

## UNVEILING CULTURAL NARRATIVES THROUGH ANALYZING ASIAN STUDIES PERSPECTIVES OF THE PAKISTAN-INDIA CONFLICT AND KASHMIR'S RIGHT TO SELF- DETERMINATION

**Novelliny Arishta Mutya**  
State University of Medan  
Email: [novelliny24231483@pmmfbs.unimed.ac.id](mailto:novelliny24231483@pmmfbs.unimed.ac.id)

### Abstract

This study examines two cultural narratives on the Pakistan- India conflict and the Claim of Kashmir to achieve independence, that is unwarranted since the two nation has been separated in 1947 over the enchanting territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The conflict, centered around territorial disputes, religious disputes, and differences in ideologies, has resulted in widespread human suffering and regional instability, compounded by ethnic and religious heterogeneity, insurgency, and foreign interference. The toll of the Kashmir conflict is not just interstate tensions between the nuclear-armed India and Pakistan but also intrastate violence and widespread human rights abuses. These works bring to light the need for recognition of past wrongs, acceptance of religious diversity and comprehensive restoration and reconciliation process which constitutes the necessity of continuing the dialogue and seeking support on the international level for achieving the lasting and mutually acceptable solution and nonviolence protection of the rights and dignity of the people of Kashmir.

**Keywords:** Kashmir dispute, dispute between Pakistan and India, right of self-determination, territorial dispute, human rights abuses, cultural portrayal, political instability, religious factor, militancy, peace.

### INTRODUCTION

Jammu & Kashmir is located right in the lap of nature presented by the Himalayas, and boasts of an iron fort, the palaces and gardens that are as beautiful as those in the story of the 'Kingdom of the Perthes'. However, this beautiful and resource-endowed gem of a place has been subject to a long-standing conflict since the early years of the country's creation in 1947 following the Partition of India. Recurrent acts of terrorism, repressive actions, and human right abuses compounded the imagery of paradise to create tension in relationship between India and Pakistan. This article explores the essence of the political diplomacy, global interference and social conflict in relation to the mostly discussed case of Kashmir issue based on the research findings and geopolitical studies as pointed by Adnal, 2018; Aziz, 2018; Jain, Bukari, & Johnson 2018; Riedel, 2008).

The historical background of the conflict in Kashmir goes back to the British Indian partition in 1947 when the British departed the Indian subcontinent. The Hindu ruled

Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir became a disputed territory both for the newly bred nation. The military power rivalry led to the first Indo-Pakistani war, which ended creating a dividing Line of Control (LoC) in the region and putting in place a shaky ceasefire. In the event, regardless of elaborate efforts towards its settlement, the Kashmir dispute has continued for several decades with occasional eruptions of the conflict and cross-border hostilities. India and Pakistan are known to have deployed military force, diplomacy, espionage, and even proxy wars to support their territorial claims to the region. On the other hand, the people of Jammu & Kashmir have suffered most in this long drawn conflict by being displaced, subjected to human rights violations, and left in an economically depressed state.

The issue of Kashmir, as we have understood, has not only been limited to the Indian subcontinent but has received attention internationally. Pakistan continues to take the conflict to the international level, at the United Nations and at least the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), as noted by Aziz in 2018. To build support, Pakistan draws the attention to so-called human rights abuses and the right of Kashmiris to liberation. On the other hand, India has categorically rejected any form of interference with the matter, insisting that Kashmir is an Indian territory. Although the conflict in the region appears to be really and completely insoluble, there have been occasional attempts to search for a diplomatic solution to the problem. For years numerous actors have attempted to employ diplomatic engagement, CBMs and Track II diplomacy in an attempt to advance the prospects of reconciliation in the region. But political agenda, past experiences and political rivalry have remained a barrier to lasting solution in the search for solution (Hussain, 2015; Jain, Bukari, & Johnson, 2018). This peaceful struggle for freedom and justice represents the aspirations of the Kashmiri people who are still waiting for an end of the conflict in their region. Finally, the Kashmir conflict is a lasting illuminated history of colonialism, division, and dispute over territory regions in the subcontinent. While being surrounded by such picturesque landscapes and having such a rich history, the area faces the threat of violence and oppression along with uncertainty as well. Having reviewed the nature of diplomacy as well as power politics, in India and Pakistan the future of Kashmir remains undecided, where voices of the oppressed are waiting for a change, waiting for their dreams to come true so that region may find a way of coexistence in the world.

## **METHOD**

The primary method of analyzing the literature on the Kashmir conflict used in this research is Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). CDA is a methodological framework, which involves analysing texts for implicit power relationships, political beliefs, and rhetorical

techniques. It explores how language fosters the creation and sustenance of social, political, and cultural realities and how it influences ways of seeing and definitions of self.

Regarding the Kashmir conflict, CDA facilitates a textual analysis of the stories, images, and the rhetoric that actors such as governments, media, academics, and campaigners use to mobilize support and meaning. Thus, through the analysing these discourses, CDA helps shed light on the dynamics of power in the conflict, the ways in which some voices are silenced while others are amplified, and how these dominant discourses shape the opinions of society and policies. The materials for the analysis comprise scholarly articles, books, reports, and film reviews to show the multiplicity of the conflict in the case of Kashmir. These concerns are relevant to the research questions under investigation, methodological quality, variety of voices, and readability of the texts.

The selected sources cover the historical, political and human rights aspects of the conflict over Kashmir and contemporary research articles and cases. Consequently, films and literature as cultural artifacts are incorporated to reflect on the daily experiences and cultural practices of people impacted by the conflict. The texts are selected from scholarly peer-reviewed journals, publishers, and well-recognized repositories. Through the close reading of a broad spectrum of texts, this research seeks to develop finding that address the multifaceted nature of the conflict in the Kashmir region and enrich the existing discourses on the topic.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **1. Unearthing Untold Narratives: In the Kashmir Files**

The ‘Kashmir Files’, directed by Vivek Agnihotri is a movie that lasts nearly 165 minutes, 2 hours and 45 minutes to be precise. It goes into historical accounts of the horrors that the Kashmiri Pandits had to face in the 1980s and 1990s and the subsequent ethnic cleansing that forced them into exile. The film enlightens the audience on the sad incident that occurred in Kunan Poshpora and the horrible ordeal on the women of the Kashmiri Pandit community. In doing so, the film makes sure that the stories of the victims of this period in the history of Kashmir are not only told, but the perpetrators also punished for these heinous crimes.

Perhaps, one of the most powerful scenes in ‘The Kashmir Files’ is describing the bombing that happened in Kashmir to the vagrants in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Concerning the setting of this scene, one gets the feeling of increasing tension in the middle of the night when loud explosions empty the silence of the serene neighborhood. The

scenes were shot clearly, and the music used in this part further adds to the suspense of the movie.

The aspects of fear, confusion, and despair are all very apparent on the actors' faces



which enhances the audience's compassion for the troubles they are going through.

Thus, with this scene, the movie "The Kashmir Files" gives a realistic and painful view on how the conflict in Kashmir affects people and communities. It also makes the viewers think about the fact that the war is not a simple thing, which means that people should struggle for peace and try to address the issue of reconciliation in the region.

And the next, the most unforgettable scene is the tragedy of Kunan Poshpora. This scene sums up the possibility of what becomes a horrifying view of the tragedy of Kunan Poshpora. Strong use of cinematography and early music makes the audience see a scene of the rape of the Kashmiri women in a village called Kunan Poshpora. Set in a rather gloomy and rather fearful setting, this scene allows the viewers to get a glimpse of the ordeal endured by the victims yet show their bravery in the face of adversity.

The movie and its music touch and provoke thoughts about the sad experiences of these moments by realizing the painful history of the past in Kashmir. Not only does it solicit



compassion but also the viewers are forced to start thinking about what is next the Kashmiri people? By adding a deeper and sadder touch, the scene of Kunan Poshpora in "The Kashmir Files" becomes something memorable as the film's lore.

### 3. Identifying book of Do you remember kunan poshpora?

The book “Do You Remember Kunan Poshpora?” is an account of the women, who fell victims to sexual assault in the village of Kunan Poshpora, the territory of Kashmir in 1991. The targeted groups are women and girls who were sexually assaulted by the Indian security forces. These were victims of crime and were deeply traumatized and the narration of the book describes their ordeal and fight for justice.

**Table 1. Analyzing the rape of victim in Do you remember Kunan Poshpora? Book**

Aspect	Natasha Rather	Munaza Rashid	Samreena Mushtaq	Ifrah Butt	Essar Batool
Background	Initially fearful, witnessing violence, later critical of army presence	Initially viewed as protectors, changed perception due to atrocities	Negative perception due to personal experiences of brutality by army	Grew up in conflict-affected Kashmir, became aware of injustices	Raised in a religious Kashmiri family, later became conscious of atrocities.
Perception of Armed forces	Natasha’s fear of armed forces evolves from witnessing their violence	Munaza’s view of the military changes from protectors to oppressors	Samreena’s negative perception of armed forces stems from personal trauma	Initially saw forces as protectors but felt uneasy.	Initially defended forces, then questioned official narratives.
Perception of justice	Belief in justice for victims of mass rape, despite time passed	Belief in ongoing struggle for justice	Seeing justice as crucial for holding perpetrators accountable	Believes in ongoing struggle, especially for unresolved cases.	Sees justice as the primary goal, advocating for it through activism.

The table represents rather complex and changing attitudes of given women as Natasha Rather, Munaza Rashid, Samreena Mushtaq, Ifrah Butt, and Essar Batool toward Armed Forces and justice in the conflict-affected Kashmir. The narrative for each person can be viewed as a more complex view of the world based upon a person's interaction with it from fear and suspicion to activism and fighting for justice.

## **2. Understanding the Insurgency: “Kashmir Conflict: An Analysis of the Source of Violent Militancy in Kashmir Valley & the Strategies That May Be Tried in Future”.**

This book by Priyanka Bakaya and Sumeet Bhatti gives a glimpse into the some of the causes that led to the militancy in the Kashmir valley. The role of history, socio economic and political factors that led to the conflict, issues of governance and political marginalization, human rights abuses and question of identity are also highlighted. Through evaluating these root causes, the study reveals the need to examine structural injustices and guarantee and enhance of policies and peaceful social justice in the area.

## **3. Tracing Historical Legacies: Currently, the name Kashmir will inevitably call to mind the dispute between India and Pakistan.**

Alaistair Lamb's work is a detailed overview of the historical background of the Kashmir conflict that began in 1846 with the sale of the region to the British East India Company and continued up to 1990, before the rise of insurgency. It analyzes what many regards as the fallout of colonial domination, the partition of India and the conflicting territorial claims between India and Pakistan. Through these journeys, Lamb underlines the realm of crosscurrents of international relations and borders that formed the fundamentals of the Kashmir problem at different stages.

## **4. Towards a Model of Reconciliation**

Altogether, these works bring out the necessity of having an interrelated and complex response to the conflict that engulfs the Kashmir region. It is important to vouch for the pain and injustices of all the parties in order to bring about a genuine reconciliation. This need involves: seeking to solve the conflict at its source, support implementation of dialogue and reconciliation processes, and respect for the rights and dignity of all people in Kashmir. If one is to look at the conflict through the lens of the past yet envisioning a future of peace and tolerance the prospects for achieving a lasting solution to one of the longest ranking conflicts in the world known exists.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Kashmir conflict is a clear example of regional instability and human suffering derived from historical, religious, and ideological differences dating back to the partition of British India in 1947. This ongoing, widely spread dispute over Jammu and Kashmir has been causing human rights abuses, displacement, and intrastate violence, further exacerbated

by geopolitical rivalries and international interference. Despite many diplomatic efforts on this conflict, it has not been resolved. Cultural narratives have included films and literature on the suffering of Kashmir, emphasizing recognition of the past as wrong, acceptance of religious diversity, and comprehensive reconciliation processes. These narratives break stereotypes and provide empathy and solidarity towards the Kashmiri. The discourses brought on the conflict underpin its interconnectedness with broader geopolitical rivalries, adherence to the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people in conformity with international norms, while reiterating the need to uphold human rights, encourage dialogue, and address humanitarian concerns. A lasting peace and reconciliation in Kashmir can be achieved only through considering the roots of this conflict, the agency of the Kashmiri people, and fostering a culture of understanding and respect towards paving coexistence and stability in the region.

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