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Review

# A Timeline of Kashmir Conflict from 1947-2019

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**Abstract:** The significance of Kashmir conflict as one of the world's longest running conflicts has frequently drawn the attention of both communication and international relations' scholars which makes it an important issue from the perspective of interdisciplinary approach. The researchers have attempted to assemble a brief history of the Indian held Jammu and Kashmir Conflict from the time of partition in 1947 to the developments which took place till 2019 in the light of the available literature. The paper provides substantial historical context of the important events like instrument of accession, UN resolutions on Kashmir conflict, Simla Accord, Gawkadal Massacre, Lahore Declaration, Kargil War, killing of Burhan Wani, Uri attack and Article 370's abrogation.

**Keywords:** Kashmir history; J&K Conflict; UN Resolutions; Indo-Pak Relations

Kashmir has time and again played the dynamic role of defining and redefining the diplomatic relations amid India and Pakistan (Andren, 2024). The geographical position of Kashmir has made its control more alluring for both India and Pakistan as it has the capacity to strengthen either side in terms of defense positioning. Kashmir's recent history dates back to the Indo-Pak partition. Kashmir was considered a gifted territory in terms of natural resources especially timber production and also as the headwater of three largest rivers (Malik, 2002). A blend of skillful military advancements and financial settlements enabled Gulab Singh to establish the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir in the first half of nineteenth century (Joel, 2004).

The researchers in this article have divided the history of Jammu and Kashmir Conflict in to different phases so that the background of Indian held Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) can be understood with better clarity especially with reference to Indo-Pak relations. Since considerable amount of literature is available regarding how the J&K conflict is framed in the Indian and Pakistani press therefore the study has also attempted to find indications from within the available literature that how the conflict is framed with reference to peace and war journalism. The contextual background of the J&K conflict will provide significant insight to the researchers who are working on Kashmir conflict in general whereas the analysis of available literature related to media framing will specifically help the media scholars who are trying to explore new dimensions of inquiry.

## 1947-1964

In 1947 J &K comprised of "an area of 222,236 square km including Aksai Chin.... Kashmir had 10 percent of the total area; Jammu comprised of 14.4 percent of the total area, and the frontier districts occupied 75.6 percent of the total area" (Cheema, 2015). The census of 1941 reported a total population of 4.02 million in Kashmir, 77 percent of the total population comprised of Muslims whereas 20 percent were Hindus. With respect to geographical distribution approximately "45.62 percent of the original territory is with India, 35.15 percent is with Pakistan and 19.23 percent with China" (Karnad, 2004). Jammu and Kashmir is divided by a 778 km long Line of Control (LoC). An uncontested border of 198 km between India and Pakistani Punjab also exists. In Siachen there is an undecided area of about 150 km which separates India from Pakistan (ibid). At the time of partition it was decided that

among the 562 princely states of subcontinent, the Muslim majority states will become part of Pakistan whereas Hindu majority areas will become part of India. Hindu Maharaja Sir Hari Singh, who was the ruler of Kashmir at partition's time, declared a standstill agreement with Pakistan instead of declaring it a part of Pakistan on the grounds of Muslim majority. Resultantly, the mistrust between the Maharaja and Kashmiri people paved the path of a revolt in the valley (Johnson, 2005).

Kashmiris acquired the assistance of Pushtun Afridi tribesman for declaring a war of freedom against the Maharaja Hari Singh. Maharaja fled to Delhi and sought military assistance from the Indian government to regain the control of Kashmir. Mountbatten, the last, agreed to help Hari Singh but also conditioned the help with holding a fair referendum in which the Kashmiris can decide their own future. Jawaharlal Nehru, Indian Premier at that time, in response to Maharaja's request ordered the troops to land in Kashmir (Johnson, 2005, pp. 96- 100). The legal stature of the Instrument of Accession acquired by the Indian government in case of J&K was regarded controversial because according to The International Court of Justice an agreement declared under the use of force stood void (Slomanson, 2000; Ansari, 2023). The instrument was also considered controversial because the Indian troops landed at Srinagar on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1947 and it was the same day when Viceroy wrote the letter to Maharaja in which he inquired his decision regarding Accession. Although Maharaja signed the accession letter on the same day but the signing and dispatching of the Accession letter is regarded dubious as the Indian army was dispatched before the letter was signed by the Maharaja (Hussain, 1998).

Before the signing of Accession letter, on October 24, 1947 part of Kashmir was declared independent from Maharaja Hari Singh's government. Similarly in the last months of 1947 Major W. Brown, Commander of the Gilgit Scouts, declared Gilgit a part of Pakistan (Lamb, 2002). In 1948 a short-term armed conflict broke out between India and Pakistan. The conflict resulted in Indian control over a major area of J&K which was declared as Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) by Pakistan. Pakistan, on the other hand, was able to gain control over a relatively much smaller area of Kashmir which was declared as Azad (free) Kashmir by Pakistan. Pakistan was able to gain strategic hold of the Gilgit Agency, western edge of the Kashmir and Baltistan which had an approximately 3 million population while India occupied the remaining Kashmir including Jammu and Ladakh which had a population of approximately nine million (Johnson, 2005).

The same year, in 1948 India took the Kashmir conflict to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) and boarded a formal complaint in which it asserted that Pakistan had made intrusions into Kashmir. The complaint was filed on the basis of the legitimacy of the Instrument of Accession (Lamb, 1992). According to the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan's (UNCIP) resolutions which were passed in 1948 and 1949, "the issue of accession of J&K to either Pakistan or India had to be decided through free, open and impartial plebiscite which both the countries agreed to but could not reach a unanimous agreement for demilitarization in Kashmir" ("Resolution adopted at the meeting of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan", 1949).

On 20<sup>th</sup> July 1950 a tripartite conference was held on Kashmir in which Liaquat Ali Khan (Pakistani Prime Minister), Jawaharlal Nehru (Indian Prime Minister) and UN representative Sir Owen Dixon deliberated on the matter but failed to reach any agreement. Kashmir was recognized as a separate autonomous state by Indian government in 1950 (Johnson, 2005).

In the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' conference, held in 1951, India rejected the idea of deploying commonwealth troops in Kashmir for the plebiscite duration. The refusal by India resulted in failure of talks on Kashmir between Pakistan and India. As Sir Owen Dixon failed in finding a peaceful solution of the Kashmir issue he was replaced by Dr. Frank P. Graham, who was a former US senator (Lamb, 1992). Dr. Graham also failed to score any peaceful agreement between India and Pakistan (Burke, 1975). An Anglo- American resolution was approved by UNSC for renewal of talks between India and Pakistan in 1952. Following this agreement, the six rounds of talks failed to produce any settlement. The Kashmir conflict also reshaped the interest of international forces in the region. The American and British alliance with India commenced new chapters of their friendship with New Delhi whereas Pakistan continued to move closer to China (Korbel, 1954, p. 336).

At the political end, Sheikh Abdullah who was the prime minister of Indian held Kashmir sustained his dominance in Kashmiri politics for around three decades. As a result of his alliance with Indian camp, Sheikh Abdullah and Indian Premier Nehru signed the Delhi Agreement in 1952 which gave Kashmir the stature of an autonomous state within a state. This stature was based on Article 370 of the Indian Constitution (Constantin & Kössler, 2016, p. 9). Sheikh Abdullah, after realizing the impossibility of a free and fair plebiscite stressed on higher level of autonomy for Kashmir from India (Schofield, 2003).

After the removal of Sheikh Abdullah from priemiership in 1953 another session of bilateral negotiations took place between Jawaharlal Nehru and Muhammad Ali Bogra (Pakistani Prime Minister) at New Delhi. Initially both the leaders agreed on holding a fair plebiscite in Kashmir but later in September 1954 Nehru shifted his stance from holding a plebiscite to asserting that Pakistan should withdraw from any interference in the region (Cheema, 2015). Meanwhile United Nations remained active in terms of resolving Kashmir issue and adopted three resolutions in the year of 1957 (Akram & Shahzad, 2015, p. 5). In 1962 and 1964 Soviet Union vetoed resolutions on Kashmir in UNSC (Karnad, 2004). The government in Kashmir which resulted because of maneuvered elections held by India in 1957 and 1962 (Lamb, 1992) along with the anger over the theft of the sacred hair of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon Him) from Hazratbal Mosque paved path for massive protests by Muslims in Kashmir. Indian security forces tried to crush the riots by use of brutal force which resulted in heavy bloodshed in the valley and the brutal episode continued for almost two years. This sweeping violence ignited a full fledge war between India and Pakistan which is more commonly referred to as the 1965 war. The war lasted for seventeen days before UN mediated a ceasefire between the two battling neighbors (Margolis, 2001). The war also amplified India's already strong hold on Kashmir (Lamb, 1992).

### 1965-1983

Although India-Pakistan Observation Groups were formulated after the 1965 war but the constant failure of UNSC on resolving Kashmir issue pushed UN to take a back foot on the issue (Lone, 2023). Also because of the cold war UN shifted its focus to more unstable areas of the world (Akram & Shahzad, 2015, p. 5). After 1965 the negotiations between India and Pakistan regarding Kashmir issue revolved around the agendas of accession, aggression, self-determination and UN resolutions (ibid, p.6).

In 1971 Pakistan lost its territory on the eastern side because of the civil war between East and West Pakistan (Vogler, 2010). The lost territory later emerged as an independent State of Bangladesh. Although the war majorly revolved around East Pakistan and during the unrest India supported the Bengalis of East Pakistan but the role of Kashmir conflict could not be ignored in the war (Cheema, 2015, p.55). On 30<sup>th</sup> January 1971 an Indian plane from the Indian held Kashmir was hijacked to Lahore. Two Kashmiri freedom fighters belonging to the Jammu and Kashmir National Liberation Front (JKLF) were allegedly involved in the hijacking. The government of Pakistan agreed on giving political asylum to the hijackers and communicated their demands to the Indian government regarding the release of 36 arrested freedom fighters and an end to brutalities conducted by Indian security forces in Kashmir. Indian government rejected the demands as a result of which hijackers blew up the plane. The rift between India and Pakistan heightened as India accused Pakistan's government of direct involvement in the hijacking and also demanded compensation from Pakistan of blown up hijacked plane. On refusal of compensation India placed a ban on all flights of Pakistani airplanes over its territory (Malik, 2002). Because of the ban on flights Pakistan was not able to deliver timely strategic supply to its armed forces in East Pakistan who were already fighting a civil war with Bengali Mukti Bahini. No visible UN mediation was observed during and after 1971 despite Pakistan's continuous call for conciliation (Cheema, 2015, p.56).

Simla Accord which was signed by India and Pakistan after 1971 did not play any significant role in terms of bringing long term peace to Kashmir and only succeeded in creating a Line of Control for Kashmir (LoC) between India and Pakistan (Siddiqua & Iqbal, 2024). Indira Gandhi, India's third and only female Prime Minister, manipulated Sheikh Abdullah's dual political policies and made

him sign the Kashmir Accord in 1975 in exchange of more power for him. The accord gave the power to Indian government to make and amend laws in Kashmir as a result of which India gained the power to keep all demands of freedom and independence in strict check. From Indian point of view, with this accord, the call for freedom and self determination was put to rest for good (Sreedharan, 2009, p. 23). Sheikh Abdullah remained Chief Minister of J&K following the accord till his death on Sep 08, 1982 (Majeed & Hameed, 2023).

#### 1984-1994

Another major incident of armed resilience by Kashmiri liberation fighters surfaced in February 1984 when a senior Indian diplomat Ravindra Mahatre was kidnapped in England by a group named Kashmir Liberation Army (KLA). KLA demanded the release of a number of prisoners which were detained in different Indian jails along with the handing over of JKLF leader Maqbool Butt in exchange of Mahatre. But Mahatre was found killed before any negotiations were commenced with the Indian authorities. Maqbool Butt was executed by India on 11<sup>th</sup> February in reaction to Mahatre's murder. The execution of Butt evolved into an event which triggered huge scale protests and demonstration in the following years in J&K. It was the same decade when Indira Gandhi was assassinated in India and her son Rajiv Gandhi became the Prime Minister of India. Rajiv Gandhi offered Dr. Farooq Abdullah who was the eldest son of Sheikh Abdullah a deal of National Conference-Congress alliance which was agreed upon by Dr Farooq Abdullah. November 1986 saw Dr Farooq Abdullah swearing as the Chief Minister of J&K interim government. This political opportunism turned Dr Abdullah from a hero to a villain for Kashmiris as they openly termed him as an 'Indian' (Sreedharan, 2009, pp. 26-27).

A new political alliance came to existence in Kashmir with the name of Muslim United Front (MUF) for the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Election 1987. Although the election further disillusioned the people of Kashmir but they also witnessed the emergence of candidates like MUF's Maulvi Mohammad Yusuf Shah, popularly known as Syed Salahuddin and his polling agent Muhammad Yasin Malik (Bose, 2003). As protests became more intense against the National Conference after the elections, a greater and stronger emotion of solidarity emerged within Muslims of Indian administered Kashmir for Pakistan (Malik, 2002). Strong resistance was witnessed in J&K in 1989 and onwards because of the brutal policies imposed in the valley through Indian armed forces. The most alarming fact for India in the 1989 uprising was the fact that the insurgency this time was primarily home grown in comparison to the 1947 and 1965 situations (Barua, 2005).

The daughter of Indian Home Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, Rubaiyya was kidnapped by JKLF in December 1989, as a result of which Delhi decided to tighten its grip on the valley. New Delhi reappointed Jagmohan Malhotra as Governor of Kashmir in January 1990 which led to the end of Farooq Abdullah's government. Jagmohan, an Indian civil servant from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was appointed as Governor of Kashmir by the Indian government twice. His first tenure lasted from 1984-1989 and his second tenure lasted from January 1990 to May 1990. His first tenure was marked with allegations of communal riots and extra judicial killings in the valley. During his second tenure a regime of state violence (Ganguly, Blank & Devotta, 2003) was witnessed in J&K. In January 1990 Kashmiri Pundits left the valley in large numbers to settle in other parts of India. Separatist leaders of Kashmir claimed that the Indian state in liaison with Jagmohan "engineered the departures of the Hindus so as to give the government a free hand to deal with Muslims" (Essa, 2011).

The departure of Kashmiri Pundits was followed by the notorious Gawakadal Massacre which took place during Jagmohan's second tenure when Indian security personnel raided houses in Srinagar to find hidden weapons and militants which led to the detention of hundreds of Kashmiris. On January 21, 1990 hundreds of protestors gathered at Gawakadal Bridge in Srinagar against the search operation. It was during the protest that Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) opened fire on unarmed protestors which resulted in the killing of at least 50 people (Ahmad, 2017). In only three days of mass demonstrations around 300 unarmed Kashmiri demonstrators were killed by Indian troops in the valley (Bose, 2003, p.109). Gawakadal massacre was seen as a precedent for coming years as Indian



government frequently resorted to extraordinary curfews, fake search operations and human rights' violations. Historian Alastair Lamb labeled the situation of Jammu and Kashmir as "a terminal colonial situation" (1992, p.22). Writers including Robinson (2002); Schofield (2003); and Bose (2005) considered the conflict in Kashmir as an indigenous Kashmiri reaction to the lasting political oppression and the denial of self-determination to Kashmiris. Sehgal (2011) also asserted that a majority of Kashmiris considered the establishment of an independent State of Kashmir as the best solution of the conflict as Indian government had promised Kashmiris the right of self-determination through a plebiscite which it never fulfilled.

Meanwhile Pakistan pressurized India for another seven round of negotiations at the level of Foreign Secretaries from December 1990 to January 1994. Negotiations were also carried out on diplomatic front between the then Indian Prime Minister Narsimha Rao and Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in 1993. Negotiations failed primarily because India wanted Pakistan to take the blame of state sponsored insurgency and infiltration in Indian administered Kashmir whereas Pakistan desired change in the territorial status quo of Kashmir (Karnad, 2004).

### 1995-2009

The Indian government wanted to legitimize its repression in Kashmir by restating a civilian government (Bose, 2003, p. 137). As a result of which elections were held in J&K in 1996. The elections were marked by lower voter turn out. The elections were also labelled as one sided because the separatist political parties who had made an alliance with the name of All-Parties Hurriyat Conference had given a boycott call for the elections. The elections however resulted in a civilian government headed by Dr. Farooq Abdullah (Sreedharan, 2009, p.31).

In 1998 India and Pakistan tested their nuclear weapons which gave an intense turn to the nuclear race in the region. Ceasefire violations also continued to take place along the LoC. But at the diplomatic front the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif met in Lahore in February 1999 and signed Lahore Declaration which pledged for sustainability of peace through composite dialogue. The peace negotiations were once again hampered by the Kargil War which lasted from May 1999 to July 1999 (Karnad, 2005).

The Kargil episode had substantial significance because both India and Pakistan were only one year old in terms of becoming nuclear states. The conflict was taken as an unpleasant surprise in the wake of Lahore declaration and looming perils of a nuclear war. The situation became intense when the control of an important strategic position slipped out of the hands of Indian troops. Armed Kashmiri fighters crossed the LoC and took charge of the strategic peaks in Mushkoh Valley, Dras, Kargil and Batalik sectors of Ladakh with the help of Pakistani troops (Behera, 2007, p. 84). Attempts by the Indian army and air force to gain control of the lost positions in Kargil-Dras region went futile. The situation further deteriorated as the naval forces of both the countries took their positions against each other in the open seas and a huge number of villagers started moving to safe places on both sides of the border. Delhi wanted to teach Pakistan another lesson whereas the Pakistan's army chief who later also became the President of Pakistan through Martial Law, General Pervez Musharraf stood by the assertion that Pakistani forces are fully prepared to counter any type of aggression (Abbas, 1999). The rising tension triggered international reaction as the G-8 leaders took notice of the Kashmir and Kargil conflict. President of United States, Bill Clinton telephoned Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers to display restraint under the given situation. US also sent its senior most military commander and a senior State Department official to both Islamabad and Delhi which resulted in averting a full scale war. Pakistan withdrew its troops from LoC on international pressure and as Pakistani troops withdrew, Indian armed forces attacked the posts and managed to gain control of them. The official death toll of Kargil war "on the Indian side was 527 and on the Pakistani side it was between 357 and 453" ("All you need to Know about Kargil War", 2017). The Indian establishment blamed Pakistan's armed forces of directly mediating violence in the region whereas Pakistan's political and military establishment denied any active role in the Kargil conflict. Meanwhile the true series of events remained hidden in the air of secrecy by both India and Pakistan.

On December 24, 1999 an Indian plane from Nepal to New Delhi was hijacked by a group of armed men. The plane was carrying 178 passengers along with 11 crew members (Schofield, 2003).

The hijackers wanted to land the plane in Lahore but Pakistani government did not allow them to do so. The hijackers landed at Amritsar from where they took off for Kabul, from Kabul first they took the plane to Muscat, then to UAE and finally landed at Kandhar on Dec 25. A group named Islamic Salvation Front claimed the responsibility of the hijacking. Hijackers demanded the release of certain prisoners including a Pakistani named Maulana Masood Azhar who was a fundraiser and forerunner of Harkat-ul Ansar which was renamed in 1997 as Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin (Schofield, 2003, p. 226). Maulana Masood Azhar went to Kashmir in 1994 to support the insurgency but was arrested by the Indian security forces and put in a high security prison near Jammu. Talks between the hijackers and the Indian government were carried out from the control tower. The crisis ended as the hijackers reduced their demands after 3 days of negotiations and the Indian government released 3 militants including Masood Azhar (ibid, p.227). The incident resulted in increased pressure on the Pakistani government by US as the later asserted that it was Harkat-ul-Mujaheddin who carried out the hijacking and Pakistan had been supporting the activities of this militant organization. The hijacking incident also resulted in heightened criticism on the Indian government in terms of becoming an easy and vulnerable state which can be easily manipulated by the terrorists (Cheema, 2015, p.59).

In 2001 Indian prime minister invited Pakistan's President General Pervaiz Musharraf to India which resulted in Agra Summit. The Summit concluded without obtaining any consensus from the two sides (Cheema, 2015, p.60). In the wake of September 11 attacks President Musharraf aligned Pakistan with the US led global war against terrorism. Meanwhile on December 13, 2001 Indian parliament was hit with a suicide attack. New Delhi blamed Pakistan for the attack and cut off diplomatic ties with Islamabad. India also moved its defense and strategic assets to the border along with the LoC in Kashmir. Pakistan equally countered the situation on Line of Control and early 2002 again saw an armed standoff between the two states which ended because of US mediation (Sreedharan, 2009, p.42).

Jammu and Kashmir state elections of 2002 resulted in a coalition government which was headed by Mufti Mohammad Sayeed. Diplomatic efforts resumed from both sides in mid-2000 as the Indian Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh met President Musharraf in New York in September 2004. The two leaders signed a joint agreement in April 2005 ("Manmohan-Musharraf meets in the past", 2006). Despite peace negotiations the blame game from two sides continued. India repeatedly blamed Pakistan of facilitating terrorism in India and Kashmir through state sponsored policies whereas Pakistan pressurized India to accept Kashmir as an unresolved agenda of Partition. Attacks on Samjhota express in 2006 and Mumbai attacks of 2008 added to the distrust which was already prevailing between the two nations.

Among other major developments, elections were held in J&K in 2008 which saw a relatively higher turnout. But within few months of the elections a gory incident of rape and murder of two women surfaced in Shopian district allegedly by the Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF). The incident sparked mass protests by Kashmiris as the Indian government showed no interest in conducting a fair investigation in to the matter ("Women's death and Inquiry's Findings, Enrage Kashmir", 2009). The state inquiry concluded that the women died by drowning and were not raped and murdered. The findings were not only rejected by the Kashmiris but were taken as an intentional effort by the government to shelter the guilty (Hafeez, 2013). Severe human rights' violations were reported at the hands of security forces as number of killings raised to 93,271 between 1989 and 2010 (Siddiqi, 2010).

#### **2010-2014**

On May 30, 2010 three young Kashmiris were killed by an Indian army unit in an incident of fake encounter in Machil sector and later they were declared as cross-border terrorists. Machil Killings sparked widespread protests in which Kashmiri youth equipped themselves with stones for hurling towards the Indian security forces (Sudan, 2023). A 17-year old boy was killed during these protests by the security forces which added fuel to the ongoing protests. The protests came at a heavy cost as more than 110 people lost their lives (Mishra, 2010). Later Indian army sentenced the involved soldiers to imprisonment for fake encounters which was a "break from routine" (Geelani, 2014).

A report of State Human Rights Commission inquiry surfaced in 2011 which revealed that thousands of bullet riddled bodies were buried in number of unmarked graves across J&K. It was suspected that the buried were civilians who had disappeared during the 1989 insurgency. The inquiry was conducted over a period of three years by senior police officers who had worked for the J&K State Human Rights Commission (Polgreen, 2011). The support for a “truth and advocacy commission” came forward in the wake of Human Rights Commission’s report on the revelation of mass graves in the valley (Qanungo, 2011).

In February 2013 the environment of the J&K was once again marked with protests and demonstrations. This time the cause was unexpected secret hanging of Afzal Guru who was declared a Kashmiri militant by the Indian government. Guru was on death row since 2002 and he was charged with plotting the 2001 attack on Indian Parliament which left 14 dead. Guru had denied the charges leveled against him. He was executed at Tihar Jail in New Delhi after the rejection of his final clemency plea (“Afzal Guru: Kashmir anger over hanging”, 2013). His hanging came three months after the execution of Ajmal Qasab. Qasab was the only attacker who was caught alive in the wake of Mumbai attacks, 2008. The hanging of Afzal Guru raised procedural questions as there was no direct evidence against him and the death penalty was purely based on circumstantial evidence (Lamba & Seth, 2013). Indian press justified the secrecy of execution and burial of Afzal Guru on the grounds of averting the grave from becoming “a rallying point for pro-Pakistan secessionists” (Mohan, Bharti & Basu, 2013).

Meanwhile at the diplomatic end in September 2013 Manmohan Singh (Indian Prime Minister) and Nawaz Sharif (Pakistani Prime Minister) met at the side lines of United Nations General Assembly session. The subsequent diplomatic measures lead to the realization that without ensuring peace in Kashmir, normalcy would be difficult to acquire in the region. This time diplomatic measures were disrupted when both India and Pakistan blamed each other for firing along the LoC in October 2014 which resulted in the death of at least nine civilians (“Kashmir: Nine civilians killed in India-Pakistan border firing”, 2014). The incident took place at a time when Muslims were celebrating the festival of Eid on both sides of the border.

After the victory of Narendra Modi in the Indian elections in May 2014, Indian army was ordered to increase patrolling and rigorous retaliation at border (Reuters, 2014). Narendra Modi made his intentions clear by issuing tough statements to Pakistan army in which he said that the “enemy is screaming” (“Times have changed, warns Modi”, 2014). Meanwhile Pakistani press responded with statements like “Indian Army opened in discriminatory fire” and “The aggression was timely reported by Pakistan army men” (“Indian Army’s unprovoked firing at LoC injures four”, 2014). As a result of the coalition of Peoples Democratic Party and Bharatita Janata Party in J&K Assembly Elections 2014 Mufti Muhammad Sayeed countered severe criticism for making an alignment with rightwing Hindu BJP as it was regarded a “political suicide” by the Kashmiris (Geelani, 2015).

## 2015-2019

Kashmiri Muslims went on strikes and protested against the ban on eating beef in 2015. As part of religious harmony a large part of Muslim population in J&K consumed less beef in regard of Hindu religious sentiments (Ashiq, 2015).

In the year 2016 Mehbooba Mufti became CM after the demise of her father Mufti Muhammad Sayeed. Mufti had an image of a soft separatist within Indian establishment as she had a history of sympathizing with the families of Kashmiri separatists (Bukhari & Masroor, 2016). Soon after the establishment of new government in Kashmir BJP start pushing the idea of Sainik Colonies. The colonies were meant for the housing settlement of Indian troops and their families. The establishment of Sainik colony was approved by the Rajya Sainik Board (RSB) in April 2015. The colony was to be established in Srinagar near the old airport. Because of the already heavy presence of the security forces in the valley Mufti’s administration resisted the establishment of colonies on the grounds of non-availability of land in the Srinagar, Pulwama and Budgam District (Jameel, 2016). Although



separatist leadership of the valley formed a united front on the issue but Indian government refused to provide them any civil space.

The issues of Sainik colony and resettlement of Pundits were still brewing when a separatist fighter from Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and his two companions was killed by the Indian Security forces in July 2016. Burhan Wani, 21 year-old was considered a face of the 5th generation of Kashmiri struggle against the brutal Indian policies. He revolutionized the conventional form of protests through the innovative use of social media platforms. The social media outreach of Burhan Wani created stimulation in the Kashmiri youth, which made around 60% of J&K population (Dasgupta, 2016). Wani was referred to as the “poster boy of Kashmir” by the media and his killing was followed by the longest enforced Indian curfew in the valley.

In August 2016, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights expressed its disappointment over India and Pakistan’s rejection to agree to its appeal to direct a team to Indian-administered and Pakistan-administered Kashmir to inspect alleged human rights abuses on both sides of the LoC. Pakistan later reversed its position. India, which had long opposed international involvement on the issue, refused to do so (Lunn, 2017). Constant violations along the LoC continued to take place as Press Trust of India reported that Pakistan Army had resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation along the LoC and the Indian troops were responding appropriately (PTI, 2016).

On September 18, 2016 an Indian army base at Uri in Kashmir was attacked near the de facto border between Pakistan and India. Indian government blamed Pakistan for the attack. The attack was carried out by 04 armed militants as a result of which 18 Indian soldiers were killed (Ahmed, Philips, & Berlinger, 2016). Indian Home Affairs’ Minister Rajnath Singh declared Pakistan a terrorist state following the attack (“Pakistan is a terrorist state, it should be isolated: Rajnath”. 2016). Pakistan’s Foreign Ministry spokesman Nafees Zakaria accused India of blaming Pakistan without doing conducting any investigation (Bukhari, 2016).

The crisis further deepened when the Indian army made claims of carrying out surgical strikes in Pakistan across the LoC to target militants which were preparing to enter India in September 2016. It was the first time when Indian army overtly recognized that the Indian troops have launched attacks across the LoC and that the strikes caused significant fatalities to the terrorists in the Pakistani area. The claims of surgical strikes were refuted by Pakistan as it termed them a lie. Pakistani army asserted that two soldiers were killed and nine injured in cross border shelling as they responded to unprovoked firing but the idea of surgical strike was nothing more than an attempt of creating a deliberate illusion by Indian Army (Boone & Safi, 2016).

In the wake of rising tensions Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi manipulated the use of water as a diplomatic tool by asserting that blood and water cannot flow together. He proposed that India can walk away from the 56- year old treaty of division of the river waters of Indus river system amid India and Pakistan (Chaudhury, 2016). The waters from Indus, Jhelum and Chanab rivers flow through Indian held Kashmir before they fall in to Pakistan. Being a country whose economy is largely dependent on agriculture, the river water is considered extremely crucial to Pakistan. Modi’s threat further accelerated the diplomatic stress between the two nations (Rowlatt, 2016). Meanwhile UN urged both the countries to resolve their differences through dialogue.

During his independence speech on August 15, 2019 the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that the autonomous status of the Indian held Kashmir has been revoked and the Article 370 of the Indian constitution has been abrogated. Indian Constitution as per its article 35A (under Article 370) empowered the permanent residents of J&K in terms of “ability to purchase land and unmovable property, ability to vote and contest elections, seek government employment and avail other state benefits such as higher education and healthcare” (Khokar, 2019). The article also barred the non-permanent residents of J&K including the Indian citizens from claiming entitlement to these privileges. The abrogation deprived the indigenous Kashmiri population from all these privileges. The revocation of Article 370 was termed unconstitutional at all levels within and outside India. In spirit the article was irrevocable because it was formulated after mutual deliberations between Jawarlal Nehru and Sheikh Abdullah. It was decided at the time of formulation of the article that both India and J&K cannot unilaterally amend or abrogate the article with exception to the situation in

which 2/3<sup>rd</sup> majority of the Indian Parliament vote in favor of the amendment or abrogation . The abrogation of Article 370 also sent alarm calls to the other princely Indian states which acceded to India at the time of partition (Khokhar, 2019).

As a result of the abrogation of Article 370 J&K was divided into two federally administered territories. Jammu and Kashmir after being combined in to one territory was named as Jammu whereas Ladakh was turned into a separate entity. With respect to religious demographics Jammu was originally considered to be Hindu dominated with around 6 million population; Kashmir was considered to be Muslim dominated with approximately 8 million population whereas Ladakh which also bordered with China was mostly Budhists and Muslim dominated with around 300,000 population ("Jammu and Kashmir: India formally divides flashpoint state", 2019). The abrogation of article 370 was therefore considered to be a systematic attempt to alter the religious demographics of the Indian held Kashmir.

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