



RESEARCH PAPER

Kashmir Issue: A Dominant Threat to Peace

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ABSTRACT

There are different issues in the world which have potential to disturb peace of the world and Kashmir is also one among those issues. India and Pakistan are nuclear powers and after 76 years of independence both countries are not able to find any durable solution for Kashmir. This standstill position is damaging and deteriorating the conditions of human rights in the valley. India after revoking article 370 has successfully made Kashmir an internal matter and UNO and big powers are reluctant to play an effective role in this regard. But Kashmir dispute is neither a secluded event nor its consequences will be isolated. The descriptive analytic approach has been used to discuss some of the key aspects of Kashmir dispute including historical background, politics, human rights violations and role of international community. This research paper has explained various recommendations to manage the issue.

KEYWORDS Bilateral, Human Rights, Kashmir, Peace, Security, Violations

Introduction

Second World War's end brought an era of mutual harmony, peace and appeasement. Most of the issues of the world can be seen moving towards their solution; however, unfortunately South Asian region is still at the brink of the nuclear war. Two nuclear countries of South Asia; India and Pakistan do not seem keen to settle down their disputes not only for peace and prosperity of their own region but for whole world. Both countries are at a standstill position on their stands. The current insecurity and instable situation in the south Asia is credited to 70 years long enmity between India and Pakistan. Kashmir dispute is bone of contention and causes antagonistic relations between them (Burke & Ziring, 1990).

People of Kashmir have raised voice for their basic right of self determination multiple times but on every occasion it has been viciously turned down by the Indian security forces. In Kashmir human rights situation is getting worst with every passing day but international community is not able to see these violations and ignoring the legal aspect of the conflict (Masood, & Muzaffar, 2019) According to UNO's charter people of Kashmir are free to use their right of self determination. Apart from all important issues between India and Pakistan, Kashmir has stood out as the most significant one. This article examines the causes and consequences of various up risings in Kashmir valley and recent developments like revocation of article 370. This paper has explained Kashmir dispute, its important developments, how it poses a serious threat to global peace and what should be done to resolve Kashmir dispute.

Literature Review

A lot of literature is available on Kashmir dispute. Many scholars have explained its different angles like Cheema (2014) discusses the historical background of Kashmir crisis. He has also explained various approaches to resolve Kashmir issue. Khan (2015) discusses Kashmir dispute's legal aspects; it briefly elaborates the international law and its implication on Kashmir dispute, human rights violations and related agreements. He explains briefly how India is violating the international law. Wolpert (2010) explains Kashmir dispute in details and presents a solution that people of the state should be allowed to decide their destiny and free and fair elections is the only and suitable solution of this problem. Despite being signatory of various parts of international laws Indian violations has no consequences.

Wani (2013) has told the untold stories of Jammu and Kashmir's people who suffered a lot. Massive human rights violations and in this cycle of violence people have lost their loved ones. This article explains the human rights situation in Kashmir since 1989. Schaffer (2018) briefly describes the historical context of international community's role to settle down the Kashmir dispute. He explains that the world has been interested in solving Kashmir issue since 1947. This book emphasis that the crisis that exploded in 1989-1990 is a continuity and result of continuous denials of Kashmiri's basic human rights. McDonald (2020) fascinating describes of strategic competition between both countries in the last two decades, following nuclear tests of 1998's.

Wenning (2003) explains that Kashmir is described as heaven on earth by the writers and the poets but this paradise has been set onto fire for more than 50 years. In the conflict of two nuclear powers only Kashmiris has suffered greatly. Bose (2003) in her book explains that how Kashmir has become a serious threat to South Asian and International peace. This book also presents solution to defuse the tension. Abakaya & Bhatti (2005) describe the main factors behind the insurgency of 1987-89 which led Kashmiris to take a more firm stand for their independence.

Sattar (2016) explains briefly the historical perspective of the Kashmir dispute. This book covers all the developments on Kashmir and role of big powers to solve Kashmir dispute. Jacob (2016) explains the Indian perspective on the Kashmir dispute. Despite tremendous amount of work on almost all aspects of Kashmir dispute has been done but still there is lack of literature of this topic. This research has tried to fill this gap and provides a deep insight on international community's role and current situation in Kashmir.

Historical background

Although subcontinent's partition and handing over power to Pakistan and India was a difficult decision, however, a number of factors pushed British government to take this decision like:

- Protests against the British rule for the transfer of power to the natives
- Fiscal deficit of the British government forced them to take a decision

Consequently, the Government was bound to declare the plan of Indian partition on June 3, 1947 (Menon, 957). Lord Mountbatten, the Last Viceroy of India, made it clear that princely states would be allowed to join Pakistan or India while keeping in view the two basic principles of:

- Geographical contiguity
- Wishes of the masses of the state

Due to above mentioned principles Kashmir was in favor of its accession to Pakistan. Keeping in view the geographical importance of Kashmir and his promises with Indian leaders Lord Mountbatten himself violated the principles that were set by his government at the first place. He acted as the sole controller of the destinies of the Kashmiris, even thought it was illegal and immoral by all the means. Indian Independence Act's violation made Kashmir an incomplete agenda of Indian partition to date.

At the time of partition, Muslims were 93 percent of the total population and were under the Hindu ruler Maharaja Hari Singh. For a long time Muslims of the state had been suffering from the Hindu rulers, the partition of India was seemed as the ray of hope but the demand of the accession with Pakistan was not met and Maharaja Hari Singh tried to consolidate his rule. Kashmiris started revolt against Maharaja and Dogra forces tried to threaten Muslims and made a massacre of a large number of Muslims. Muslims were slaughtered and while looking at the situation and on brutalities, the tribesmen from the bordering area of Pakistan entered in Kashmir to support Kashmiri Muslims. On 26th October 1947 finding no way out Maharaja turned to New Delhi for military help and by signing the accession helped him to deploy Indian forces in the valley. In result of deployment of Indian forces and operation about 80,000 Kashmiris were butchered and 700,000 left their homes or forced to take refuge in Pakistan (Ganguly, 1988).

1989's Unrest and Human Rights Violations

From 1947 to 1988 people of Kashmir constantly kept on struggling for their basic human rights but a strong wave was there in 1988 against the economic, religious political and cultural exploitation. India made strong efforts to crush the Muslims of Kashmir by all available sources but these freedom lover Muslims were not de-motivated. Since 1988, Kashmir the heaven on earth has been transformed into a slaughter house for the sons and daughters of the soil and Indian government decided to crush separatists and to take hard stand. Due to unrest and protests valley went under president rule. In 1990, Indian forces worst human rights violations were witnessed in Kashmir (Schaffer, 2018). Armed forces has murdered Muslim civilians, executed persons in their custody and have committed rape, assault, kidnapping and indiscriminate attacks which have injured and killed civilians. In 1990's this situation got worse as Indian forces started operation "catch and kill" against alleged freedom activist. Since then number of executions of prisoners by Indian troops have tremendously augmented (Asia Watch, 1993). Kargil crisis deteriorated relations between Pakistan and India (Masood, Sultana, & Muzaffar, 2020; Pandita, 2003).

In 2001, terrorist attack on Indian parliament once gain deteriorated relation between the two countries. India mobilized forces on Pakistani border. Indian forces once again launched operation in Kashmir valley blaming them for their terrorist activities and militancy in Kashmir. By using the name of terrorism Indian government once again violated human rights on the large scale. There were different new dimensions in international politics after 9/11 terrorist incidents in USA. India and Pakistan had also different options to discuss their issues including Kashmir but Mumbai attacks in 2008 deteriorated the whole process and Kashmir issue could not gain any proper attention by in 2008 Pakistan was a weak position without any reliable partner, consequently international community (Wani, 2013).

Human rights violations in Kashmir during January 1989 to January 2012

Total Killings	93,716
Custodial Killings	6,989
Civilians Arrested	119,789
Destroyed Structures Arsoned	105,936
Women Widowed	22,763
Children Orphaned	107,436

Women gang-raped / Molested

10,350

Reported by Kashmir media service (Tabassum, 2013)

2016's Unrest

In July 2016 after a new wave of protest against Indian government arose in Kashmir as a 22 years young man Burhan Wani was killed by security forces because of his Facebook and Whatsapp posts. Security forces shot into the face of the protestors in result 570 were admitted in hospital with no chances of recovering eyesight. Once again this issue was raised in UNO by Pakistan. International organizations have expressed serious concerns on human rights violations in Kashmir. Tension between Pakistan and India further escalated in result of attack on Uri, an Indian army camp on 18th September, 2016. Pakistan was being accused for providing help to such terrorist activities as Pakistani marked weapons were found after the attack. India once again succeeded to divert world's attention towards Pakistan from her human rights violations (Sattar, 2016). Indian army has violated the all international and humanitarian laws by torturing; deliberate killings during custody and by not letting them exercise their fundamental right of self-rule. Indian security forces are violating human rights and various laws are enforced ASFP, PSA, POTA and TODA. Such black laws reminds the imperial era of British government. Through these laws people can be unconstitutionally arrested. Since 1978, Amnesty International has been banned from entering the valley (Lamb, 1994). The OIC permanent Commission on Human Right's report showed that during this period 17855 children became orphan, 22939 women became widows and 110445 houses and other buildings were damaged. This report further elaborates that 11, 246 women were desecrated and 8000 Kashmiris went missing by Indian forces during this period (Khaliq, 2022).

Pulwama Attack & revocation of Article 370

In Pulwama, India's Central Reserve Police's vehicle convoy was attacked by a suicide bomber which killed almost 40 soldiers. Immediately tension between Pakistan and India flared. During this whole episode an Indian plane was shot and pilot was captured who landed on Pakistani land. However through negotiations tension was eased and Pakistan released Indian pilot showing good will gesture.

In October 2019, the Indian government revoked Article 370 of Indian Constitution. Article 370 allowed a limited autonomy and a special status was given to Jammu and Kashmir which permitted the state to have its own constitution, laws and flag. Land could not be bought by Indians of other states and Kashmiri women would lose their property rights if they marry outside the state. While other important affairs like defence and foreign policy was controlled by Indian government. Modi government after returning in office for second term removed the article 370 calling it was a temporary arrangements. They claimed that it was discriminatory in nature and hindered development of the region. Cancellation of article 370 has also ended the special rights of Kashmir and it is divided into union territories of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh.

It was a controversial decision and anticipating the consequences the Indian government organized a big number of armed forces in the region. Political leaders were imprisoned, internet services were cut off, media houses were lockdown and whole region was under curfew. Pakistan strongly responded by suspending trade and withdrawing its ambassador. These were blatant violations of human rights which were criticized by human rights organizations but internationally response was in favour of India and considered internal matter.

Right of Self-Determination

State security gives most significant place to the human security, it is constitute of individual, communities and societies' security. Charter of UNO guarantees the right to live, cherish and survive to every human being regardless of their cast, religion and geographical identities. These basic rights are categorically stated in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and in international law (Khan, 2015). Individuals and nations are free to decide their social economic, political status and right of self-rule is the fundamental right which guaranteed by Charter of UNO. International law and principles of international Court of justice assures that self determination is detained by the masses and not by the government and Self determination is about the individual's autonomy, capability, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

Self-determination symbolizes the fundamental right for making decision of their destiny. This concept is as ancient as the Greek city states. It remained significant throughout French and American revolutions, progressed in fourteen points by Woodrow Wilson, thus integrated in the charter of the League of Nations and got central position in the Charter of United Nations. After World War-II, it became the most important factor of the European decolonization in Asia and Africa (Fox, 1995). India and Pakistan got independence o this principal of self determination on 14th August 1947, but India never let to the Kashmiris to use their right although there are numbers of resolutions have been passed by the UNO accepting their demand of self-rule (Syed, 2003). Kashmir is a case study and has all the basics that an independent nation or a state should have.

International law about basic rights says that; "individuals should not be arbitrarily deprived of their lives, and homicide should be deterred, prevented and punished." These rights are further protected by the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights-1948' (Human Rights Charter, 1948). This assertion emphasizes on 'innate freedom and equality, puts a ban on discrimination and states that, everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." Unfortunately, despite these guarantees, agreements, declarations and covenants for the human rights, the Kashmiris are humiliated.

Kashmir's different strategic location and strategic importance for India and Pakistan made both countries to not compromise their stand over Kashmir. They perceive Kashmir as a guarantee to their securities and this perspective has bound both states to design and adopt conflicting policies and build a stronger and equipped military since independence. Consequently, this approach has led these states towards three wars (1948, 1965 and 1971) and still uncertainty is big obstacle in peaceful coexistence.

Internationally, After Simla agreement 1972, Kashmir is considered as Pakistan and India's bilateral issue and human right violations and abuses have not received due attention. Kashmir dispute can be Study from different angles but following three are considered as the most important:

- A bilateral issue between Pakistan and India
- From a geopolitical perspective and threat to regional and international peace and security
- Kashmir issue is analyzed from humanitarian perspective although this angle is being ignored but massive human rights violation like repression, torture and unconstitutional killings caused unrest among the people of Kashmir and in last two decades these violations have reached on unprecedented level.

Latest by revoking the article 370 India successfully established Kashmir issue an internal matter. India' rapidly growing economy, increasing market and successful diplomacy made world to either support their stance or to remain silent on the issue.

International Community's Role

The global concern and involvement in Kashmir is full of disappointment and failure because the negative attitude of India towards the internationalizing of the issue. India first took Kashmir issue to United Nations in January 1948, but in a few weeks number of incidents pushed the applicant to adopt altogether a different approach and in consequently after seventy years later Kashmir dispute is still with us and threatening for peace of the whole world. United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was formed consisted on five members, which passed resolutions of withdrawal of forces, ceasefire, , and plebiscite in which the Kashmiris would decide about their future.

Except ceasefire, none of these resolutions were put into practice. A number of UN missions were unproductive to settle down the differences of the both states and to convince them for a peaceful solution of the Kashmir. Military Observer Group was set up by the UN and placed beside the ceasefire line; this group was helpful in decreasing the tension till 1965 (Schaffer, 2017).

USA, Britain, and Soviet Union endeavored outside the UNO to solve the issue. Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1950 endorsed India-Pakistan Talks on all the crucial issues including Kashmir but India discarded any foreign intervention. John F. Kennedy was of the view that in 1962, China's defeat to India made an agreement possible US and Britain involvement in the six rounds talks between Pakistan and India was not successful and proved her wrong.

Pakistan's decision to join western security alliances and later on US and other allies' role during 1965's war, questioned the U.S and UN's role that either they were serious to settle down the Kashmir dispute or just trying to appease both sides to get help from them during the cold war. Soviet Union decided to support India's stand and to veto UN's any future resolution which would not be acceptable for India. In 1966, Alexi Kosygin soviet prime minister helped both countries to conclude Tashkent agreement after 1965. This agreement was merely restored the status quo and did not provide any political solution to the crucial issue of Kashmir. Other nations recognized that it was impossible to solve Kashmir issue and stayed aloof.

After 1971's war Simla agreement in 1972 was a big breakthrough for the peaceful relations between the two countries as they were agreed to resolve their mutual conflicts bilaterally and refrains from interference into each other's internal affairs. Pakistan was focusing on the immediate issues like POWs but India was keen for the permanent acceptance of the Kashmir issue and its withdrawal from UN.

United Nation resolutions on Kashmir under Chapter-VI of its Charter cannot be enforced because cooperation of both parties is needed for its implementation. For the US, EU and other major powers, willingness of the New Delhi India and Islamabad is important to play the role of mediator or facilitator. However, due to US's strategic partnership with India seems a reason for not playing an active role to resolve Kashmir dispute except rhetorically. India is encouraged by the world community on Kashmir which made it behave more aggressively without realizing that it might have drastic consequences.

India's stubborn attitude, lack of interest on the part of UN and the apathy of the big powers, have not adopted an appropriate stance against India, following their strategic and economic interests in spite of respecting UN resolutions and charter. Globally the latest developments in Kashmir and amendment in article 370 has been ignored and considered India's internal matter.

Threat to Peace

Kashmir dispute has been reduced to regional issue. India has presented this conflict as a civil unrest by the people of the Kashmir against the Indian government which can be resolved by diplomatic efforts and secondly it is a bilateral issue between both countries and it should be tackled without international interference. India has successfully presented its stance and world political leadership is failed to take a firm stand against the atrocities of Indian forces and have completely ignored the plight of the people of the Kashmir. Tortures, abuses, rapes and murders of innocent civilians have continued to pervade Kashmir and have failed to reach our radars due to the Indian government's censorship. Underneath all of the warring between the Indian army and Kashmiris lies a fragile nuclear, economic and political region fraught with terrorist activity.

Being busy in Kashmir and on the eastern border will affect Pakistani army's ability to fight against the Taliban on the western border. India's aggressive policies in Kashmir are test of nerves for Pakistan and to maintain balance of power in the region. So resultantly, on one hand Pakistan is engaged on the eastern border to contain India and on the other hand to combat terrorism on the western border. Recent nationalist struggle in Kashmir and brutal torture of Indian forces on the Kashmiris diverted Pakistan's attention from war on terror (McCarthy: 2002).

Most of the Pakistanis do not like US in Pakistan because the religious affiliations of the masses and intelligence services and military personals's with the fundamentalists and some of extremist groups (Albright & O'Neill, 2001). Anti- American sentiment arose when US decided to attack Afghanistan and Pakistan decided to join US's war on terror after 11 September and it had triggered a tremendous increase in domestic terrorism (Muzaffar, Yaseen, & Afzal, 2021; Khan, 2003).

A disturbing fact about this terrorist wave and increasing militancy is that Pakistani nuclear arms could fall into the hands of these extremists' hands, as General Musharraf has himself accepted that there were links between Al-Qaeda and Pakistani scientists "but we know today that the scientists involved had only a very superficial knowledge and that the al-Qaeda terrorists did not come closer to their dream of building their own atomic bomb" (Boyes, 2005). It is a real threat for the whole world if these terrorist are not fight and curbed properly.

New Delhi wants to exploit international sentiments on terrorism for their interests to suppress the Kashmiri nationalist struggle and name this struggle as terrorism and take advantage and mobilize world opinion punish Pakistan for helping Kashmiris for their legitimate freedom struggle. India has justification that if Israel and U.S can use force to eliminate terrorism then India has same right to curb terrorism in Kashmir. If the U.S and Israel forces can enter in Afghanistan and West Bank then India is justified in crossing the line of control and entering in Kashmir (Khan, 2003). The war on terror had grave consequences on Kashmir because it is not only limited to South Asia. Kashmir is directly linked with the world's security and peace issue such as nuclear weapons, terrorism and the role of the international community in Kashmir's existing conditions (Wenning, 2003).

Moreover, two nuclear powers Pakistan and India pose a serious threat considering the instability, uncertainty and explosive nature of their relationship. Kashmir has become worst and tension has escalated and terrible violence erupted which is having a possibility to turn the South Asian region into breeding ground for the nuclear attack. India and Pakistan should be pressurized to reduced the possibility and bring Kashmir dispute on the table for a solution.

Conclusion

Kashmir is not merely a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan but it is an international issue with grave consequences to world peace. UN has passed number of resolutions and it is on Security Council's agenda. International community, so-called peace loving nations are failed to bring both nations on the negotiation table. UNO and big powers are not fulfilling their responsibilities on establish peace in Kashmir and letting Kashmiris to enjoy freely their right of self determination. Indisputably, as long as Kashmir remains unresolved, the world is at the edge of a nuclear war.

Although India's economic stability, military power and strategic location persuade world to adopt a more lenient approach towards her. India has successfully established its narrative on Kashmir that it an internal matter of India.. Due to successful diplomacy and strong position, India is successful to name Kashmir's struggle for their basic rights as terrorism. Need of the time is Pakistan should adopt comprehensive approach towards Kashmir for its solution. Pakistan should focus the legal aspect of Kashmir dispute. Basic human rights of Kashmiri people should be respected and international community must play its role by putting pressure on India.

US can bring both the states on the negotiate table but it would not be any helpful if the US government becomes a part of such negotiations as India will definitely not like this. The US government can play the role of a facilitator and keep its informal position to encourage the public discussions. Although India has developed strong relations with the US but while looking at the past history of the Pak-US relation, Indian government will be more cautious of US role in this whole process of settlement. Washington can convince the New Delhi by offering a permanent Security Council seat and by building world pressure. Joint mechanism can be proposed with the help of World Bank and other donor's special fund to reconstruct Kashmir. Other countries should support efforts to enhance International involvement and find out different ways to influence India and Pakistan that a little change in the Kashmir's geographic status quo is worth their efforts for a long period of South Asian peace.

It is important to understand that Kashmir is a complex issue and keeping in view its seven decades long tortured history, it should be addressed carefully and constant efforts must be made to achieve any desirable outcome, but immediate pressure can persuade India from human rights violations and sufferings of the people of the Kashmir may be decreased. If Violation of human rights in Kashmir is consciously kept on ignored by the world, which could be dangerous for the peace of the entire world as India and Pakistan both are nuclear powers and their public opinions are being dominated by the fundamentalist fanatics.

Recommendations

Kashmir issue has potential to escalate into violent conflict between Pakistan and India. Apart from the world's role there is important role which should be played by our political leadership and media on Kashmir. From the beginning due to unsuccessful diplomacy there is failure on the behalf of the political leadership to mobilize world opinion on Kashmir. Different steps should be taken to resolve Kashmir dispute:

- Kashmir sovereignty commission should be formed. The line of control can be announced as a permanent border between Pakistani Kashmir and Indian Kashmir. People should be allowed to move across the border easily.
- Self-government for the people of the Kashmir for the both sides of the border. A commission consisting of the Indian, Pakistani and Kashmiri representatives should be formed to resolve every issue related to the both sides of Kashmiris

- Determine the viability of Kashmir independence in terms of economic and political stability. Establish a transitional government in Kashmir to develop infrastructure and security.
- According to international law, Self-determination is recognized fundamental right and it is also accepted in almost all the international treaties. International law provides Pakistan an opportunity to mobilize international opinion which could persuade India to fulfill its legal obligations. Hold free and fair referendum and considering the results of the referendum, introduce a resolution using the global community to support Kashmir sovereignty. International community should persuade India and Pakistan to recognize Kashmir as an independent nation. Draft a resolution in the Security Council recognizing Kashmir as a sovereign state and calling for demilitarization of the region
- Pakistan should come with a powerful stance to mobilize world's opinion that without protecting human rights in Kashmir durable world peace cannot be achieved. World peace and stability is associated with Kashmir dispute. Although Pakistanis are emotionally and religiously connected with the Kashmir but Pakistan should highlight the legal aspects of the dispute on the international level. Through legal perspective Pakistan may establish a strong counter-narrative.
- India is a signatory of different international conventions which have been playing a significant role for protection of human rights. Pakistan should raise its voice on these forums to highlight human right violations in Kashmir and to realize them to pay attention towards their legal obligations.
- It is important to mobilize public opinion internationally; through public diplomacy Pakistan can promote its legal perspective in a successful way. Pakistan can play an active role to highlight violations in Kashmir by organizing workshops, exhibitions, rallies and seminars not only in Pakistan but also in the different cities of the world. A well organized and combined effort by the policy makers and academia can contribute in this regard. An institutional approach is needed and can be helpful. Pakistani media should allocate time to Kashmir dispute and highlight the human right abuses in Kashmir, Civil Society and media can play a very important role to highlight the human right violations in Kashmir.
- Although Kashmir committee is formed but it should be more active and vibrant, it should be headed by an experienced diplomat rather than a religious head that can bravely put forward the Pakistani stance in UNO and on other international forums.

Kashmir dispute is threatening not only for both countries but for the whole world. International community should take responsibility and play their role to persuade India to assure basic rights of the people of Kashmir.

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