

years were a process of rapport building for the Plebiscite leadership, who sought to create alternate avenues for political mobilisation.

The Kashmir Accord, signed in 1975, between Indira Gandhi and Shiekh Abdullah, also added to the resentment. The accord's provisions ensured that Shiekh Abdullah would be released and re-appointed as state chief minister. Additionally, the Plebiscite Front would be disbanded with immediate effect. This was bargained against integrating Kashmir into central constitutional structures and any further devolution of autonomy. This was a turning point in many ways, as the culture of systematic political mobilisation was replaced by sporadic mobilisations led by various youth groups.

### **Contribution of Plebiscite Front Movement to Kashmiri Nationalism**

The Plebiscite Front movement converted Kashmiris into a group possessing common and distinctive cultural elements, where a strong sentiment arose from everyday experiences. This historical point ensured a political awareness of the self and differentiated itself from other political collectivities. The process, which spanned several years, acquainted people with rights and responsibilities, essentially missing from the existing dispensation. A noteworthy aspect of the movement was the unity between the elites and the masses and a sense of owning up to institutions. The breakdown of autonomous provisions for the incarceration of Shiekh Muhammad Abdullah became a symbol of political mobilisation for Kashmiri nationalism.

The Plebiscite Front movement utilised the myths and memories from the past to reconstruct and transform the community into the modern phenomenon of nationalism through re-discovery and re-affirmation. By creating a political and cultural process of legitimacy, the movement ascertained the ownership of resources and infrastructure, launching disruptive actions against the authority. Participation in a movement like *Rai Shumari* was motivated by three key factors: a prevailing sense of injustice and moral acknowledgement that collective

grievances existed and were provoked by the centralising moves of the government. The perceived injustice was at a collective level rather than an individual one. This collective identity was based on shared beliefs and sensibilities, be it cultural or religious. The second important factor contributing to this movement was the presence of an aspect of agency, a belief that one can participate in sustained collective action to alter political conditions.

These conditions indeed emerged in retaliation to the various contextual factors and were cultivated by Kashmiri nationalism.

The door-to-door contact campaigns and reading material circulated by the publicity division of Plebiscite Front ensured the development of a shared perception of injustice, reinforcement of collective identity and the amalgamation of a sense of agency occurring at different levels of society. The activities conducted by the Front dramatically changed the perceptions and persuaded people from other contexts to be a part of the movement. The shared experience of state-enforced coercion influenced the people to come together as the Mahaaz, converting the threshold of sympathy into participation. Political coercion not only formed the core of the collective grievances but also developed a response and led to the maximisation of the goals of political nationalism. This experience also channelled the further adaptation of strategies and tactics for Kashmiri nationalism.

The Plebiscite Front utilised the myth-symbol complex and the mythomoteur by creating similarity in the events of 1931 and 1953 and preserving it for all future events. The political leadership and intelligentsia were thus trying to transform a collectivity into a political nation. This also helped gain recognition for a community's cultural and political claims. The Plebiscite Front reinforced collective identity by persuading those who perceived a sense of injustice being perpetrated on the ethnic and tried to convince them that a national movement was the only way to address this injustice.