

BARNARD



*Beyond State Narratives: The Realities of Conflict, Identity, and Governance in Jammu
and Kashmir*

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Introduction

The territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir has been a subject of protracted conflict and debate, often analyzed through the narrow lens of state-centric geopolitics. While this perspective offers a foundational understanding of territorial sovereignty, it tends to marginalize the voices and lived experiences of those who are entangled in this dispute: the Kashmiri people themselves. What makes this conflict even more multifaceted are its nuances that stretch way beyond military and geopolitical strategies, extending to the region's economic and legal systems. These systems tend to function, somewhat deceptively, under the umbrella of state authority – a trait common to most territorially contested conflicts. Delving deeper into this paper, my objective revolves around moving past the limitations presented by a traditional, state-centric analysis while carefully examining novel concepts such as internal socio-political dynamics, development for ulterior motives, and aspects of settler colonialism.

Against this backdrop, this paper aims to scrutinize the ways in which India employs development initiatives and postcolonial governance frameworks as instruments of control in its bid for sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir. Issues such as the masking of hegemonic power under the guise of development and India's resurrecting and reinterpreting colonial tactics to serve a nationalistic purpose are explored in this paper. This research aims to do so by delving into India's strategic practices used to establish dominance over Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing the unintended or concealed consequences of employing development as a camouflage for control.

The importance of this research lies in the inherent invisibility of post-colonial accords between nation-states; the remnants of colonial regimes and the geopolitical dynamics that shape the relationships between former colonies and their ruling powers. This research endeavors to understand how the actions mentioned earlier impact the sovereignty and well-being of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. It also seeks to analyze and evaluate the conflict's various social and political dimensions to assess their implications. Within the realm of social dynamics, the focus revolves around changes due to cultural representations, displacement, and imposition of foreign norms, highlighting their disruptive effects on the social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir. In particular, it intends to document instances of human rights violations and the imposition of restrictions on fundamental liberties, such as freedom of expression, assembly, and religious practices, especially after the Abrogation of Article 370. This would reveal how political agency has been curtailed and how these factors contribute to the ongoing conflict.

Methods

As discussed in the previous section, the Kashmir crisis is multifaceted on various fronts such as social, religious, territorial, and cultural, and therefore a multi-pronged research methodology was employed. To examine the grassroot impact of legislative changes on the political and social aspects of everyday life, this research comprised two semi-structured hour-long interviews and document analysis, both serving as qualitative data.

A. Semi-Structured Interviews

Two hour-long interviews were conducted to grasp an understanding of the daily manifestations of this conflict. However, due to the high media censorship and the overall sensitive nature of this

issue, the interviewees have been anonymized for their protection and will be referred to as Interviewee X and Interviewee Y. The credentials of both interviewees are highly valuable in a crisis as volatile as this one, with Interviewee X being a local regional politician and Interviewee Y being a Kashmiri activist. Conducted remotely, the safety and anonymity of the participants was ensured and their responses were later transcribed and translated in accordance with their consent.

B. Document Analysis

The document analysis for this research consisted of both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources comprised government documents essential to the conflict and its escalation such as the Abrogation of Article 370 papers and the Act of Accession. These documents and their closer examination provided essential information about their legality and the current government's stance. The secondary sources were compiled using a literature review that broadly included scholarly articles, reports from international organizations, and news from both national and international media outlets. These sources were crucial for gaining a holistic view of the conflict and contextualizing the frameworks that seemed to have information gaps in them.

Moving Beyond the State-Centric Analysis

In modern-day discourses surrounding governance and territorial control, the global geopolitical system seems overwhelmingly dictated by a state-centric lens. This entails the treatment of citizens – the constituents the states govern – as secondary when compared to the machinery that

allows states to function ‘free of national security threats.’¹ This stark distinction between the prioritization of state security and individual security has been increasingly illustrated in the seven-decade-long Kashmir conflict. Caught between the territorial disputes of India and Pakistan, it is not new for the Kashmiri populace to find their peace, agency, and safety subordinated to better fit the ambitions of these states.² The presence of this state-centric discourse, forces not just the media to neglect Kashmiri aspirations but the Kashmiris as well.³

A. Selective Memory: Reassessing the Dominant Post-Partition Narratives

The Kashmir crisis was born out of the Partition of India in 1947, which marked the creation of two new sovereign nations—India and Pakistan—following their liberation from British colonial rule. As these countries rose from colonial subjugation, the remaining 'princely states' found themselves at a pivotal junction.⁴ Their options were to align with either India or Pakistan or seek their independent path. Maharaja Hari Singh, the ruler of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, initially sought independence. However, he dramatically altered this trajectory after being faced with a ‘tribal invasion’ and signed the Instrument of Accession, accepting the dominion of India. This monumental decision heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, sparking the first Indo-Pak war and setting the enduring course of the conflict.⁵ Being the overarching discourse often used to summarize the events leading up to the onset of the conflict,

¹Buzan, B. (1983). *People, States and Fear: The National Security Problem in International Relations*. University of North Carolina Press.

²Behera, N. C. (2016). The Kashmir conflict: Multiple fault lines. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 3(1), 41-63.

³(Interviewee Y, Personal Communication, 06, 23, 2023)

⁴Copland, I. (1991). The princely states, the Muslim League, and the partition of India in 1947. *The International History Review*, 13(1), 38-69. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07075332.1991.9640572>

⁵Mohan, A. (1992). The historical roots of the Kashmir conflict. *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, 15(4), 283-308. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10576109208435908>

there is little to no emphasis on how this history is shaped by those in power. Kashmir Valley's defiance against the Pakistani 'tribals' has been perfectly crafted with India's nationalist discourse, acting as a testament to the Indian secular nationalist project.⁶ This history has, however, repeatedly disregarded grave events such as the 1947 Jammu Massacre that lasted for up to two months, killing anywhere between twenty thousand to two hundred thousand Muslims, and half a million being forcefully displaced.⁷ The conspicuous absence of these events in national history, the underestimation of loss of life, and the perpetuation of a single story demand introspection. Raising a pertinent question, this historical oversight forces us to examine why some forms of violence are considered influential enough to start cross-border conflicts. In contrast, others are reduced to inconsequential and distant occurrences in history. More importantly, it compels us to try to unweave history from a well-crafted state-centric perspective as it invariably magnifies violence that aligns with national interest while erasing events that tarnish the state's image.⁸

B. Voices in the Crossfire: Community Narratives and State Militarization

Moving beyond the dominance of the state-centric narratives of this conflict, it is imperative to acknowledge the experiences of being caught between a cross-fire surrounding state authority, security, and sovereignty.⁹ Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir possess diverse internal complexities in terms of ethnicities, religions, languages, and cultures. The intricate mosaic of

⁶Rashid, I. (2020). Theatrics of a 'Violent State' or 'State of Violence': Mapping histories and memories of partition in Jammu and Kashmir. *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies*, 43(2), 215-231. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856401.2020.1712774>

⁷The forgotten massacre that ignited the Kashmir dispute. (2017, November 6). Al Jazeera. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/11/6/the-forgotten-massacre-that-ignited-the-kashmir-dispute>

⁸ Anderson, Benedict. "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism." Verso, 1983.

⁹Sarvesh, T. (2021). Multilayered consequences in a turmoil zone: A study of lived experiences of women in Jammu and Kashmir. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 56(8), 1999–2013. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00219096211000373>

the region is formed by communities such as the Kashmiris, Gujjars, Bakarwals, Paharis, and Dogras.¹⁰ This distinct communal affiliation also leads to political alliances that heavily characterize the internal political landscape of the region. The Kashmir valley has been historically seen as the site of political assertion, often portrayed as demanding ‘Azaadi’ (freedom) from India. This freedom has, however, changed in meaning over the course of the conflict, becoming more so a sense of liberation from the stationed Indian armed forces in Kashmir.¹¹ ¹² On the other hand, the Gujjar and Dogra communities of Jammu have often expressed sentiments of having a closer affiliation with India provided that they can still seek regional autonomy.¹³ Additionally, it is harder to get a cohesive sense of the sentiments of the Pakistan-administered side, including inhabitants of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) due to the ever-changing demographic of the region. Having said that, the recent discourse has highlighted that these groups grapple with their political identities in various ways – some by seeking independence while others asking for recognition of their basic constitutional rights.¹⁴ This proves that the Kashmir conflict is far from a monolithic struggle, and these communal voices, often forgotten due to the overarching rhetoric of state sovereignty, elucidate the lived experience of an otherwise underrepresented history.

Additionally, being one of the most highly armed conflict zones in the world, the Kashmir valley experiences daily excessive militarization, often legitimized using special legal frameworks

¹⁰European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS). (2017, November). Political divisions of the divided State of Jammu & Kashmir. European Foundation for South Asian Studies (EFSAS).

<https://www.efsas.org/publications/study-papers/political-divisions-of-the-divided-state-of-jammu-and-kashmir/>

¹¹(Interviewee X, Personal Communication, 06, 20, 2023)

¹²Butt, A. T., & Majeed, G. (2020). A view on the issue of occupied Kashmir (2008-2018): Disputed territory. *Journal for Research Scholars*, 57(3), 237.

¹³(Interviewee Y, Personal Communication, 06, 23, 2023)

¹⁴Varshney, A. (1991). India, Pakistan, and Kashmir: Antinomies of nationalism. *Asian Survey*, 31(11), 997-1019. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2645304>

enforced by the government.¹⁵ Apart from countless instances of human rights abuses, police brutality, and identity politics, such a dominant military establishment raises many essential questions about the impact of an entrenched state-centric narrative. The manifestation of this facilitates the systematic exclusion of communities that are considered a ‘threat to national security’ hence questioning their national alliances, loyalties, and inclinations – often ruling them as ‘untrustworthy’.¹⁶ This skepticism invariably forces an ‘ingroup versus outgroup’ dynamic, prompting that surveillance and control rank higher in priority than the liberty of the Kashmiris. As stated by Interviewee X, most of the military personnel stationed in the Kashmir valley are either from the BSF or the CRPF and come from Indian states that have drastically different norms and cultures than Kashmir. It is worth noting that according to the 2011 census data, Jammu and Kashmir has the highest percentage of Muslim population in mainland India, naturally bringing about its differences in culture, traditions, and practices.¹⁷ Noted by the interviewee, these army troops often tend to accentuate the ‘ingroup vs. outgroup’ dynamic causing mistreatment, fear, and a greater sense of isolation.¹⁸ This is backed by the infamous Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) that authorizes armed forces to exercise extraordinary power in ‘disturbed areas’ under the pretense of maintaining public order and security. This has often resulted in unwarranted arrests, otherwise illegal shootouts, and mass murder – adding to the physical and mental erasure experienced by the people of Kashmir.¹⁹ This framework,

¹⁵Bhattacharyya, R. (2018). Living with Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) as everyday life. *GeoJournal*, 83, 31–48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-016-9752-9>

¹⁶Duschinski, H. (2009). Destiny effects: Militarization, state power, and punitive containment in Kashmir Valley. *Anthropological Quarterly*, 82(3), 691–717. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20638657>

¹⁷Muslim Population by State - Census 2011. (n.d.). [Census2011.co.in](https://www.census2011.co.in). Retrieved August 20, 2023, from <https://www.census2011.co.in/data/religion/2-muslims.html>

¹⁸(Interviewee X, Personal Communication, 06, 20,, 2023)

¹⁹Bhattacharyya, R. (2018). Living with Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) as everyday life. *GeoJournal*, 83, 31–48. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-016-9752-9>

therefore, not only grants unchecked authority to the military but also shields them from myriad abuses of power that would otherwise be considered illegal. In light of this, it becomes essential to move beyond a state-centric narrative that spreads political jargon such as ‘maintaining order’ and ‘minimizing threat’, hiding underlying layers of subjugation, surveillance, and control.

Development and the Facade of State Hegemony

Often perceived as a force for catalyzing socioeconomic shifts and uplifting marginalized communities, development can often diverge from these virtues, especially in territorially contested regions. This can seem as an inherent manifestation of reinstating the power of the state, furthering national interests, and promoting dependent local economies.²⁰ In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, there have been numerous development projects that, on the surface, seem like promising steps toward the territory’s prosperity. However, often it is only after their implementation that the true objectives of broader national integration are revealed.

A. The Mirage of Integration: Unpacking Aftermath of Article 370 Abrogation

In a crisis as politicized as Jammu and Kashmir, even seemingly benign endogenous tend to carry underlying political motives. This holds true, especially since the abrogation of Article 370 – a step deemed necessary for the integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country for what was advertised as ‘regional development’. Article 370 had previously allowed the state to have semi-autonomous provisions such as an independent constitution, state flag, and internal

²⁰Whann, C. (1992). James Ferguson: The anti-politics machine: 'Development,' depoliticization, and bureaucratic power in Lesotho [Review of the book *The anti-politics machine: 'Development,' depoliticization and bureaucratic power in Lesotho*, by J. Ferguson]. *Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies*, 55(1), 191-192. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0041977X00003426>

administration along with state-formulated property laws.²¹ These laws granted permanent residents of the state the ability to purchase land, seek government employment, vote, and cast elections under Article 35A, while residents from other parts of India could not.²² The 2019 abrogation marked the most significant development in the Kashmir crisis since the last Indo-Pak war in 1999, leading to enhanced security measures and heavy military deployment. The newly assigned union territory observed curfew-like situations for nearly 7 months with an internet ban, communications blackout, detainment of regional politicians, and implementation of Section 144 of the Criminal Procedure Code – restricting assembly of individuals greater than four.²³ Numerous critics have deemed this act unconstitutional since Jammu and Kashmir's constitution holds an inviolable place in India's federal structure according to the Instrument of Accession signed in 1947, annulling its unilateral alteration.²⁴ Interestingly, economic development in the region has also seemed to dwindle since the abrogation due to blackouts and blockades. Accounting for losses of upwards of INR 142.95 billion over the span of 5 months, the central government's aim of spurring economic development can be deemed futile.²⁵ This kind of political underachievement would previously get pinned on Jammu and Kashmir's inadequate

²¹BBC News. (2019, August 5). Article 370: India strips disputed Kashmir of special status. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-49231619>

²²Bhadoriya, R. S. (2016, December 4). Origin of Jammu and Kashmir: Analysis of Article 370 in present scenario. LexHindustan. Archived from the original on October 12, 2017. Retrieved March 22, 2017, from <https://web.archive.org/web/20171012042000/http://lexhindustan.com/%E2%80%8Borigin-of-jammu-nd-kashmir-a-nalysis-of-article-370-in-present-scenario/>

²³Rather, T. A., Wani, G. M., & Suhrawardy, B. M. (2020). Abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India: Socio-Economic and Political Implications on Jammu and Kashmir. *IJRAR: International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews*, 7(3), 501-517. <http://doi.org/10.1729/Journal.24153>. Retrieved from https://www.ijrar.org/viewfull.php?&p_id=IJRAR19L1820

²⁴Jamwal, A. B. (2019, August 14). An Existential Crisis for Jammu & Kashmir and Danger to India's Federal Structure. The Hindu Centre. Updated: January 2, 2020. Retrieved from <https://www.thehinducentre.com/the-arena/current-issues/article29048868.ece>

²⁵PTI. (2019, December 17). Kashmir economy suffered loss of Rs 17,878 cr in 4 months after Article 370 abrogation. The Indian Express. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/kashmir-economy-suffered-loss-four-months-after-article-370-abrogation-jk-6172096/>

regional management by the central government. However, since demoting the state to a union territory status, the center can no longer make this argument since the administration of the territory is entirely reliant on them. Additionally, the reasoning used by the government surrounding its decision for the abrogation was to revitalize Kashmir using increased private investment. This would occur by nullifying land laws that hinder non-residents from land ownership in the region. However, a more disconcerting trend is revealed upon a closer examination of the official statistics. Investments for the fiscal year 2021-22 barely reached a mere \$46 million, pointing out the stark contrast from not just the previous year but also the year before at \$102.8 million.²⁶ It's important to note that this decline isn't merely a byproduct of disruptions such as curfews and restrictions post-abrogation. In fact, it's intrinsically tied to changes introduced with the promise of spurring development, such as the revised land ownership laws.

B. Untapped Potential: Geoeconomics and the Hydroelectric Paradox

Another aspect of development in the region is one that overlooks compelling instances of economic gains and an overarching theme of 'geoeconomics'. This can be understood as states engaging in economic activities that do not solely lead them towards wealth accumulation but also provide access to a larger geo-strategic framework.²⁷ These frameworks gain even more value in territorial disputed regions as resource control often translates into arguments about control over the land itself. The nineteen hydroelectric projects in the valley, serve as an example of just this. The territory has immense potential for hydroelectric production, estimated to have a

²⁶Wani, M. (2023, February 4). Kashmir is bleeding. So is its economy. Al Jazeera. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2023/2/4/kashmir-is-bleeding-its-economy>

²⁷Shahzad, A. (2022). Geoeconomics: The New Geopolitics. *Policy Perspectives*, 19(2), 21–40. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/48734159>

capability of 20,000 MW. Despite this, Jammu and Kashmir has remained in an electricity crisis that severely contradicts their said capability. According to a report by a local news outlet, this development paradox has been caused by the electricity sector's unsustainable financial model. Confirming this, Interviewee Y stated that there are 6-7 hour power blackouts in the valley, closely followed by the district of Jammu. The news outlet has stated that the situation has now worsened since the government has opted to purchase less electricity from outside the union territory, creating a deficit of 250 MWs with demand being 1450 MWs and supply stopping at a mere 1200 MWs.²⁸ When one takes into account that Jammu and Kashmir has an untapped hydroelectric potential of approximately 20,000 MW, the current situation becomes all the more confounding. According to insights provided by Interviewee Y, a shift toward state-level administration of the hydroelectric sector could transform Jammu and Kashmir from a power-deficient region into a net exporter of electricity. This reframes the issue entirely: the current electricity shortages should not be understood merely as technical shortcomings, but rather as the outcomes of deliberate resource management—or lack thereof—in the context of complex geopolitical considerations. The funding and resource allocation strategies employed by the government further complicate this convoluted scenario. While the people of Jammu and Kashmir experience persistent power shortages, a significant portion of the electricity generated within the territory is being channeled to other Indian states. To be precise, the state-run Jammu Kashmir Power Development Corporation (JKSPDC) contributes 1211.96 MW from its portfolio of 21 power projects, whereas the National Hydro Power Corporation (NHPC) generates a

²⁸GK Editorial Desk. (2023, July 12). Worsening power scenario. Greater Kashmir. <https://www.greaterkashmir.com/todays-paper/editorial-page/worsening-power-scenario>

heftier 2,009 MW from seven projects.²⁹ These operational tactics raise salient questions about fair resource allocation and the ideological frameworks guiding these decisions, particularly in light of the stated objectives of achieving regional self-sufficiency and fostering local development.

Re-Employing Colonial Tactics for Nationalistic Agendas

Postcolonial studies often present a critical lens to understand colonial legacies that are persistently functional in the contemporary world. This highlights the interplay between historic colonialism and the consequent postcolonial nationalism, filled with intricacies that are way more elaborate than mere temporal transgressions. The tactics of colonial governance such as surveillance and control bear an eerie resemblance to the present-day nationalistic agendas emerging when examining legal frameworks. This is especially relevant in the case of Kashmir when understanding the aspect of settler colonialism and resource extraction.

A. Settler Colonialism: Re-engineering of Demographics and Culture

As earlier discussions in this paper have highlighted, the abrogation of Article 370 constitutes a pivotal shift in the territorial dynamics of Jammu and Kashmir. Although this policy change was originally framed as a developmental initiative for the region, subsequent scrutiny and real-life data have undermined this rationale, as argued in previous sections. Meanwhile, the theoretical framework of settler colonialism has earned scholarly attention as an alternative lens through which this act can be further broken down. This framework takes into account the primary

²⁹Dar, Z. A. (2023, January 13). Untapped hydropower potential is key to socio-economic development in J&K. JK Policy Institute. Retrieved from <https://www.jkpi.org/untapped-hydropower-potential-is-key-to-socioeconomic-development-in-jk/>

objectives of the ‘occupant’ to the ‘colonized territory’.³⁰ These often include exploiting legal frameworks not solely with the purpose of delegating resources but also regulating systemic violence and oppression violence.³¹ Not only does this ensure the fetishization and hence the occupation of land, but it also promotes a structural design that is appointed to replace existing populations with a new societal model.³² Adding to this, speculations of re-engineering the religious composition of Jammu and Kashmir have also been raised, with an emphasis on diluting the Muslim population and disintegrating the Kashmiri culture. Corroborating this, Interviewee Y clearly stated that the abrogation was an illegal action by the central government and the supreme court should have declared it unconstitutional. He added that this felt as if a direct attack on the Kashmiri culture as it protected their property rights and held a strong symbolic and emotional significance for the community, leaving them feeling shelterless. Furthermore, the BBC has described Article 35A as a way of protecting the state’s demographic character³³. This has been linked to an identity-based conflict in Kashmir as it is the largest Muslim-majority state in the country and its citizens have been suspicious of Hindu nationalist groups encouraging Hindus to migrate to the state.³⁴ Adding to this, there had been a rapid distribution of domicile (residence) certificates after the abrogation – over 25,000 certificates were issued in just a span of a month in 2020. Recently confirmed during the interview with

³⁰Kaul, N. (2019, August 13). Kashmir Is Under the Heel of India’s Colonialism. Foreign Policy. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/08/13/kashmir-is-under-the-heel-of-indias-colonialism/>

³¹Mushtaq, S., & Amin, M. (2021). 'We will memorise our home': Exploring settler colonialism as an interpretive framework for Kashmir. *Third World Quarterly*, 42(12), 3012-3029. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1984877>

³²*Title Unknown*. (2021). From Domicile to Dominion: India’s Settler Colonial Agenda in Kashmir. *Harvard Law Review*, 134(7), 2530.

URL:<https://harvardlawreview.org/print/vol-134/from-domicile-to-dominion-indias-settler-colonial-agenda-in-kashmir/>

³³BBC News. (2019, August 5). Article 35A: Why a special law on Kashmir is controversial. Contributions by Shujaat Bukhari (deceased). Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-40897522>

³⁴Mustafa, F. (2019, August 6). Explained: What are Articles 370 and 35A? The Indian Express. Retrieved from <https://indianexpress.com/article/explained/understanding-articles-370-35a-jammu-kashmir-indian-constitution-5610996/>

Interview X and an Indian media outlet this number has reached up to 4 million now.³⁵ Therefore this large-scale distribution of certificates is an indication of settler colonial tactic that is aimed at the elimination of indigenous culture and population composition. All these alterations to the pre-existing social framework of Jammu and Kashmir highlight the settlers' goal which is to legitimize control over the land by reshaping laws that kept them intact for decades. Therefore, it can be said that employing these measures extends beyond mere territorial control, aspiring to construct a way of life that ensures sustainable legal authority and conquest.

Conclusion

The biggest takeaway from this research is the recognition of the recurring misconstruction of this conflict through the singular lens of territorial conflict between India and Pakistan. With this in consideration, the aim of this research has been to uncover and reinstate truths that have often been overlooked and ignored under the guise of national sovereignty and security. As stated earlier, the Kashmir crisis is a deeply human issue with clashing aspirations and grievances of a population that unfortunately has been silenced since their suggestive independence after the colonial rule.

This paper critically engages with the militarization of daily life in the valley and the deployment of legal frameworks that establish systematic suppression and control. Further, the political landscape gets increasingly complicated due to the economic and developmental anomalies that the region faces. These paradoxes are formed due to the presentation of these policies as promises of growth while the empirical evidence presented underscores a contrasting reality

³⁵ Ganai, N. (2021, August 3). J&K Govt Issued 41.05 Lakh Domicile Certificates In Two Years. *The Outlook*. [URL:<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-jk-govt-issued-4105-lakh-domicile-certificates-in-two-years/390368>]

characterized by economic stagnation and decline. In the concluding section, the research uses the concepts of settler colonialism as an analytic framework that establishes links between altered property laws and population erasure. In summary, this research primarily advocates for a holistic and multidimensional analysis of the Kashmir conflict transcending the territorial dispute.

Ultimately, a comprehensive understanding is essential for catalyzing meaningful dialogue, shaping well-informed policy decisions, and fostering the possibility of a just and enduring resolution to one of the most longstanding conflicts in history.

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