**Infinite Oppression in IIOJK**

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The months of July and August haunt India more than usual amid strong protests against the illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir. Indian designs to bluff the world on the status of disputed territory were challenged once Kashmiris celebrated Srinagar Martyrs Day and Accession to Pakistan Day in protest mode during July. Momentum of Kashmiri resistance against Indian hostilities is touching vertex with protests against unlawful abrogation of statehood and observance of Black Day on 5th and 15th August respectively. Unilateral stripping of statehood from Kashmir and re-designation of this disputed region as union territory plentifully exposed the Indian colonial mindset. Kashmiri resistance is sending a clear message that Indian occupational rule is just an extension of Dogra and British Rajs in IIOJK. Four years back, what transpired with the abrogation of statehood status in IIOJK was the real reflection of the BJP’s hostile mindset. The 5th August Act doesn’t qualify to be termed as legal or democratic. Abrogated Article 370 precisely hindered the imposition of the Indian parliament’s legislation in Jammu and Kashmir until approved by the state assembly. In other words, this article was an absolute denial of the Indian ‘Atoot Ang’ (integral part) mantra. It also endorsed the disputed status of IIOJK and continuously pinched the religiously prejudiced anti-Muslim hawks of the BJP.

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Historically, Jammu and Kashmir had never been a part of India. Even in the post-partition era, the state of Kashmir was supposed to have a separate assembly, flag, anthem and a semi-autonomous government. Unlike AJK, all these legal rights were denied to Kashmiris in IIOJK. Back in 2015, BJP strived hard to gain the majority in the state assembly to swallow Jammu and Kashmir with targeted legislative tweaking. Despite multi-layered manipulations and rigged elections, BJP could not gain a decisive majority and settled for a coalition government with Mufti Saeed-led PDP. A fresh wave of resistance after the martyrdom of Burhan Wani jolted the nexus of New Delhi and the puppet government in IIOJK. After the death of CM Mufti Saeed, his daughter Mehbooba Mufti took over as CM but this artificial arrangement was eventually substituted with Governor rule in 2018. Since then, the BJP has been ruling IIOJK through illegal non-democratic mechanisms. On 5th August 2019, the BJP government unilaterally abrogated Articles 370 and 35A to convert the disputed IIOJK into union territory through an act of parliament. This controversial manoeuvre has further complicated the unresolved issue of Kashmir and amply exposed the hostile designs of the BJP regime. The act of abrogation precisely aims at accelerating the demographic change agenda to gradually dent the majority of Kashmiri Muslims. Abrogation of statehood lacks legal and constitutional validity because, at the time of this legislation, IIOJK had no elected assembly. Indian reluctance to hold elections is primarily a reflection of deep-rooted public anger against oppressive acts of abrogation. Kashmiris, even the club of former puppet CMs, have unanimously opposed the Indian assault on statehood status. This vicious move has granted the right to own the properties to non-Kashmiris. BJP government has started issuing domiciles to RSS-influenced activists and striving to increase the number of Hindu voters in the Jammu region. In a way, India is following the Israeli model by forcefully settling non-Kashmiris in IIOJK. State-sponsored propaganda outlets are overplaying Pundit victimhood cards to justify the venomous manoeuvres. Besides violating the Indian constitution, the BJP regime blatantly ridiculed the UN resolution with unilateral abrogation of the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. India is continuously trying to divert the attention of the international community from the worsening state of human rights and state-sponsored atrocities taking place in IIOJK. The recent manoeuvre to conduct the G20 event in Srinagar was aimed at portraying normalcy in IIOJK. This diplomatic bluff backfired and international media widely reported the conversion of Srinagar into an open prison. The 5th August act of abrogation has multiple implications on regional dynamics beyond the peculiar Indo-Pak contestation over the Kashmir issue. China openly conveyed concerns about the conversion of Ladakh into union territory. India is pursuing a well-thought-out provocative plan as evident from the timing of the renewed LAC rift with China in 2020. Indian provocative actions have a strong linkage with the rapid militarization drive in areas adjacent to LAC and the growing procurement of military hardware. This conclusion is validated with the largest ever military reforms in Indian armed forces commonly referred to as the establishment of operational theatre commands. Virtually simultaneous activation of India in IIOJK and areas adjacent to LAC is enough to interpret the understandable threats to regional peace. Pakistan has been persistently urging the international community about the hegemonic designs of the BJP regime. What transpires in Manipur and Haryana is a validation of Pakistan’s concerns about growing extremism in India. Worldwide protests in condemnation of the 5th August act of abrogation put a big question mark on the democratic credibility of India. Undeniably, IIOJK is a territory where an RSS-influenced extremist regime is oppressing the Kashmiri masses through genocide, gang rapes, draconian legislation, demographic change and systematic marginalization.

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