



KASHMIR POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE (KPRI)

MUZAFFARABAD

INTERNSHIP REPORT

2025

Table of Content

- I. Introduction**
- II. Pre-Internship Activities**
 - a. Advertisement
 - b. Registration
 - c. Selection Process
- III. Orientation and Documents Submission**
- IV. The Opening Ceremony**
- V. Research Methodologies– Building the Foundation**
 - a. Introduction to Research Methodology: Foundations of Research
 - b. Research Design and Methodologies
 - c. Referencing, Academic Writing & Literature Review
 - d. Data Analysis and Research Tools
 - e. Application of Research Skills and Review
- VI. Understanding the Kashmir Conflict: Various Dimensions**
 - a. Emotional and Religious Dimensions of the Indian Perspective of the Kashmir Conflict
 - b. Military Aspect of the Kashmir Conflict – Operation Bunyan Marsoos
 - c. Genesis of the Kashmir Conflict and Recent Developments
 - d. Historical and Political Aspect of the Kashmir Conflict
- VII. Themes of Governance, Youth Empowerment, and Development in AJK**
 - a. Constitutional Development in AJK
 - b. Empowered Youth, Inclusive Society: Role in Shaping Tomorrow (from 14 to 41)
 - c. Networking and Employ-ability Skills
 - d. Planning Process in AJK and Its Impact on Development
 - e. Interaction between Bureaucracy and Youth of AJK
 - f. Social Contract: The Trinity of People, Government of AJK, and Pakistan Army
 - g. Digital Footprint and Resume Writing
- VIII. Internee Engagement, Research Contributions, and Feedback**
 - a. Confidence Building Activities
 - i) One-One Interaction
 - ii) Stage Conduction

iii) Presentations and Motivational Stories

- b. Presentation on the Research Topics and Abstracts
- c. Submission of the Research Articles
- d. Feedback by the Internees

IX. Miscellaneous

- a. A Seminar on 10th July
- b. Field Trip to Chakothi Border (Line of Control)
- c. A Networking Lunch
- d. Farewell Ceremony and Stage Drama on Plights of Divided Families
- e. Coverage in Newspaper

X. Certificate Distribution Ceremony

XI. Recommendation for Future Internships

XII. Conclusion

XIII. Appendix

- a. Code of Conduct
- b. Internees List

Introduction

The **Kashmir Policy Research Institute (KPRI)** has firmly established itself as a premier think tank in Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK), committed to in-depth research, policy analysis, and advocacy on issues concerning **Kashmir's history, development, and conflict resolution**. In alignment with its mission to engage and empower the next generation of scholars, policymakers, and leaders, **KPRI organized the 5th edition of its flagship initiative — the KPRI Summer Internship Program (SIP-2025)**. This program has become a signature event of KPRI, designed to cultivate research aptitude, analytical thinking, and civic responsibility among university students across Pakistan and AJK.

The **KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025** commenced on **June 23, 2025**, and concluded on **July 20, 2025**, spanning **four intensive weeks of academic and practical engagement**. A total of **45 interns**, selected through a competitive and merit-based process, participated in this year's program. These interns represented **five reputed universities**, including the **University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (Main Campus and Jhelum Valley Campus)**, **International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI)**, **National University of Modern Languages (NUML)**, and **University of Lahore**. The academic disciplines of the participants covered a broad spectrum of **social sciences**, including **International Relations, Political Science, Law, Mass Communication, History, Education, and Kashmir Studies**.

The primary objective of SIP-2025 was to provide a multifaceted learning experience that blended theoretical knowledge with practical exposure. The internship was designed to enhance interns' understanding of research methodologies, the Kashmir conflict, regional dynamics, governance challenges in AJK, and leadership development. The program was curated in four progressive weekly themes: Week 1, Research Methodologies; Week 2, Understanding the Kashmir Conflict; Week 3, Developmental Potential of AJK; and Week 4, Leadership Activities and Field Engagement.

Throughout the program, the interns engaged in group discussions, simulations (Model UN on Kashmir), presentations, and interactive activities, ensuring active learning. They were also tasked with producing an original research paper on a relevant topic concerning Kashmir or development issues in AJK, thereby applying their learning into practical research output.

The KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was not merely an academic exercise but a platform for personal growth, networking, and leadership development. It aimed to instill in students a sense of civic duty, a deep understanding of the Kashmir issue, and the capacity to contribute constructively in national and international discourse.

The internship sessions were conducted in a disciplined and professional manner, beginning with Quranic recitation and Darood, while interns took turns in stage duties and storytelling to build confidence. Feedback forms ensured quality, and punctuality, dress code, and professional conduct were strictly maintained.

This comprehensive report aims to document the structure, content, experiences, outcomes, and impact of the program. It reflects on the journey of empowering youth through research, dialogue, and engagement, in alignment with KPRI's vision to build a knowledgeable and proactive youth capable of contributing meaningfully to the cause of Kashmir and the development of Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Pre-Internship Activities

Advertisement: The KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was officially announced on June 1, 2025. For registration purposes, an online application form was created and widely disseminated through KPRI's official digital platforms, including social media forums and the institute's website. Additionally, the registration link was shared with relevant academic departments across universities to ensure outreach to eligible students. Interested candidates were invited to apply by June 15, 2025.

Registration: A total of 122 applications were received from students enrolled in the relevant social science disciplines at various universities across Pakistan. Following a competitive evaluation process, 45 students were selected — comprising 30 principal candidates and 15 alternative candidates. All selected applicants were notified through email and phone calls, and were provided with important joining instructions, including the KPRI Code of Conduct.

Selection Process: The selection process was based on four primary criteria: the quality and relevance of the submitted research abstract, diversity in academic fields, diversity in institutional representation, and gender balance. While several students from Sindh, Punjab, and Balochistan expressed interest in participating, accommodation limitations regrettably prevented their inclusion. Ultimately, the selected cohort represented a diverse academic

pool, with students from the University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (UAJK), International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), and the University of Lahore. A majority of the interns were from the field of International Relations, with others from History, Political Science, Mass Communication, and Kashmir Studies, ensuring a rich interdisciplinary learning environment throughout the program.

Orientation Day

The Orientation Day of the KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was held on June 23, 2025, marking the formal commencement of the four-week internship journey. Interns gathered at the KPRI Conference Hall in Muzaffarabad, where they were warmly welcomed by Mr. Haroon Ur Rasheed, Assistant Director KPRI and Focal Person of the program. He briefed the interns on the structure, objectives, and expectations of the internship, while also introducing the Code of Conduct, attendance policies, and submission requirements. Interns completed their registration forms and submitted required documents, including copies of their ID cards, student cards, academic transcripts, CVs, and research abstracts.

The session provided interns with an overview of KPRI's vision and mission, as well as the broader goals of the internship—particularly in promoting research culture, critical thinking, and leadership skills among youth. Interns had the opportunity to meet their fellow participants, fostering a collaborative and diverse learning environment from the outset. The orientation laid a solid foundation for the weeks ahead, emphasizing professionalism, discipline, and active engagement. It also instilled in interns a sense of purpose and responsibility, setting a positive tone for the entire program.

Opening Ceremony

The Opening Ceremony of the KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was held on June 24,



2025, in the KPRI Conference Hall, Muzaffarabad. The event marked the formal inauguration of the fifth edition of KPRI's flagship internship program. It was graced by the presence of Chief Secretary AJK, Flight Lieutenant (R) Khushhal Khan (S.St.), who attended

as the Chief Guest. The ceremony brought together interns, faculty, KPRI staff, and special guests, creating an atmosphere of anticipation and excitement as the program officially began.

The ceremony commenced with a warm welcome by Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan,



Director KPRI, who delivered the opening remarks. He introduced the mission and objectives of KPRI and elaborated on the purpose of the Summer Internship Program. He emphasized the importance of engaging youth in research, policy analysis, and awareness on the Kashmir conflict, highlighting how such programs are essential for grooming future leaders and researchers. Dr. Sajjad also outlined the structure of the four-week program, detailing the themes for each week and the expected outcomes.

Following this, Mr. Rafaqat Hussain Khan, Secretary of Kashmir Culture, Arts, and Languages (KCAL), the parent department of KPRI, delivered a brief address. He appreciated the initiative of the internship program and provided an update on the achievements and ongoing projects under KCAL. He thanked the Chief Secretary for his support and presence, acknowledging his consistent encouragement for youth development initiatives across AJK.

In his keynote address, Chief Secretary Khushhal Khan commended KPRI's efforts in



organizing such a comprehensive internship program. He highlighted the critical role of youth in shaping the future of AJK and Pakistan, particularly in raising awareness on the Kashmir issue at national and international levels. The Chief Secretary urged interns to take full advantage of this opportunity, emphasizing discipline, research integrity, and active participation. He appreciated the diverse academic backgrounds of the interns and encouraged them to explore innovative

solutions for the socio-political challenges facing the region. The ceremony concluded with a vote of thanks and group photo, officially setting the tone for a productive and impactful internship journey ahead.

Research Methodologies– Building the Foundation

The first week of the KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was dedicated to equipping interns with fundamental research skills essential for academic and policy inquiry. The week included five comprehensive sessions, each delivered by subject specialists from across Pakistan, focusing on core areas such as research philosophy, design, writing, referencing, and data analysis.

Throughout the week, intern feedback was collected daily through structured forms. These responses allowed the organizing team to assess comprehension levels, session delivery, and intern expectations—enabling timely improvements in engagement methods, discussion opportunities, and coordination.

a. Foundations of Research (Prof. Dr. Wajid Aziz)

The first lecture of Research Week, delivered by Prof. Dr. Wajid Aziz, focused on the conceptual foundations of research. Dr. Aziz began by explaining the nature and purpose of research in social sciences, addressing key questions such as: Why do we conduct research?



What is knowledge? What are the types of research questions? He introduced interns to the difference between qualitative and quantitative paradigms, emphasizing how the selection of a research approach depends on the research problem itself. His engaging delivery helped demystify complex academic terms and philosophical underpinnings such as ontology, epistemology, and methodology.

In the second half of the session, Dr. Aziz emphasized the importance of objectivity, critical thinking, and ethical responsibility in the research process. He discussed the role of curiosity and skepticism in building new knowledge and highlighted the limitations of blindly following assumptions. Interns appreciated how real-world examples were used to illustrate abstract concepts. This session

laid the intellectual groundwork for the rest of the research week, helping students transition from a passive understanding of research to active intellectual inquiry.

b. Research Design and Methodologies (Dr. Zaheer Abbas)

The second session was led by Dr. Zaheer Abbas, Assistant Professor of Sociology, and



focused on the structuring of research through design and methodology. Dr. Zaheer explained the key components of a research proposal: problem statement, objectives, research questions, hypotheses, and conceptual framework. He walked interns through types of research designs such as exploratory, descriptive, experimental, and case studies, helping them understand how structure enhances the reliability and relevance of a study.

Dr. Zaheer also introduced various sampling techniques, including probability and non-probability methods, and their application in fieldwork. He discussed data collection tools like interviews, surveys, focus groups, and participant observation. His comparative examples between quantitative and qualitative strategies helped students understand when and why to choose one approach over another. Interns found the session practical and useful, especially those preparing their own research topics. Feedback forms later showed that this session significantly clarified the interns' confusion around proposal writing and research scope formulation.

c. Referencing, Academic Writing & Literature Review (Dr. Asim Muneeb Khan)

The third lecture, delivered by Dr. Asim Muneeb Khan, addressed some of the most practical and frequently misunderstood aspects of academic work: referencing, writing structure, and literature review. Dr. Asim began by highlighting the importance of academic integrity and the dangers of plagiarism. He introduced various citation styles, such as APA, MLA, and Chicago, and demonstrated referencing tools like Zotero and Google Scholar to ease the writing process. The interns were shown how proper citation not only avoids plagiarism but also strengthens the credibility of an academic argument.

In the second part of the session, Dr. Asim guided students on how to conduct a comprehensive literature review, emphasizing the need for thematic organization, synthesis, and critique rather than mere summary. He also explained the structure of research papers,

from abstract to conclusion. Interns practiced paraphrasing, note-taking, and bibliography building. The feedback from this session indicated that many interns—especially those from non-research-intensive programs—felt more confident about writing academically and managing references properly.

d. Data Analysis and Research Tools (Dr. Latafat Aziz)

The fourth session was conducted by Dr. Latafat Aziz, a Senior Researcher in Social Sciences, who focused on data analysis and digital research tools. Dr. Aziz introduced interns to the basics of quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and how both are essential in drawing valid and reliable conclusions. She explained coding techniques for qualitative data, measures of central tendency in quantitative analysis, and how to choose tools based on the type of data gathered. Her emphasis on ethics in data interpretation and transparency in reporting was particularly appreciated.

The session also included a hands-on overview of popular research software like SPSS for statistical analysis and NVivo for qualitative content analysis. Dr. Aziz highlighted how



digital tools not only improve efficiency but also enhance accuracy in large-scale research projects. Her interactive teaching style allowed interns to ask technical questions and share their own research dilemmas. Many interns mentioned in their feedback forms that this session made data handling less intimidating and sparked their interest in mastering research technology.

e. Application of Research Skills and Review

On the final day of Research Week, the interns were asked to apply the knowledge gained from the previous sessions by beginning to refine their own research topics and abstracts.

They discussed their ideas in peer groups and received informal guidance from the focal person and KPRI staff. This helped reinforce their learning in a collaborative environment.

Week 2: Understanding the Kashmir Conflict: Different Dimensions

Week 2 shifted focus from academic skill-building to deep intellectual engagement with the Kashmir conflict from multiple dimensions—legal, emotional and religious, military, and historical and political. From June 30 to July 4, the knowledge spectrum of interns on the Kashmir conflict was widened by different experts.

Day-2 Emotional and Religious Dimensions of the Indian Perspective on Kashmir

This session was led by Mr. Tariq Mahmood Butt, Directing Staff, Kashmir Institute of



Management (KIM). The second day focused on India's religious and emotional narratives surrounding Kashmir, particularly in the context of Hindutva ideology and post-2019 developments. A scholarly session on "Emotional and Religious Dimensions of The Indian Perspective on Kashmir" covered the geographical, historical, economic, and religious significance of Kashmir for India.

He placed particular emphasis on the religious perspective, explaining that Jammu and Kashmir holds great importance for India due to several highly significant Hindu religious sites in the region. This adds a layer of religious motivation to India's occupation of the



territory.

He also provided a detailed breakdown of the current territorial divisions in Jammu and Kashmir. According to him, 41.43% of the total area is under India's forcible occupation,

while 41.39% is controlled by Pakistan, which includes Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Additionally, 17.6% of the region is under China's control, including Aksai Chin. He highlighted that India has not been serious about resolving the Kashmir issue through negotiations, as evidenced by its historical actions. Instead, India has focused on solidifying its control over the region, driven not only by strategic considerations but also by religious significance.

Discussing India's political moves, Mr. Butt explained that since 1957, India has been attempting to abrogate Articles 370 and 35A, which provided special status to Kashmir under its constitution. Recently, India succeeded in amending Article 370, effectively ending Kashmir's special status and dividing it into two union territories. By abolishing Article 35A, India also aims to change the identity and demography of Kashmir. However, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are actively resisting these efforts with an organized strategy. Mr. Butt emphasized that the responsibility of the people in Azad Kashmir is to keep the flame of freedom alive and ensure that the voice of Kashmiris reaches the global stage. The setting at KIM, coupled with a detailed Q&A session, made this session both impactful and memorable.

Day 3- Military Aspect of the Kashmir Conflict – Operation Bunyan Marsoos

Guest Speaker: Brigadier Tariq Sohail, Sector Commander ISPR

On the third day, the focus shifted to the military dimension of the Kashmir conflict. Brigadier Tariq Sohail from ISPR delivered an impactful session on Operation Bunyan Marsoos, an intelligence-driven military operation targeting cross-border threats and terror networks. He provided rare insights into how Pakistan's military has responded to escalations along the Line of Control, including post-2019 Indian aggression, and ceasefire violations.



Brigadier Sohail also discussed the regional and international implications of the militarization of Kashmir, particularly in light of nuclear deterrence, proxy warfare, and hybrid threats. The session helped interns understand the strategic calculations behind military actions and the importance of defense diplomacy. Interns appreciated the opportunity

to engage directly with a military leader, gaining firsthand insights into the security challenges, operational constraints, and humanitarian considerations involved in conflict zones.

Genesis of the Kashmir Conflict and Recent Development

A special session focusing on the historical dimensions of the Kashmir conflict was held with Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan, Director KPRI. During this session, Dr. Sajjad Khan provided a detailed overview of the history of the Kashmir conflict, starting from the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846. He then discussed the key events that unfolded in 1947 and beyond, giving the students a deeper



understanding of how the conflict has evolved over time. He emphasized the importance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions, particularly Resolution 39 and Resolution 47, which serve as the foundation for resolving the conflict. Dr. Sajjad Khan also reaffirmed that Kashmiris have never accepted India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and remain determined to fight for their freedom.

Addressing the special status of Kashmir, Dr. Sajjad Khan explained that this status was first granted by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1927 and later by the Indian Constitution under Articles 370 and 35-A in 1949 and 1953, respectively. However, the Government of India revoked this special status on August 5, 2019. Dr. Sajjad Khan argued that this revocation violates not only India's own constitution but also the Instrument of Accession, international law, the Shimla Agreement, and various UN resolutions. He drew parallels between India's actions in Kashmir and the Israeli model, noting that India has issued over 6.1 million domiciles to non-Kashmiris, which is a strategy to alter the region's demographic makeup.

Dr. Sajjad Khan further explained that the criteria for issuing domiciles include 15 years of service or 10 years of residence in Kashmir, criteria often met by security forces and their families. He stressed that in today's world, facts hold more weight than slogans, and it is crucial to present the Kashmir case through research and academic papers. He encouraged the

students to actively engage in research and also to utilize social media platforms to raise awareness about the Kashmir issue.

He concluded the session by urging the internees to actively engage in promoting the Kashmir cause through scholarly research and social media. He emphasized the importance of using these platforms to convey the factual realities of the situation to the global community and to advocate for the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir.

Day-5: Historical and Political Aspect of the Kashmir Conflict

Guest Speaker: Justice (R) Syed Manzoor Hussain Gillani, Former Chief Justice AJK



On July 3, 2025, the interns attended an in-depth session on the Historical Aspect of the Kashmir Conflict, delivered by Justice (R) Syed Manzoor Hussain Gillani, former Chief Justice of the High Court and Supreme Court of AJK. Drawing upon his vast legal and political experience, Justice

Gillani provided a comprehensive historical overview, tracing the roots of the Kashmir conflict from the Dogra regime, the Partition of British India in 1947, to the events leading up to the controversial accession and subsequent ceasefire line. He emphasized how colonial legacies, political betrayals, and the arbitrary division of territory laid the foundation for the decades-long struggle of the Kashmiri people.

Justice Gillani critically examined key historical events, including the tribal invasion of 1947, the role of the Maharaja, and the impact of successive wars between India and Pakistan on the fate of Jammu and Kashmir. He argued that the absence of Kashmiri representation during major political decisions, including the drawing of the Line of Control, has perpetuated alienation and unrest. His analysis was both thought-provoking and emotionally resonant, urging interns to appreciate the depth of the historical injustices and to engage meaningfully with the narrative of Kashmiri resistance and resilience. The session enriched the interns' understanding of the chronology and context of the conflict and underscored the importance of preserving historical memory in pursuit of a just resolution.

Themes of Governance, Youth Empowerment, and Development in AJK Constitutional Development in AJK

Dr. Idrees Abbasi, Secretary Presidential Affairs, led this important session.



The second week of the internship began with a deep dive into the constitutional evolution of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Dr. Idrees Abbasi, a legal expert and senior bureaucrat, delivered a comprehensive lecture on the legal and constitutional journey of AJK, from its inception to present-day governance structures. He elaborated on AJK's Interim Constitution

Act 1974, discussed the powers and limitations of the legislative assembly, and touched upon the ongoing debates regarding autonomy, representation, and judicial reforms. The interns actively engaged in the session, raising questions on the future of constitutional development and its link to the broader Kashmir conflict.

The session was hosted at the Presidency of AJK, which added to the significance of the occasion. It provided interns with a rare opportunity to experience governance from within its institutional hub. The discussion helped students understand the distinct political and legal status of AJK, and how it interacts with the Kashmir dispute and Pakistan's federal structure. The interns showed keen interest in the implications of constitutional changes for self-governance, development, and identity politics in the region.

Empowered Youth, Inclusive Society: Role in Shaping Tomorrow (from 14 to 41)

On July 10, 2025, the interns participated in an inspiring and interactive session led by Ms. Maria Iqbal Tarana, renowned human rights activist, former Chairperson of the AJK Commission on the Status of Women, and a prominent youth and political leader. The session, titled "Empowered Youth, Inclusive Society: Role in Shaping Tomorrow (from 14 to 41)", focused on the transformative role of young people in building a socially inclusive, equitable, and progressive society. Ms. Tarana emphasized that



youth, particularly in conflict regions like Kashmir, must be conscious of their rights, responsibilities, and potential to drive meaningful change. She encouraged interns to develop critical thinking, civic engagement, and advocacy skills, highlighting examples from her own activism and public service.

The session also explored the barriers to youth participation, including lack of political representation, economic insecurity, gender inequality, and limited access to decision-making forums. Through open dialogue, interns discussed how they could contribute to inclusive policy-making, peacebuilding, and social justice in AJK and beyond. Ms. Tarana challenged the interns to look beyond conventional roles and take ownership of societal change by using education, social media, and civic platforms effectively. Her energetic and motivational approach left a lasting impression on the participants, reinforcing the program's goal of cultivating informed, confident, and empowered youth leaders for the future.

Certainly! Below is a detailed report on Week 3 of the KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025, with three comprehensive paragraphs for each day:

Networking and Employability Skills

Guest Speakers: Mr. Nawaz Dar and Mr. Khawaja Mudassar Iqbal

The week commenced with a focus on professional growth through an insightful session titled “Networking and Employability Skills”, led by two experienced trainers, Mr. Nawaz Dar and Mr. Khawaja Mudassar Iqbal. Mr. Nawaz Dar, an M&E Officer at SoLF and a certified trainer, introduced interns to essential soft skills necessary for personal and career



success. He elaborated on the role of professional networking, both offline and online, and highlighted how strategic relationships can create new learning and career opportunities. Interns were guided on how to present themselves in a professional environment, build

rapport with colleagues and mentors, and harness the power of LinkedIn and social media for career advancement.

In the second half, Mr. Khawaja Mudassar Iqbal, a social activist and certified student trainer, focused on interview mastery techniques. He conducted mock interviews, provided real-time feedback, and helped interns develop effective strategies to respond confidently to challenging questions. His practical advice on resume presentation, body language, and professional demeanor resonated well with the interns. Mr. Mudassar also emphasized the need to research organizations before interviews and tailor resumes and cover letters to job-specific requirements, a practice often overlooked by fresh graduates.

The session was highly interactive, with live role-playing activities, group discussions, and Q&A rounds. Interns appreciated the hands-on learning environment, which allowed them to practice newly acquired skills in a supportive setting. This session was critical in preparing the interns for future job markets, particularly in a competitive and evolving employment landscape. It reinforced the importance of self-presentation, communication, and adaptability—skills that are increasingly valued across professions, including research, public service, and civil society sectors.

Planning Process in AJK and Its Impact on Development

***Guest Speaker: Ms. Talat Farooq, Assistant Chief, Planning & Development Department
AJK***

On the second day, Ms. Talat Farooq, Assistant Chief at the Planning & Development Department of AJK, conducted a detailed session on the planning process and its implications for regional development. She introduced interns to the developmental planning cycle, including project formulation, budgeting, monitoring, and evaluation mechanisms within the government



structure of AJK. Ms. Farooq emphasized the importance of inclusive planning, wherein the needs and voices of local communities and youth must be represented in development

priorities. Her engaging presentation helped interns understand the technical and bureaucratic challenges faced during the execution of public development projects.

During the session, Ms. Farooq also discussed current developmental initiatives in AJK in sectors like education, health, infrastructure, and information technology. She explained how strategic planning can directly impact economic growth, employment opportunities, and service delivery in remote and underserved regions of AJK. Interns asked pertinent questions about resource allocation, project delays, and governance bottlenecks, which led to a lively discussion on how youth can contribute to policy-making and planning through advocacy, research, and innovation.

This session offered a rare glimpse into the inner workings of government departments and the intersection of policy and practice. It underscored the importance of evidence-based planning and the critical role of transparency and accountability. Interns left with a deeper appreciation for the complexities of regional development and the need for young professionals to engage with public institutions to influence meaningful change. It also sparked interest among several interns in exploring career opportunities within public sector planning and development policy analysis.

Interaction between Bureaucracy and Youth of AJK

Chief Guest: Chief Secretary AJK, Khushhal Khan (S.St)

The third day was a landmark event in the internship program—a high-level interactive session between interns and senior members of the AJK bureaucracy. The Chief Secretary AJK, Khushhal Khan (S.St), served as Chief Guest, accompanied by Secretary Wildlife and Fisheries Mr. Amir Mahmood Mirza, Secretary KCAL Mr. Rafaqat Hussain Khan, and Director KPRI Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan. Interns had the rare opportunity to directly engage with these senior



officials, posing critical and well-researched questions on diverse governance issues. Topics ranged from e-governance, digital service delivery, youth unemployment, and education

reforms, to more specific concerns such as AJK Public Service Commission practices, quota vs. open merit, and the implementation of AJK’s Youth Policy.

The session was interactive, informative, and solution-oriented. The Chief Secretary responded to each question thoughtfully, appreciating the preparation and sincerity of the interns. He provided valuable insights into policy limitations, budget constraints, and institutional reforms, while also encouraging interns to pursue public service careers and innovative projects that can benefit AJK. The exchange was dynamic, with fruitful discussions on climate change threats, eco-tourism potential, the status of AJK Bank, and the need for a National Incubation Center to support youth entrepreneurship and digital freelancing.

Interns found this session empowering and eye-opening, as it allowed them to present youth concerns directly to decision-makers and receive real-time feedback. It reinforced the belief that informed youth engagement is essential for transparent, efficient, and inclusive governance. The session also provided a strong networking platform, with officials expressing willingness to mentor young professionals and consider their suggestions in future policy discussions. The event highlighted KPRI’s unique role in bridging the gap between youth and the state machinery, fostering a culture of accountability and civic participation.

Social Contract: The Trinity of People, Government of AJK, and Pakistan Army

Guest Speaker: Brigadier Qaiser Iqbal, Station Commander Muzaffarabad

On the fourth day, Brigadier Qaiser Iqbal, Station Commander Muzaffarabad, led a powerful session on the theme “Social Contract: The Trinity of People, Government of AJK, and Pakistan Army.” He began by explaining the concept of a social contract, where citizens, state institutions, and defense forces work interdependently to ensure peace, stability, and development. Brigadier Qaiser emphasized the responsibility of youth to uphold law, civic responsibility, and national unity, while the government and military remain committed to defense, governance, and service delivery.



A significant part of his address covered the recent Pakistan-India military conflict in May 2025, during which Pakistan emerged victorious. Brigadier Qaiser provided interns with a detailed account of Operation Bunyan Marsoos, a strategic military campaign that successfully defended the region against external threats and upheld the sovereignty and dignity of the Kashmiri people. He linked military operations to the broader cause of peace, regional security, and conflict resolution, encouraging interns to be informed advocates of their national interest.

The session concluded with an interactive segment where interns asked questions about civil-military cooperation, youth engagement in national defense narratives, and the role of the Pakistan Army in disaster relief, education, and community welfare. Brigadier Qaiser's articulate and passionate delivery left a deep impression on the interns, who expressed gratitude for the sacrifices of the armed forces and committed themselves to being responsible, informed, and patriotic citizens. The session reinforced the importance of strategic awareness and civic duty as integral elements of leadership.

Digital Footprint and Resume Writing

Guest Speaker: Dr. Mubashar Naqvi, Public Relations Officer, UAJK

The week concluded with a practical skills session led by Dr. Mubashar Naqvi, Public Relations Officer at the University of AJK, on the theme “Digital Footprint and Resume Writing.” Dr. Naqvi, an experienced media educator and journalist, began by discussing how one’s online presence—on social media, LinkedIn, and other platforms—constitutes a digital footprint that can impact professional credibility and employability. He urged interns to manage their online identities strategically, maintaining a balance between personal expression and professionalism.



The session then focused on resume and CV writing techniques, where Dr. Naqvi shared templates, common mistakes, and industry-specific advice. He emphasized customizing CVs for each job application, including relevant keywords, measurable achievements, and a clear personal statement. Interns were invited to submit their CVs for review, and many received constructive feedback on how to enhance layout, content clarity, and formatting. Dr. Naqvi

also discussed email etiquette, cover letters, and the importance of a concise portfolio in today's digital job market.

Interns found the session extremely useful and timely, particularly as many of them will soon be applying for jobs, scholarships, or further education. The workshop bridged a crucial gap between academic learning and job readiness, providing interns with practical tools for career advancement. It reinforced the core objective of the internship program—to develop confident, well-rounded, and employable youth leaders who are prepared to contribute to both national progress and the resolution of the Kashmir conflict through informed engagement and professional excellence.

Internee Engagement, Research Contributions, and Feedback

The KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 was designed as a comprehensive learning and development experience, aiming not only to enhance research capabilities but also to foster confidence, leadership, communication, and management skills among interns. Students were divided into 9 groups to participate in a range of interactive activities that cultivated a dynamic and engaging environment.

a. Confidence-Building Initiatives

i. One-on-One Interaction:

During the second week, Assistant Director KPRI, Mr. Haroon ur Rasheed, held one-on-one meetings with interns in group settings. Over five days, he met with two groups per day, discussing each intern's application form, CV, skills, and future goals. These personalized interactions allowed interns to identify and correct errors, receive individualized career guidance, and share any concerns they faced during the program. The activity built trust and rapport, significantly boosted interns' self-confidence, and encouraged them to actively participate in future sessions.



ii. Stage Conduction:

To help eliminate stage fear and build public speaking skills, interns participated in daily pre-session activities. One intern would serve as stage host, another recited from the Holy Quran, and a third shared a motivational message. Additionally, each day two interns were assigned to formally receive guest speakers, allowing them to develop event management skills. Through this inclusive and rotational approach, every intern was provided with the opportunity to lead, boosting their confidence and presentation abilities.

iii. Presentations and Motivational Stories:

Interns were also required to present their research topics and abstracts, explaining their objectives, rationale, and expected outcomes. Furthermore, each intern shared a personal or motivational story, offering lessons in resilience, growth, and determination. These stories served as a platform for peer learning, and helped interns become more expressive and articulate.

b. Research Development Activities

i. Research Presentations:

Following the research methodology sessions in Week 1, interns selected relevant topics focused on Kashmir-related issues and developmental challenges in AJK. After refining their topics with the support of research scholars, interns submitted abstracts online and formally presented them during group discussions. Student Research Paper Presentations

During the last week, interns presented their research papers to the KPRI team and fellow interns. Each presentation focused on the objectives of the study, the rationale for the selected topic, and the relevance of the research to the Kashmir conflict or development challenges in AJK. Interns demonstrated a clear understanding of research design, including qualitative and quantitative approaches, and explained the methodologies and data analysis tools they employed. Topics ranged from youth unemployment, education reforms, and digital governance to geopolitical dimensions of the Kashmir conflict, media narratives, and cross-border tensions.

The presentations showcased the diversity of thought and academic rigor among the interns. Each intern was provided time for a Q&A session, allowing for peer engagement, constructive critique, and the opportunity to defend their findings. The sessions were interactive, with active participation from the audience, reflecting the analytical mindset and

curiosity cultivated during the program. The KPRI faculty commended the interns for their effort, depth of analysis, and the practical relevance of their proposed recommendations.

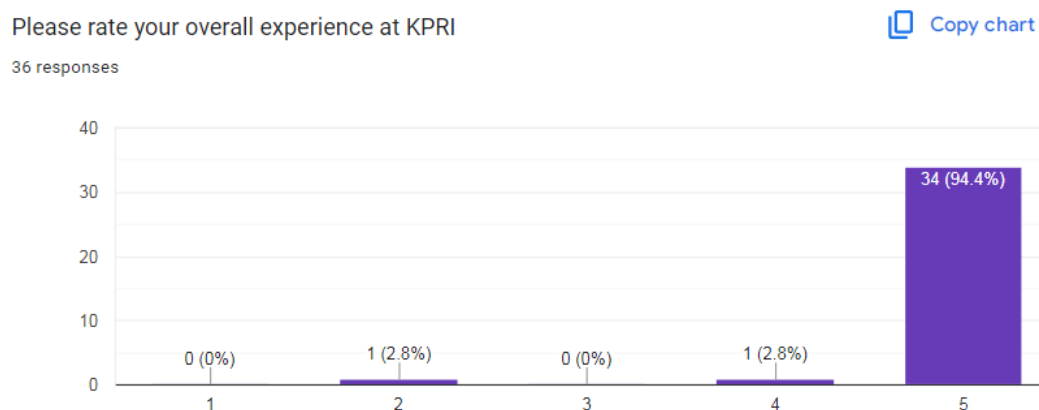
This week not only highlighted the intellectual growth of the interns but also served as a testament to the effectiveness of the training modules provided throughout the internship. The ability to translate theoretical learning into practical research underscored the success of KPRI's aim to nurture young researchers and policy advocates. The research presentations were a culminating achievement and provided valuable content that may inform future policy reports, publications, or collaborative projects by KPRI.

ii. Research Paper Submission:

At the conclusion of the internship, interns submitted research articles based on their approved topics. While most participants were undergraduate students and relatively new to academic research, their submissions demonstrated genuine effort, analytical thinking, and clarity of purpose. The experience instilled in them a commitment to pursue further research, with aspirations to publish their work in national and international journals.

c. Intern Feedback and Evaluation

Interns were required to submit daily session feedback via online forms, offering insights into what they learned, their satisfaction levels, and areas for improvement. This real-time feedback helped KPRI tailor the sessions to meet interns' needs and expectations. At the end of the internship, comprehensive feedback was collected to assess the overall effectiveness of the program. The analysis of these forms revealed a high level of satisfaction and highlighted the transformational impact of the internship on students' academic and professional development. Feedback charts and summaries were compiled to inform future internship planning and improvements.



Miscellaneous

10th Death Anniversary of Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan – Honoring a Legacy

Chief Guest: Prof. Dr. Taqdees Gillani, Minister of Trade and Small Industries

The week concluded with a commemorative session marking the 10th death anniversary of Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan, a veteran political leader and former President and Prime Minister of AJK. The event, held at KPRI, featured Prof. Dr. Taqdees Gillani as the Chief Guest. She reflected on Sardar Qayyum Khan's political legacy, his role in advancing Kashmir's cause globally, and his contributions to education and governance reforms in AJK.

Interns Roma Irshad, Khawaja Kashif Shamim, and Anaya Butt shared their reflections, followed by remarks from Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan and Director Operations JKLC Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan. The ceremony highlighted the importance of leadership, vision, and dedication in the freedom struggle. Interns were encouraged to carry forward the mission of advocacy and service, inspired by the life of Sardar Qayyum Khan. The event concluded with prayers for national unity and Kashmir's liberation, adding a reflective and emotional close to a deeply educational week.



Field Trip to Chakothi Border (Line of Control)

The final week of the KPRI Summer Internship Program began with a memorable field trip to Chakothi Border (LOC), offering interns a unique on-ground exposure to the realities of the Kashmir conflict. Upon arrival, the interns were warmly welcomed by Brigadier Qaiser Iqbal, Station Commander Muzaffarabad, who delivered a comprehensive briefing on the military operations, security dynamics, and daily challenges faced by soldiers stationed at the LOC. He vividly described the life of soldiers in conflict zones, the strategic significance of the border, and shared the heroic story of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Pakistan's first Nishan-e-Haider recipient. Brigadier Iqbal also explained aspects of guerilla warfare tactics employed in the region and the Pakistan Army's unwavering commitment to safeguarding the people of AJK.

Following the briefing, the Pakistan Army hosted a lunch in honor of the interns, showcasing their hospitality and camaraderie. This interaction helped interns better understand the role of the military beyond combat, including community engagement, relief work, and support to civilian institutions. It also reinforced the spirit of national unity and inspired many interns to consider careers in public service and defense sectors. The field trip not only enhanced their theoretical understanding of the Kashmir conflict but also deepened their emotional connection to the sacrifices made by the armed forces.

After the visit to the border, the interns were taken to Dao-Khan, a mesmerizing natural site en route to Leepa Valley, where they enjoyed the serene landscape and bonded as a group. The social networking among interns and KPRI staff was strengthened, offering a space for informal interaction, reflection, and team building. The day ended on a high note, with interns expressing gratitude for the opportunity to witness the frontline realities and connect with their heritage and homeland in a meaningful way. It was a transformative experience that blended patriotism, learning, and personal growth.

Networking Lunch

As part of the internship's social and professional engagement, a **networking lunch** was arranged by the interns at **Kudadad Hotel, Muzaffarabad**. The informal gathering provided a relaxed environment where participants, KPRI officers, and resource persons interacted beyond the formal setting of lectures and sessions. It served as an opportunity for the interns to strengthen personal connections, exchange experiences, and develop camaraderie after weeks of collaborative learning and activities.

During the lunch, many interns shared their **future academic and career aspirations**, receiving encouragement and informal guidance from KPRI officers. This interaction not only deepened the bonds among the interns themselves but also fostered a stronger relationship between the interns and KPRI, reinforcing the institute's role as a mentor and facilitator for young professionals. The occasion reflected the spirit of teamwork, mutual respect, and shared purpose that had defined the entire Summer Internship Program.

Farewell Ceremony and Stage Drama on Plights of Divided Families

The final day of the internship marked the farewell ceremony, where Director KPRI, Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan, delivered his concluding remarks, expressing pride in the

dedication, discipline, and intellectual progress displayed by the interns. He highlighted the unique contributions of the 2025 batch, encouraged interns to stay connected with KPRI, and emphasized their responsibility as young ambassadors of Kashmir to carry forward the values of critical thinking, research, and advocacy. Interns were also invited to share their feedback and reflections, many of whom spoke emotionally about their transformative journey during the four-week program.

As part of the farewell, interns performed a short drama titled “The Story of Maryam”, portraying the emotional trauma of divided Kashmiri families across the Line of Control. The performance was poignant and powerful, shedding light on the human dimension of the conflict and the psychological scars of separation. It was a moving tribute that resonated deeply with both faculty and fellow interns, and showcased the creative and empathetic potential of the youth. The drama also sparked a discussion on the need for peacebuilding, reconciliation, and cross-border dialogue.

The day concluded with group photos, certificate announcements, and informal interactions, marking the end of a deeply enriching and memorable journey. Interns left with new skills, lifelong connections, and a renewed sense of purpose. The final day encapsulated the spirit of learning, unity, and commitment to Kashmir’s cause, and reinforced the success of the KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025 as a model of youth empowerment, research excellence, and civic engagement.

Coverage in Newspaper

The achievements and significance of the **KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025** received recognition in local media through dedicated coverage in leading newspapers of AJK. **Mr. Babar Bashir Awan, Assistant at KPRI**, played a pivotal role in this outreach by recording interviews of the interns, gathering their reflections, and compiling detailed accounts of the program. His efforts highlighted not only the activities conducted during the internship but also the transformative impact it had on the students in terms of research skills, confidence building, and professional development.

Through these published articles, the program reached a wider audience, drawing attention to KPRI’s role as a premier think tank committed to youth empowerment and policy-oriented research. The media coverage emphasized the unique opportunities offered by the internship, portraying it as a model initiative for grooming future leaders and advocates of the Kashmir

cause. This positive visibility enhanced the reputation of KPRI, strengthened its community outreach, and inspired other students and institutions to take interest in similar academic and leadership initiatives.

Feedback

Certificate Distribution Ceremony

The Closing Ceremony of the **5th KPRI Summer Internship Program** was held on **September 3, 2025**, at the KPRI Conference Hall in Muzaffarabad. The event was graced by the presence of **Ms. Kausar Taqdees Gillani**, Minister for Small Industries, Cooperation, Travel and Trade Authority, who attended as the Chief Guest. The ceremony was also



attended by **Director KPRI, Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad Khan**, **Former Director JKLC, Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan**, and senior officers from both JKLC and KPRI. The hall was filled with an air of accomplishment and celebration as the four-week academic and leadership journey of the interns reached its formal conclusion.

The program began with an overview presented by **Director KPRI, Dr. Sajjad Khan**, who briefed the Chief Guest and other dignitaries on the objectives, structure, and outcomes of the internship. He highlighted how the program successfully blended research training, exposure to the Kashmir conflict, and leadership development with practical activities. Following this, **Raja Muhammad Aslam Khan** shared his remarks, appreciating the commitment of the interns and emphasizing the importance of sustained youth engagement in research and policy initiatives.

In her keynote address, the **Chief Guest** praised both KPRI and the interns for their dedication and achievements. She remarked that such opportunities had once been

unimaginable and described today's youth as fortunate to have them available "at their doorstep." Her words were both inspirational and encouraging, underscoring the value of academic and professional grooming in shaping future leaders. At the end of the ceremony, she distributed **completion certificates** among all interns and presented **souvenirs** for best recitation, best naat, and best speech, along with **shields for the top three performers** of the program. In recognition of her support, the Director KPRI presented a shield to the Chief Guest on behalf of the institute. The event concluded with a **group photograph**, capturing the spirit of achievement, unity, and commitment that defined the Summer Internship Program 2025.

Recommendation for Future Internships

- Consider extending the program to **six weeks** or designing it in modular phases to allow more time for in-depth research and leadership development.
- Instead of focusing mainly on lectures, dedicate the **last two weeks** for interns to **practically conduct research work in the KPRI Library**, applying skills learned in the earlier sessions
- Limit the number of selected interns to **30 students** to ensure quality engagement and effective management.
- Ensure representation of students from **Sindh, Balochistan, KPK, and Gilgit-Baltistan** by offering blended participation.
- Provide a **stipend of PKR 15,000** per intern to support their participation and motivate greater commitment.
- Arrange accommodation for interns coming from other provinces of Pakistan in **University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (UAJK) hostels**. Collaborate with UAJK administration to formalize this arrangement for smooth logistics.
- For exposure visits and field trips, a **University bus** should be arranged in partnership with UAJK. To institutionalize this cooperation, it is recommended that **KPRI sign an MoU with UAJK**.
- Add **computer systems in the KPRI Library** to provide interns with access to digital resources, databases, and writing tools for their research projects.
- Ensure reliable internet connectivity and research software support for data analysis and academic writing.
- Assign faculty mentors to small groups of interns for personalized research guidance and improved quality of articles.
- Introduce a **peer-review workshop** before final submissions to encourage collaborative learning.
- Add more workshops on **digital literacy, project management, freelancing, and entrepreneurship** to strengthen employability skills.
- Introduce a dedicated **Career Counseling Session** to guide interns on career pathways, scholarship opportunities, competitive exams, and professional development.
- Establish a **KPRI Internship Alumni Network** to connect past participants and encourage joint projects, mentorship, and annual alumni conferences.
- Enhance visibility through **social media campaigns, video documentaries, and partnerships with youth-oriented platforms**, in addition to newspaper coverage.

Conclusion

The **5th KPRI Summer Internship Program 2025** proved to be a highly impactful initiative that blended academic learning with practical exposure and leadership development. Over four weeks, 45 interns from leading universities engaged in sessions on research methodologies, the Kashmir conflict, constitutional and governance issues in AJK, and youth empowerment. The program not only imparted essential scholarly skills but also created a platform for critical dialogue, enabling interns to connect theory with real-world challenges.

A major strength of the program was its focus on **research and personal growth**. Interns refined their research skills through workshops, presentations, and article submissions, while also gaining practical insights through interactions with senior bureaucrats, military officials, and policymakers. Confidence-building activities such as stage conduction, storytelling, and motivational speeches enhanced their communication skills, while informal gatherings like the networking lunch strengthened relationships among interns and with KPRI staff.

In conclusion, SIP-2025 was a **transformative experience** that empowered young participants to emerge as confident, informed, and socially responsible individuals. It embodied KPRI's mission of preparing the next generation of researchers and leaders who can contribute meaningfully to Kashmir's cause and the development of AJK. The program's success demonstrates the importance of sustained youth engagement and provides a strong foundation for further strengthening future editions of the internship.





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