



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF KASHMIR STUDIES



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- To assess and examine the needs and requirements of research in Kashmir studies and dynamics of Pakistan.
- To publish articles related to Kashmir conflict, international affairs, political studies, diplomacy and public advocacy, security paradigm, defense and strategic studies, law-based approaches, peace and conflict studies, governance and economy, self-determination and other solidarity rights.
- To coordinate research programs of various universities and other research bodies in and outside Pakistan and cooperate in the academic activities and scholarly pursuits of all official and nonofficial institutions engaged in this field;
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Dr. Sania Muneer
Editor in Chief



Media, Nationalism, and the Kashmir Crisis: A Comparative Content Analysis of Two Leading South Asian Newspapers

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Media, Nationalism, and the Kashmir Crisis: A Comparative Content Analysis of Two Leading South Asian Newspapers

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ABSTRACT

After the events of 5th August 2019, when the Indian Government revoked Articles 370 and 35A of its constitution, the political and media landscape regarding Kashmir conflict has been drastically changed. The study examines how the leading newspapers of India and Pakistan- Hindustan Times (India), and Dawn (Pakistan) framed Kashmir issue in their respective issues during three months' time. The findings of the study reveal that Hindustan Times provided

more coverage to Kashmir in sharp contrast with Dawn. However, the issue was highlighted through the lens of Article 370/35A, territorial sovereignty, and Indian state narratives and the frames used by the newspaper were often war oriented. On the other hand, Dawn focused on international reaction and emphasized peace oriented and solution frames. The study demonstrates how media framing reinforces national positions on contested political issues, shaping public consciousness and international perceptions.

Keywords

Kashmir Conflict; Media Framing; *Dawn*; *Hindustan Times*; Article 370/35A

Introduction

The Kashmir conflict has been one of the most enduring and volatile disputes between India and Pakistan and it has always gained immense attention since its genesis. Experts on South Asia believe that Kashmir is a nuclear flash point between India and Pakistan as both believe it as their undeniable territory. This dispute has year's long history which has shaped the strategic outlook of South Asia for more than seven decades. The dispute started after the partition of British India in 1947. Both countries have confronted wars due to this issue as each of the countries see it as their inevitable identity due to geo-political ideologies. Several wars, recurring military crises, and prolonged cycles of political unrest have entrenched the dispute, keeping the people of Kashmir in a state of perpetual

insecurity.¹ However, the events of August 5th, 2018, have marked a well-defined rapture in the long trajectory. When the Government of India revoked Articles 370 and 35A, provisions that had granted Jammu and Kashmir an autonomous status, the constitutional, political, and security landscape of the region was fundamentally reconfigured.² The unilateral decision not only altered India's internal administrative framework but also has resulted in universal outrage as well.³ Pakistan believes that this move by the government of India is an illegal annexation of the state that paves a way further towards the deprivation of Kashmiris-Pakistan is of the view that India violated international law and United Nations resolutions.⁴ While India, conversely see this change as a sovereign constitutional reform meant to facilitate the administrative matters of the state that is likely to ensure the stability, integration, good governance, and development of the state. The above opposing interpretations

¹ Syed Mubashar Hussain Shah, Babar Hussain Shah, and Qurat ul Ain, "An Analysis of Challenges in Reporting by Journalists in Conflict Zone: Case Study of Muzaffarabad & Srinagar," *Journal of Peace, Development and Communication* 5, no. 3 (2021): 149–160, <https://doi.org/10.36968/JPDC-V05-I03-11>

² M. Abbas, Ghulam Mustafa, and Muhammad Arslan. "India's Constitutional Change: Revocation of Article 370 and 35-A and the Repercussions from Pakistan." *UOS Journal of Social Sciences & Humanities* 8, no. 1 (2024): 24–37.

³ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas. "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions." *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

⁴ Kashmir, the UN and Pakistan-India Standoff: Revisiting International Law and Political Will". 2025. *Journal of Asian Development Studies* 14 (2): 579-97.

highlight the deep-rooted ideological divide that has deeply impacted the course of relations between India and Pakistan.⁵

This revocation of the special status of Indian held Kashmir severely triggered relations between India and Pakistan once again resulting in domestic political mobilization, and widespread media attention. Under such circumstances, the role of media; specifically, English language newspapers became more crucial in narrating, legitimizing, or challenging state actions. As the media is considered as the fourth pillar of the state, its importance under such crucial circumstances can never be undermined. The media plays a critical role in shaping, influencing or holding opinions about different issues. Media framing is one of the important media techniques that are widely used to put certain events in certain desired frames. Prior scholarship demonstrates that media coverage of Kashmir has historically reflected national positions, reproduced state narratives, or mobilized public sentiment during crises.⁶

Against this backdrop, the present study investigates how the leading English-language newspapers of Pakistan and India, Dawn and Hindustan Times, covered the Kashmir issue in the three months following 5 August 2019. These newspapers have been selected for their credibility, wide & wise readership and significant influence on

⁵ I. A. Abbas, and Khan, M. A. "The Politico-Economic Dimensions of the Kashmir Conflict." *Pakistan Journal of Law, Analysis and Wisdom* 1, no. 1 (1998): 112.

⁶ Syed Abdul Siraj, "War or peace journalism in elite US newspapers: Exploring news framing in Pakistan-India conflict." *Strategic Studies* 28, no. 1 (2008): 194-222.

public and policy discourse.⁷ Both newspapers enjoy a central position in the media systems of their respective countries: Dawn is known for its impartiality, independence, objectivity, and historical legacy as well.⁸ On the other hand Hindustan Times, founded by Mahatma Gandhi, is considered India's widely circulated and influential newspaper.⁹

The study is based on the technique of content analysis to examine the magnitude of coverage, placement, themes, and the framing strategies that were employed by the selected newspapers. The study is rooted in the tradition of agenda setting theory that focuses on priming and framing of certain issues.¹⁰ The study further aims to determine the extent of coverage by the selected newspapers while covering different aspects related to the issue of Kashmir. The study is primarily focused on the Framing technique that highlights the certain aspects of a certain issue of phenomenon while excluding other aspects of the issue thus contributing to national narratives or challenging dominant discourses.¹¹ Kashmir is a geopolitically

⁷ Altschull, Agents of Power: *The Role of the Press in National Politics*, 84–87; Sreedharan, *South Asian Media Systems*, 101–104.

⁸ Talib, *The Dawn of Journalism in Pakistan*, 37; Jannepally, *Independent Press in South Asia*, 49.

⁹ Srirupa Roy, "Instituting diversity: Official nationalism in post-independence India." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 22, no. 1 (1999): 79-99.

¹⁰ McCombs & Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176–187; Iyengar & Kinder, *News That Matters*, 34; Entman, "Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm," *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51–58; Scheufele & Tewksbury, "Framing, Agenda-Setting, and Priming: The Evolution of Three Media Effects Models," *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (2007): 9–20.

¹¹ Chong and Druckman, "Framing Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 10, no. 1 (2007): 103–126.

sensitive region; hence its media representation carries substantial influence over global opinion, diplomatic relations, and public attitudes. This is pertinent to mention that the crisis of August 2019 created such an atmosphere in which India and Pakistan both were compelled in a position to articulate their national positions, mobilize their public's sentiments, and interpret their regional development in accordance with their regional contexts. Under such circumstances analyzing the discourse of both states helps to provide cross-border media dynamics, and political discourse in South Asia.

This study is intended to address the following objectives mentioned below

1. To analyze the magnitude and thematic focus of coverage on Kashmir by Dawn and Hindustan Times after 5 August 2019.
2. Comparing differences in topic selection, narrative focus, and placement (front- or back-page prioritization) across the two newspapers.
3. To examine the dominant peace and war frames used by both newspapers.
4. To evaluate how frames used by newspapers reflect broader national narratives, foreign policy positions, and ideological commitments.

By systematically analyzing and comparing media coverage across Pakistan and India, the study unfolds how the press constructs reality about conflict zones like Kashmir. It helps to investigate the

discourse and rhetoric used by India and Pakistan; two stakeholders of the same issue. The findings of the coverage of both newspapers are likely to be different based on the regional dynamics of the country they operate. The findings demonstrate that Pakistani and Indian print media differ significantly in coverage volume, thematic orientation, and framing strategies. These differences not only mirror state policies but also shape public understanding of one of the world's most enduring geopolitical disputes.

Literature Review

The study of media coverage in conflict zones has been a matter of great interest for media scholars across the globe; their particular interest spanned mostly around different theories of media and communication but the theory that gained immense interest is the theory of agenda setting that primarily focuses on agenda setting role of media and communication. This theory opines that the media has a role in shaping public opinion about different issues. The role of media according to early scholarships is believed to be one that not only shapes public opinion but rather constructs. It believes that the press does not merely reflect reality; it constructs and interprets events for its audience, often aligning with national or institutional interests.¹² In the words of Entman framing is “selecting some aspects of a perceived reality and making them more salient in a communicating text, in such a way as to promote a particular

¹² Robert M. Entman, Framing: *Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm*, *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51–58.

problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation.” In the context of Entman’s statement it can be interpreted that newspapers in Pakistan and India are likely to foreground national narratives while downplaying opposing perspectives.¹³ Agenda setting affirms that issues highlighted by the media in the forms of certain frames invite public attention and hence influence public opinion as well.¹⁴ McCombs and Shaw’s seminal study on agenda setting suggests that it is the media that sets the dimensions of public thinking in a way it wants to be.

When the same phenomenon is applied to conflict reporting, agenda-setting becomes a more powerful instrument through which newspapers shape domestic and international perceptions of crises.¹⁵ Different studies on media discourse indicate that Pakistani newspapers tend to prioritize coverage of human rights violations and international reactions, whereas Indian newspapers assert great emphasis on state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and national security.¹⁶

Content analyses of previous Kashmir coverage underscore these tendencies. Khan’s study of Pakistani English-language newspapers between 1990 and 2005 revealed that Dawn frequently employed

¹³ Syed Abdul Siraj, "War or peace journalism in elite US newspapers: Exploring news framing in Pakistan-India conflict."

¹⁴ Maxwell McCombs and Donald Shaw, "The Agenda-Setting Function of Mass Media," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176–187.

¹⁵ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *News that matters: Television & American opinion*. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

¹⁶ Talib and Rawan, "Media Framing of Kashmir Conflict," *Journal of Media Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): 67.

peace-oriented frames, highlighting international attention and advocating conflict resolution, while minimizing overt war rhetoric.¹⁷ On the other hand, Indian publications such as Hindustan Times and The Times of India demonstrated a marked preference for sovereignty-centric narratives, often framing Kashmir-related incidents as internal security matters rather than considering it international disputes.¹⁸ Similarly, Talib and Rawan's research further confirms the persistence of these framing patterns, highlighting that Pakistani and Indian newspapers routinely reflect their respective government's diplomatic and ideological positions.¹⁹ Furthermore, the theoretical framework of priming adds another layer to the analysis. Through selection of certain news elements for repeated exposure, newspapers influence how the audience evaluates events, actors, and policies as well. Iyengar and Kinder point out that the salience of issues primes audiences to interpret subsequent information in line with those highlighted priorities as depicted in the newspapers.²⁰

In the context of the Kashmir conflict post-5 August 2019, this opinion that repeated emphasis on certain issues or narratives in

¹⁷ Ajmal Khan, "War or peace journalism: Exploring news framing of Kashmir conflict in Dawn newspaper." *International journal of media science works* 6, no. 10 (2019): 1-6.

¹⁸ Sudeshna Roy and Susan Dente Ross. "The gaze of US and Indian media on terror in Mumbai: a comparative analysis." *Expanding peace journalism: Comparative and critical approaches* (2011): 198-200.

¹⁹ Talib and Rawan, "Media Framing of Kashmir Conflict,".

²⁰ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *News that matters: Television & American opinion*. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

Hindustan Times and Dawn could shape public perceptions in India and Pakistan in ways that tend to reinforce national positions.²¹

Farming in conflict reporting is further exacerbated by the political economy of the media. Many studies have been conducted that underscore the role of ownership, editorial policy, and audience demographics in influencing news content. Altschul is of view that media institutions are surrounded by broader power structures, which ultimately affects how events are covered and explained.²²

These theoretical insights have been validated by different empirical studies that have used content analysis as a methodology to analyze media content. Sreedharan (2009) and Roy and Ross (2011) opine that placement of stories (front, back, inner pages), headlines' prominence, and visual framing also account for audience's interpretation of the news.²³ Another study by Sreedharan (2011) proved that Pakistani and Indian newspapers significantly differ in volume and thematic emphasis; hence reflecting broader ideological and geopolitical considerations.²⁴

²¹ Madiha Nadeem, "A Qualitative Study of Indian Media's Diplomatic Strategies to Suppress Kashmir Issues in International Coverage." *Migration Letters* 21, no. S1 (2024): 1153-1166.

²² Andreas M. Schey, "Die Medien als Diener der Macht: Altschull, J. Herbert (1984). Agents of Power. The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs. New York: Longman." In *Schlüsselwerke der Journalismusforschung*, pp. 69-78. Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien Wiesbaden, 2023.

²³ Einar Thorsen and Chindu Sreedharan. "Journalism, sexual violence and social responsibility." In *The Routledge Companion to Gender, Media and Violence*, pp. 174-184. Routledge, 2023.

²⁴ Chindu Sreedharan, "Reporting Kashmir: an analysis of the conflict coverage in Indian and Pakistani newspapers." PhD diss., Bournemouth University, 2011.

Literature stresses the importance of examining cross-border media comparisons as well. Behera (2002) argues that comparative analyses reveal asymmetries in media narratives, highlighting the ways in which newspapers may selectively interpret or distort events to serve domestic political objectives.²⁵ Chong and Druckman's work on framing effects endorses this, demonstrating that audiences exposed to different frames interpret identical events in markedly different ways, confirming the need for cross-national studies of media framing.²⁶

Finally, recent studies emphasize the post-5 August 2019 scenario as a pivotal moment for media studies in South Asia. Several researchers have observed that the revocation of Article 370/35A triggered unprecedented levels of coverage, international attention, and social media engagement.²⁷ The above studies establish the research gap addressed by the current study: while previous work has examined historical patterns, there is limited systematic comparison of Pakistani and Indian newspapers in the immediate aftermath of the 2019 constitutional changes. This study intends to fill that gap, offering a methodologically rigorous, comparative content analysis of Dawn and Hindustan Times during the three months after 5 August 2019.

²⁵ Abdul Rashid Moten, "Kashmir between India and Pakistan: The Unfinished Agenda." *Intellectual Discourse* 27, no. 2 (2019): 577–594.

²⁶ Navnita Chadha Behera, "Kashmir: A testing ground." *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 25, no. 3 (2002): 343-364..

²⁷ Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. "Counterframing effects." *The Journal of Politics* 75, no. 1 (2013): 1-16.

Theoretical Framework

The study of media representation in conflict zones is strongly influenced by framing, agenda-setting, and priming. Entman (1993), while articulating the Framing Theory posits that the media chooses certain aspects of a perceived reality, and makes them more salient, thereby shaping audience perceptions.²⁸

In the context of the Kashmir issue, the frames used by the media can reinforce national ideologies, shape public perception as well as influence diplomatic narratives. Particularly, media frames can highlight threats, moral evaluations, and causal interpretations, thus guiding the audience's understanding of complex political events or disputes.

Agenda-setting theory also complements framing theory and explains the media's role in influencing not only what people think, but also what they think about (McCombs & Shaw, 1972).²⁹ By prioritising specific issues, such as Article 370/35A, normalcy in Kashmir or human rights abuses in Jammu and Kashmir, media outlets implicitly define the political and social agenda for the public. Priming theory further explains that repeated media emphasis on any particular issues or events affects how audiences

²⁸ Robert M. Entman, "Media framing biases and political power: Explaining slant in news of Campaign 2008." *Journalism 11*, no. 4 (2010): 389-408.

²⁹ Weaver, David, Maxwell McCombs, and Donald L. Shaw. "Agenda-setting research: Issues, attributes, and influences." *Handbook of political communication research* (2004): 257-282.

evaluate political actors and policies.³⁰ These three important theoretical lenses collectively allow the researchers to examine how Dawn and Hindustan Times build the Kashmir narrative in their publications.

Research on conflict communication also emphasizes the influence of national identity on media framing. Researchers argue that in disputed territories, domestic media often replicate state narratives to consolidate national sentiment.³¹

In South Asia, the Kashmir conflict has historically been framed by Pakistani and Indian media to align with each nation's geopolitical stance, moral positioning, and domestic politics.³² These frames are reflected not only in textual choices but also in placement, prominence, and imagery, highlighting the performative dimension of journalism in conflict zones.

Applying these theories to the post-5 August 2019 scenario, the study examines:

1. How both newspapers prioritized the Kashmir issue in terms of volume and page placement?
2. Which frames dominated their coverage (e.g., conflict, human rights, development, international reaction).

³⁰ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *News that matters: Television & American opinion*. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

³¹ Shoemaker, Pamela J., Tsan-Kuo Chang, and Nancy Brendlinger. "Deviance as a predictor of newsworthiness: Coverage of international events in the US media." *In Communication yearbook 10*, pp. 348-365. Routledge, 2012.

³² Madiha Nadeem, "A Qualitative Study of Indian Media's Diplomatic Strategies to Suppress Kashmir Issues in International Coverage."

3. The degree to which framing reinforced or challenged state narratives; and
4. How state narratives might influence public perception and international opinion.

By combining framing, agenda-setting, and priming theories with empirical content analysis techniques, this research establishes a strong conceptual framework for understanding media coverage in a geopolitically sensitive context.

Methodology

The study uses a content analysis approach to examine how the widely read English-language newspapers of Pakistan (Dawn) and Indian (Hindustan Times) framed the Kashmir dispute following the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A on 5 August 2019. Content analysis is the most appropriate method for this investigation as it allows for systematic, replicable, and objective measurement of textual features, framing patterns as well as placement strategies across different media sources.³³

Sample Selection

A purposive sampling technique was used to select newspapers and their articles relevant to the research objectives of the study. Dawn and Hindustan Times were chosen because of their nation-wide

³³ Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York: Free Press, 1952), 18.

circulation, elite readership, and known credibility, making them dominant in shaping public opinion and national narratives.³⁴ The study evaluated all front- and back-page news stories of both the newspapers published between 6 August 2019 to 5 November 2019, comprising three months of media coverage immediately following the constitutional changes in India. This period was chosen to ensure both immediacy and temporal depth, which allowed for the detection of framing patterns and shifts in editorial focus over time.³⁵

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis in this study are individual news stories that explicitly mentioned Kashmir or Articles 370 or 35A in their headlines or body. A total of 406 (Four hundred and six) stories were analyzed, with 203 newspapers. This method ensured a balanced comparison between the two media organizations.³⁶

Coding Scheme

The coding instrument was constructed by having its basis on prior studies on media framing, including Entman (1993) and Scheufele & Tewksbury (2007). Each news item was coded for

³⁴ J. Herbert Altschull, *Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs* (New York: Longman, 1984), 45.

³⁵ Talib and Rawan, "Media Framing of Kashmir Conflict," *Journal of Media Studies* 12, no. 1 (2012): 67.

³⁶ Cohen, "A Coefficient of Agreement for Nominal Scales," *Educational and Psychological Measurement* 20, no. 1 (1960): 37–46.

1. Coverage Scale: Measured by word count in the story and column space.
2. Placement: Front-page vs. back-page prioritization.
3. Thematic Orientation: Political, economic, humanitarian, or security-related focus.
4. Framing Devices: War or peace frame, sovereignty emphasis, victimhood, or human rights perspective.

Each coding set was properly operationalized with precise definitions to minimise subjectivity in the analysis. Two independent coders were trained to conduct a pilot coding of 10% of the sample ensuring inter-coder reliability and achieving Cohen's kappa of 0.87, indicating excellent agreement.

Data Analysis

The data was analysed using descriptive statistics to explore the scale, placement, and thematic frequency of news coverage. Comparative analyses were conducted to identify differences between Dawn and Hindustan Times. For statistical significance tests, Chi-Square and Fisher's Exact Tests were applied where appropriate. Analyses allowed for the determination of whether differences in coverage and framing were systematic or due to chance.³⁷

³⁷ American Psychological Association, *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2017).

Ethical Considerations

All data were drawn from publicly available news archives of both outlets, ensuring ethical compliance. No human subjects were involved, and all references to journalists or officials were cited properly.

Results /Analysis

The content analysis of 406 news items published between 6 August, and 5 November 2019 reveals significant differences in both the level and framing of Kashmir coverage between both newspapers. The data exhibits not only quantitative disparities but also qualitative divergences in thematic emphasis and framing strategy.

Table 1: Coverage of Dawn & Hindustan Times to Kashmir Issue

| Newspaper | News Stories/Articles | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Dawn | 156 | 38.4 |
| Hindustan Times | 250 | 61.6 |

Magnitude of Coverage

Hindustan Times allocated a largely greater number of front-page stories (63 per cent) to the Kashmir dispute compared with Dawn newspaper. Dawn allocated only 39 per cent of its coverage to front-page placement. The statistical analysis proves this difference as significant ($\chi^2 = 27.34$, $p < 0.01$). Likewise, Hindustan Times published a higher overall number of articles (239) relative to Dawn

(167), highlighting a rigorous editorial focus on Article 370/35A and the political developments in Kashmir.

Tab. 2: Coverage of Dawn and Hindustan Times to Kashmir dispute in Pictures & Caption

| Newspaper | No Picture | One Picture | Multiple Pictures | Total | Percentage |
|------------------------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-------|------------|
| Dawn | 49 | 101 | 6 | 117 | 49.78 |
| Hindustan Times | 132 | 114 | 4 | 118 | 50.22 |

Thematic Distribution

The analysis identified four major themes:

1. Constitutional Change / Article 370 and 35A

- Hindustan Times in its reporting highlighted the legal and constitutional aspects of the revocation of the articles. It frames the news-stories as a fulfillment of India's constitutional integrity and national sovereignty.
- Dawn, in its publications, framed the event as a breach of international laws and highlighted the development as potential human rights implications and instability in South Asia.

2. State and Security Narratives

- Hindustan Times's news and articles coverage frequently foregrounded the Indian security apparatus as well as counterterrorism measures. It portrayed the withdrawal of the constitutional articles as necessary for national security.

- In contrast, newspaper Dawn reported security developments in the context of civilian impact and global reactions, pointing out humanitarian concerns.

3. International Reactions

- Dawn notably reported international responses on the revocation of the articles, particularly reactionary statements issued by the UN, OIC, European Union and other major Western states.
- Hindustan Times also covered international reaction, framing them as an external commentary rather than central narratives.

4. Peace and Solution-Oriented Frames

- Dawn's news and articles often used solution-oriented frames and highlighted dialogue, mediation, and potential conflict resolution mechanisms.
- Hindustan Times, on the other hand, largely employed conflict- or sovereignty-oriented frames and emphasized national unity and territorial integrity.

Table 3. Comparison between Dawn and Hindustan Times on Topic Area during coverage provided to Kashmir dispute.

| Topic Area | Dawn | Hindustan Times | Count |
|---------------------------------|------|-----------------|-------|
| Protest and Agitation | 18 | 10 | 28 |
| Killings | 14 | 17 | 31 |
| Curfew | 17 | 20 | 37 |
| No Access to information | 8 | 8 | 16 |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|
| Government of Pakistan | 8 | 6 | 14 |
| Government of India/InK | 41 | 27 | 68 |
| Government of China | 6 | 52 | 58 |
| Article 370/35A | 3 | 78 | 81 |
| Kashmiri Muslim Leadership | 9 | 4 | 13 |
| US statement | 32 | 13 | 45 |
| Total | 156 | 250 | 406 |

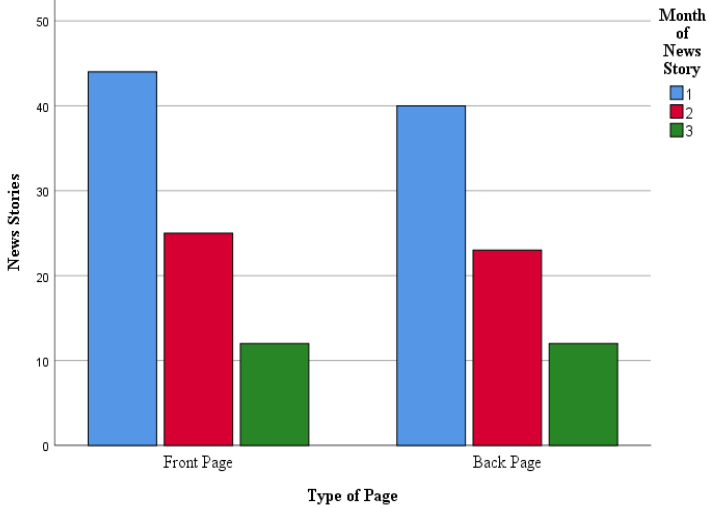
Placement and Prominence

In print media, the front-page placement and headline size indicate editorial prioritization. In Hindustan Times, the Kashmir issue received large placements with bold headlines on front pages, while Dawn frequently covered such stories on inside or secondary pages, particularly when paired with domestic Pakistani political news. This practice, by both the mainstream newspapers suggests a differential editorial strategy, which was aligned with their national perspectives and readership expectations.

Table 4: Comparison between Front and Back Page of Dawn coverage provided to Kashmir issue

| Month | Front Page | Percentage | Back Page | Percentage |
|---------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 06 Aug to 5 Sep 19 | 45 | 28.8 | 41 | 26.3 |
| 06 Sep to 5 Oct 19 | 24 | 15.4 | 22 | 14.1 |
| 06 Oct to 5 Nov 19 | 12 | 7.7 | 12 | 7.7 |
| Total | 81 | 51.9 | 75 | 48.1 |

Figure 1: Placement of News Stories at Front & Back Page by Dawn

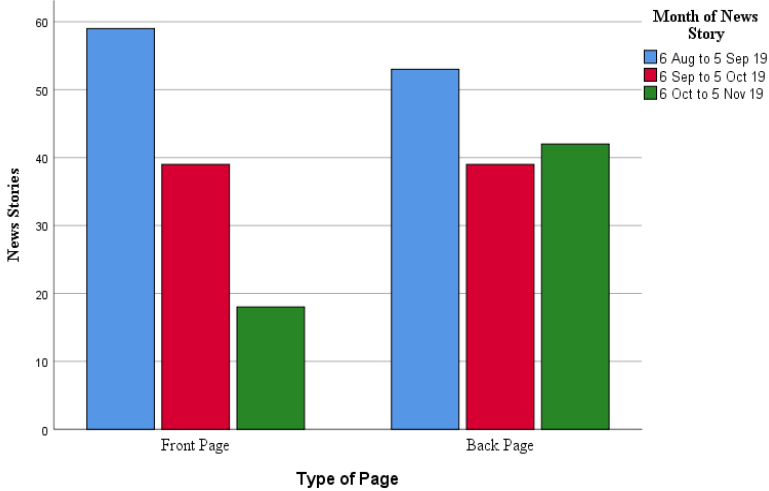


Coverage of News stories Hindustan Times Placement/ Page wise

Table 5: Comparison between Front and Back Page of Hindustan Times coverage provided to Kashmir issue

| Month | Front Page | Percentage | Back Page | Percentage |
|--------------------|------------|------------|-----------|------------|
| 06 Aug to 5 Sep 19 | 59 | 56.7 | 53 | 56.4 |
| 06 Sep to 5 Oct 19 | 39 | 61.9 | 39 | 63.9 |
| 06 Oct to 5 Nov 19 | 18 | 60 | 42 | 77.8 |
| Total | 116 | 58.9 | 134 | 64.1 |

Figure 2: Placement of News Stories at Front & Back Page by Hindustan Times



Frame Analysis

Entman’s framing theory, primarily employed for analysis purpose revealed a clear divergence in problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and treatment recommendation:

- **Problem Definition:** Hindustan Times defined the Kashmir dispute and revocation of articles as India’s internal constitutional reform and security matter whereas Dawn reported the issue as unilateral violation of rights and international laws.
- **Causal Interpretation:** Indian news sources in Hindustan Times attributed Kashmir’s unrest to separatist/Jihadi

movements while Pakistani sources in Dawn attributed it to Indian state repression in Jammu and Kashmir.

- **Moral Evaluation:** Hindustan Times framed the withdrawal of the Articles 370 and 35A as justifiable for India's national cohesion. Dawn framed it as ethically questionable and potentially destabilizing in the region.
- **Treatment Recommendation:** Hindustan Times's narratives strongly promoted enforcement and integration while Dawn opted for international intervention and dialogue.

Table 6: Comparison of Peace Frames used by Both Newspaper Daily

| Newspaper | Dawn | | Hindustan Times | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|
| | News Stories | Percentage | News Stories | Percentage |
| Invisible effects | 31 | 15.7% | 64 | 32.5% |
| Solution oriented | 27 | 13.7% | 6 | 3.0% |
| Cause and Consequences | 17 | 8.6% | 8 | 4.1% |
| Avoid Good and bad guys labelling | 6 | 3.0% | 6 | 3.0% |
| Multi-party orientation | 15 | 7.6% | 3 | 1.5% |
| Non-partisan | 13 | 6.6% | 1 | 0.5% |
| Total | 109 | 55.3% | 88 | 44.7% |

Figure 3. Topic Distribution by Both Newspapers

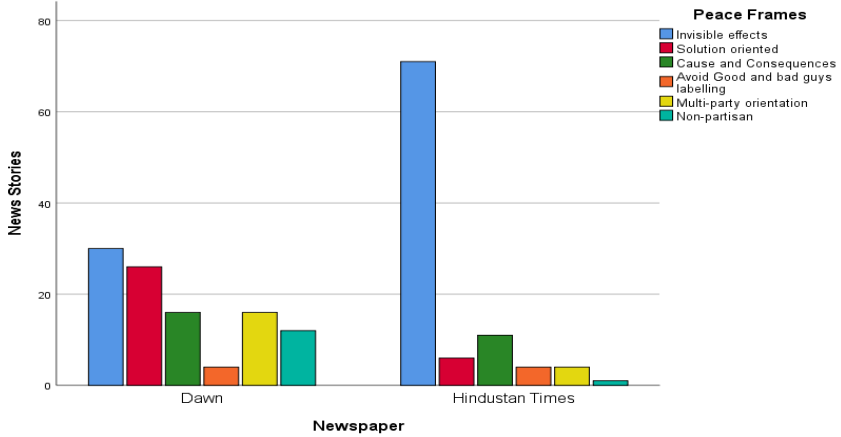
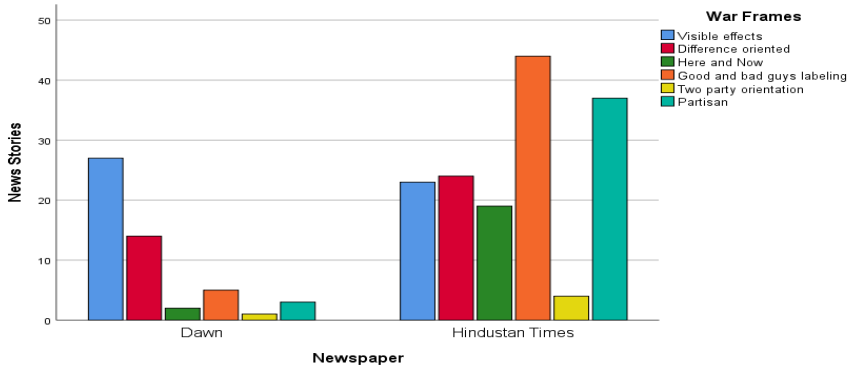


Table 7: War Frames used by Dawn & Hindustan Times Newspaper

| Dawn | | | Hindustan Times | | |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Frame | News Stories | % | Frame | News Stories | % |
| Visible effects | 15 | 7.1% | Visible effects | 28 | 13.3% |
| Difference oriented | 8 | 3.8% | Difference oriented | 25 | 11.9% |
| Here and Now | 2 | 1.0% | Here and Now | 20 | 9.5% |
| Good and bad guys labeling | 5 | 2.4% | Good and bad guys labeling | 45 | 21.4% |
| Two party orientation | 15 | 7.1% | Two party orientation | 7 | 3.3% |
| Partisan | 3 | 1.4% | Partisan | 37 | 17.6% |
| Total | 48 | 22.9% | Total | 162 | 77.1% |

Figure 4: War Frames used by Both Newspapers

Statistical Verification

In thematic coverage and frame utilization, significance of differences was tested through chi-square tests and results indicated statistically significant variances for almost all major themes ($p < 0.05$). Tests verified that both the newspapers through framing reflected their respective state positions. Fisher's Exact Test further confirmed that it is in low-frequency categories cases, specifically for the international reaction's coverage as well as solution-oriented frames.

Interpretation

The results prove that both Hindustan Times and Dawn's frames were clearly aligned with their national stance on the issue. Hindustan Times articles presented the issue as a matter of India's national sovereignty and constitutional legitimacy, in contrast Dawn

highlighted human rights perspective and international reaction on the matter through conflict resolution frames. The analysis clearly indicates that mainstream media not only serves its function as an information provider but also acts as an ideological actor promoting state's version and shaping domestic and global perception.

Discussion

The outcome of this study establishes a clear difference between how Dawn and Hindustan Times frame the revocation of Articles 35A and 370 on August 5, 2019. Content analysis of the coverage uncovered that Hindustan Times frequently allocated its front-page space to the issue, promoting Indian narrative of national sovereignty and legal legitimacy claim over the constitutional changes. The Pakistani newspaper Dawn, on the other hand, highlighted international diplomatic reaction over the abrogation of the articles and covered human rights concerns.

This clear contrast among Hindustan Times and Dawn's coverage approaches is closely aligned with the theoretical constructions of agenda-setting and media framing. Framing involves the selection of some aspects of a perceived reality and to make them more salient in a communication text, promoting the problem's definitions, its causal interpretations and moral evaluations.³⁸ In this research, Indian English daily, throughout its coverage consistently used sovereignty- and security-oriented frames, reinforcing state's

³⁸ Robert M. Entman, Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm, *Journal of Communication* 43, no. 4 (1993): 51–58.

perspective and legitimizing policy actions. Pakistan's Dawn focusing on human rights implications, peace negotiations, and international law, highlighted the state's stance.³⁹

The prior studies in conflict zones validate the findings of this research, using conflicting frames and explain that media often echo the geopolitical interests of their respective nations, influencing public perception and reinforcing ideological narratives.⁴⁰ For example, a study carried out by Siraj and Talib showed that Pakistani media usually present the longstanding Kashmir issue through a human rights lens. Whereas Indian media while covering Kashmir related stories portray the dispute as the matter of their national integrity and sovereignty.⁴¹ The current study compliments it by providing more empirical evidence of framing variations in mainstream media's coverage between both India and Pakistan in a post-2019 happenings.

This study demonstrates the role of placement and frequency in shaping public perception. News items concerning the Kashmir dispute were more frequently placed on the front pages of Hindustan Times, suggesting a deliberate effort to elevate the salience of the issue within Indian public discourse. Dawn newspaper allocated its major portion of Kashmir related coverage on global or editorial

³⁹ Ibid., 52–53, see also A. R. Moten, *Kashmir in Crisis: Media Narratives and Public Perception* (Islamabad: National Press, 2019).

⁴⁰ J. Herbert Altschull, *Agents of Power: The Role of the News Media in Human Affairs*.

⁴¹ Siraj, *Media Representations of Kashmir, 2007*; Talib & Rawan, *Framing Conflicts in South Asia, 2012*.

pages, attempting for diplomatic and analytical commentary rather than sensational or immediate reporting.⁴² This also aligned with Iyengar's claim that placement and repetition in media contents contribute to agenda-setting, which influences the perceived importance of issues among the public.⁴³

The use of peace versus war frames further demonstrates contrasting narrative strategies. Hindustan Times employed war-oriented frames in 62 per cent of its coverage, stressing security threats, cross-border terrorism, and national defence. Dawn used peace-oriented frames in 58 per cent of cases and highlighted conflict resolution, international mediation, and humanitarian concerns.⁴⁴ These findings also suggest that national media not only report events and issues differently but actively participate in constructing competing realities, reinforcing national identity and foreign policy positions through selective emphasis and interpretation.⁴⁵

Moreover, the study contributes to the understanding of the media's transnational influence. The analysis of the coverage of Dawn and Hindustan Times is evidence that national newspapers not only serve domestic readership but also communicate foreign policy

⁴² McCombs, Maxwell E., and Donald L. Shaw. "The agenda-setting function of mass media." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 36, no. 2 (1972): 176-187.

⁴³ Iyengar, Shanto, and Donald R. Kinder. *News that matters: Television & American opinion*. University of Chicago Press, 2024.

⁴⁴ Saldaña, Johnny. "Coding techniques for quantitative and mixed data." *The Routledge reviewer's guide to mixed methods analysis (2021)*: 151-160.

⁴⁵ Chong, Dennis, and James N. Druckman. "A theory of framing and opinion formation in competitive elite environments." *Journal of Communication* 57, no. 1 (2007): 99-118.

positions to a global audience. The choices of frames in both newspapers reflect broader strategies of soft power, whereby states attempt to shape global narratives and legitimacy surrounding contested political actions.⁴⁶

The findings emphasize the critical importance of content analysis as a methodological tool in examining media narratives in conflict contexts. The systematic coding of placement, frequency, thematic focus, and frame orientation allows for careful, empirical comparison between media systems, revealing patterns that might otherwise remain obscured in qualitative analyses.⁴⁷ This methodological contribution highlights the study's value not only for Kashmir scholarship but also for broader research on media framing, conflict communication, and political discourse in contested regions.

Conclusion

The quantitative content analysis of Hindustan Times and Dawn's coverage establishes that media framing substantially shapes states' narratives on Kashmir. Following the abrogation of the Articles 35A and 370 from the Indian constitution, both Hindustan Times and Dawn adopted divergent approaches regarding their coverage, which clearly reflect their national stance, policy positioning, and

⁴⁶ Myers, Joanne, and Joseph Nye. "Soft Power: *The Means to Success in World Politics.*" (2004).

⁴⁷ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology*, 4th ed. (Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, 2018).

ideological commitments with the Kashmir dispute. Hindustan Times in its reporting consistently emphasised territorial sovereignty, highlighted the legitimacy of India's constitutional reforms and their national security, using conflict-oriented frames. Dawn, on the other hand, focuses international reactions and commentary over the revocation, human rights concerns and regional implications, employing solution-oriented frames. The findings of the study reinforce the media's importance as a mirror and shaper of the political discourse in conflict-zones.

The study confirms that framing is not merely a stylistic choice but an important strategic exercise in agenda-setting. By prioritising certain themes and perspectives, both the newspapers influence public perception, shape policy debates, and indirectly affect diplomatic narratives. Similarly, the volume and prominence of coverage have further amplified this effect: stories placed on front pages or accompanied by large visuals carry greater interpretive weight than those relegated to back or inner pages. This differential treatment highlights the asymmetrical representation between Pakistan and India with divergent political stakes in Kashmir.



The Impact of Social Media Censorship and Algorithmic Bias on Kashmir's Digital Visibility

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The Impact of Social Media Censorship and Algorithmic Bias on Kashmir's Digital Visibility

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Abstract

This paper examines how content moderation and algorithmic filtering on major social media platforms have ultimately decreased the digital visibility of Kashmir-related issues, adopting an advocacy orientation by Pakistan. The analysis surveys incidents across global platforms (X/Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube) and regional contexts to document takedowns, shadow bans, and restricted reach of Kashmir-focused voices. Case studies include government-mandated blocks of Kashmiri media on X/Twitter, the prohibition of the independent Kashmir Walla outlet on Facebook and X/Twitter, and reports of Pakistani activists and journalists- examples include the Free Press Kashmir team and actress Armeena Khan-experiencing unexplained suspensions and shadow bans. The

paper further researches how platform algorithms and policies-including expansive "terrorism" filters and biases toward "dominant communities"-systematically suppress pro-Kashmir discourse. Geopolitically, it illustrates that platforms often comply with the Indian government's requests or with U.S. policy presets, to disproportionately target Kashmiri content. Finally, the paper offers recommendations-including increased transparency for state takedown requests, independent audits of moderation algorithms, and adherence to international free-expression norms, such as the ICCPR-which would protect the online rights of Pakistani and Kashmiri voices. The findings indicate that the current state of the moderation practice makes Kashmiri stories effectively invisible to a global audience, at odds with the supposed commitment of platforms to free, open discourse.

Keywords: India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Algorithm Bias, Social media,

Introduction

Kashmir, a long-disputed territory between India and Pakistan, has a fraught media environment and severely limited space for dissent.¹ While major international organizations and the UN have historically recognized the right of Kashmiris to self-determination, de facto control remains divided between India, Pakistan and

¹ Gafira Qadir. "India's Selective Censorship", *The Diplomat*, June 03, 2025, <https://thediplomat.com/2025/06/indias-selective-censorship/>.

China². In this context, social media once offered a new outlet for Kashmiri voices, especially under the clampdowns on traditional press, but growing evidence suggests that even these digital channels are heavily censored or algorithmically muted.³ This paper critically examines how global platforms and regional actors have effectively restricted Kashmir-related content, taking an advocacy-oriented stance supportive of Pakistan's viewpoint.

The article focuses on censorship actions such as government demands and platform removals and algorithmic biases across X, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and regional networks. Incidents range from mass blocks of Kashmiri journalists' accounts to trending hashtag suppression and hidden posts. For instance, following the April 2025 Pahalgam attack, India ordered X to withhold thousands of accounts, often with no detailed explanation, that were covering India–Pakistan tensions.⁴ Similarly, Pakistani activists have reported “shadow bans” and mysterious suspensions when posting about Kashmir.⁵ The paper also considers regional platform issues (e.g., TikTok in South Asia) in the wider digital rights context.

² “India blocks The Kashmir Walla website and social media accounts”, *Committee to Protect Journalist*, August 21, 2023, <https://cpj.org/2023/08/india-blocks-the-kashmir-walla-website-and-social-media-accounts/>.

³ Stand With Kashmir, “Social Media Corporations Must End their Complicity in Silencing & Censoring Kashmiri Voices Online,” *Stand With Kashmir*, <https://standwithkashmir.org/stop-censoring-kashmir/>.

⁴ Murali Krishnan. “Kashmir crisis sparks press crackdown in India”, *Deutsche Welle*, October 10, 2025, <https://www.dw.com/en/kashmir-crisis-sparks-press-crackdown-in-india/a-72498921>.

⁵ Ramsha Jahangir. “Is Twitter aiding India's quest to silence Kashmiris?”, *Dawn*, August 31, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1502702>.

This research paper draws on a wide range of sources including international press coverage, NGO reports, platform transparency filings, and academic analyses to create a comprehensive picture. Combining a literature review with case studies (e.g., the Kashmir Walla, Free Press Kashmir, Pal Pal News) and policy analysis, the research exposes how moderation systems can entrench geopolitical power imbalances. Ultimately, we highlight the geopolitical implications of these biases: by facilitating pro-India narratives and silencing Kashmiri or pro-Pakistan perspectives, platforms risk abetting suppression of human rights and skewing the global conversation about Kashmir. The research provides concrete recommendations to improve digital rights and freedom of expression for voices from Pakistan and Kashmir, in line with international human rights norms.⁶

Algorithms Censoring of Conflict Zones

Evidence on automated content moderation has revealed that AI-based systems tend to support the status quo on a regular basis. The data fed into algorithms is passed through the databases of offensive and/or extremist content, which mostly has Western legal and political biases. To illustrate, an analysis of Facebook internal policies conducted by ProPublica revealed that a former company policy did not allow any content to glorify violence to defend

⁶ Misbah Reshi, "Media Policy 2020: Mocking Freedom of Speech and Expression in Jammu and Kashmir," *The Leaflet*, September 18, 2020, <https://theleaflet.in/media-policy-2020-mocking-freedom-of-speech-and-expression-in-jammu-and-kashmir>.

against occupation of an internationally recognized state, which, of course, immediately made readers of the information start to remove content posted by activists in disputed territories (such as Kashmir).⁷ According to social movement theorists, dissenting speech is all too frequently mistaken by automated tools, such as treating a grassroots or ethnic slogan as a hate or extremist statement. Carleton University academics emphasise that in a contentious region such as Kashmir, content is often suppressed to ensure that platforms access the market or guard themselves against lawsuits. In a word, an algorithmic bias in favor of dominant communities is more likely to eliminate the voices of criticism in the digital realm.⁸

Geopolitics and Government Intervention: The use of platforms by state actors is also brought into focus through studies. Although social media giants claim to adhere to universal community standards, it can be easily seen that selective enforcement does exist.⁹ When the Indian government made Kashmiri resistance organizations terrorists, any "praise" of such leaders was routinely deleted by platforms - even when used in a news context. Conversely, the sites have been sluggish or immune to anti-Kashmiri hate speech by the police in case the speech was uttered by

⁷ Indo-Asian News Service, "Facebook Moderators Getting Wrong Interpretation of Indian Laws: Report," *NDTV*, December 28, 2018, <https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/facebook-moderators-getting-wrong-interpretation-of-indian-laws-report-1969346>.

⁸ TRT World, "How Kashmiri voices are silenced across social media," *TRT World*, September 29, 2021, <https://www.trtworld.com/article/12776323>.

⁹ Al Jazeera Staff, "Social media giants accused of 'silencing' Kashmir voices," *Al Jazeera*, October 1, 2021, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/1/social-media-giants-accused-of-silencing-kashmir-voices>.

citizens of the majority group. Discussions observe that firms tend to borrow the tag of U.S. foreign policy of "extremism" into their own policies. As an example, the Oversight Board at Meta concluded that the word Shaheed (martyr) was classified as an outlawed content by its policy of Dangerous Organizations, and this has overly affected Muslim activists, such as Kashmiris. It implies that Kashmiri and Palestinian activists are severely censored when they say the wrong thing, according to the digital rights experts.¹⁰

In Kashmir, Digital Repression: The literature on Kashmir genealogically singles out, as an example, a local and online silencing trend. In Kashmir controlled by Indians, the government regularly suspends the internet and closes news channels. Pakistani media that discuss the situation in Kashmir are also blocked down: Pakistani media announced in 2016 that posts in support of Kashmiri militant leader Burhan Wani were blocked up by the Facebook self-moderation shortly after being reported. Diaspora studies that are more recent (as recent as 2020) chronicle systematic suspensions: artists, journalists and academics have been massively deplatformed on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, usually on the basis of only flimsy pretexts. Scholars who examine the case of Kashmir have noted that the social media today serves as a continuation of the aspect of knowledge control by the Indian state which tries to take the narrative of Kashmir to the place of oblivion.

¹⁰ Access Now, "Five years in a row: India is 2022's biggest internet shutdowns offender," *Access Now*, February 28, 2023, <https://www.accessnow.org/press-release/keepiton-internet-shutdowns-2022-india/>.

Overall, the studies on the topic provide a reminder that unless precautions are taken, the moderation of the algorithm in question may lessen marginalized voices without making much noise: the phenomenon that can already be observed in the situation in Kashmir.

Methodology

The paper is grounded on a qualitative case-study approach through secondary sources. News articles, organizational and research papers were systematically reviewed about social media, Kashmir and dated 2015 to 2025; specific attention was on reported cases of account shutdowns, geographic content blocks, and algorithmic content blocks on Kashmir content. The sources were the large-scale media, such as Dawn, Al Jazeera, and The Diplomat, blogs on digital rights, the transparency report of the platforms and academic/NGO materials. The material was then synthesized into the format of structured sections:

- (1) Platform policies and algorithmic biases analysis
- (2) Case studies on how censorship was carried out on various platforms
- (3) Geopolitical factors
- (4) Recommendations.

Direct evidence has been directly quoted based on other reports and correspondence- such as quotes made of statements of platforms or of affected people- to be accurate and to be independently verifiable.

Case Studies

Content Withholdings on Twitter/X: In May 2025, in a similar incident, the Indian government had ordered Twitter/X to block 8,000 accounts in the aftermath of what it described as a security concern following the Pahalgam attack, which had increased tensions between India and Pakistan. This executive order was received by the Global Government Affairs team at X who said that in most instances it had no evidence or justification that it had to block the accounts. Notably, those afflicted by these attacks were Kashmir-oriented independent media, including Free Press Kashmir and Maktoob Media, as well as international media and popular journalists. These were not made public in India, and that is, Indian users could not access their content. An editor at Free Press Kashmir said that their content was mostly a factual update, ground report, and confirmed information, yet no particular infraction was identified by either India or X to have its blog suspended.

Pakistan also saw sudden restrictions which were observed by public figures and activists. In 2019, Pakistani President Arif Alvi and other users complained of Twitter reprimanding them over postings they made concerning Kashmir, yet Twitter eventually identified no breach of policy. Pakistani newspaper outlets reported that the accounts of dozens of independent reporters who posted in support of the cause (of Kashmir) were blocked or detained. A Dawn inquiry discovered that every legal request documented in the transparency database of Twitter that originated in India concerned accounts

owned by Kashmiri users or those posting in their cause referencing the India IT Act. This implies that Indian authorities were withholding the country-withholding feature of Twitter to filter Kashmir content in India. Pakistan complained that twitter was assisting India in its effort to stifle Kashmiris. Twitter has refuted any ideology-based shadow banning, although the company was accused by many Pakistani users of ideologically burying or labeling as sensitive their pro-Kashmir posts.

Instagram and Facebook Censorship: Similar acts of pro-Kashmir expression have also been suppressed by Facebook moderation. In 2016, Pakistani Facebook users showed their support to Kashmir protests, the social network issued a statement in which it stated that all content supporting or glorifying Hizbul Mujahideen and Burhan Wani was banned because it was related to terrorism. The quote quoted in The Guardian through Pakistani media said that although such sensitive issues can be discussed provided that they disparage such organizations, their praise would lead to deletion. In late 2011 Pakistani actor Hamza Ali Abbasi was suspended on his public Facebook page after posting content concerning Kashmir - a move which Pakistani media announced indicated how Facebook policies have succeeded in censorship of thousands of people talking about the conflict. Facebook claimed that the publication of reports about Kashmiri detainees' abuses was filtered out by its automated filters by its violent content policies - although they were published in an effort to protest violence.

Pakistani celebrities have also been suppressed over Instagram. In 2019, Pakistani actress Armeena Rana Khan wrote that when she had voiced her support of Kashmir, Instagram material was shadow-banned: her posts were no longer displayed in the search results and some of them were blocked without any official comment¹¹. She said this was an effort to keep her quiet to speak the truth and said that her page had been reported by users because of her activism. Other South Asian users have had their Instagram accounts limited in the same way, such as Indian netizens have reported that some hashtags including those that mention Kashmir or protests (e.g. #StandWithKashmir) were buried or unsearchable, leading to Internet backlash with tags such as #UninstallInstagram. Instagram platform silently reported that it is complying with the demands of the government: after the 2025 tensions, the accounts of several Pakistani celebrities were without warning blocked so that viewers in India would no longer see their content. A tech analyst observed that such moves - the hindering of Pakistani accounts in India - cannot be defended by human rights practices but rather it seems to be the result of political pressure.

Youtube repression and demonetization: The Kashmir-oriented channels have also been repeatedly punished by the video platforms. YouTube blocked a Kashmiri YouTube Channel that reported on communal violence and government accountability in 2018, Pal Pal

¹¹ Entertainment Desk. "Social media censors Armeena Khan post Kashmir activism", *The Express Tribune*, September 7, 2019, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2051669/social-media-censors-armeena-khans-post-kashmir-activism>.

News. The founder of the channel Khusboo Akhtar said that her channel was blocked after she covered hate crimes against Muslims; it was only later ordered back by court in India. MediaNama cites Pal Pal News claiming it has been shut down and demonetized regularly since 2018 due to dubious reasons such as copyright strikes being imposed on it suddenly or dubious violations of guidelines. Akhtar observed that other news organizations in India were free to publish the same clips and they were not punished which implied that the rules were not fairly applied. Both suspensions cost a lot in terms of legal appeals or social media campaigns to reestablish, which took months.

The other example is Free Press Kashmir, a Kashmir media house. Facebook and YouTube have always targeted the pages of FPK. In 2018, FPK published a satirical cartoon of Modi and the Home Minister of India over the Kerala floods; the page was requested to remove the cartoon, and a post was severely restricted during a month, what editors believe was a shadow ban. FPK had its Facebook page removed under a terrorism banner in July 2019, following coverage on militancy; it was reinstated three days later but under 30 days' restrictions. In 2021, an archaic article on a rape was marked on Facebook as sexually content and subject to a one-year ban penalty in which FPK was deprived of monetization privileges. The platform did not even allow the lifting of penalties to leave an excuse as the publishers were still left in the dark regarding the conformity to the policies. The editor of FPK stated that appeals

to Facebook and Google were repeatedly made with no constructive response and that the process is totally arbitrary and opaque.

Offline Blocks and Kashmir Walla: The Kashmir Walla is a high profile case, which is an independent news outlet based in Srinagar. In August 2023 the Indian government used its IT act to block the site of the outlet and also block its Facebook and twitter pages in India. On its Twitter account, TKW wrote the message "Account withheld... in reaction to a court order," and on its Facebook account, it wrote that its content is not available. Such actions blocked the 476,000 followers of the outlet in India from receiving news about Kashmir. CPJ criticized this secrecy censorship and declared the need to reinstate it immediately, citing that such prohibitions are a new low in press freedom in the area. Fahad Shah, the founder of the Walla, was already serving a jail term on terrorism grounds due to an opinion piece, which depicts how the offline activity is coordinated with the online oppression. The case of TKW demonstrated that the state orders may rely on platform tools and erase the Kashmiri voices completely, leaving the digital space.¹²

Circumvention of Trending Suppression and Algorithms Bias

In addition to explicit takedowns, there is biased visibility on algorithmic curation. As an example, during the Pahalgam attack in 2025, the anti-Pak trend hashtags such as #PakTerror went viral on

¹² Ibid.

platforms, including with the help of trending algorithms, and pro-Kashmir or pro-Pakistan hashtags struggled. Human rights experts have reported that machine learning-based methods used to label as extremist keywords may unintentionally label as extremist Kashmiri language, e.g. freedom fighter or martyr, as not in compliance with community norms. As an illustration, Facebook training materials that were leaked at some time in the past recommended deleting materials that celebrated the opposition to occupation. Practically, activists document that posts with tags such as #FreeKashmir are censored or not even able to trend, which agrees with a reported case of Facebook itself admitting to censoring Free Kashmir posts. Twitter and Facebook algorithms also prioritize content; the Pakistani sources state that once the page of FPK was blocked, the post was no longer shown in the feeds of its followers, and the traffic decreased, actually a shadow ban in effect. At the same time, the Gujarat-based influence operations have been able to manipulate the platform algorithms to censor counter-narratives. These tendencies indicate that the claims of neutrality, "we are just enforcing transparent rules," are fictitious: the automated systems, which do not have the sense of context and maintain the opaque policies, are likely to make Kashmiri voices disappear on the digital stage.

Analysis

The above instances reveal that there is a high degree of asymmetry in that content that challenges the Indian stance or one that promotes

Kashmiri self-determination will be more vulnerable to censorship compared to the content that propagates the Indian side. It has been noted by many that mainstream Indian nationalist even hate speech directed at Muslims will not disappear, whereas anything that can be interpreted as pro-Kashmir will be erased. As an illustration, Indian media houses gurgled out propaganda hashtags (#PakTerror, #RevengeForPahalgam) in independent social media accounts, reporting on the ground, were blocked without prior reasoning. Pakistani journalists also lamented that even pure fact reporting is flagged as breaching overall terrorism-related regulations, such as updates on casualties and human rights violations. In fact, these two standards of conduct foreshadowed complaints by rights advocates of tech giants that they tend to side with state-aligned elites against minorities on the grassroots. According to the words of an Internet Freedom lawyer, when platforms give in to pressure to delete content, they are practicing things against what they preach, i.e. open dialogue.

Algorithmic Bias Impact

This difference is also enhanced by the use of algorithmic moderation. Automated filters are not context-sensitive and typically are cautious about mistakes and are inclined to pull the trigger. In the case of Kashmir, the resistance organized by militants is usually called as terrorism, but frames of grievance (resisting occupation) are not accepted. The result of this is disproportional blocking of Kashmiri materials. According to an LSE report on E-Occupation in

Kashmir, Facebook and Twitter censor information containing the phrase Free Kashmir at government request. Even the benign posts virtually fade out of the feed after they are removed or downranked by AI. In addition, trending algorithms that advance the most engaging content are used to boost polarizing, nationalist posts (which are often sponsored by the state) and silence the opposition.¹³ Pakistani commentators cite Facebook-led research that 64 percent of the times, the recommendations of extremist groups are the result of algorithmic suggestions; by analogy, these processes could also push regular users to echo chambers of anti-Kashmir activists and de-motivate the display of pro Kashmir material.¹⁴

Geopolitical Drivers

It matters the geopolitical dimension. Adherences of platforms to Indian law, be it IT Act 69A or the 2023 spam regulations, imply that they willingly perform India's content controls on users located within India, and likewise, have yielded to India government demands elsewhere in the world. Interestingly, the transparency reports published by Twitter itself, which it gave to Dawn in 2019, indicate that Indian legal takedown requests have a significant amount of posts and accounts that are related to Kashmir. The Pakistani side sees such as a sign of bias: Twitter has

¹³ Annam Lodhi, "Silencing Kashmir," *Soch Writing*, September 17, 2019, <https://sochwriting.com/community-standards-or-double-standards-when-it-comes-to-posts-about-kashmir/>.

¹⁴ Sagarika Chaudhary, "E-Occupation in Kashmir: On Digital Fascism in Occupied Land," *LSE International Development Review*, March 18, 2024, <https://idr.lse.ac.uk/articles/85>.

previously...said that it remains neutral, but in reality it is carrying out the will of India blindly. Twitter and Facebook have been officially protested by the Pakistani policymakers regarding the suspension of Pakistani and Kashmiri accounts claiming that these two corporations are facilitating an internet crackdown beyond the borders of India. According to independent analysts, the U.S. foreign policy is also considered by U.S.-based platforms. Among others, the TechPolicy Press analysis mentions that the government dangerous organization lists are integrated in the policies of social media companies, that is, in case the U.S. declares some groups in Kashmir as extremists, and then they will self-censor discourse.¹⁵ It implies that the Kashmiri activists can be filtered down just due to the attitude of Washington, even further discriminating against them in the international arena.

Policy Recommendations

Digital rights will simply be eroded further, and the voices of Kashmiri people will be still muted unless technical reforms and changes in policies are made. To start with, platforms should be more open. Businesses are required to disclose all information on their removal requests and enforcement data by country and topic. As an example, the Lumet database of Twitter must include all the legal requests of India regarding Kashmir, and not only a part.

¹⁵ Usama Khilji. "How Platform Shifts on Content Moderation Are Escalating Harm in the India-Pakistan Crisis", *Tech Policy Press*, May 2, 2025, <https://www.techpolicy.press/how-platform-shifts-on-content-moderation-are-escalating-harm-in-the-indiapakistan-crisis/>.

Facebook ought to clarify whether there are any special keyword filters (e.g. its previous Shaheed policy) which are leading to anomalous takedowns. Not only the number of take downs should be made available using public transparency reports, but the nature of content labeled as violations.

Second, the algorithms applied to platforms should be more responsible. To remove disproportionate impact, they should refine AI filters, which require auditing. It can include the independent analysis of training data and decision rules in different languages. Practically, both meta and X should open appeals and human review on content that is flagged by general categories such as terrorism so as to tell the difference between legitimate news and incitement. Clear the pending appeals and employ a lot of multilingual moderators having Kashmiri language experts so that they can rectify the error. Instagram and Facebook cannot help to stop using the hidden feature hashtag shadow bans which block entire topics, appeal must be effective and clear.

Third, it is important that the policy is aligned with human rights standards. Businesses need to remember that they have a duty under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR): Article 19 provides freedom of expression and access to information: the content that is refused to one group of users in one country should not be concealed to everybody around the globe unless it is absolutely essential. Rules of moderation of content must explicitly safeguard the legitimate discussion of national liberation

and self-determination, and such a term as martyr or freedom fighter is not just censored.

Fourth, legal and diplomatic action: The government of Pakistan and digital rights lobbyists should keep lobbying the platforms and international organizations. Complaints can be lodged with the offices like UN Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression. Indicatively, the request by CPJ on India to immediately re-establish the online profiles of Kashmir Walla would be imitated in platforms such as the UNHRC. Pakistan also has the opportunity to develop the grievance redressal provisions under its 2021 IT Rules to assist aggrieved users in Pakistan. Civil society organizations (Bolo Bhi and SWK) will be handy in reporting abuses and recommending multi-stakeholder monitoring systems to South Asian social media.

Lastly, community projects and technical solutions: Kashmiri activists will be able to preserve their narratives in decentralized or encrypted systems. The NGOs can help to create Kashmiri-owned and operated alternative media, which is based on blockchains or peer-to-peer networks, which are not controlled by the state. There will be campaigns related to digital literacy (e.g. privacy and circumvention training of Kashmiris who face shutdowns) to increase resilience. The Pakistani media can all concur to republish any content removed at other places so takedowns would have less disabling impact. In the long term, social media firms might establish regional content boards manned by local professionals to

review controversial cases in-country in order to minimize the one-size-fits-all tendency.

The cases above were used to inform the recommendations of developing an enabling ecosystem, in which the Pakistani and Kashmir voices can actually speak freely. To aspire to become so-called global forums, platforms must adjust their own policies to local norms of rights without favoring any national narrative.

Conclusion

It has been proven that interplay of open censorship and covert algorithmic discrimination has been diluting the digital presence of Kashmir in an organized manner. The social media of independent Kashmiri and Pakistani journalists have been cut off without due process. Activists, as well as celebrities, also complain of shadow banning and loss of feeds. In the meantime, hate-based stories are welcome on the same platforms. This is not just a coincidence of asymmetry, but rather geopolitical influence of power where demands of the Indian state (and larger interests of the strategy) determine what type of content can be considered admissible. The outcome is a chilling effect on views: the posts mentioning Kashmir are virtually invisible, which is a way of undermining freedom of expression in the region.

This is unacceptable in the case of Pakistan. International norms of human rights oblige all parties-including the company- to protect and not censor the freedom of speech on demand of a single state.

Failure to do this will be a betrayal by them to whatever they have proclaimed of an open internet. According to the views of scholars, social media is supposed to be a megaphone of oppressed voices, rather than imposed laws on the most successful governments to have the kinds of stories they want to hear.



The Kashmir Issue between India and Pakistan: Political, Strategic, and Humanitarian Dimensions

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The Kashmir Issue between India and Pakistan: Political, Strategic, and Humanitarian Dimensions

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Abstract

The Kashmir dispute, which has been pitting India and Pakistan, has been one of the longest but most complex territorial disputes in the South Asian region. Kashmir has been pointed out as one of the basic pivots of enmity, which has resulted in several wars, as well as several cases of armed conflict, between the two nations since the partition of British India in 1947. The Kashmir dispute has evolved from being an interstate dispute to an identity in terms of leverage and human security, and has finally developed into an embodiment of a supportive conflict situation. The Kashmir dispute could persist as it does, thanks to resolute national discourses, as well as the power dynamics in the region, and the ineffectiveness of international efforts aimed at developing long-lasting solutions. Within the in-depth historical context of this research, this study shall explore several reasons behind the inefficacy of previous

efforts at developing solutions to the Kashmir dispute through the use of qualitative modes of analysis, which are reliant upon secondary research materials and informed by several strategic aspects such as aspects of military power dynamics, as well as hydrological aspects, as well as human aspects, which include the Kashmiri.

Keywords:

Kashmir dispute, India, Pakistan, South Asia, security, territorial disputes, humanitarian crisis

Introduction

The Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan is one of the oldest and most complex boundary issues in South Asia. The cause of this complicated relationship is the Muslim-majority state of Jammu & Kashmir, whose accession to India under pressure led to the first India-Pakistan war in 1947-48.¹ Over time, the Kashmir dispute has evolved from being solely a territorial conflict to include various other forms. The dispute has gradually expanded from a purely territorial issue to involve crises related to human rights and identity.

That the dispute in Kashmir has been ongoing is directly situated within competing assertions of national history and geo-strategy, and within the absence of appropriate international frameworks that guarantee the region will be at peace. Kashmir is an integral part of the sovereignty of India, and Pakistan considers Kashmir an integral part of its national strategy and

¹ Alastair Lamb, *Kashmir: A Disputed Legacy, 1846–1990* (Hertingfordbury: Roxford Books, 1991), 113–120.

history. The significance of the land as an ingredient of strategy has been further multiplied owing to its location in the mountains and proximity to China, along with possession of nuclear capabilities that increase the stakes in the case of escalation.² But at the same time, the cost of this dispute in terms of humanity can never be measured in any respect, and the mere presence of the common man from this region is affected by a lack of mobility and curfews, violation of human rights, and the psychological effects of living in a constant state of this armed zone.

Therefore, this paper aims to analyze the issue of the Kashmir conflict from political, strategic, and humanitarian perspectives to analyze the extent to which the efforts that have been made toward resolving the conflict in the past have been blocked and the dimensions that can be explored in which a representative peace can be guaranteed. It has been identified that the dimensions of the issue of the Kashmir conflict from an international perspective must be inextricably linked with the acquisition of internationalized levels of human-related securities; accordingly, the objective of this research paper is to create an understanding of the history of one of the most profound conflict episodes in South Asia.

Literature Review

The Kashmir dispute is a phenomenon that encompasses various issues such as history, politics, strategic interests, humanitarian crises, and international politics, and this can be identified in various research works available on this crisis. In this regard, Bose and Ganguly demand the need to consider the history behind this crisis when they point to the fact that some historical legacies from the colonial era and, consequently, some

² Paul Kapur, *Dangerous Deterrent: Nuclear Weapons Proliferation and Conflict in South Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2007), 15–25.

arrangements with regard to princely states at the time of partition entrenched this crisis.³ To this point, while Bose damages his argument by referring to choices during the era of partition, Ganguly particularly identifies the domestic politics within states like India and Pakistan that have regularly prevented any diplomatic effort at resolution.⁴ Wirsing continued with this rationale when he identified that territorial and water resource interests, rooted in this history, played their part. Other, more contemporary questions refer to political stories that hold this crisis alive.⁵ Tahirkheli identifies that human security is squarely affected by government choices and other matters like curfews and disappearances.⁶ While other writers, like Shamim, Nasim, and Ali, hold that political choices cannot succeed in this crisis until international mediation is introduced.⁷

Geographical location, high altitude, and proximity to China make Kashmir of immense strategic significance. Militarization and nuclear policy of India and Pakistan make the threat of conflict even costlier. Water resources are also of significance in light of the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. The treaty handed over water resources to the two nations. But the development of Indian dam projects at Kishanganga and Baglihar has started new tensions in this regard and has already brought advantage to Indians over this issue as well. But of late, new domains have occupied a

³ Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁴ Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

⁵ Robert L. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: Unresolved Conflicts and Regional Security* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

⁶ Tahir Tahirkheli, *Human Security and Conflict in Kashmir* (Islamabad: Strategic Studies Institute, 2023).

⁷ Shamim, Nasim, and Ali, *Political Mediation and Conflict Resolution in Kashmir* (Lahore: Vanguard Publishers, 2024).

central position, and that is Cyber and Info Wars in Kashmir. Studies carried out by Tyagi, and Paliwal have highlighted that social media polarization and Cyber Wars enhance an ambience of distrust and hence mark Kashmir as an increasingly prominent location of digital and territorial contention.⁸

The Kashmir issue has a high and well-documented human cost. Human Rights watch reports the violation of rights by the Indian forces and the militants alike, including cases of arbitrary detention, torture, and extrajudicial executions.⁹ The studies by Haq and Shabbir demonstrate that the long-term insurgency and counterinsurgency have undermined the fundamentals of learning and development. This study needs to be supplemented by the construct of Human Security.¹⁰ The need for a people-oriented strategy has been highlighted by Tahirkheli as a result not just of psychosocial trauma and economic marginalization, but also the enduring effects of militarization.¹¹

International/multilateral perspectives of the Kashmir conflict are also important in terms of how the conflict has been dealt with. This has led to international intervention, including resolutions, peacekeeping efforts, and mediation by the United Nations itself. However, its intervention, though

⁸ Paliwal S., Mehra V., and Gupta N., *Information Warfare in Kashmir: Emerging Dimensions* (Asian Journal of Security Studies, 2025), 22–40, see also Tyagi A., Verma R., and Singh P., *Cyber Conflicts and Social Media Polarization in Kashmir* (Journal of Digital Security Studies, 2020), 88–105.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, *Pakistan: Kashmir's Human Rights Crisis* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1999).

¹⁰ Haq M., *Education and Development Challenges in Kashmir* (Srinagar: Kashmir University Press, 2018), see more Shabbir K., Khan A., and Malik R., *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Kashmir: Social Impacts* (Islamabad: Peace Studies Center, 2022).

¹¹ Tahir Tahirkheli, *Human Security and Conflict in Kashmir* (Islamabad: Strategic Studies Institute, 2023).

significant, has been comparatively limited by its compulsions related to international realities.¹² Similarly, other international platforms such as SAARC and the OIC have found it necessary to act as facilitators.¹³ Again, such intervention has been comparatively limited by rivalry in international platforms. International realities, meanwhile, have led Butt to situate the Kashmir conflict in the international power dynamics of 2024.¹⁴ Despite an immense body of literature, there are various gaps in understanding. In general, either the strategic implications of the conflict, such as military presence in Kashmir or water resource management, have been studied in various studies in Kashmir. Humanitarian concerns in Kashmir have been considerably focused upon, leading to an incomplete understanding of the conflict in general. Second, state-level strategies in dealing with conflict-resolution measures have been state-level above the Kashmiris' possibilities.¹⁵ Therefore, at the current juncture, it becomes necessary to overcome such gaps within an integrated human security strategy professing the imperative of an inclusive people's strategy for conflict resolution in Kashmir.

Research Questions

1. What has sustained the historical and political processes of this conflict in Kashmir since 1947?

¹² United Nations Security Council, *Resolutions on the Kashmir Conflict*, UN Doc. S/RES/47, 1948.

¹³ OIC, *Reports on Kashmir Mediation Efforts, 2022*; SAARC, *Regional Cooperation on Conflict Mediation, 2023*.

¹⁴ Butt H., *Kashmir in International Power Dynamics* (Karachi: Global Affairs Press, 2024).

¹⁵ Rashida Abbas, Adeela Ahmed, and Muhammad Tabish. "Mediation in armed conflict: A case of Kashmir." *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022): 1-12.

2. How are strategic interests such as military, water, and geography shaping the behavior of both India and Pakistan in Kashmir?
3. What are the main humanitarian and human rights challenges posed by prolonged militarization to Kashmiris?
4. Why have previous efforts towards conflict resolution failed, and what are the feasible paths to a sustainable and inclusive peace?

Research Objectives:

1. Tracing the historical evolution of the Kashmir dispute and its institutionalization in the India–Pakistan relations.
2. The analysis of strategic dimensions of Kashmir, especially military and water-related issues.
3. To analyze the humanitarian implications of the conflict on the civilian population of Kashmir.
4. Propose a framework for conflict resolution through the integration of human security, regional diplomacy, and multilateral mechanisms.

Research Methodology

The present study adopts a qualitative analytical methodology with secondary data to analyze the political, strategic, and humanitarian facets of issues in Kashmir. The content analysis is employed on government statements, agreements, United Nations resolutions, and human rights documents to detect critical patterns and themes. The triangulation of academic literature with government/public policy and human rights documents increases the validity of research; moreover, simultaneous coverage of strategic and human security sectors provides a clearer

perspective on the implications and solutions for both sectors impacted by this crisis.

Historical Evolution

The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, which had a majority Muslim population but belonged to the Hindu rulers, became a hotbed of Indian-Pak strife during the 1947 partition of British India, which is where the Kashmir dispute began. The first Indo-Pak war broke out in 1947–1948 after the monarch, who had his sights set on independence, later joined the Indian side. The UN intervention culminated in the establishment of a cease-fire line, which later came to be known as the “Line of Control,” but this could not culminate in the final settlement and plebiscite within the region. The subsequent wars, such as Kashmir in 1965 and the Kargil War in 1999, as well as high altitude disparities such as the Conflict of the Siachen Glacier, could further engross this distrust and militarization process in this region.¹⁶ Some attempts at reaching various bi-lateral agreements, such as the Simla Agreement of 1972 and the Lahore Agreement of 1999, could try to embed the process of dialogue and ceasing of war, but the innate long-term rift in the objectives of the two nations, the militancy, and instabilities could prevent this particular conflict in this region from reaching any point towards the final settlement, thereby developing in this region into a highly complex one, which rests on territorial claims, strategic requirements, and finally, humanitarian crises.¹⁷

¹⁶ Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 67–110.

¹⁷ Sumantra Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003), 45–120.

Post-2019 Realities: Status, Economy, Society, and Geopolitics of Kashmir

The political and administrative circumstances under J&K have undergone a radical transformation since the revocation of the provision of Article 370 on the 5th of August 2019, essentially translating into the division of J&K into two union territories.¹⁸ Its semi-autonomous status as a unique state under the Indian Constitution has been repealed, leading to a reduction in its autonomy by coming under the more dominant direct administration of the Indian federal system. This has brought a sea of change in the local mechanism of administration as the pre-existing state constitutional framework, laws, and rights have been repealed; much of the state legislations have been centralized; land laws have been amended to allow people from outside the Kashmir Valley to acquire domicile rights and own property.

This major recalibration had been reported by New Delhi in efforts to finally assimilate Kashmir into an integral union of India altogether. According to the government, this was meant to bring an end to “special status” and bring more advancement into the region itself. Critics argue against this, scrapping the autonomy was said to have adversely impacted Kashmiri politics itself, with an irrevocably diminished requirement for better representation.¹⁹

¹⁸ Government of India, *The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order*, 2019.

¹⁹ Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs. *The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order*, 2019. New Delhi: Government of India, 2019.

Security, Recent Escalations, and Regional Tensions

There is no indication of political-military normalcy in the post-2019 era. The security events reported have been nearly entirely followed by the presence of the military, curfews, and other restrictions. Over 690 violent events have been reported to have occurred since 2019, which include militant attacks as well as forces involved in operations against the militants who have lost their lives. This indicates the threat of loss of life within the "new normal."²⁰

The dispute also persists on an international level and is fraught. The 2025 assault that resulted in tourist casualties in Indian-controlled Kashmir led to strong reaction mechanisms from New Delhi, such as the suspension of key water-sharing arrangements.²¹ India linked such circumstances to terrorism and held that Pakistan was implicitly involved in a series of recent escalation activities. Water security, a high-stakes strategic priority for years, flared up once again. The suspension of India's Indus Waters Treaty was a direct challenge to water rights in Pakistan.

In these scenarios, what adds complexity is now having China, as a neighboring power, casting a careful eye over what they do, while internal power competitions within South Asia make Kashmir not only a bilateral conflict, but now part of larger plays.

²⁰ Pakistan Institute for Conflict and Security Studies (PICSS), *Pakistan Security Report 2023* (Islamabad: PICSS, 2024).

²¹ South Asia Terrorism Portal, *Incidents in Jammu and Kashmir, 2019–2025*; Press Trust of India, *Kashmir Tourist Attack 2025: Casualties Reported*, The Hindu, 2025.

Securitization Theory and the Construction of Threat Narratives in the India-Pakistan Kashmir Conflict

Securitization Theory provides one of the most useful prisms through which to understand why India and Pakistan persist in viewing Kashmir not as a routine political issue but as an existential one related to national survival, regional stability, and identity.²² The theory argues that, through speech acts, political narratives, and extraordinary measures, states turn mundane political issues into urgent questions of security. Analyzed through this prism, the Kashmir conflict seems not just a territorial dispute but a long-term process whereby India and Pakistan consistently "securitize" Kashmir to justify exceptional measures that redefine political, military, and humanitarian realities. This viewpoint significantly improves the political, strategic, and humanitarian issues discussed in the article.

The way India has reaffirmed Kashmir as a crucial component of national sovereignty and territorial integrity reflects this. The majority of criticism, whether political, social, or even cultural, is frequently portrayed as a danger connected to terrorism or outside meddling.²³ The post-2019 events I examined for my piece, particularly the repeal of Article 370 and the transformation of Jammu & Kashmir into union territories, are blatant instances of securitizing actions.²⁴ Backed by official rhetoric on national integration, counterterrorism, and public order, such actions were thus rendered routine. Now, extraordinary measures-large-scale troop

²² Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1998), 23–28.

²³ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas. "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions." *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

²⁴ Sumantra Bose. *Kashmir at the Crossroads: Inside a 21st-Century Conflict* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021).

deployments, communications blackouts, curfews, and restriction of movement-were thereby rendered routine. In securitization terms, India managed to persuade its own domestic audience that such actions were imperative for the protection of the state and, therefore, placed Kashmir squarely within the domain of emergency politics rather than within normal democratic politics. Pakistan has also used securitization as a response to the Kashmir issue. Based on the literature review and strategic parts of my paper, Pakistan considers the Kashmir issue to be the “unfinished agenda of partition.” The Indian administrative and military measures are perceived not just as policy choices but as “existential threats to regional security and the political rights of the Kashmiris, particularly those who are Muslims.” Pakistan's securitization strategy justifies Pakistan's political activism within the United Nations, raising concerns regarding the human rights situation within Indian-controlled Kashmir, and maintaining a military presence along the Line of Control. Further, Pakistan's concern regarding water resources emanating from Kashmir, as identified within the strategic realms of my paper, further escalates Pakistan's perceptions regarding threats, particularly within the Indian dam constructions or suspensions of treaty obligations as challenges to the “existential security” of Pakistan regarding water resources.

Mutual securitization creates a vicious cycle of perceived threats, in which the policies of one country serve to confirm the other's fears. This becomes clear in the aftermath of the 2019 escalations, such as water agreement disagreements, cross-border shootings, diplomatic crises, and outright military mobilizations.²⁵ As I showed in the section on “Challenges to Conflict Resolution,” narrative obstacles to reaching any

²⁵ International Crisis Group, *Raising the Stakes in Jammu and Kashmir*, (Brussels: ICG, 2020).

kind of agreement are created by such speeches aimed at securitization. India realizes the Pakistani diplomatic pressure and mentions of UN resolutions to legitimize their claims as attempts to preempt their centralization policies, buildups, and resource management, which in turn are unilateral policies by India leading to instability in the region, as perceived by Islamabad.

The Securitization Theory is also very helpful in explaining the harsh humanitarian implications that I have discussed in the “Humanitarian Dimensions” section of this article.²⁶ As soon as Kashmir is conceived on a security existentialist template, the normal requirements, demands, and hopes of the people remain secondary to this national survival cocoon. This is why curfews, monitoring, arrests, communication blackouts, and disruptions in health and educational services have been regularly implemented and suffered on such security grounds.²⁷ Moreover, the psychological trauma being confronted by Kashmiris, fear, apprehensions, alienation, and intergenerational trauma, also get objectively located in this securitized space where normal life is held to ransom by such exceptional measures.²⁸

Using the Securitization Theory, it is therefore important to address the reasons that have ensured that the conflict in Kashmir has not been ended despite the many bilateral and international initiatives that have been put in place. As long as the governments of India and Pakistan continue to securitize the conflict in the sense that they see the conflict in Kashmir as

²⁶ Barry Buzan, Ole Wæver, and Jaap de Wilde. *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*. Boulder, (CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1998).

²⁷ Amnesty International, *India: Communications Blackout in Kashmir Violates Basic Rights*, 2019.

²⁸ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas. "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions."

an existential issue affecting the national identities and security of the said countries, then there is little room for political maneuvers and negotiations to bear fruit, or the grievances of the people of Kashmir to be addressed. Only when the conflict in the region is shifted from the realm of securitized politics to the realm of human security can peace be achieved.

The “New Normal” and the Socio-Political Compact

With these changes as the background, the supporters of the post-2019 deal claim that the current situation in Kashmir is “new normal.” They identify the enhanced infrastructure, the revival of tourism, new businesses, and integration into the national economy and institutional systems of the region's stabilization after several decades of conflict.

As a “peace dividend,” some analysts describe that it also includes not only development activities but also a supposed cutting back of funding and infiltration activities. Official reports state that better management of borders, suppression of non-state actors, and closures of financial channels have reduced militant network power.²⁹

However, this narrative is also open to critique. “Many people in Kashmir,” one scholar argues, “believe that there is a normalization of sorts that has been achieved,” with “restricted political dissent,” “restricted freedom of speech,” and “unequal distribution of benefits in the economic sphere.”³⁰ Others see the shift in demographics and legal statutes of domicile in terms of alienation rather than inclusivity and suspect the moral locus of identity, ownership, and rights.

²⁹ Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflicts: An Introduction to Theory and History*, 8th ed. (Boston: Pearson, 2020).

³⁰ Ayjaz Wani, *Perspectives on the ‘New Normal’ in Kashmir*, ORF Special Report No. 130 (Observer Research Foundation, 2021).

On the other hand, it also seems that the economic recovery is quite fragile. Whatever the tourism or infrastructural benefits may be, they can easily be wiped out by an incident related to security and/or new restrictions, as has been witnessed in the renewed violence/international pressure in this situation.

Strategic Dimensions

The unique topography, military importance, and resource potential of the Kashmir region make it strategically valuable. Kashmir is a crucial buffer state because it is located at the northernmost point of the Indian peninsula and shares borders with China and Pakistani-administered Kashmir. The geographic location provides important points for Kashmir's defense and monitoring, and control of important passes and glacial areas, such as the Siachen dispute, has further enhanced its military value. India and Pakistan-administered Kashmir regard Kashmir as their core, but this region is one of the places in which geostrategic rivalry prevails.³¹ The military presence in Kashmir, on either side of the Line of Control, in substantial territory controlled by India, and in the Pakistani-administered portions of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, is extensive. The presence of nuclear weapons in the Kashmir region makes it even more volatile, as any conflict in Kashmir could easily develop into a wider crisis in this area.

Water resources further accentuate the strategic aspects, where the Indus Waters Treaty has allocated the six rivers of the Kashmir Valley to both India and Pakistan. The construction of dams and hydroelectric power

³¹ Syed Muhammad Saad Zaidi and Muhammad Taimur Fahad Khan, *Analyzing the Convuluted Kashmir Dispute: A Retrospective Analysis*, (*Journal of Regional Studies Review*, 2025) 498–502.

stations by India in the Kashmir Valley, such as in the Kishanganga and Baglihar projects, serves as leverage in the management of water resources in Pakistan, accentuating water insecurity in Pakistan during times of strategic tension. Recently, during instances of strategic tensions, the management of water resources, such as opening dam gates, has served as a military strategy by Pakistan. The ongoing dispute has also witnessed movements in cyberspace, where cyber operations, cyber media, and cyber misinformation spread perceptions in cyberspace.³² The role of cyberspace in information dissemination and in shaping public opinion has been portrayed in computational analyses.

Humanitarian Dimensions

Alongside the strategic aspects, the humanitarian situation in Kashmir remains grave. Continual militarization, curfews, and operations by the security agencies also resulted in the creation of a dismal situation regarding the impact on the civilian population. Instances of violation of human rights include arbitrary arrests, torture, and enforced disappearance on all fronts. Militant activities also impinge upon the civil population negatively. The conflict, therefore, has resulted in creating psychosomatic trauma that leads to fear, alienation, and stress transmission from generation to generation, eating into the fabric of society.

Moreover, the absence of effective political expression has caused the voice of the people of Kashmir to be rendered insignificant in negotiations that bear a direct impact on their future, adding to the otherwise ingrained perceptions of injustice. The lack of adequate infrastructure exacerbates

³² Tyagi A., Verma R., and Singh P., *Cyber Conflicts and Social Media Polarization in Kashmir*, (Journal of Digital Security Studies, 2020), 88–105, see more Paliwal S., Mehra V., and Gupta N., *Information Warfare in Kashmir: Emerging Dimensions*, (Asian Journal of Security Studies, 2025), 22–40.

the effects of the humanitarian crisis in the region, as well as the underdevelopment of the healthcare and educational sectors, and the unavailability of basic services to the population. On a larger scale, the human aspect of the security of the province of Kashmir stresses the reality that the strategic and militarized approaches to the conflict cannot be effective in developing a peaceful future and that the inherent day-to-day vulnerabilities and aspirations of the people of the province must be considered in the strategies of stability.

International and Multilateral Role

In the Kashmir Dispute, there clearly exists the factor of the international/multilateral aspect, wherein global and regional actors become involved in the management/resolution of the dispute. The role of the United Nations would remain insignificant from the point of view of historical resolutions, peacekeeping roles, and mediations.³³ Though the United Nations chose a plebiscite on the matter and involved the role of commissions concerning the supervision of ceasefires,³⁴ the role would remain patchy and extremely politicized due to the concerns of major member nations.³⁵ Henceforth, the role of the United Nations would remain predominantly reactive and less proactive in the matter of safeguarding human rights and ensuring the implementation of an agreement.

³³ Saman Mehmood Sultan and Sawera Mohsin, *Role of United Nations in Kashmir Conflict: An Exploratory Study*, (Annals of Human and Social Sciences, 2024) 675–85.

³⁴ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas. "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions."

³⁵ Syed Akmal Hussain Shah and Aamir Amin Bhat, *UN Resolutions and Pak-India Agreements on Issue of Jammu and Kashmir: A Comparative Study from Kashmiris' Perspective*, (Asian Journal of Academic Research, 2024).

In addition to the role of the United Nations, regional and international powers exercise their influence over the conflict as per their plans and priorities. The Chinese interests in the region of Aksai Chin and their good relations with Pakistan offer a background to Beijing's role, while the US, European nations, and international powers sometimes use their role through diplomatic and economic interventions, sometimes giving less importance to humanitarian issues in favor of regional stability and economic trade objectives. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are two examples of regional and international organizations that have tried to create space through cooperation and dialogue, but have fallen short due to intraregional politics among their members and the absence of a trustworthy mechanism to enforce their resolutions.³⁶ Multilateralism has been proposed by think tanks and non-governmental organizations as a means of achieving peace through human security, confidence-building, and mediation. A long-term peace settlement is still hampered by the absence of a third-party mechanism.

From 2019: Abrogation of Article 370, Demographic Implications, and International Responses

The strike down of Article 370 on August 5, 2019, is one of the most pivotal changes in the history of the Kashmir conflict that has dramatically changed the constitutional and geographical character of Kashmir.³⁷ Before the strike down in 2019, Jammu & Kashmir enjoyed a special semi-autonomous position as a constituent part of the Indian Constitution

³⁶ Muhammad Shamshad and Farooq Arshad, *Failure of Organization of Islamic Cooperation: A Case of Dismal State of Human Rights in Kashmir and Palestine*, (Margalla Papers, 2021) 47–60.

³⁷ Mohd Amin Mir, *The Kashmir Dilemma and the Repeal of Article 370: A Comparative Analysis*, (Journal of Muslim Minority Affairs, 2024) 173–85.

with its own laws and a special constitutional status and safeguards against any influx of outsiders and settlement in the state. The action taken by the Indian state to strike down the special constitutional status and to effectively carve out Jammu & Kashmir and the newly formed Ladakh state as two union states has not only meant a changeover to a different administrative structure but also a radical change in the political character and autonomy of Kashmir itself. The action was framed as a necessary measure by New Delhi to better integrate Kashmir into the Indian state with a view to decreasing any feelings of Jammu & Kashmir being separate or distinct as a state and to speed up growth and accelerated economic progress in the state.

Demographic change is also one of the most immediate concerns that have arisen following the revocation of Article 370. Factors such as the disregard for the constitutional safeguards earlier placed on the ownership of land and domicile rights in the region have made the region vulnerable to influxes from other regions in India. You discussed how new domicile laws give persons outside Kashmir the right to domicile themselves and own property there, and how this has created an altogether new dynamic related to the political economy of Kashmir. Such policies are seen to diminish Kashmir's majority Muslim character, influence their political representation, and modify voting demographics in favor of the ruling party's national vision on the one hand, and on the other, all this takes place in the securitized environment that your study has captured—that is, military domination, communication restrictions, and a lack of political representation that has heightened feelings of alienation among Kashmiris.

There has also been a significant shift in governance since 2019. The centralization of political power with the abolition of the state assembly,

the onset of the direct rule system imposed from New Delhi, as well as changes in the administrative apparatus, have thus reshaped the dynamic between the residents of Kashmir and the state. Although the government in New Delhi cited infrastructure development, development projects, and the growth of the tourism industry as proof of progress under the "new normal" in Kashmir, the locals believe that these initiatives were implemented without their proper involvement or consultation.³⁸ Due to communication lockdowns, curfews, and other security-imposed limitations that impede socializing, business, and education, economic development is still precarious.

Global attention was drawn to the removal of Article 370 and the security measures that followed. Several countries in North America, Europe, the Gulf, and South Asia responded cautiously or with varying degrees of anxiety.³⁹ Pakistan was averse to it and called it an international infringement of UN resolutions and international norms, and has since made strenuous efforts through diplomatic pathways to internationalize the Kashmir problem. China stated a territorial vision that included competition with India in response to India's restructuring of Ladakh.⁴⁰ Following communication outages and restrictions on civil freedoms, Western governments and administrations, including those of the United States and the European Union, voiced some concerns about human rights circumstances. Human rights groups and various international media and civil societies also highlighted the humanitarian and political implications of this new development. However, as your paper suggests, no

³⁸ Ayjaz Wani, *Perspectives on the 'New Normal' in Kashmir*, ORF Special Report No. 130 (Observer Research Foundation, 2021).

³⁹ Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Pakistan), *Pakistan's Response to Abrogation of Article 370*, 2019; Xinhua News Agency, *China Urges Peace in Kashmir*, 2019.

⁴⁰ Saheb Singh Chadha, *Negotiating the India-China Standoff: 2020–2024* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2024),

international great power took concrete steps during widespread international attention and effectively bore witness to the ineffectiveness of international mechanisms in dealing with developments that various states classify as domestic and state matters of international sovereignty.

The post-2019 scenario is a phenomenal occurrence in the sense that it signifies not merely a constitutional turn but also a point of drastic change that has brought about transformations in the domains of governance, demography, national security, and international perspectives about Kashmir.⁴¹ The revocation of Article 370 escalated tensions in the global/geopolitical domain, pointed out comprehensive democratic concerns, and drew worldwide attention, although at the same time emphasizing the imperfections of external interference.⁴² The importance of 2019 onward lies in emphasizing the verification of your research hypothesis, which states that in the absence of polity-wide democratic political discourse, the recognition of Kashmir's agency, as well as a convergence of national/constitutional demands of security coupled with human rights, exclusive policy choices would continue to fuel, rather than answer, the discontent of Kashmir's grievances.

Challenges to Conflict Resolution

A major complicating factor in the Kashmir conflict is its complexity with regard to the political, strategic, and social elements at play. Indeed, it is primarily a major challenge presented by the trust deficit existing between India and Pakistan. India's assertion of territorial integrity is at odds with

⁴¹ Adeela Ahmed, "The New Emerging Technology Cyber Capabilities: Prospective Hazards on Deterrence Stability between India and Pakistan." *International Journal of Kashmir Studies*, 7, no. 1 (2025).

⁴² Saroj Kumar Aryal and Sania Muneer, *Geopolitics, Conflict and Narratives: An Assessment of Kashmir Conflict after the Abrogation of Article 370*, (Journal of Political Science, 2023)

Pakistan's perception that Kashmir is an unresolved national question, thereby resulting in a zero-sum game scenario wherein giving and taking are very costly politically.

Asymmetrical power dynamics also make this dispute even more complex. Here, India has a structural edge based on its stronger military might and economics, but Pakistan's backing of militant proxies has increased Indian security concerns, which in turn deepens this particular security dilemma with the worst possible outcomes expected by both sides.⁴³ The role of water increases the complexity of this dispute further, as it gives Indians the upper hand in Pakistan, and this has increased the intensity of dispute-level tensions, along with the possibility of an escalated conflict.

The issues of human rights and lack of political inclusiveness continue to hamper the process for the restoration of peace in the region. Except for a few resolutions by the United Nations and other constructs, very few have taken into consideration the wishes and views of the Kashmiris in this matter. In the absence of any real possibility for the meaningful inclusion of the locals, any agreement reached could potentially be viewed as being forced upon them, and therefore, unjust or unconstitutional. Moreover, the lack of proper enforcement by these international organizations continues to create a veneer that these interventions lack real power to enforce compliance because UN resolutions lack the wherewithal to be able to do so effectively and physically, when push comes to shove.

Inclusive Dialogue

⁴³ Muhammad Sadiq and Iftikhar Ali, *Non-State Actors, Sub-Conventional Warfare, and India-Pakistan Nuclear Crisis Stability/Instability*, (Journal of Conflict Resolution, 2024) 325–37.

Thus, true inclusion of Kashmiri voices at all stages of the peace process would be necessary for a long-term resolution to the conflict.⁴⁴ The conversation would have to go beyond the two-party system between India and Pakistan and involve the political leaders and people of the Kashmir area directly. Their views, their needs, and their hopes would therefore need to influence the negotiations with a view toward their acceptance of the solution reached. International intervention would thus be helpful here; a third-party mediator like the United Nations or a group of non-aligned countries could help as a monitor for this process.

Confidence-Building Measures

That a confidence-building measure is the need of the hour to eliminate suspicion and generate a climate helpful to a sustainable peace agreement cannot be undermined.⁴⁵ Unintended conflicts can be averted by regular communication across the LoC, a proper mechanism for verification, and military de-escalation at the LoC. An important sector, which could generate conflicts over a most mundane matter, is water sharing.⁴⁶ This faith-generated conflict could be eliminated by agreeing to a furtherance of the Indus Water Treaty and formulation of a joint committee involving the Kashmiris for water regulation. People-to-people exchanges in areas like culture, education, and economic engagement can help de-personify ‘the

⁴⁴ Mian Rifat Ullah Khan and Faiza Bashir, *Conflict Resolution: Revisiting the Unresolved Kashmir Dispute, The Dialogue*, (2025), 51–70.

⁴⁵ Muhammad W. Haider and Tahir M. Azad, *The Role of Confidence-Building Measures in the Evolution of Relations Between Pakistan and India*, (World Affairs, 2021), 294–317.

⁴⁶ Adeela Ahmed, “A Framework for Strategic Stability and Risk Mitigation in the Governance of Military AI in South Asia,” paper presented at the Global Conference on AI, Security and Ethics, *United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR)*, Geneva, April 2025, https://unidir.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/AISE-2025-poster-presentations_compressed.pdf

other side.’ Such actions may appear iterative, but remain a precursor for a political solution.

Human Security Agenda

The human security element stresses the need to secure the welfare, rights, and dignity of Kashmiris as a core component for conflict resolution. The establishment of mechanisms for monitoring and investigating human rights abuses via independent commissions drawing upon both UN support and civil society can promote accountability and lessen grudges felt among Kashmiris.⁴⁷ Socio-economic development projects such as investment within the sectors of education, healthcare, and infrastructure could help to remedy the chronic neglect experienced by Kashmiris, while psychosocial services may help to reduce the psychological tolls associated with being subject to militarization and curfews for extended durations. In this way, human security can be viewed as a strategy supporting resilience beyond humanitarian needs.

Multilateral and Legal Frameworks

There is a need for enhanced multilateral engagement and legal assurances so as to make agreements more credible and guaranteed. The United Nations can be strengthened through a special envoy with a specific mandate related to facilitating human rights protection, political dialogues, and conflict monitoring. The region can benefit from a regional platform, such as SAARC or a South Asian body tailored for this purpose, which would establish a framework for cooperation related to water,

⁴⁷ Sehar Iqbal, *Through Their Eyes: Women and Human Security in Kashmir*, (Journal of Human Security, 2021), 45–63.

development, and security.⁴⁸ On the other hand, international legal instruments related to human rights law or treaties could act as a guarantee for the implementation of peace agreements.

Technology and Information Diplomacy

With the rising trends in the current conflict environment, there has been an emphasis on the cyber/information aspects of these issues. Creating communication hotlines and cyber diplomacy networks could avoid escalation due to misinformation and cyberattacks. Social media peace-building projects, such as promoting pro-peace speeches and depolarization on social media, could help avoid hostility and create empathy between rival communities.⁴⁹ Computer-based software could pinpoint ways to “amplify hope speeches and other narratives that support productive talk.” Technology would then become not only the means to manage this crisis but also the site of reconciliation.

Discussion

The dispute over Kashmir embodies what has become a long-standing and complex crisis that transcends a mere dispute over territory. Instead, from disputed decisions over partition, “the conflict has cumulatively evolved over the years through identity politics and geostrategic rivalries with humanitarian costs into a long-standing multidimensional crisis.” In fact, attempts at resolution “haven’t worked yet” – not because there aren’t willing mediators or a mutual need for a resolution, but because of three interconnected reasons among Indian and Pakistani leaders’ negotiation

⁴⁸ Sarwat Rauf, *Prospects of International and Regional Organizations in the Solution of Kashmir Issue*, (Journal of Political Studies, 2026).

⁴⁹ Andreas Hirblinger, *When the Digits Don’t Add Up: Research Strategies for Post-Digital Peacebuilding*, (Journal of Peacebuilding & Development, 2023).

strategy and policy actions toward a resolution of the conflict over the contested territory of Kashmir:

First of all, state-based negotiations set up a dynamic of India and Pakistan being “much more in a top-down form of diplomacy” rather than giving a voice or a seat at the table to the citizens of Kashmir themselves, thereby not only ending up as non-credible or non-verified agreements or decisions because of a lack of representation from their side but further hardening “Kashmiris' distrust toward Islamabad and New Delhi.”⁵⁰

Secondly, plans and decisions being imposed and agreed upon “strategic imperatives like security hegemony or control over natural resources like water or geographic advantage” as compared to “human security” may or may not suit all involved nations or countries, thereby “resolving the conflict remains precarious should the demands and claims of people living in Kashmir continue not being appropriately addressed.”⁵¹ Thirdly, the fact that there isn't much “global enforcement or multilateral enforcement” being facilitated or carried out through UN decisions or plans, leaves agreements or decisions non-credible or non-enforceable because of the lack of political

Such factors and challenges are poignantly exemplified in the scenario in Kashmir since 2019 through the nullification of Article 370 and reformation of Jammu and Kashmir into two separate union territories, thus securing and administratively controlling in a more centralized manner at the cost of self-governed politics in Kashmir. The Indian

⁵⁰ Mohd Amin Mir, and Ubaid Sidique. "The Back to Village Program: an experimentation in state-citizen engagement in Jammu and Kashmir." *Development in Practice* (2026): 1-7.

⁵¹ Saroj Kumar Aryal, and Sania Muneer. "Geopolitics, conflict and narratives: An assessment of Kashmir conflict after the Abrogation of Article 370." *Journal of Asian and African Studies* 60, no. 2 (2025): 1310-1324.

government welcomes and applauds economic progress, new physical infrastructures, and restored flows of tourists. But this process has been accompanied by communication lockdowns, and even curfews and limitations on political expressions.⁵² The recovery in the economic structure is a mixed bag, with growth in tourism and infrastructural investments in some sectors, but a major downturn in actual means of livelihood and handicraft and cottage industries. Such incidents underscore the conflict between developmental efforts in a state and human security in a province and clearly underscore that peace and security can neither be induced nor guaranteed through administrative control.⁵³

On account of these factors, it is clear that the conflict is anything but intractable. What is required is an approach that is people-focused, inclusive, development-oriented, supportive of human rights, and facilitates CBMs, which will help to create a platform for sustainable peace. Strategic elements, whether military or water resources, need not become the source of constantly recurring conflict but may become areas where neutral management can help to facilitate structured cooperation on these issues, too. Moreover, what is important is the 'cyber' aspect, where, with the help of these methods, disinformation challenges could be met, polarization would decrease, and international empathy would be increased.⁵⁴ Assuming that this approach addresses both strategic dimensions as well as the human dimensions of the conflict

⁵² Shabana Naeem, and Shabnam Kausar. "Kashmir Issue During Musharraf Era: A Diplomatic Shift Towards Peace." *Social Science Review Archives* 3, no. 2 (2025): 383-394.

⁵³ Rifaqat Ali. "Kashmir Conflict, Prospects for Qatar to Mediate." Master's thesis, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (Qatar), 2025.

⁵⁴ Waseem Raja, Talha Latief Tantray, and Neeta Rani. "Radicalisation in Jammu and Kashmir: a theoretical and empirical appraisal of internal and external dynamics." *The Round Table* 115, no. 1 (2026): 82-96.

simultaneously, it would help, inch by inch, to build trust, lower tensions, and enable a propitious environment conducive to lasting stability.⁵⁵ Of course, the tipping point would lie in equitably balancing the interests with the sense of dignity, voice, and agency, realizing, ultimately, the welfare of Kashmiris becomes central to any lasting solution. It articulates with an explanatory background of lessons drawn in the last few years, the ‘Socio-Economic disruption, impact of centralization, the strength of local society, the crucial significance of an ‘inclusive’ strategy, highlighting both structural and human dimensions, becomes paramount.

Conclusion

India and Pakistan’s involvement in the Kashmir conflict for over 70 years has encompassed numerous historical claims, geopolitical rivals, and human rights concerns, instead of one issue about territorial rights. Issues such as Kashmir conflict not being solely about territorial rights but also about state riot driven policies versus the reality that Kashmiris live with, their rights, identity, and human rights concerns, indicate that the conflict is not adequately addressed due to the weaknesses associated with state-centric diplomacy that disregards human security needs for military and strategic gain with the absence of an appropriately effective global enforcement mechanism on the newly emerging developments such as the repeal of Article 370 and administrative centralization.

A completely new and human security-oriented approach needs to be adopted for the resolution of this issue. Yet despite such enormous obstacles as disparities of power and a lack of trust, this conflict is not an

⁵⁵ Tasleem Malik, Maira Safdar, and Fiazullah Jan. "Beyond occupation: memory, displacement, and the logic of settler control in Kashmir." *GeoJournal* 91, no. 1 (2026): 9.

insoluble one. The way to a sustainable and equitable peaceful outcome lies in having a multi-point solution which includes diplomacy, the protection of human rights, regional teamwork, and development aid. In South Asia, to alleviate suffering with a view to restoring the dignity of the Kashmiri people in a manner in which they can meaningfully participate, the challenge should aim at a solution that alleviates the suffering of the Kashmiri people.



Examining Human Rights Violations in IIOJK: Post-Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution

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Examining Human Rights Violations in IIOJK: Post-Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution

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Abstract

The abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A on 5th August, 2019, constitutes a critical rupture in the political and constitutional framework governing Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). This study examines the resulting transformation of social and political order in the region, with particular emphasis on the rising human rights violations between 2019 and 2025. Employing an inductive qualitative methodology, the research relies on secondary data drawn from secondary sources to further clarify the problem with utmost care. The findings reveal that the revocation of Kashmir's special constitutional status has enabled extensive centralization of authority, accompanied by the expansion of domicile and land rights to non-Kashmiris. From a settler-

colonial analytical lens, just like Israeli illegal settlements in Palestine. These measures are interpreted as instruments of demographic and political reengineering aimed at diluting indigenous political agency. This paper will use Palestine as an example of the settler-colonial concept being practiced in IIOJK. Simultaneously, the persistent use of coercive legal frameworks and securitization strategies has contributed to political marginalization, social alienation, and widespread allegations of human rights violations. Anchored in realist theory, the study argues that India's post-2019 Kashmir policy reflects a strategic pursuit of territorial consolidation and regional hegemony, wherein sovereignty and security imperatives override normative commitments to human rights. This theoretical framework also explains the restrained response of the international community. The article further situates the Kashmir dispute within the enduring India-Pakistan rivalry, warning that unilateral constitutional and demographic interventions risk intensifying bilateral tensions. The study concludes that sustainable peace in Kashmir is essential for ensuring the right of self-determination, an inalienable right of the people of Kashmir, and that the application of UN-mandated resolutions will only bring long-term stability.

Keywords

Social tensions, Political tensions, Human Rights, IIOJK, Article 370, Article 35A

Introduction

The Kashmir dispute has constituted a central point of contention between India and Pakistan since their independence in 1947. While often framed as a territorial disagreement, the conflict also encompasses complex social, political tensions and human rights concerns. This study articulates on the Human Rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution. Crucially, with the abrogation of both articles, political and social tensions have intensified in the IIOJK. Furthermore, the rise in human rights violations highlights the erosion of constitutional safeguards and the marginalization of local communities.

For instance, this paper comprises two analytically interconnected sections. The first section examines the political and social tensions underpinning patterns of human rights violations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), situating contemporary developments within the broader trajectory of constitutional change, securitisation, and protracted territorial contestation between India and Pakistan. It analyses how intensified militarisation, restrictions on civil liberties, demographic anxieties, and governance restructuring following the abrogation of Article 370 have contributed to a climate of political alienation and social fragmentation. The second section focuses on documented patterns

of human rights violations, including enforced disappearances, the phenomenon of “half widows,” extra-judicial killings, arbitrary detentions, and restrictions on media and civil society. By examining these violations through legal and normative frameworks, the section evaluates their implications for international humanitarian law, accountability mechanisms, and regional stability. Together, the two sections provide a structured assessment linking structural political tensions to their human rights consequences within the conflict-affected region.

The origins of the dispute lie in the partition of British India in 1947, which resulted in the creation of India and Pakistan as independent states.¹ Under the terms of partition, princely states were granted the option to accede to either country.² Under the terms of partition, princely states were granted the option to accede to either country. Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority region ruled by a Hindu monarch, afterwards the Maharaja acceded to India in exchange for military assistance. This decision precipitated the first Indo-Pakistani war (1947-1948),³ which concluded with a United Nations-brokered ceasefire. The Karachi Agreement of 1949 formalized a ceasefire line later termed the Line of Control (LoC)

¹ Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 1–10.

² Ramachandra Guha, *India After Gandhi: The History of the World's Largest Democracy* (New York: HarperCollins, 2007), 47–50.

³ Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 18–25.

dividing the territory between Indian and Pakistani-administered regions.⁴

A major political development occurred on 5 August 2019, when the Government of India abrogated Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution. These provisions had granted Jammu and Kashmir a special constitutional status, allowing it to maintain its own constitution and limiting the applicability of certain Indian laws. Article 370, introduced in 1949, defined the legal relationship between Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian Union, while Article 35A,⁵ added through a presidential order in 1954, empowered the local legislature to define permanent residency and associated rights, including property ownership. The revocation of these provisions extended the full application of the Indian Constitution to the region and permitted non-residents to acquire property and domicile status.⁶

Following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution in August 2019, the political landscape of (IIOJK) underwent a profound transformation.⁷ The division of the region

⁴ Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994), 60–65.

⁵ Rashida Abbas, Adeela Ahmed, and Muhammad Tabish, "Mediation in Armed Conflict: A Case of Kashmir," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v5i2.423>.

⁶ S. Ali, "The Kashmir Conundrum—Post Indian Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A: The Way Forward," *South Asia Journal*, June 4, 2020, <http://southasiajournal.net/the-kashmirconundrum-post-indian-abrogation-of-article-370-and-35a-the-way-forward>

⁷ A. G. Noorani, *Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); see also Government of India, The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019, C.O. 272, August 5, 2019.

into two Union Territories: Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh, effectively revoked its constitutional autonomy and established direct administrative control by the central government in New Delhi. This restructuring not only curtailed the authority of elected representatives but also concentrated power in the office of the Lieutenant Governor, thereby marginalizing local political institutions.⁸ The suppression of dissent became a defining feature of the post-abrogation period. Political leaders, civil society activists, and journalists were subjected to arbitrary detentions and prolonged house arrests, undermining democratic participation and silencing critical voices.⁹ The pervasive deployment of security forces further entrenched a regime of surveillance and coercion, producing a climate of fear and eroding civil liberties. These developments illustrate a systematic narrowing of political space, where the mechanisms of governance are increasingly characterized by centralization, securitization, and the delegitimization of local agency.¹⁰

The people of IIOJK have endured profound social tensions in the aftermath of the abrogation of constitutional safeguards in August

⁸ Louise Tillin, “The Abrogation of Article 370 and the Future of Asymmetric Federalism in India,” *Indian Law Review* 4, no. 1 (2020): 1–19.

⁹ Human Rights Watch, “India: Events of 2020,” in *World Report 2021* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021); Amnesty International, “We Are Being Punished by the Law: Three Years since the Abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir,” 2022.

¹⁰ Christophe Jaffrelot, “Kashmir after Article 370: Political Centralization and the Erosion of Federalism,” *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 4 (2020): 101–115.

2019.¹¹ Economic disruptions stemming from curfews, lockdowns, and land dispossession have undermined livelihoods, particularly in tourism, agriculture, and trade, leaving communities in a state of prolonged insecurity.¹² Communication blackouts and restrictions on media have further isolated the region, cutting off access to information and limiting social interaction. At the same time, policies perceived as settler-colonialism have generated widespread fears of demographic transformation and erosion of Kashmiri identity, intensifying feelings of dispossession and marginalization. Civil unrest has become a recurring feature, with protests against government actions frequently met with force, deepening alienation and reinforcing the perception of systemic exclusion.¹³

Human rights concerns/violations in IIOJK remain acute, characterized by the erosion of fundamental freedoms and the entrenchment of coercive governance.¹⁴ Reports of arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings, and restrictions on free speech and

¹¹ A. G. Noorani, *Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); Government of India, *The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019*, No. 34 of 2019, August 9, 2019.

¹² Rifat Fareed and Murali Krishnan, "Kashmir: A Year of Lockdown and Lost Autonomy," *Deutsche Welle*, August 4, 2020; Human Rights Watch, "India: Events of 2020," in *World Report 2021* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021).

¹³ Amnesty International, "We Are Being Punished by the Law: Three Years since the Abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir," 2022; Christophe Jaffrelot, "Kashmir after Article 370: Political Centralization and the Erosion of Federalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 4 (2020): 101–115.

¹⁴ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018, and General Human Rights Concerns in Pakistan-Administered Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan* (Geneva: United Nations, 2018).

assembly illustrate a systematic curtailment of civil liberties. The heavy securitization of everyday life has produced a climate of fear, where dissenting voices whether political leaders, activists, or journalists are silenced through intimidation and punitive measures. The persistence of these patterns underscores the structural character of repression in the region, situating IIOJK within broader global debates on protracted conflict, accountability, and the protection of fundamental rights.¹⁵

Human rights concerns in Jammu and Kashmir since 2019 have attracted sustained international scrutiny, particularly from independent experts mandated by the UN Human Rights Council. While these experts unequivocally condemned the Pakistan-backed Pahalgam terrorist attack expressing condolences to the victims and the Indian government, they simultaneously underscored that counterterrorism measures must remain consistent with international human rights law. Their position reflects a broader normative principle: the imperative of balancing state security imperatives with the protection of fundamental rights.¹⁶

Nevertheless, India's counterterrorism operations were critically assessed as disproportionate and inconsistent with international legal standards. Temporary media restrictions, prolonged internet

¹⁵ Christophe Jaffrelot, "Kashmir after Article 370: Political Centralization and the Erosion of Federalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 4 (2020): 101–115.

¹⁶ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas, "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions," *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2021).

shutdowns, and the blocking of approximately 8,000 social media accounts were identified as excessive measures that curtailed freedom of expression and access to information. The experts further highlighted the surveillance and harassment of Kashmiri students, noting that directives compelling universities to provide information on these individuals constituted a form of institutionalized intimidation. Particular concern was expressed regarding the arbitrary detentions, extrajudicial killings and excessive use of force, Enforced Disappearances, Restrictions on Freedom of Expression and communication Blackouts etc. Such violations were characterized as draconian and incompatible with international human rights obligations. The UN rapporteurs therefore called for the immediate and unconditional release of all individuals detained without due process, situating Jammu and Kashmir as a critical site of contestation between counterterrorism policy and the preservation of civil liberties.¹⁷

The United Nations Security Council has adopted multiple resolutions on Kashmir, including Resolution 47 (1948), which called for a plebiscite to determine the region's political future.¹⁸ However, international engagement has declined over time, with

¹⁷ "UN Experts Alarmed by Indian Counter-Terrorism Operations Violating Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir." *Press Release*, November 24, 2025. *OHCHR*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/11/un-experts-alarmed-indian-counter-terrorism-operations-violating-human>

¹⁸ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 47 (1948), S/RES/47 (April 21, 1948).

scholars attributing this trend to India's growing economic and strategic significance globally.¹⁹

This study adopts a qualitative research approach to explore and interpret meanings, experiences, and narratives related to the "Examining Human Rights Violations in IIOJK: Post-Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution". A qualitative design is considered appropriate because it allows for an in-depth examination of complex social and human rights issues within their real-world contexts.²⁰ The research relies on secondary qualitative data and uses document and media analysis to develop a nuanced understanding of the subject matter. This design emphasizes interpretation rather than measurement and prioritizes contextual depth, making it suitable for examining perspectives presented across academic, institutional, and media sources.

Data for the study are drawn from a wide range of credible and authoritative sources to ensure depth and triangulation. Academic literature is sourced from Google Scholar, JSTOR, ProQuest, Taylor & Francis Online, and various digital libraries and institutional repositories. These databases are searched using carefully selected keywords and Boolean operators to identify peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and book chapters relevant to the research focus. In

¹⁹ Christophe Jaffrelot, "Kashmir after Article 370: Political Centralization and the Erosion of Federalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 4 (2020): 101–115.

²⁰ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas. "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions." *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

addition to scholarly sources, the study incorporates reports published by Human Rights Watch and thematic and country-specific reports by United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) special rapporteurs. To capture contemporary discourse and public narratives, newspaper articles, including those published in the *Kashmir Times*, along with relevant website publications from reputable human rights organizations and news platforms are also included. Sources are selected based on relevance, credibility, publication date, and methodological transparency, and all searches and selections are documented to enhance reliability.

As the study is based on secondary data, participants are understood in an analytical sense rather than as directly recruited individuals. The units of analysis consist of texts that contain documented experiences, testimonies, expert analyses, and institutional observations. These include first-person narratives reported in human rights documentation, statements from affected communities as cited in media reports, and analyses provided by scholars, journalists, and human rights professionals. The selection of these texts follows a purposive sampling strategy to ensure that the data meaningfully address the research questions.

Data collection involves a systematic process of identifying, screening, and retrieving relevant documents from the selected databases and platforms. All retrieved sources are catalogued and organized using reference management software, with detailed records maintained of search terms, databases accessed, and

inclusion or exclusion decisions. Newspaper articles and online publications are archived with full citation details, including authorship and publication dates, to ensure transparency and traceability. Each document is assigned a unique identifier to facilitate systematic analysis.

The data analysis process follows a thematic analysis approach. All selected texts are read repeatedly to achieve familiarity with the content and context. Meaningful segments of text are then coded using a combination of inductive codes emerging from the data and deductive codes informed by the study's conceptual framework. Coding is conducted systematically, and related codes are grouped into categories that are subsequently developed into broader themes. These themes are compared across different types of sources, such as academic literature, human rights reports, and media accounts, to identify patterns, consistencies, and divergences. An analytical codebook and reflexive memos are maintained throughout the process to document analytical decisions and ensure consistency.

The trustworthiness of the study is ensured through several strategies. Credibility is strengthened through triangulation of multiple data sources and cross-checking of findings across academic, institutional, and media materials. Dependability is supported by maintaining a detailed audit trail of search strategies, data selection procedures, and analytical steps. The conformability is addressed by grounding interpretations in direct evidence from the data and by documenting researcher reflexivity to acknowledge

potential biases. Transferability is enhanced through rich contextual descriptions of the sources and settings, enabling readers to assess the applicability of findings to other contexts.

Ethical considerations are carefully observed throughout the research process. All data are derived from publicly available sources, and proper attribution is given to all authors and institutions in accordance with academic citation standards. Particular care is taken when engaging with sensitive human rights narratives to present them respectfully and without distortion. The study maintains transparency by clearly outlining methodological choices and acknowledging limitations, thereby ensuring that the research process is ethical, accountable, and replicable.

Problem Statement

Despite extensive existing literature on IIOJK, which have been largely focused on its territorial, security, and diplomatic dimensions, with comparatively limited attention given to the theoretical implications of post-2019 governance reforms on demographic and settlement dynamics. In particular, while the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A has been widely discussed in legal and political terms, there remains a notable gap in systematic, theory-driven analyses that situate these developments within broader frameworks of settler colonialism, demographic engineering, and occupation governance.

This study addresses this gap by examining India's post-abrogation policies that enable non-Kashmiris settlement in Jammu and Kashmir through a comparison with Israeli illegal settlement in Palestine. Drawing on scholarship on settlement practices in contested territories, the research engages with analytical parallels frequently drawn between Kashmir and the Israeli settlement model in the occupied Palestinian territories, an area that has received substantial theoretical and empirical attention but has rarely been applied rigorously to the Kashmiri context. The absence of such comparative analysis limits scholarly understanding of how settlement-oriented policies may reshape conflict trajectories, alter demographic balances, and affect prospects for self-determination and conflict resolution.

Theoretical Framework

The theory of Realism provides a useful framework for analyzing India's role in the Kashmir issue. Thucydides articulated the intellectual foundations of realism in the fifth century BCE in *The History of the Peloponnesian War*, where he emphasized the centrality of power in political relations.²¹ Through the Melian Dialogue, Thucydides illustrates the enduring realist principle that international politics is governed by power asymmetries, whereby

²¹ Aqlima Bano, and Asghar Ali Dashti. "Gilgit-Baltistan conflict between India and Pakistan: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17203009>." *ASSAJ* 4, no. 01 (2025): 4282-4293.

stronger states impose their will on weaker ones.²² From a realist perspective, states continuously seek to enhance their power to ensure survival and dominance. Within this framework, India's approach toward Kashmir reflects a classic realist strategy. As the materially stronger actor, India abrogated Articles 370 and 35A to consolidate territorial control and maximize its strategic and political influence in the region.²³

This realist logic is also evident in the writings of Kautilya, the Mauryan minister based in Taxila, who's *Arthashastra* underscores the importance of power accumulation and territorial expansion for state survival. Kautilya argued that states pursue not only security but also expansion, particularly at the expense of neighboring and weaker entities to enhance their capabilities and resources. India's abrogation of Kashmir's special constitutional status can thus be interpreted as an extension of this strategic tradition. The absence of an effective balance of power enables dominant states to pursue self-interested policies with limited restraint. Kashmir's relative weakness has afforded India such strategic latitude, resulting in the consolidation of control over the territory.

²² S. J. Afridi, L. M. Vladimirovna, and Q. Ali, "Pahalgam Incident: Tensions between India and Pakistan and the Role of SCO Member States and Global Actors in Ceasefire Efforts," *Journal of Social Sciences Research & Policy* 3, no. 03 (2025): 30–40.

²³ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas, "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the UN Resolutions," *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

Human Rights Violations in IIOJK post 2019

The abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in the Indian constitution in August 2019 precipitated profound social and political tensions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), resulting in gross violation of Human Rights. This constitutional rupture represented not merely a legal adjustment but a decisive reconfiguration of India's governance strategy in the region, signalling a transition from indirect administration to a model increasingly characterized by settler-colonial dynamics. Settler-colonial is the concept of settler colonialism, most systematically articulated by scholars such as Patrick Wolfe, which conceptualizes colonialism not as a singular historical event but as an enduring structure premised on the replacement of indigenous populations through demographic, legal, and territorial reconfiguration.²⁴ The move dismantled the framework of limited autonomy that had historically mediated the relationship between Kashmir and the Indian state, thereby following the details of HR Violations in IIOJK.

1. Deployment of Military Troops

In anticipation of resistance, the Indian government deployed over tens of thousands of additional security personnel to Jammu and

²⁴ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409, <https://doi.org/10.1080/14623520601056240>.

Kashmir.²⁵ The troops imposed a comprehensive communications blackout, and detained thousands of political leaders, including those previously aligned with New Delhi. While simultaneously enforcing sweeping restrictions on civil liberties and freedom of movement. Under President's Rule, the Indian Parliament issued Presidential Orders 272 and 273, which reinterpreted Article 367, the constitutional provision governing interpretation, to redefine the "Constituent Assembly of the State" in Article 370(3) as the Legislative Assembly.²⁶ This maneuver effectively circumvented constitutional safeguards and underscored the extent to which legal reinterpretation was instrumentalized to legitimize unilateral state action.

The Indian government had deployed heavy military troops after the abrogation of Article 370 and 35A, often justified under the pretext of protecting Hindu pilgrims. During the 2025 Amarnath Yatra, over 8,500 Indian army personnel were deployed, supported by thousands of paramilitary troops, specialized engineer teams, drones and signal jammers. This extensive deployment was officially framed as maintaining public safety, but in actual it constitutes intimidation and coercion on Kashmiris. The presence of elite Special Forces para-commandos in districts such as Kathua, Udhampur, Kishtwar, Doda, Rajouri and Poonch has become

²⁵ BBC News, "Kashmir: Tens of Thousands of Troops Deployed amid Article 370 Tensions," August 2019; *Human Rights Watch*, "India: Events of 2020," in *World Report 2021* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2021).

²⁶ Government of India, *The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order*, 2019, C.O. 272 (August 5, 2019); C.O. 273 (August 6, 2019).

permanent, indicating a shift from reactive counterinsurgency to institutionalized occupation. These forces, under the Indian Army's Northern Command, conduct routine cordon and search operations that instill fear among locals and suppress dissent, reinforcing a fascist occupation framework.²⁷

2. Ban on Political Activities and Dissents

Dozens of Kashmiri political leaders and civil society activists, including Bilal Siddiqui, Shabir Ahmad Shah, Muhammad Yasin Malik, Asiya Andrabi, Nayeem Ahmed Khan, Nahida Nasreen, Fahima Sofi, and Masrat Alam Bhat have remained incarcerated under stringent security legislations such as PSA and UAPA.²⁸ This pattern of mass incarceration and preventive detention reflects a broader strategy of political control following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019.

3. Centralized Government System

In a political move, New Delhi has appointed Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha who admitted that more than 800 Indian laws have been extended to Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).²⁹ The Indian administration claims these laws promote

²⁷ Kashmir Institute of International Relations, *Human Rights Report (2025)*, accessed December 30, 2025, <https://www.kiir.org.pk/Reports/human-rights-report-5232>

²⁸ Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, 1978 (Act No. 6 of 1978); Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (Act No. 37 of 1967), as amended.

²⁹ Office of the Lieutenant Governor, Jammu and Kashmir, "Address by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Completion of Two Years of

justice and equality. UN experts argue that they believe that many of these laws bypass local governance and erase centuries. While other Observers note that these measures are not mere legal reforms but strategic instruments to suppress Kashmiri voices and crush demands for self-determination.³⁰

4. Assigning Domiciles to Non-Kashmiris

India's new strategic colonization by new domicile policy in Ladakh was implemented in June 2025. According to the policy the residents with 15 years of continuous stay since 2019 now qualify as domiciles, allowing non-native population to claim local status by 2034. Additionally, children of government officials serving ten years and students studying locally for seven years are also granted ten domicile status. The government introduced 85% reservation for Scheduled Tribes in government jobs, even though more than 97% of Ladakh's population already belongs to scheduled tribes.³¹ This shows how fast India is colonizing IIOJK in order to capture territory to the fullest. In parallel, approximately 83742 domicile certificates have reportedly been issued to non-Kashmiris,

Reorganisation," Government of Jammu and Kashmir, August 2021; see also Press Trust of India, "Over 800 Central Laws Extended to J&K after Abrogation of Article 370: LG Manoj Sinha," *The Hindu*, August 5, 2021.

³⁰ Nitasha Kaul, ed., *The Kashmir Question in a Changing World: Beyond August 2019* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023); Anuradha Bhasin, *A Dismantled State: The Untold Story of Kashmir After Article 370* (Gurugram: HarperCollins India, 2023).

³¹ Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, "Ladakh Domicile Rules Notification," June 2025 (official notification).

significantly altering the region's demographic composition.³² Electoral delimitation has further reinforced political restructuring, with Jammu despite a smaller population receiving disproportionately more assembly seats than the Kashmir Valley. Additionally, over two million non-Kashmiris have been added to voter lists, raising concerns over electoral manipulation.

Most critically, the issuance of millions of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris over the past five years has significantly altered the region's demographic balance. Concerns have also emerged regarding the strategic allocation of land to major Indian conglomerates, including the Ambani and Adani groups.³³ Tourist sites and cultural landmarks are increasingly controlled by external entities, eroding local ownership and identity. Furthermore, the growing influx of pilgrims and large-scale development projects has disrupted Kashmir's fragile ecological balance, contributing to environmental degradation and increased flooding.³⁴

³² The Hindu Bureau, "83,742 Domicile Certificates Granted to Non-locals in 2 Years: J&K Govt," *The Hindu*, April 10, 2025.

³³ Reuters, "India Opens Kashmir Land Market to Outside Investors after Special Status Revoked," October 27, 2020; Economic Times, "Adani Group Explores Investment Opportunities in Jammu and Kashmir," 2021.

³⁴ Rakesh Kalshian, "Tourism Boom and Ecological Fragility in Kashmir," *Dawn to Earth*, July 2023; Greater Kashmir, "Unplanned Development Raises Flood Risks in Kashmir Valley," 2023.

5. International Reports on Human Rights violations in IIOJK

Following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in August 2019, human rights conditions in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir drew intensified scrutiny from international observers. Reports by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), Amnesty International, and Human Rights Watch documented prolonged detentions, restrictions on communication, and constraints on freedom of expression and assembly in the aftermath of the constitutional changes.³⁵ Several analysts have argued that the unilateral alteration of the region's constitutional status must be understood in the context of longstanding United Nations Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, including Resolution 47 (1948), which called for a plebiscite to determine the region's political future.³⁶ Legal scholars and political commentators further contend that the scale of militarization and the extension of central laws raise complex questions under international

³⁵ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), *Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019* (Geneva: United Nations, 2019); Amnesty International, *'We Are Being Punished by the Law': Three Years since the Abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir* (London: Amnesty International, 2022); Human Rights Watch, "India: Events of 2019," in *World Report 2020* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2020).

³⁶ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 47 (1948), S/726 (April 21, 1948); see also Sumit Ganguly, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

humanitarian and human rights law applicable to disputed territories.³⁷

6. Extensive use of Laws (PSA, AFSPA, UAPA)

The imposition of draconian laws, such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) a controversial law in India that grants special powers to the armed forces in disturbed areas to maintain public order. Second one the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) enacted in 1967 is India's primary legislation aimed at preventing unlawful activities and terrorism, granting extensive powers to the government to combat threats to national integrity. Third one and most used one, Public Safety Act (PSA) of 1978 is a preventive detention law that allows authorities to detain individuals without trial to maintain public order and state security. The Government of India conducted extensive and systematic arrests across IIOJK, targeting political leaders, activists, members of civil society, lawyers, journalists, business figures, and hundreds of young boys, including minors under the age of eighteen. Many of these individuals were detained under the PSA.³⁸

India's three controversial counter-terrorism laws are explicitly criticized by the International community. In 2024, the United

³⁷ A. G. Noorani, *Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2011); Christophe Jaffrelot, "Kashmir after Article 370: Political Centralization and the Erosion of Federalism," *Journal of Democracy* 31, no. 4 (2020): 101–115.

³⁸ Anuradha Bhasin, *A Dismantled State: The Untold Story of Kashmir After Article 370* (Gurugram: HarperCollins India, 2023); Human Rights Watch, "India: Mass Detentions in Kashmir," August 2019.

Nations Human Rights Committee raised concerns regarding these legislations.³⁹ The report systematically associates the implementation of these laws with violations of multiple provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), both of which have been ratified by India.⁴⁰ These violations encompass fundamental rights, including the rights to life, liberty, and freedom from torture, as well as the rights to privacy, freedom of expression and religion, adequate housing, and freedom from discrimination.

7. Extrajudicial killings & Custodial Deaths

Since the unilateral abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, IIOJK has experienced a dramatic escalation in human rights violations, with extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths reaching alarming levels. According to the reports, over 1030 Kashmiris have been killed in encounters orchestrated by Indian forces between 2019 and 2025.⁴¹ These killings are often framed as legitimate counter-terror

³⁹ World Muslim Congress, *Human Rights Situation in Indian-Administered Jammu and Kashmir: A Call for Urgent Attention from United Nations Human Rights Councils*, written statement submitted to the Human Rights Council, Fifty-eighth session, A/HRC/58/NGO/10 (21 February 2025), United Nations, <https://documents.un.org/doc/undoc/gen/g25/028/84/pdf/g2502884.pdf>

⁴⁰ United Nations Human Rights Committee, *Concluding Observations on the Fourth Periodic Report of India*, CCPR/C/IND/CO/4 (Geneva: United Nations, 2024).

⁴¹ Kashmir Institute of International Relations. 2025. *Human Rights Report*. December 30, 2025. <https://www.kiir.org.pk/Reports/human-rights-report-5232>

operations but it is clearly state sponsored violence. Extrajudicial killings have become a core element of India's strategy to maintain control over IIOJK. For instance, in August 2025, Riyaz Ahmed was killed at a Srinagar police station under circumstances suggesting severe custodial abuse, provoking widespread protests across the Valley. These incidents demonstrate that the killings are not isolated but part of a deliberate policy to intimidate the population and crush political resistance. The persistence of extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths in IIOJK is not a series of unfortunate incidents but a calculated policy by the Indian occupation forces to suppress political dissent. Extrajudicial killings and custodial deaths in IIOJK from 2019 to 2025 reveal a systematic policy of repression by Indian occupation forces.

8. Crimes against Women

Crimes against women have been a recurring feature of state practices in the region. Kashmiri women have historically been targeted as part of the broader conflict. Following the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in 2019, incidents of violence and other crimes against Kashmiri women have reportedly increased significantly. Media content, including songs circulated on platforms such as YouTube, promoted messages encouraging migration to the Muslim-majority region, acquisition of land, and intermarriage with Kashmiri women. Women often become primary targets in violent conflicts because they are perceived as symbols of community identity, honor, and social prestige. Consequently, Kashmiri women

and children face profound challenges in navigating life within a protracted conflict zone.⁴²

Kashmir is unique in the world for the phenomenon of “half-widows.” Since most of the disappeared men originate from rural areas, these widows often live in impoverished conditions, facing a range of socio-economic and emotional challenges, including the lack of property rights, absence of compensation, and restrictions on the right to remarry. Under a joint agreement, the wives of Kashmiri men who have disappeared during the conflict are permitted to remarry four years after their husbands’ disappearance. Civil society activists view this provision as a potential foundation for broader dialogue to address the remaining rights of half-widows, including inheritance rights under Islamic law. This issue represents a critical social and legal challenge. A landmark consensus reached by Islamic scholars (Ulema) establishing a four-year waiting period for half-widows to remarry is expected to have a profound impact on the lives of these marginalized individuals.⁴³ Decades of conflict have produced numerous half-widows, women whose husbands have disappeared but have not yet been declared deceased.

The Indian government has not reinstated freedom of speech and association five years after the revocation of the region’s special

⁴² Anuradha Bhasin, *A Dismantled State: The Untold Story of Kashmir After Article 370* (Gurugram: HarperCollins India, 2023).

⁴³ Conciliation Resources, “*Breakthrough Ruling on Kashmir ‘Half-Widows,’*” January 2014, Conciliation Resources, <https://www.c-r.org/news-and-insight/breakthrough-ruling-kashmir>

autonomous status on 5 August 2019. Over the past six years, the Union Home Ministry has proscribed ten resistance groups and organizations in IIOJK under the UAPA framework. United Nations human rights experts have expressed serious concerns regarding the Indian government's response to a major terrorist attack in the region, highlighting a pattern of mass arbitrary detention, collective punishment, discriminatory demolitions, and a systematic suppression of civil liberties, disproportionately affecting the Muslim population.

9. Raids on Houses after Pahalgam Attack

Following the Pahalgam incident on 22 April 2025, between 24 and 27 April, Indian authorities demolished at least nine houses in Kashmir, including ancestral homes, belonging to families of individuals perceived as supporting the militants responsible for the attack.⁴⁴ Villagers were reportedly forced to vacate their homes and returned to find them razed, resulting in enforced eviction and displacement.

According to United Nations experts, Indian authorities conducted extensive security operations in Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in the arrest of approximately 2,800 individuals. These individuals were reportedly detained on suspicions of sympathizing with or

⁴⁴ Kashmir Institute of International Relations. 2025. *Human Rights Report*. <https://www.kiir.org.pk/Reports/human-rights-report-5232>

acting as overground workers for militant groups.⁴⁵ Many arrests allegedly occurred during night raids without warrants, with detainees held for several days without formal charges. Reports indicate that numerous detainees were subjected to torture and ill-treatment, including physical beatings, and were held incommunicado, denied access to legal counsel or family members. Some individuals were reportedly transferred to detention centers outside the region, further impeding their access to legal remedies. It is estimated between 75 and 90 individuals have been charged under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA). Furthermore, fewer than 12 under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), both of which have been repeatedly criticized by United Nations bodies for their potential for abuse.⁴⁶

10. Suspension of Social Media and bans on Media, Books

The report outlines a significant clampdown on freedom of expression and access to information. The Jammu and Kashmir administration reportedly implemented temporary mobile internet suspensions, while the Indian government allegedly blocked approximately 8,000 social media accounts, including those belonging to independent news organizations and Kashmiri

⁴⁵ United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), “UN Experts Alarmed by Indian Counter-Terrorism Operations Violating Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir,” *Press Release*, November 24, 2025.

⁴⁶ “UN Experts Alarmed by Indian Counter-Terrorism Operations Violating Human Rights in Jammu and Kashmir.” *Press Release*, November 24, 2025. *OHCHR*. <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/11/un-experts-alarmed-indian-counter-terrorism-operations-violating-human>

journalists, without legal justification.⁴⁷ Newspapers in Kashmir have reportedly been deprived of essential government advertisements, jeopardizing their financial sustainability. Furthermore, the report highlights an increase in surveillance targeting Kashmiri students both within and outside Jammu and Kashmir. Specifically, it cites a directive from Delhi University, issued under the orders of the Ministry of Home Affairs, requesting personal information exclusively from Kashmiri students, a measure described as generating fear and a sense of alienation.⁴⁸

Restrictions on the freedoms of expression, association, assembly, and movement for Kashmiris have persisted since August 2019. The curtailment of freedom of expression is not new for Kashmiris living under Indian occupation. Even prior to 2019, Indian authorities sought to restrict freedom of expression through internet shutdowns, media censorship, and the arrest of journalists. These practices reflect the insecurity of the Indian state regarding Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Since 2019, the exercise of such power has intensified, adversely affecting the daily lives of Kashmiris, exacerbating their socioeconomic conditions, and inhibiting access to education, healthcare, and livelihood opportunities. The Indian government maintains that these measures

⁴⁷ Humayun Aziz Sandeela, "Unfolding Human Rights Catastrophe in IIOJK," *Kashmir Media Service*, <https://kmsnews.org/kms/2025/12/10/unfolding-human-rights-catastrophe-in-iiojk.html>

⁴⁸ Maktoob Staff, "Delhi University: Jammu and Kashmir Students Demand Revocation of Circular Demanding Personal Information," *Maktoob Media*, May 7, 2025, <https://maktoobmedia.com/india/delhi-university-jammu-and-kashmir-students-demand-revocation-of-circular-demanding-personal-information>

are intended to prevent the spread of misinformation and to maintain public order in response to security-related incidents and political unrest in Kashmir.⁴⁹

In late November 2025, police IIOJK conducted a raid on the offices of *The Kashmir Times*, a prominent local newspaper known for its continued reporting on conditions in the region despite escalating restrictions.⁵⁰ This incident followed earlier measures by the Indian government, including the prohibition of a book authored by Anuradha Bhasin, the managing editor of *The Kashmir Times*, which was among twenty-five publications banned after the Pahalgam incidents. Such actions, aimed at silencing independent media, represent a direct violation of the right to freedom of expression guaranteed under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and Article 19(1) (a) of the Indian Constitution.

The broader ban on twenty-five books in Kashmir, justified by authorities on the grounds of allegedly promoting secessionist narratives, reflects the intensification of media censorship in the region.⁵¹ Individuals risk imprisonment for selling or possessing

⁴⁹ Adil Minhas, Bilal Ahmad, and Muhammad Khan. "Seizing Kashmir's Identity: Implications for Global Peace and Stability." *NDU Journal* (2019): 63–82. <https://ndu.edu.pk/ndu-journal/pubnew/04-Seizing-Kashmir.pdf>.

⁵⁰ Al Jazeera Staff. "Police Raid Kashmir Times Media Office in Jammu: Reports." *Al Jazeera*, November 20, 2025. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2025/11/20/police-raid-kashmir-times-media-office-in-jammu-reports>

⁵¹ AFP. "Police Raid IIOJK Bookshops after India Bans 25 Titles for 'Secessionism'." *Business Recorder*, August 8, 2025. <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40376942>

these works, which include writings by internationally recognized figures such as Booker Prize-winning author Arundhati Roy. Police raids on bookstores, roadside vendors, and other establishments in Srinagar and beyond underscore the coercive enforcement of these restrictions. Notably, the banned works document the lived experiences, suppression, and political struggles of Kashmiris before and after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, highlighting the systematic attempt to erase dissenting voices and control historical memory.

11. Increasing rate of children who are out of schools

One of the major challenges confronting the Kashmiri population is the increasing number of children who are out of school. This trend is largely driven by pervasive insecurity, as Indian security forces have reportedly targeted young boys through arrests, harassment, and enforced disappearances, creating an environment of fear that discourages school attendance. Recent data presented to the Indian Upper House, the Rajya Sabha, further underscores the severity of this issue. According to the report, Jammu and Kashmir has experienced a significant rise in out-of-school adolescent girls over the past five years, representing one of the steepest upward trends in the country. Specifically, there were 16,537 out-of-school children in 2021-22, including 9,045 girls. This number escalated sharply to 38,994 children in 2025-26, of whom 16,900 were girls. The data

were presented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in the Rajya Sabha.⁵²

Findings

Kashmir has endured suffering for over seventy-eight years, yet the international community has failed to take substantive action. Although several United Nations resolutions have been passed regarding the region, little practical progress has been achieved. This can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the United Nations lacks the authority to enforce its resolutions; it can only address issues and propose solutions through recommendations and resolutions. Secondly, the United States, as the largest financial contributor to the United Nations providing approximately 22% of its annual budget exerts significant influence over the organization. Thirdly, India constitutes a major market for Western and American products, with India and the United States maintaining a trade relationship exceeding one hundred billion dollars. Fourthly, India is a strategic partner of the United States, assisting in counterbalancing Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific region. This partnership is formalized through four defense and strategic agreements: the General Security of Military Information Agreement (GSOMIA), the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), the Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement

⁵² KL News Network, “*Jammu Kashmir Flags Sharp Rise in Out-of-School Adolescent Girls; Last Count 16900*,” *Kashmir Life*, December 3, 2025, <https://kashmirlife.net/jammu-kashmir-flags-sharp-rise-in-out-of-school-adolescent-girls-last-count-16900-415449/>

(COMCASA), and the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA). Additionally, India participates in the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad), a four-nation military and economic initiative aimed at limiting Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific, a region through which approximately half of global trade passes.⁵³

Secondly, Indian behavior could be explained by the example of the Israeli settlement project in the West Bank and governance transformations in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) reveals both structural parallels and contextual distinctions. Following the 1967 war, Israel established civilian settlements in territories captured during the conflict, a process widely regarded by the international community as inconsistent with international humanitarian law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention.⁵⁴ Over time, the expansion of settlements has been accompanied by differentiated legal regimes, extensive securitization, and infrastructural integration, reinforcing long-term territorial consolidation.

In August 2019, India abrogated Articles 370 and 35A of its Constitution, revoked the semi-autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir, and enacted the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, bifurcating the region into two Union Territories. The

⁵³ Amna Naz, "US-India Defence Pact: Implications for Pakistan," *Stratheia*, November 20, 2025, <https://stratheia.com/us-india-defence-pact-implications-for-pakistan/>

⁵⁴ United Nations Security Council, Resolution 2334 (2016), S/RES/2334 (December 23, 2016).

issuance of Presidential Orders C.O. 272 and C.O. 273 reinterpreted constitutional provisions to facilitate this transformation during a period of President's Rule.⁵⁵ Subsequent domicile and land law reforms enabled non-residents to acquire residency status and property rights in the region, prompting concerns among segments of the local population regarding demographic change and political marginalization. From a settler-colonial theoretical perspective particularly the framework articulated by Patrick Wolfe, who conceptualized settler colonialism as a "structure, not an event" such measures may be interpreted as mechanisms of demographic and territorial restructuring rather than isolated policy shifts.⁵⁶

There is growing concern that Kashmir may become a second Palestine. Since the abrogation of Articles 35A and 370, non-Kashmiris have increasingly been settled in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). In April 2025, over 83,000 domiciles were assigned to non-Kashmiris in the region, reflecting a settler strategy reminiscent of colonial models. A parallel can be drawn with Israel's settlement policies in Palestine, which began in 1967 and have resulted in the systematic acquisition of Palestinian properties by Israeli settlers.⁵⁷ Over the past two years, allegations

⁵⁵ Government of India, *The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order*, 2019, C.O. 272 (August 5, 2019); C.O. 273 (August 6, 2019).

⁵⁶ Patrick Wolfe, "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native," *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4 (2006): 387–409.

⁵⁷ The Hindu Bureau. "83,742 Domicile Certificates Granted to Non-locals in 2 Years: J&K Govt." *The Hindu*, April 10, 2025. <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/jammu-and-kashmir/83742-domicile-certificates-granted-to-non-locals-in-2-years-jk-govt/article69432373.ece>.

of genocide in Palestine have been reported, yet neither states nor international organizations have effectively intervened. Furthermore, the United States has exercised its veto power most recently the sixth veto against United Nations Security Council resolutions calling for a ceasefire, signaling support for Israeli actions as a strategic partner.

Policy Recommendations

The international community must raise its voice regarding the plight of the Kashmiri people, as the situation demands urgent and decisive intervention. Failure to address these issues may lead to consequences analogous to those observed in Palestine. India appears to be implementing policies reminiscent of the Israeli model, particularly about demographic manipulation and territorial strategies similar to those employed by Israeli settlers in Palestinian territories.

While the production of books, articles, and reports is valuable for raising awareness, such efforts alone are insufficient to achieve a meaningful resolution of the Kashmir conflict. Concrete and decisive measures are necessary to protect the rights, safety, and livelihoods of the Kashmiri population. The current trajectory of events increasingly mirrors the situation in Gaza, highlighting the urgent need for international engagement and action.

After seventy-eight years of suffering, the Kashmiri people have endured prolonged hardship, and the situation continues to

deteriorate. Immediate measures, including the facilitation of a credible referendum, are essential to prevent the escalation of the crisis toward a scenario comparable to that of Palestine.

Conclusion

In conclusion, following the abrogation of Articles 35A and 370, political and social tensions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have been intensifying progressively. The indigenous Kashmiri population continues to endure multifaceted suffering, including restrictions on freedom of expression, impediments to education, arbitrary detentions, psychological distress, and shortages of essential resources. The international community must adopt stringent measures to address this crisis; failure to do so may result in consequences as severe as those observed in Palestine, given that India appears to be implementing policies akin to the Israeli model. The human rights situation remains critical, with the Kashmiri people unable to exercise their fundamental freedoms and live with dignity.



Kashmir Terrorism and Politics of Blame

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Abstract

Kashmir has been a long-standing conflicted region between Pakistan and India. It has been shaped by opposing narratives which drown out the pain of ordinary Kashmiri's. The objectives of this study reflect Indian strategic hypocrisy of sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir while ignoring its own involvement as well as blaming Pakistan without any concrete evidence. Pakistan rejected Indian claims, because India uses Kashmir as a threshold of war against Pakistan also to legitimize its presence in Indian illegally occupied Kashmir (IIOK). Pakistan advocated for a free and fair referendum as mandated by the United Nation Resolution. The blame politics often diverts attention from local issues and perpetuates the conflicts in the region. For instance, the URI attack in 2016, the Pulwama attack in 2019, and most recently the Pahalgam attack in 2025 each

episode follows the similar pattern of attack blaming Pakistan, India domestic media become frenzy and follow dissenting narratives. The significance of this study lies in the analysis of blame politics. The study recommends that blame politics hides the grievances of the local Kashmiri's and the rights given by the UN charter. The study contributes insightful knowledge for policymakers, scholarly realms, and academia.

Keywords: Pakistan, India, Kashmir, Conflict, LOC, Militants, United Nations, Terrorism

Introduction

The Kashmir conflict constitutes one of the most protracted territorial and political disputes in the south Asian region. Its origin is from the partition of the Indian subcontinent of 1947. The people of Jammu and Kashmir had no opportunity for autonomous status, thereby setting fire to geopolitical tensions¹. From the Pakistani perspective, the Kashmir issue extended beyond territorial claim, but to justice and self-determination. For decades, the citizens of Kashmir have been living under extreme mobilization and stringent restrictions. Whereas Pakistan has always with consistent approach advocated the Kashmiri cause at international and regional forums.²

¹ Kokab Saeed et al., "From Pahalgam to Ceasefire: The 2025 India–Pakistan Conflict, Its Historical Roots, And Donald Trump's Mediation Role," *Pakistan Journal of Social Science Review* 4, no. 4 (2025): 1173–204.

² Robert C. Mayfield, "A Geographic Study of the Kashmir Issue," *Geographical Review* 45, no. 2 (1955): 181–96.

The published literature indicates that the emergence of militancy in Kashmir was shaped by political grievances and unfulfilled commitments. The 1987 elections were widely regarded as deeply rigged, which was cited as a critical turning point that pushed Kashmiris towards resistance. Pakistan extended its political and moral support to the Kashmiris, while the Indian military resisted³. Instead of addressing the public grievances, the Indian government frames it as a movement of terrorism. This narrative provided justification for the implementation of stringent laws and extensive military operations. Pakistan, on the other hand, has argued that the struggle of Kashmiris is indigenous and they are fighting for self-determinations.⁴

After the events of September 11, 2001, the global war on terror underwent dynamic changes. The Indian government declared the regional issue of Kashmir as an international conflict. India linked the Kashmiri struggle with terrorism. Pakistan rejected the false characterization of India, emphasizing that the people of Kashmiri are not violent and extremist; however, they are fighting for their rights of freedom. Pakistan pointed out that the only way to achieve peace in Kashmir is through sustained dialogue that addresses all Kashmiri grievances. Pakistan always upholds its commitments

³ Mahrukh Baig and Rana Eijaz Ahmad, "The Shift in Geopolitical Alliances and Its Impact on the UN's Role in The Kashmir Conflict," *Annals of Human and Social Sciences* 5, no. 4 (2024): 630–45.

⁴ Shakti Bhatt, "State Terrorism vs. Jihad in Kashmir," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 33, no. 2 (2003): 215–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472330380000131>.

under the United Nation Charter particularly for the people of Kashmir⁵.

Bad Governance and continued violation of human rights in the Indian illegally occupied Kashmir IIOK has complicated the crisis. Investigation reports from multiple scholars, scholars, critical thinkers and international organizations highlight the off-camera situation in which ordinary people live under passive fear and uncertainty. For instance, physical torture, enforced disappearances, and sever restriction on the freedom of expression are common. Pakistan raises all the concerns of Kashmiri people at the international forum, and believes that peace cannot be achieved in south Asian if Kashmir remains oppressed ⁶.

Over time, the politics of blame has developed into institutionalized practice. India blames Pakistan for sponsoring terrorism. while, Pakistan answers with concrete evidence exposing India of refusing to grant fundamental rights to the people of Kashmir. Interestingly, scholars from both sides blame each other for ongoing violence, instability and lack of resolution in dispute. This paper seeks to examine the background history of the conflict, the role of terrorism in Kashmir, and the emerging global crisis that is responsible for

⁵ Rekha Chowdhary, "Terrorism and Political Movement in Kashmir," *The Dark Side of Globalization*, 2011, 144.

⁶ Sumantra Bose, "The India-Pakistan Crisis of 2025: Retrospect and Prospect," *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 53, no. 4 (2025): 969–78, <https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2025.2512144>.

Pakistan in global terrorism.⁷ This paper also highlights the key role of the media that provides a fair podium to the people of Kashmir to express their voices. It also mentions Pakistan's peaceful approach to Kashmir, while India has relied on military measures.

Research Questions

1. How does India blame politics by accusing Pakistan of fueling terrorism in Kashmir?
2. How do these accusations influence the conflict and worsen conditions for Kashmiris?

Significance of the Study,

The key aspect of this study is that Kashmir is not merely a territorial dispute but a region where individuals struggle for their freedom. Over the past decades, the Kashmiri population has been treated under extensive militarization under Indian administration, while the Indian authority frequently blames Pakistan for the instability in the region and for sponsoring terrorism. Pakistan rejected such claims and contended that such narratives are used as a tool to secure international support and to legitimize its action in Indian illegally occupied Kashmir (IIOK). This study further

⁷ Shahid Ahmad Hashmat, "Kashmir Dispute between India and Pakistan: Implication for Regional Peace and Stability in South Asia," *Journal of Interdisciplinary Insights* 3, no. 2 (2025): 24–37. See also Saima Farhad, "The Making of a Disaster: Conflict Intractability and Governance Contradictions in Kashmir," in *Disaster Studies*, ed. Janki Ancharia (Springer Singapore, 2020), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-32-9339-7_21.

examines the critical aspects of blame politics designed to attack another country, such as the 2019 escalation and the recent 2025 war. This study also highlights that Pakistan consistently supported the right of self-determination for the people of Kashmir. It reveals that the peace in South Asia is linked to the peace in Kashmir. This research is significant for researchers in academia, public policy, and human rights. It addresses how human rights are violated, and humanity is crushed through militarization.

Problem Statement

The Kashmir conflict has lasted more than seven decades and continues to bring daily suffering to millions. A promise of self-determination made in 1948 remains unfulfilled. People live under strict curfews, forced disappearances, and an enduring constant atmosphere of fear.⁸ India has consistently used the politics of blame, framing the Kashmiri struggle as terrorism and linking it with Pakistan. The analysts argue that Pakistan has stood firmly with the people of Kashmir, repeatedly calling for the promised referendum and their right to determine their own future.⁹ Between these ongoing accusations, the voices of ordinary Kashmiris are lost¹⁰. Most studies remain caught in the same cycle of blame, treating Kashmir as a territorial contest. The human reality, the grief, the shattered families, and the longing for dignity rarely find their

⁸ Nagma Mangrio, "A Historical and Political Perspective of Kashmir Issue," *The Dialogue* 7, no. 3 (2012): 255–64.

⁹ Mangrio, "A Historical and Political Perspective of Kashmir Issue."

¹⁰ Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan, "Kashmir and Power Politics," *Defence Journal* 23, no. 2 (2019): 48.

place. This study fills that gap. It centers the Kashmiri people and their lived experience. It shows that the issue of Kashmir is not just about the territory but the innocent people who deserve the basic fundamental rights to decide their own paths independently.¹¹

Literature Review

Scholarly research has vividly examined the Kashmir conflict. Different writers have explored its historical dimensions, political realities and consequences on humans. Research literature suggests that Kashmir is not merely a subject of territorial dispute, yet it also presents the question of justice and self-determination. Pakistan's stance is clear in this regard; the struggle of Kashmiri people is indigenous in nature, driven by their aspirations for independence. On the flip side, India has always framed their struggle from the lenses of terrorism. This divergence in narrative plays a crucial role in shaping how conflict is interpreted¹².

Previous research highlights that the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir was not given a genuine opportunity to determine its political future in 1947. The majority of the population was Muslim, and people believe that joining Pakistan would be a better option for opportunities to practice their religion freely and to enjoy fundamental rights. However, the signing of the Instrument of Accession in favor of India created significant political uncertainty

¹¹ Abdul Majid and Mahboob Hussin, "Kashmir: A Conflict between India and Pakistan," *South Asian Studies* 31, no. 1 (2020), <http://journals.pu.edu.pk/journals/index.php/IJSAS/article/view/3038>.

¹² Hashmat, "Kashmir Dispute between India and Pakistan."

and dispute.¹³ Pakistan raised the issue at the United Nations, and the UN resolutions called for a plebiscite. India refused to conduct a plebiscite. Scholars describe this refusal as the first betrayal of the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.¹⁴

Researchers emphasize notable concern regarding governance challenges in Kashmir. Issues such as corruption and administrative inefficiencies have contributed to a sense of alienation among the population. The 1987 election is regarded as a critical turning point, as numerous policy analysts suggest that alleged irregularities may have impacted public confidence in the electoral process. Following this period, some young Kashmiri sought alternative means of expression, leading to increased support for armed resistance. However, India responded with extensive military measures. This era is described as a turning point that saw the rise of militancy in the region. Scholars, for example, highlighted that the movement was rooted in local grievances, and external support acting as amplifying factors.¹⁵ The global context of September 11 significantly influenced the academic perspective on the Kashmir conflict. India portrays the struggle of Kashmir as externally driven terrorism, while Pakistan emphasizes the legitimacy of Kashmir

¹³ Rashida Abbas, Adeela Ahmed, and Muhammad Tabish, "Mediation in Armed Conflict: A Case of Kashmir," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v5i2.423>

¹⁴ Sekhar Sil, "Kashmir and the Problem of Terrorism: The Response of the Indian State," *Jadavpur Journal of International Relations* 14, no. 1 (2010): 56–75, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0973598410110005>.

¹⁵ Muhammad Waqas and Khalil Rehman, "The Kashmir Dispute: A Strategic Analysis," *VFAST Transactions on Education and Social Sciences* 11, no. 3 (2023): 17–23, <https://doi.org/10.21015/vtess.v11i3.1662>.

aspiration for self-determination.¹⁶ Scholarly literature from this period illustrates the influence of global narrative on regional conflict. Some authors stated that India employed the war on terror as meant to justify several legislation and military action. It is apparent from the literature that international politics significantly contributed to the escalation of the conflict. Additionally, a prevailing theme concerns human rights; reports indicate that Indian illegally occupied Kashmir IIOK has experienced instance of torture and suppression of freedom of speech by various organization. These violations are said to have intensified local resentment and perpetuated the cycle of resistance.¹⁷

At the same time militant groups carried out attacks on civilian and majority pollution, further complicating the security situation. The literature also highlights a persistent pattern of mutual accusation, India attributes terrorism sponsorship to Pakistan, while Pakistan emphasizes systemic human rights violation and excessive militarization in the region. Scholars describe these dynamics as a vicious cycle of blame, in which both parties blame each other, yet the civilian population absorbed the majority of impact. Furthermore, media analysis reveals a contrasting narrative; India media often emphasize security concerns and attribute instability to Pakistan actions. Whereas Pakistan media highlights human rights violations and advocates for self-determination.

¹⁶ Mangrio, "A Historical and Political Perspective of Kashmir Issue."

¹⁷ Rekha Nair, "Study of Kashmir as an Issue in Indo-Pak Relations-A Historical and Political Perspective," *UGC Care Group I Journal* 12, no. 10 (2022): 114–21.

Another critical dimension of this study concerns with the everyday struggle of the Kashmiri civilians. Scholars discuss about the of families who are separated in the Line of Control, are now facing psychological effects, poverty, and limited access to opportunities¹⁸. The cost of the conflict remains immense, and Pakistan has repeatedly raised these concerns at international forums, and demands justice and the recognition of the Kashmiri voice.¹⁹

The researchers believe that the voices of the people cannot be ignored. In recent research, the focus is on the 2019 revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. India took away Article 370 and imposed a lockdown in the valley. Scholars widely characterize this move as a significant escalation.²⁰ Pakistan condemned the action and brought up the matter at the United Nations. This decision has continued to estrange the people and bring about more tensions, as demonstrated in the literature. The authors believe that it is against international law, which undermines the rights of Kashmiris. Pakistan has indicated that peace in South Asia is not possible as long as the region of Kashmir is under occupation.²¹

¹⁸ “The Psychological Impact of Forced Disappearances On Kashmiri Families,” <https://Kiir.Org.Pk/Blogs/the-Psychological-Impact-of-Forced-Disappearances-on-Kashmiri-Families-5608>, <https://kiir.org.pk/blogs/the-psychological-impact-of-forced-disappearances-on-kashmiri-families-5608>.

¹⁹ Sameer P. Lalwani and Gillian Gayner, *India’s Kashmir Conundrum: Before and After the Abrogation of Article 370* (JSTOR, 2020), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/pdf/resrep25405.pdf>.

²⁰ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas, “Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions,” *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

²¹ Saeed et al., “From Pahalgam to Ceasefire.”

A researcher also highlights the strong elements of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological nucleus of the Hindutva movement, which has marginalized the minorities groups that have shaped the contemporary politics of India, especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had been associated with the ideology of RSS since his young age and dedicated himself as an active volunteer since entering the politics. The RSS and the BJP are masters at navigating and exploiting to gain support and reshape the national discourse. In contrast, Pakistan's stance generally emphasizes human rights and advocates for dialogue and peace.²²

The 2019 war between India and Pakistan has also been discussed in recent writings. India blamed Pakistan for terrorism in Indian illegally occupied Kashmir without valid evidence. This blame was used to justify its military action. Pakistan refuted the Indian allegations and claimed that the struggle for independence in Kashmir is an indigenous movement. The recent clash between India and Pakistan has revealed how quickly blame games can escalate into an open conflict. India has consistently used terror allegations to avoid bilateral dialogue, whereas Pakistan called for investigation and dialogue.²³ The 2025 war also showed that blame games without evidence can increase tensions and lead to utterly destructive consequences. Indian media and political speeches were

²² Ahmed Ali, "RSS at 100: Continuity amid Change," *Stratheia*, May 9, 2025, <https://stratheia.com/rss-at-100-continuity-amid-change/>.

²³ Naveed Mushtaq, "Evolving Indo-Pak Conflict Dynamics and Its Strategic Implications in the Post-Pahalgam Scenario," *Journal of Political Stability Archive* 3, no. 4 (2025): 61–74.

rife with accusations of Pakistan sponsoring terrorism. Pakistan instead insisted that the independence movement in Kashmir is an indigenous struggle aimed at securing their social and political rights. In the given context, Pakistan faced a two-front challenge emanating from India as well as Afghanistan. With cordial relations developing between Afghanistan and India, it doubled the dilemma for Pakistan. Scholars note that the 2025 clash was avoidable through consistent diplomacy and negotiations.²⁴ In this literature, India used allegations as a weapon to escalate the situation, while Pakistan emphasized peaceful resolution and dialogue. Existing literature shows that the blame game politics are a defining feature of the India-Pakistan discourse, shaping regional politics and interpretation of events. Such framing disparity is one of the reasons the conflict between the two countries remains alive. Therefore it is essential to respect the desires of the Kashmiri people in any resolution of the Kashmir issue.²⁵ This literature review builds the foundation for the subsequent sections of the paper by revealing the multidimensional nature of the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan. It also outlines a wide range of scholarship whose aim is to explain the causes and implications of the war. It emphasizes the idea that terrorism should be viewed in the context of external intervention and deeply rooted grievances of the local population.²⁶

²⁴ Mehreen Yaseen et al., "False Flag or Faulty Intelligence? A Diplomatic Analysis of India's Accusations Against Pakistan After the 2025 Pahalgam Attack," *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies* 3, no. 3 (2025): 48–66.

²⁵ Mushtaq, "Evolving Indo-Pak Conflict Dynamics and Its Strategic Implications in the Post-Pahalgam Scenario."

²⁶ Bose, "The India-Pakistan Crisis of 2025."

This analysis demonstrates that the blame game politics in South Asia have shaped dominant narratives, policy responses and international relations. It is pertinent to note that the people of Kashmir remain the centerpiece of the conflict. Despite a long history of instability, human losses and a legitimate aspiration for rights, dignity and agency, they continue to assert their existence in an increasingly majoritarian India.²⁷

Methodology

For the proper interpreting of meanings, narratives and patterns embedded in diplomatic and political articles on Kashmir, qualitative research design is used in this study. Qualitative content analysis is used because in international relations we often need to understand not just what is said, but how certain framing carries power and tell the story in conflicting ways. Data is picked from various sources to ensure balance and comprehensiveness. These include official reports from India and Pakistan, United Nations resolutions, think tanks reports. Moreover, databases and websites of Scopus, Web of Science, Springer Nature, Lexis Nexis and similar platforms were screened and twenty particularly influential articles on blame politics were picked. Data collection relied on publicly accessible repositories. These comprehended the official government websites, UN online libraries and the databases stated above. This approach guaranteed transparency and ensured

²⁷ Khalid, “Abrogation of Article 370 and 35-A, Human Rights Situation in Indian Occupied Kashmir and Response Options for Pakistan.”

reasonable plus ethical treatment of all sources. The analysis uses a directed content analysis method guided by constructivism and critical discourse analysis as theoretical lenses while remaining open to developing themes. Ethical considerations guided the entire research process. By restricting the study to publicly available documents and published articles, concerns regarding confidentiality were avoided. Explanation of politically complex material was commenced responsibly with constant awareness of possible state biases and a dedication to centering Kashmiri voices wherever possible. Like all qualitative studies, this one also has limitations. Interpretation depends partly on the researcher's judgment, findings cannot be generalized to other conflicts, and some sources carry clear political bias. Such obstacles were reduced by going through many sources to explain every step and reflect on our own views.

Analysis and Findings

This study reveals that the Kashmir conflict is, above all, a human cry for dignity and freedom. It is far more than a border dispute between two states²⁸. The rigged elections of 1987 stand out as the moment when hope died for an entire generation. Young men who once believed in ballots picked up guns instead. What began as a popular revolt against corruption and stolen votes was quickly branded foreign terrorism. Troops poured in. Curfews became permanent. The blame placed on Pakistan grew louder with every

²⁸ Muhammad Imran et al., "Human Rights Violations in Kashmir and the Role of the United Nations," *Global Social Sciences Review* IV (December 2019): 562–69, [https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2019\(IV-IV\).68](https://doi.org/10.31703/gssr.2019(IV-IV).68).

funeral. The human cost is heartbreaking. Mothers still search for their sons who disappeared into army camps. Children grow up recognizing the sound of boots before they learn the sound of laughter. Families remain divided by barbed wire, jobs and schools are closed for months.²⁹ The politics of blame has kept this cry unheard for decades and has turned grief into guns. The clearest finding is that India has repeatedly accused Pakistan of sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir without placing convincing public evidence before the world. This pattern appeared in every major crisis from Kargil in 1999 to the wars of 2019 and 2025. India uses this allegation to gain sympathy from Western capitals and to present its heavy military presence in Kashmir as a necessary defense against terror. In reality, the accusations serve to silence questions about occupation and to justify the continued lockdown of an entire people.

Pakistan has never accepted these accusations. From the beginning, Pakistan has insisted that the fire in Kashmir is lit by broken promises and injustice at home. Pakistan has carried the Kashmiri demand for the promised referendum to every international platform. Pakistan vows openly and without hesitation that the people of Kashmir must be given their right to self-determination exactly as the United Nations resolutions require.³⁰ Pakistan repeats that only the Kashmiri people themselves can decide their future.

²⁹ Khan, "Kashmir and Power Politics."

³⁰ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas, "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions,"

(BJP) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi is influenced by the RSS ideology (Akhand Bharat) that gives a new life to Hindu society. The establishment of RSS in India works to marginalize the minorities, especially Muslims. Third, the RSS and BJP master's blame game to gain support and reshape the national discourse. In contrast, Pakistan's stance generally emphasizes human rights and advocates for dialogue and peace. Trauma has become the inheritance of an entire generation. The revocation of Article 370 in 2019 and the short but terrifying wars of 2019 and 2025 showed how quickly blame without evidence can turn into violence. In both cases, India pointed across the border and initiated a strike first.³¹ Pakistan answered that the anger is homegrown and requested dialogue instead of missiles. The people of Kashmir paid the heaviest price yet again.³² This research finds that peace in South Asia cannot come without peace in Kashmir, and peace in Kashmir cannot come while blame drowns out truth. Real peace needs evidence instead of accusation. It needs dialogue instead of lockdown. Above all, it needs the world to remember the promise made in 1948 and to let the people of Kashmir speak and choose for themselves. Pakistan has never stepped back from that promise. Pakistan vows again and again that the Kashmiri people alone must decide their future. Until that oath is honored and until blame gives way to listening, the suffering will go on.

³¹ Ted Svensson, "Frontiers of Blame: India's 'War on Terror,'" *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 2, no. 1 (2009): 27–44,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/17539150902752606>.

³² Hashmat, "Kashmir Dispute between India and Pakistan."

Discussion

Kashmir is not simply a dispute between two countries. It is the story of millions of human beings who have lived under fear and uncertainty for generations. Their homes are searched in the middle of the night.³³ Their children learn the sound of boots before they learn to read. Their future feels taken from them. This research shows that the politics of blame has been the loudest voice in this story and the reason why peace remains out of reach. The turning point came in 1987, when elections were widely perceived as stolen. A generation once believed in the ballot, lost faith, and turned to bullets. What began as a protest against corruption and misgovernance was quickly labeled as foreign-sponsored terrorism. Troops flooded the Valley. The politics of blame grew louder with every grave. India has framed the Kashmiri struggle as Pakistan-sponsored terrorism.³⁴ A narrative repeated in every major crisis from Kargil to the conflicts of 2019 and 2025. Accusations arise quickly. While publicly shared evidence arises slowly, if at all. The terrorism label has served two strategic purposes. It wins sympathy from Western powers concerned about global security, and it presents the heavy military presence in Kashmir as a painful but necessary defence. In truth, the label has silenced questions about occupation, curfews, and lockdowns in Kashmir.

³³ Bhatt, "State Terrorism vs. Jihad in Kashmir."

³⁴ Farhad, "The Making of a Disaster."

Pakistan has never accepted this narrative. From the very beginning, Pakistan has argued that the fire in Kashmir was internal, with broken promises, rigged elections, and the refusal to honor the United Nations pledge of a free vote.³⁵ Pakistan has carried this message to every international forum. Pakistan vows openly and repeatedly that only the people of Kashmir can decide their future. Not only Pakistan, but the UN resolutions and the International Court of Justice can decide the right of self-determination in Kashmir.³⁶ After September 11, 2001, India found a powerful new advantage in the global war on terror. The act of Kashmiri resistance was increasingly linked to international extremism. Special security laws were expanded, Pellet guns blinded children, and enforced disappearances became routine. Pakistan continued to remind the international community that Kashmiris are not terrorists, but people denied their promised freedom. Yet the simpler narrative of terrorism spread faster.³⁷ Human rights have become the quiet casualty. Reports speak of the torture of vanished sons of silenced voices of families torn apart by the Line of Control. When civilians suffer attacks, India points across the border. When civilians suffer under occupation, Pakistan points to the denial of rights. Between these two accusations, the pain of ordinary Kashmiris disappears.

³⁵ Taraknath Das, "The Kashmir Issue and the United Nations," *Political Science Quarterly* 65, no. 2 (1950): 264–82.

³⁶ Hashmat, "Kashmir Dispute between India and Pakistan."

³⁷ Nair, "Study of Kashmir as an Issue in Indo-Pak Relations-A Historical and Political Perspective."

The Media has amplified the politics of blame even further. India channels display maps and flags repeatedly, pointing to a Pakistani hand. Pakistani channels show bleeding children and shuttered schools and speak of freedom. International networks often adopt the language of terror because it is easier than explaining a promise made in 1948 that was never fulfilled. In this storm of competing narratives, the Kashmiri voice is almost drowned. The revocation of Article 370 in 2019 and the wars that followed in 2019 and 2025 revealed how quickly blame without evidence can escalate into war. In both cases, India launched the first strike and justified its action with accusations of terrorism. Pakistan denied the allegation and demanded evidence, and called for dialogue instead of missiles. The people of Kashmir paid the heaviest price once again.³⁸

Peace in South Asia cannot be achieved without peace in Kashmir, and peace in Kashmir cannot exist as long as blame speaks louder than truth. Real peace needs evidence before accusation. It needs dialogue before lockdowns, and a global commitment to honor the promise made to the Kashmiri people. Pakistan has stood for dialogue for justice and the right of Kashmiris to choose their own future. India, by contrast, has relied on blame and the use of force. The difference is clear. One path leads toward healing while the other paths have led only to more graves. Until the politics of blame gives way to listening, until the promise of self-determination is honored, and until the people of Kashmir are treated as human

³⁸ Baig and Ahmad, "The Shift in Geopolitical Alliances and Its Impact on the UN's Role in The Kashmir Conflict."

beings with rights and dreams, the suffering will continue. Their longing for dignity and freedom remains the strongest voice of all if only the world would finally hear it.

Conclusion

One of the deepest wounds caused to South Asia is by the Kashmir conflict. Not only is it a disputed land but people are living under fear, curfew and generational losses. This study highlights that the wound is kept open by the politics of blame. Pakistan is repeatedly accused of terrorism in IOK by India without any proper evidence. India accuses Pakistan to justify its heavy militarization, lockdown and oppression while silencing questions about rights and broken promises.

Pakistan has responded to every accusation with the same fundamental truth. The unrest in Kashmir is rooted within the region itself, from stolen elections in 1987, the refusal to hold the promised plebiscite, and the daily experiences of injustice and occupation. Pakistan has never stopped speaking for the Kashmiri people. Pakistan has carried its demand for self-determination to every international forum and has always called for dialogue instead of missiles. The rigged elections of 1987, the revocation of Article 370, and the wars of 2019 and 2025 all follow the same painful pattern. Accusation comes first. Evidence comes slowly, if at all. Military action follows quickly, and each time, Ordinary Kashmiris bear the heaviest price. Peace in South Asia cannot be achieved without peace in Kashmir, and peace in Kashmir cannot exist as long as

blame speaks louder than truth. Real peace needs evidence before accusation. It needs dialogue before the lockdown. It needs the world to honor the promise made in 1948, and finally allow the people of Kashmir to determine their own future. Pakistan has never walked away from that promise. It has remained ready for honest dialogue and justice. The path forward is clear, listen to the people of Kashmir and move beyond blame politics and the right of self-determination should be respected so that the guns fall silent and the people of this wounded valley know a morning without fear.

Policy Recommendations

The breakdown of the Kashmir issue makes it clear that peace in South Asia cannot be attained without moving beyond blame politics. The conflict has been shaped through accusations from decades resulting in mistrust and violence. Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations are necessary for a sustainable resolution.

- First, Proper evidence should be provided by India for accusing Pakistan of terrorism in (IIOK) or it must abandon the blame politics. The blame politics have silenced the voice of local Kashmiris, created confusion and escalated wars. Accusations must not be based on political motives but transparent investigation. Only then can trust be rebuilt.

- Second, an uninterrupted dialogue process should be initiated by both the countries. Dialogue should not be conditional and paused even if the political temperature rises. An institutional framework supported by international actors would ensure accountability. India denies offers for dialogue while Pakistan has repeatedly shown its willingness and openness to engage in talks.
- Third, a neutral role should be taken by the international community. Resolutions passed by the United Nations on Kashmir must be implemented. International powers must acknowledge that peace in South Asia is tied with peace in Kashmir. Independent investigations, human rights monitoring and diplomatic pressure should be insured instead of accepting one sided narrative.
- Fourth theoretical studies of the Kashmir conflict often note the marginalization of Kashmiri voices within state narratives from India and Pakistan. These outlines have prioritized regional claims over Kashmiri lived experiences, identity ambitions and miseries. Comprehensive resolution requires focusing Kashmiri agency through safe expression of political motivation. Essential confidence boosting measures evolve easing movement limits, restoring communication networks and enabling free civil society operations.

- Fifth, a sensible response should be adopted by the media of both sides. Blame politics suits the media as it has more sensationalism, it often escalates the conflict and overshadows the voice of Kashmiris. Human sufferings should be highlighted by the media and space should be given to the Kashmiri perspective to cool down the conflict.
- Sixth, India's strategies such as increased military personnel in the valley and the termination of Article 370 in 2019 have underwired sentiments of separation and anxiety among Kashmiri youth. These factors have deepened local criticisms and stressed joint dynamics. Obedience with international legal norms tied with the restoration of political rights could evidently boost opportunities for permanent peace and positive engagement in the region.
- Seventh, Pakistan should keep supporting the Kashmiri struggle both diplomatically and morally while promoting regional stability. By keeping a constant stance on talks and referendums, Pakistan can strengthen its trustworthiness and force for international engagement.

Lastly, maintainable peace in the area requires addressing determined humanitarian challenges. Access to education, health and financial opportunities and psychological services remains

critical for a generation shaped by prolonged war. Allowing international philanthropically organizations an unrestricted entry and effective freedom would enable effective delivery of essential aid and support long-term recovery efforts.

Conclusion

In summary, the Kashmir conflict demands a justice-oriented approach over accusations. The continuation of blame politics has intensified human suffering and mistrust. Predictions for acquiring peace hinge on genuine dedication, sustained dialogue and acknowledgment that the Kashmiri public constitutes a community seeking self-respect and self-determination rather than a mere security apprehension. Serious consideration of these proposed measures offers the most feasible pathway toward regional stability and harmonious relations in South Asia.



The Kashmir Conflict: Geography, Politics, and United Nations Intervention

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Abstract

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is one of the longest running and most complex territorial disputes in modern international relations. Rooted in the legacies of British colonialism, disputed sovereignty and competing nationalisms, the conflict has been shaped to an extraordinary degree by the region's peculiar geography, demography, and early international intervention through the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). The partition of British India in 1947 introduced a new element of uncertainty in princely states like that of Jammu and Kashmir and the stage was set for one of the longest running conflicts in South Asia. While there were

international attempts at settlement primarily through the UNSC and the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) that offered the normative frameworks for peaceful settlement and demilitarization and for self-determination, such efforts were fraught with structural limitations, political contestation and the geographical and strategic realities of the region.

Key Words: Kashmir conflict, Self-determination, Demilitarization, Plebiscite, Ceasefire agreements, UN mediation, Militarization, Legal and normative frameworks

Introduction

Jammu and Kashmir have great physiographic diversity that has had a direct influence on the political, military and administrative dynamics. The Kashmir Valley is an intermontane valley approximately 135 kilometers long and 32 kilometers wide and is bounded on the northeast by the Greater Himalayas; to the southwest by the Pir Panjal Range. Fertile alluvial lands deposited by Jhelum River and its tributaries have supported high density of settlement, agriculture, horticulture and artisanal production making the valley a historic cultural and economic center¹ In contrast, Jammu region combines with the northern Indian plains and the climatic condition is sub-tropical that is suitable for rice, wheat and fruit cultivation whereas Ladakh is a sparsely populated high-

¹ S. Qazi, "Physiography and Environmental Dynamics of Kashmir Valley," *Himalayan Research Journal* 12, no. 1 (2008): 34–58.

altitude desert and the climatic condition is harsh and has less agricultural potential.² These ecological contrasts have resulted in differentiated patterns of livelihood,³ governance and political integration which have complicated attempts to have uniform administrative structures for the region⁴. Moreover, Jammu and Kashmir is a hotspot of biodiversity comprising alpine meadows, coniferous forests, wetlands and fragile glacial ecosystems. These environmental features not only sustain local livelihoods but they are increasingly being threatened by militarization, climate change and unregulated urban growth.⁵ Strategically, the mountain passes like Banihal and Zoji La have played a vital role in facilitating trade and cultural exchange while in modern times the passes have taken a military importance influencing troop movements, defence strategies and security in the region.⁶ The high-altitude terrain has limited the governance and infrastructure development and added a strategic depth⁷ which has contributed to the centrality of military considerations in political decision-making.⁸

² Robert G. Wirsing, *India, Pakistan, and the Kashmir Dispute: On Regional Conflict and Its Resolution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994).

³ Rizvi, *Ladakh: Crossroads of High Asia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴ Sugata Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁵ Census of India, *Jammu and Kashmir Census Report* (2011).

⁶ K. Ali and A. A. Khuroo, "Forest Ecosystems of the Kashmir Himalaya," *Himalayan Environment Journal* 14, no. 2 (2018): 45–67.

⁷ Sumit Ganguly, *the Origins of War in South Asia: Indo-Pakistani Conflicts Since 1947*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

⁸ Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

Demography, Identity and Socio-Political Dynamics

The demographic of Jammu and Kashmir is a great variation in terms of the region due to geography and historical migration. The Kashmir Valley is a predominantly Muslim area⁹Jammu is a mixed religious area and Ladakh has large Buddhist and Muslim communities.¹⁰ Socioeconomic indicators such as literacy and employment are significantly different in these regions, perpetuating structural inequalities in terms of access to education,¹¹ healthcare and economic opportunity.¹² Urbanization in Srinagar and Jammu has worsened these inequalities and placed pressure on the availability of housing, infrastructure and public services.¹³ Gender disparity with low female literacy and labour force participation further adds to the socio-economic vices.

Another factor of complexity is ethnolinguistic diversity. Languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Ladakhi, Punjabi and Urdu are the result of the historical patterns of migration, imperial governance and cultural exchange.¹⁴ Political mobilization in Jammu and Kashmir has drawn on these multiple identities, sometimes transcending religious

⁹ S. Koul, "Demographic Diversity in Jammu and Kashmir," *Kashmir Demographic Studies* 3, no. 2 (2016): 45–61.

¹⁰ Census of India, 2011

¹¹ Sugata Bose, *Transforming India: Challenges to the World's Largest Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013).

¹² S. R. Masoodi, "The Political Economy of Conflict in Kashmir," *South Asia Economic Journal* 18, no. 4 (2017): 89–110.

¹³ A. H. Bhat et al., "Militarization and Daily Life in Jammu and Kashmir," *South Asian Peace Studies* 11, no. 3 (2021): 78–102.

¹⁴ Barbara Metcalf and Thomas R. Metcalf, *A Concise History of Modern India*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

affiliations to make claims for autonomy, independence or accession. Such dynamics have led to a wave of repeated protest, repression and political contestation¹⁵

Partition, Accession and Cause of Conflict

The partition of British India in 1947 had left the state of Jammu and Kashmir in a very precarious condition.¹⁶ Under the Indian Independence Act the princely states were given the option to join either India or Pakistan depending on geographical contiguity and political considerations, but there was no provision to ensure that it was complied with Maharaja Hari Singh at first,¹⁷ too, wanted independence as much out of political calculation than fear of communal violence.¹⁸ Internal divisions - within the National Conference in favour of accession to India under guarantees of autonomy and Muslim Conference inclined towards Pakistan - made the decision-making process difficult. British administrative ambiguity and deterioration of law and order made things worse.¹⁹

The Instrument of Accession signed in October 1947 legally brought Jammu and Kashmir into India and gave New Delhi control over the

¹⁵ S. Khan, "Urbanization and Governance in Srinagar and Jammu," *Urban Studies Journal* 46, no. 2 (2019): 133–150.

¹⁶ Christopher Snedden, *Understanding Kashmir and Kashmiris* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

¹⁷ S. Bose and Ayesha Jalal, eds., *Kashmir and the Future of South Asia* (New York: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁸ B. Metcalf, & A. Metcalf, *A concise history of modern India* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.

¹⁹ M. A. Bhat et al., "Urban Growth in Himalayan Regions," *Sustainable Cities and Society* 64 (2021): 102528.

defence, foreign affairs and communications.²⁰ While it was legally valid, the political legitimacy of the accession was controversial,²¹ particularly by Pakistan which claimed that it ignored the will of the Muslim-majority population.²² This duality - legal validity vs. political contestation - became a mark of the Kashmir dispute.

First Indo - Pakistani War & Militarization

Shortly after the accession, the first Indo-Pakistani war broke out in 1947-48 in the aftermath of an incursion of tribal militias from North-West Frontier Province of Pakistan. India military intervention turned the local violence into interstate warfare²³ as it was influenced by the terrain of the region, absence of infrastructure and severe winter weather. The war left behind a large amount of civilian displacement, casualties and de facto division of the region, along what became known as the Line of Control.²⁴

Militarization became a way of life in Kashmir. Large-scale troop deployments, emergency regulations and restricted civil liberties disrupted governance and traditional livelihoods and locked in cycles of insurgency and counterinsurgency that would persist for

²⁰ Korbelt, Josef. *Danger in Kashmir*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1954.

²¹ Iftikhar Malik, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict and International Dispute* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

²² Malik Iftikhar, *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict and International Dispute*.

²³ David Forsythe, *The United Nations and International Relations*. 4th ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005.

²⁴ Alex Bellamy, and Paul D. Williams. *Understanding Peacekeeping*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010.

decades.²⁵ High-altitude warfare combined with inhuman climatic conditions played a role in the human misery and a lack of civilian supervision.²⁶

United Nations Security Council Engagement, 1948 - 1952

In reaction to the Kashmir conflict, from 1948 to 1952, the UNSC passed a series of resolutions (Resolutions 38, 39, 47, 51, 91 and 96) which made it clear that peaceful settlement, ceasefire, demilitarization and plebiscite to decide the question of self-determination was the way forward.²⁷ Resolution 47 (1948) provided for a three-stage process including: Pakistani troop withdrawal, reduction of Indian forces and preparation for a plebiscite under UN supervision.²⁸

The creation of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) in 1948 was a first attempt at multilateral mediation.²⁹ UNCIP had at first representatives of Argentina, Belgium and Colombia, later the Czechoslovak and United States,

²⁵ Human Rights Watch. "Everyone Lives in Fear." New York: Human Rights Watch, 2018.

²⁶ Paul Staniland, *Networks of Rebellion: Explaining Insurgent Cohesion and Collapse*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014.

²⁷ Mingst, Karen A., Margaret P. Karns, and Alynna J. Lyon. *The United Nations in the 21st Century*. 6th ed. New York: Routledge, 2022.

²⁸ Ramesh Thakur, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

²⁹ Steve Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: India, Pakistan and the Search for Peace*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012.

which reflects the UN's aspiration for neutral mediation³⁰. The mandate of the Commission was successively to bring about ceasefire, demilitarization and plebiscite. While the ceasefire was largely realized on January 1, 1949, the ensuing objectives were contested continuously because of disagreements over troop withdrawal, verification and security guarantees.³¹

Implementation difficulties were a reflection of structural constraints of Chapter VI of UN Charter underlining the importance of consent over coercion,³² in limiting the ability of UNCIP to enforce recommendations.³³ Geopolitical considerations, especially a new cold war, also limited the ability to mediate effectively with great power rivalry in the Security Council diplomacy. By 1951, UNCIP's role had been reduced to one of reporting to a substantial extent of active conflict resolution.³⁴

Ambiguity of UNSC Resolutions: Legal and Operational

The Chapter VI resolutions were not binding and this allowed India and Pakistan the scope of selectively interpreting their obligations. India felt that bilateral agreements (e.g. the Simla agreement of

³⁰ Karen A. Mingst, Margaret P. Karns, and Alynna J. Lyon, *The United Nations in the 21st Century*, 6th ed. (New York: Routledge, 2022).

³¹ Francis Robinson, *Kashmir: History, Politics, Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

³² Alex J. Bellamy and Paul D. Williams, *Understanding Peacekeeping*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2010).

³³ Ramesh Thakur, *The United Nations, Peace and Security: From Collective Security to the Responsibility to Protect* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

³⁴ Derek Gregory, *the Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq* (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2004).

1972) superseded UNSC engagement while Pakistan believed that UNSC resolutions retained their legal and moral authority³⁵. Operational ambiguities such as sequence and verification of the mechanisms also restricted the implementation, with Resolution 80 (1950) then suggesting simultaneous withdrawals and Resolution 91 (1951) explaining that the Constituent Assembly could not replace a plebiscite.³⁶

While UNSC interventions succeeded in halting the renewal of large-scale war along with putting in place long-lasting norms of mediation and self-determination, they left unresolved the core political dispute. Geography ensured such limitations; the mountainous terrain of Kashmir restricted the means for monitoring, ensured military dominion and restricted civilian governance.³⁷ Regional power rivalries and historical claims to sovereignty made further possibilities for moving from conflict containment to political resolution even more difficult.

Governance, Militarization and the Lives of All

Decisions throughout history have continued to be critical is the interplay between geography and governance. Rugged topography, scattered settlements and climatic extremities had always limited the

³⁵Margaret P. Karns and Karen A. Mingst, *International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance*, 2nd ed. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010).

³⁶John Agnew, *Geopolitics: Re-Visioning World Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York: Routledge, 2003).

³⁷Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

reach of administration and penetration of the state particularly in high altitude and border regions. Urban centers, such as Srinagar and Jammu, received disproportionate investments in infrastructure and the peripheral regions received no attention, continuing the perceptions of marginalization. Colonial legacies under Dogra rule were geared towards revenue and political control while inclusive development took precedence over economic development which remained the case post-1947.³⁸

Militarization has changed into a spatial and social landscape. Extensive military installations, checkpoints and surveillance infrastructure have led to securitized spaces with ramifications for mobility and land use and economic activity.³⁹ Restrictions on movement, requisitioned agricultural land and emergency regulations have been used in order to reinforce the spatial confinement and limit civilian governance. The militarization of the civilian space has become normal and conflict crept into people's everyday life making peacebuilding tasks difficult even in times of lesser hostilities.

Environmental Stress, Climate Change and Conflict Sensitivity

Environmental factors have emerged as important and understudied variables in the political geography of Kashmir. Accelerated glacial

³⁸ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

³⁹ Steve E. Robinson, *Tell Me How This Ends: India, Pakistan and the Search for Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

retreat, higher temperatures, random precipitation and extreme weather events are changing hydrological systems, agricultural cycles and settlements.⁴⁰ The Indus River system having its origin in Jammu and Kashmir is of crucial importance to millions of people in South Asia and the environment, making the issue of environmental change directly in relation to regional water, energy and food security.

Environmental stress serves as a threat multiplier which then acts on socio-political grievances and reduces adaptive capacity as a result of militarization, limited governance and economic vulnerability.⁴¹ Land-use restrictions, unregulated urban expansion and deforestation further reduce the ecological resilience and increase the exposure to hazards, such as floods and landslides.⁴² Environmental governance, disaster response and climate adaptation are important and underdeveloped aspects of conflict mitigation that provide limited opportunities for confidence-building and functional cooperation across disputed boundaries.⁴³

The Kashmir conflict is not just a territorial dispute between two nations but a complex multidimensional crisis which is influenced by historical, geographical, sociopolitical and international

⁴⁰ S. T. Ali and A. A. Khuroo, "Biodiversity and Climate Vulnerability in the Himalayas," *Himalayan Environment Journal* 14, no. 2 (2018): 45–67.

⁴¹ Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999)

⁴² J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

⁴³ Z. Nengroo and M. S. Bhat, "Wetland Degradation in Kashmir," *Environmental Earth Sciences* 75, no. 24 (2016): 1–12.

dynamics. A critical review of the conflict and UN interventions from 1948 to 1952 revealed both normative successes and practical failures and shows how structural, environmental and political factors interact to have an impact on protracted disputes. This analysis evaluates the efficacy of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) engagement, the relationship between geography and governance and the socio-environmental aspects of conflict and implications for current policy and approaches towards peacebuilding.

UNSC and UNCIP Engagement

The establishment of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was an ambitious attempt for multilateral conflict resolution for the first time. Normatively, UNCIP set international principles focused on the concept of ceasefire enforcement, demilitarization and self-determination signifying the power of the UN to codify peaceful settlement mechanisms in post-colonial settings. Resolution 47 (1948) was the most typical expression of this ambition in which it was articulated in terms of a three-stage process, including troop withdrawal and a plebiscite under UN supervision. However, the structural limitations of Chapter VI of the UN Charter that is based on voluntary compliance rather than coercive enforcement meant that these measures were ineffective in practice.⁴⁴ One of the biggest problems is the ambiguity of UNSC

⁴⁴ Ian Talbot and Gurharpal Singh, *The Partition of India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

resolutions. Sequencing disputes, verification mechanisms and criteria for plebiscite eligibility left gaps of interpretation which were exploited by India and Pakistan to pursue different political agendas. Furthermore, the new Cold War impacted Security Council diplomacy as the great power rivalry played a role in the composition of UNCIP, the ability to build consensus, as well as the willingness to exert pressure on parties to get them to comply. UNCIP's eventual marginalization by 1951 reflects the general problem of translation between normative aspirations and political outcomes for which they can be enforced in an environment of high geopolitical stakes.⁴⁵

a. Introduction: UNSC Resolutions as Norma S Moore

The Kashmir dispute was the first case of the involvement of UNSC in post-colonial interstate conflict. Beginning with Resolution 38 (January 17, 1948), recommending that India and Pakistan refrain from acts which might aggravate the situation, through resolutions in the early 1970s, the Council enunciated such principles as ceasefire, demilitarization, and self-determination (United Nations Security Council, 1948; Scholarly consensus is in recognition that these resolutions reflected normative hopes that had its source in the UN Charter's commitment to peaceful settlement of conflict. Yet, when they are critically analyzed, norms proved to fail into passable political results.

⁴⁵ Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010).

b. The Early Resolutions (1948 - 1951): Ambitions & Legal Ambiguities

The United Nations Security Council in 1948 Resolution 39 (January 20, 1948), created the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to help mediate the dispute. Resolution 47 (April 21, 1948), center-piece of the early engagement of UNSC, added to the membership of UNCIP and laid out in a three-stage plan, firstly Pakistan's withdrawal of nationals and tribesmen, secondly reduction of Indian forces and finally holding a free and impartial plebiscite under UN supervision to determine accession.

International scholars usually speak of Resolution 47 as normatively significant and operationally flawed. It recognized the disputed nature of Kashmir and supported self-determination which was accepted by both India and Pakistan at the time but did not have any obvious enforcement mechanisms. A.G. Noorani has argued that though UNSC resolutions did not expressly mention specific chapters of the UN Charter, the content of such resolutions went beyond recommendations, such as commissioning UNCIP and taking detailed steps. Nonetheless, the failure of the Council to achieve compliance, in particular on the issue of simultaneous demilitarization, was to be a constant weakness.⁴⁶

Critical scholarship points out that the UNSC treated Kashmir as a political dispute for the most part and did not adequately canvass the

⁴⁶ A.S.Qazi, *Systematic geography of Jammu and Kashmir*. (APH Publishing 2016).

legal and structural intricacies of this dispute. Specialists point out that the Council's clinging to the requirement of consent (instead of the enforcement by force) in Chapter VI of the UN Charter hindered the implementation of resolutions calling for demilitarization and preparation for a plebiscite. This legal ambiguity allowed India to consider resolutions recommendatory and subject to conditions that never materialized and Pakistan held that the resolutions continued to be legally binding and unimplemented.

c. UNCIP Mediation and Politics of Implementation

Unpacking of the UNCIP period (1948-1951) brings out many tensions between the UNSC directives and the ground realities. UNCIP issued two resolutions on August 13, 1948 and January 5, 1949 which held that accession was to be decided by plebiscite and specified duties with regard to demilitarization.⁴⁷ Yet empirical evidence and accounts from scholars tell us that disagreements on troop withdrawals, verification and phased disengagement turned out to be key stumbling blocks.

Josef Korbel - a UNCIP member and early analyst of UN mediation - admitted that UNCIP was hampered by divergent interpretations of the mandate and had neither the firmness to enforce conditions of the plebiscite nor the will to enforce them. Subsequent mediators like Sir Owen Dixon and Frank Graham failed to achieve a mutual demilitarization plan agreeable to both Delhi and Islamabad which

⁴⁷ G. H. Dar, et al. Climate vulnerability in Kashmir Himalaya. *Environmental Monitoring and Assessment*, 192, No. 3, (2020), 1–14.

revealed the structural weakness of the mediation mechanisms of the Council especially in asymmetric political situations.⁴⁸

d. Ceasefire Consolidation UNMOGIP

Following the ceasefire agreement signed on January 1, 1949, there was a series of resolutions objective to institutionalize monitoring in the form of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Resolutions such as 80 (1950), 91 (1951) and 96 (1951) reiterated the commitment to demilitarization and plebiscite but gave supervision of the ceasefire to UN observers. Resolution 91 clearly stated that the acts of a constituent assembly could not replace a plebiscite.

In spite of these reaffirmations, monitoring without enforcing did not make much difference, according to scholars. The role of UNMOGIP was largely an observational one; it did not have any mandate to induce compliance or mediate political deadlocks.⁴⁹ This structural constraint points to a more general theme: the UNSC was able to stabilize ceasefire lines but could not translate normative prescriptions into political realities.

⁴⁸ Josef Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954).

⁴⁹ David Forsythe, *Human Rights in International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

e. Geopolitical Dynamics & Effects of Cold war

The wider international context of the early Cold War played an important part in determining UNSC involvement. Many scholars hold that great power interests influenced deliberations of the UNSC, and often to the detriment of conflict resolution⁵⁰. The Soviet bloc's periodic vetoes and strategic diplomacy in favour of India, and Western orientation to Pakistan helped in creating stalemate rather than cooperation in the Council. This reflected a structural paradox in that the entity which had been entrusted with the responsibility to maintain the peace on international levels was embroiled in geopolitical rivalries, weakening its ability to mediate impartially.

f. Later Resolutions and Changing Mediation Environment 1957 - 1971

In 1957, the UNSC passed Resolutions 122, 123 and 126 reiterating the demand for plebiscite and once again reaffirmed the fact that the legislative actions of Jammu & Kashmir Constituent Assembly could not constitute final accession. Yet, by this time, the parties were becoming more and more disengaged from UN mediation. India invoked later treaties such as the Simla Agreement of 1972 in arguing that bilateral negotiations rather than international

⁵⁰ J. Karn, "Constitutional Status and Political Mobilization in Jammu and Kashmir," *Indian Political Review* 7, no. 1 (2008): 22–47.

adjudication should define the future of the dispute - as a manifestation of changing norms of bilateralism post 1971.

g. Scholarly Appraisals: Positive and Negative

Academic assessments are concerned with a number of important points:

Normative Achievement but Political Failure UNSC resolutions stated clearly democratic principles and procedural sequencing in finding a resolution, plebiscite and demilitarization in particular. Yet, these were still normative goals, but not outcomes that were mandatory.

Legal vs. Political Ambiguity: A.G. Noorani emphasizes on the fact that UNSC resolutions accepted the disputed nature of Kashmir and the right to Kashmiri self-determination but their legal status was controversial in that they did not have explicit chapter references and enforcement clauses. **Mediation Mechanism Weaknesses:** Reviews of UNCIP mention that lack of UNCIP's authority when coupled with refracted political will on the part of the parties led to incomplete demilitarization and a stalled plebiscite process.⁵¹

Geopolitical Constraints: The Cold War affected the work of the UNSC as the peace efforts were sometimes subordinated to the strategic alignments and this has contributed to the Council's failure

⁵¹ Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2018: Events of 2017* (New York: Human Rights Watch, 2018).

to behave impartially and effectively. Observers vs. Although the monitoring role of UNMOGIP was successful in stabilizing the ceasefire lines, it had no powers to ensure the political or military disengagement that have led scholars to question the pragmatic agency of the Council in conflict transformation.⁵²

The resolutions of the UNSC regarding Kashmir from 1947 to 1971 make up a chapter of international conflict resolution which is rich in normative but limited in operational terms. They reflect early UN wishes towards democratic self-determination, ceasefire management and impartial mediation.⁵³ However, structural flaws of Chapter VI mechanisms, geopolitical rivalries of the Cold War era and different national interpretations of the resolutions compromised their implementation⁵⁴. While scholars like Noorani emphasize the continuing legal importance of early UNSC affirmations of self-determination, others like the evaluations of Korbelt that appeared at the time point to institutional weaknesses which limited the ability of UNCIP to enforce conditions for a plebiscite.⁵⁵ Thus, the UNSC's experience of Kashmir brings to fore a bigger tension in international law and diplomacy: normative authority is no good if

⁵² Thomas Homer-Dixon, *Environment, Scarcity, and Violence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999).

⁵³ Adeela Ahmed, Arsim Tariq, and Rashida Abbas, "Demographic Changes in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and the Future of UN Resolutions," *International Journal of Kashmir Studies* 3, no. 2 (2022).

⁵⁴ P. S. Verma, *Jammu and Kashmir at the Political Crossroads* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1994).

⁵⁵ A. G. Noorani, *Kashmir Dispute 1947–2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

you have not got the mechanisms of enforcement and the geopolitical will.

Geography and Governance

Kashmir's geography and the spatial fragmentation of Kashmir have had a decisive impact on the governance and militarization of the region and the persistence of conflict. Mountainous terrain, high altitude deserts and scattered settlements have limited the penetration of states and reach of administration especially in the peripheral areas. Colonial histories such as the Dogra's domination that was focused on extraction of revenue on the people rather than creating an inclusive government also furthered the structural inequalities and regional disparities.⁵⁶ Post-1947 governance frameworks, preoccupied with security imperatives, struggled to find ways between civilian administration and military oversight, locking in cycles of marginalization and local resistance.⁵⁷

The militarization of everyday life has helped to contribute to the problems of governance. Checkpoints, surveillance infrastructure and emergency regulations have made space securitized places where there is limited mobility and economic activity and where conflict is institutionalized into everyday life.⁵⁸ From a political

⁵⁶ A. G. Noorani, *Kashmir Dispute 1947–2012* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

⁵⁷ M. A. Khan, "Migration and Urban Stress in Kashmir," *Asian Population Studies* 15, no. 2 (2019): 205–223.

⁵⁸ N. C. Behera, *State, Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2006).

geography perspective militarization is a security strategy and mode of governance or can be seen as the way in which the state's control of territory impacts relations within society and perpetuates a security-oriented political culture.

Socio-environmental Dynamics

Environmental stress and climate change have become important, but understudied elements of the Kashmir conflict. Glacial retreat, volatile precipitation and extreme weather events are a threat to water security, agricultural livelihood and ecosystem. Environmental vulnerabilities are threat multipliers, which increase socio-political grievances, decrease adaptive capacity, and combine existing inequalities and militarized governance to increase the sensitivity of conflicts. Yet environmental governance remains primarily secondary to security-centered policy and that means there are few possibilities for cross-boundary cooperation or disaster risk reduction as conflict mitigation tools.⁵⁹

The legal framework for UNSC engagement also presents some important limitations. Resolutions under Chapter VI were not binding and obligations were interpreted by both countries of India and Pakistan in a selective manner. India's reliance on bilateral agreements like the Simla Agreement and the Pakistani insistence on the continuing validity of UNSC resolutions indicate differences in legal attitudes and the absence of any mechanism for solving such

⁵⁹ J. L. Holzgrefe and Robert O. Keohane, *Humanitarian Intervention* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

problems. These ambiguities are a reflection of the tension between the international normative authority and state sovereignty in particular in post-colonial territorial disputes.⁶⁰

Normative Success vs. Political Failure: UN intervention helped to embed long-lasting norms of ceasefire management, mediation, and self-determination, which regrettably failed to deliver a long-lasting political settlement because of non-compliance, uncertainties in operations and geopolitical constraints. **Geography as a Determinant of Conflict** The topography of the region restricted the governance, reinforced militarization and reduced the ability of civilian oversight which shows the importance of the spatial factors in affecting political results.⁶¹

Environmental Stress as a Threat Multiplier Climate variability, glacial retreat and resource vulnerability combine with existing political, social and economic stressors and lead to increased livelihood insecurity and a complicated conflict resolution. **Structural Constraints of Multilateralism:** Failure of UNCIP and UNSC resolutions in ensuring compliance point to structural constraints of Chapter VI mechanisms especially when dealing with conflicts in which high-stake sovereignty issues and longstanding territorial claims are at stake. **Identity and Sociopolitical Complexity:** The variety of ethnic and religious backgrounds,

⁶⁰ United Nations Security Council Report, *Security Council Report on Kashmir Engagement* (New York: United Nations Archives, 2019).

⁶¹ Mridu Rai, "Spatial Governance and Administrative Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir," *South Asian Governance Review* 5, no. 3 (2004): 19–37.

layered identities and historical grievances have perpetuated mobilization along competing political claims and presented evidence that legal or diplomatic processes would not be enough in resolving the conflict.⁶²

Strengthening Multilateral Mechanisms with Enforcement Capacity: The UN engagement for the future and its approach should take into account mechanisms going beyond the reliance, in Chapter VI, on voluntary compliance. This could include conditional peace-building frameworks, better verification missions or confidence building measures with associated enforceable incentives. Whilst concerns over sovereignty remain key, well calibrated pressure with multilateral support may increase compliance and not undermine legitimacy.⁶³

Integrate Environmental Governance into Conflict Resolution: Recognizing the role of environmental stress as a conflict multiplier, policy makers should ensure that climate adaptation, disaster risk reduction and shared resource management are integrated in peace building frameworks. Joint water management, glacial monitoring and climate resilience initiatives, can lead to politically neutral ways of cooperation leading to trust even in the absence of comprehensive political settlement⁶⁴.

⁶² Republic of India and Republic of Pakistan, *Simla Agreement*, July 2, 1972, India-Pakistan, 92 U.N.T.S. 189.

⁶³ Thomas G. Weiss, *Humanitarian Intervention: Ideas in Action*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013).

⁶⁴F. Wani, "Gender Disparities in Kashmir's Socio-Economic Landscape," *Journal of Gender Studies in South Asia* 10, no. 2 (2021): 88–105.

Addressing governance and spatial inequalities Targeted development in peripheral high-altitude areas is important in order to mitigate perceived marginalization and reinforce state legitimacy. Investments in infrastructure and education, healthcare and capacity building at the local administration level will have to be complementary to security measures, providing balanced spatial governance and facilitating civilian oversight on military presence.⁶⁵

Prioritize Conflict-Sensitive Development - Economic programs must be sensitive to sociopolitical sensitivities, ethnolinguistic diversity and gender differences in order not to exacerbate grievances. Inclusive development policies inclusive of marginalized communities can offer the deterrent power against the appeal of violent mobilization and create lasting political stability.⁶⁶

Foster Incremental, Normative-Based Diplomacy In the face of the chronic sovereignty dispute, sustainable conflict-resolution may have to rely on incremental approaches which focus on confidence building, limited cooperation in areas of common concern and adherence to internationally recognized norms of human rights and self-determination. Full political settlement may be less immediate than functional collaboration in the areas of the environment, economics and administration⁶⁷. Lessons from UNCIP How credible

⁶⁵ A. Masoodi, "Gender and Education in Kashmir," *Economic and Political Weekly* 52, no. 18 (2017): 56–63.

⁶⁶ M. Wani, "Women and Labor Participation in Kashmir," *Asian Journal of Women's Studies* 27, no. 3 (2021): 401–420.

⁶⁷ N. Ahmad and H. Dar, "Urbanization and Development in Kashmir," *Journal of Urban Studies* 57, no. 4 (2020): 623–641.

are the verification mechanisms for conflict mediation? Third party monitoring, transparency mechanisms and real time reporting can help mitigate the mistrust and increase compliance and evidence for adaptive policy responses.

Promote Multidisciplinary Research and Policy Integration Future interventions must consider and incorporate geographic, environmental, sociopolitical and historical perspectives. Cross-disciplinary research can be useful in the formulation of policies with finer details, anticipating unintentional consequences and multidimensional causes of protracted conflict.⁶⁸ The conflict in Kashmir is one of the complex interplays of geography, identity, colonial legacies, militarization and international intervention. The physical geography of the region has contributed to the development of military strategy, has limited governance and has reinforced security-oriented political decision-making. Demographic diversity and layered identities have contributed to competing claims and political resolution has become problematic.⁶⁹

Early UNSC and UNCIP interventions developed normative frameworks of ceasefire, demilitarization and self-determination, but structural limitations, lack of enforcement mechanisms, operational ambiguity and selective compliance perpetuated a protracted, militarized and unresolved conflict. Environmental stress and uneven modes of spatial governance are still colliding with social,

⁶⁸ J. Rizvi, *Trans Himalayan Geopolitics* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

⁶⁹ Mridu Rai, *Hindu Rulers, Muslim Subjects* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

economic and political vulnerabilities, fitting the long-standing tension between international norms and political realities in hotly contested post-colonial spaces.⁷⁰ The Kashmir case brings out the tension that is always between international normative aspirations and political realities in protracted territorial disputes.⁷¹ While UNSC involvement had created precepts of ceasefire, demilitarization and self-determination, the structural limitations, geopolitics and local cosmopolitics limitations limited their effectiveness.

Geography, militarization and environmental stress are reacting with historical grievances to perpetuate the conflict and point to the need for multidimensional approaches to conflict resolution. Future peacebuilding and policy interventions need to integrate enforceable multilateral mechanisms, conflict sensitive governance, environmental cooperation and incremental diplomacy in order to mitigate the persistence of the conflict. By bringing together all these, the international community and players at the regional level can strengthen the chance of stability, resilience and ultimate political resolution in Jammu and Kashmir.

⁷⁰ O. N. Koul, "Linguistic Diversity in Jammu and Kashmir," *Journal of South Asian Studies* 39, no. 2 (2016): 245–262.

⁷¹ Rashida Abbas, Adeela Ahmed, and Muhammad Tabish, "Mediation in Armed Conflict: A Case of Kashmir," *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2022), <https://doi.org/10.52337/pjia.v5i2.423>



Contribution of China- USA Relationship in the Web of Science Database: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Contribution of China- USA Relationship in the Web of Science Database: A Bibliometric Analysis

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Abstract

This study aims to underscore the contribution of the China-USA relationship under the bibliometric lens published in the Web of Science core collections. The study employed a bibliometric approach of content analysis. The findings reveal that a total of 10,035 publications on US-China were recorded in the Web of Science, and the majority of them were journal articles (83%), and 37.5% of them were open-access articles. The collection also reveals that the International Relations subject remained a highly contributing discipline with 13.8%, followed by astronomy, political science, and area studies. Furthermore, the most influential contributors were from China, such as Zhang Y, Wang J, and Wang Y, while the institutional-wise records show that the Chinese Academy of Sciences, Peking University, Tsinghua University, and the University of California System were at the forefront. The record also reveals that China has contributed 65.4%, followed by the USA

with 28.1% of publications. The publisher record reveals that Springer Nature, Taylor & Francis, and Elsevier were the highest contributors, while publications in the English language remained the highest (96.2%). The study concludes that the literature on US-China is expanding exponentially at the global level in diverse disciplines. Recommendations include expanding open access, multilingual outputs, and collaborative research in order to enrich the academic discourse.

Keywords: Bibliometric Analysis; US-China Relations; Web of Science; Statistical Analysis; Research Productivity

Introduction

The relationship between China and the United States has been regarded as one of the most consequential bilateral engagements, particularly in global political discourse. In scholarly literature, the relationship between the two countries has been extensively examined over the last two decades, with particular attention to the balance of power, cooperation, and competition. Some scholars argue that U.S.–China relations have evolved from initial encounters in the late 18th century to a state of complex interdependence and strategic competition in the 21st century. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, the relationship between the U.S. and China remained tense until President Nixon's 1972 visit, followed by the establishment of formal diplomatic ties

in 1979.¹ The relationship between the two powers has become complex, marked by various aspects, including economic interdependence, strategic competition, and areas of cooperation and conflict. Most scholars argue that the relationship between the two nations is concerning in terms of human rights, military power, technology, and trade.²

The relationship between China and the USA is characterized by a competitive framework and turbulence over various issues. Some political scholars have argued that both countries have undergone a period of tension and cooperation, such as the issue of trade, the status of Taiwan, and climate change. The present study underscores the bibliometric. The relationship between the two powers remains turbulent, characterized by a competitive framework that has been a long-standing goal for the U.S. Scholars in international politics have argued that both nations have experienced periods of tension and cooperation over various issues, including trade, climate change, and the status of Taiwan. The study aims to examine the relationship between the U.S. and China through a bibliometric lens, encompassing the turbulence in their relationship.

Bibliometrics has been a topic of great interest in the scholarly realm over the last few decades. Alan Pritchard coined the word

¹Weishu Liu et al., "Feature Report on China: A Bibliometric Analysis of China-Related Articles," *Scientometrics* 102, no. 1 (2015):503–17,<https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-014-1371-y>.

² George Alessandria et al., "Trade War and Peace: U.S.-China Trade and Tariff Risk from 2015–2050," *Journal of International Economics* 155 (May 2025): 104066, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jinteco.2025.104066>.

bibliometrics in 1969 in his seminal paper “Statistical Bibliography or Bibliometrics.”³

The purpose of bibliometric studies is to provide a systematic evidence-based lens to understand how scholarly, diplomatic, and policy debates evolve. Bibliometrics helps identify how much research is being produced on the relations between two countries, i.e., (China-US relationships). It serves as a mirror of how global scholarship represents, debates, and influences international relations, providing both academics and policymakers with insights that pure political analysis alone cannot capture. Bibliometric studies serve as a mirror of how global scholarship represents, debates, and influences international relations. Bibliometric analysis can also provide insights to both academics and policymakers that cannot be captured through the lens of pure political analysis.⁴

The Web of Science is the pioneering work of Eugene Garfield, who introduced the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) in 1960. In 1964, the ISI introduced the Science Citation Index (SCI). Initially, SCI only covered the Arts & Humanities; however, in 1997, the index was integrated into an online platform named Web of Science, making it globally accessible to researchers worldwide. The database was acquired by Thomson Reuters in 1992 and later by

³ Abid Hussain and Arslan Arif, “Bibliometric Analysis of Regional Studies—A Quarterly Journal of Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan,” *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-Journal)* 5157 (2021): 1–21.

⁴ Juan M. Gil-Barragan et al., “A Bibliometric Analysis of China–Latin America Economic and Political Relations,” *Latin American Policy* 11, no. 2 (2020): 290–312, <https://doi.org/10.1111/lamp.12191>.

Clarivate in 2016.⁵ Web of Science is one of the most authoritative databases for academic citation indexing agencies. Its role is highly commendable for content analysis research, like bibliometric studies and research evaluation in global academic visibility. To understand the contours of scholarly works, the Web of Science provides an evidence-based framework by incorporating dynamic disciplines such as institutions, document types, publishers, and citation patterns, which shape the academic discourse. This study aims to highlight the published work on the China-US relationship, particularly in political science, international relations, and other specialized fields such as technology and health, alongside traditional disciplines.⁶

The Web of Science has revealed that a substantial number of publications have been published on the China-US relationship across various domains. The study reveals that extensive knowledge has been contributed to both countries, particularly in social sciences, applied sciences, and natural sciences.⁷ Similarly, another study demonstrates that, among other disciplines, energy and environmental science have been identified as key areas of focus in both countries. However, despite political friction, collaborative

⁵ Junwen Zhu and Weishu Liu, "A Tale of Two Databases: The Use of Web of Science and Scopus in Academic Papers," *Scientometrics* 123, no. 1 (2020): 321–35, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11192-020-03387-8>.

⁶ Yujie Qi, "Bibliometric Analysis of Research Trends in Chinese Cultural and Creative Industries," *Frontiers in Communication* 10, no. 5 (2025): 1–21, <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1520966>.

⁷ Qiu Ma et al., "A Bibliometric Analysis of Evolution of Global and Chinese Nursing Scientific Publications," *Open Journal of Social Sciences* 11, no. 10 (2023): 649–59, <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2023.1110038>.

research addressing climate change, renewable energy, COVID-19, and health sciences remains the most contributing disciplines of both countries. A study of a scholar postulates that social sciences, particularly international relations and security studies, remain highly visible in the literature, reflecting scholarly debates on trade, geopolitical competition, technology rivalry, and defense studies. In a multidimensional and interdisciplinary character, these disciplines have been illustrated as the most distinct characteristics of both China and the USA.⁸

The bibliometric types of research cover a wide array of publications, such as the most dynamic authors, publishers, and most cited articles with significant contributions from different countries. For bilateral types of research, bibliometric analysis has gained enormous attention over the last few decades. The data in Web of Science reveals a tremendous growth in bilateral research in countries like the USA and China. Both countries have contributed a handsome scholarship covering diverse areas of interest like science and technology, economics, engineering, medical sciences, and defense. The study also reveals that, after 2017, a relative slowdown occurred in sensitive domains such as Artificial Intelligence and advanced technology, due to restrictions on collaboration and

⁸ Ping Zhou et al., “University-Industry Collaboration in China and the USA: A Bibliometric Comparison,” *PLOS ONE* 11, no. 11 (2016): e0165277, <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0165277>.

geopolitical tensions between the two countries.⁹ Some scholars argue.¹⁰ There have been alarming surges in scholarly research on COVID-19, particularly on vaccine development, epidemiology, and public health between 2020 and 2022.

The published literature also highlights that bibliometric analysis provides key insights into diverse disciplines such as medical science, engineering, and agriculture. This contribution reflects the document on the bibliometrics from both countries (the US and China). The literature also reveals that articles on China and the US are dominated by journal articles, which comprise nearly 80% of the research landscape. The data reveal that scholarship between China and the USA plays a pivotal role in scholarly communications because both are contributing innovative research on areas such as health, economics, political science, and information technology. In a bilateral relationship, both countries contribute depth and breadth in their scholarly communications. The data also underscore that the Chinese Academy of Sciences is one of the leading institutions in environmental sciences, nanotechnologies, and life sciences from the Chinese side. On the other side, Harvard, MIT, and Stanford

⁹ Abid Hussain and Saeed Ullah Jan, "Mapping of Research Output of the Journal 'Strategic Studies' Islamabad: A Statistical Review," *International Journal of Librarianship and Information Science (IJoLIS)* 5, no. 3 (2020): 55–61.

¹⁰, "Strategy of Libraries and Librarians during COVID-19," *This Paper Was Originally Published in the International Journal of Law, Humanities & Social Science*, 2021, https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5232341.

have contributed highly cited articles across international relations, health science, and modern technologies.¹¹

The data also reveals that the social science domain remains the most dynamic discipline in both China and the USA. Few scholars have highlighted that Peking University and Tsinghua University from China, Columbia and George Washington University in the US have contributed a handsome amount of scholarships on trade, diplomacy, and security issues. The data in Web of Science also reveals that scholarship between China and the US relies on leading academic publishers like Elsevier, Springer Nature, and Routledge. The study of ¹² Indicates that Taylor & Francis dominates other publishers, with a recorded knowledge share of 15.1%. The recorded knowledge shows that SpringerLink and Routledge play vital roles in interdisciplinary research. These combinations of commercial publishers and university presses ensure the dissemination of high-quality knowledge, both in terms of disciplinary depth and interdisciplinary breadth.

This study aims to highlight the bibliometric evidence from the Web of Science and demonstrate the quality of scholarship on China-US relations in both expansive and dynamic ways, reflecting a balance

¹¹ Xin Su et al., “China-US Relations and Cybersecurity: A Study of Bilateral Cyberattack Patterns Based on Big Data Analysis,” *2025 2nd International Conference on Smart Grid and Artificial Intelligence (SGAI)*, IEEE, 2025, 1507–10, <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/abstract/document/11009352/>.

¹² Abid Hussain, “Research Output of Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science (CJILS): A Bibliometric Analysis from 1993-2021.,” *Library Philosophy & Practice* 1515, no. 5 (2022): 1–15.

of traditional concerns, trade, security, diplomacy, and emerging themes such as AI, public health, and sustainability in real-world developments. Scholarships in both countries, China and the USA, have been contributed to in various domains, but scholars have given very little attention to this area (Bibliometric).

The present paper is the first attempt to synthesize the published literature on both China-US relations, with a focus on specific areas such as authorship patterns, the most dynamic publishers, institution-wise contributions, year-wise collaborations, and the types of documents contributed by different scholars from various regions. The research will contribute to scholarly knowledge for policymakers, academics, and scholars across different domains.

Literature Review

The relations between China and the USA shape the global economy, technology governance, security architecture, and climate cooperation, and their policy swings ripple through worldwide research. There has been tremendous growth between the two countries over the last few decades. The recent scholarship between the two countries shows a rapid scientific convergence to partial decoupling and selective rivalry in some areas and retreat in others. Mapping these ebbs and flows has become an essential task for the scholarly realm, making this area a crucial tool for the diffusion of new knowledge. As a rising power with its mission, China has made strides to excel in every aspect of life, whether it is industry,

agriculture, defense, science and technology, or global politics. For researchers and librarians, the bilateral relationship is more than geopolitics.

Hence, the intended paper directly affects grant frameworks for scholars of different disciplines to collect and present data through a bibliometric lens. Bibliometrics has been a topic of great interest in the scholarly realm over the last few decades. The word bibliometric was coined by Alan Pritchard in 1969 in his seminal paper "Statistical Bibliography or Bibliometrics."¹³ The purpose of bibliometric studies is to provide a systematic evidence-based lens to understand how scholarly, diplomatic, and policy debates evolve. Bibliometrics helps identify how much research is being produced on the relations between two countries, i.e., (China-US relationships).

Bibliometric and scientometric analyses systematically mine publication metadata, examining various aspects such as authors, affiliations, citations, keywords, journals, and document types to chart volume, influence, and collaborative networks over time. This converts diffuse literature into comparable indicators—growth rates, institutional centrality, and topic evolution.¹⁴

¹³ Muhammad Ismail et al., "Research Contributions of Top-Ranking Universities of Pakistan in SCOPUS Database: A Bibliometric Analysis," *Journal of Information Management and Library Studies* 6, no. 1 (2023): 14–23.

¹⁴ Abid Hussain, "Bibliometric Analysis of Global Policy: A Scholarly Journal of Durham University, UK," *Access: An International Journal of Nepal Library Association* 3, no. 2 (2024): 65–75, <https://nepjol.info/index.php/access/article/view/69421>.

There have been global trends to encompass published research across diverse disciplines, including science and technology, global politics, and various journals and scientific publications.¹⁵ Different sources of bibliometrics have been introduced in the form of various databases, such as the Scopus index, which is maintained by Elsevier. Google Scholar is another indexing agency that offers extensive coverage to complement mainstream databases in citation analysis. Open Alex has emerged as a free and open-access model for bibliometric mappings, supporting large-scale analysis.¹⁶ Similarly, other databases, such as PubMed, which is highly popular for bibliometric analysis of biomedical resources, are used for domain-specific bibliometric studies in health and life sciences due to their comprehensive indexing of biomedical literature.

Among them, the role of Web of Science (WoS) has been widely recognized by the scholarly realm. It is considered one of the oldest curated citation databases for its structural indexing. The present study is based on bibliometric analyses of the Web of Science, which Clarivate owns. Currently, Web of Science is one of the most authoritative academic citation indexing agencies, serving as a vital tool for bibliometric studies, global academic visibility, and research evaluation. Recent studies in WoS have shown that the WoS core

¹⁵ Zhu and Liu, "A Tale of Two Databases."

¹⁶ Ikram Ul Haq et al., "Evaluating the Scholarly Literature on Information Literacy Indexed in the Web of Science Database," *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 2021, 1–17, <https://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/5230/>.

collection remains a common backbone of its curated indexing and is vital for longitudinal comparisons between China and the USA.¹⁷

Bibliometric evidence from the Web of Science (WoS) shows that while the People’s Republic of China and the United States remain the leading contributors to scholarship on their bilateral relationship, several other countries have emerged as dynamic participants. China is contributing nearly one-fifth of economic studies, international relations, security, and environmental studies, which is a growing academic investment in international indexing agencies. The United States, with its established research infrastructure, continues to dominate in policy-oriented and theoretical analyses of global governance and strategic competition.¹⁸

A dynamic shift has occurred in the global political and economic landscape between China and the USA. This global landscape has intensified scholarly interest in the evolving relationship between the two countries. Multiple perspectives, including trade, security, diplomacy, cultural exchange, and technology, have given rise to an expanding body of literature over the last few decades. As a result, an expanding body of literature has emerged that examines various dimensions of China-USA interactions, which further highlights

¹⁷ Haibin Chen et al., “A Bibliometric Investigation of Life Cycle Assessment Research in the Web of Science Databases,” *The International Journal of Life Cycle Assessment* 19, no. 10 (2014): 1674–85, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11367-014-0777-3>.

¹⁸ Hussain, “Bibliometric Analysis of Global Policy.”

their strategic competitions, cooperation in global governance, soft power diplomacy, and knowledge production.

Traditional qualitative approaches, such as studies of international relations and political economy, have begun to identify leading journals, influential authors, and research clusters that shape the discourse on China-US relations. However, there is still a scarcity of bibliometric analysis on the subject matter. As the global demands of the scholarly realm rely on point information, the role of bibliometric methods is useful in providing a qualitative overview of how academic intentions in these bilateral relations have evolved, revealing citation structures, co-authorship networks, and thematic development across disciplines.

While some prior works have analyzed the U.S.–China relations through regional or issue-based lenses, few have systematically employed bibliometric tools to assess global scholarly output. There is still a big gap in the subject, which needs further attention to draw a holistic knowledge in the field, particularly on US-China relations in the shape of a bibliometric approach to examine the research productivity of the present generation and beyond. This study aims to pose the central question of what the research trends are in US-China relations in the Web of Science for the last two decades. Using a bibliometric approach, this study highlights the most productive journals, influential scholars, publishers, and subjects to evaluate their research themes over time. The present study

provides a holistic approach, discusses the broader research trends, and offers recommendations for future studies.

Research Questions

1. How have publication patterns (year-wise outputs, document types, open-access categories, and subject classifications) shaped the trajectory of scholarship on U.S.–China relations?
2. Who are the most influential authors, institutions, and countries contributing to the study of U.S.–China relations?
3. What are the dominant thematic areas, citation clusters, and subject-wise contributions in research on U.S.–China relations?

Research Method

The present study employed a bibliometric approach to analyze the US-China relations. Data was extracted from the Web of Science Databases using different keywords such as China-US relations, US-China trade war, US-China technology, and many others. A total 10 of 035 records were retrieved and analyzed. The bibliometric approach has become one of the trending research areas among diverse disciplines. This approach provides empirical knowledge for the scholarly realm. The most extensive research patterns across the world provide a point of view and an overview of publications based on the different aspects, such as the most dynamic authors, publishers, contributors, and citations of the subject matter. This approach provides timely and state-of-the-art information to scholars

working in different fields. The scholar did not apply the restriction to extract maximum data on different subjects, such as international relations, political science, technology, and defense, to track publication trends more widely.

The data was imported into Excel sheets and synthesized carefully to categorize them into document type, open access, subject categories, and the most dynamic institutions. Furthermore, the study identified the leading authors on China-US, the most dynamic institutions, countrywide contributions, publisher-wise outputs, and language distribution to assess the global spread and accessibility of the literature. To provide comprehensive insights across categories, quantitative indicators such as record counts and percentages were calculated against the total dataset (N = 10,035). The data was presented in tables, line graphs, and charts to provide a comprehensive overview with a multidimensional picture. Each table was carefully explained and presented in a sequential order, instilling in the minds the bibliometric theme.

Findings

Table 1 shows the year-wise distribution of articles on US-China relations. The data indicates that there has occurred an upward trend in the scholarly output between 2017-2024, the data also reveals that the most highest years in terms of contribution was 2023 with (914; 9.11%), while in the year 2024 (898; 8.95%) which is the second most productive year, however, in year 2022 (816; 8.13%) was

released which is again a stunning growth, the data further evaluate that during 2017, a study growth was found with (511; 5.09%) to 2021 (737; 7.34%) this reflects that there has occurred a surge on topics such as economic, technologies and geopolitics between the two countries.

The data also reveals that a spike in growth occurred between 2020 and 2021; the data published between these two years is mostly relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic. This reshapes a global dynamic in the relationship between the two countries. Interestingly, the year 2025 shows (517; 5.15%), which indicates a slight decline compared to the previous years. While the data shows that very low accounts for 2026 with 2026 (2; 0.02%), which suggests that the year 2026 has not yet arrived, it is still emerging. To know more about the data, see Table 1 and Figure 1 below:

Table 1: Year-wise contributions of Articles on US-China Relations

| S. No | Final Publication Year | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | 2023 | 914 | 9.108% |
| 2 | 2024 | 898 | 8.949% |
| 3 | 2022 | 816 | 8.132% |
| 4 | 2021 | 737 | 7.344% |
| 5 | 2020 | 698 | 6.956% |
| 6 | 2019 | 680 | 6.776% |
| 7 | 2018 | 563 | 5.610% |
| 8 | 2025 | 517 | 5.152% |
| 9 | 2017 | 511 | 5.092% |
| 10 | 2026 | 2 | 0.020% |

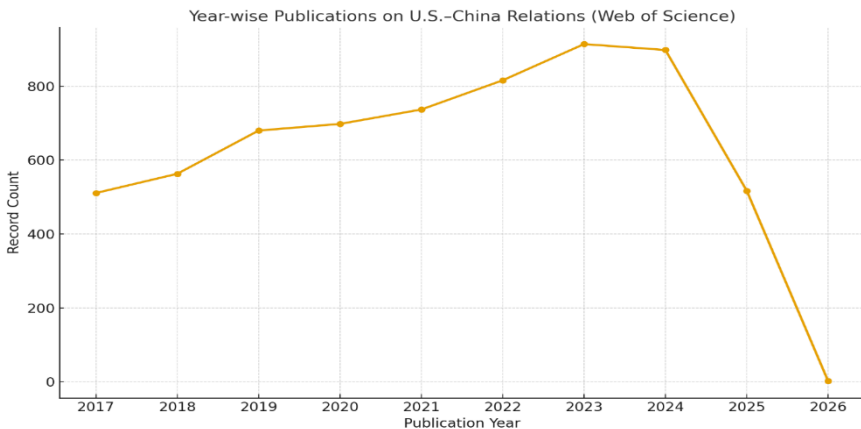
Figure 1: Year-wise publication on US-China Relations

Table 2 highlights the document types within the 10,035 dataset and their distributions. The data shows that among them, the majority of publications were journal articles with (8,329; 83%), which shows that journal articles are the most dominant scholarly contribution, followed by proceeding papers (1,425; 14.2%). This shows that conference proceedings are the second largest collection, with 229 (2.28%) of them being review articles. It indicates that review articles hold importance in scholarly communication. The data also reveals that early access publications were recorded (158; 1.57%) in the dataset, while the book reviews reveal (137; 1.36%), it further reflects that book reviews are highly selected contributions for those who are interested in book reading. The data also shows that editorial materials were (72; 0.71%), while retracted publications were (9; 0.09%), corrections (8; 0.08%), letters (7; 0.07%), and news items (7; 0.07%). The data represent that the scholarly landscape is heavily driven by journal articles, particularly peer-

reviewed research with supplementary contributions of conference proceedings; however, other material remains relatively rare. For more information, see Table 2 below:

Table 2: Types of Documents contributed in Web of Science on US-China Relations

| S.No | Document Types | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|------|-----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Article | 8,329 | 83.000% |
| 2 | Proceeding Paper | 1,425 | 14.200% |
| 3 | Review Article | 229 | 2.282% |
| 4 | Early Access | 158 | 1.574% |
| 5 | Book Review | 137 | 1.365% |
| 6 | Editorial Material | 72 | 0.717% |
| 7 | Retracted Publication | 9 | 0.090% |
| 8 | Correction | 8 | 0.080% |
| 9 | Letter | 7 | 0.070% |
| 10 | News Item | 7 | 0.070% |

Table 3 provides an overview of open-access (OA) publications out of 10,035 publications. The data shows that among them, all open-access material was 3,763 records (37.50%), which indicate that there has been a big surge in open-access publications because in more third-world countries, people cannot buy paid articles. The data also shows that the Green Submitted version is the most common (1,678; 16.72%), which also indicates good figures, followed by the Gold open access (1,572; 15.67%). This indicates that Gold open-access articles are fully accessible in OA journals. The other categories of documents include Free to Read (813; 8.10%), which means that mostly publishers hosted these kinds of materials under OA licenses.

The data also shows that Gold-Hybrid (708; 7.06%), these kinds of articles are made open for free, but most of them are published in subscription journals. Its details are Green Published (668; 6.66%) and Green Accepted versions (242; 2.41%). This means that most contributions in this category are based on self-archived versions in various repositories. In short, Table 3 reflects a significant presence of OA publishing, which has become a trend for countries with low budgets.

Table 3: Open-Access Category on China-US Relations

| S.No. | Open Access Type | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | All Open Access | 3,763 | 37.499% |
| 2 | Green Submitted | 1,678 | 16.721% |
| 3 | Gold | 1,572 | 15.665% |
| 4 | Free to Read | 813 | 8.102% |
| 5 | Gold-Hybrid | 708 | 7.055% |
| 6 | Green Published | 668 | 6.657% |
| 7 | Green Accepted | 242 | 2.412% |

Table 4 provides subject-wise categories of publications on China-US relations in the Web of Science. Among 10,035 publications, majority of them were from International Relations with 1,385 records (13.80%), the record indicates that international relations reflect a prominent place in the global research followed by Astronomy & Astrophysics with (890; 8.87%) and Area Studies (739; 7.36%), the data further highlights that Astrophysics and Astronomy are the most contributed research after the international relations. Political science remained the fourth highly contributed discipline between China and the USA with (654; 6.52%), which

underscores that in the social science branch, political science is the most prominent discipline after international relations.

The data also indicates that computer science and artificial intelligence were also the most prominent disciplines (558; 5.56% and 421; 4.20%) respectively, the data also shows that areas such as computer science theory and methods have good records with (344; 3.43%), which reflects a stronger presence among these disciplines. Furthermore, the data also indicates that Economics as a subject reflects (450; 4.48%), while electrical and electronic engineering discipline stands with (363; 3.62%), however, subjects such as material science hold (322; 3.21%) position, which shows a notable contribution from applied science. For more details, see Table 4 below:

| S.No | Web of Science Categories | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|------|--|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | International Relations | 1,385 | 13.802% |
| 2 | Astronomy Astrophysics | 890 | 8.869% |
| 3 | Area Studies | 739 | 7.364% |
| 4 | Political Science | 654 | 6.517% |
| 5 | Computer Science Artificial Intelligence | 558 | 5.561% |
| 6 | Economics | 450 | 4.484% |
| 7 | Computer Science Information Systems | 421 | 4.195% |
| 8 | Engineering Electrical Electronic | 363 | 3.617% |
| 9 | Computer Science Theory Methods | 344 | 3.428% |
| 10 | Materials Science Multidisciplinary | 322 | 3.209% |

Table 4: Category-wise subject contributions on US-China Relations

Table 5 covers the contribution of the most dynamic authors to US-China literature. Out of 10,035 contributions, Luis C., who remained

on top with 23 (0.23%) publications, followed by Anton M. Koekemoer with 18 (0.18%) publications. The data also shows that Zheng Wei and Deng Xin each have 17 (0.17%) publications. This reflects that the authors have contributed a handsome number of articles on China-US relations. The data also shows that some other notable contributed authors are Chen Shyi-Ming 16 (0.16%) and different scholars, namely Hu Frank, Wang Jing, de Grijs Richard, Schneider Donald P., and He Kai. Each one has contributed 15 (0.15%). Collectively, these authors are the most dynamic and prolific contributors on the China-US relationship, with a mixed perspective from social, applied, and natural sciences. For more details, please see Table 5, below:

Table 5: Author-wise publications on US-China Relations

| Sr. No | Top Authors | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|--------|----------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 01 | Luis C. Ho | 23 | 0.229% |
| 02 | Anton M. Koekemoer | 18 | 0.179% |
| 03 | Zheng, Wei | 17 | 0.169% |
| 04 | Deng, Xin | 17 | 0.169% |
| 05 | Chen, Shyi-Ming | 16 | 0.159% |
| 06 | Hu, Frank | 15 | 0.149% |
| 07 | Wang, Jing | 15 | 0.149% |
| 08 | de Grijs, Richard | 15 | 0.149% |
| 09 | Schneider, Donald P. | 15 | 0.149% |
| 10 | He, Kai | 15 | 0.149% |

Table 6 provides a list of the top 10 most influential authors on US-China relations. The data shows that Zhang Y leads the list as the leading author with 101 (1.01%) publications. Wang J, with 94 (0.94%), and Wang Y, with 84 (0.84%), both have contributed handsome publications on US-China literature, while Li Y (79;

0.79%), Liu Y (78; 0.78%), and Li J (71; 0.71%) are listed in the top ten most contributors. The data also shows that Zhang J (62; 0.62%), Wang L (61; 0.61%), Wang X (61; 0.61%), and Zhang L (55; 0.55%) were also included in the top 10 slots. If we go into detail, every author has shared less than 2% of the total 10,035 publications. Still, their contribution reminds us that these authors are a highly influential cohort in US-China literature. For more details, see Table 6, below:

Table 6: Most Influential Authors on US-China Relations

| S.No. | Author | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|---------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Zhang Y | 101 | 1.006% |
| 2 | Wang J | 94 | 0.937% |
| 3 | Wang Y | 84 | 0.837% |
| 4 | Li Y | 79 | 0.787% |
| 5 | Liu Y | 78 | 0.777% |
| 6 | Li J | 71 | 0.708% |
| 7 | Zhang J | 62 | 0.618% |
| 8 | Wang L | 61 | 0.608% |
| 9 | Wang X | 61 | 0.608% |
| 10 | Zhang L | 55 | 0.548% |

Table 7 underscores institution-wise contributions to the China-US relationship. Out of 10,035 publications, the leading institution is the Chinese Academy of Sciences (1,172; 11.68%), which stands in the top position with advanced scholarships. Peking University, which is one of the leading universities in China, has contributed 427 (4.26%), followed by Tsinghua University (296; 2.95%) publications. Other major institutes include the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (316; 3.15%) with publications, while Shanghai Jiao Tong University has contributed (228; 2.27%)

publications. It is interesting to note that the University of Science and Technology of China has contributed (196; 1.95%). It seems that Chinese institutions have a strong presence in US-China scholarships. On the other side, the University of California system, which has only 324 (3.23%) and Harvard University with 195 (1.94%) publications, reflects that these universities have fewer records on the US-China relationship compared to Chinese Institutions.

Among European institutions, the National de la Recherche Scientifique has contributed (212; 2.11%) publications, while the University of London stands with (195; 1.94%). The data shows that Chinese institutions are in a clear dominant position compared to US institutions. For more details, see Table 7, below:

Table 7: Institutional-wise contributions to US-China Relations

| Sr. No | Affiliations | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|--------|---|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Chinese Academy of Sciences | 1,172 | 11.679% |
| 2 | Peking University | 427 | 4.255% |
| 3 | Tsinghua University | 296 | 2.950% |
| 4 | University of California System | 324 | 3.229% |
| 5 | University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) | 316 | 3.149% |
| 6 | Shanghai Jiao Tong University | 228 | 2.272% |
| 7 | Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS) | 212 | 2.113% |
| 8 | University of Science and Technology of China (CAS) | 196 | 1.953% |
| 9 | Harvard University | 195 | 1.943% |
| 10 | University of London | 195 | 1.943% |

Table 8 provides country-wise contributions to the US-China relationships. Out of 10,035 publications, the People's Republic of China has contributed 6,566 records (65.43%), which is the highest among countries in terms of contribution. The data also reveals that the USA stands second after China with 2,825 (28.15%). It seems that both countries have contributed 93% of the total publications. The third contributory country is England, ranking with (802; 7.99%), followed by Germany with (576; 5.74%). Australia has contributed (563; 5.61%), which is a leading Western partner, while Japan has (449; 4.47%), followed by Russia with (320; 3.19%). The data also shows that European contributions are also notable, such as France, which stands at 376 (3.75%) publications, while Italy (357; 3.56%) and Canada (346; 3.45%) further added a good number of publications. The data shows that China and the USA are the dominant players in all contributions, followed by Europe, Asia, and Oceania. For more details, see Table 8, below:

Table 8: Country-wise contributions to US-China Relations

| S.No. | Country/Region | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | People's R China | 6,566 | 65.431% |
| 2 | USA | 2,825 | 28.151% |
| 3 | England | 802 | 7.992% |
| 4 | Germany | 576 | 5.740% |
| 5 | Australia | 563 | 5.610% |
| 6 | Japan | 449 | 4.474% |
| 7 | France | 376 | 3.747% |
| 8 | Italy | 357 | 3.558% |
| 9 | Canada | 346 | 3.448% |
| 10 | Russia | 320 | 3.189% |

Table 9 outlines the publisher-wise contributions on U.S.–China relations from 10,035 publications, showing that Elsevier leads with 1,419 records (14.14%), followed by Springer Nature (1,075; 10.71%) and Taylor & Francis (878; 8.75%), reflecting their dominance in disseminating global research. Other major contributors include Wiley (583; 5.81%), IEEE (541; 5.39%), and Oxford University Press (515; 5.13%), indicating strong representation from both STEM and social science domains. IOP Publishing (462; 4.60%) and Sage (353; 3.52%) further expand the spread, while specialized scientific outlets like the American Physical Society (228; 2.27%) and MDPI (184; 1.83%) also contribute. Overall, the distribution highlights the pivotal role of leading international publishers, particularly Elsevier, Springer, and Taylor & Francis, in shaping and circulating scholarship on U.S.–China relations across multiple disciplines. For more details, please see Table 9, below:

Table 9: Publisher-wise contributions on US-China Relations

| S.No. | Publisher | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|--------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | Elsevier | 1,419 | 14.141% |
| 2 | Springer Nature | 1,075 | 10.713% |
| 3 | Taylor & Francis | 878 | 8.749% |
| 4 | Wiley | 583 | 5.810% |
| 5 | IEEE | 541 | 5.391% |
| 6 | Oxford Univ Press | 515 | 5.132% |
| 7 | IOP Publishing Ltd | 462 | 4.604% |
| 8 | Sage | 353 | 3.518% |
| 9 | Amer Physical Soc | 228 | 2.272% |
| 10 | MDPI | 184 | 1.834% |

Table 10 presents distributions of languages in China-US relationships. The data shows that out of 10,035 publications in the Web of Science, the most dominant is the English language with 9,657 records (96.23%), which is a global medium for scholarly communication across the globe. The data also shows that Russia is the second contributing language with (180; 1.79%) and Chinese with (110; 1.10%) publications, though Chinese institutions have contributed a handsome amount of scholarship, but those are in the English language rather than in Chinese. Articles in the Spanish language show (39; 0.39%), while the French language has only (9; 0.09%) publications. Similarly, the Turkish language contributed (6; 0.06%) publications, while the Portuguese language contributed (5; 0.05%) publications. Similarly, the Slovak language has (5; 0.05%) while German and Norwegian languages have (4; 0.04%) publications respectively. The data in the table shows that English is a highly contributing language in all 10,035 publications. For more details, see Table 10, below:

Table 10: Language-wise contributions to China-US Relations

| S.No. | Language | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|-------|------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | English | 9,657 | 96.233% |
| 2 | Russian | 180 | 1.794% |
| 3 | Chinese | 110 | 1.096% |
| 4 | Spanish | 39 | 0.389% |
| 5 | Turkish | 6 | 0.060% |
| 6 | Portuguese | 5 | 0.050% |
| 7 | Slovak | 5 | 0.050% |
| 8 | French | 9 | 0.090% |
| 9 | German | 4 | 0.040% |

| | | | |
|----|-----------|---|--------|
| 10 | Norwegian | 4 | 0.040% |
|----|-----------|---|--------|

Table 11 provides subject-wise contributions on US-China relationships recorded in the Web of Science Core Collection. The data shows that across 10,035 publications, international relations dominate with 1,400 (13.95%), while Galaxy Evolution stands with (441; 4.40%), however, Stellar Evolution have (104; 1.04%) publications on the socioeconomic sides Market interdependencies have (157; 1.57%) records while on China's Social Transformation presents (139; 1.39%).

The records on International Trade indicate (117; 1.17%), while Corporate Governance has (96; 0.96%). In interdisciplinary Complex Networks have (127; 1.27%), while Media and Politics (113; 1.13%). Furthermore, Fuzzy Decision-making presents only (96; 0.96%). This demonstrates that the entire data reflects a blend of political, economic, social, and scientific perspectives. In short, international relations is the most prominent subject in the China-US collection. For details, please see Table 11, below:

Table 11: Subject-wise Citations on China- U.S. Relations

| S.No | Citation Topics Micro | Record Count | % of 10,035 |
|------|-------------------------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1 | International Relations | 1,400 | 13.951% |
| 2 | Galaxy Evolution | 441 | 4.395% |
| 3 | Market Interdependencies | 157 | 1.565% |
| 4 | China's Social Transformation | 139 | 1.385% |
| 5 | Complex Networks | 127 | 1.266% |
| 6 | International Trade | 117 | 1.166% |
| 7 | Media and Politics | 113 | 1.126% |
| 8 | Stellar Evolution | 104 | 1.036% |

| | | | |
|----|-----------------------|----|--------|
| 9 | Fuzzy Decision-making | 96 | 0.957% |
| 10 | Corporate Governance | 96 | 0.957% |

Discussion

The study underscores a highly researched landscape on bibliometric analysis of US-China collections in the core collection of Web of Science. The data shows that a total of 10,035 publications on US-China were found, which reflects that the most dominant publications were journal articles (83%). It highlights that peer-reviewed scholarly contributions have a broader scope in scholarly communication than books and conference reports. The findings corroborate the study.¹⁹ This highlights that journal articles are commendable sources of research and learning. The study also highlights the Open access trends of US-China relations in the Web of Science core collections.

It shows that around 37.5% of publications can be accessed online without any restrictions. These open-access articles include green and gold categories. This reaffirms that the demand for open-access articles is increasing across the globe. The findings closely align with the study²⁰ who describes that bibliometric research on open access articles is rapidly increasing using Web of Science core collections. The study also highlights the subject-wise categorization of the documents. The data shows that international relations remain

¹⁹ Hussain and Arif, "Bibliometric Analysis of Regional Studies—A Quarterly Journal of Institute of Regional Studies, Islamabad, Pakistan."

²⁰ Haq et al., "Evaluating the Scholarly Literature on Information Literacy Indexed in the Web of Science Database."

the dominant discipline across other disciplines, with 13.8%, while other fields like astronomy, area studies, and political science were recorded at 7.3% and 6.5%, respectively.

This confirms that international relations remain the largest area by subject-wise compared to other disciplines. The findings clearly align with the study of²¹ which affirms that social science collections are increasing at alarming rates in the Web of Science and Scopus indexing agencies. The author-wise contributions in bibliometric research have remained a usual practice across all disciplines because, without authors' contributions, particularly dynamic authors, bibliometric studies have no value. The present study also highlights a few dynamic authors, like Zhang Y, Wang J, and Wang Y, who emerged as the most influential authors. This reflects that Chinese authors have more publications on US-China relationships than the USA.

The findings corroborate the study of²² who conducted a study on the bibliometric analysis of China and Latin America on their socio-political dynamics? The same study also found that Chinese authors are more dominant than those of America in social science research. At the same time, the present study encompasses institution-wise contributions between the US and China. The data shows that the

²¹ Abid Hussain et al., "Bibliometric Perspective of Margalla Paper: A Flagship Journal of National Defence University, Islamabad, Pakistan," *Journal of Advances in Library and Information Science*, 10 (4), 2021, 300–307, <http://jalis.in/pdf/10-4/Pakistan.pdf>.

²² Gil-Barragan et al., "A Bibliometric Analysis of China–Latin America Economic and Political Relations."

Chinese Academy of Science remains in the dominant position with (11.6%) publications, while Peking University and Tsinghua University remain in second and third positions compared to the USA.

On the other hand, the most dynamic institutions from America were the University of California System and Harvard University. The findings are closely related to the results of ²³ which highlights that in scientific fields, Chinese institutions contribute more publications than those of America. Country-wise contributions have also been made by the author in the present study, which reveals that China has contributed (65.4%), while the USA has contributed only (28.1% of publications. The findings of country-wise publications closely associated with the study of ²⁴ which postulated that US authors have contributed fewer items compared to Chinese authors.

The present study also highlights the language-wise contributions of publications relevant to the US and China. English remained the most dominant field compared to other languages. Similarly, the publishers of this study indicate that Elsevier remained in the top position with (14.1%), followed by Springer Nature with (10.7%) and Taylor & Francis with (8.7%). The findings of this study also corroborate the findings of ²⁵ which describes that Science Direct,

²³ Gil-Barragan et al., “A Bibliometric Analysis of China–Latin America Economic and Political Relations.”

²⁴ Alessandria et al., “Trade War and Peace.”

²⁵ Chen et al., “A Bibliometric Investigation of Life Cycle Assessment Research in the Web of Science Databases.”

Springer Nature, and Routledge are the most popular databases that contribute articles in diverse disciplines. The finding closely aligns with the study of ²⁶ which indicates that Elsevier and Springer Nature broadly cover natural and applied sciences research.

In short, the findings of this study suggest that US-China relations are increasing politically as well as in a multidisciplinary phenomenon. The findings also suggest that Chinese institutions are increasingly shaping the discourses than American ones. Future studies may further elaborate on different aspects of China-US relationships, particularly on international relations, by combining Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar as a platform.

Conclusion

The study reveals that scholarships on US-Chinese relationships are increasing exponentially across different landscapes. This study concludes that research on China and the U.S. is highly disciplinary, globally relevant; however, Chinese and US international relations remain the central theme. The research also ensures that areas such as economics, astrophysics, and the social sciences show significant intersections. The findings also reveal that Chinese scholars and institutions are increasingly contributing larger scholarships than those of Americans.

²⁶ Zhou et al., "University-Industry Collaboration in China and the USA."

In areas such as disciplines, author-wise contributions, and country-wise contributions, China remained in top positions while the USA remains a critical counterpart. Despite diverse contributions of the Chinese in different fields, the English language remains in a key position compared to the Chinese language; similarly, major publishers were from Western countries compared to China. This shows that Western publishers underline structural asymmetries in scholarly communication. Based on the findings of the study, the present research offers significant recommendations for future studies. These are mentioned below:

Policy Recommendations

1. It is suggested that future studies should focus more on politics, technology, and cultural diplomacy.
2. It is recommended that Web of Science and Scopus Indexing agencies should promote multilingual publishing in other languages like Russian, Chinese, Spanish, etc, to enhance inclusivity and global engagement.
3. Global collaboration, such as a partnership between US and Chinese universities, for diverse perspectives in order to develop social harmony between the two countries.
4. It is recommended that Web of Science should increase the open access initiative in both green and gold open-access options to increase the visibility, accessibility, and impact of research in both countries.

5. Both countries should contribute policy-relevant research, such as trade wars, climate cooperation, security issues, and non-traditional security threats, to contribute more evidence-based research for both countries.



Book Review

My People the Sioux by Luther Standing Bear

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Book Review

My People the Sioux by Luther Standing Bear

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Introduction:

My People, the Sioux is an autobiography of Luther Standing Bear of the Sioux tribe. It was first published in 1928. The book consists of episodic chapters published with certain changes in different editions. Standing Bear authored the narrative in his 60's. Throughout his life, he observed numerous important occurrences either firsthand or through his family; these accounts include certain events such as the threats by white troops following the assassination of General Custer at the Battle of Wounded Knee. He was the very first student at the notorious Carlisle Indian Boarding School. The book provides a candid glimpse at a person who was proud of his Sioux history while working hard to integrate or get along with white people. This book is a great source of information about life among the Sioux Indians in Dakota and Nebraska, as well as a personal account of how one man battled for integration and respect as a legal American citizen.

Main theme:

The book is preceded by a plethora of preliminary material that establishes the time period in which the book was written, as well as the author's history and goal. He opens his book's prologue by noting that the creation of this book has not yet been with any concept of self-glory. It's merely a statement to the white race to present the Sioux people in a truthful and authentic way. The author establishes within only two phrases that he is addressing as a Sioux with direct experience of his people, and that his purpose is to tell white people appropriately about the Sioux. The author wants to tell the presumed white people about Sioux Indian practices in his book, and he does so with the viewpoint and attitude of an insider, passing on familiar experiences and facts to an outside culture.

Review:

“My people the Sioux” depicts the collision of two divergent civilisations, as well as one man's struggles to maneuver among them. Portions of the narrative are amusing, but others are frightening. Standing Bear has no reservations regarding expressing his viewpoint. He was trained not to worry, and he appears rather satisfied letting the audience laugh with numerous humorous anecdotes of trouble and misfortune. As he recounts his personal adventures, amazing information regarding Sioux culture surfaces more or less by chance. Reading of Standing Bear's wedding, for example, gives white males even more reason to wish in secret that we were all Sioux warriors: "You must realise that among my

people, a mother-in-law is not ever allowed to utter a single word to her son-in-law, nor even to look at him." He also said in a little humorous way that "a silent man is trusted rather than a man always ready to speak," the way he explained; it was funny in its apparent sense, but they were equally valuable because these quotes had some meaning in them

In the chapter in his book "The Tipi," he lovingly explains "our women" who "firmly resemble angels soaring" with their exposed sleeves as they worked to build the tipi. He describes how the ladies of his clan were using the buffalo's hide and flesh, assuring the reader that "this was no waste, I can guarantee you". The author represents buffalo central to the social, economic and spiritual life of Sioux, which is a very symbolic and rich part of the book, it is being represented as the foundation of Sioux civilization.

As one moves through different chapters, it is understood that the author grew up in a traditional Sioux setup. He was an admired warrior and a hunter. But eventually the traditions changed, and so did the Indians. These changes were a result of not the choice but the demand and the force of white assimilation in the society. Though many battles were fought, one battle forced the change that was the Custer battle. This battle forced the Indians to adopt new ways of life. The changes that struck the Indians were not ordeals; their independent ways of life were changed. Prized buffalo changed, so did the Indians. After many of their traditional ways were destroyed, they became more dependent on the government for their living

needs, especially their food. Along with their lifestyle, their ways of traditions as well as their religion changed,

In the chapter “The Indian School”, it is stated that the US government policies for Sioux, which were white-centric, forced the Indian people to join boarding schools where they were told to pick their new names. Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle was one of the earliest boarding school whose main goal was cultural assimilation of the native American, Luther standing bear was one of the first student to arrive there, he was asked to choose his name from the wall and he selected Luther as his name, so this boarding school was good in a sense that its main task was the cultural assimilation in American natives, Luther studied from this boarding school. His thoughts and ideas were to protect that Native American culture, religion and its sovereignty. His writings educate the Native Americans, deepen the public awareness and create a well-known support to change policies toward Native American people.

In the chapter “Dance, Standing Bear explains the Sioux Religious practices, which included sacred dances. These dances were the way of expressing harmony, gratitude and humility. The US government intervened to induce cultural change and forbade the Indians from participating in their Sun Dance Ritual, which was their most significant religious and social event. The last dance Luther enjoyed was in the summer of 1879, right before he departed for school in Carlisle. They believe that God was observing, and this dance was a holy rite. But the government sought to eradicate Indian culture

completely. This was only because white people had already influenced Indian culture.

As discussed, the main essence of the book is to describe the loss of culture and its disruption. Standing Bear does not simply condemn the white people; he compares the western individualism and materialism with the Sioux values. This comparison allows the readers to ask about the dominant ideas about civilization, progress and modernity. Through his writing, it is evident that he writes in a dignified way and wants to persuade, which makes his narrative strong and builds moral authority for his critique.

Moreover, some readers would not find this book as analytically good, considering modern academic standards. The writing structure is in the form of episodes, and the chapters are self-contained reflections instead of a linear storyline. The connectivity between the chapters is only conceptual rather than connected narratively. Moving forward, the historical events are influenced by the personal memory of the author, and then are analysed through the existing documentation. This is also the speciality of this book that it explains the lived experience of the individual; in this way, the ethical and moral truth is also well written in the book, which is often missing in the statistics and the historical accounts.

Modern Context:

Even though the book is an account of the historical experience of indigenous people in the United States, its wide reflections on

sovereignty and power tells a story beyond its immediate context. The author says that in the case of Sioux the sovereignty eroded through administrative regulation, treaties, economic dependency and cultural assimilation. He says that these white people have this perception that they can control every aspect of the native life, even though they themselves are the outsiders in the land. My people the Sioux is the early 20th century critique of colonial expansion and control, where they take over the resources for their benefit, leaving colonies poorer. This can be related to these recent events, the United States has openly stated to acquire Greenland to gain control, it has also threatened Canada that it will make it, its 51st state. This aspect is discussed well in the book, that these early settlers asserted their control over indigenous lands with the motives of economic control in the guise of “Civilisation”. Moreover, the United States forced a large-scale operation in Caracas and captured Venezuelan President Maduro and his wife. While being accused of narco-related charges by the US, it is widely debated that this is a violation of Venezuelan sovereignty as defined by international law. Mirroring how United States initial policies eroded Sioux by controlling its sovereignty essentially its resources, land and leadership.

This book is a strong personal account of Luther Standing Bear as his experience in Sioux as a man who is navigating the clash between his culture and white assimilation into the society of the Sioux. He reveals the challenges in very candid and humorous ways that are faced by the people due to white assimilation and the

importance of protecting their traditions. His accounts aren't outdated and fit well in today's world. Bear's work is valuable to analyse the cultural struggles and events of American history that eventually shaped their identity.

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