

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE OF NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC AFFAIRS



# Interaction

ISSUE-08

VOLUME-17

MC-1326

Rs.400/-

199

ABC CERTIFIED

MARCH 2024



## GHAZNAVI MISSILE

EVOLUTION, SPECIFICATIONS,  
AND STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

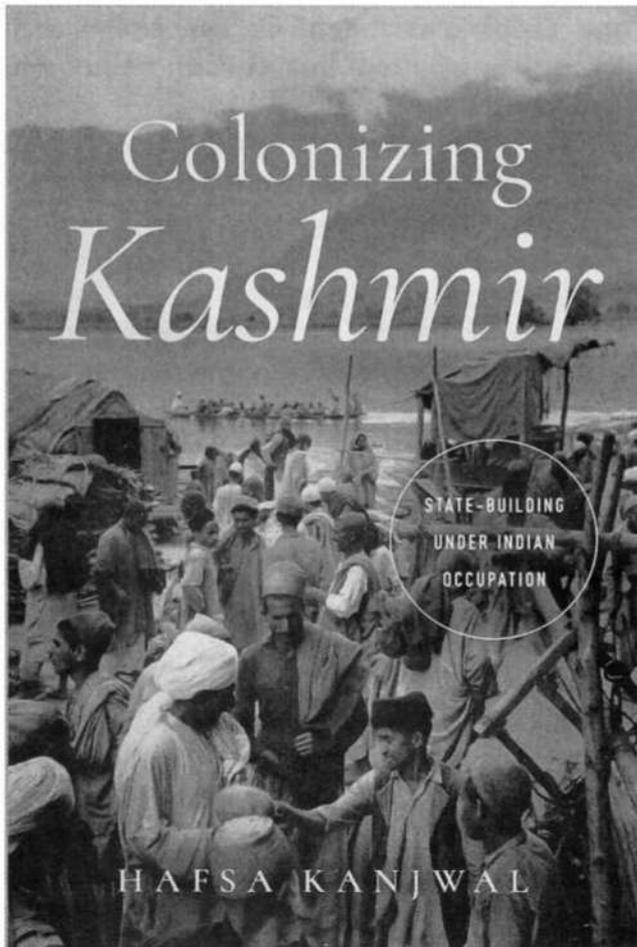
**BOOK REVIEW****HAFSA KANJWAL,  
COLONIZING KASHMIR:****STATE-BUILDING UNDER INDIAN OCCUPATION,  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 2023, 384****ZEESHAN  
HYDER**

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is internationally recognized. United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions provide the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to self-determination. However, the forceful occupation of the territory by India has denied that right to the Kashmiri people. Hafsa Kanjwal's book *Colonizing Kashmir: State-building Under Indian Occupation*

provides a well-researched account of colonization of Kashmir by India. The book explains how India had managed to consolidate its occupational control over Kashmir. It also narrates how India used state institutions, politics, media, tourism, culture, economic policies and demographic engineering to colonize Kashmir. The book is divided into nine chapters including an introduction and a conclusion.

Talking about brief history of Kashmir, the author informs that during the last British census of 1941, Muslims constituted the majority, comprising almost 77 percent of the entire population of the princely state. Hindus, in contrast, accounted for slightly over 20 percent of the total population. Notably, the native region of the Dogras, Jammu, had a predominantly Muslim population of over 60 percent, with the remaining populace identifying as Hindu. However, the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in Jammu in 1947 resulted in a change in demographic composition, with Hindus becoming the majority (p. 5).

The author notes that Sheikh Abdullah, a prominent Kashmiri politician of the anti-Dogra movement, was appointed as the prime minister of an interim government of Jammu and Kashmir by the Maharaja on 5 March 1948 on the insistence of Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru. Sheikh Abdullah was a staunch supporter of the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the dominion of India.

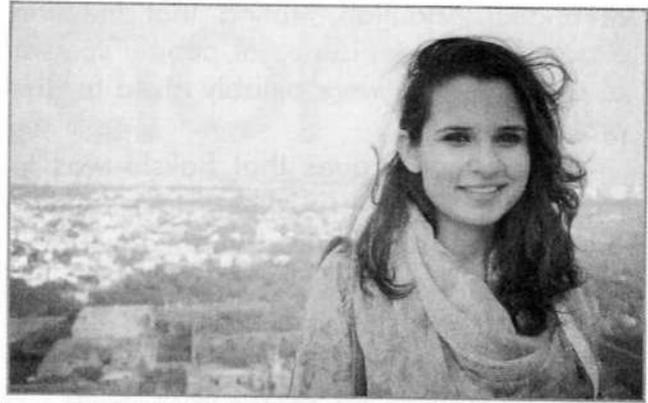


He had envisaged that Kashmir would attain an enhanced autonomous status within India.

From 1947 to 1953, during his tenure, Jammu and Kashmir assumed the status of legal provisionality, operating as an administered yet autonomous territory under the jurisdiction of the government of India. This arrangement was contingent upon a United Nations-mandated plebiscite to ascertain the future of the entire region. In 1953, Sheikh Abdullah was ousted by the Indian government due to his growing concerns about rising Hindu nationalism. Consequently, the Indian government replaced Sheikh Abdullah with Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad and assigned him the task of emotionally integrating Kashmiris into India. His role included denying the possibility of a plebiscite for the people of Kashmir by implementing "state-building" policies in the valley, a strategy the author terms the "winning hearts and minds" approach (p. 7).

In chapter two "Narrating Normalization" the author contends that to project normalcy and "state-building" efforts, rigorous propaganda initiatives were undertaken during Sheikh Abdullah's leadership which intensified under Bakshi's tenure (p. 54). Contextually, under Sheikh Abdullah's administration, plans were devised to publish three magazines i.e., Kashmir Today (English), Tameer (Urdu), and Yojna (Hindi) with the sole aim of advocating Kashmir's accession to India (p. 72). Journalists visiting the region were exposed to aspects that would convey a semblance of normalcy, emphasizing the National Conference's significant influence and portraying the government as widely popular. Any facts contradicting this narrative were systematically erased.

While under Bakshi, the Department of Information utilized Radio Kashmir to host a series of programs to encourage Kashmir's



**Hafsa Kanjwal, author of the book**

accession to India, where cabinet members discussed development schemes that the new government was seeking to implement (p. 89). In chapter three, titled "Producing and Promoting Paradise: Tourism, Cinema, and the Desire for Kashmir," the author reveals how India employed its film and tourism industries as instruments of propaganda in Kashmir during the 1950s and 1960s. The author underlines that many Indian filmmakers wrote letters to Kashmiri officials seeking permission to make films in the valley.

They assured the Kashmiri government that their production had nothing to do with politics, religion, and propaganda. Despite these assurances, the films produced during this period proved as a means to give a false impression of normalcy. Moreover, tourist guidebooks published by the Indian and Kashmir governments were also part of the propaganda. These guidebooks promoted fake normalcy and blurred the miseries of the people of the valley (p. 97). Chapter four "Developing Dependency: Economic Planning, Financial Integration, and Corruption" discusses the economic and development policy initiatives taken under Bakshi era. The author underscores that soon after the ouster of Shaikh Abdullah, Bakshi in his speech which was broadcasted on Kashmir radio, widely criticised the economic policies

of Shaikh Abdullah, noting that they had exacerbated the miseries of people specially of peasants who were pitiably taxed for their produce.

The author argues that Bakshi was too focused on carrying out the "state-building" project. He praised the Indian government and emphasized that Kashmir would benefit from economic ties with India. He believed that by addressing the economic challenges faced by masses he would be able to curb political dissent and suppress opposition to forceful accession (p. 129). With this aim, Bakshi introduced a new manifesto named "Naya Kashmir (New Kashmir)." The author argues that as most of the population relied mainly on agriculture, the economic policies were profoundly focused on the abolition of landlordism, the distribution of land, and the establishment of associations to facilitate the sale and purchase of agricultural produce (p.132).

In chapter five "Shaping Subjectivities: Education, Secularism, and its Discontents", the author argues that Bakshi, with an aim to emotionally integrate Kashmiris into India introduced educational reforms which were mainly targeted towards the Muslim population.

He waived off the tuition fee which was charged during Shaikh Abdullah's government, made the Kashmiri language a medium of instruction in primary schools, granted scholarships to the students, and organized rallies to commemorate days like Indian Independence Day and Nehru's birthday. The author highlights that the underlying goal of these policies was to involve youth in physical and sports activities, thereby diverting their focus from political engagement (p.175).

Chapter six "Jashn-e-Kashmir: Patronage and the Institutionalization of Kashmiri

Culture" discusses the promotion of Kashmiri culture as an effort of "state-building" process. The author argues that in 1956 Bakshi government organized a festival under the name of Jashn-e-Kashmir. The main objective behind this initiative was to promote and highlight Kashmiri culture through art, literature, poetry, dance, music and project normalcy. This event attracted some twenty thousand foreign tourists as well as leaders from India including Jawaharlal Nehru (p. 203).

Lastly in chapter seven titled "The State of Emergency: State Repression, Political Dissent, and the Struggle for Self-Determination" and conclusion of the book author argues that despite all the efforts by Indian client regimes in Kashmir, dissent of people against forceful accession and yearning of Muslim population to join Pakistan could not be suppressed. In order to overwhelm echoing voices of natives to join Pakistan, Indian government sent a militia under the name of "peace brigade" to silence the voices and dissent.

This militarization of Kashmir further triggered demand of freedom from India among people through a plebiscite envisioned in the UNSC resolutions (p.238). The well-researched book uses primary and secondary sources, official documents, biographies and contains several interviews in English, Urdu and Kashmiri languages. It documents carrot and stick policy implemented by New Delhi through puppet governments in occupied Kashmir to instil pro India and anti-Pakistan sentiments into the people of Kashmir. However, India failed to achieve its objectives.

The author is a Research Officer at the Center for International Strategic Studies Sindh (CISSS).