

The Kashmir Conflict: A Matter of Geopolitics and Micropolitics

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Abstract

This article gives an overview of the conflict that has been taking place in Kashmir since 1947 and has killed millions of innocent Kashmiris. How did this conflict start? Who are the parties involved? What is the importance of this conflict for the countries involved and how does it affect their politics? In this short viewing of the historical context of the conflict some of these questions can be answered, and even more questions can be raised.

Key words: *Kashmir, Conflict, India, Pakistan, History, Geopolitics;*

The Kashmir region (Happymon, 2016)

Actors involved in the dispute

India

Kashmir is seen as strategically vital for India, as it is seen as a key characteristic of its secular identity. The territory is also considered to be “the only window open towards central Asia” as it does have physical access with Afghanistan and East Turkestan and is hence a so called “integral part” of India.

India considers the region of Gilgit-Baltistan to be of great strategic and economic importance. Gilgit-Baltistan is part of Jammu and Kashmir, presently under Pakistan’s control, with most of the people asking for independence, as they’re not satisfied by the Pakistani government.

There are many other areas in Kashmir that are of major geo-political significance. One such area is the Siachen Glacier. It is considered to be the only barrier that prevents China and Pakistan from combining their forces in Kashmir. “If Pakistan and China were allowed to link up their militaries at Siachen, India’s national security over the entire northern frontier would be greatly undermined. Such a link up would create a very powerful military force, consisting of India’s two biggest rivals”⁵.

India’s policy on Kashmir hasn’t been the most flexible throughout the years, as the nuclear-armed country doesn’t seem to want to loosen its grip when it comes to Kashmir or the self-determination of its people. Since 2014, when the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) became the Governing Part, the Kashmiri situation has been heated. According to Yasir Masood, “the BJP is a right- leaning, Hindu nationalist party. It is the first major party to mobilise overtly on the basis of religious identity and to adopt a clearly anti-Muslim stance.”⁶

Since Narendra Modi took office, India has been particularly aggressive against Pakistan and has plenty of open matters to deal with. During the last two years, India has been violating ceasefire agreement along the LoC and the Working Boundary and killed and injured many innocent people⁷

⁵ Kalis, N. A., & Dar, S. S. pg: 115–123

⁶ Yasir Masood Khan, (2014):13

⁷ Rupam Jain Nair and Mehreen Zahra-Malik,