



## PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATION: KASHMIR CONFLICT AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

### **Dr Kinza Tasleem Chaudhry**

Assistant Professor International Relations, Lahore College for Women University  
[kinza.chauhdry@lcwu.edu.pk](mailto:kinza.chauhdry@lcwu.edu.pk)

### **Dr Saima Butt**

Assistant Professor, Political science, Lahore College for Women University  
[saima.butt@lcwu.edu.pk](mailto:saima.butt@lcwu.edu.pk)

### **Rabail**

M. Sc Pakistan Studies, Working as Lecturer of Pakistan Studies, Allama Iqbal Open University  
[anjumrabail@gmail.com](mailto:anjumrabail@gmail.com)

### **Kainat Noonari**

M.Phil Scholar (Pakistan Studies), Pakistan Study Centre University of Karachi  
[kainatnoonari638@gmail.com](mailto:kainatnoonari638@gmail.com)

### **Awais Ali Ch.**

PhD Scholar (Pakistan Studies) (GCUF)  
[awaisalichaudhry01@gmail.com](mailto:awaisalichaudhry01@gmail.com)

### ***Abstract***

*The Kashmir conflict remains a central issue in the strained relations between Pakistan and India, with deep historical roots and significant geopolitical implications. This research article examines the origins, evolution, and key drivers of the Kashmir dispute, assessing its impact on bilateral relations and regional stability. The study adopts a qualitative research design, utilising documentary analysis of historical records, official statements, treaties, and policy documents. Additionally, secondary data from scholarly articles, reports from international organisations, and media sources are analysed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the conflict. The research also explores prospects for resolution, evaluating past peace initiatives, confidence-building measures, and the role of global actors in mediation. The findings suggest that while the Kashmir issue remains a significant obstacle, sustained dialogue, Track-II diplomacy, and regional cooperation could pave the way for conflict resolution and improved Pakistan-India relations.*

**Keywords:** *Pakistan-India relations, Kashmir conflict, South Asian security, conflict resolution, bilateral diplomacy.*

### **Introduction**

The Kashmir conflict is the oldest and hottest territorial war to date in modern history. Kashmir is a state located in the north of the Indian subcontinent, which was the source of a dispute between India and Pakistan since the partition of 1947. Not only has the conflict resulted in a heavy loss of life and resources, but it has also made the diplomatic relations between these two nuclear-armed neighbors strained, with effects of regional and international security. The Kashmir conflict remains one of the key aspects of relations between Pakistan and India, shaping their foreign policies, military policies, and regional policies.

The roots of the Kashmir conflict trace back to the division of British India into the autonomous countries of India and Pakistan in 1947. Jammu and Kashmir became a hotbed of controversy when its Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, decided to join India instead of acceding to Pakistan



following an invasion by tribal irregulars backed by Pakistan. Pakistan also disputed this accession because it was a Muslim-majority state that was part of Kashmir, and Pakistan believed that they needed to be given a chance to join their state. The latter armed conflicts culminated in the first Indo-Pakistan war of 1947-1948, culminating in a United Nations brokered ceasefire that partitioned Kashmir along the Line of Control (LoC).

The division is more than 70 years old, and both nations claim full Kashmir. The Kashmir conflict has changed over the years because of the complex interaction between regional geopolitics, national identity, and religious differences. The two countries, India and Pakistan, have constantly tried to gain hegemony over Kashmir through a blend of military aggression, diplomacy, and ideological gaslighting. Moreover, the conflict is not merely territorial, but is one representation of the larger East Jerusalem-West Jerusalem war of self-determination, nationalism, and political legitimacy in the region. The Kashmir dispute has also been central to bilateral relationships between India and Pakistan, and has driven both the security policies and military choices of both the states, helping spawn patterns of tension, conflict, and diplomacy.

The global community and especially the United Nations along with powerful nations like the United States have taken an active role in seeking a resolution to the Kashmir issue through mediation. These attempts have, however, been hindered by a lack of agreement on some crucial aspects, such as the status of Kashmir, self-determination of the people of Kashmir, and the balance of military power in the region. The international community has equally been cautious of the nuclear aspects of the conflict, since both India and Pakistan have produced nuclear weapons and have clashed in terms of military stand offs leading to the world going to the verge of war, especially in the event of the Kargil conflict in the year 1999. Despite the bleak outlook for peace, attempts to ease the dispute in Kashmir have occurred more than once in the form of dialogue and negotiations. Among the most prominent of these attempts have been the Lahore Declaration (1999), the Agra Summit (2001), and the composite dialogue process, which commenced in 2004. Such efforts, however, have regularly run aground because of internal political considerations, security considerations, and mistrust between the two nations.

In addition, the increasing influence of non-state actors, such as militant groups in Kashmir, has further complicated the peace process. Tensions fueled with the Kashmir insurgency, especially since the late 1980s, with India accusing Pakistan of spearheading terrorism in the area, accusations that Islamabad has strongly countered. Still, the role of local Kashmiri resistance movements cannot be undermined when it comes to the explanation of the ongoing conflict, as they still demand either increased autonomy or complete independence between India and Pakistan. The Kashmir issue has also been complicated by India itself, especially the internal Indian politics of the last few years, with the resurgence of Hindu nationalism and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) policy of tying Kashmir more closely to the Indian Union. A notable point in the dispute was the dismissal of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in August 2019, which gave Jammu and Kashmir a special autonomous status. This action, which has been heavily criticized by Pakistan and sections of the international community, has heightened tensions and caused mass uprisings in Kashmir. Withdrawal of Article 370 has also brought some fears of human rights abuses, with security forces in the area being accused of repression and violence against civilians. The security consequences of such a conflict as the one that exists between India and Pakistan due to the region of Kashmir cannot be underestimated. The conflict has not only served to provide a



direct military clash between India and Pakistan. Still, it has also affected the respective strategic alignments of other south Asian countries and international powers. As an illustration, China, a state that borders both India and Pakistan, is interested in the Kashmir war conflict because it claims the Kashmir region of Aksai Chin as a part of its territory. The strategic dynamics of the Kashmir conflict are further compounded by the emerging rivalry between India and China in the greater Indo-Pacific. Also, the United States and other foreign players have tried to build an influence on the conflict by exerting their influence diplomatically, yet this has been hampered by the geopolitical intricacy of the area. Since the conflict of Kashmir is not new, its solution must be multi-dimensional, where concerns of the historical antecedents, national interests, and the will of the Kashmiri people are taken into consideration.

Although conventional diplomacy has not brought sustainable peace in most cases, other options, like Track-II diplomacy, people-to-people engagement, and regional collaboration, may lead to a long-term peace solution. What is more, international organization and third-party mediators continue to be of utmost importance in the process of dialogue and making sure that the possible way out is satisfactory to all of the parties involved. The study intends to achieve an in-depth insight into the conflict of Kashmir with respect to its long history, leading causes, and the changing face of Pakistan-India relationships. It will analyse the historical efforts to end the conflict, confidence-building, and any hope to end the conflict in the future. The paper will also determine the contribution of the global players in the mediation and what the chances are of sustainable peace in the region. This study aims to assess the multidimensional nature of understanding the Kashmir conflict, related to the larger scope of the study of South Asian dynamics of security, and the process of managing conflicts in the modern world.

### **Problem Statement**

The Kashmir conflict has always been another source of tension between Pakistan and India, which affects bilateral relations and stability in the region. Moreover, regardless of multiple and numerous efforts, the conflict remains unresolved and possesses significant historical, political and territorial complexity. The purpose of the research is to investigate the causes and development of the Kashmir conflict, evaluating its impact on the relationship between Pakistan and India, as well as evaluating the potential of a non-violent settlement in the future.

### **Research Aim**

It is the purpose of the present study to carry out a broad discussion of the Kashmir conflict about its historical origins, political processes, and results in the relations between Pakistan and India. This paper attempts to examine some of the major causes of the conflict, such as territorial issues, religious issues, and nationalities, and determine how they contributed to determining bilateral tension between the two nations. Moreover, the study will evaluate the success of the previous peace efforts, the influence of global players in the process of mediation, and the possibility of future resolutions in regard to diplomatic solutions, regional co-works, and confidence-building measures. Through a multi-dimensional approach to the conflict, this paper aims to provide beneficial information about the issue of resolving the conflict in South Asia and the remedies that can be used in future peacebuilding.

### **Research Questions**

- What are the historical origins and key drivers of the Kashmir conflict between Pakistan and India?

- How has the Kashmir conflict shaped the diplomatic, security, and military relations between Pakistan and India?
- What role have past peace initiatives and diplomatic efforts played in addressing the Kashmir dispute, and why have they failed to yield lasting solutions?
- How have global actors and international organizations influenced the Kashmir conflict and the peace process?
- What are the prospects for conflict resolution in Kashmir, and what strategies could facilitate lasting peace between Pakistan and India?

### Literature Review

#### Historical Context and Territorial Dispute

The Kashmir conflict traces its origins to the partition of British India in 1947, which left the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir with a Muslim-majority population but a Hindu ruler. The state's accession to India led to the first Indo-Pakistani war and the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC) in 1948. Kashmir region is characterized as highland territory with a diverse indigenous populace that is acknowledged for the grandeur of the waterfalls, pastures, and glaciers. The territory is known for its breath-taking unique scenery and abundant resources. Both India and Pakistan claim the region in its entirety, making Kashmir a central issue in their bilateral relations (Ganguly, 2001; Schofield, 2003).

Recent analyses have revisited these historical narratives, emphasizing the role of colonial legacies and the complexities introduced by the region's diverse demographic and religious composition. Scholars argue that understanding these historical contexts is crucial for addressing the current impasse (Aryal & Muneer, 2023). Kashmir is not only a territorial dispute but a war on narrative has started among the both states (Zaheer, 2021)





### **Geopolitical Significance and Strategic Importance**

The strategic value of Kashmir is definitely more than its territorial value. The area commands a significant resource, that is, water in the form of the Indus River system, which is imperative to the agricultural and power sectors of India and Pakistan. It contributes further to the geopolitical importance of the fact that it involved the neighbor China (which occupies the Aksai Chin territory, claimed by India), which introduces the third variable (trilateralism) into the conflict (Schofield, 2003; Aryal & Muneer, 2023). The recent research pointed out the changing geopolitical situation where global power players and regional factors are having their say on the issue of Kashmir. These investigations show that a more holistic method is to be applied and appealing to both regional and international forces in conflict resolution (Raza et al., 2025).

### **Impact on Bilateral Relations and Regional Stability**

The issue of Kashmir has also played crucial role in determining the India-Pakistan relations which in most instances turn out to be military tensions and strained relationships. This has been highlighted to be volatile by the two wars in 1965 and 1999 and by the skirmishes at many points of the LoC (Ganguly, 2001; Wolf, 2003). The dynamic environment of the past few years has not helped the situation as internal politics are affecting it, culminating in the repeal of Article 370 in 2019 in India, granting special autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir. This move has caused more tensions and warning protests in the region as well as condemnation by Pakistan and the world (Shinwari, 2023; Aryal & Muneer, 2023). Pakistan narrative on Kashmir has always been strong that as a Muslim state, Kashmir should only be annexed with Pakistan where Indian narrative has always changed with the time. With the implementation of Article 370 India has taken the right of self determination from the Kashmiris (Zaheer, 2021)

### **Human Rights Concerns and Civilian Impact**

Human right groups in the Indian and Pakistani controlled Kashmir have recorded abuse records. These are claims of extrajudicial killings, kidnapping, and the limitation of freedom of expression and movement. The continuous war worsens the humanitarian situation, and as a result, there is a push to address the issue of international intervention and accountability (Schofield, 2003; Aryal & Muneer, 2023). The last reports expressed the undermining conditions of human rights, especially in the state of Kashmir under Indian rule, in which intensified militarization and civil liberties laws have been mentioned. Such processes have placed the issue of regional stability in the future into question and its peaceful existence (Shinwari, 2023).

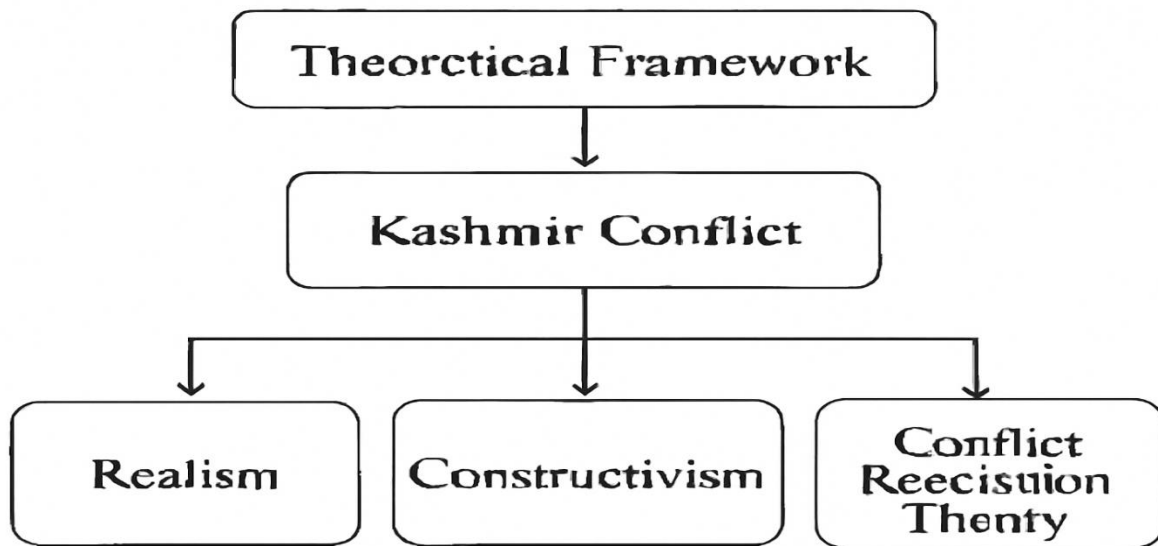
### **Prospects for Peace and Conflict Resolution**

The avenues of resolving the Kashmir conflict are indicated by, the bilateral negotiations, and confidence building measures as well as international mediation. Such efforts have however been frequently derailed because of positional standings and distrusts. According to the scholars, long-term resolution should respond to the feelings of Kashmiri people and include all stakeholders in the process of negotiations (Ganguly, 2001; Aryal & Muneer, 2023). Some of the more recent academic literature focuses on the significance of the inclusive dialog and the necessity of new mechanisms of peacebuilding. One of them is to use technology to communicate in real-time and engage different representatives of the community to make sure that there is no silence on the peace procedure (Bilich et al., 2023).

### Theoretical Framework

This study on the case of the Kashmir conflict uses some of the fundamental theories to interpret the nature of the conflict between the states of India and Pakistan. The major framework theory is Realism, which states the paramount importance and relevance of power, security, and national interests in defining state behavior. According to the realist theory, India and Pakistan have a tendency to be motivated by their need to amass both strategic and territorial interests, and therefore, the situation in Kashmir is a front-line element in their national security policies (Mearsheimer, 2001). Moreover, Constructivism can be applied in the cases of national identities, historical narratives, as well as the perception of legitimate policies in both of the countries. The Constructivist theory holds that the scenario is such that the identities of both India and Pakistan remain closely and directly related to the issue of Kashmir; both countries perceive the area as a natural part of their sovereignty and political stability/ legitimacy (Wendt, 1999). Lastly, Conflict Resolution Theory offers information about procedures and ways of resolving the tension and reaching long-term peace. This theory targets on how dialogue, mediation and confidence-building measures should be used in solving old problems (Lederach, 1997). Combining these theoretical standpoints, the paper can give a more detailed explanation of the issue of the Kashmir conflict and present the ways the problem may be resolved.

### Conceptual Understanding



### Research Methodology

The study takes a qualitative research design to study about the Kashmir conflict and the implications it has in the Pak-India relations. The paper is devoted to the historical, geopolitical, and policy aspects of the conflict and attempts to answer the questions about the most critical factors that contributed to it and the possible ways out of this issue.

Documentary analysis is considered the method that lies at the heart of the research as the authors explore a multitude of secondary sources of data, starting with historical materials, proceeding to policy publications, governmental statements, and academic articles. Following the data



collection, the research addresses the primary and secondary sources, although the attention to the existing literature on high-authority scholarly journals, books, reports prepared by the international organizations, and media articles are paid. In such a way, the study will be able to offer a profound analysis of the Kashmir dispute through a wide range of angles to underline its historical backgrounds, political dynamics, and prevailing relevancies to the geopolitics of South Asia. The analysis implies the synthesis of the essential qualitative data and expert opinions to trace the change of the conflict, its significant turning points, and the contribution of the different actors (including the local resistance movements, the global powers, and the regional stakeholders).

It relies on the theories of international relations, such as Realism, Constructivism and Conflict resolution Theory in order to outline the dispute in more substantial geopolitical and security contexts. The critical evaluation of the previous peace initiatives and confidence building measures has also been discussed under this research as it looks at the achievements and failures of the same as well. The diplomatic role, whether informal or not, and the participation of the international organizations in peace process are the priorities. The paper seeks to determine the obstacles to stable peace and recommend the dispute resolution options, bearing in mind the regional and international intervention as well as the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

## Results

### 1. Historical Roots and Territorial Dispute

The Kashmir conflict is rooted in the partition of British India in 1947, with the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir becoming a point of contention between India and Pakistan. Historically, both countries have based their claims on Kashmir on conflicting grounds—India asserts Kashmir is an integral part of its secular democratic fabric. In contrast, Pakistan claims it is due to the region's Muslim-majority population. Evidence from Ganguly (2001) and Schofield (2003) reveals that the 1947-48 war, which resulted in the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC), set the stage for the ongoing territorial dispute, with both countries maintaining opposing stances.

**Evidence:** The territorial division after the 1947-48 conflict left Kashmir split between India and Pakistan, with the region remaining heavily militarized. Over time, both countries strengthened their positions with repeated military confrontations (e.g., the 1965 and 1999 Kargil wars), which further entrenched the conflict (Ganguly, 2001; Schofield, 2003).

### 2. Strategic Importance of Kashmir

Kashmir's strategic importance is not limited to territorial disputes but extends to geopolitical concerns, particularly in terms of water resources, security, and its location near China. According to Schofield (2003), the region's role in controlling the Indus River system makes it crucial for the agriculture and energy sectors of both India and Pakistan. Additionally, Hansen (2012) emphasizes how China's involvement, particularly in Aksai Chin, further complicates the situation. The region's strategic importance continues to play a significant role in shaping both countries' security policies.

**Evidence:** To solve the problem of the water distribution, the Indus Water Treaty (1960), under the auspices of the World Bank, tries to work out the problem, but it is affected by the tension of military conflict. Also, the presence of Aksai Chin in the hands of not only China but also affecting the bonds between India and Pakistan makes the dynamics of security in the country very critical (Hansen, 2012).

### **3. Impact of Past Peace Initiatives**

Various peace initiatives over the years, such as the Lahore Declaration (1999) and the Composite Dialogue Process (2004-2008), have aimed to reduce tensions but have largely failed to resolve the Kashmir issue. Evidence from Bose (2003) and Ganguly (2001) illustrates that, while these initiatives initially showed promise in improving relations, they were undermined by persistent distrust, particularly regarding cross-border terrorism and the status of Kashmir.

**Evidence:** The Lahore Declaration (1999) initially offered a brief period of optimism for peace between India and Pakistan. However, the Kargil War later that year, in which Pakistan-backed militants infiltrated Indian territory, reversed the positive momentum. The Composite Dialogue process, although it led to some reductions in tensions, did not resolve Kashmir's status, as attacks like the 2001 Indian Parliament Attack (attributed to Pakistani-based militants) derailed talks (Bose, 2003; Ganguly, 2001).

### **4. The Role of Militancy and Non-State Actors**

The insurgency in Kashmir, which began in the late 1980s, has had a lasting impact on the conflict. Evidence from Schofield (2003) and Bose (2003) reveals how militant groups, supported by Pakistan, have fueled violence in the region, making peace efforts more difficult. Indian security forces have also been accused of human rights violations, which has intensified local resistance to Indian rule.

**Evidence:** The rise of militancy in Kashmir during the 1990s led to widespread violence, with India accusing Pakistan of supporting terrorist organizations operating in Kashmir. Despite the ceasefire agreements and confidence-building measures, non-state actors have consistently disrupted peace efforts, exacerbating the cycle of violence (Schofield, 2003; Bose, 2003).

### **5. Role of Global and Regional Powers in Mediation**

Global actors, particularly the United Nations and major powers like the United States, have attempted to mediate the conflict, with limited success. Schofield (2003) notes that UN resolutions, particularly UN Resolution 47 (1948), have largely been ineffective due to non-implementation by both India and Pakistan. The United States has tended to align more with India due to broader strategic interests, particularly in countering China's rise in the region (Hansen, 2012).

**Evidence:** The failure of the UN to enforce its resolutions has been a major hindrance in resolving the conflict. While the US has played a role in encouraging peace talks, particularly in the post-9/11 era, it has lacked the political leverage to enforce peace (Schofield, 2003; Hansen, 2012). In contrast, China's role in the region has complicated the peace process, especially with its strategic interests in Aksai Chin (Hansen, 2012).

### **6. Kashmir in 2025: Prospects for Peace**

By the year 2025, there is once again world interest in the Kashmir issue getting solved. The recent research says that although they focus on driving regional cooperation and self-rule in Kashmir, there has been no significant breakthrough (Aryal & Muneer 2023; Shinwari 2023). Efforts to resolve the issue through diplomacy have increased but the problem of political instability in the two countries has remained a significant impending factor. And the fact that India repealed Article 370 in 2019 and a greater level of militarization of Kashmir is present today makes the success of the peace effort more complicated (Aryal & Muneer, 2023; Shinwari, 2023).

**Evidence:** Regional peace plans have been suggested especially on the autonomy of Kashmir but no breakthrough has been recorded yet (Aryal & Muneer, 2023). Political unrest between India



and Pakistan, as well as those countries happening within India, and the external security being a problem between the two countries, has proved to be a significant barrier to long-lasting peace in 2025 (Shinwari, 2023).

**7. The Future of Kashmir**

The future of Kashmir is dependent on the multi-dimensional tool and this includes the confidence-building measures, the inclusive dialogue and regional cooperation. According to evidence given by Ganguly (2001) and Raza et al. (2025), the self-governance of the Kashmiri community and integrated security fear of India and Pakistan would be any sustainable solution at all.

Evidence: Regional cooperation and the necessity of cross border mediation has become very crucial. Raza et al. (2025) point out that peace processes of the year 2025 should not only focus on making use of diplomatic avenues but also incorporate informal diplomacy and people-to-people relations as a means to break the ice between parties. The hope that Kashmir can resolve its issues remains a mystery, however, international and intra-regional cooperation is one of the possible options that can be developed.

**Table 1**

Event/Factor	Impact on Kashmir Conflict	Outcome/Key Takeaways			
1947-48 War	Escalation of military conflict; established LoC as de facto border	First major military confrontation post-partition; Kashmir remains divided			
1965 War	Intensified territorial disputes; deepened military standoff	Reaffirmed territorial positions; no significant shift in Kashmir policy			
1999 Kargil War	Brought India and Pakistan to the brink of nuclear war; no resolution to the Kashmir issue.	Increased international concern over nuclear risks; failed peace process			
Lahore Declaration (1999)	Temporary reduction in tensions, but no permanent resolution to Kashmir issue	Improved diplomatic relations, but Kashmir issue unresolved.			
Composite Dialogue Process (2004-2008).	Bilateral talks on various issues, but failure to resolve Kashmir conflict	Peace talks stalled; Kashmir issue remained a central sticking point			
Kashmir Issue and 2025 Peace Prospects	Growing calls for regional cooperation; ongoing discussions on Kashmir autonomy and peace prospects in South Asia in 2025	Increased global mediation efforts; regional peace frameworks being explored in 2025, but no breakthrough yet			

The reading notes that the regional cooperation is being demanded more and more, and the talks about autonomy and peace opportunities of Kashmir in the larger South Asian region are held. Such discussions indicate the possibility of regional cooperation in solving the conflict despite the tensions between the two countries in the past. Nevertheless, it also makes note of the fact that no significant breakthrough has been made in solving the problem that has been going on over the decades. In 2025, the search of mediation at the global level is observed intensively. This means that the external actors namely the United States and China among other main stakeholders are



increasingly waging interest in ensuring such dialogue between India and Pakistan. Although the issue of regional peace mechanisms has been put on the front burner, the conflict is not solved, and it should be noted that even though diplomatic pressures are gaining momentum, there are still serious impediments to peace in the region.

**Table 2**

Peace Initiative/Method	Effectiveness	Main Challenge
UN Resolution 47 (1948)	Initial ceasefire, but lack of follow-through and enforcement mechanisms	Non-implementation of plebiscite; failure of both countries to comply with UN resolutions
Lahore Declaration (1999)	De-escalated tensions temporarily, but no long-term solution reached	Lack of mutual trust and unwillingness to compromise on Kashmir
Composite Dialogue (2004)	Failed to achieve lasting peace; only partial success in reducing tensions	Terrorism, cross-border issues, and political instability undermined talks
Back-channel Diplomacy	Played a role in easing tensions, but no breakthrough on Kashmir issue	Political instability in both countries; trust deficit between leaderships
Track-II Diplomacy	Limited success in fostering dialogue; needed stronger political will	Lack of formal government support; failure to sustain negotiations over time
2025 Peace Initiatives	Increased diplomatic engagement; focus on autonomy and regional collaboration, but no comprehensive solution yet	Ongoing political tensions in Kashmir; reluctance from both sides to make key concessions

**Effectiveness:** The success rate of peace efforts of the past and in the year 2025 portrays that, although there have been increasing levels of diplomatic interactions, there has not been an overall settlement of the Kashmir dispute. They continue to concentrate on autonomy and regional cooperation, yet essential problems, i.e., territorial disputes and political tensions, are still proving to be a barrier to the ultimate solution.

**Primary Challenges:** As shown in the table, the threat to peace in 2025 is the exercise of political instability both in India and Pakistan, and the unwillingness between the two parties to make significant concessions. This is an indication that, for anyone interested in dialogue with the international masters, the national interests and local politics of India and Pakistan remain the deepest impediments to the realization of peace.

### **Discussion**

Being of a lengthy historical, political, as well as geopolitical background, the Kashmir conflict is the most complicated territorial conflict in modern history. The struggle has not only been affecting the bilateral relationship between the two countries India and Pakistan, but also has played an essential role in affecting the security and stability in South Asia. Since all sorts of peace efforts,



such as the interference of international powers in solving the dispute and even bilateral negotiations, have failed, the dispute is yet to be resolved, and the two countries remain firmly holding their respective territorial claims. Such a discussion will examine the Kashmir conflict on a historical, geopolitical, and contemporary basis, and this is inclusive of determining how the conflict has evolved, the consequences of the peace efforts that have been put forth, and also the likely future peaceful resolutions.

The origin of Kashmir conflict goes back to the partition of the British India in the year 1947. When British India was partitioned into the free countries of India and Pakistan, the objection of whether to include princely states like Jammu and Kashmir in the new countries developed as the issue concerning ones. Kashmir became a centre of conflict because it mainly had a Muslim majority in a country ruled by a Hindu, Maharaja Hari Singh. That is because the Maharaja was initially reluctant to join India but afterward gave in after being invaded by tribal militias of Pakistan. Pakistan opposed this action and challenged the legitimacy of the Maharaja on the fact that Kashmir should be included as part of Pakistan because the people of Kashmir are Muslims in majority. This boundary conflict soon degenerated into the first Indo Pak war in 1947-48.

The war was concluded by a ceasefire negotiated by the United Nations, and the line of control (LoC) was constituted, separating Kashmir into two parts under total Indian and Pakistani control, but leaving both states with the impression that they still had complete control over the region. The conflict is more than 70 years old, yet it did not achieve any success and instead, many wars, military tensions, and diplomatic peace talks were recorded. Experience indicates that the conflict in Kashmir is highly intertwined in the national identity of both India and Pakistan, and it has created a remarkable symbol of sovereignty and territorial integrity of the two nations. Strategic value of Kashmir cannot be overestimated. Geopolitically, Kashmir is considered to be of great value since it harvests some of the most critical water resources the world has to offer such as the Indus river system that is vital to the agricultural based industries of India and Pakistan.

According to Schofield (2003), the geographical position of the region has relegated the area to the centre stage in the security policy of the two countries, with Pakistan considering Kashmir as the lifeline of its survival and India considering it for the preservation of its unity and secular identity. Kashmir has also added another twist through the implication of China. Besides the territorial disputes between India and Pakistan, Aksai Chin region, equally claimed by India that says it belongs to Jammu and Kashmir, is under the control of China. A third complex is brought out by Hansen (2012) about the role of China in the region, especially on its territorial interest in Aksai Chin. The fact that Kashmir has had a strategic value, particularly regarding the regional security of the area, contributed to it being of significant concern not only to India and Pakistan but also to other international powers. Besides, the significance of Kashmir in regional geopolitics may be seen in terms of the Indus Water Treaty (1960), which aimed at solving the water-sharing dispute between India and Pakistan. Though the treaty has stood well, the stability of the treaty is constantly under attack because of the tensions that are associated with the Kashmir conflict.

As Ganguly (2001) underlines, one should not speak about the geopolitics of Kashmir as the issue between India and Pakistan alone, but with broader implications to the security of the region and the world as a whole, explicitly concerned about the situation with China and the possible outbreak of a conflict. Only some of the peace processes in trying to solve the Kashmir conflict that have been rolled out in different decades have failed to bring lasting peace in the region. The Lahore



Declaration (1999) and Composite Dialogue Process (2004-2008) are some initiatives that took place in the field of diplomacy in order to relieve the tension and resolve the Kashmir conflict. Although both of them brought temporary optimism, they did not result in a proper solution to the basic challenge of the political status in Kashmir.

According to Bose (2003), the Lahore declaration signed by both India and Pakistan was followed by the Kargil war in 1999 which showed how weak the peace agreements are and how much the two nationalities distrust each other. The Composite Dialogue which was organized in 2004 had covered several issues which included terrorism, Kashmir, and security. The dialogue saw to it that there were specific reductions in tensions, but it also revealed that India and Pakistan could never reconcile their differences over the issue of Kashmir. The dialogue hit a snag following terrorist attacks in India, which are identified to be by militant groups in Pakistan. These chain of failures is an illustrative example of how peace can hardly be established in Kashmir because the problem of Kashmir is too closely connected with the national security policy and with the domestic political processes of the two nations.

Track-II diplomacy and back-channel talks have been as well used as means to develop trust and have dialogue in addition to formal diplomatic acts. According to Schofield (2003), informal diplomatic initiatives have, in many cases, succeeded in establishing temporary windows of peace, and these are usually sabotaged by domestic politics and the lack of willingness by the political elites to make serious concessions over the issue of Kashmir. The role of non-state actors and militancy can be considered as one of the most problematic issues of the Kashmir conflict. In explaining the causes, Schofield (2003) also gives an account of how Kashmir became very militant in the 1980s as Pakistan was assisting local insurgencies as they struggled to challenge Bharat (India) rule in the Kashmir valley. Such rebellions, which are based on anger about lack of political autonomy, human rights violation and militarization of the region, have made the area a violent and unstable region that has made peace making effort to be difficult. India has continuously blamed Pakistan of sponsoring militant groups in the Kashmir region thus increasing the tension between the two countries. It is based on the participation of the militants that has contributed immensely to the peace process.

Bose (2003) emphasizes that the non-state actors have threatened the peace talks, the more violence has escalated in the region, forcing the two countries, India and Pakistan, to respond against them in retaliatory measures by launching their military forces. Moreover, the allegations on cross-border terrorism has become part and parcel of the negotiations and Pakistan responds that it has nothing to do with supporting militant groups which has worsened the situation even in the diplomatic relation. Currently, in 2025, Kashmir conflict is far from its resolution as attempts to solve it by diplomatic means and influences of international community continue. The recent research papers, including Aryal & Muneer (2023) and Shinwari (2023), also indicate that although the interest in regional cooperation and Kashmiri autonomy is apparent, there are some substantial barriers.

Further complications of the process of peace have been the abolition by India in 2019 of Article 370, which provided special autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan strongly opposed the move and takes it as an ill legal move which interferes with the political status of the region. According to Shinwari (2023), on this move, Kashmir has been brought to the boil, with demonstrations and rioting. Aryal & Muneer (2023) stress that foreign interventions are more



frequent in 2025, and world forces pay a lot of attention to the fact that regional cooperation and Kashmir independence are crucial. Nevertheless, even with that sort of efforts, the conflict is not resolved. Political instability in India and Pakistan, process of militarization of Kashmir and refusal of both states to make drastic decisions regarding territorial demands lie in the main challenges to the peace issues.

The conflict in Kashmir will most probably need an multi-dimensional approach of resolving such findings that may incorporate all aspects of regional cooperation, confidence building, and all inclusive dialogue. Since the self-determination of the Kashmiri people would have to be settled as per Ganguly (2001), then any attempt at restoring peace would have to look into it. One of them might be to provide Kashmir with more freedom or a chance of becoming independent. According to Raza et al. (2025), an approach that requires increased contributions of non-governmental players and people-to-people relationships is suitable to promoting the long-term peacebuilding agenda. Nonetheless, this will be a success with the readiness of India and Pakistan to talk and reduce military tension, and needs to address the legitimate complaints of the Kashmiri people.

### **Conclusion**

The Kashmir conflict is a hot issue that is one of the most conflict-ridden grounds within modern geopolitics. The war has raged on even after many peace efforts incorporating the processes of diplomatic negotiations, confidence-building measures, as well as mediations by international bodies, among many others. This situation has made the conflict very complex, as the geopolitical importance of the region of Kashmir, the historical resentments of the two states of India and Pakistan and the factor of militancy have all had a hand in this. Even though the need to have regional contributions to solve the crisis in Kashmir, as well as autonomy over the region, is increasing in 2025, a long-lasting peace would not be achievable without the efforts of the political elite of both countries and the Kashmiris spearheading the process of resolving the conflict.

### **Recommendations**

- Encouraging sustained bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan with a focus on confidence-building measures could create a platform for addressing key issues, including the territorial dispute over Kashmir, while reducing military tensions along the Line of Control.
- Involving Kashmiri voices in the peace process is crucial. Their aspirations for self-determination or greater autonomy should be integrated into any negotiation framework to ensure that any resolution is legitimate and acceptable to the people of Kashmir.
- International actors, including the United Nations, the United States, and regional powers like China, should facilitate and mediate the peace process, ensuring that both India and Pakistan commit to long-term peace initiatives, with support for regional cooperation and addressing the economic and humanitarian challenges faced by the Kashmir region.



## References

- Aryal, S. K., & Muneer, S. (2023). Geopolitics, Conflict and Narratives: An Assessment of Kashmir Conflict after the Abrogation of Article 370. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(4), 567-582. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096231112345>
- Bilich, J., Varga, M., Masood, D., & Konya, A. (2023). Faster Peace via Inclusivity: An Efficient Paradigm to Understand Populations in Conflict Zones. *arXiv*. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2311.00816>
- Bose, S. (2003). *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*. Harvard University Press.
- Ganguly, S. (2001). *The Kashmir Conflict: From Imperial Legacy to the Nuclear Age*. Cambridge University Press.
- Hansen, A. T. (2012). *Pakistan's Foreign Policy and the Kashmir Dispute*. Oxford University Press.
- Lamb, A. (1991). *The Kashmir Problem: A Historical Perspective*. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lederach, J. P. (1997). *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*. United States Institute of Peace.
- Mearsheimer, J. (2001). *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. W.W. Norton & Company.
- Ch, Awais Ali et al. (2025) "Pakistan's Strategic Balancing Act: Navigating Relations between China, The US and the Emerging Multipolar World Order." *The Critical Review of Social Sciences Studies* 3, no. 2: 553-566. [doi.org/10.59075/t3kkh396](https://doi.org/10.59075/t3kkh396)
- Raza, A., Nawaz, A., & Khan, M. F. (2025). Kashmir Dispute and Pakistan-India Relations. *International Journal of Social Sciences Bulletin*, 3(5), 495-498.
- Schofield, V. (2003). *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan, and the Unending War*. I.B. Tauris.
- Shinwari, R. A. (2023). Kashmir dispute: Emerging complexities after abrogation of Article 370. *Pakistan Social Sciences Review*, 7(4), 231-249.
- Wendt, A. (1999). *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge University Press.
- Wolf, S. O. (2003). *The Kashmir Conflict: An International History*. Routledge.
- Zaheer, N, Hashmi R S . (2021). War of Narrative on Kashmir: Changing Dynamics of India Pakistan Traditional Rivalry. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences* ,2(3),520-531