

## Working of Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and Congress coalition government in Jammu and Kashmir 2002-2008

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### **ABSTRACT:**

*The term coalition is derived from Latin word "Coalescere" which means to go together. Coalition is a cooperative arrangement under which distinct political parties unite to form the government or ministry. In this research paper an attempt has been made to highlight the development of various sectors in Jammu and Kashmir State during Congress/ PDP coalition government under the vision of Healing Touch and Khushal Kashmir policies.*

### **Keywords:**

Congress; PDP; Healing Touch; Development; Government etc

### **Introductory Remarks:**

After more than two decades in power, the ruling National Conference (NC) was voted out by popular mandate in the 2002 Assembly elections in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The elections, held over four phases in September and October 2002, witnessed an average turnout of about 44 percent. However, what made these elections different from those previously held in the State was that nearly all political parties, independent candidates, non-governmental groups, human rights activists, media (both domestic and foreign) and most importantly, the international community, appreciated the credibility of the elections and the results that followed it. Despite the increased threat of violence during the polling, the people of Jammu and

Kashmir came out to exercise their franchise. The ruling NC, which had 57 seats in the 1996 assembly elections, was voted out of power and could manage to retain only 28 seats in the 2002 elections. Observers termed the verdict as an anti-NC mandate of the people who clearly wanted a change in the State. The elections are also a victory of the ballot over the bullet as the participation in all the phases was around 40-45 percent. Before the first phase of the polls on 15 September, about 250 people including political activists and probable candidates were killed in terrorist attacks. However, polling in the first two phases for assembly segments in Jammu and Kashmir districts passed off without any major incidence of violence. Overall, the Election Commission of India estimated the turnout to be around 45-46 percent. The former Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was criticized for spending more time in New Delhi than in Srinagar, other NC ministers were blamed for the massive corruption that was affecting the daily life of the people. Amidst such political circumstances, the People's Democratic Party (PDP), under the leadership of former Union minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed and his daughter, Mehbooba Mufti, effectively incorporated into the party's campaign manifesto, issues with which the common people identified. The PDP promised a corruption free government, unconditional dialogue with militants, disbanding the Special Operations Group (SOG), providing a 'healing touch' to those affected by militancy. While the NC

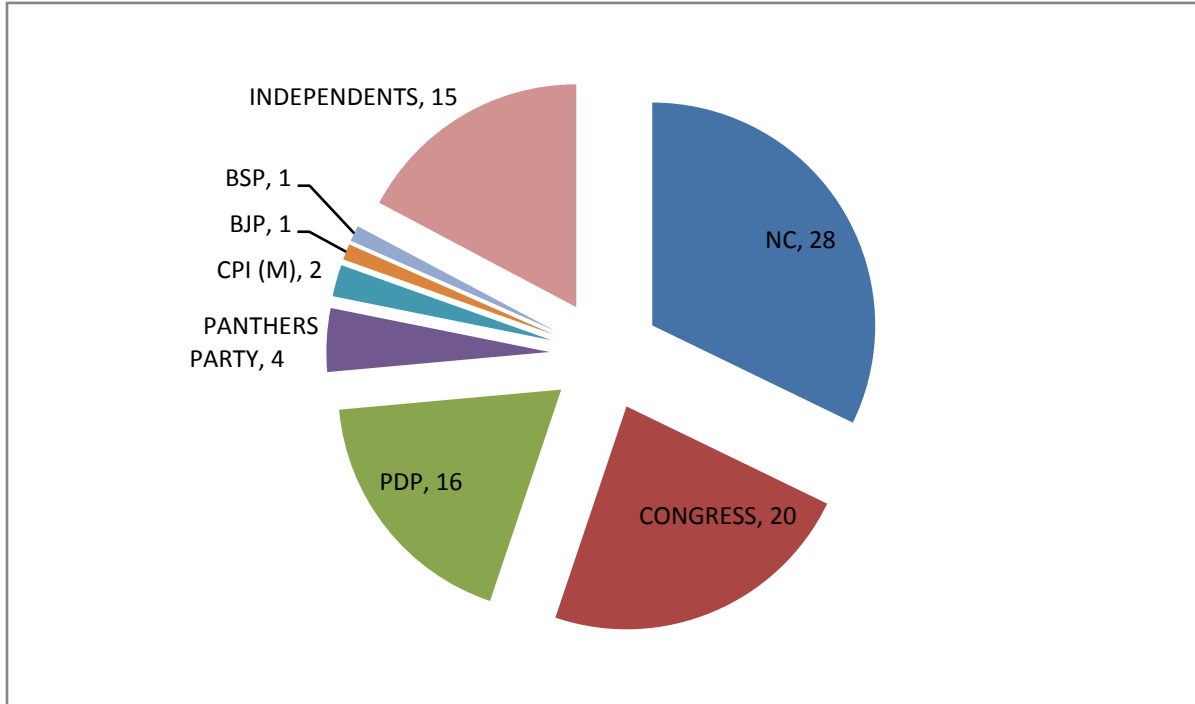
had a hardline position on these issues, the PDP clearly understood the mood of the people, especially in the Valley. The result was that the PDP won all of its 16 seats in the Kashmir valley on an anti-NC and pro-people campaign. The PDP also managed to raise all those issues that till now were mostly talked about by separatist outfits. The NC was punished even in Jammu where the party could manage to win only 9 seats as compared to the 14 it had in the 1996 elections. The United States welcomed the successful completion of 2002 elections in the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. While condemning terrorists attacks which disrupting democratic process it urged India and Pakistan to make a strenuous effort to resume a dialogue on all outstanding issues including Kashmir. The elections resulted in

the overthrowing of the dominant National Conference party. The Indian National Congress and the regional People’s Democratic Party

(PDP) won a combined 36 seats in the state assembly, 8 short of the required number. However, the support of most of the independent candidates and other parties ensured that the coalition has sufficient numbers to form the government and relegate the NC to the opposition benches. In 2002, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was sworn as the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir vowing to bring a “Healing Touch” to state politics for a term of three years as per coalition agreement. Under his visionary leadership PDP has now emerged as a dominant force in Jammu & Kashmir politics.

PARTY	SEATS WON
NATIONAL CONFERENCE	28
CONGRESS	20
PEPOLE’S DEMOCRATIC PARTY	16
PANTHERS PARTY	4
CPI (M)	2
BJP	1
BSP	1
INDEPENDENTS	15
TOTAL	87

2002 Election Results



**Objective of the study:**

- ❖ To examine the Healing Touch policy
- ❖ To investigate the effect of coalition politics on development of the state

**Material and methods:**

For the purpose of the study, both published and unpublished secondary data has been utilized like books, magazines, journals, newspapers, internet, government publications and records to know the functioning of coalition government in the state.

**Healing Touch policy:**

PDP leader Mufti Mohammed Sayeed has assumed the office of chief minister vowing to bring a “Healing Touch” to state politics. The goal of the coalition government is to heal the physical, psychological and emotional wounds inflicted by 14 years of militancy, to restore the rule of law in

Jammu and Kashmir, to complete the revival of the political process, which was begun by the recently-concluded elections, and to request the Government of India to initiate and hold, sincerely and seriously, wide-ranging consultations and dialogue, without conditions, with the members of the legislature and other segments of public opinion in all the three regions of the State, to evolve a broad-based consensus on restoration of peace with honour in the State. Ensuring safety of life and property and restoring dignity and honour of all persons in the State will be the foremost concern of the Government. The coalition government will take all possible measures within its power, to protect all the people in Jammu and Kashmir from violence and militancy, whether originating from within or outside the State, and to encourage those young men from the State who have resorted to militancy to return to their families and the mainstream, with the belief that they will receive security and justice according to law. At the same time, the State Government will fully cooperate with the Government of India in combating cross-border militancy

originating from Pakistan. The Government shall review the operation of all such laws that have been used in the past decade to deprive people of their basic right to life and liberty for long periods of time. Where the Government deems that all cases of custodial killings and violations of human rights shall be investigated and persons responsible for them will be identified and punished appropriately. The Government shall strengthen the State Human Rights Commission to make it an effective instrument for addressing the grievances of the people. The Government shall formulate a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation package for those families affected by militant violence. The ex-gratia relief at Rs. one lakh per deceased person in militant violence will be raised to Rs. 2 lakhs. In recruitment to Government posts, preference will be given to one member of each family where an innocent member has been killed in militancy-related violence. The Government shall implement special schemes to rehabilitate former militants who have renounced violence and rejoined the mainstream. The Government reaffirms that the return of Kashmiri Pandits to their motherland is an essential feature of Kashmiriat. It will seek the cooperation of all elements in the society to create an atmosphere conducive to their safe return. Persons living close to the Line of Control and the International Border face difficulties due to frequent tension and cross-border violence. Permanent shelters will be constructed. The Government will also provide alternative land to such families in safe zones. The Government shall give top priority to ridding the administration of corruption and nepotism, especially in the award of Government jobs and contracts to made all those positions and institutions fully transparent. The Government shall establish an institution or "Ehtisab" to look into complaints received against the Chief Minister/Ministers and MLAs. The

appointment to this post shall be made by the Chief Minister in consultation with the Chief Justice of the High Court and the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly. A commission will be set up to make recommendations for reform of the police administration to make it a more effective and humane instrument for investigation of crimes and for enforcement of law and order. The Government will ensure that the personnel in the Special Operation Group (SOG) are relocated within the regular police. The coalition government considers that there are enough laws in existence to deal with militancy. Therefore, it will not implement POTA in the State. The Government shall make sincere efforts to ensure that all the three regions of the State — Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh receive an equitable share of resources available for development.

#### **Major achievements of mufti- led coalition government:**

The coalition government led by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed has created new ideas and new hopes amongst the people and launched a enormous programme for all round development to lead the state in a new era of peace and prosperity. Worldwide acknowledgement of free and fair elections of Jammu and Kashmir legislative assembly in 2002 changed the socio-economic and political scenario in the state. The state witnessed dramatic changes through qualitative governance by a government to a power. People's involvement in the development and peace process started by the coalition government made a visible turn around in the grim situation of the past decade and more. A noticeable human approach towards the common people by the security forces and making the people believe that peace with dignity was not a distant dream but an achievable goal if the peace gets roots and the walls of hatred and

violence are dismantled. The path breaking elections brought into power for the first time a multi- party coalition government led by veteran political leader Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. The partners in the coalition government including the People's Democratic Party, Congress Party, Panthers Party and Peoples Democratic Forum. The parties have charted out common minimum programme for governance and have stuck to that. During this government visit of Prime Minister AtalBihari Vajpayee and announced historic peace initiative that changed the political scenario in the sub-continent. The people overwhelmingly welcomed Mr. Vajpayee extending his hand of friendship to Pakistan at a largely attended public rally, received a good response from Pakistan's prime minister that broke the ice between the two countries. The coalition government has embarked upon the path of economic development in a big way to achieve this Mufti Sayeed himself toured various states to interact with business houses, movie moghals and tour and travel operators to persuade them to visit Kashmir. The coalition government formulated the common minimum programme for governance. Among other things it promised rule of law and respect human rights, minimizing people's sufferings and government will not invoke POTA. In 2002 The Accountability Commission Bill was also passed by state legislature.

The coalition government has given highest priority to education, tourism power, health, agriculture and allied sectors for activating economy of Jammu and Kashmir. Some of landmark decisions taken by the government in these sectors are listed below:

#### **Education Sector:**

- ❖ Kashmir university to have additional campuses and new colleges opened
- ❖ Post-graduation classes are introduced in degree colleges
- ❖ 100 schools upgraded from primary to middle, 10279 ReT teacher posts created
- ❖ 3260 new schools opened
- ❖ 5125 education guarantee centers opened
- ❖ New concept of adopting higher secondary schools by ministers introduced
- ❖ Age of admission reduced from 6 to 4 years
- ❖ CM announces increase of seats for agriculture course from 50 to 100 at wadoora agriculture college, Shuhama veterinary college seats raised from 60 to 100

#### **Tourism sector:**

- ❖ For revival of tourism and redevelopment of tourist spots, development authorities set up for Gulmarg, Pahalgam and Patnitop
- ❖ Integrated projects are formulated for preservation of historic jama masjid and hazrat shah hamdan, Khanqa-i-moulla in Srinagar, similar projects formulated for KhirBhawani and Mattan pilgrim centres.
- ❖ First ambassador's Golf Cup Kashmir 2003 organized at royal springs at Srinagar to utilize state's such infrastructure for attracting high spending tourists visiting to Jammu and Kashmir
- ❖ Introduction of courier service by using state owned helicopters to ferry passengers to snow bound areas of Kashmir and Ladakh regions during winter

### Health Sector:

- ❖ Government contemplates to set up modern hospitals in districts in a latest diagnostic treatment facilities to the people nearer to their door steps across the state
- ❖ Anantnang to have 300 bed hospital CM revived progress of 200 bedded hospital each at Baramulla and Sopore
- ❖ Srinagar Dental college to have MDS, BDS seats to increase by 50, new CD hospital to be constructed in Srinagar

### Power Sector:

- ❖ New Hydel power policy announced to involve private sector in execution of mini and small projects
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir state power development corporation identified 140 micro, mini and medium hydel power projects with installed capacity of 550 MW
- ❖ Ambitious Rs 109.25 crore projects to streamline transmission system for Jammu, Srinagar and Budgam cleared
- ❖ 923 Kms transmission lines added
- ❖ Metering of consumer power installations taken up
- ❖ Two new power stations one each at Leh and Kargil sanctioned

### Rehabilitation of Kashmiri Migrants:

- ❖ Pragmatic measures taken for return of Kashmiri pandits
- ❖ RS 20 crore projects for construction of 200 residential flats at Shiekhpora Budgam
- ❖ Monthly cash relief to migrant families enhanced to RS. 3000
- ❖ RS 16 crore spent on improving infrastructure of migrants in Muthi-

II, 500 ORTS in Purkhoo-IV camp with improved sanitation

### E-Governance:

- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir goes hi-tech
- ❖ Video conferencing facility launched, secretariat linked with Srinagar, Jammu, Leh and Nyoma
- ❖ E-governance at secretariat, SMART-GOV( Simple, Moral, Accountable, Responsive and Transparent Governance
- ❖ 5114 solar lanterns costing RS. 1.78 crore are provided in 27 villages of Gurez, Tulialand Karnah

### Employment:

- ❖ Under prime minister's package one lakh youth were provided employment opportunities
- ❖ Ban on recruitment in government jobs lifted
- ❖ More than 50,000 jobs provided in a transparent manner, 2000 educated youth appointed on contractual basis in agriculture, medical, engineering and physical departments
- ❖ Self-help groups of 2000 jobless engineers set up and provided RS. 4.20 crore
- ❖ 46 recruitment rallies organized, 1000 Kashmiri youth recruited in Indian Navy, Air force and Army

### Major achievements of Azad-led coalition government:

Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad of the Congress party was sworn as the chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir on November 2, 2005 replaced Mufti Mohammad Sayeed of the Peoples Democratic Party after completion of three years. the Congress, being a national party, would see all issues from a national security perspective, the



PDP, which is clearly a regional party with its constituency limited to the Valley, would attempt to honour its electoral promises. This government under the leadership of Azad has taken some epoch-making and unprecedented decisions on political, administrative and development fronts. The focus of government has been on restoration of law and order, good governance, fighting corruption and creation of infrastructure to bring peace, normalcy and prosperity in the state. To bring political stability the anti-defection law was modified to further restrict the tendency of defections from one political party to another. The constitution was amended to restrict the size of ministry to 20% of the total strength of the legislature. One of the breaking initiatives on political front was holding of three roundtable conferences to address both internal and external dimensions of issues at hand. These conferences drew an overwhelming response from all shades of political opinion in the state. Opening of Srinagar Muzaffarabad road is undoubtedly a major political initiative to foster better relations between India and Pakistan. As sequel to this, Poonch- Rawalakote road was thrown open on June 20, 2006 when UPA Chairperson Mrs. Sonia Gandhi flagged off the bus from Poonch. This has strengthened the people to people contact and bolstered our confidence to open many more routes across the LOC. These routes will eventually be used for trade and commerce as well. On administrative front, bold, innovative and historic decisions have been taken to make administration accessible, transparent, accountable, responsive and efficient. An amendment in the prevention of corruption act has been made which enables the vigilance organization to attach the property disproportionate to the known sources of the income of public servants. The office timings in the secretariat and other move offices were changed. The Assembly remained in session for six days a

week as against five days week norm in the parliament and other state legislatures. The institution of additional district development commissioner (ADDCs) was created in twenty districts. This is a novel institution and has been conceived for the first time in the country. The ADDCs have been assigned the specific task to monitor the works at ground level in their respective districts. Public grievance redressal mechanism was institutionalized. The deputy commissioners and other officers are now holding public darbars at district, tehsil and block headquarters for speedy redressal of grievances of people. The government resolved a long pending demand regarding the implementation of Wazir Commission by taking historic and bold decision to create eight new districts, three sub divisions and 12 tehsils. The Roshni Scheme was recast as a result of which ownership rights of about 22 lakh kanal of state land are being conferred to the landless, small and marginal farmers. To strengthen institutions at grass root level, the remuneration of Nambardars and Chowkidars was increased from sum of RS. 81 to RS. 501 and from RS. 225 TO RS. 500 per month respectively, similarly the salary of about 2500 SPOs were increased from RS. 1500 to RS.3000 per month. . On 26 May 2008, the government of India and state government of Jammu and Kashmir reached an agreement to transfer 99 acres of forest land to the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board in Kashmir valley to set up temporary shelters and facilities for Hindu pilgrims. This caused a controversy protests from the Kashmir valley against the land transfer. The People's Democratic Party (PDP) said that it would withdraw support to the Indian National Congress (INC)-led state government if it did not revoke the land transfer agreement. Though the land transfer was revoked and the PDP withdrew its support to Gulam Nabi Azad's government on 7 July 2008.

### Philosophy of Khushal Kashmir:

The state of Jammu and Kashmir from the time of independence has witnessed several phases of political turmoil and uncertainty, Ensuring political stability in such a situation was a challenging task for the coalition government. GhulamNabi Azad wanted to project his vision of prosperous Jammu and KashmirState by eliminating corruption and by bringing transparency andaccountability in the administration of the state. When GhulamNabi Azad took over the reins of government of the statein 2005 was one of the biggestchallenges for his government to bring out state from dark side of violence and corruption to new era of development and progress to make Khushal Jammu and Kashmir. Some important steps taken by this government for the development of various sectors are mentioned as under:

#### Education sector:

- ❖ 1334 Primary school buildings constructed, another 2100 such buildings under construction
- ❖ 134 middle school buildings constructed and 394 were under construction
- ❖ 62 Block Resource centres constructed and 54 more were under construction
- ❖ 1,35,587 teachers trained in various capacity building programmes
- ❖ 1017 teachers trained in computer education
- ❖ About 7000 ECG centres established
- ❖ Under SarvaShikshaAbhiyan (SSA) about 800 primary schools upgraded and 3542 new schools established
- ❖ New degree colleges have been set up
- ❖ Nine new women ITIs made functional

- ❖ 523 posts of lecturers and 286 non-teaching posts created for 18 new colleges

#### Power Sector:

- ❖ Dulhasti power project in Kishtwar with a capacity of 390 MWs commissioned during 2007-08
- ❖ Baglihar dispute resolved in favour of Jammu and Kashmir
- ❖ Seven power projects with installed capacity of 2799MWs started through NHPC
- ❖ Six grid stations at Kathua,Samba, Hira Nagar, Bari Brahama, Zainakote and pampore with 360 MVA capacity completed
- ❖ Modernization of seven old power houses taken in hand at cost of RS.208 crore
- ❖ RS. 18912 crore allocated for power under Prime Minister's reconstruction plan
- ❖ Projects worth RS. 418 crore cleared under Rajiv Gandhi GrameenViduytikaranYojana (RGGVY)
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir became the first state to have a separate budget for power sector

#### Health Sector:

- ❖ Block Over 45 Kanals of land acquired at a cost of RS.22.50 crore for government medical college Jammu super specialty hospital block
- ❖ 15 super specialties with 220 beds for government medical college jammu
- ❖ 1755 sub centres have been made functional with one ANM each and 9500 ASHA workers selected and trained



- ❖ 45 primary health centres made functional for 24 hour services
- ❖ One each maternity hospital at Srinagar and jammu sanctioned
- ❖ Bio-chemistry department at government medical college Srinagar upgraded
- ❖ Gastroenterology section and video-endoscopy with therapeutic procedures started first time at GMC Jammu

### **Tourism:**

- ❖ 18 new tourism development authorities created in the state and made functional
- ❖ Three tourists circuits via Jammu-rajouri- poonch, Baderwah-Kishtwar-Simthan-Sringar and Lakanpur- Bani- Basholi-Sarthal sanctioned at a cost of RS. 21.79 crore for development of tourist destinations
- ❖ 50 tourist villages identified for development under prime ministers reconstruction plan
- ❖ New tourist destinations at Gurez, Bangus valley, Dodepathri sanctioned at an estimated cost of RS.4.33 crore
- ❖ Projects formulated to install aerial ropeway and chairlift at Aishmuqam (Anantnag)in Kashmir and Mubarak mandi Jammu
- ❖ Work started for construction of new golf course at Sidhra ( Jammu) at an estimated cost of RS.10 crore

### **Horticulture/ Agriculture/ Floriculture Sericulture Sector**

- ❖ Area under fruit cultivation and orchards increased to 283 lakh hectares during 2006-07 as compared to 268 lakh hectares in 2005-06

- ❖ Fruit production touched 15.04 lakh tonnes as compared to 14.03 lakh tonnes 2005-06
- ❖ Income generated by fresh and dry fruits increased to RS. 2100 crore during 2006-07 as compared to RS.1900 crore in 2005-06
- ❖ Production of fruit plants from registered fruit nurseries reached to level of 25 lakh in 2006-07
- ❖ 1474 budded and grafted walnut plants distributed to farmers during last two years
- ❖ Tulip garden was developed at SirajBagh with the proposed cultivation of 20 lakh bulbsin phase-I
- ❖ Seven Zanana (ladies) parks have been developed
- ❖ Bivolitine Cocoon production in the sericulture sector in the state increased from 762 MTs in 2005-06 to 829 MTs in 2006-07 registering an increase of 67 MTs
- ❖ Income generation from silk worm rearers by way of sale of cocoon increased to RS. 726 lakhs
- ❖ For giving thrust to the saffron development RS. 2 crore have been spent

### **Conclusion:**

The competitive nature of regional politics of Kashmir ultimately resulted in deeper changes in the politics of the State. The fragmented verdict at the regional level and the failure of any party to obtain a majority of seats led to the formation of a coalition government. Mufti's healing touch policy and Azad's KhushalKashmir policy have worked to some extent in the state. Overall development of the state during coalition government issatisfactory. PDP Kashmir based party have not only challenged the dominance of the NC butchanged the very logic of power politics. It borrowed issues from the separatist camp and brought them to the mainstream political space.

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