**[Kashmir, Pakistan and the issue of self-determination](https://nation.com.pk/23-Nov-2020/kashmir-pakistan-and-the-issue-of-self-determination" \t "_new)**

Dr. Imtiaz Khan November 23, 2020

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The people of Kashmir have always looked towards Pakistan with the hope that this is the nation which will enable them to break their shackles of slavery and steer them to the path of freedom. However, in the recent years, some of the enigmatic statements and actions emerging from the country have created serious doubts in the Kashmiri minds.

The reality is that almost all the pro-freedom leaders are languishing in Indian jails and the only people who have been set free are politicians like Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti—all of whom favour the accession of Kashmir to India. These politicians are lackeys of the Indian government and they raise their voices only when they are deprived of plum posts. Once the goal is achieved, they willingly collaborate in the decisions that are highly detrimental to the cause of self-determination. This should be made emphatically clear to higher echelons in the Pakistani government.

Radical transformation is the demand of the hour. It is undeniable that Pakistan has paid an immense price, both in terms of men and material, in fighting for the Kashmir cause but over the last several years its actions have been languid and have not proven to be fruitful.

The prevailing situation demands for some serious brainstorming to determine the strategy needed to counter this problem. We should not put all the emphasis on human right issues and ignore right of self-determination. Human right abuses are the symptoms of struggle for the right of self-determination, which is the main ailment. The solution to the problem cannot be attained by addressing the symptoms alone. You have to take care of the ailment.

A paradigm shift is needed as far as this issue is considered. A national consensus on Kashmir should be developed in Pakistan, including both representatives of government and all opposition parties. This has not happened so far and onus of taking initiative in this direction lies on the party in power. They should set aside their political bickering and speak on this issue with one voice.

There should be both long-term and short-term policies on the issue. Currently it appears that decisions are taken in an arbitrary manner without any roadmap. Time is of the essence and positive steps should be taken with minimal delay. The Indian government is introducing fresh barbaric laws in IIOJK every other day.

The mention about Kashmir issue should not be restricted to ceremonial occasions like the Black Day, Kashmir Day or July 13th. Every day in Kashmir is a ‘black day’. There should be a round the year plan for Kashmir. Just taking out processions on the streets of major Pakistani cities on ceremonial occasions with sloganeering and a chest thumping crowd may not yield tangible results. There should be strong effort to extract support from the international community. The Foreign Minister of Pakistan should lead a delegation to important countries and acquaint them about the problem and expostulate eloquently about the consequences of leaving this issue unresolved.

Time and again we have emphasised that Pakistan should have a special desk on Kashmir in all the major embassies of the world so that any new development is communicated rapidly to the foreign offices of these governments.

On several occasions Pakistan has been requested to approach and register a case against India at the International Court of Justice for crimes against humanity. There is formidable evidence for the crimes like the existence of mass graves, use of pellet guns, gang rapes for which India should be held accountable.