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Policies, Programs and Achievements of Ghulam Nabi Azad - led Coalition in Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract: ***The coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir during 2002 to 2008 helped build some kind of confidence in the electoral institutions and processes. Breaking the hegemony of the single dominant party also brought an alternative to the PDP-Congress coalition power. PDP- Congress formed a coalition government after 2002 Assembly elections as no political party had won majority and it resulted in a fractured mandate. The coalition was significant in the sense that PDP had recently emerged as regional force, and it was its first game in elections as well as coalition politics. The coalition began very well on a good note. The coalition incorporated their election manifestoes with the basic issues which the people were facing. The PDP promised a corruption- free government, unconditional dialogue with militants, providing a healing touch and like. The present paper analyses the performance of PDP- Congress coalition led by Ghulam Nabi Azad.***
Keywords: Coalition, Jammu and Kashmir, Ghulam Nabi Azad, PDP-Congress.

I. INTRODUCTION

The 2002 Assembly Elections were held over four phases in September and October, and witnessed an average turnout of 44%. However, what was important regarding this election was that it was considered as more credible than earlier elections in the political history of Jammu and Kashmir. The ruling National Conference which had 57 seats in the 1996 Assembly elections was overwhelmingly voted out of power and could manage to retain only 28 seats in the 2002 elections. The mandate was anti- National Conference as the people wanted a change in the state. The turnout of Phase- I was 46% and for the Phase- II, it was 41%. During the Third and Fourth Phase of polling held in October, the poll percentage was 41% and 46% respectively.[1] the voter turnout was less as compared to 1996 elections. The people voted decisively to overthrow the ruling National Conference whose rule from 1996 was considered as most corrupt, inefficient, uncaring to the needs and demands of the people in the state. What was significant from this election was the change in the form of emergence of PDP as a coalition partner in the power- sharing arrangement, which had emerged recently in the political scenario of the state. PDP emerged as an alternate regional force in the state. During this election, 710 candidates contested elections while as in 1996 elections, the figure was only 546. Further in this election, the people's participation in rallies of political parties was also higher than the earlier elections.

The following table shows the seats won by different political parties: [2] Party Seats Won

Political Party	Seats won
National Conference	28
Congress	20
People's Democratic Party	16
J&k panthers party	4
CPI(M)	2
BSP	1
BJP	1
Independent	15

Source; Election Commission of India

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II. EMERGENCE OF PDP-CONGRESS COALITION

PDP & Congress made an electoral coalition putting up joint candidates in many constituencies like Gulmarg, Pattan in Baramulla District. Both the coalition partners secured majority of votes in the Assembly elections and agreed to form coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir, Congress 20 seats and PDP 16 seats. After the elections, PDP-Congress understanding could not reach out soon because of complexities on different issues like release of common minimum programme, the post of Chief Minister etc. In order to settle the issue between the Congress and PDP, it was more important that the basic principles and the joint programme of proposed Policies, Programes and Achievements of coalition are settled first, while every party in the coalition would naturally have its leader, the coalition as a whole ought to choose the Chief Minister ship by consensus.[3] After due consensus and deliberations, it was decided to concede the post of Chief Minister Position to PDP Leader, Mufti Sayed for the first three years and the remaining three years for Ghulam Nabi Azad of the coalition. This was announced by the Congress President, Sonia Gandhi at her residence on October 26, 2002. It was also decided that the Post of Deputy Chief Minister will stay with Congress and will be held by Mangat Ram Sharma, an MLA from Jammu region. Congress- PDP agreed to a first ever power- sharing arrangement and made its alliance with smaller parties like CPI (M), Panther's Party, People's Democratic Front in order to raise the number of MLAs to 46 in the 87 member Assembly. It was announced that the post of Chief Minister would be held by rotation PDP leader and veteran politician Mufti Sayed will serve as Chief Minister for three years, after which he is to be replaced by a Congress party member as per the coalition government. The Congress- PDP coalition had agreed to a Common Minimum Programs (CMP) for the governance of Jammu and Kashmir and released 31 point Common Minimum Programme of the governance of the state at the joint press conference in Delhi on October 27, 2002. It was agreed from both the two sides that, "they had taken time to sieve up a strong, purposeful, cohesive and stable government to send a message to the people of Jammu and Kashmir and rest of the world"[4]

III. COMMON MINIMUM PROGRAMME CMP

Is a common agreement of the common understanding among different coalition partners to make the coalition government run smoothly and efficiently. At the central level, Congress- led UPA government adopted a Common Minimum Programme for the smooth functioning of the coalition government at the centre. Likewise in Jammu and Kashmir, Coalition government also adopted and agreed to a Common Minimum Programme for the governance of Jammu and Kashmir which was released at New Delhi on October 28, 2002. The main objectives of the CMP are[5]

1) Congress- PDP Coalition government laid emphasis on healing the physical, psychological and emotional wounds inflicted by fourteen years of militancy, restore the rule of law and revival of the political Rashtrasevak (November to December, 2018) 57 process and stability in the state. The government stressed to formulate a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation package for those families affected by militant violence over the last decade. It committed itself to implement special schemes to rehabilitate former militants who have forsworn violence and joined the mainstream.

2) The government shall strengthen the State Human Rights Commission, investigate all cases of custodial killings and violations of human rights and person responsible for them will be identified and punished appropriately. It shall review all cases of detainees being held without trial for long periods, release all detainees held on non- specific charges, those not charged with serious crimes.

3) The coalition government laid emphasis on restoring peace and normalcy and curbing corruption and nepotism, especially in the award of government jobs and contracts and in institutions of higher learning. It will endeavour to make the selection process to all those positions and institutions fully transparent.

4) The coalition government shall review the operation of all such laws that have been used in the past decade to deprive people of their basic rights to life and liberty for long periods of time, without due legal process. The Congress- PDP coalition government considers that there are enough laws in existence to deal with militancy. Therefore it will revoke and not implement POTA in the state.

5) The government reaffirms that the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their motherland is an essential ingredient of Kashmiriyat. The government will seek the cooperation of all elements in the society to create an atmosphere conducive to their safe return, will make all necessary steps to ensure their safety and devise measures for their rehabilitation and employment.

6) The coalition government establishes numerous measures like Ehtisaab or Accountability Commission for enquiring into complaints received against Chief Minister, Ministers and Legislators, Delimitation Commission for delimiting the Legislative Assembly constituencies will also be established. The government will also lay its attention to the due consideration of the recommendations of Wazir Commission.

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7) The government will lay much emphasis to the preparation of an employment oriented medium term development plan laying particular emphasis on the development of agriculture, horticulture, handicrafts, tourism, information technology, food processing etc. The government will also set up a State Finance Commission and ensure clearance of development and employment at the regional and district level within a specified time frame. It further committed for the special attention of the employment of young generation.

8) The government will lay emphasis on promotion welfare of backward communities including Gujjars and Bakerwals, SCs, STs and proposed to set up a commission to look after the interest of the minority communities.

9) The government will take necessary steps for the basic needs like provision of safe drinking water, sanitation, rural roads, primary health care and elementary education and school buildings. A new scheme will be launched to universalize access to elementary education for all children.

10) The government will lay higher priority to the development of the power resources of the state and extend the benefits of electricity to all villages. A comprehensive plan for the development of environment friendly tourism in all three regions of the state will prepare hinterland districts on the tourist map of the state.

11) The government will take steps to make Panchayati Raj Institutions both functional and autonomous. Further, adequate financial support will be given for making them an effective instrument for decentralized development.

IV. COALITION GOVERNMENT-LED BY GHULAM NABI AZAD

Ghulam Nabi Azad was sworn in as Chief Minister, consisted of 13- member coalition cabinet making the transfer of power from the People's Democratic Party to the State Pradesh Congress Committee after three years, when Mufti Sayed acquired the position of Chief Minister of the state. As Chief Minister, Ghulam Nabi Azad had embarked on the uphill task of implementing various pledges made in their Common Minimum Programme.

V. PROGRAMMES, POLICIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF AZAD-LED COALITION GOVERNMENT

A. Khushahal Kashmir (Prosperous Kashmir)

While taking over the reins of power in the state, the greatest challenge for him was to usher the state from the dark phase of violence to a new era of development and progress. It was at this crucial juncture, he gave a new vision of Khushahal Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh. This policy statement revealed that Azad government will focus more on developmental issues rather than the issues of conflict resolution in the state. Like his predecessor, Gh Nabi Azad wanted to project his vision of a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir state where work culture should improve, corruption should go down and fast track development of the state takes place while as Mufti Syed's healing touch envisaged dialogue reconciliation across borders, regions and amongst different ethnic groups. The vision of Khushahal Kashmir was fundamentally development-oriented program.The broad tenets of Khushahal Kashmir as envisioned by Gh Nabi Azad are as:

1) Crusade against corruption launched with the resolve to weed out corrupt elements. To implement such a dedicated national step, Jammu and Kashmir became the first state where a law of ceasing the property acquired by government officials through unlawful means was passed. State Accountability Commission was given more powers by legislations. Another step was the establishment of work culture introduced for the first time in government offices. Transparency, accountability and good governance were key drivers of new work culture. Two and half hours of additional working hours per week in the civil secretariat was entertained and must take place regular monitoring of punctuality, attendance and disposal of work. Consequently 78 government cognizance and response became more interested and responsive.

2) Legislation for downsizing ministry in order to relieve extra burden on state exchequer.

3) Anti- defection laws were made more effective to curb defection menace by enacting amendments to existing law.

4) In order to enhance economy and employment avenues, directions were given for creation of industrial base at block, tehsil and village levels. Better road connectivity at village level was given thrust. Bottlenecks removed and funds released for construction of Mughal road.

5) Reconstruction of tourist infrastructure was given priority. For that purpose measures were initiated for preservation of Dal Lake and other water bodies in the state.

6) 18 month's time frame was fixed for completion of 661 health centres were proposed. This included modernization of rural hospitals taken in hand.

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7) Concrete policy was formulated to ensure use of new technology and highly yielding seeds aimed at boosting agriculture production. Consequently a comprehensive drive was launched for large scale aforestation and cultivation of improved fruit plants.
8) Education sector was given new direction by providing infrastructural development and strengthening of staff strength for catering this important sector.

B. *Achievements of Azad-led Coalition Government*

It was during Azad's regime that serious efforts were initiated for the restoration of peace in the state. It was one of the most hard-won efforts that government could acquire within the context and certain initiatives were taken that can silent the guns on the border and within the state.

C. *Political Initiatives*

Azad was instrumental in getting roundtable conferences organized by Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India. Second Round-table Conference was held in Srinagar. All political parties, including those outside mainstream orbit, were also invited to put forth their view points in these round- table conferences to evolve comprehensive and viable solutions to the problems faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Round-table Conferences were participated by all the mainstream political parties, representatives of ethnic groups, regions, legislators and others having stake- holders. A Five Working groups were announced by Manmohan Singh at the conclusion of second round- table conference at Srinagar to deliberate upon the subject of:

1) Confidence- building across the segments of society in the state.
2) Strengthening relations across LOC,
3) Economic development in the state to provide good governance for better and strengthening of centre- state relations. State and central governments having issued categorical directions to security forces that human rights violation would not be tolerated at all.[16]

D. *Other Initiatives*

1) A Cabinet Sub- committee was constituted to monitor implementation of the recommendations of state Human Rights Commission.
2) Categorical directions given to bring custodial deaths, destruction of property and harassment of innocents to zero level while combating militancy.
3) Delegations from European countries and other countries of the world visited Jammu and Kashmir and freely met with political leadership of all mainstream and other parties.
4) Ambassadors of various countries visited the state and talked to political leadership. 80 In his thought provoking and fact narrating address to European Parliament of 25 countries, Gh Nabi Azad explained the Indian view point with regard to addressing all problems in Jammu and Kashmir. G.N.Azad enlightened the European Parliament about the positive approach of central and state government to create conducive atmosphere for cultivating lasting peace in the state and sub- continent. G.N.Azad also gave details of state- centric CBMs and policy for strengthening bonds of friendship and peace in future between its neighbors.

E. *Achievements in Economic Sector*

1) For the first time, Rs. 5,600 crore annual budget got sanctioned from Planning Commission of India and for the first time separate budget for Power Development was launched in the state. Besides Rs. 3, 000 crore projects for the dual cities of Jammu and Srinagar and about 70 towns of the state got approved from central government to the state. Bharat Nirman Project aimed at all- round development in road communication and other sectors was implemented with added thrust on connectivity of cut- off and backward areas. National Water Mission and National Health Mission were implemented in the state to cover all villages under water supply and health care facilities.
2) To fill up electricity shortages and power curtailments, steps were taken for increasing local power generation from 165 MWs to 2,700 MWs by 2015. Construction of 1, 200 MW cheapest indigenous Sawalakote Hydro- Electric Power Project was approved
3) Steps were taken to speed up the work on inter- regional and interdistrict roads of alternate National Highway between Srinagar- JammuMughal road, Kishtwar-Simthan-Anantnag road, Srinagar- Baramulla, Uri roads were taken up to provide immediate connectivity communication.

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4) National Rural Empowerment Guarantee Scheme was launched in Doda, Kupwara and Poonch districts.
5) Release of funds provided for all 1, 200 spell over development works each costing up to Rs.50 lakh for completing during the financial years. Major initiatives were taken to bring about expenditure. Budget process fully computerized, fiscal responsibility and budget management act to pave way for better fiscal management and tightening in public expenditure.
6) A Guarantee Redemption Fund was created for the first time with an initial corpus of Rs.1 crore. Besides, massive programme for infrastructure development initiated under 250 million US Dollar funding from Asian Development Bank for construction of 49 bridges and up- gradation of 59 roads measuring 900 Kms. The new VAT Tax regime successfully and encouraged taxes registered a growth of 22 % during 2005-2006 and VAT collections grown upto 25% during 2007

F. *In Administrative Field*

1) Within the perspective of decentralization, Gh Nabi Azad-led coalition government created history by announcing eight new districts, three subdivisions and 13 tehsils in the state, thereby fulfilling pending demand of the people and gaining far ahead of Wazir Commission Report which had recommended only four districts, three for Jammu and one for Kashmir. Azad created four districts each for Jammu and Kashmir divisions.
2) A historical Financial Commission Bill enactment was commenced to ensure equitable distribution of resources at regional and sub- regional level and to make good backlog in development and employment in the areas hitherto left underdeveloped.
3) Delimitation Commission headed by Dr. S.S.Boleria was constituted.
4) Besides double and triple shift working system introduced for early completion of 550 identified development schemes of urgent public utility. To ensure financial discipline and pace of the works, 10- day time fixed for according administrative approvals and technical sanction 82 for new projects. New clause introduced in contract agreement where under contractors, executive agencies, officials would be penalized if found responsible for delaying projects.
5) ARTO for every district was approved to ensure better traffic management.
6) Anti- defection laws were made more effective to curb defection menace by enacting amendments to existing law
7) Timely accord of administrative approvals (AAs) for development works made mandatory. Fast track system for accord of Administrative Approvals As being introduced.

G. *Achievements in Agriculture Sector*

In the changing market scenario, farmers had been encouraged to cultivate more remunerative cash crops like vegetables, saffron in order to make optimum utilization of the available land resources and unique agro climatic conditions of the state. State registered a record vegetable production of 9 lakh tones whereas saffron production had gone up from 50 quintals in 2002 to 150 quintals in 2005. National Agriculture Insurance Scheme had also been extended to the state and the response of farming community to risk indemnification had been encouraged. In co- operative sector, 46 Poultry Cooperative Societies had been registered in the state during 2006-07. Trapping horticulture potential was must as it has assumed new importance as a source of employment in the state. Fruit production, which stood at 13 lakh tones during 2002, increased to 19 lakh tones in 2005. Proper grading of fruit production and better remuneration of fruit growers being ensured. Market Intervention Scheme introduced to purchase C- grade fruit from orchardists at their doorsteps. New dwarf variety of walnut plants had been raised and distributed to the orchardists, who were expected to bear fruit within three years as against the indigenous varieties which bear fruit after 12 to 15 years. Cooperative movements were given new directions so that they become a source of benefit to people. Government planned to motivate 83 educated youth to start new cooperative ventures in various fields for which all technical and financial assistance would be provide. Five member high level committee to work out comprehensive re- engineering plan to make state's apex cooperative J&k cooperative supply and marketing federation limited financially viable suggest measures for its diversification.

VI. HEALTH & MEDICAL EDUCATION

Sector Up gradation and modernization of the blood banks for eradication of TB, additional emergency Trauma Centre's on the Jammu- Srinagar National Highway, Telemedicine, Pulse Polio Programme, National AIDS Control Programme and popularization of alternative medicine were some of the thrust areas. Up gradation of facilities at SKIMS Srinagar and establishment of super special hospital-cum-college at Jammu with the treatment of serious diseases within the state. A Regional Cancer Centre and Centre for Advanced Genetic Disease were being set up at SKIMS with assistance to Rs. 20 crore and Rs. 5.28 crore respectively from the central government so that health care was to be enhanced and reach at the doorsteps in the state. A maternity hospital and a nursing college had been set up at SKIMS.

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Within this context steps were taken to improve the personal management of the Health and Medical Education Department so as to provide avenues for regular promotions to the deserving and to improve the morale of the doctors and other staff members. [17] State became a participant in the National Rural Health Mission which aims at providing adequate medical care to mother and child at various stages. Various district level societies were also being set up under this mission and an advanced step was taken up by introducing Laparoscopic surgery in all district hospitals of Jammu provinces and Baramulla, Anantnag, Pulwama, JLNM Hospitals to provide modern surgical facilities to poor people at their door steps. For that purpose various equipment's and machinery was provided to the institutions which include X-Ray machines in about 24 primary health centres. Construction works of Nurses and Doctors hostel, administrative block were initiated.

VII. STREAMLINING OF EDUCATION SECTOR

Massive drive launched to achieve total literacy in 2007 by implementing Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) and increased the enrolment in schools particularly in far- flung and hilly areas. Remarkable progress had been made in the up- gradation and construction of primary schools under SSA. 14 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas were set up. 56 upper primary schools were being provided computers and many higher secondary schools and DIET in the state were being connected to EDUSAT. Enhancement of educational curriculum continued in all three provinces of the state. 19 colleges had offered PG Courses, 16 professional courses like BCA, BBA & BIT were introduced in the Degree Colleges in Jammu and Kashmir. The quality of education in the colleges was being monitored through the mechanism of the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) Bangalore. New Degree Colleges were set up. Pace of work on the construction of Government Colleges for Engineering and Technology at Jammu was speeded up. 4, 780 Kanals of land had been transferred for setting up the Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University at Rajouri. Around 1, 267 kanals of land had earlier been transferred to Shri Mata Vaishnov Devi University at Katra. Four main university campuses were being set up with UGC funding. 1, 017 teachers had been trained in computer education. Around 1, 3000 disabled children were being helped under Assistive Devices Scheme. 2, 760 primary schools upgraded to middle level, 410 middle schools upgraded to high schools, 245 high schools upgraded to higher secondary schools. 71 more primary schools proposed to be middle schools. Transition rate of 95.73% from primary to upper primary centres level and 81.63% from upper primary to secondary level was achieved. 62 Block Resource Centres were constructed and 54 more had been under construction In the field of Technical Education, the existing Industrial Training Institutes (ITI'S) were upgraded and modernized at a total cost of Rs. 37 crores, 69 new trades were added and obsolete equipment was replaced. 9 85 Industrial Training Institutes and two women polytechnics were opened and 523 posts of lecturers and 286 non- teaching posts were created for 18 new colleges. Moreover, the government was in communication with the World Bank for contributions. Rs. 30 crore Aid Project for modernization of four government Polytechnic colleges in the city. [18]

VIII. RECONSTRUCTING ROADS AND BUILDINGS

Several far- off and hilly villages had been brought under the Village Connectivity Scheme. Srinagar- Leh road was upgraded to the level of National Highway in order to make travelling comfortable through this safe and secure road. NABARD sanctioned 768 projects including 276 projects in Roads and Buildings Jammu at an estimated cost of Rs.29, 785 lakh, 445 projects in Roads and Buildings Kashmir involving Rs.65, 392 lakh, 23 projects in R&B Leh at an estimated cost of Rs.4,20, 971 lakh and 24 projects in R&B Kargil involving Rs. 22, 187.85 lakh. 27 CPF Schemes costing about Rs.161.51 crore and 129 PMGSY schemes costing about Rs. 128.85 crore were under execution. Construction of Mughal Road connecting Balfiaz in Poonch with Shopian at an estimated cost of Rs.225 crore started in April 2006. 70 kms completed 35 kms each from Poonch and Shopian sides. This road has opened new avenues of development and considerably reduced the distance between the Rajouri- Poonch districts and the valley. Multi-sector Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project funded partly with ADB assistance was set up at a cost of $358 million. The project envisaged rehabilitation of approximate 1, 200 kms of roads and construction of 80 bridges in all the 14 districts of the state. Another project for construction of roads and bridges for an amount of $425 million was likely to be sanctioned during 2007-2008 and North- South highway was taken from Srinagar. [19]

IX. TOURISM SECTOR

Efforts were made to upgrade the tourist infrastructure both in the private and public sector. Indian government sanctioned Rs. 53.8 crore for development of new tourist destinations in the state. Government had approved setting up of 12 new Tourism Department Authorities in the state. Rs. 10 crore were spent by the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Development Corporation in constructing Tourist Bungalows, Tourist Plaza, Yatri Niwas, Convention Complexes, Huts and other tourist infrastructure. Royal Spring Golf Course hosted a number of golf tournaments.

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Golf Course had also been developed on the left back of River Tawi in Jammu. 18 New Tourist Development Authorities were created in the state and made functional during 2006-2007 by various cabinet decisions. New tourist destinations at Bangus Kupwara, Gurez Bandipora and Dodepathri Budgam were sanctioned at an estimated cost of Rs. 4.33 crore. Rs. 90 crore were earmarked for creation of new infrastructure and up gradation of existing infrastructure at various places under 12th Finance Commission. [20]

X. REVIVAL OF INDUSTRIES AND COMMERCE

Conducive environment were provided for the development of industries, main emphasis was given to medium and large scale industries, handicrafts and allied sectors. Industrial Growth Centre Lassipora with a separate Leather Park was developed in Kashmir; work on phase- II of Industrial Growth Centre, Samba was in full swing. 65 large and medium sector units with an investment of over Rs. 1, 058 crore had already been registered in the state with an employment potential for about 8, 000 persons. In the small sector 815 units had been registered with an employment potential for about 5, 500 persons. A New Integrated Industrial Development Project was approved for Govindsar district Kathua to be set up at a cost of Rs. 664 crore. In order to promote and project the Kashmiri brand in handicrafts which caters three lakh artisans work legal framework was created. An Export Development Centre for handicrafts and a Crafts Museum was to be 87 established at the exhibition ground Srinagar in the vicinity of the urban hut. In order to promote the industrial and entrepreneur growth new policy was announced that opened new vistas in the development of industrialization in state and problems of existing units taken care with thrust on utilization of state's vast resources. Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute was set up to conduct training programmes for potential entrepreneurs and Rs. 15 crore projects launched for development of designs of woolen fabric.[21] By ending 2007, more than 133 Industrial Units were set up with total investment of Rs. 2, 500 crore which could provide employment potential of around 20, 000 persons. In the handicrafts field, 810 cases sponsored to various banks under the Micro Enterprises Scheme and the turnover production of handicraft sector where around 3.50 lakh artisans were engaged, touched to Rs. 1, 000 crores during 2006-2007 as against around Rs. 750 crore during 2001- 2002. [22]

XI. BOOSTING POWER SUPPLY

Jammu and Kashmir became the first state to have a separate budget for power sector. In view of estimated 20, 000 MWs power potential of the state steps were taken for proper utilization of the hydro potential. Various steps were taken for increasing local power generation from1, 653 MWs to2, 700 MWs by 2015, work on construction of new transmission lines Northern grid to valley spear. Work in Baghliar Hydro Project and other dozen mini Hydel Projects intensified including 270 MWs Spear HTL, from 35 mini projects with an installed capacity of 195 MEWs were identified for public- private partnership. To cover all the remaining un-electrified and de-electrified villages and habitations, a new central scheme Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana and Bharat Nirman Programmed being implemented in the state at an estimated cost of Rs. 707 crore to cover all such villages and habitations by 2009. Besides 88 central government approved construction of 375 KMs long 220 KV transmission line from Srinagar to Leh via Kargil at a cost of Rs. 633.79 crore. [23] Comprehensive drive to regularize illegal power connections was also launched.

XII. STREAMLINING REVENUE SYSTEM

Custodian and Nazool Department were given new dimensions by introduction of beneficial and reformative measures. Evacuee Property, custodian land and Rahcharai identified and inventoried to prevent malpractices on one hand and mop up resources on the other, many cases detected where leases were not renewed for years together undue benefit to some and process was initiated to remove encroachments or illegal occupation. As a result a big chunk of land was retrieved from land grabbers. By this Nazool land received serious attention of administration and management and astringent action against violators was taken. Thus Nazool land within Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporation was being allotted to the Development Authorities to render the necessary management. In the field of Public Administration, Public Distributive System was streamlined. Within this context, various centrally sponsored schemes were implemented which included BPL, Anto- Yodya Anna Yojana and Annapurna Anna Yojana and were closely monitored to ensure that benefits reach to the deserving and eligible sections of the society. Fair Price Shops were encouraged. Activisation awareness awakening were promoted to the consumers so that the consumers could seek redressal from the various Consumer Protection Forums that had been created at the state, divisional and district levels. In the field of forest and plantation, government made strenuous efforts to check deforestation by encouraging large scale aforestation and arising huge plantation enclosures. During the last two years of the regime, Rs. 2 crore worth plant materials planted over an area of about 70, 000 hectares in the 89 state. Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre at Dachigam National Park was completed.

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XIII. ADVANCEMENT IN INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

Work on installation of photovoltaic devices through J&K Energy Development Agency (JAKEDA), 3, 806 solar home lighting devices were distributed in Kupwara and Doda districts under Village Electrification Programme and 3, 300 solar lanterns were distributed in boarder districts of the state. The government tried to move towards IT Revolution to convert the Kashmir valley into Silicon Valley of India by popularizing information technology with the aim to improve efficiency in disposing off official work and delivery of public services. Video- conferencing facility were provided in six districts of the state viz Leh, Kargil, Baramulla, Kupwara, Poonch and Doda and other districts were also in the pipeline for similar connectivity. Community Information Centre (CIC) were set up in 110 blocks for the state and efforts were on to make CICs useful for ruralities. Infrastructure support in the form of software technology parks and internet connectivity was provided to encourage entrepreneurs to set up their own units. [24] Participatory Watershed Management Project with 11 sub- watersheds were identified on priority. The World Bank agreed to provide Rs. 450 crore for the project

A. Opening of Srinagar- Muzaffarabad Road

The opening of Srinagar- Muzaffarabad road was indeed a major political initiative to foster better relations between India and Pakistan. As a sequel to this, Poonch- Rawalakote road was thrown open on June 20, 2006. UPA Chairperson Mrs Sonia Gandhi flagged off the bus from Paunch. This strengthened the people to people contact and bolstered confidence to open many more routes across LOC. These routes have to be eventually used for trade and commerce as well. [25]

B. Roshni Act 2001

The Jammu and Kashmir State Lands (vesting of ownership to the occupants) Act 2001 made more flexible, result oriented and people friendly by carrying out revolutionary amendment in the Act in 2006-07 giving 20 lakh kanals of state land free of cost to the farmers for agriculture purpose.

C. Relief to Earthquake Victims of 2005

The state government provided a compensation of rupees one lakh for each fully damaged house due to volatile earthquake on October 8, 2005. The government also sanctioned special assistance of Rs. 30,000 for construction of temporary shelter sheds with an incentive of Rs. 5,000 to those who constructed the sheds before the end of December 2005. A total of Rs. 601.27 crore ex- gratia reliefs was also sanctioned in favour of earthquake victims. The first instalment of rupees one crore was distributed among 150 affected families of Khundroo ammunition depot fire.

D. Constitution of Working GROUPS

The peace process was given new dimension by the Azad- led coalition government. After the Round Table Conference of May 2006 in Srinagar, Prime Minister of India constituted five working groups to move the peace process ahead. These working groups were constituted to evaluate and emphasize the Confidence- Building Measures with Pakistan including cross LOC relations, centre-state relation, good governance, infrastructure and economic development and CBMs with the people of Jammu and Kashmir, which included widows and orphans who became the victim of violence, return of displaced people and return of people who crossed over during insurgency. [26] Congress as part of the coalition government with Ghulam.Nabi .Azad as Chief Minister had embarked on the uphill task of implementing various pledges made in their common minimum programme. However the ruling alliance made their commitments and promises to the people through their manifestos at the time of 2002 Assembly Elections. The PDP- Congress coalition succeeded 91 in many aspects. The coalition put forward the healing touch policy, in developing confidence and building up the capacity of the people of the state. Their policies yielded certain positive results. To bring the administration closer to the doorsteps of the people, Azad- led government created eight new districts, three sub-divisions and a dozen new tehsils.

XIV. CONCLUSION

The coming up of PDP as a regional alternative to the National Conference can also be attributed to the political heavy weight of the latter with its 2/3rd majority after 1996 Assembly Elections. National Conference assumed a greater bargaining power by passing resolution on the greater autonomy which the then NDA government considered as confronting and challenging While taking over the reins of power in the state, as a rotational chief minister policy the greatest challenge for Ghulam Nabi Azad was to usher the state from the dark phase of violence to a new era of development and progress. It was at this crucial juncture, he gave a new vision of Khushahal Kashmir, Jammu and Ladakh.

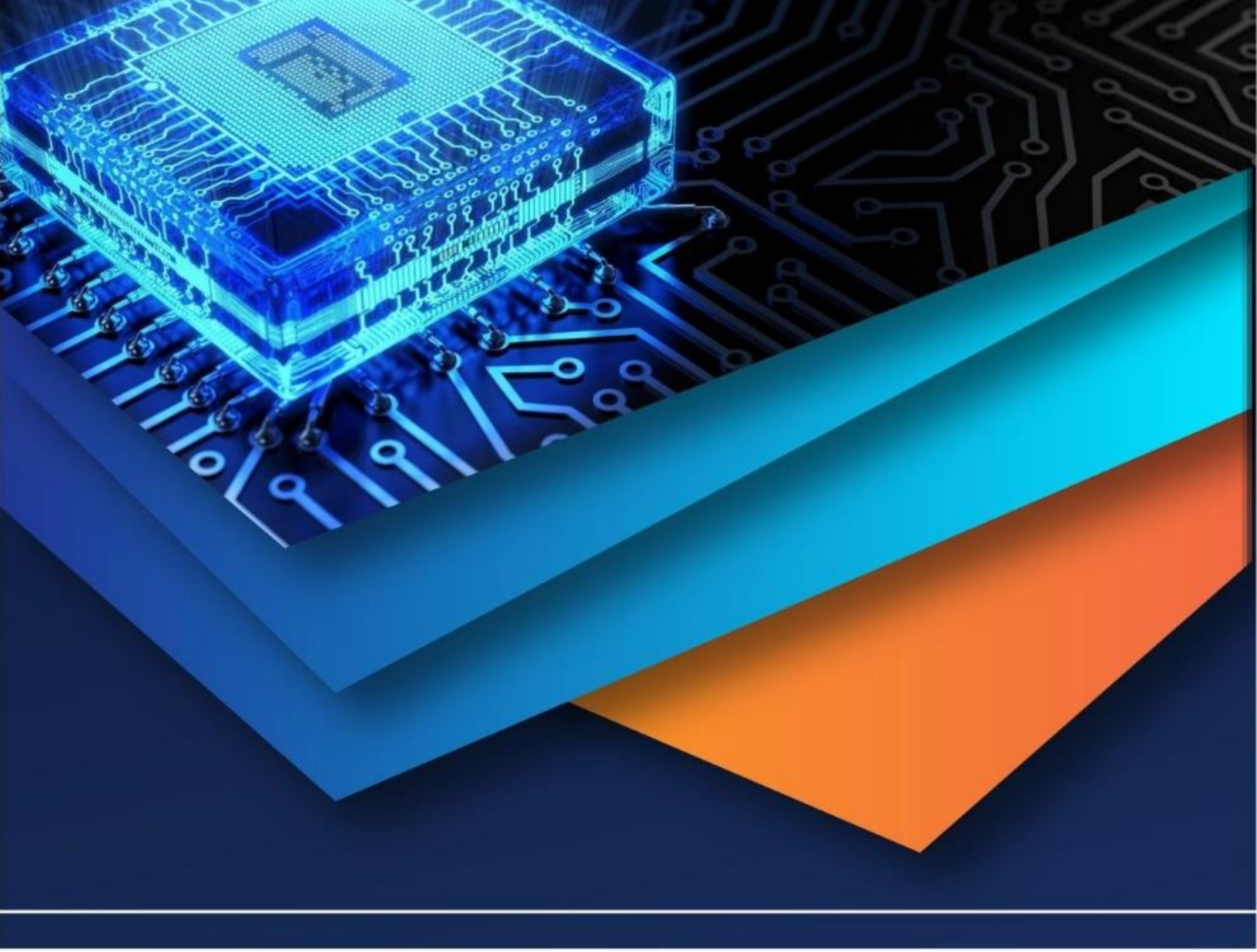
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This policy statement revealed that Azad government will focus more on developmental issues rather than the issues of conflict resolution in the state. Like his predecessor, Gh Nabi Azad wanted to project his vision of a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir state where work culture should improve, corruption should go down and fast track development of the state takes place Ghulam Nabi Azad was instrumental in getting roundtable conferences organized by Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister of India. Second Round-table Conference was held in Srinagar. All political parties, including those outside mainstream orbit, were also invited to put forth their view points in these round- table conferences to evolve comprehensive and viable solutions to the problems faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Round-table Conferences were participated by all the mainstream political parties, representatives of ethnic groups, regions, legislators and others having stake- holders. The coalition government of PDP- Congress made tremendous developments in various sectors like agriculture, industries, commerce, education, tourism, health, employment, electricity, rural development and so on. There were other areas where government succeeded in building trust among the people that included eradication of corruption, promotion of human rights, and announcement of relief and rehabilitation of violence victims. Tourism sector, the main stay of state economy, was revived to a certain extent during Ghulam Nabi Azad era.

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