

**Daily Excelsior April 21, 1984.**

### **Jammu Identity**

Sir,

The article "People of Jammu: A Quest for Identity" by Dr AC Bose (DE Apr 17) is very illuminating. It is free from political over-tones such as were noticeable at the seminar on Jammu identity held recently and is, therefore, objective and consequently more purposeful.

The case of the Jammu people is not really that of their identity. With the discrimination being practiced against them in matters of employment, admissions to professional colleges and regional development, the case of the people of Jammu can appropriately be termed as one of struggle for existence. In this regard it would not be correct to say that the feeling of discrimination among the people of Jammu is the result of their having lost the privileges which they enjoyed during their rule before Independence. It could, perhaps, even be said that they never enjoyed any such privileges even then. If they dominated the civil services along with the Kashmiri Pandits it was more because of their merit than any special favour conferred on them by the Government. Kashmiri Muslims remained out of the services because they lagged behind in education. The Dogras could hardly be blamed for this state of affair any more than the British could be for the equally low educational standard of the Muslims in British India. In fact the Muslims were as poorly represented in the services in British India as they were in the J&K State. The only department in which the Kashmiris were debarred for enrolment by order was the Army. For this the Kashmiris could even thank the Dogras. They have inherited rule over vast territory of the State without having sacrificed a single life for its acquisition.

More than the identity, the quest of the Jammu people is for justice. If the Government is scared of accepting the principle of merit in the State services let it at least allow Jammu a share in proportion to its population. The same goes for the allotment of funds for regional development. Besides, the people of Jammu have political aspirations, as all free people would have, which have remained unfulfilled all these years of freedom because of the constitutional set up within the State which allows political domination of Kashmir over Jammu and Article 370 which limits the powers of the Parliament over the State.

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