

The Genesis of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir: Unraveling India's Stance and the Complex Status Quo

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Abstract—The Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir regions have historically been central to one of the most intricate territorial conflicts in South Asia. From India's perspective, the issue originates from historical assertions rooted in the 1947 Instrument of Accession, which conferred complete authority over Jammu and Kashmir to India. The unique characteristics of the region and Pakistan's formal authority over Gilgit-Baltistan, however, raise questions about this idea. Historian Ayesha Jalal contends that the Kashmir issue transcends mere geographical dispute; it is a result of incomplete decolonization. The region's strategic significance exacerbates its future complexities, as the international community remains polarized, with the UN advocating for a vote. As Pakistan seeks to assert its supremacy and India endeavors to fortify its legal claims, the current quo represents a precarious equilibrium of power, identity, and geopolitics. Concerns over self-determination and sovereignty have intensified due to ongoing processes that continue to impact regional and global order.

Keywords—Kashmir conflict, Gilgit-Baltistan, India-Pakistan relations, Instrument of Accession, UN resolutions, plebiscite, territorial dispute, decolonization, geopolitical tensions, sovereignty.

I. INTRODUCTION

The comprehension of historical narratives and geopolitical realities has slowly made the discourses in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir more central to South Asia. After the British Indian partition in 1947, the princely states found themselves embroiled in a patchwork of legal complications and a volley of national ambitions, producing perennial turmoil. The most prominent of these underlying issues would be centered on the evolution of India's policy on the matter which has remained both, placing value in acquiring land's monopoly his/her neighbours and accepting the nested identities of the local peoples. In addition, there have been socioeconomic effects which have piled on the existing problems in these areas where political apathy and military interference have both worked to maintain this precarious

equilibrium. This paper attempts to interpret the dynamics of the formation processes of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir in order to present vivid pictures of Indian strategies explaining the ways in which the past influences present relations including the never-ending struggle for self-definition and self-government against the background of constant conflict.

Overview of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir

Gilgit-Baltistan and areas administered by India Kashmir, situated at the northeastern limits of the Indian subcontinent, have always been a hotbed of international friction, being notorious for its rugged beauty and rich ethnic diversity. These lands were historically inhabited by many of the princely states and saw great structural transformations after India's independence in 1947. These lands are universally acknowledged as strategic borders as they bridge central Asia and South Asia which is why they are also coveted by many empires. The geographical advantages though appealing to the eye are not devoid of socio-political tension, a consequence aggravated by warfare and clashing ideologies. For this reason, the populations in question have had some retention and some loss of the structures of identity which strive toward containing cultural preference with cultural anxiety. As important as this is so does the need to appreciate the contemporary picture with regards to sentiment towards political order and national identity (Shah, [2022](#), 25).

Historical context of the region

The evolution of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir denotes an epoch infiltrated with cutting edge geopolitical endeavours and cross-cultural exchange. Historically, this subcontinent was the focal point of trade routes towards Central Asia, South Asia, and the Middle East, and hence the reason as to why various cultural practices evolved here. Subsequently, various empires emerged including the Mauryas and the Mughals who influenced the local

administration and society laying the foundation for conflict resolution and disputes over land. However, the British rule in the late nineteenth century changed all that, as the colonial 'order' was ushered in, with the imposition of Western forms of governance in British India but with colonial 'instigations' amongst the peoples of the regions. In 1947, as independence beckoned, the effects of colonialism and absence of mere legal clauses on princely states set the stage for the endless territorial challenges that define India's position on this endless status quo today (Lone, [2018](#), 22).

Importance of studying India's stance

Analyzing the reasons behind India's stand regarding the Kashmir conflict, is significant in understanding the geopolitics of the area. Considering the position of India on the Kashmir issue, there are national interests but there is also the reconstruction and production of the discourse on Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. This is especially pertinent when speaking of Pakistan's administrative policies and the social development policies instituted in Gilgit-Baltistan after the 2009 empowerment order that aimed to interact with the concept of governance and development (Ali, [2022](#), 10). These are developments embedded within and shaped by India's historical claims and projection and current policies of the Indian state towards the region, all of which are deeply rooted in India's historical narrative; hence, there is some level of interrelationship that requires analysis. This research underscores the persistent geopolitical tension in Gilgit-Baltistan, notably over Pakistan's administrative claims and India's corresponding position. Therefore, exploring the position of India helps in expounding the delicate equilibrium of power supply and its possible outcomes, be it peace or further deterioration of the status-quo (Shah, [2022](#), 25).

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

Looking into the historical and political aspects of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir also calls for looking into certain interrelated purposes. First of all, the research is trying to clarify such issues as what has been the dynamics of the region's governance in particular after the promulgation of the Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment Order in 2009 which commenced huge reforms in the country. Such a studying also sets many of the reforms in their possible influences on the local governance and

politics and how far they have swayed people into active democracy. Moreover, the research attempts to examine the issues of citizenship education in this phenomenon especially the concept of citizenship from the perspectives of teachers and what it means in terms of identity and belonging in a politically contentious situation. These objectives, however, interrelate and are likely to lead to an integrative understanding of the interplay of narrative, governance, and citizenship for the political spaces of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir.

III. METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

This research takes a multidisciplinary approach combining qualitative research with outstanding theoretical analysis on the historical and geopolitical context of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. Primary sources such as government documents, diplomatic letters and other historical documents formulate a basic understanding of India's policy, while other literature presents various views on the standing of the said region. Such an approach is aimed, in the first place, at the impact of conventional wisdoms usually dominated by realist paradigms and secondly, it permits critical assessments of issues of identity and security as presented by feminist and postcolonial theories. These frameworks provide the space for an interrogation of militarism, how it is practiced by states and how it reflects in their foreign policies. In addition, the incorporation of findings from these studies improves this work by situating the regional issues within bigger political contexts. The overarching objective in the end is to offer new, complementary views towards national identity furthering conflict studies in South Asian geopolitics.

Structure of the Paper

Understanding the interrelationships of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir requires this in-depth exemplification that cuts across the historical, political and geopolitical divides. At first, the paper gives a rough historical outline of the area, mostly concerning colonialism, its two partition effects in 1947, and the political conflict present today. Subsequently and further, the papers proceed with how India's policies and government or other sub-units aid the country in attaining security as well as a sense of self in the larger context of south Asia. The confrontation of the policy of India, with all its socialist pretensions. It becomes clear from the works that these relationships are not isolated but are part of

the ever-growing indebtedness of one state to another, one identity to another many offensive international relations are nested in Indo-Pak and Indo-Chinese relationships as elucidated in the foreign policy of the military-theorists do lunch (Bastos, [2021](#), 67). Lastly, the writing aspires to bring clarity to the limited understanding of the status-quo. Its broad aims are therefore to develop an understanding of the internal dynamics of regional politics.

Significance of the topic in contemporary geopolitics Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir regions are also quite hotly debated as they clasp the attention of contemporary geopolitics and impact on the security of states and their international relations. The enduring disputes over these territories expose underlying tensions that are crucial for understanding South Asia's security dynamics. Geopolitics of the region becomes even more complex with factors such as issues of national identity and militarism inherent in the region's politics- especially in how Pakistan has seen its role in the world and its relations with countries like India and China (Bastos, [2021](#), 68). It is even more complex by the political aspirations of the people living on these regions who want more self-rule and respect (Tariq, [2020](#), 17). Thus, it is crucial to separate historical complaints from the current affairs of the state so as to understand relations between states in the Indian subcontinent and the politics of more powerful countries trying to exert control over the region in focus as it is, today.

Historical Background of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir

Historical boundary disputes in South Asian sub-continent are regarded to have germinated in 1947, around the divide of British India which was fraught with various tension within and outside the country. This division did not only bring about the formation of two separate countries in India and Pakistan but also the basis for the long lasting struggle over this historically and strategically important territory of Kashmir. The region of Gilgit Baltistan has drawn attention as being at the intersection of these different national narratives. It occupied not less important role in the Empire as a territorial buffer and fostered lesser integration of its politics. Kashmir Conundrum, which arises from the aftermath of Jammu and Kashmir state amalgamations with India, has had debris of wars, where the clash of international competitors, mainly China and India, over its geographical merits. This is the reason people

understand that, the history of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir has always been intertwined with the rest of the world, through concepts like colonialism, and hence, looking for a solution will be rather complicated (Khan, [2021](#), 34).

Pre-Colonial Dynamics of the Region

Before the impact of colonialism whose main instrumental is imperialism, people's historical movements in the history of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir are still very much active and contain great interaction and Cultural amalgamation which is unfortunately eclipsed by current differences. There existed numerous principalities within the region, which had incorporated the local elements and the elements of the neighbouring states and thus formed distinct identities that repelled assimilation. This cultural diversity explains the regions importance & relevance, making several powers throughout history, struggle to gain control over its rich agricultural lands and crucial trade routes. Undoubtedly, the other colonial legacies also did overstay their welcome and in-depth affected development as in the case of British cross border hostility boundaries separating unreconciled ethnic groups. Vulnerable consideration, however, is that despite the assertion that integration Kashmir of Gilgit-Baltistan was a consequence of colonial imposition, it is of critical importance. This article posits that such geographical categorization reinforces the misconception that outside political dominations shapes Gilgit-Baltistan. Therefore, rumours of territorial anxiety in Pakistan's northern borders of Gilgit-Baltistan make such political cartographies much difficult. In other, such geographical categorization will reinforce the deep-seated misconceptions that outside political dominations shape Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Legacy of British Colonialism

History always shows that British colonialism had one way or another forced geographical, political and social impacts in the Indian Subcontinent, more notably in Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan. The establishment of the colonial rule changed the systems of native governing and started developmental activities that commenced interethnic disputes. It was this change of local order that brought up contrasting claims and ambitions; most visible during social and political changes that happened from the 1940's to the extensive migration of Kashmiri Pandits that happened in 1990 where the

conflict of class and identity emerged (Kaul, [2024](#), 23). In addition, the administrative boundaries created by the colonisers introduced religious and ethnic cleavages which worsened in the postcolonial era and this created conditions for extremism (Bukhari, [2022](#), 7). At the very bottom, it must be emphasized that without deeper knowledge of the British colonialist paradigm it is impossible to decipher the very complicated status quo which persists in these regions up to present time.

The Partition of India and its Consequences

Extensive ramifications were observed regarding communal relationships within the Indian subcontinent political panorama due to the partition of the Indian region in the year 1947 which was more than a mere boundary demarcation. The formation of Pakistan as an independent state, too, was a product of some identity-security consideration formed in a most trying period of British colonization and sectarian violence. This in turn led to the reflective development of the countries, further to the Indian Pakistani dispute, centered around the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir whereby notions of nationalism and self-rule for the Kashmiri people were critical (Lone, [2009](#), 5).

Seemingly, partition also bolstered the militarized nature of Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly on decision making by the military as an institution, in this case held a majority of such power and more often than not, resorted to national security as a basis for their aggression to India. It follows that today and many more years after the partition, the geographical and historical changes and their determinants will form the relations between India and Pakistan and the territorial disputes including Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Princely States and their Significance

The princely states depending upon the multifaceted Colonial India were important. The princely states served as the buttons for aggravating geopolitical conflicts. The semi-auto moused regions and the rise of the nations of Indian and Pakistan adjusted the territory in such a way that contributed to border clashes with the most troublesome being Jammu and Kashmir. The Kashmir conflict has demonstrated that these princely states mostly after the colonial era became theatre of battles for national consciousness and equality which was characterized by an emerge of hostility between India and Pakistan after their

partition in 1947. In real terms, there may not have been any change of boundaries but there was an expression of desire to have territories in line with international acts- out wars as engaged between India and Pakistan and the frequent visits and declarations in the UN argue the deepest fooling systems on statehood and legitimacy which exists (Khan, [2021](#), 72). The importance of princely states though based in the past has its consequences on the present and even to the future in as far as togetherness and peace are concerned. These borders have previously modified how sovereignty and self-governance are viewed in contemporary South Asia.

Geopolitical Shifts after the First Kashmir War

The issues related to the territorial changes that ensued after the first Indo-Pakistani war of 1947-1948 laid a very important foundation to the present disputes arising from the war over Jammu and Kashmir. This war, which was characterized by battles and politics, created a very tense situation which has survived for many years. India's military action was triggered by Pakistan's invasion of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, resulting in a pernicious change in the territory's political geography, prone to violent conflict this was the first of many boundaries that emerged in Kashmir following the dislocation of authority. This demarcation also illustrated the consequences of territorial conflicts on interaction and power relations in the south Asian region, integrating the supranational actors that intervened in the conflict due to the geostrategic benefits it offered to them (Ishfaq and Gul [2021](#), 33-44). Thus, how this war continues to haunt the parties involved is evident from the fact that it produces a bargaining range and triggers conflict in the future, furthering the understanding of the regional structure and the relations within this tempestuous environment.

The Position of global actors in the region

One observes that the competition of international relations in the area is greatly determined by the prevailing external interests. We find that various styles of foreign policy such as public diplomacy and geopolitical strategies of the USA or China play a crucial role in the foreign policy of Pakistan and India. It has been historically noted that due to tension with India, Pakistan often viewed security in alliance with other countries, as a result today, the US and China portray sources of influence, with either aggravating the situations on the ground as they view

them through the military and identity politics in Pakistan. Furthermore, the assertive Hindu nationalism observed in India especially of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has led to increasing social discrimination of Muslims which has raised concern from other states, showing how foreign powers occupy this social space. Hence, the international players are not limited to the provision of only assistance that is why it actively incorporates both domestic discourses and distribution of territorial power-equilibrium in Gilgit- Baltistan and Kashmir; thus explaining the necessity of their interceding in the stability of the region.

Transformation of local governance and local belonging in the society

The intricate nexus of governance and identity evident in Gilgit-Baltistan has dramatically altered particularly after the 2009 Gilgit-Baltistan Empowerment Order that sought to improve regional self-rule and systems. This landmark order not only set out provisions for the running of democracy including an executive popularly known as the Chief Minister and an assembly of elected representatives but also tried to change the political map of the region by reducing red-tapism that has been known to neglect local views and identities (Ali, [2023](#),23) Such reforms have however emerged within a rather complex story where all the time Pakistani leadership has sought its geopolitical ambitions more than the real democratic ambition, and it is no different in how Gilgit Baltistan has always been rendered powerless in the national politics (Shah, [2022](#), 32). Hence the fact that there has been an evolution towards the improvement of regional self rule does not excuse the fact that identity construction remains a chimera in a political environment tethered to the external forces. In the end, the narrative of Gilgit-Baltistan represents a fragile coexistence of governance structures so newly emergent and the old persistent narrative of identity crisis brought about by history and modernity.

India's Political and Strategic Interests

South Asian politics is quite intricate such that there is a need for India to propagate political and strategic interests in the region. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is construction of great importance for India, not only because of its relations with Pakistan (which India views as an infringement upon its territorial integrity) but also because it runs through the disputed region of Gilgit-Baltistan

(Akhtar, [2023](#), 28–38). It was CPEC not only extends the Chinese footprint in Pakistan, it will also dilute geostrategic influence of India in that region. What makes this concern even more serious is the fact that there are more unity building dimensions of that stronger SinoPak relation, which would undermine India's leadership position in South Asia. Furthermore, Indian stance on Pakistan Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, especially Gilgit-Baltistan, is more than temporal political concern as it is linked to complicated historical past. By engaging critically with this region, India hopes to make a claim while taking advantage of the historical politics that have led to the territorial wrangling in the region for the longest time (Shah, [2022](#), 56).

India's historical claims over Kashmir

It is evident that there is a political history of Kashmir which is an important component of the post-colonial consciousness of India and territorial issues. Ever since the two nations were partitioned, the territorial issues of this region especially the status has remained a matter of nationalist emotions, hence the varied perspectives of sovereignty. Such historical perspectives are found in the Instrument of Accession reposed in Maharaja Hari Singh in 1947 which, legalized the act of Indian dominance over Kashmir as a destiny covenant. Nevertheless, concerns arise from the long-term effects of article 370, which, despite being drafted in order to incite autonomy, has created contradictions of unjust perceptions in Jammu and Kashmir (Hoskote, [2017](#), 813–835). With the evolution of the political narrative of the region, there are new identities emerging in Gilgit-Baltistan that are proving fidelity to the Kashmir problem obsolete and more so suggesting withdrawal from the once shared collective identity of the Kashmir conflict (Dad, [2016](#),43). This complexity is also an illustration of the fact that as India continues to pursue historical aspirations, it is necessary to take a proper account of the regional dimensions that exist in today's world.

The significance of Gilgit-Baltistan in India's security strategy

Perhaps more than ever, the contribution of Gilgit-Baltistan to the security calculations of India should be appreciated given the increasing geopolitical tensions in South Asia. Given its location, this region actually acts as a frontline towards the menace posed by countries such as Pakistan and China, who have directional aspirations in the region. Indian

government argues that further penetration of its influence in Gilgit-Baltistan is defensive in nature and meant to protect the country from aggressor countries. Also, the importance of the region increases, as it is near to the crucial supply routes used in military logistics and regional movement. The problem is that enhancement of the defense capability by the Indian state would make it impossible to relinquish any claims over Gilgit-Baltistan, lest hostile policies from Pakistan be satisfied in that region weakening order in that part of the world. As a result, the retention and enhancement of India's interests in Gilgit-Baltistan relates to a significant strategic aspect of the Indian state, thus underscoring the paradox of territory and security in the state's policy (Cohen, [2011](#), 45).

The Political Economy of Regional Interests

The reciprocal relations of socioeconomic interests in the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir are of significance as far as geopolitics is concerned. As the region seeks to address the issues of colonialism and the challenge of territorial boundaries, economic benefits dictate the response of other actors on the region. For example, the management of Gilgit-Baltistan by Pakistan, especially because of the pathways that are resourceful is not outside her overall international portrait that has to do with one of the bilateral relations, her strategic partnership with China as outlined in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. In addition to that, the revolving door of ambiguity regarding Gilgit-Baltistan's provincial status, not only marginalise the common people of the area but also makes the local players to clamour for economic justice and visibility. This is how status quo works and perhaps pushes us all to rethink the relationships between the economy and the ideas of security and identity in the context of South Asia and particularly how such links have been framed and understood historically in the context of militia exercise of policy options that relate to regional identity of South Asia.

India's Diplomatic Posture in South Asian Triangular Relations

India's relations with Pakistan as well as with China are shaped not only by historical influences but also by stakeholder interests in the region. India's image of Pakistan as its main foe, is heavily influenced by the ongoing territorial spate over Kashmir, as well as the latter's support of separatist groups within that region. However, India finds even more threats to the

geographical shape of India and its hegemonic position in the region in the growing engagement of Pakistan in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. More so, India strategists fear the increasing military posture of both Pakistan and China in South Asia, most particularly, the introduction of tactical nuclear weapons and asymmetric warfare strategies (Khan, [2021](#), 22). This dangerous triangle of relations, it seems, requires India to speak loudly and often but develop adequate defenses to protect the country's interests. In essence, the nature of these diplomatic relationships also continues to be the defining factor influencing the overall security balance in South Asia.

Explaining India's Position through the Lens of Nationalism

The relationship of Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan has also been deeply affected by the rise of nationalism in India, especially with regard to the policies adopted by the Indian states in relation to the independence movements in the regions. This particular nationalism has been a double-edged sword since on the one hand; it brought people of India together whereas on the other hand, it exclusivised the other regional identities including the people of Kashmir. Some Ancillary Affiliated Modules supplying sources: K that reinforce Dwivedi's thesis and reflect the political culture of Kashmir constituency are that citizens of Kashmiras exponents of nationalism only face persecution and never bring democracy and political stability to the region. There is also the peculiar situation that many states and international organizations have created a very compelling area of illiberality, particularly towards America, that rarely gets addressed or taken into consideration when looking at historical imperialism. As a result, India has remained more than willing to assert full sovereignty over Jammu and Kashmir with little consideration of the challenges of the region and the identity and politics of Kashmir.

The domestic political implications of the Kashmir issue in India

The Kashmir issue undoubtedly features in the internal politics of India where it derives mobilization and construction over politics and identity of the nation. Due to this continued contestation over the territory, the Indian authorities have been forced to employ a hard handed strategy which has included infringing on certain democratic liberties that draws

criticism from various quarters including the civil society, and the political dissidents. In the case of Gilgit Baltistan, this has been articulated as the desire for constitutionalism and the demand for the aggrieved populations to be granted a place to articulate their grievances. Moreover, as seen in their exploration of citizenship conceptualized in education resources in Gilgit Baltistan, in the context of Kashmir there are tensions and discourses associated to the high levels of citizenship educating that are governance related (Rozenberg, [2015](#), 62). This situation not only demonstrates the inadequacies of the country's discourses about identity and belonging, but it also indicates internal dissatisfaction and the emergence of reformist movements in the polity.

India avoid casting itself in the role of international mediator

The complexities and nuances of India's foreign relations have progressively turned the country into an international mediator and this is notably in relation to South Asian disputes. Such an approach is historical plus strategic in nature and forms the country's conception of national sovereignty and regional order. In this case, New Delhi, though careful, demonstrates a level of belligerence and generally insists on countries discussing roots of their conflicts rather than international assistance, presumably because of its desire to control such volatile matters as Kashmir. The need for a third party to come in is largely absent since India's nationalistic attitude regards it as a threat to its independence and these conflicts with Pakistan. How tactical shifts and subordination to growing external forces can offer alternative peacekeeping solutions that India has reserved before remains murky. Such a shift, however, poses questions as to what changes it can create in the long-standing conflicts in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir (Akhtar, [2023](#), 28).

The Importance of International Law and Human Rights

Against this background is the context of the sociocultural and Geopolitical environment of GilgitBaltistan and Kashmir where International Law and Human Rights country situation demands respect. The Indian Partition history grievance has continued to mark the region as one embroiled in a conflict where the local population's desires often override the States. Such a concern level as Empirical evidence suggests, there are more human rights

violations allegations including those relating to the derogation of individual rights that, as is the case with the horrible human rights abuses during religious and ethnical conflicts of the regions (Tariq, [2020](#), 65). Also, legal guarantees of the historic justice tend to strengthen the culture of silencing oppression instead of preventing it. Most importantly, international law as it concerns the rights of all individuals levels violation of such rights by any organization has been the only means of answering all grievances with no crimes repeated in geographical regions.

The Legal regimes that are related to territorial conflicts

Territorial disputes usually require the application of these several legal frameworks, which presuppose, quite rightly, the existence of such frameworks in order to resolve disputes that are prompted by the existence of two or more nations claiming the same territory. It is worth mentioning though, on a broader context, the issue of Kashmir illustrates the challenges of applying such normative legal principles more so the Western-oriented turn considering the peculiar history and politics of the region. Since that most controversial joining of Jammu and Kashmir into India last 1947, the concept of self-determination and the practice of other international legal rules have been raised occasionally by both India and Pakistan in support their stand. The international community has witnessed through the United Nations Security Council the passing of several calls seeking to address the Kashmir conflict and pointing toward the need for dialogue between the conflicting sides. However, the fact that these resolutions cannot be complied to by the parties concerned demonstrates a universal phenomenon of territorial disputes whereby legal principles are set aside in favor of political self-interest which elongates conflicts such as in Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir that are at the core of national identity and security where the two nexus cannot be delinked policy on Gilgit Baltistan.

Kashmir and the United Nations Resolutions

Focused meetings and talks have always raised the problem of Kashmir, an area claimed and controlled by both India and Pakistan with multiple United Nations resolutions trying to smooth the disputes. The first resolution passed in the United Nations in the year 1948 seeks to know the desire of the people of Kashmir and, thus calls for a plebiscite. Nevertheless this resolution has been a hard nut to

crack owing to the political malpractice surrounding the plebiscite caused by the unique history of the area as pointed out in Gilgit-Baltistan Reforms. The persistence of this territorial disputativeness defect has also contributed significantly to the deterioration of political order within the region which in turn inflates stresses emanating from the region to outside of South Asia. Also, movements for autonomy in such peripheral regions as Gilgit-Baltistan are emerging out of these conflicts, attempting the formation of governance systems that might evolve into wider self-rule systems, as discussed in policy on Gilgit-Baltistan. Therefore, my point is that the resolutions of the United Nations with respect to Kashmir and its peoples' aspirations and capabilities of governance of the affected regions must be seen within this context.

The Abuse of Human Rights in the region

The territorial integrity and the political factors in the region have all contributed to the widespread occurrence of abuses of human rights in areas such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan's occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan, for instance, has always been declared due to its potential for economic growth as in the case of the China-Pakistan economic corridor, yet at the same time it has resulted in the repressive nature towards the local voices and ambitions. And also in such instances the imposition of such government structures by Pakistan into these territories has shamed any ideals of democracy as such citizens do not have much options and means of political representation or dialogue. As two nations now inextricably clashing over territorial entitlements, there is a moral issue that both of them need to address to the people who live on such pieces of land that the war is being fought over, that is unadulterated human rights, not compromised by the desire and fight for territories, act of sovereignty.

India Polices Strategies against the International Law Influences

It cannot be overemphasized that the Role of International Law in the Policy of India regarding Jammu and Kashmir has marked a significant impact, historical as well as geopolitical. India's policies have allowed it to play these strategic factors through a combination of laws and dynamics of the region as well as advocating quite vigorously for her claims. In particular, this is so pilot a fact given the changing nature of international norms on issues such as self-

determination or integration that have become a weak point for the different parties in regard to the Kashmir dispute.

As a result, the instruments of India's policy making have long been targeted at that very aspect: the isolation of foreign influence and international law, asserting that the internal sovereignty over the said territory must prevail. But, as the history of Gilgit-Baltistan illustrates administrative rule of Pakistan under the cover of law, raises a critical issue of accusation and perhaps action against

India for its practice on 'democratic' governance and its status as the reign of power by the world. In the same vein, the post September 2001 political forces, which shifted the Indian paradigm toward the regional super power, resulted into an expansionist posture that not only makes the Kashmir issue more complex but also raises questions to the compliance of international law. So, the very careful reconciliation of legal norms and the interests of the nation state is the key in making sense of Indian approach towards this part of the world.

The Role of NGOs and Human Rights Organizations Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and human rights organizations endeavor to represent the rights of victims within the convoluted geopolitical layout of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. These agencies function both as observers who report and record human rights violations, sadistic actions and abuses, as well as campaigners for various changes to be made and some actions be brought out to the international community. It sheds light on what many governments will not readily say – the various warring aspects of the conflict and compels the world to be sympathetic and listen to local advocates who are mostly unheard. In addition to this, lobbying, NGOs document cases of human rights violations which make it possible to influence the issues of politics in the country and other states and to bring pressure on the authorities to honor human rights. The role of many of these organisations is crucial in the sense of promoting accountability and initiating discussion regardless of the impediments posed by the authorities and the historical and more recent complaints from the people of the region (Informa UK Limited, [2021](#), 112).

Domestic Public Opinion and the Status Quo

It is becoming clearer that such changes bring something more than just a reversal of the status in regional hot spots like Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. There has been more action by sub-national groups that places local narratives within the international arena and balances action with the role of affecting the domestic policy agenda. The educational policies on the region as highlighted in the recent studies have been used to perpetuate political 'constructive' ignorance as to how the local population enjoys nationhood. In addition, the focus on empowerment after 2009 also including donor's institutional reform dynamics has been analyzed placing and motivating the issue of self-determination affecting the issue discursive policy promoting local inclusion within the governance framework. Clearly, as the world stands, foreign perceptions have a tendency to either help in maintaining the existing political structures or they promote radical changes which have to be balanced in real time by the policy makers.

The Impact of International Law on Regional Security

Many things are verifiable and cross national boundaries, and the source of such an influence is the cumulated international law wove up by various treaties. This is especially true for conflict zones such as Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. The '*Tillinghast Treaty*' is a legal tool that can be employed to settle territorial disagreements, and is weighted especially toward the review of previously reached agreements. For example, the historical context of the administrative history of Gilgit-Baltistan also unveils why international law determines the power relationships in the region, in that it is used to justify claims over the elongated dissensions as brought forth by the governance systems of GB. At the same time, in relation to the status of Kashmir being the context of the study, the questions of sovereignty in this politically volatile twin policed by the state of India are inflamed by Indian expansionism that appears very little regard for international law and scholarly opinion, thereby fuelling instability in South Asia. Therefore, a great deal of international law is expected in addressing the vigorous political angles that require political-legal dialogues that can encourage stability in the region.

The current stalemate pertaining to the issue of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir results from historical complexities as well as recent visible conflicts, which

predict doom for any prospects of progress in the foreseeable future. Even while addressing the complicated national questions in the case of Pakistani establishment self-determination and territorial integrity remain at odds. Traditionally, the Indian experts argued that separatists within Pakistan were being supported by India. Such circumstances continue to convict Pakistan in the development of regional defense mechanisms against real or imaginary Indian threats. At the same time, the Ukrainian experience provides food for thought about the possible scenarios of Kashmir development, where both local and external pressures led to identity compromises hampering stability. It appears then that the problems engendered by colonial rule which the Kashmir situation exemplifies will not go away rather they will create barriers to peace and amicable coexistence. There is therefore a great risk that issues may continue to find successive cycles of violence avoiding in any way for peace building efforts and seriously jeopardizing hopes for successful resolution of conflict in the indefinitely blocking Kashmir and Gilgit Baltistan disputes.

The Current Political Situation in Kashmir

The multifaceted political setup in Kashmir is still affected by past injustices as well as current geopolitical concerns. Since the division of British India in 1947, this region has served as an area of contention and conflict within India and with Pakistan. The inclusion of the complaint particularly Clause issa' led to the status of Jammu and Kashmir before its abrogation on August 5, 2019 which raised questions regarding statehood and governance in the region. However, nothing has pointed out the fact that both countries are jostling for control such that the two stories add to an already militarised and brutal human rights atmosphere. Further, the people's need to seek self-determination through the political process often resembles requirements of these countries reinforcing the idea of the complex transitions' countries. Finally, the issue of the present political context in Kashmir is historical factors, strategic interests and quest for self-determination and all of them make the resolution process quite complicated.

The Socio-Economic conditions in Gilgit-Baltistan Blessed with its tough geographical features and rich ethnic mix, Gilgit-Baltistan sits within a very peculiar socio-economic scenario. Poverty, education, and healthcare are even more daunting challenges in an

area where the geography has always been a hindrance to infrastructural development. Job opportunities are mainly in agriculture and tourism which is affected by climatic conditions as well as regional political situation. The region has very great potential in tourism which however is still untapped due to inadequate marketing... The people residing in the geographical areas are generally offered limited health and education services and therefore cannot attain any form of socio-economic development (Gledhill, [2013](#), 145). There is the possibility of targeted policy by the government and support from other countries in addressing these systemic challenges and improving the quality of life of the people in Gilgit-Baltistan by enabling sustainable development.

Recent Developments and Their Impact on Regional Dynamics

It can be read that there have been some recent changes in the geopolitical relations of South Asia that have led to some changes in the regional status quo especially with regard to the intricate questions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. The reluctance of Pakistan to incorporate Gilgit Baltistan in normal Western state politics has created a power vacuum which has led to the development of sectarian, ethnic and nationalistic movements which increasingly reject state narratives and economic confines of relationships outside traditional Kashmiri nationalism. For example, this divergence does not only make the Kashmir dispute more convoluted but also hints at the possible disintegration of once unified motherland nationalism constructs as they go and rethink their alliance and state capacity. At the same time, the practical corrosion of Pakistan's foreign policy objectives can be observed from a more specific need that of security which is rather or primarily dictated by the countries relations with India, China or the US. It necessitated a militaristic national identity that blends with the conduct of foreign policy, which only muddied the waters further and made it very clear how identity policymaking intersects with geopolitics (Sharma, Hassan, and Behuria, [2019](#), 54).

Endogenous Factors as Predictors of Future Outcomes

Within the complex geopolitical structure of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir, the involvement of local populations stands out as one of the determinants for the region's future. Typically excluded from the

venues of decision-making, these populations already have some internal knowledge and culture that is fundamental for sustenance and conflict resolution processes. Their life accounts and stories of their people act against those externally presented by political elites, instilling a sense and the ability to action towards their political and socio-economic environments. In addition, the participation of the community in the dialogues and decision-making processes can help decrease the tensions and also ensure that the policies are in line with the needs of the people. Most of the problems, but not all, need solutions outside the political and intellectual paradigm of the Kashmir issue. Such systems balkanize the peace and development efforts, thus, not addressing the reasons for looking for peace and development in the first place (Rozenberg, [2015](#), 17).

Prospects for peace and conflict resolution

The intertwined stories of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir tell a standstill of historical injustices and sociopolitical goals pursued by the actors thus complicating matters of peace and peacebuilding in the region. In order to find solutions to many of these processes, it is not enough to see them as merely political ones but to bear in mind the ideological conflicts and local dynamics particularly the inter-ethnic and inter-religion relations that exacerbate the situation. These developments suggest that rather than looking simply for a ceasefire, there is a need for efforts that would promote dialogue and bring in the different voices within the communities concerned. Including these measures as precedence on how to handle the situation highlights that order and economic recovery are essential to bring order to the region, because these methods reduce insurgent behavior and build confidence within the different groups. And also Indonesia's role as a neutral party, advocate for mediation by Indonesia is the centre of a new dynamic discussed in (Thomas, [2019](#), 42) instead of interfering with internal matters is a good way to promote peace in the region.

The forces shaping the status quo

Indian and Chinese interest and interventions have deeply affected the volatile political environment around Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir. A good case for foreign interference restructuring regional politics is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is a flag project of the Belt and Road Initiative of China's government and therefore claims are forthcoming as

to why India is so much against the project. It is economic opportunities of this project that help Pakistan grow in every way but especially militarily while China is scrambling for South Asia which is a thorn in the flesh of Indian expansionism. Another perspective here is the administrative importance of Gilgit-Baltistan particularly regarding its geographical regulations which have been in place since the eighties suggest an embeddedness of the politics of state and external engagement, in support of the lobby group. Such tensions and circumstances among other things narrate the stranglehold of status quo whereby territories are constantly configured by internal and external actors.

Scenarios for the future of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir

The socio-political dynamic of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir is currently at a tipping point, where the probable scenarios in the future may accommodate geopolitical factors and the expectations from the local people. Thus, the motives of this ambition were raised through deep reforms which were introduction in Gilgit-Baltistan after 2009 the local power architecture emerged which created expectations of more self-rule and progress (Pickering, [2015](#), 22). This outsourcing may coexist with the territorial sovereignty narrative promoted by India, especially with regards to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) territorialization which India sees as the establishment of Chinese hegemony over South Asian space. There is a conflict potential hovering over the development issues and the local desires which if not articulated may either lead to a more autonomous Gilgit-Baltistan or tighter regional domination thus arguing the importance of dialogue towards peace and progress respectfully and meaningfully. This study is significant for the society interrelationship, sustainable development discourse, and more so domestically as it addresses a major meeting point of arguments gained through academia and policy making in the case of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Disputes surrounding the regions of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir illustrate quite well the examples of the geopolitical tensions among the sub continental countries precisely concerning with that of India's positions. A legacy, together with the inherent disputes of interest, expansive landclaims, and the changing geopolitics, creates a scenario where nations are perennially battered into disagreements. Legal, ideological and even strategic reasoning

interplay within Indian policy towards every contested region and to the amazement it has lauded such efforts against all international opprobrium and opposition. On the one hand, this duality deepens the prevailing situation, which results in the lack of progress of talks and increase of militarization in the conflict seeking regions. Therefore, making sense of these factors is not only crucial for academic research but also for policymaking. The historical context and its present relationship indicate the need to resolve the effects of war and the fundamental problems that cause war. In as much as we try to make sense of all these, there is need to rethink the status quo to promote lasting peace in the region, further enhancing global knowledge and practice on the resolution of conflict (Ali, [2022](#), 78).

Deepening one's knowledge of Gilgit-Baltistan is a combination of historical, political, and social forces which logically explains the governance structure of the region. The evidence shows that a monistral impedes in which 'the state of Pakistan pursues using an administrative approach was devoid of democracy and moral sin through 'systematic disrespect and disregard of the local population's wishes' as evidenced by policies from the 1980s.' The introduction of the Gilgit Baltistan Empowerment Order 2009 saw awakening of gradual changes such as withdrawal of hierarchic bureaucratic structures and creation of local institutional such as Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly and other legislative authorities (Spencer, [2019](#), 45). Despite these developments, other concerns still arise as to whether these changes were constitutional and what their effect would be on the independence or lack of it of these changes. Thus, while the differences in the accounts of governance by Indians and Pakistanis precisely explain the self-determination challenges in this region, new policies that would be able to actualize the expectations of the people of Gilgit Baltistan are also called for.

It might be argued that as Gilgit-Baltistan and Jammu and Kashmir continue to evolve, they largely shape India's foreign policy, thus reshaping the regional dynamics. However, in practice, it is understood that a cautious self-assertiveness strategy is needed in order to mitigate the multifaceted threats Pakistan poses with regards to its claims of these territories. These restructuring forces compel New Delhi to focus on strengthening relations with global powers while simultaneously seeking to engage smaller neighboring states that hold strategic significance.

Further, the shift in India's strategy towards cultural engagement and economic ties is also seen as a strategy to counter-attract potential adversary discourse in the region. However, as external policy changes as the geography changes, there's need for considerations regarding the nationalistic narratives that concern the people regarding national integrity and security to ensure that engagements are not in conflict with their sentiments. These aspects ultimately highlight a delicate balancing act between cooperation and pressure in the implementation of India's foreign policy (Ishfaq, Ashfaq, and Gul, [2021](#), 33–44).

The complexity and sensitivity of the South Asian region bring out the need for diplomacy as a means of fostering stability and furthering progress. In the case of Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir, such mechanisms might open channels for discussions and networking among parties with diverse interests, which has been a challenge due to historical enmity. Through regional cooperation in poverty alleviation, the environment, and cultural integration, these nations will be able to fight against the spread of extremism, supporting economically, logistical and intellectual always dominates available governments as one of the great influencing dictator factors of the dominative environment. Economically, productive collaboration will ensure a common approach to the efficient exploitation and management of resources which includes water resources that are crucial for millions inhabiting the region. Therefore, the promotion of regional cooperation does not only favour the concerned countries individually but also strengthens the order against external threats and develops confidence and mutual regard which is critical for long term peace (Ali, [2022](#),12).

With regard to persistent tensions especially in view of the complicated geopolitical concerns within Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir, it is imperative policy-makers adopt a built-in strategy. One of the important recommendations is the Russia's of course dealing in managed relations with Pakistan and China related to the CPEC, which considers a danger to the territorial and regional aspirations of India. Constructive engagement is not merely called for but it is useful in carrying out measures that build trust by highlighting the economic advantages rather than the politics of competition. It is also important for Indian strategy decision makers to turn back the pages of history and put the colonialist sentiments aside and be reasonable

to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Such an attitude helps alleviate internal discontent while enhancing a situation where solving problems in a team is possible. Thus, while adjusting its positioning in this context of India's readjustment of its position, it is necessary to understand the relationship between sovereignty and regional stability (Lone, [2018](#), 72) Social science is usually described as grappling with a particular field one of which is Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir and their surroundings by the academic. They can help advance narratives and even histories by providing contexts that are otherwise ignored in popular media.

Using a historical, political, and sociological perspective the students are able to examine the factors that are prevalent in the Indian position with regard to the issue and the current predicament providing a perspective that goes beyond the extremes. In addition, they offer stakeholders the possibility of promoting and facilitating dialogue, encouraging research and policy formulation on peace and reconciliation. Involving communities, including those being studied, into the scientific process does not only add substance to the argument. Ilyas Khan, Salman, "*The Kashmir Quagmire: South Africa's Foreign Policy Position*", extends further than passive interpretation; it seeks for active participation in an ever challenging environment, especially in this case, the region under consideration. Because of the multifarious historical and geopolitical environment within which Kashmir exists, more attention needs to be paid towards further research, especially about what both its regional and international context would imply for its future. In particular, existing discourse captures some history that suggests the challenges of the Pakistan-administered Kashmir (PAK) as well as that of its political constituents-Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan are grossly inadequate, most specifically in terms input with regard to Pakistan-India lake relation. It is essential to study the emergence of these territorial disputes and their corresponding influence on the national identity of both states in question, in light of the current geographies of animosity as a result of several historical occurrences which are fundamental in relation to modern day events (Dawson, [1987](#), 21) In addition, attention must be given to the legal and moral aspects of external interference on the postponement of the Kashmir conflict, which contains valuable elements of possible solution for

this conflict because South Asian security emphasizes stability.

Examining the peculiarities within Gilgit-Baltistan and Kashmir is not an easy task as it involves probing into the multilayered status quo that has slowly evolved through decades of political struggle and cultural exchange. The story of the conflict history comprises correlation in between history in geopolitics and construction of identity, which explains the reasons as to why regional borders are prone to fractious politics. On the other hand, this situation is made worst by other nationalisms and the different expectations of the people living there and creates a very conservative environment where age old conflicts make most if not all diplomatic attempts go backwards. As the stakeholders of the international community seek to facilitate the resolution of such issues, the socio-economic and historical context of the conflict tends to silence attempts to settle the dispute. Thus, there is little or no deviation from the existing structure, on the face of it, but in order to bring about change, there are of course many other major factors which must be replaced as well as the ideas being put forth. It is therefore necessary to understand the stability of the status quo in order to help in achieving lasting peace and stability in this region of great geopolitical importance.

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