

Kashmir Dispute and Challenges to the National Security of Pakistan: An Analysis

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Abstract

Since the independence of Pakistan and India in 1947, Kashmir has remained a bone of contention between both the countries and led to four warsⁱ and numerous minor and major clashes. This Kashmir dispute continues to be a source of challenges to the National Security of Pakistan apart from being a flashpoint between these nuclear powers. In this paper, an analysis has been made through discussing the historical perspective of Kashmir dispute and its relation to the dynamic challenges which are faced by Pakistan's National Security. The paper concludes that it is essential for Pakistan and equally important for India to have the dispute resolved and the only probably way forward is to hold a plebiscite for Kashmiri people to decide their future. To achieve this the international community has to come forward and play a comprehensive role.

Key Words: Kashmir Dispute, Pakistan & India, Indo- Pak wars, Pakistan's national security, historical perspective of Kashmir, etc.

Introduction:

The literal meaning of a country's "national security" as defined by Collins English Dictionary is its "ability to protect itself from the threat of violence or attack" (Collins English Dictionary, 2018). A more detailed open-source definition of national security states, "National security is the requirement to maintain the survival of the state through the use of economic power, diplomacy, power projection and political power." The concept of national security, though initially had only the military dimension, however, now encompasses a broad range of facets. A few examples of measures taken to ensure national security may include:

- i. Using diplomacy to rally allies and isolate threats.
- ii. Marshaling economic power to facilitate or compel cooperation (Bashir et al., 2019).
- iii. Maintaining effective armed forces (Amir, 2018).

ⁱ 1948, 1965, 1971, Kargil

- iv. Implementing civil defense and emergency preparedness measures (“Definitions for National Security”, 2018).

Ever since its independence in 1947, Pakistan has remained beset with a host of National Security challenges. The most dominant amongst these has been Pakistan’s relations with India due to the long outstanding Kashmir dispute. The region of Kashmir is an 86,000-square mile region, situated in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. Indian- and Pakistani-controlled parts of Kashmir are separated by 435 miles long Line of Control. India-controls State of Jammu and Kashmir which makes up the southern and eastern portions of the region, totaling about 45% of Kashmir. Pakistan has three areas under its control i.e. Azad Kashmir, Gilgit and Baltistan and this is chiefly the northern and western portions of the region. It totals approximately 35% of the whole Kashmir (“Azad Kashmir”, 2018). China has one area under control which is called Aksai Chin situated in the northeastern part of the region and it equals 20% of Kashmir (“Kashmir Fast Fact on CNN Library”, 2018).

The Kashmir dispute does not only have a military dimension for Pakistan, the fallouts from this dispute have gravely impacted Pakistan in many aspects. These challenges have further compounded since the nuclearization of South Asia in 1998. Events of 11 September 2001 and the Global War on Terror that followed added further impetus to challenges with another war being fought on Pakistan’s western borders (Naz, 2018). Despite the Kashmir dispute, a known nuclear flashpoint, lack of international will to implement UN Resolution on the issue has allowed this violent dispute to prevail along with unabated oppression of indigenous Kashmiri freedom struggle.



Fig 1 Disputed Area of Kashmir

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the Kashmir dispute from its historical aspects with a view to establishing its impact on Pakistan's National security. As mentioned earlier, Pakistan as a state suffers many challenges, however, for this paper, the scope will remain limited to Pakistan National Security concerns and endeavor to find possible solutions.

Being a long outstanding issue, the subject is extensively debated at national, regional, and global levels. Considering the sensitivities of this dispute and its impact on the traditional military security concerns for Pakistan, only open-source information has been included to in this paper. Furthermore, the Kashmir issue being the cornerstone to the foreign policy of Pakistan, it is important to mention here that views expressed in the contents of this paper are also acquired through various open sources and in no way reflect the official position of Government of Pakistan on Kashmir.

Kashmir Dispute Historical Perspective:

Independence and First Indo Pak War 1947-48:

The partition of the Indian subcontinent along religious lines led to the formation of India and Pakistan in 1947. However, there remained the problem of over 650 states, run by princes ("Instrument of Accession (Jammu and Kashmir," 2018). In theory, these princely states had the option of deciding which country to join, or of remaining independent (Prasad, 2016). Due to its location, Kashmir could choose to join either India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of Kashmir, was Hindu while most of the population was Muslim. Unable to decide which country to join, Hari Singh chose to remain neutral ("A Brief History of the Kashmir Conflict", 2001). The merger of a Muslim dominant state with India was not acceptable to Muslims in Pakistan. Pakistan's political leadership decided to reverse the decision by force. However, lacking effective military power, it decided to use tribesmen from the Northwest Frontier Province (Hussain, 2011).

Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession, ceding Kashmir to India on 26 October 1947 and appealed to the Indian government for military assistance. Indian and Pakistani forces thus fought their first war over Kashmir in 1947-48. India referred the dispute to the United Nations on January 1, and filed a complaint with the UN Security Council, which established the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan. The UNCIP passed a resolution ("Instrument of Accession Jammu and Kashmir", 2018), stating:

"The question of accession of the state of Jammu & Kashmir to India or Pakistan will be decided through the democratic method of a free and impartial plebiscite (Burns, 1998)."

1948-1965 Second Indo Pak War:

India, having taken the issue to the UN, was confident of winning a plebiscite. An emergency government was formed on October 30, 1948 with Sheikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister. On January 1, 1949, a ceasefire was agreed upon, with 65% of the territory under Indian control and the rest with Pakistan. The ceasefire was intended to be temporary but the Line of Control remains the de-facto border between the two countries. Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru desperately needed to demonstrate the legitimacy of India's control over Kashmir for which elections were held in 1951 and Sheikh Abdullah took over as Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir ("A Short History of Elections in Kashmir", 2014). In 1957, Kashmir was formally

incorporated into the Indian Union. It was granted special status under Article 370 of Indian constitution (“The Constitution of India,” 1950). War broke out again between Pakistan and India in September 1965, but a ceasefire was established. Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri, and Pakistani President, M Ayyub Khan, signed the Tashkent agreement on January 1, 1966 to end the dispute. However, the death of Mr. Shastri and the rise of Gen Yahya Khan in Pakistan resulted in a stalemate.

1971 - Third Indo Pak War and Rise of Indigenous Freedom Struggle:

In 1971, the third war was fought between Pakistan and India as a consequence of Indian active support to terrorist organization Mukti Bahini in East Pakistan, resulted in the formation of independent Bangladesh (Hali, 2016). In 1972, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, signed the Simla Agreement. The two sides once again agreed to resolve the issue peacefully. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was overthrown and hanged in 1977 with Pakistan reverted to military rule under General Zia-ul-Haq. In Kashmir, the balance of influence had decisively tilted in Pakistan’s favor by the late 1980s, with people’s sympathy no longer with the Indian Union.

Similar to eyewash elections conducted in the past, Mrs. Gandhi attempted to install puppet governments in state capitals by manipulating the democratic process in the state legislatures (“A Short History of Elections in Kashmir”, 2014). In 1989, pro-independence and pro-Pakistan freedom fighters initiated armed struggle in the Indian Kashmir. Concurrently, Indian and Pakistani troops regularly exchanged fire at the border. In 1948, India had taken the Kashmir issue to the UN and agreed for a plebiscite, but by 1990s, it hid behind the Simla Agreement and refused any attempts for the UN or third-party mediation.

May 1998 (Dawn of Nuclearized South Asia):

The military dimension of the Kashmir dispute changed when India-conducted Nuclear weapons test on May 12, 1998 (Burns, 1998). Despite tremendous international pressure, Pakistan decided to authenticate its own nuclear weapons state by conducting its nuclear weapons test on May 28, 1998. Both countries also tested weapon delivery systems to exhibit the capacity and the capability in the use of nuclear weapons if required. After the 1998 nuclear tests, then US president Bill Clinton called Kashmir “the most dangerous place in the world” (Akran, 2016). UN Security Council’s Resolution 1172 on June 6, 1998, urged India and Pakistan to, “find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of their tensions, including Kashmir” (“Un Resolution”, 1172)

Peace Efforts and the Kargil Conflict Fourth Indo Pak War:

On the political end, efforts were made for the normalization of relations between Pakistan and India. However, diplomacy failed with the initiation of conflict in the Kargil area along the Line of Control in Kashmir (“A Brief History of the Kashmir Conflict, 2001). India contended that the infiltrators were trained and armed by Pakistan, and based in “Azad Kashmir” with the full knowledge of the Pakistani government. Pakistan insisted that those involved were freedom fighters from Kashmir and that were given merely moral support. The conflict ended after US President Bill Clinton met Pakistan’s Prime minister Nawaz Sharif on July 4, 1999 and forced him to withdraw troops from the area inside the Indian side of Kashmir.

In 1999, the war remained limited to one sector. Despite much pressure from the military and the public, the government of India decided not to cross the LOC. Pakistan Army also suffered criticism in Pakistan for initiating the operation without complete political backing and subsequently limiting its war to artillery fire across the LOC and shooting down Indian aircraft. The fear of a full-scale war, with nuclear capability adding a deadly dimension, coupled with precarious economies and the knowledge of what international sanctions could do to them, may have prevailed in both countries.

9/11 Attack and Resumption of Dialogue:

After the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, Pakistan supported the Taliban government in Afghanistan, however, it decided to support the US coalition military intervention in Afghanistan post 9/11 attack (Shafique, 2015). The Indian Parliament was attacked by militants of Jaish-e-Muhammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba on December 13, 2001. Although the attack was largely unsuccessful, however, India termed the attack as an attack on its democracy and waged an international narrative to declare Pakistan as a terrorist state and thus consequently lure the US against Pakistan. However, the US being dependent on Pakistan's support for the conduct of its operations in Afghanistan, distanced itself from the Indian narrative.

Notwithstanding, international pressure compelled Pakistan to ban a number of pro-Pakistan Kashmiri Jihadi Groups. However, Pakistan repeatedly termed India's policy in IOK as state terrorism and denied any kind of support to militancy. Events of 9/11, attack on Indian Parliament and international pressure once again made both Pakistan and India to resume dialogue in 2004. President of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf's proposal initiated new debates on the dispute worldwide. Yet the Indian response to his suggestions remained limited only to some tentative improvements on LOC.

Mumbai Attack:

The Kashmir cause remained dormant from 2004 till 2008. The issue might have continued to remain a secondary problem between India and Pakistan if there were no Mumbai attacks on 26-29 November 2008. The Indian authorities blamed Pakistan, as some of the perpetrators of the attack were allegedly Pakistani nationals, though some critiques termed the Mumbai attacks as a false flag operation launched by Indian Intelligence Service, RAW (Abrar, 2018).

Pakistan's government analyzed the situation carefully and banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah in addition to arresting its senior leaders. The Pakistani leadership attempted to involve the international community by highlighting the issue on various forums while at the same time kept its options open to respond militarily to an Indian attack (Wikileaks, 2018). The US yet remained enchanted to the Indian stance of Kashmir being a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan which indirectly supported the Indian viewpoint ("Kashmir Taken out of Holbrooke's Brief", 2009). The PPP government's term ended in May 2013. Nonetheless, there was no substantial move on the part of the government to initiate any noteworthy negotiations with India to resolve the longstanding unresolved dispute.

2013 Onwards:

Pakistan Muslim League (N) took over the government in 2013. While Kashmir dispute remained the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy, internally Pakistan remained besieged by a violent wave of terrorism as the worst affected country in the world, second only to Iraq (Khan,

2014). The Military establishment was fully engaged in rooting out terrorism throughout the country especially in the highly volatile areas of FATA, Baluchistan, and Karachi (Abbasi, 2014). While both sides continue to engage each other across LOC, on the diplomatic front Pakistan's policy towards Kashmir remained ambiguous with no headway being made in dispute resolution by both sides.



Fig 2 Pakistan Map

A popular rebel commander Burhan Wani was killed by Indian security forces on July 8, 2016, followed by a civilian uprising in which hundreds of civilians were killed. The impact of Wani's killing was perhaps the most significant change in Valley since the late 1980s (Shah, 2018b).

Pakistan Tehreek Insaaf came into power after the July 25, 2018 elections. Immediately after assuming his duties as Prime Minister, Mr. Imran Khan offered the Indian Government an offer to resume dialogue on all issues including Kashmir ("Imran Khan Writes to PM Modi says Pakistan ready to restart dialogue on trade, religion, terrorism", 2018). Indian authorities initially accepted the offer, however, immediately backed out, blaming Pakistan again for sponsoring terrorism in Kashmir (Koronuma, 2018).

Pakistan Security Challenges:

The inability of an 800,000 strong army in Kashmir to suppress the uprising has greatly enraged the Indian government. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi pulled his Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party out of a local coalition government to prepare the ground for a crackdown in Kashmir before the next general election in 2019 (Shah, 2018). Pakistan has continued to be entangled with India with regards to its security concerns throughout its 72 years independent history. Notwithstanding, events occurring on eastern border, major events on the western borders, such as the Iranian revolution, Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, hosting more than 3 million Afghan refugees for decades, Afghan infighting post-Soviet withdrawal and the influx of former Mujahideen into Pakistan western areas and a second invasion US lead coalition post 9/11, had a cumulative effect on Pakistan National Security Challenges. Some of the cardinal challenges directly linked to Kashmir dispute are discussed in the ensuing paragraphs:

a. Nuclear / Arms Race:

- i. The insecurity of Pakistan and India from each other has triggered an arms race in the region. Competing global powers continue to extend their support to either of their strategic partners. While the Western powers and Russiaⁱⁱ back their strategic partner, India, China supports its strategic partner, Pakistan.
- ii. More importantly, the USA agreed to supply civilian nuclear-power technology to India in 2008 against strong opposition from China and Pakistan.
- iii. Following the agreement, the USA also supports Indian membership for the Nuclear Supplier's Group and Missiles Technology Control Regime. This enhances India's nuclear weapons and its delivery capability and also increases Pakistan's concerns that India would gain a seat at the world's nuclear inner circle and block nuclear technology to their country (Raquel, 2014).
- iv. Aspiring to become a regional power, India focuses on matching China's military capabilities compelling Pakistan to at least maintain rough parity with India. Consequently, Pakistan pays a heavy price on military spending,

ⁱⁱ though now supporting Pakistan as well

impeding its own development. It raises the question of Pakistan's ability to afford and sustain the arms race.

- v. There is also the possibility of a nuclear confrontation over the Kashmir crisis and this is one of the overall consequences to the security of South Asia.
- vi. What makes the India-Pakistan scenario fit well with this idea is that India has declared that it will use nuclear weapons only if Pakistan uses nuclear weapons first.
- vii. Pakistan has also threatened to use nuclear weapons in response to a conventional attack by India. Consequently, the current nature of India-Pakistan relations, the Kashmir issue, and the possibilities of unintended escalation of a nuclear war pose greater challenges to the security of the South Asian region.

b. Insurgency, Terrorism & Counter-Terrorism:

- i. There are two brands of organizations with varying strengths operating in the Kashmiri cause. On the one hand, there are many pro-Pakistani Islamic organizations like Jamaat-e-Islami, Hizbul Islami, Allah Tigers, Islamic Student League, and Lashkar-e-Taiba.
- ii. These organizations are fighting to get rid of Indian rule in Kashmir and integrate it with Pakistan and are alleged to be supported by Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence for giving financial and technical assistance, training, guidance, and military hardware to these organizations.
- iii. On the other hand, the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front are operating, advocating a secular independent Kashmir.
- iv. Using the terror attacks on its soil as an excuse, India avoids going to the peace talks. It continues to blame institutions like the ISI and a certain section of the Pakistani military for the terrorist attacks on its soil.
- v. In the name of fighting terrorism, the Indian military is committing human rights violations in Kashmir.
- vi. While alienating Kashmiri Muslims from Indian rule, Indian military operation fuels more Pakistani support for the Kashmiri cause.
- vii. On the other hand, the Indian intelligence organization, Research Analyzing Wing, RAW, secretly supports every anti-state movement with the aim of destabilizing Pakistan.
- viii. These measures fuel the trust deficit between India and Pakistan, further complicate the problem in Kashmir and frustrate any possibility of bilateral relations.
- ix. While India continues to impatiently blame every terrorist occurrence in India to elements in Pakistan, it backs out of any joint investigation offered by Pakistan Government. Instead, it parades comical arrests of "spying bird from Pakistan" on various occasions ("Pakistani spy pigeon arrested in India," 2015).
- x. On another occasion, an Indian Airforce aircraft was deployed to shoot down a balloon that had floated from across the border ("Balloon that was downed by IAF's Sukhoi-30MKI had come in from Pakistan", 2018).

- xi. While on the other hand, number of Indian spies have been arrested in Pakistan's latest being a serving Indian Navy officer (Usman, 2017).

c. **Competition in Afghanistan:**

- i. Impelled by the Kashmir conflict, both countries, India and Pakistan have entered into Afghanistan for political, security, and economic reasons.
- ii. Ever since the Taliban regime, which was friendly towards Pakistan, was ousted in late 2001, Pakistan lost its strong foothold in Afghanistan, whereas, India has become the fifth largest bilateral aid donor and its closest ally in the region ("India fifth largest donor to Afghanistan: official", 2018).
- iii. Pakistan had long viewed Afghanistan as a corridor to the Central Asian Republics. An aggressive outreach of India to the CARs via Afghanistan and its efforts to build a military base in Tajikistan not only threaten to outflank Pakistan but also enhance the capacity of India to project its military power in the region.
- iv. India is also investing in its own intelligence agencies to fight the proxy war in Afghanistan and uses its numerous consulates in supporting and training anti-Pakistan elements in Afghanistan.
- v. Conversely Pakistan is often accused of supporting the Taliban with a view to destabilizing Afghan government or to have a compliant government in Afghanistan. This makes it difficult to find a negotiated settlement to the Kashmir conflict, widening the trust deficit between both countries.

d. **Foreign Policy:**

- i. Pakistan Foreign policy, though not India specific, contains a clear objective of "safeguarding national security and geostrategic interests, including Kashmir" ("Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Government of Pakistan; Foreign Policy Objectives", 2018).
- ii. The perpetually tense relationship between India and Pakistan clearly get reflected in foreign policy and diplomatic relation being exercised by both Pakistan and India with other countries in the immediate neighborhood as well as regionally.
- iii. For Pakistan, one of the objectives is to prevent India from being a perceived threat to its regional strategic interests. It is likely to contest, limit, and possibly even prevent Indian influence, where possible (Solangi, 2019).
- iv. Growing Indian economic influence in the Central Asian Republic indirectly threatens Pakistan's future energy security concerns.
- v. India has made heavy investments in Iran's Chabahar Port and road infrastructure to link Iran and Central Asian Republics through Afghanistan (Solangi, 2019).
- vi. Although the core problem of the Pakistan-Iran relationship is political-economic engagement between the two states, however, the Indian engagement in the Chabahar project is a major concern (Christopher, 2018; Solangi, 2019).

- vii. China remains a challenge to US hegemonic aspirations in the Asia Pacific region. Despite Pakistan's formerly a member of SETO, CENTO and later having the status of major non-NATO Ally, the US has supported India, especially in the military domain.
- viii. Lately, US-Pakistan relations have gone into a nose dive due to the US frustration over losing its grip in Afghanistan despite 17 years of military operations (Haliwanger, 2018).
- ix. US military cooperation with India and lack of same with Pakistan has compelled Pakistan to seek other military and economic partners such as China and more recently Russia.
- x. Indirectly the fallouts of Kashmir dispute have compelled Pakistan to shift its foreign policy axis from the West to the East (Rid, 2006).

e. **Water War:**

- i. Pakistan is an agrarian society with a heavy dependence on agriculture for food security. Agriculture also forms almost a quarter of Pakistan GPD whereas almost 45% of workforces in the country are associated with agriculture. Kashmir is the main source of irrigation water for India and Pakistan (Usman, 2016).
- ii. Indus Waters Treaty was signed on 19 September 1960, between India and Pakistan, and was brokered by the World Bank. The treaty fixed and delimited the rights and obligations of both countries concerning the use of the waters of the Indus River system ("Encyclopedia Britannica: Indus Water Treaty", 2018).
- iii. India is stepping up efforts to maximize its water use from the western rivers, flowing through Kashmir, allocated to Pakistan under the Indus Water Treaty. The move would involve building huge storage facilities and canals.
- iv. Pakistan views India's move as using the water issue to put pressure on Pakistan in the dispute over Kashmir.
- v. Reduction in available water for Pakistan will severely affect Pakistan's agriculture thus directly impacting Pakistan's economic and food security.
- vi. Indirectly, this would lead to a huge population without a reasonable source of income which will have a severe social and political impact on Pakistan.

Options For Dispute Resolution:

The Kashmir Dispute is highly complex and prone to the use of violent force as proven by history. It is imperative that this dispute should see a logical conclusion, based on the aspirations of the Kashmiri population while at the same time safeguard the interests of Pakistan as well as India. The options for a solution, are discussed in succeeding paragraphs:

Option 1 – Plebiscite Option:

The accession of entire Kashmir to India or Pakistan through the right of self-determination by the Kashmiris on both sides of LOC, as stipulated in UN resolutions.

a. **Implications for Pakistan:**

- i. A plebiscite in Kashmir would uphold the official position of Pakistan and will also be in line with the partition plan thus fulfilling the aspirations of people of Pakistan and Muslims of Kashmiris.
- ii. The possible accession of Kashmir to Pakistan can remove her strategic vulnerabilities, including the economic and military, besides offering security to the Silk Route between China and Pakistan.
- iii. Indirectly this would create a balance of power in the presence of already established nuclear parity in the region.
- iv. In case Kashmir accedes to India:
 - (a) Pakistan will lose its part of Kashmir, Gilgit, and Baltistan and will be deprived of its only land link to China. This may not be acceptable to China due to its economic interest on the CPEC project linking China to the Arabian Sea at Gwadar Port.
 - (b) India will have control over all the rivers of Kashmir, which would devastate Pakistan's economy and defense capability leaving an open field for India to impose its hegemony over the entire region.

b. **Implications for India:**

- i. In the prospect of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, India will be deprived of the entire state.
- ii. Giving Kashmir the right of self-determination will spark similar demands from other states of India thus threatening the integrity of the Indian Union.
- iii. In case India is successful to manipulate the plebiscite, the problem will still not be solved due to the resistance of the dominant Muslim population.
- iv. It would thus be a status quo with regards to security concerns for Pakistan as well as for India.

Option 2 - Partition Option:

Division of Kashmir along with Muslim /non-Muslim majority areas, is also an option. In practical terms, it would mean; accession of Northern Areas, Kashmir valley, Azad Kashmir and Muslim majority areas of Jammu with Pakistan and Ladakh and Hindu majority areas of Jammu with India.

a. **Implications For Pakistan:**

- i. Pakistan would retain Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas and also acquire additional territory in Kashmir valley, Northern Areas, and Jammu district which would overcome Pakistan's strategic vulnerabilities.
- ii. Link with China will be maintained which is at present imperative for Pakistan's economic security.
- iii. Maximum of population in Pakistan and in Kashmir will oppose it as in reality, it will be a step back from the original position from Pakistan's viewpoint since 1947.

b. **Implications For India:**

- i. India will have to give a portion of the area under her control to Pakistan and this could result in a similar kind of reaction from the Indian population as in the case of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan as a result of the plebiscite.
- ii. All the disadvantages of Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, in case of the plebiscite, are applicable in this option to a certain extent.

Option 3 - Independent Kashmir Option:

It envisages an independent and sovereign state consisting of all parts of Jammu & Kashmir. This option is being pursued by Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front.

- i. **Implications For Pakistan:** In case this option is coupled with plebiscite option, it will divide the Muslim votes into three choices; accession to Pakistan, accession to India, or Independent Kashmir. Whereas non-Muslim votes are likely to be cast in India's favor, Muslim votes will get divided between accession to Pakistan or Independence. This may ultimately tilt the result of the plebiscite in favor of India thus paving the way for Kashmir's accession to India having implications as mentioned earlier.
- ii. **Implications For India:** India will have to lose both Jammu and Ladakh. It may result in similar demands from other former princely states also. The Hindu population in the state will be left without any safeguards.
- iii. **Viability of an Independent Kashmir:** An independent Kashmir without solid economic aid from outside is not feasible. Kashmir will be a landlocked country and it will have to have equal relations with both India and Pakistan. Considering growing Indian economic power, Kashmir may get compelled to maintain a pro-India and anti-Pakistan stance.

Option 4 – Converting LOC Into Border:

Present LOC becoming the international border with some minor adjustments. The idea has been proposed by India many times but rejected by Pakistan.

- i. **Implications For Pakistan:**
 - a. The proposal ignores the ground realities since de-facto partition in vogue has been rejected by the people of Kashmir.
 - b. It would be a compromise to the principled stand on Kashmir since 1947, besides betrayal to the Kashmiri struggle.
 - c. It would leave a large Muslim dominated territory in Indian Control.
 - d. Similarly, Pakistan's strategic vulnerabilities will not be addressed.
- ii. **Implications For India:** India will be at a much advantageous position in case this option materializes as she has the control of more than 65%.

Option 5 – Military Option (War With India):

- i. Pakistan's economic fragility and internal fissures strongly oppose the adoption of such an option.
- ii. An India Pakistan war will completely retard the Kashmir struggle.
- iii. In international diplomacy, India evidently enjoys an upper edge over Pakistan with a negative perception of Pakistan and its relations with neighboring countries.
- iv. Pakistan would be immediately condemned internationally for initiating the war and whatever little international support Pakistan has, it will be lost.

Recommended Option:

The only viable option is the "Plebiscite Option" (Rafi, 2016). A UN-supervised plebiscite in the state to determine the will of the Kashmiri people is the only way to decide the question of the state's final accession.

The solution requires the following in their real sense and meaning (Fayaz, 2016):

- i. UN effective role.
- ii. Major powers and international community pressure and sincere efforts for the solution.
- iii. Flexibility from both Pakistan and India.
- iv. Involvement of all the three parties i.e. Pakistan, India, and Kashmiris because exclusion of anyone from the solution settlement will prove a failure.
- v. Continuous negotiations. The disruptions in the dialogue always wither away what has been achieved earlier.
- vi. Kashmiris' continuous struggle, to pressurize India to agree for the settlement.

Conclusion:

Kashmir dispute remains unresolved for 72 years now. Apart from Kashmiris having suffered worst of humiliation, exploitation, and repression at the hands of Indians, this dispute remains the most volatile nuclear flashpoint in the world. With its extensive loss of human life either due to the freedom struggle or the wars fought between Pakistan and India, this dispute carries grave security concerns primarily for Pakistan.

In the case of Pakistan, these security concerns transform into traditional as well as non-traditional security challenges. It is, therefore, essential for Pakistan and equally important for India to have the dispute resolved and the only probably way forward is to hold a plebiscite for Kashmiri people to decide their future. To achieve this, the international community has to come forward and play a comprehensive role as former US President Ronald Regan said:

"Peace is not the absence of conflict; it is the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means."

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