

Published:
June 21, 2025

MILITARIZATION AND MARGINALIZATION: THE KASHMIR PREDICAMENT

Dr. Anees ur Rashid Hashmi

Assistant Professor,
Institute of Kashmir Studies,
University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad.

Email: anees.rasheed@ajku.edu.pk

Prof. Dr. Khawaja Zahid Aziz

Professor,
Department of Kashmiryat, Oriental College,
University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Email: akhawajazahid@yahoo.com

Dr. Farida Anjum

Research Scholar,
Department of Kashmiryat, Oriental College,
University of the Punjab, Lahore.

Email: anjumfarida01@gmail.com

Abstract

The Kashmir conflict has been one of South Asia's most enduring and destructive disputes, posing significant threats to regional security and international peace. Beyond territorial disagreements, the issue is fundamentally grounded in humanitarian concerns, political instability, and the ongoing military occupation of the region. Since 1947, the dispute has led to multiple wars and skirmishes between India and Pakistan, with temporary ceasefires brokered through international interventions. In 1948, the United Nations intervened, emphasizing the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination. This paper examines the impact of militarization and political marginalization in Indian-administered Kashmir, particularly following the revocation of Article 370 in

2019. By reviewing human rights reports and scholarly literature, the study highlights how the region's increasing militarization has curtailed democratic rights, civil liberties, and social equity. The research also explores how the ongoing occupation has marginalized the people of Kashmir, depriving them of fundamental freedoms and exacerbating their socio-political and economic challenges.

Key Words: Kashmir Conflict, Militarization, Marginalization, Fundamental Rights, Socio-Economic, Socio-Politics, Freedom Movement.

Introduction

After the 2nd World War which consequence in partition of subcontinent by emerging two dominions Pakistan and India changed the British vs Czars ideological great game into new battlefield with new proxy players? Although under the article 7(b) of Indian Independence Act of 1947 with the abolishment of all the treaties and agreements, the State of Jammu of Kashmir was free as considering end of Amritsar Treaty of 1846. So, it has three options: either join Pakistan or India or live independent in the light of third June Plan which was revealed by Muslim League as well. The last Dogra ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh could not decide from given options and only succeeded to sign “**Standstill Agreement**” with Pakistan while India refused by asking “**provide further details**”.

The inclination of Kashmiri Muslims along with All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was towards Pakistan as reflected from resolution of “Accession to Pakistan” dated 19th July 1947 on one side while Indian Congress is exploiting the Hindutva and regularly pressurizing Hari Singh by Congress top

class rigid Hindu leadership in the supervision of Gandhi, Patel and Nehru. These circumstances made frustration and fear in Kashmiri Muslims and revolt arose from western parts of the State of Jammu and Kashmir from Poonch areas. Muzaffarabad also joined the party with the assistance of tribesmen from Sarhad Province (currently Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) from 22nd October 1947. This revolt resulted in the foundation of revolutionary government in western parts of the state named “Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir” on 24th October 1947. India desperately dropped its paramilitary forces on Srinagar Airport pretending a fake “instrument of accession” on 27th October 1947. Indian this move divided the state into two main parts Azad Jammu and Kashmir (semi-autonomous region on western and northern west) and Jammu and Kashmir State which went under Indian occupation that still ongoing.

Since 1947, the Kashmir dispute emerged as a central conflict in South Asia, undermining regional security and obstructing sustainable peace. Beyond territorial disagreements, the crisis is marked by severe humanitarian challenges and a prolonged military occupation that limits the region’s self-determination. Following multiple conflicts between India and Pakistan and subsequent international engagement, including a 1949 United Nations affirmation of Kashmiri self-determination the situation has grown increasingly complex. This study examines the evolving relationship between militarization and political exclusion in Indian-administered Kashmir, especially after the 2019 revocation of Article 370. Drawing on international human rights investigations and academic research, the paper assesses how enhanced security measures and policy shifts have curtailed civil liberties and democratic engagement, while exacerbating the

socioeconomic and political marginalization of the local population.

Historically Dilemma for Kashmiris

Kashmir is among the most contested regions in South Asia, positioned at the crossroads of religion, nationalism, and strategic interests. After the 1947 Partition of British India, both India and Pakistan laid claim to the region, which led to multiple conflicts and a prolonged standoff. In the decades since, Indian-administered Kashmir has become one of the most heavily militarized zones in the world (Bose, 2003), with major implications for the rights and daily lives of its residents. After the Indian invasion in Kashmir which brutally divided the state into two main parts which separated by ceasefire line drawn by United Nations on 5th January 1949 after first Indo-Pak war of 1947-48. This bloody line mitigates all types of freedom, fundamental rights, socioeconomic and religious affairs of the people of the Jammu and Kashmir State which named by Pakistan Indian Illegal Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

United Nations Security Council (UNSC) assures in its resolution which declared ceasefire between India and Pakistan on Kashmir question in first part while in rest two sections of this agreement determines the future of Kashmir through plebiscite. The mechanism of plebiscite was presented in that resolution of 5th January 1949. Indian leadership also seduced Kashmiris in the name of “**right of self-determination**” and soon imposed article 370 and 35A to reduce the resistance from Kashmiri by alluring them special status fraud. With the passage of time from 1952 to 1975, the Kashmiri leadership and Kashmiris became aware of Indian fraud. They became hopeless about the right of self-determination from Kashmir and launched a movement for freedom from India.

Published:
June 21, 2025

This time India tactically introduced “**the Kashmir Accord**” in 1975 which made large scale changes in the special status, governance and sovereignty of Kashmir. Kashmiris were unable to resist because in meantime Pakistan was under sever crisis. Pakistan faced the tragic “**Fall of Dhaka**” in Indo-Pak war of 1971 and soon after Indian nuclear tests in the “**Smiling Buddha Operation**”.

During the wars of 1965 and 1971 which ends on Tashkent Declaration and Shimla Agreement followed by converting Ceasefire Line into Line of Control made the Kashmiris life tough, bounded and disintegrated. After LoC, the social, racial and interconnectivity among the Kashmir badly affected and gaps were increased among them day by day. From 1975 to 2018, the people of Jammu and Kashmir faced persistent challenges arising from political shifts, armed insurgency, state militarization, economic stagnation, and social disruptions. This period marked a phase of continuous unrest and anxiety, wherein ordinary Kashmiris bore the brunt of political decisions, insurgent violence, and security responses. The region’s complex relationship with the Indian Union, coupled with internal and external pressures, contributed to a situation of deep uncertainty and trauma for generations.

Challenges Faced by Kashmiris

Soon after the Indian occupation, the Kashmiris has been facing human abuses, brutality, depriving from fundamental rights, missing all types of freedom like freedom of movement, speech, business, employment, gathering, organization etc. from the Indian occupies military forces. Indeed, militarization is not any durable solution in settlement of any conflict or dispute. The militarization in Jammu And Kashmir State impacted in multifaceted social,

cultural, racial, communal and economic manner like migrations, displacements, suppressions, oppressions, forceful inclusion, marginalization and abuses. There is a wide range of abuses: rapes, gang-rapes, disgracing, unethical treating, insulation, ill behaviors and treating Kashmiris most inferior class like slaves.

- **Social and Cultural Suppression**

Beyond military control, new policies have intensified fears of cultural erasure and political disempowerment. The introduction of domicile laws has raised concerns about demographic changes, as non-Kashmiris are now eligible to own land and settle in the region (Hussain, 2020). Political leaders, including former chief ministers, have been detained or silenced, and local media and cultural voices operate under strict censorship, deepening the region's alienation from the rest of India. The region of Jammu and Kashmir has long witnessed a complex interplay of political conflict and cultural resistance. Over the years, a range of measures by the Indian state have been criticized by scholars, journalists, and international observers as contributing to the suppression of local identity, culture, and expression.

There have been repeated instances where religious gatherings and cultural processions have been disallowed or heavily policed. Notably, processions during Muharram and congregational prayers at Srinagar's historic Jamia Masjid have been frequently restricted or outright banned. These measures, often imposed under the guise of security concerns, have been interpreted by many as infringements on religious freedom and expressions of communal identity, thereby alienating significant segments of the population. Artists, poets, academics, and other cultural practitioners have faced state scrutiny for their

Published:
June 21, 2025

work. Intellectuals whose writings or performances explore themes of identity, resistance, or historical memory often encounter censorship or harassment. Such treatment fosters a climate where creative and critical expression becomes a risk-laden act, limiting the space for cultural reflection and dialogue.

The Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act, enacted in 2020, introduced Hindi as one of the region's official languages, alongside Urdu, Kashmiri, Dogri, and English. This legislative change sparked concern among many Kashmiris, who perceived it as an imposition of a linguistic identity disconnected from the valley's historical and cultural fabric. Scholars argue that such measures contribute to the gradual dilution of the region's indigenous languages and narratives, especially within educational institutions and public discourse. There is a growing perception that place names, public institutions, and development schemes are being renamed in ways that marginalize Kashmir's Muslim heritage. The symbolic reshaping of the public sphere is seen by some as part of a broader project aimed at cultural assimilation. This process often involves sidelining or reframing historical references to emphasize a singular national identity over the region's pluralistic and diverse past. Laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) have been used extensively in Kashmir, often against activists, students, and community leaders. These laws permit detention without trial and provide broad immunity to security forces. Civil society actors have long argued that such legal frameworks are used not only for maintaining public order but also for suppressing political expression and weakening local civic institutions.

- **Political Disempowerment and the Erosion of Autonomy**

The Indira-Abdullah Accord of 1975 marked a turning point in Kashmir's post-Partition history. Though it facilitated the return of Sheikh Abdullah to power, it was perceived by many Kashmiris as a compromise that betrayed earlier commitments to greater autonomy or a plebiscite. The period that followed saw a slow but consistent dilution of Article 370, which originally granted Jammu and Kashmir special status under the Indian Constitution (Noorani, 2011). Laws and institutions from the Indian Union were extended to the state, often bypassing democratic consultation. A critical blow came with the 1987 legislative elections, which were widely perceived as rigged. The unfair electoral process crushed hopes for political representation, especially among youth, and pushed many towards armed resistance (Bose, 2003). The resulting political alienation fostered a breeding ground for militancy, which erupted shortly thereafter.

The political framework of Jammu and Kashmir was initially shaped by its unique constitutional relationship with India, formalized through Article 370. This provision granted the region limited autonomy, allowing it to have its own constitution and control over most legislative matters except defense, foreign affairs, and communications. However, over the decades, this autonomy was gradually reduced through a series of central government interventions, which extended various laws and institutions to the region without meaningful local consultation. This slow dilution of powers weakened the region's ability to govern itself in accordance with the original spirit of its accession. A significant turning point occurred on August 5, 2019, when the Government of India revoked Article 370 and reorganized Jammu and Kashmir into two separate union territories

Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

- **The Emergence of Armed Conflict**

By the end of the 1980s, frustration over broken promises, political manipulation, and economic neglect manifested in an armed insurgency. Fueled in part by support from across the Line of Control, groups in the Valley began advocating either for independence or for integration with Pakistan. The Indian state responded with massive militarization, deploying thousands of troops to the region. In 1990, the Indian government enacted the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) in Jammu and Kashmir, granting the military sweeping powers including arrest without warrant and immunity from prosecution. This led to a range of alleged human rights violations, which significantly worsened relations between the state and its people (International People's Tribunal, 2009).

The emergence of armed conflict in Kashmir can be traced to the political tensions that followed the partition of British India in 1947. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, with a Muslim-majority population ruled by a Hindu Maharaja, became a contested territory between India and Pakistan after the Maharaja chose to accede to India in exchange for military assistance during a tribal invasion. This decision led to the first Indo-Pak war and the eventual division of the region along the Line of Control, a boundary that remains disputed to this day (Schofield, 2003). The conflict deepened over time due to political disillusionment within Kashmir, particularly after the Indian central government's increasing interference in local elections and the erosion of promised autonomy under Article 370. These developments fostered a sense of betrayal among many Kashmiris, especially during the 1987 state elections, which were widely seen as

rigged. This event is often cited as a turning point that led to the rise of insurgency and the beginning of sustained armed resistance against the Indian state (Bose, 2003).

The armed movement in Kashmir gained momentum in the late 1980s, fueled by both internal frustrations and external support. Disenchanted Kashmiri youth, some trained and armed across the border in Pakistan-administered Kashmir, began a violent insurgency aimed at achieving independence or joining Pakistan. The movement soon evolved into a broader conflict involving militant groups, Indian security forces, and civilians caught in between. Pakistan's involvement through financial and logistical support to insurgent groups added an international dimension to the local rebellion, complicating efforts for peace (Ganguly, 1997).

- **Displacement and Demographic Shift**

A particularly tragic outcome of the violence was the mass exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in 1990, following targeted attacks and threats. An estimated 100,000 to 150,000 Pandits fled the Valley, leaving behind property, heritage, and community ties. The event not only disrupted Kashmir's composite culture but also intensified communal tensions (Kak, 1994). In later years, some Muslim and Sikh families were also displaced due to targeted violence, further fracturing the social landscape. The conflict in Kashmir has led to significant displacement, most notably the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandit community in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Following the rise of militancy in the Kashmir Valley, thousands of Hindu Pandits fled their homes due to targeted killings, threats, and fear of violence.

Estimates suggest that over 100,000 Pandits were displaced from the region between 1989 and 1991, leading to the near-total disappearance of this community from the Valley (Bose, 2003). Many of them were relocated to temporary camps in Jammu and other parts of India, where they have lived in difficult conditions for decades. The forced migration of this population not only altered the demographic composition of the Valley but also became a symbol of the broader sectarian and political divisions in the region. Efforts to return the Pandits to their homeland have been sporadic and largely unsuccessful, due to concerns about safety and the lack of reconciliation between communities (Ganguly, 1997). More recently, demographic concerns have resurfaced following major constitutional and legal changes in Jammu and Kashmir. In August 2019, the Indian government revoked Article 370, which had granted the region special autonomy, and removed Article 35A, which restricted land ownership and government jobs to permanent residents. These decisions opened the door for non-residents to settle in the region, raising fears of a state-led demographic shift (Chowdhary, 2020).

- **Violations of Human Rights**

During the height of the insurgency and counter-insurgency operations in the 1990s and early 2000s, civil liberties were severely curtailed. Reports from rights groups and journalists documented torture, enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and sexual violence. The Kunan-Poshpora case of 1991, where local women accused security forces of mass rape, became emblematic of state impunity. Despite investigations and petitions, justice remained elusive for victims (Human Rights Watch, 1999). The Kashmir conflict has been

Published:
June 21, 2025

accompanied by ongoing allegations of human rights violations, particularly in areas under Indian administration. Since the eruption of the armed insurgency in 1989, security operations have led to numerous reports of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and arbitrary detentions. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which grants sweeping powers to the military in "disturbed areas," has been widely criticized for enabling impunity and obstructing accountability for abuses (Amnesty International, 2015). Families of victims often struggle to access justice due to delays, lack of transparency, or fear of retaliation. Human rights groups, both local and international, have documented thousands of cases of unmarked graves and custodial deaths, raising serious concerns about due process and the rule of law in the region (Asia Watch & Physicians for Human Rights, 1993).

The situation has become even more concerning following the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status in August 2019. In the immediate aftermath, the region experienced a total communication blackout, restrictions on movement, and mass detentions, including the arrest of political leaders, journalists, and minors. Reports indicated widespread suppression of dissent and curbs on freedom of expression, which were condemned by international bodies such as the United Nations and Human Rights Watch (UN OHCHR, 2019). While the government justified these measures as necessary for national security and integration, critics argue that the crackdown infringed on fundamental rights and deepened the sense of alienation among the local population. These actions highlight how human rights concerns in Kashmir are not limited to past conflicts but are ongoing and deeply tied to political developments and governance

structures.

- **Economic Decline and Youth Unemployment**

Decades of conflict stunted the region's economic potential. Tourism, once a major economic driver, declined sharply after 1989. Local industries, such as handicrafts and horticulture, suffered from curfews, transport restrictions, and a lack of outside investment. Infrastructure development lagged behind national standards due to persistent instability and bureaucratic control from New Delhi (Zutshi, 2014). The result was a sharp rise in unemployment, particularly among educated youth. With limited job prospects, many young Kashmiris became increasingly alienated and susceptible to radical ideologies, protests, or migration.

Economic decline and youth unemployment are closely linked, especially in regions facing conflict, political instability, or structural economic weaknesses. When an economy slows down or contracts, investment drops, industries stagnate, and job creation becomes limited—leaving young people particularly vulnerable. In many developing countries, a mismatch between education systems and labor market demands also contributes to unemployment among graduates. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO, 2020), global youth unemployment rates remain consistently higher than adult rates, with young people three times more likely to be jobless. This trend is more pronounced in regions with rapid population growth, weak industrial bases, and limited access to vocational training or entrepreneurship support. Economic hardship among youth can also lead to long-term consequences such as delayed family formation, increased migration, and greater social unrest.

- **Educational Disruption and Mental Health Impact**

Conflict conditions significantly disrupted the education sector. Schools and colleges were often shut during periods of protest or curfew. Long closures, such as those during the 2016 uprising, prevented students from taking exams or completing academic years. The lack of continuity affected entire generations (Wani, 2017). In addition, the mental health consequences of prolonged exposure to violence were profound. Anxiety, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and substance abuse became widespread, especially among the youth and women. However, mental health services remained underdeveloped, and the social stigma around treatment worsened the situation.

These educational disruptions have also contributed to a rising mental health crisis among Kashmiri youth. Prolonged school closures, uncertainty about the future, and the psychological toll of living in a militarized environment have led to increased levels of anxiety, depression, and trauma. A mental health survey conducted by Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in collaboration with the Srinagar-based Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) found that nearly 20% of the population in Kashmir showed signs of probable depression, with young people being particularly affected (MSF, 2015). The absence of structured schooling, combined with exposure to violence and societal instability, has created an environment where students feel both emotionally and academically disconnected.

- **Waves of Civil Unrest and Protest Movements**

Between 2008 and 2016, mass protest movements became common, with civilian populations, especially young people, openly confronting state forces.

The Amarnath land transfer controversy (2008), the protests over fake encounters (2010), and the uprising after Burhan Wani's killing (2016) all led to intense confrontations between demonstrators and security personnel. Security forces often responded with lethal force. In 2010 alone, over 100 civilians, many of them teenagers, were killed. In 2016, the use of pellet guns left thousands injured, including hundreds who lost partial or complete vision (Amnesty International, 2017). These incidents intensified public anger and deepened mistrust in democratic institutions.

Kashmir has experienced multiple waves of civil unrest and mass protest movements often sparked by political developments, security actions, or perceived violations of local rights. One of the earliest major uprisings occurred in 1990, when protests against Indian security forces escalated into widespread demonstrations following the intensification of the armed insurgency. These mass mobilizations were largely driven by demands for political self-determination and the withdrawal of armed forces from civilian areas (Bose, 2003). In more recent years, particularly during the 2008, 2010, and 2016 protest cycles, Kashmir witnessed large-scale civilian agitations many of which were youth-led and centered on symbolic acts such as the funerals of slain militants. These protests were often met with curfews, detentions, and the use of force by state authorities, resulting in civilian casualties and long-term trauma. Each wave of unrest has deepened public mistrust in the state apparatus and exposed the fragile nature of governance in the region (Chowdhary, 2019).

- **Media Gagging and Communication Blackouts**

During times of unrest, the state frequently imposed telecommunication shutdowns, suspended internet services, and restricted media reporting. These measures, aimed at curbing mobilization, further isolated Kashmiris from the outside world. Journalists often faced harassment, censorship, or arrest, limiting independent reporting and access to credible information (RSF, 2018). Media gagging and communication blackouts have been systematically used as tools of control in Kashmir, particularly during periods of political tension and civil unrest. These restrictions are often imposed to curb the flow of information, prevent the mobilization of protests, and suppress dissenting voices. Following the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, the Indian government enforced an unprecedented communication lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir, suspending mobile services, internet access, and landline communication for several months. According to the Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC, 2020), this was one of the longest internet shutdowns ever imposed in a democratic country.

The blackout not only impacted journalists but also severely disrupted daily life, education, healthcare, and commerce. Students were unable to attend online classes, patients could not access telemedicine, and businesses suffered due to their inability to conduct digital transactions. International human rights organizations, including Human Rights Watch (2019), criticized the communication blockade as a disproportionate response that violated international legal norms. Media organizations within Kashmir also faced harassment, with several journalists being summoned, interrogated, or charged under stringent laws such as the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Revocation of Article 370

On August 5, 2019, the Indian government unilaterally revoked Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution, dismantling the special status previously afforded to Jammu and Kashmir. The decision was made without local consultation and was accompanied by mass detentions, a communications blackout, and the deployment of thousands of additional troops (Human Rights Watch, 2019). While the government framed the move as a step toward economic integration and national unity, others saw it as a blow to federalism and local autonomy (Chowdhury, 2020). Territories governed directly by the central government. While Indian authorities claimed the move would bring development and security, many Kashmiris perceived it as a unilateral imposition that stripped them of political agency and identity (Chowdhary, 2020). The abrupt decision, made without consultation with the region's elected representatives who were simultaneously detained—fueled feelings of disenfranchisement and mistrust among the local population, reinforcing the long-standing perception of alienation from the Indian state (Noorani, 2019).

The post-revocation period has seen intensified marginalization of Kashmiris across political, economic, and social domains. The extended communication blackout, mass arrests, and restrictions on assembly following the constitutional changes severely limited civil liberties and access to basic services. Moreover, the removal of Article 35A previously linked to Article 370—has raised fears of demographic change, as it allowed non-residents to buy land and apply for government jobs in the region. This has created anxiety over cultural dilution and economic displacement, particularly among the Muslim-majority

population in the Valley (Misri, 2021). Many Kashmiris also report increased surveillance, reduced freedom of speech, and declining trust in institutions. Far from fostering integration, the revocation of Article 370 has, for many residents, deepened a sense of marginalization and political exclusion, with long-term implications for peace and governance in the region.

Militarization of Civilian Life

Kashmir's militarization goes beyond physical deployment; it influences every aspect of civilian life. Reports estimate that up to 700,000 security personnel operate in the region (Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights [OHCHR], 2018). Laws such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) provide sweeping powers and legal immunity to military forces. This legal framework has been linked to numerous human rights abuses, including custodial deaths, enforced disappearances, and the widespread use of pellet guns against protestors (Amnesty International, 2015). The militarization of civilian life in Kashmir has become a defining characteristic of the region's socio-political landscape. Since the eruption of armed insurgency in 1989, the Indian government has deployed hundreds of thousands of security personnel to maintain control and suppress militancy in the Valley. As a result, Kashmir has become one of the most densely militarized zones in the world (Bose, 2003).

This intense militarization has also led to widespread human rights concerns. Civilians are often subjected to house raids, identity checks, and arbitrary detentions under laws such as the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA), which grants immunity to military personnel from prosecution (Amnesty International, 2015). The presence of the military in civilian areas

increases the risk of collateral damage during operations and has created a climate of fear and distrust. Reports of enforced disappearances, custodial deaths, and the use of excessive force during protests further highlight how military operations deeply affect non-combatants (Duschinski, 2009). Women in particular have reported feeling unsafe in the presence of armed personnel, citing instances of intimidation and harassment. In such an environment, basic rights such as freedom of movement, privacy, and expression are routinely compromised.

International Silence and Strategic Interests

Despite repeated calls from human rights organizations, the global response has largely been muted. While the OHCHR released two major reports in 2018 and 2019 detailing alleged abuses, no independent inquiry has been permitted within Indian-administered Kashmir (OHCHR, 2019). The region holds immense strategic importance, situated between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan and bordering China. International actors, particularly the United States and European Union members, have generally favored maintaining stable relations with India a growing economic and political power over advocating assertively for Kashmiri human rights or conflict resolution (Ganguly & Howenstein, 2009). Consequently, even when serious concerns are raised about communications blackouts, civilian killings, or legal crackdowns in Kashmir, they are often addressed through vague statements that prioritize regional stability over justice or intervention.

International organizations such as the United Nations have periodically acknowledged the situation in Kashmir, but their impact remains limited. While reports like the 2018 and 2019 UN High Commissioner for Human Rights

assessments highlighted violations in both Indian- and Pakistan-administered Kashmir, concrete follow-up actions or resolutions have been minimal. This lack of enforcement reflects broader challenges in global governance, where state sovereignty and strategic alliances often override humanitarian concerns (UN OHCHR, 2018). For Kashmiris, the international silence has further deepened the perception of marginalization and abandonment, especially as diplomatic appeals for self-determination or intervention have gone largely unanswered. In effect, strategic interests ranging from military alliances to economic ties have rendered the Kashmir issue a low priority on the global human rights agenda, thereby allowing the conflict and its humanitarian consequences to persist with little accountability.

Conclusion

From 1975 to 2018, the people of Jammu and Kashmir lived through an extended crisis marked by political marginalization, insurgency, economic stagnation, and repeated violations of basic rights. While successive governments claimed to seek resolution, the lived reality for Kashmiris remained shaped by conflict, insecurity, and loss. The disillusionment that grew over these decades created an enduring gap between state and society. For any future peace to be sustainable, it must center the experiences and aspirations of the Kashmiri people and address the injustices that have long been overlooked. The cumulative impact of these measures has contributed to a sense of alienation, cultural erosion, and social fragmentation in Kashmir. While the Indian state justifies many of its actions in the name of national security and integration, the lived experiences of many Kashmiris reflect a different narrative one marked by a loss of agency,

identity, and voice. Understanding this dynamic is essential to any meaningful dialogue on peace, reconciliation, and justice in the region. A sustainable solution to the Kashmir conflict requires more than a security-oriented approach. Restoring civil liberties, ensuring accountability, and engaging Kashmiris in political dialogue are essential for building lasting peace. Without acknowledging the grievances born out of militarization and marginalization, long-term stability in the region remains unlikely.

References

- Amnesty International. (2015). *Denied: Failures in accountability for human rights violations by security force personnel in Jammu and Kashmir*. Amnesty International India.
- Amnesty International. (2017). *Losing Sight in Kashmir: The Impact of Pellet-Firing Shotguns*.
- Asia Watch & Physicians for Human Rights. (1993). *The Human Rights Crisis in Kashmir: A Pattern of Impunity*. Human Rights Watch.
- Bhat, B. A., & Yousuf, S. (2019). Youth unemployment in conflict regions: A case study of Jammu and Kashmir. *International Journal of Innovative Studies in Sociology and Humanities*, 4(1), 78–83.
- Bhat, R. A. (2017). Impact of conflict on education in Kashmir. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 8(10), 168–171.
- Bose, S. (2003). *Kashmir: Roots of conflict, paths to peace*. Harvard University Press.
- Chowdhary, R. (2019). Civil resistance and contentious politics in Kashmir. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 54(8), 45–52.
- Chowdhary, R. (2020). Kashmir after Article 370: Politics and the future. *South Asia:*

Published:
June 21, 2025

Journal of South Asian Studies, 43(4), 678–690.

- Duschinski, H. (2009). Destabilizing the discipline of human rights: Kashmir and the question of the human. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 82(3), 755–782.
- Fair, C. C. (2020). India in the Indo-Pacific: New Delhi's role in regional security and strategic partnerships. *Journal of Indo-Pacific Affairs*, 3(1), 42–57.
- Ganguly, Š., & Howenstein, N. (2009). India–Pakistan rivalry in Kashmir: Challenges and prospects. *Third World Quarterly*, 28(3), 571–588.
- Human Rights Watch. (1999). *India's Secret Army in Kashmir: New Patterns of Abuse Emerge in the Conflict*.
- Human Rights Watch. (2016). *India: Kashmir Protest Killings, Injuries*. Retrieved from <https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/09/22/india-kashmir-protest-killings-injuries>
- Human Rights Watch. (2019). "Everyone lives in fear": *Patterns of impunity in Jammu and Kashmir*. <https://www.hrw.org/report/2019/09/05/everyone-lives-fear/patterns-impunity-jammu-and-kashmir>
- Hussain, M. (2020). The new domicile law in Jammu and Kashmir: A case of settler colonialism? *South Asian Voices*. <https://southasianvoices.org/the-new-domicile-law-in-jammu-and-kashmir/>
- Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS). (2015). *Prevalence of mental disorders in conflict-affected areas of Kashmir Valley*. Srinagar: IMHANS.
- International Labour Organization (ILO). (2020). *Global Employment Trends for Youth 2020: Technology and the future of jobs*. Geneva: ILO.
- International People's Tribunal on Human Rights and Justice in Kashmir. (2009). *Buried Evidence: Unknown, Unmarked, and Mass Graves in Kashmir*.
- Kak, S. (1994). *Kashmir: The Unwritten Chapter*.

Published:
June 21, 2025

- Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF). (2015). *Minding the Mind: A report on the mental health situation in Kashmir*. MSF India.
- Misri, H. (2021). The impact of Article 370 abrogation on Kashmiri identity and land rights. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 56(3), 12–15.
- Noorani, A. G. (2011). *Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir*. Oxford University Press.
- Noorani, A. G. (2019). *The Betrayal of Kashmir: The Constitutional Fallout*. New Delhi: LeftWord Books.
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2018). *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 Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan*. <https://www.ohchr.org>
- Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2019). *Update of the situation of human rights in Indian-Administered Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir from May 2018 to April 2019*. <https://www.ohchr.org>
- Peer, B. (2020). *Curfewed Night: A Frontline Memoir of Life, Love and War in Kashmir*. Scribner.
- Press Council of India. (2020). *Report on Media Freedoms in Jammu and Kashmir Post-Article 370*. New Delhi: PCI.
- Reporters Without Borders (RSF). (2018). *India's Kashmir blackout: Journalism under pressure*.
- Software Freedom Law Center (SFLC). (2020). *Internet Shutdowns in India: Annual Report 2019*. Retrieved from <https://internetshutdowns.in/>
- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR). (2019). *Update of the Situation of Human Rights in Indian-Administered*

Published:
June 21, 2025

Kashmir and Pakistan-Administered Kashmir. <https://www.ohchr.org/>

- United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (UN OHCHR). (2018). *Report on the Situation of Human Rights in Kashmir: Developments in the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir from June 2016 to April 2018*. Geneva: UN OHCHR.
- Wani, A. (2017). *Education and Conflict in Kashmir*. Economic and Political Weekly, 52(2).
- Zutshi, C. (2014). *Kashmir's Contested Pasts: Narratives, Sacred Geographies, and the Historical Imagination*. Oxford University Press.