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Introduction

India is the world's most densely populated country and a major democracy, but it faces a significant problem that shapes its current situation: the perpetual dispute in the Jammu and Kashmir region. This conflict comes from India and Pakistan, who are both been claiming the area as their own since they became independent and have been a steady source of instability.

This leads to frequent military clashes and diplomatic disputes that remain unresolved. The Kargil War was a two-month conflict fought in 1999 between India and Pakistan over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir in the Kargil region, and has a lasting implication that continues to exacerbate the tension even to this moment, such as severe humanitarian impacts on Kashmir's local population, from disrupted daily life to restricted access to key services ("Kargil War | EBSCO"). The Pakistani army's involvement in the Kargil War was publicly admitted by the Pakistani army chief, General Asim Munir. He has stated that numerous soldiers had sacrificed their lives in the 1999 Kargil conflict. In addition, India became a nuclear power in 1974 and Pakistan became a nuclear power in 1998. With both countries possessing nuclear weapons, the risk of things getting worse increases, something that could threaten global security. For the people living there, daily life is completely disrupted. Their movement is limited, buildings are damaged, and it's hard to get basic services like healthcare and education. This only exacerbates the difficulties local communities face.

Alongside this main issue, India has other secondary issues. There are occasional tensions between different religious and ethnic groups in some states, which impede social peace. There is also an enormous wealth gap, where some people struggle with poverty and lack access to basic resources.



Figure 1: India-Pakistan Claim of Territory

Background

To understand the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir, we need to look back to the beginnings of the dispute, which started when British India was partitioned into India and Pakistan in 1947 (“Partition of 1947 Continues to Haunt India, Pakistan”). At that moment the rulers of princely states, which were semiautonomous regions under British rule, were asked whether to accede to India, accede to Pakistan, or become independent (Princely State). Jammu and Kashmir, which had been influenced and advised by Britain, mainly by the Indian Independence Act of 1947, had a Muslim - majority population but was ruled by a Hindu leader, Maharaja Hari Singh. This situation would later quickly become a crucial point of tension.

Maharaja Hari Singh initially hesitated to align with either nation, wishing to preserve the state’s independence in order to maintain his own power. However, as



Figure 2: Maharaja Hari Singh



Figure 3: Partition of India and Pakistan alongside neighboring countries.

mentioned, India is an Hindu-majority country and Pakistan is an Islamic-majority country. Pakistan therefore saw this as a reason to push Kashmir to join Pakistan. In October 1947, armed groups from Pakistan entered the region, urging Singh to leave his palace and seek military intervention and protection from India. In exchange for this support, he signed the "Instrument of Accession," formally agreeing the integration of Jammu and Kashmir into India (“Instruments of Accession”). Pakistan rejected this move, arguing that the region’s mostly Muslim population should determine its own

fate, and refused to move its own troops, causing the first Indo-Pakistani war. Moreover, beyond Pakistan's armed involvement, the conflict reshaped administrative control. The 1949 UN - brokered ceasefire established a Line of Control, dividing Kashmir into areas under Indian and Pakistani administration. This division had enormous impacts on resource distribution and the daily lives of Kashmiris.

A United Nations (UN)-brokered ceasefire halted the fighting in 1949. By then, India had secured control over the southern and eastern parts of Jammu and Kashmir, while Pakistan held the northwestern areas of the region. The UN resolution that ended the conflict called for a plebiscite, a public vote by the region’s inhabitants to decide their future, allowing inhabitants of Jammu and Kashmir to make a decision between which country to accede. Security Council Resolution 47 of 1948



Figure 4: Armed police in Kashmir



had three conditions: First, Pakistan was required to withdraw all its forces from the region. Second, India needed to reduce its military presence to a minimal level, only sufficient to maintain basic control functions. Third, the United Nations would organize a plebiscite to allow the inhabitants of the region to decide their future (Security Council Resolution 47 - UNSCR). However, the plebiscite never occurred due to ongoing disagreements between India and Pakistan over the resolution's implementation. Pakistan refused to withdraw all its troops, fearing that India would not reduce its military afterward. Similarly, India refused to demilitarize without Pakistan withdrawing its military completely.

Both countries distrusted each other, so the conditions required by the UN were never met. Over the decades, the dispute has led to three major wars — 1947, 1965, and 1999 —and numerous smaller clashes. In 1989, an armed insurgency erupted. A surge in militant groups emerged, for instance: Lashkar - e – Taiba, a group connected to Pakistan. Additionally, various groups, some supported by India, existed, with armed groups on both sides advocating for union or independence. This fragmentation of objectives meant that it was not a single, unified insurgency, but rather a collection of overlapping movements. The violence further exacerbates the instability.

India responded to the escalating violence by significantly increasing its military presence in the region, which led to a vicious cycle of violence. This included accusations of extrajudicial killings of Kashmiri civilians and severe restrictions on Kashmiri civilians' civil freedoms. For instance, which can



Figure 5: Claim of territory

encompass freedom of movement, expression, and assembly (Guangming Net). The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), which grants security forces the authority to arrest or even kill suspects without warrants, has been heavily criticized for enabling human rights violations (Admin).

According to Amnesty International's 2015 *Denied* report, over 13,000 civilians have died in the conflict, with widespread failures to hold security forces accountable (Amnesty International). The

Jammu and Kashmir government reported that, over the past 21 years, 43,460 people have been killed, which is caused by the insurgency. Among these, 21,323 were militants, 13,226 civilians were killed by militants, 3,642 civilians were killed by security forces, and 5,369 policemen were killed by militants (Wikipedia, "Kashmir Conflict"). These staggering figures highlight the severity of the crisis.

The conflict underwent a significant shift in 2019 with India's revocation of the special autonomous status of Jammu and Kashmir. This decision deprived the region of its ability to maintain its own constitution and laws, previously granted under Article 370 of India's constitution. The move brought the region under tighter control, with only a small portion left with partial autonomy.



This decision provoked criticism from Pakistan, which also claimed Kashmir and described this action taken as illegal, since India's decision does not represent the entire Jammu and Kashmir population. Today, the region remains divided, turned into a region that it is under large scale militarization. The Line of Control (LoC) separates Indian and Pakistani territories. However, conflicts have happened regularly ever since. The key parties are India, Pakistan, and regional militant groups. India aims to keep Jammu and Kashmir as part of its territory. While Pakistan pushes for Kashmir's union with itself or independence, noting self-determination, with historical partition-era motivations still important, now caught between cross-border clashes, infiltration accusations, and militant violence.

Problems Raised

Humanitarian Crisis

The perpetual conflict in Jammu and Kashmir has created a serious humanitarian crisis for the region's community. Decades of violence, military presence, and recurring clashes have damaged infrastructures such as schools, hospitals, and roads, leaving communities without access to basic services. For example, healthcare facilities operate to only a limited extent, with shortages of medical supplies, as well as the educational system being disrupted.



Figure 6: Perpetual Conflict in Kashmir

Displacement is another crucial issue. Tens of thousands of families have been forced to leave their homes due to violence, finding cover in overcrowded shelters. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) have to face overcrowding, poor sanitation, poor hygiene, limited food supplies, and increasing risks of infection and disease spreading. However, the specific numbers for displaced persons are unknown. Reports from human rights groups, such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, mention restrictions imposed by government authorities on movement and access to the media. These measures further isolate populations and hinder efforts to address their needs.

Cross-Border Tensions and Regional Conflicts

The Kashmir dispute also extends into neighboring countries, limiting regional stability and diplomatic relations. Cross-border shelling and clashes along the LoC displace communities on both sides, with some people fleeing into Pakistan. However, this just exacerbates the situation; for example,

Afghanistan and China are experiencing indirect effects of the conflict, which include increased security concerns and political-economic strains due to the instability in the region.

Moreover, the dispute leads to a widening wealth gap. Both India and Pakistan allocate significant



Figure 7: Continuous Cross-Border Shelling

years (Express News Service, “Corruption of Over Rs 100 Cr in MGNREGA in Dahod: Chavda”).

resources to defense, yet experience severe governmental corruption, which results in less funding for development projects, including poverty alleviation and healthcare programs. For example, according to The Indian Express, the Congress party alleged over Rs 100 crore (1 billion Indian rupees) in corruption related to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 (MGNREGA), with the state government receiving a total of 27 complaints of financial irregularities in the past two

International Actions

Efforts to Address Humanitarian Crises

International organizations have tried to provide aid to vulnerable communities. For instance, the UN and its agencies, including the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), have provided food supplies, medical kits, and educational materials to the displaced populations and marginalized areas. For instance, the WFP is pioneering multi-micronutrient fortification, which is the process of adding multiple types of vitamins or minerals into food or beverages, in school meals in Kashmir. The pilot project used rice fortified with iron, which was distributed in a single district within India, resulting in a 20 percent drop in anaemia (“India | World Food Programme”). Despite previous successful cases, access to some regions still remains restricted due to security concerns and natural factors, such as earthquakes, with reports of aid being delayed or blocked. Sources support that Jammu and Kashmir face extreme earthquakes, such as the 2005 event, which measured 7.6 on the moment magnitude scale and reached a maximum Mercalli intensity of XI (Extreme). The server earthquake caused impassible roads, isolating some districts within Kashmir, resulting in aid being delayed (Wikipedia contributors, “2005 Kashmir Earthquake”).

Human rights groups such as Amnesty International and the Human Rights Watch have published reports documenting violations in the region, requesting the Indian government to improve accountability and protect civilians. But it has had limited impact on policy changes, since India has often viewed such proposals as interference in its internal affairs.

Diplomatic Engagement on Cross-Border Tensions

The United Nations has a long history of attempting to address the Kashmir dispute, going back to the 1948 Security Council Resolution 47. That resolution called for a ceasefire and a plebiscite (“Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes”). But later attempts by the UN to facilitate India and Pakistan’s communication have halted, with both countries refusing to give in on their main demands: Pakistan insisted on a plebiscite, while India rejected demilitarization without full Pakistani troop withdrawal. The Security Council has had regular debates on the region, but it hasn’t passed any big new resolutions in recent decades. Recent examples include emergency consultations and high-level debates on conflict prevention and the peaceful settlement of disputes (“Conflict Prevention and Peaceful Resolution of Disputes”). This shows splits among the permanent members, such as the Soviet Union using its veto power to block resolutions that favor the Indian position. According to the Security Council’s resolution from 30 March 1951, the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) will supervise the ceasefire in Kashmir and also needs to make reports on the situation (“Background”). Despite this, tensions have persisted, and UNMOGIP’s role has often been limited: India has increasingly limited UNMOGIP’s operation, arguing that the issue is bilateral and should not involve third-party mediation.

Regional groups like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) have also attempted to make communication between the nations better. But summit meetings between India and Pakistan in SAARC often get less attention from member states due to long-term disputes over Kashmir and lack of trust in negotiations. Talks between the two countries, alone, with help from third parties like the United States or Russia, have gone up and down too—their talks have oscillated between periods of discussion and stalemate. Ceasefire agreements (like the 2021 deal to stop cross-border firing) often fall apart.



Figure 8: UN supervising cease fire



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Key Players

Pakistan

As a direct party to the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan's actions significantly impact cross-border tensions. It has consistently advocated for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, aligning with its position that the region's status should be determined by its people. Pakistan has also raised concerns about human rights issues in Indian-administered Kashmir at international forums, including the UN. In fact, Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has stated that Pakistan will continue diplomatic efforts to secure Kashmiris' right to self-determination in line with UN resolutions.

India

As a key player in the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, India claims that Kashmir and Jammu are vital part of India. India has also focused heavily on addressing security risks and rebel groups within its borders. Its actions, such as revoking Jammu and Kashmir's special self-rule in 2019, have significant effects on politics, the economy, and civil life, both for locals and in terms of India's relations with other countries. For example, curfews and checkpoints make daily life extremely disturbed for people by limiting their movement. Beyond that, India wants to keep control of Jammu and Kashmir to maintain its national unity and territory, viewing the region as a necessary part of the country. The way India handles events influences meetings, the reactions of other countries, and the overall outcome of the conflict. It is a key in any discussion or efforts to solve the problem.

Possible Solutions

Reducing Cross-Border Tension

To de-escalate the perpetual tensions between India and Pakistan, organized talks and regular communication led by neutral and unbiased international bodies and organizations are crucial. For example, the Organization of American States (OAS) successfully mediated the border dispute between Belize and Guatemala in 2000. Through a series of negotiations and trust-building measures, they



Figure 10: Cross border tension between India and Pakistan

prevented a violent conflict between the two countries. A similar neutral party, like the UN or a trusted organization, could bring India and Pakistan to an effective negotiation. First, small trust-building steps are essential. For instance, both countries could

agree to halt all cross-border firing. It failed in the past potentially due to delays in communication, which led small conflicts to erupt because there was no direct, real-time channel to clarify the intention of each side. A “Cross-Border Incident Hotline” could be created to immediately de-escalate minor conflicts. The UN has overseen some successful ceasefires in the past, but its effectiveness varies greatly depending on the specific conflict and situation. In the Iran-Iraq war, the UN Iran-Iraq Military Observer Group (UNIIMOG) monitored the implementation of the ceasefire, which eventually led to both sides withdrawing their forces to the internationally recognized boundaries. An agency group of UN observers could be placed to monitor and ensure conformity in the India-Pakistan conflict. Therefore, collaborations with other organizations could be needed in order to reach ceasefires more easily. A step-by-step approach is crucial in such an armed crisis.

Establishment of the Joint Kashmir Reconstruction Organization

Establish a government Joint Kashmir Reconstruction Organization involving India, Pakistan, and neutral international parties to focus on rebuilding conflict-affected areas. This organization would address efforts to restore infrastructure like schools, hospitals, and roads in Jammu and Kashmir, with the shared fund from both nations and supervision to ensure resources are used for civilian welfare. Such collaboration could build trust by showing the benefits of cooperation for local communities, de-escalating tensions through shared investment in civilian welfare stability.

Glossary

Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)

An act that is invoked when a case of militancy or insurgency takes place and the territorial integrity of India is at risk

Article 370 of the Constitution of India

A provision in the Constitution of India, abrogated in 2019, that granted special powers and a high degree of autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir.

Autonomous Status

Is the state of being self-governing and controlling itself rather than being controlled by anyone else.

Cross-Border Shelling

The usage of artillery guns to drop shells across the border.

Instrument of Accession

A legal document used when a state joins an existing treaty or federation.



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Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

People who are forced to flee their homes by conflict, violence, persecution, or disasters; however, unlike refugees, they remain within their own country.

Line of Control

A military control line between the Indian-administered and Pakistani-administered portions of the former princely state of Jammu and Kashmir.

Plebiscite

The direct vote of all the members of an electorate on an important public question, such as a change in the constitution.

Transboundary Resources

Natural resources that are shared between two or more countries or jurisdictions, crossing international borders.



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