religious engagements in past, though now been considered and/or taken up for extensive study in present, had rarely been given as much of scholarly attention as it deserved. Thus, to commemorate, and highlight the elixir of inspirations of the warriors of freedom struggle, scholars are well appreciated and encouraged to engage and (re)engage with the so far unrecognised/ underplayed potential human characters of past as well. Since, there was no

extensive study taken up or considered for research earlier on the proposed theme under title. Therefore, the present study is an endeavour to disseminate, translate and update our knowledge of the past with regard to the role and contribution of the tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir during the freedom struggle.

[5], Tribal Leaders of Jammu and Kashmir:-

The following tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir were socially and politically active during the freedom struggle of India-against the colonial rule.

[1], Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi

[2], Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi (Lovingly called, ‘Gujjar Gandhi’)

[3], Choudhary Diwan Ali Khatana

[4], Choudhary Wazir Mohammad

[5], Maulvi Lal Din Bhatti

[6], Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar

[1], Role and Contribution of Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi:-

[1.1], Birth and Name:-

Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was born to the Sufi Saint Hazrat Mian Abdullah (Alias, ‘Baba Ji’) in April 1892 at Haritji-wangat Ganderbal, whose name in the beginning was kept Mian Abdul Latief. However, later-on, after two and a half years of Mian Abdul Latief’s birth, Hazrat Mian Abdullah presented himself before the Sufi Saint Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Kayanavi-(who was the spiritual guide of Hazrat Mian Abdullah) and humbly requested him to make a Dua (prayer) for the long life, health and education in favour of his son Mian Abdul Latief. Sufi Saint Hazrat Nizam-ud-Din Kayanavi made a Dua but also changed Mian Abdul Latief’s name to after his own name Mian Nizam-ud-Din. Hence, the name Mian Nizam-ud-Din continued.

[1.2], Education:-

Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was sharp minded and a capable person since his childhood. Since the environment at home was very disciplined, intellectual and spiritual. Therefore, he received his education at his home-place from teachers Ahmad-ji Saheb and Maulana Abdul Qudus Saheb. Over the years, he acquired indepth knowledge of religious texts and command over the languages such as: Arabic, Persian and Urdu. With his command over Arabic language, he was deeply engaged in the contemplation of the Holy Qur'an. Moreover, he developed interest in reading and writing Sufi poetry and chose Punjabi, Gojri and Urdu as the languages of communication.

[1.3], Socio-religious Activities:-

In the pre-1947 period, multiple methods were used/ applied to awaken people of their social responsibilities during the freedom struggle-against the colonial rule. And, it is no denial of the fact that social or socio-religious reform movements-as a method, in time and space, have shaped the societies socially, psychologically, spiritually and educationally strong and thus have played vital role during the freedom struggle-against the colonial rule. In Jammu and Kashmir, since the Gujjar and Bakarwal communities were far behind from receiving any formal and/or distance-mode education. And, in this situation, social ills, therefore, were easily creeping into these (and other) communities and targeting their very existence. Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, though basically guided and trained in spiritual teachings, thus very smartly realised his duty towards the welfare of the downtrodden communities. For this, he along with his colleagues organised public gatherings where gradually the stress was laid on the formation of welfare committees. Thus, 'Gujjar Welfare Committees' were formed at Tehsil level. The main focus and purpose of these welfare committees' was to build a strong disciplined network among the tribal-people and educate them of their social responsibilities towards each other and the nation. Moreover, he used the folk tales and Sufi poetry in the languages of Punjabi, Gojri and Urdu to awaken the public conscience against the injustice prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir during the dynastic (and/or, autocratic) rule between 1846 and 1947 period.

[1.4], Political Activities:-

Through historical documents, we learn that, in Jammu and Kashmir, there was hard and impoverished condition of the people of all communities, because of the exploitative and opulent life style of its rulers-which mostly prevailed during the period between 1846 and 1947. The Maharajas (rulers) soaked and/or appropriated all hard earnings of common people in their leisure tours of England and Europe. To keep themselves and their British bosses fiscally rich, common people were heavily taxed, and suffered the most. This hard condition of people thus left with no choice, but someone to be brave in taking lead and represent the aspirations of people.

Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was someone to be proud of his spiritual legacy and cultural heritage inherited. He was a gifted person with strong leadership qualities. As he grew up and himself observed the condition of his community's people. Therefore, after having several discussions and consultations with the other intellectuals of his community, he took the lead to awaken people socially and politically against an act of exploitation, oppression and wrongdoing. For this, he along with his colleagues started public meetings/conferences and gradually the stress was laid on the formation of a political body which will represent the issues of the tribal-people along with the other communities of Jammu and Kashmir.

[1.5], The Gujjar-jat Conference (1932):-

In Jammu and Kashmir, the rebel feelings of all communities to overthrow Maharajas rule (1846-1947) was simmering for years which gradually intensified to strike-in-action between 1920s and 1930s. In this situation, the exploited but charged people of all communities, however, needed to be guided and represented by someone who could bargain the course correction. Thus, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah along with other leaders with great determination took the chance to materialise the aspirations of common people. The British-India government in Delhi took the notice of political activities in Kashmir. To appease the situation, the government in Delhi formed the '**Glancy Grievances Commission Enquiry (1931)**' to report the immediate grievances and recommend the suggestions to overcome the socio-economic and political crisis. The

Commission, after taking notice of the ground situation, though in 1932, recommended some of the far-reaching measures in general such as:

- 1. To introduce people's representation in legislative bodies.**
- 2. To sanction a considerable share in government employment to Muslims.**
- 3. To sanction the proprietary rights to peasants on the state-land (or, otherwise) under their possession for years.**

*However, the 'Glancy Commission' recommendations had nothing special exclusively for the backward communities of Jammu and Kashmir. Since, the tribal-people in general were not mostly literate, and also did not possess holding of any state land (and/or otherwise). Therefore, they could not avail the benefits of these recommendations suggested. It was under such circumstances, the tribal-people leaders, such as, **Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi, Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi, Choudhary Diwan Ali, Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar** and other intellectuals formed the '**Gujjar-jat Conference**' in 1932. Hence, the following leaders became the founding members and first office bearers of this political body.*

- 1. Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi:- chairman and president**
- 2. Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi:- General Secretary**
- 3. Choudhary Diwan Ali:- Vice-president**
- 4. Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar:- Secretary**
- 5. Syed Mohammad Abdullah Shah Azad:- Treasurer**

Thus, after the formation of the 'Gujjar-jat Conference', it was immediately decided, that its members would be elected henceforth and the first conference would be conducted at Prodri-gujjran in Rajouri.

Therefore, as discussed and decided earlier, in April 1932, the first congress of the 'Gujjar-jat Conference' was accordingly held in Prodri-gujjran (Rajouri) under the presidentship of Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb. And, Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar Saheb was incharge of the proceedings of the congress. On the invitation of the president, the occasion on-the-dice was graced by other intellectuals. One such intellectual present on-the-dice was Haji Syed Nooran Shah Saheb. Almost twenty thousand people from the Gujjar, Bakarwal and other communities attended the first congress. In his first

presidential address, (besides conveying gratitude to GOD), the key points that were raised are as follows:-

- 1. The heads of the families, villages and/or groups would own the responsibility for awakening discipline and coordination among the people.**
- 2. The heads of the different communities/groups should work for to awaken social and political unity among people without imposing any jealousy, hate or discrimination.**
- 3. Those heads of groups who in their respective areas are well-off as compared to other people should come forward to help at occasions of need.**
- 4. The congress of the ‘Gujjar-jat Conference’ henceforth would be held regularly at different occasions to discuss and figure out the future course of action.**
- 5. And, the emphasis was laid that the ‘Gujjar-jat Conference’ as a political body would remain open to all regardless of any discrimination.**

Henceforth, under the presidentship of Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, the congresses of the ‘Gujjar-jat Conference’ were held at several other occasions primarily at state level in Rajouri (1937), Jammu (1939), Jammu (1943) and in Rajouri (1944).

[1.6], ‘Al’Insan’ Newspaper Launched:-

To highlight the issues and make the voice heard with regard to the downtrodden people, a weekly newspaper, ‘Al’Insan’ in Urdu language was started in 1939. Mohammad Din Barnalvi, who was based in Jammu, was naturally gifted with journalistic traits since his upbringing. Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, after the congress of the ‘Gujjar-jat Conference’ in 1937, consulted him to take over the task of publishing newspaper ‘Al’Insan’. Mohammad Din Barnalvi agreed and henceforth took over the task of publishing ‘Al’Insan’. Though, ‘Al’Insan’ remained the regular voice of the downtrodden people between 1939 and 1947. But, unfortunately it could not continue in print after 1947 due to the occurrence of turmoil in Jammu.

[1.7], Meeting with National Leaders:-

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, as a president of the 'National Conference' organised an annual congress of the 'National Conference' on August 13, 1945 in Sopore. To participate and grace the occasion of the annual congress, he had invited national leaders, of whom, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Khan Abdul Samad Khan Achak Za'e and others arrived to Kashmir. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wished and expressed to tour the upper landscapes of Kashmir and asked Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to arrange a meeting with the tribal-people leader Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb. Thus, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah who was already in touch with Mian Saheb arranged a meeting and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru along with other national leaders visited Wangat-Ganderbal where they were welcomed by five hundred tribal-people lined up-on-horses. After meeting with Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and other leaders got impressed with his personality and knowledge. This meeting turned to be useful, and extended friendship and purposeful working relation between them henceforth.

After reaching to Delhi, in 1945 itself, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru asked his daughter and son-in-law (Indra Gandhi and Feroz Gandhi) to tour Kashmir and visit the shrine of 'Baba-ji' in Wangat-Ganderbal, which they subsequently did and spent a week over there.

And, it was followed by other occasions of meetings between them and other leaders in Jammu and Delhi. For example, in 1948, Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru invited Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb to attend a meeting in Delhi, which subsequently was followed by another meeting with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in Jammu as well.

[1.7], Later-life: -

The partition of the country in 1947 followed a continued tragedy for Jammu and Kashmir as well. Kashmir divide, on a large scale, affected the social and political activities and engagements of the people. The communities, groups and sub-groups could hardly understand and digest the unusual division happened. Thus, a total chaos and confusion was making rounds around. Therefore, a situation that arised left the leaders of all communities perplexed. It threw an open challenge to their genius to overcome the unusual situation. Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, among the social and political

leaders, although was largely affected by events following, yet his resilience and genius worked to unite the people. To accept the challenge and move forward, he over the years gradually revived the strength and stamina of the people of his community. In an independent India, later on, his sincere efforts were crowned with success.

Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was not only a saint, a high profile scholar and thinker, but his charismatic character(s) would tell us, he was many men rolled into one-who breathed his last on November 10th, 1972.

Interview:-

The study and collection of historical information of past events via interviews-('recorded') is called oral history. These interviews are conducted with people who are capable of sharing historical information based on their sharp memories-through participation/observation and/or knowledge-acquiring of past events.

This oral interview of **Jinab Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi Saheb was conducted at his residence in Wangat-Ganderbal as a part of the TRI-J&K research programme. Therefore, the content has a copy right with the TRI-J&K and the author.*

[Q. 1], Sir, going back to the period of freedom struggle of India or before, how can you define and/or distinguish the tribals of Jammu and Kashmir from the tribals of the rest of the country?

Pertaining to the phrasing of your question, I have some reservation to the choice of the word used, 'Tribals'. As I recall there were only Gujjars, Bakarwals and other few marginalised ethnic groups/communities living in the upper landscape-reaches of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. Though, these communities possessed 'tribal characteristics' then, as they possess now. However, could these ethnic communities/groups be called "Tribals" then? No. Smiling...! Because, if I am not factually wrong, unlike other few provinces/states of India, these ethnic communities of Jammu and Kashmir (and Ladakh) were given the 'Scheduled Tribe Status' in 1991 by the government of India.

Now coming back to your basic question, I could draw the linguistic and geographical distinction between the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir and the tribal-people of the rest of the country. Yes, going back to the pre-1947 period, unlike Jammu and Kashmir (where the socio-economic and political situation was organically different), the tribal-people in some parts of British-India were somehow directly exposed to the injustice and oppression of the colonial rule. Thus, we learn from the text books that, there were many tribal resistance movements going on during the colonial period. However, the text books unfortunately remain silent with regard to the resistance that the tribal-people alongside with other communities of Jammu and Kashmir had shown against the injustice and oppression of the dynastic (and/or, autocratic) rule prevailing during the pre-1947 period.

[Q. 2], Sir, for our knowledge, would you please identify and recall the name of the tribal leaders of Jammu & Kashmir?

I think you want me to recollect those few names of tribal-people leaders who were politically (and/or, otherwise) active in Jammu and Kashmir during the freedom struggle of India. As I recall these were: Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi Saheb (Lovingly called, 'Gujjar Gandhi'), Choudhary Diwan Ali Khatana Saheb, Choudhary Wazir Mohammad Saheb, Maulvi Lal Din Bhatti Saheb and Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar Saheb.

[Q. 3], Sir, based on your discussion (if any) with your father or grand-father, can you recall how tribal-people leaders of Jammu & Kashmir viewed the entire scenario of the freedom struggle of India-against the colonial rule?

The colonial rule in its sense or essence was not something that could have been praised. Similarly, the dynastic (and/or, autocratic) regime (whether direct or indirect) particularly prevailing in Jammu and Kashmir during that period was not acceptable to anyone. The aspiration of getting freedom from the colonial rule was evolving around since years. Therefore, during the pre-1947 period, the tribal-people leaders of Jammu and Kashmir together with the national leaders of the rest of the country in spirit viewed a great hope for the common people in their grand great struggle against the colonial and/or, dynastic rule/regime.

[Q. 4], Sir, socio-religious reform movements have contributed their share during the freedom struggle of India. Could you please enlighten us with the socio-religious reform contribution of the tribal-people leaders of Jammu & Kashmir during the pre-1947 period?

Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi, Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi, Choudhary Diwan Ali and Maulana Mehrud-Din Qamar were all learned persons. They were highly capable and blessed with all the leadership qualities one could wish to have. The Gujjar and Bakarwal communities were far behind from receiving any formal and/or distance-mode education. On ground, within these communities there was no functional idea of social or formal education. Social ills were easily creeping into these and other groups/communities of Jammu and Kashmir. Thus, the tribal leaders realised their challenges and welfare duties towards the downtrodden communities/groups. For this, they organised conferences/meetings where the stress gradually was laid on the formation of welfare committees. For example, to fight against the social ills (and other social issues), ‘Gujjar Welfare Committees’ were formed at Tehsil level. This way, attempts were made to educate and acquaint people of their social responsibilities. Moreover, these leaders particularly I may mention here: Sufi Saint Hazrat Mian Abdullah Saheb (Alias, ‘Baba-ji’), to whom Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was born, devoted their time in disseminating religious (and/or, spiritual) teachings to people-belonging to any group whether rich or poor, Muslim or non-Muslim. In British-India, it is no denial of the fact that social or socio-religious reform movements in time and space have shaped the societies socially, psychologically, spiritually and educationally strong; and thus have played vital role during the freedom struggle-against the colonial rule.

[Q. 5], Sir, what was the contribution of Larvi family in the political awakening of the tribal-people of Jammu & Kashmir? Could you please brief us on?

Smiling...! I do not hesitate in saying that the Larvi family (of which I am a descendent) have played very important role in the socio-religious and political awakening of the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir. My grand-father, Jinab Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, though was basically trained in religious and/or spiritual teachings in his childhood. But, he was a gifted person with strong leadership qualities as well. He was someone who was proud of his spiritual legacy and cultural heritage. Under the dynastic

rule (referring to the Maharajas rule between 1846 and 1947) the people of all communities/groups in Jammu and Kashmir were too much suffering. And, amongst these communities, the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir, as I pointed out earlier, had no one to raise their basic issues with the administration. They had no access to the basic necessities of life even. Therefore, the need was felt for someone to take lead. It was under this situation that, some contemporary colleagues-who knew the leadership potential of Jinab Mian Nizam-ud-Din Ahmad Larvi Saheb, convinced him of his political role for the benefit of the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir. Prior to the formation of the ‘Gujjar-Jat Conference’, several meetings were organised to unite and awaken tribal-people for their basic fundamental rights. Finally, the ‘Gujjar-Jat Conference’—a socio-political body was established in 1932, of which Jinab Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi became the founder president, Choudhary Ghulam Hussain Lisanavi became its general secretary and Choudhary Diwan Ali vice-president. He (Mian Saheb) contested state assembly elections from Kangan constituency and won his seat in all attempts uncontested. This way he (and the other leaders) raised the voice of the voiceless for more than two decades. And, it did not stop there. The political activities started by my grand-father continued with my father Jinab Mian Bashir Ahmed Larvi Saheb-who is recipient of the award, ‘Padma Bhushan’ in 2008.

[Q. 6], Sir, can you recall any incidence or occasion of meeting between the tribal-people leaders of Jammu & Kashmir and the national or freedom movement leaders of India?

Yes, as I recall the first meeting occasioned in 1945 when Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru ji along with Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other national leaders visited Wangat-Ghanderbal to meet my grand-father Jinab Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb, which, henceforth, was followed by other occasions of meetings between them and other leaders in Jammu and Delhi.

[Q. 7], Sir, during and after-1947, what was the role of tribal-people leaders in disseminating modern education among the tribal communities of Jammu & Kashmir? Could you please brief us on with few examples?

Yes, before 1947, though, attempts had been made to educate tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir, but it was more of a religious (and/or, spiritual) education. The tribal-people leaders, as I am told, were concerned about the modern education as well, but the circumstances were not negotiating in their favour. For example, before 1947, Mian Nizam-ud-Din Larvi Saheb was called to Jammu, where it was thoroughly discussed among the leaders that a Gujjar hostel would be established for the purpose of education. Unfortunately it could not materialise due to some dispute with regard to the site (land) selected for hostel construction. However, after 1950s, as I recall, my father Jinab Mian Bashir Ahmed Larvi Saheb was very much concerned with regard to the modern education for tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir. Finally his sincere efforts bore fruits in 1970s when Prime Minister Indira Gandhi sanctioned 12 crore rupees for the establishment of Gujjar hostel and cultural academy in Jammu. Thus, Jinab Mian Bashir Ahmed Larvi Saheb laid the foundation stone of the first Gujjar hostel in Jammu in 1975 when Syed Mir Qasim was the chief minister of the state.

[Q. 8], Sir, during the pre-1947 period, can you recall and/or recollect any tribal-people resistance movement that happened against the oppression of oppressors at local or state level?

The people of all communities/groups living either in the upper or plane landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir were the worst victims of the dynastic (and/or, autocratic) rule. And, the tribal-people were the most sufferers amongst them all. It is on record (referring to the historical documents of the Maharajas rule between 1846 and 1947) that people of all communities had shown their resistance occasionally against the oppression at local or state level despite of the state terror used against them frequently. But, this resistance-which was inclusive morphologically, and growing larger gradually, intensified only after 1920s. And, aggression of the people altogether against an act of oppression continued till 1947.

[Q. 9], Sir, what was the socio-economic contribution of tribal-people leaders among the tribal communities of Jammu & Kashmir?

Up till 1950, it is not in my knowledge, if there was any special package sanctioned for the welfare of the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir. But, the tribal-people leaders at

local level compensated it with the formation of the 'Gujjar Welfare Committees'-which were followed by the formation of the 'Gujjar-Jat Conference' in 1932. The aim of these Welfare Committees or Gujjar-Jat Conference was not only to awaken tribal-people politically but to raise their socio-economic status as well.

[Q. 10], Sir, apart from the 'Gujjar-Jat Conference', can you recall and/or recollect any other conference or organization formed during the pre-1947 period?

Yes, as I pointed out earlier, prior to the 'Gujjar-Jat Conference', 'Gujjar Welfare Committees' were formed at tehsil level to raise the social status of the tribal-people. Moreover, several Welfare Sabas/Associations (such as: Maha Saba, Rajput Saba, Sanatan Daram, Pratap Saba, Mahajan Saba, Hindu Saba, Sri Dogra Saba, Sangar Saba, Yuvakh Saba, Anjuman Imamia, Anjuman Islamia Jammu and Young Muslim Association Jammu) were formed. It is important to note here that; the members of these Sabas (organisations) /Associations did not represent any particular community (as the titles may reflect) but represented the aspirations of all communities. These Sabas/Association(s) were aimed to work for the welfare of the people.

[Q. 11], Sir, any message you would like to give to the 'Tribal Research Institute' of Jammu & Kashmir which is already functional-(under the dynamic role of Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary and Dr. Abdul Khabir) but in the process of its competent establishment?

The establishment of the 'Tribal Research Institute' is a welcome step. To me, it is indeed one of the best policies that the present government of India has worked upon and sanctioned a timely approval to its functioning in collaboration and under the guidance of the UT government. This, Research Institute in future will serve as a repository of knowledge on the tribal-people of Jammu and Kashmir. It will open the multiple opportunities for young scholars to highlight the historical and literary contribution of the tribal-people. Moreover, the new research that is assigned to young scholars will also work as a policy document for the government. I appreciate and congratulate Dr. Shahid Iqbal and Dr. Abdul Khabir (and those who are concerned with this Institution) for their commitment towards making this Institution a successful asset. And, I wish a very bright future to the young fellows working with this Institution at present.

Sir, thank you very much for your kind cooperation!

Oral interview conducted by:

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Post-script: Although, to script and document the profile and contribution of the other (those mention above) tribal-people leaders, was already in consideration. Since, the relevant or near-relevant literature was/is not easily available and accessible. Therefore, in so doing, it shall remain subject to the availability of authentic material sources or information ahead.