

# CASA



The Current and Strategic Affairs Forum

## Webinar Summary Report: The Newly Minted Union Territories – A Year On



---

**09 August 2020**

**CASA**



The Current and Strategic Affairs Forum

## **The Newly Minted Union Territories – A Year On**

Webinar Summary Report

Publishing date : 09 August 2020

Published by : CASA

### **Acknowledgements :**

The Webinar “The Newly Minted Union Territories – A Year On” held on August 9th, 2020, was organized by The Current and Strategic Affairs Forum. The organizers would like to thank Shri Amitabh Mattoo, Professor of Disarmament Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Shri Ajimand Hussain Talib, Author and Writer and Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Bar) (Retd), Member National Disaster Management Authority, for candidly expressing their views. A special note of thanks to Lt Gen Gautam Moorthy, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd) for conceiving and launching the CASA Website, Maj Gen Deepinder Singh and Core Team CASA for designing and making it happen, and Mr Mahadevan Shankar for brilliantly conducting the event from Australia.

### **DISCLAIMER:**

The views expressed in this Webinar Summary Report are those of the presenters/participants and do not necessarily reflect the policies or opinions of the Government of India or any statutory body.

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photo-copying, recording or otherwise without the prior permission of The CASA Forum (CASA).



### Talks

#### 1. Talk by Shri Amitabh Mattoo, Professor of Disarmament Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University.

Shri Amitabh Mattoo put across a SWOT analysis of the past one year since the abrogation of Articles 370 & 35A. The summary of his considered points on the issue are as under :-

#### Strengths

- Article 370 of the Constitution has been diluted permanently. Its spirit and substance gone.
- Women and marginal groups including Valmikis have now got their Constitutional rights.
- Central laws for all of India extended as applicable to both the Union Territories.
- A signal has gone to the entire world that strong decisions will be taken by the current Government of India and there is no looking back.
- Jammu & Kashmir residents now feel that they are an integral part of India.
- One Flag and One Constitution concept has been embraced by the people of both the Union Territories.
- The BJP had this in their manifesto right from the Jan Sangh days and they implemented it.

#### Weaknesses

- Mixed responses from people in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.
  - Welcomed in Ladakh - completely identify with India.
  - Agnostic in Kargil.
  - Euphoric in Jammu due to Hindu majority but domicile rights, property and jobs will be issues.
  - Alienated and disaffection intense in the Kashmir Valley.
- Governance issues; economy and tourism not taken off.
- Propaganda, as an exercise of statecraft finds no resonance with reality in the Valley.
- Mainstream leaders interred.
- Army influence in Leh significant.



- Jobs and unemployment a concern in Leh.
- No advantages seen for the Kashmiri Pandits.

### **Opportunities.**

- Resentment against the Chinese in Leh.
- Empowerment across the Kashmir Valley is needed along with development and good governance.
- ‘Sabka saath sabka vikas’ has not yet taken off in the Kashmir Valley and can be a significant game changer.
- Investors from across India and overseas have not yet arrived in the two Union Territories. It is only an idea at the moment and needs more efforts from the Government of India to make it a reality.
- Restoring of Statehood at the earliest within a timeframe could lead to more engagement at grassroots levels.
- Art 370 has lost its meaning.
- Next 12 months would be crucial.
- Time to rewind history and bring back the old custom of inhabitants of both the Union Territories promoting their traditions and cultures.

### **Threats.**

The element of uncertainty in the Union Territories as a result of many Indo-Pak issues, especially on security matters, yet to be resolved.

## **2. Talk by Shri Arjimand Hussain Talib, Author and Writer.**

The salient points that can be drawn from the talk of Shri Ajimand Hussain Talib are as under:-

- Creation of these two Union Territories was a unilateral decision by the Government of India that was not consensual.



- Government of India's decision of creating these two Union Territories is legally questionable.
- The people of Jammu & Kashmir feel betrayed and humiliated as a result of this action by the Government of India.
- Political mainstream of the Union Territories feels betrayed as it was not consulted when the major decisions on Articles 370 and 35A were taken by the Central Government.
- Sheikh Abdullah had conceded to the idea of India as he had believed it was heading towards becoming a vibrant democracy, something that the people of Kashmir do not believe now, after what the Central Government has done.
- The 5th Aug 2019 events are a breach of trust by the Government of India with the people of Jammu & Kashmir.
- The decisions on Articles 370 and 35A have now become a barrier for integration of Jammu & Kashmir with India.
- Sustainable Development Goals of Jammu & Kashmir are not as good as those of other States of India post removal of Article 370.
- Governance Model of Jammu & Kashmir has deteriorated.
- There is no right to reforms.
- A large number of business bankruptcies have taken place since removal of Article 370.
- Jammu & Kashmir Bank is in serious trouble.
- Suicides in Jammu & Kashmir are increasing.
- Tourism has been seriously impacted with no flow of tourists into Jammu & Kashmir.
- Startups have not been promoted and those that existed have closed down since the events of 5th Aug 2019.
- The speaker opined that all of the above is extremely unfortunate as :
  - The Persian mantra on the relationship between India & J&K is – I (J&K) have become you (Indian) and you've become me. I (J&K) am the body and you (India) are the soul.
  - India has enjoyed tremendous International goodwill till date, having had great luminaries like Gautam Buddha, Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi (to name a few) as part of its civilisation. Unfortunately all that has now changed.
  - The people of Jammu & Kashmir and the people from rest of India have had no history of aggression, but that has got dented post the events of 5th August 2019.



- About half a million migrant workers from all over India work in Jammu & Kashmir. The local population has always welcomed them and even made them a part of their festivals and events.
- The people of J&K are pinning their hopes on the Hon'ble Supreme Court where the appeal against the abrogation of Art 370 is pending.

### **3. Talk by Lt Gen Syed Ata Hasnain, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM, SM, VSM (Bar) (Retd), Member National Disaster Management Authority.**

The salient points that were brought out in the talk are as follows :-

- In the last one year, people expected too much. Consolidation had to take place. A long and harsh winter was followed by the COVID pandemic.
- Perceptions differ vastly among the voices that are in favour and those that are against the decision to remove Articles 370 & 35A.
- Ideological perceptions need to change. A common line of thinking needed.
- What was wrong and why was abrogation necessary?
  - Due to the situation that existed before 5th August 2019 there was political necessity to do away with Articles 370 & 35A. And the present government had the will to carry it out.
  - The decision to only bifurcate Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and not carve out three regions, was a very wise one. The people of Jammu & Kashmir have shared thousands of years of history and culture and to separate them would have been a mistake.
  - Separatists have built the Aazadi narrative based on help from Pakistan with the end plan to integrate into Pakistan. A dangerous nationalism existed.
  - Art 35A provided the narrative of exclusivity. The Army had stabilized the situation 4-5 times earlier.
  - The issues of Kashmiri Pandits have not been addressed for the past three decades, since the events of the early 90s, when they were forced out of the Kashmir Valley.
  - Overt and covert networks in Kashmir have created chaos.
  - These networks have been getting financial assistance from across the border. They have dealt in drugs, set up cartels to control businesses, encouraged stone throwers and even



created an over ground ecosystem which thrived due to the absence of good governance.

- Media never supported or complimented the security forces even once.
- The mainstream political parties also fuelled separatism for vote bank politics.
- Going Ahead
  - Do not remove the army from the hinterland.
  - It's the people who must be addressed.
  - Be mindful of the obstacles, especially the exercise of delimitation.
  - The external factors remain- 42 terrorist camps operating in POK, Overground network still seems intact and recruitment is still taking place.
  - It is important to win the hearts and minds of people through good governance and democratic processes. A super 'Sadhbhavana' at the national level is required.
  - Absence of violence is not normality and much needs to be done to fix sensitive issues before statehood is given to the two Union Territories.

#### 4. Questions to panelists and discussions.

Interesting questions came in from the audience of the webinar and were put up to the panelists by the moderator and healthy discussions followed. After an hour and half of intellectually stimulating talks and discussions, the webinar came to an end at 8.30pm IST.