

1. Introduction

Since 1947 to till date, Kashmir remains the ~~poor~~ territorial dispute between Pakistan and India. There were multiple alternatives adopted to resolve the issue, but it remained the bone of contention that can transform into the nuclear flashpoint. To understand the complexity of Kashmir issue, one has to learn about its totality as follows.

2- Historical Backdrop

At the time of independence, it was decided by the British that independent princely states like Kashmir, Swat, and Bhawalpur may accede to Pakistan or India as per the will of majority of its population. The Kashmir was a muslim majority state and also aligned with territorial adjustment with Pakistan. Moreover, the Kashmiris wanted to accede to Pakistan.

But the ^{hindu} ruler of Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, was not in favour of compromising its state independence. Initially, he neither wanted to join Pakistan nor India. However, the story at the backdrop was a little bit different. The Kashmiris, out of uncertainty of their state's future accession and fearing accession to India, revolted. ^{in Oct, 1947} Given to muslim brotherhood, Pakistan helped them.

On the other hand, the Maharaja also sought India's help to stop revolt. But India put down condition to sign 'Instrument of Accession' that allowed India to interfere in the matter. This led to the first-ever Indo-Pak war. The

delicacy of issue and its geopolitical implications attracted global power towards it. The UN intervened on the request of India and mediated the ceasefire in Jan, 1948. Pakistan welcomed the UN mediation and appealed for just solution of the issue.

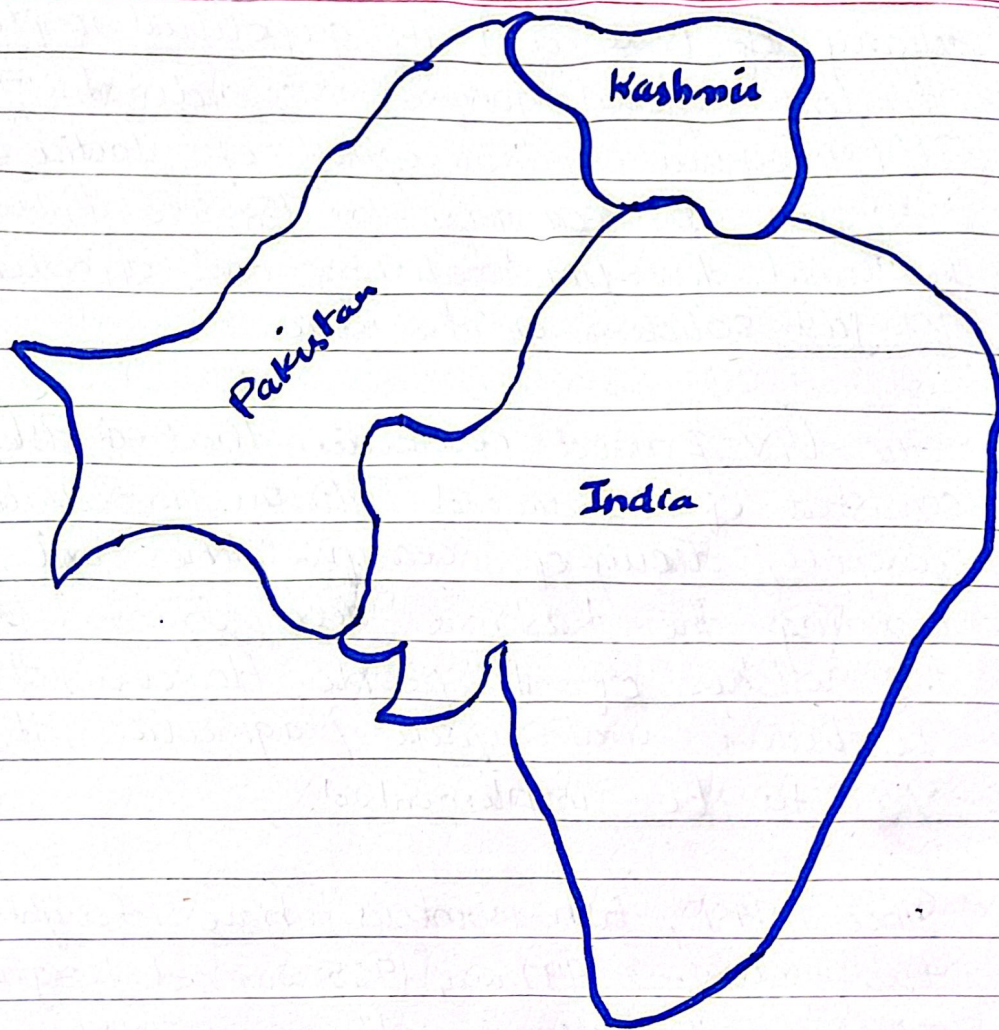
The UN passed resolution that ~~consisted~~ consisted of India and Pakistan immediate ceasefire, drawing of ceasefire lines and deciding the Kashmir accession as per the wishes of its people. However, the resolution was quite pragmatic, it is yet to be implemented.

Since 1947, both countries have fought three wars — 1947 war, 1965 war and Kargil war (1999) on the decade old irredentist issue.

There were also many diplomatic efforts such as Simla Agreement and Composite dialogue process to resolve the issue mutually, but it didn't generated desired outcomes. Hence, Kashmir became the most sensitive issue that strained diplomatic relations between them.

3- Kashmir Issue From 2019 to 2025

Over the decades, both countries are stucked to their claim. India claims that Kashmir is its territory which they gained through the document of 'Instrument of Accession'.



But the legal validity of this document is not even approved by the UN. Pakistan also rejects this claim. The historian and author, Alastair Lamb wrote in his book "Incomplete Partition" that despite extensive efforts to get access to the document of 'Instrument of Accession', he didn't get access to the original document. This raises concerns about the very existence of it. On the other hand, Pakistan demands the Kashmir issue to be decided through referendum. The Indian resistance to conduct just referendum in the auspice of UN delayed the Resolution of Kashmir issue.

i-Revocation of Article 370 & 35-A

Kashmir again became the hot topic following the revocation of Article 370 and 35-A by the Modi Regime in India on 5 August, 2019. Stripping off these articles means stripping off the special autonomous status of the state of Jammu & Kashmir. Through this act, the Modi Govt. attempted to sell the narrative that Kashmir issue has been solved, once for all. Contrarily, Pakistan perceived the act as the clear violation of the UNSC resolution and the bilateral Shimla agreement to not decide anything unilaterally. Pakistan openly condemned the act with persistent calls of Referendum.

ii-Pakistan's condemnation against Revocation

On the diplomatic front, Pakistan strongly opposed the revocation and expelled the Indian High Commissioner and recalled its own also. The bilateral trade and transportation were also suspended that further strained the bilateral relations.

Pakistan also took legal action by raising the issue at international Platforms. Moreover, the parliament passed the immediate resolution, condemning the India's act of revocation as illegal and unilateral. The August 5 was declared as the 'Day of Exploitation' to show the solidarity for the Kashmiris. The ex-PM Imran Khan also warned about escalation of tension into full conventional war.

i. Crackdown in Kashmir Post-revocation

Following the revocation, the Modi Govt. aimed to signal that normalcy has returned to Kashmir. Revocation is not enough so the Govt passed further laws to deprive of Kashmiris from special autonomous status. These laws promoted aggressive migration, enabling the non-Kashmiris to acquire residency and property right. Pakistan perceived it as a 'deliberate' attempt to change demography of the Muslim-majority region. ~~into~~ So that, if a referendum would be held, the decision went in favor of India.

Moreover just a year later, the strict curfew has imposed in the Indian-administered Kashmir. The internet services were shut down, hindered the communication. The free movement was halted by increased military presence there. The innocent people were imprisoned and tortured and yet the situation is not good. The Indian Govt and state-controlled media continued to claim that normalcy and peace have returned, but it lacks in credibility. The international media had not given an access to report the truth. Beside, the lockdown has adversely affected the livelihoods and survival of Kashmiris.

iv- India reluctance to Internationalise Kashmir Issue

At first, it was India that took the Kashmir issue to the UN. But now, it is reluctant to International interference in resolving the issue. In 1971 Shimla

agreement, it stressed to resolve ^{all} bilateral issues including Kashmir mutually. The recent 3-day intense war between Pak-India followed the Post-Pahalgam Incident resulted in internationalising of Kashmir issue ~~at once~~. It shattered all claims of stability in Kashmir due to the terrorist activity of killing 25 tourists at Pahalgam. The world capital powers realised that Kashmir is the volatile and combustible nuclear flashpoint that can disrupt regional and global peace. It gave Pakistan an opportunity to raise the war issue at international forum, which is allergic for India. Pakistan wanted the resolution of issue whether through internationalism or diplomatic dialogues. Therefore, it showed readiness to discuss issue with India on the negotiating table, but India exhibited same rigidity as earlier.

3- Pragmatic Solutions to Kashmir Issue

Although the resolution of solution lies in the cooperation of both countries, the following are the pragmatic options to adopt in the recent circumstances.

i. Track-II diplomacy: Resumption of Dialog

The formal talks between both countries have stalled many times due to the Uri Attack 2016, Pulwama-Balakot strike 2019 and recently the Pather Incident. Besides, the highly-charged political environment in India painted formal diplomacy with Pakistan as appeasement. So, the Track-II diplomacy remained as a viable solution to sustain dialogues for resolution. Although India's hardline stance may limit the outcomes of it and require an external pressure (e.g. US tariffs), India is aware of that continued resistance and instability will weaken global diplomatic narrative and distract from regional leadership ambition.

ii. Third-Party-Mediation: Global power

Over the decades, the ~~mediation~~ ~~mediation~~ seem effective to resolve and reduce escalation of conflicts. The UN mediated ceasefire success to stop further escalation and the landmark Indus Water Treaty, mediated by the World Bank are manifestation for it. On a global chessboard, the US is sought to offer the resolution of issue.