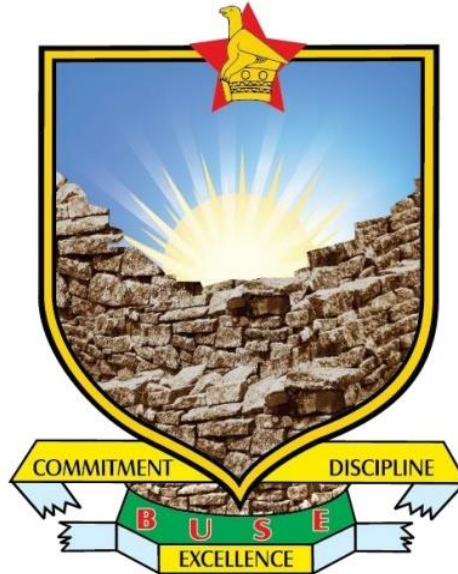


The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region

**BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE EDUCATION
FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES
DEPARTMENT OF PEACE AND GOVERNANCE**



**THE INDO-PAKISTANI KASHMIR CONFLICT: AN INVESTIGATION OF ITS
SECURITY IMPLICATIONS TO THE SOUTH ASIAN REGION**

BY

(B1232254)

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE BINDURA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
EDUCATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR A
MASTER OF SCIENCE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

2023

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region

ABSTRACT

The aim of this research was to explore the security implication of the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir to the South Asia region. This was qualitative research which employed interviews and document analysis to unravel the multifaceted nature of the conflict. For the selection of participants purposive sampling was used. Examining its causes revealed a complex interplay of factors, including territorial claims and power struggles. Historical roots contribute to the persistent dispute, while socio-cultural dimensions, marked by diverse identities within Kashmir, add layers of complexity. Human rights violations underscore the urgent humanitarian aspect of the conflict. The study's second focus explores the India-Pakistan conflict's effects on bilateral relations and security in South Asia. Profound consequences emerge, as civilians in Kashmir face displacement, injuries, and loss of life. The conflict perpetuates a troubling militarization cycle, with both nations allocating significant budgets to defense, fueling an arms race. The Line of Control (LoC) and international borders have become frequent flashpoints, exacerbating an already volatile environment. External actors complicate the security landscape, contributing to accusations of proxy wars and support for militant groups. Diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan remain strained due to historical disputes, ongoing conflicts, and internal pressures. The region's association with terrorism further complicates the diplomatic landscape, with militant groups in and around Kashmir having links to elements within both countries. The nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan introduce an additional layer of complexity, raising global concerns about the risk of nuclear escalation. In conclusion, the research emphasizes the urgent need for attention and resolution to mitigate the deep-seated impacts of the Kashmir conflict on regional stability and global security.

Key words: Conflict, Diplomacy and Security

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region**DECLARATION**

I YVONNE CHIPO GWATA, do hereby declare that this dissertation is a result of my own effort and research, except to the extent indicated in the acknowledgments, bibliography, references, and comments included in the body of the report, and that it has not been submitted in part or in full for any other degree to any other university.

I YVONNE CHIPO GWATA grant Bindura University permission to produce copies of this dissertation in whole or in part, for private, scholarly, or scientific research purposes.

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The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region**DEDICATION**

I dedicate this piece of work to my lovely daughter Hailey, my mother, my four brothers and the big four. May you find inspiration in my work.

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

First and foremost, I express my gratitude to God for bestowing upon me grace, and protection. Special recognition goes to my supervisor, Dr. Mahuku, whose invaluable input and guidance were instrumental at every stage.

I extend my appreciation to my family and friends Fafie, Lindy, Goddie, Choice, Chantie, Busi and my grandmother for moral and emotional support.

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict: Security implications to the South Asia region**List of Abbreviations**

AI.....	Amnesty International
CC.....	Carter Centre
CPEC.....	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
LoC.....	Line of Control
ICG.....	International Crisis Group
JKCCS	Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society
USIP	United States Institute of Peace
UN.....	United Nations

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CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

1. BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict stands out as a global issue characterized by its lethal and intricate nature within the realm of international relations. According to The Carter Centre (2013), Kashmir has been identified as the most perilous location on the planet due to the unsettling presence of two nuclear-armed nations, India and Pakistan, in such close proximity. Scholars have delved into the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, revealing it as a deeply entrenched and multifaceted geopolitical disagreement stemming from the tumultuous partition of British India in 1947, a historic event that led to the emergence of India and Pakistan as independent countries (Akthar, 2010; Asoori, 2020; Mukherjee, 2016). Noteworthy is the pivotal role of the contested region of Kashmir at the core of this prolonged strife, a region of immense cultural, religious, and strategic significance, as argued by Asoori (2020). Over the passage of time, this dispute has transformed into an enduring hotspot characterized by a series of armed clashes, intermittent truces, and diplomatic negotiations. In this regard, the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has been considered as the major obstacle in bringing peace in South Asia is one of the most intractable and long-standing conflicts in the world (Ahmed and Chakma, 2013).

Understanding the historical backdrop is essential for comprehending the complexities of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict. It is important to note that the division of British India in 1947 marked a period of significant change, accompanied by communal strife and territorial divisions (Raquel, 2014). The region of Kashmir, situated at the intersection of India and Pakistan, emerged as a central point of disagreement (Akthar, 2010). According to Ahmed and Chakma (2013), Kashmir possessed a distinctive demographic makeup with both Muslim and Hindu populations. Despite its predominantly Muslim populace, it was under Hindu leadership during that time. Additionally, the British colonialists, as they prepared to depart through the "Mountbatten Plan," employed a "divide and rule" strategy for India and Pakistan, which was rooted in the concept of majority rule (Raquel, 2014). Based on this principle, regions with a Hindu majority were slated for India, while those with a Muslim majority were designated for Pakistan.

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Considering the aforementioned factors, both parties regarded Kashmir as a crucial territorial region of significant significance. As Mukherjee (2016) explains, Pakistan considers Kashmir to hold exceptional importance, serving as a vital tool to fortify its identity; its loss would severely limit its strategic integrity and geopolitical security. On the other hand, India asserts full ownership of Kashmir and accuses Pakistan and China of unjustly asserting claims over Indian territory. India upholds the legitimacy of the instrument of accession signed by Maharaja Hari Singh, deeming it a legally binding document that rightfully grants India control over Kashmir (Asoori, 2020). Consequently, India's military advantage in Kashmir enabled its eventual takeover of the region. In response, the Pakistani government sought assistance from Britain and the United States, urging them to engage the United Nations in mediating an unconditional ceasefire (Hussain, 2019).

The significance of Kashmir to both India, Pakistani, China and the rest of South Asia, goes beyond the ethnic and religious identity of the population within Kashmir. According to Chandra (2011), the primary reason for this conflict between the two nations is due to how valuable Kashmir is in terms of national security, geography and resources. Hussain, (2019) notes that, the Indus River, a vital watercourse, flows through Kashmir and is of immense importance to both Pakistan and India for agricultural and irrigation purposes. The control over this river system, which includes the Indus and its tributaries, holds strategic significance, as it allows the controlling nation to potentially disrupt the water supply of the other (Hussain, 2019). This concern led to the creation of the Indus Water Treaty in 1960, dividing control over different tributaries between India and Pakistan.

Despite the treaty, Pakistan remains apprehensive about India's ability to manipulate the water supply due to their control over the region through which the Indus flows (Asoori, 2020). This fear stems from the geopolitical tensions between the two nations. However, historical instances have shown that India has not employed water supply disruption as a weapon. Kashmir's significance extends beyond water resources. Its abundant rivers offer substantial hydroelectric power potential, which could significantly fulfil the energy demands of the Jammu and Kashmir region (Hussain, 2019). Additionally, the region also possesses valuable resources like uranium, gold, oil, and natural gas (Chandra, 2011). Asoori, (2020) contend that from a geopolitical perspective, Kashmir serves as a pivotal bridge connecting South Asia and Central Asia. For India, it is a crucial route to Central Asia and beyond, and it plays a significant role in initiatives like the Belt and Road initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) (Ahmed and Chakma, 2013). The CPEC involves

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substantial infrastructure and energy projects that traverse the Pakistan-administered Kashmir, enabling Pakistan to establish direct connections with Central Asia and China. Kashmir's geopolitical importance is further underscored by its location between three nuclear-armed nations: India, Pakistan, and China. The region's territorial distribution currently sees India controlling around 55%, Pakistan holding 30%, and China possessing 15% of the original Kashmir territory (Asoori, 2020).

While numerous studies have explored various facets of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict and its security implications, there is a noticeable research gap regarding the evolving geopolitical dynamics and their impact on the broader South Asian region. This then calls for need to conduct research on the matter to breach the knowledge gap within the discourse. Existing research often focuses on historical events, security strategies, and the immediate implications of the conflict. However, there is a need for a more comprehensive analysis that considers recent geopolitical shifts, emerging regional powers, and the interconnectedness of security issues beyond the conflict itself. In doing so this was done using the qualitative research technique.

1.1. Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to analyse the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, by investigating its security implications to the South Asian region.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

One of the primary challenges faced in the Indo-Pakistani conflict stems from the persistent territorial and political disputes between India and Pakistan, creating an environment of ongoing hostility. This not only exacerbates bilateral relations but also contributes to a precarious security landscape, with implications extending beyond the immediate conflict zone. The militarization of the Line of Control (LoC) and international borders intensifies tensions, posing a continuous threat to regional peace and stability. In this regard, this study seeks to investigate the socio-cultural dimensions of the conflict, examining how diverse identities within Kashmir further complicate the security situation. Human rights violations in the region underscore the urgent humanitarian challenges, demanding attention to alleviate the suffering of the affected population. Moreover, the involvement of external actors and the alleged support for militant groups contribute to a complex security environment, adding layers of uncertainty to the region's stability. Furthermore, the nuclear capabilities of both

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India and Pakistan introduce an alarming layer of risk to the South Asian region, heightening concerns about the potential for nuclear escalation. As diplomatic relations remain strained, historical disputes persist, and internal pressures mount, the study aims to elucidate how these factors collectively contribute to the security challenges faced by the broader South Asian community. In essence, this research endeavors to provide a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted security challenges arising from the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict and their broader implications for the South Asian region, offering insights crucial for policymakers, scholars, and practitioners seeking to navigate and mitigate these complex issues.

1.3.OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To discuss the causes of Kashmir conflict.
- To analyse the effects of the conflicts between India and Pakistan on their bilateral relations and its security implications in South Asia region.
- To assess whether a negotiated settlement or pursuing policies that enhance regional economic integration and growth would help resolve the Kashmir conflict and improve the bilateral relations.

1.4.RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the causes of the Kashmir conflict?
- What are the effects of the conflicts on the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan and its implications in the South Asia region?
- Can negotiated settlement or pursuing policies that enhance regional economic integration and growth assist in resolving the Kashmir conflict and improve the bilateral relations of India and Pakistan and restore regional peace in South Asia?

1.5.ASSUMPTION OF STUDY

- i. The Kashmir conflict poses a significant threat to the security of the South Asian region.
- ii. It is a fundamental factor contributing to tense relations between India and Pakistan
- iii. The conflict has multifaceted causes, including historical, political, cultural, and strategic factors.

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- iv. These varied causes contribute to the complexity of the conflict and impact its security implications for the South Asian region.

1.6.SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY.

This research is of important significance to different stakeholders, and this is explained as follows. The significance of studying the security implications of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict holds immense relevance for both India and Pakistan. The conflict remains a defining feature of their bilateral relations and shapes their national security strategies. Understanding the complex dynamics surrounding the conflict can aid policymakers in both nations to make informed decisions that mitigate the risks of escalation, promote diplomatic avenues, and contribute to regional stability. By comprehending the nuances of the conflict's security dimensions, India and Pakistan can better navigate their interactions and work toward conflict resolution, fostering a climate of trust and cooperation.

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict reverberates across the entire South Asian region, impacting its stability, economic growth, and prospects for integration. A thorough investigation of the conflict's security implications is vital for regional leaders and policymakers, as it allows them to grasp the potential ripple effects of heightened tensions. South Asian nations have vested interests in regional stability, economic growth, and cooperation, and a comprehensive understanding of the conflict's impact empowers them to engage in collaborative efforts that foster peace and prosperity.

The research on the security implications of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict adds valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge. By delving into the evolving geopolitical dynamics and their impact, this research enriches the understanding of how historical conflicts intertwine with contemporary security challenges. It contributes nuanced perspectives to academic scholarship, offering new layers of analysis that explore the intersections of nationalism, territorial disputes, proxy warfare, nuclear deterrence, and regional diplomacy. Researchers and scholars can build upon this foundation to refine their understanding of conflict resolution, international relations, and security studies.

For students of international relations, the study of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict and its security implications offers a unique opportunity to apply theoretical concepts to a real-world scenario. It helps students comprehend the complexities of conflict management, diplomacy, and strategic decision-making in an environment shaped by historical legacies, regional power

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dynamics, and global geopolitical considerations. Moreover, this topic provides a case study through which students can analyse the role of international organizations, the challenges of balancing national interests, and the potential for peaceful conflict resolution. By engaging with this topic, students gain a deeper appreciation for the multifaceted nature of global security challenges and the tools available to address them.

1.11. DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The region of Kashmir is a geographically complex area situated in the northern part of the Indian subcontinent. Kashmir can be presented geographically in the following context.

- India-administered Jammu and Kashmir

This region is part of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir in India. It is located in the northernmost part of India and shares borders with Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan to the west and north, the Union Territory of Ladakh to the east, and Himachal Pradesh and Punjab states of India to the south.

- Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir

This region is administered by Pakistan and is situated to the west and northwest of India-administered Jammu and Kashmir. It shares a border with Pakistan's Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces to the west and the Line of Control (LoC) with India-administered Jammu and Kashmir to the east.

- Pakistan-administered Gilgit-Baltistan

Located to the north of Pakistan-administered Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan shares a border with China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region to the north and northeast, Indian-administered Ladakh to the east, Pakistan's Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province to the west, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir to the southwest.

- China-administered Aksai Chin

Aksai Chin is a region located in the eastern part of the larger Kashmir region. It is administered by China's Xinjiang Autonomous Region. It shares a border with India-administered Ladakh to the south and east and the Tibet Autonomous Region to the north.

- Indian-administered Ladakh:

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Ladakh is a Union Territory of India located to the east of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, sharing a border with both regions to the west. To the north, Ladakh shares a border with China-administered Aksai Chin.

Figure 1 shows the Map of Kashmir.



1.12. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research has a possibility of several limitations. Some of the potential limitations of the study includes the following:

i. Access to Data and Information:

The major challenge regarding accessing of data is that the researcher will not be able to travel to Kashmir. Moreover, Governments involved in the conflict may restrict access to sensitive information. To address this, researchers shall rely on open-source data, diplomatic cables, and reports from international organizations. Additionally, the use freedom of information requests where applicable.

ii. Data Reliability:

Official data provided by the conflicting parties may not be complete or accurate. The researcher will be cautious when using such data and cross-verify information with independent sources.

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To address these limitations, researchers should adopt a rigorous and transparent research methodology, maintain ethical standards, seek diverse perspectives, and acknowledge the complexity of the conflict. Collaboration with experts in the field and interdisciplinary approaches can also enhance the quality and comprehensiveness of the study. Finally, continuous updates and revisions to the study's findings may be necessary as the conflict evolves.

1.13. Definition of key terms.

Destabilisation - the action of making a government, area, or political group lose power or control, or making a political or economic situation less strong or safe, by causing changes and problems.

Nuclear proliferation - refers to the spread of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons technology, or fissile material to countries that do not already possess them as recognised by the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of nuclear weapons, commonly known as the Non-Proliferation Treaty or NPT.

Deterrence - military strategy under which one power uses the threat of reprisal effectively to preclude an attack from an adversary power. With the advent of nuclear weapons, the term deterrence largely has been applied to the basic strategy of the nuclear powers and of the major alliance systems.

Politics refers to the activities, actions, and processes associated with the governance and decision-making of a country or multiple countries. It involves the competition and cooperation among various actors, including governments, institutions, and individuals, to exercise authority, allocate resources, and influence policies that shape the domestic and international landscapes.

Power in international relations refers to the ability of a country or an actor to influence the behaviour and actions of other countries or actors to achieve its own goals and interests. Power can be derived from various sources, such as military strength, economic resources, technological advancements, cultural influence, and diplomatic prowess.

Diplomacy is the practice of managing international relations through peaceful means, negotiations, and dialogue. It involves the use of diplomatic tools and techniques to resolve conflicts, promote cooperation, and advance national interests. Diplomacy can take various forms, including formal negotiations, international agreements, summit meetings, cultural

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exchanges, and the establishment of diplomatic missions (embassies and consulates) in other countries.

1.14. Chapters outline

This research has five chapters. The first chapter of the research is the introductory chapter which focuses on introducing the research. The chapter two is focused on reviewing the existing literature and empirical evidence, in line with the research objectives. The chapter three is the research methodology chapter which lays out the blueprint on how the study is going to collect and analyse data. The chapter four, focuses on presenting, discussing and analysing the findings of the study. The chapter five gives the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO**LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK****2. Introduction**

This chapter embarks on a comprehensive exploration of existing literature that aligns with the research objectives and themes, thereby serving as the bedrock upon which this study is constructed. The primary purpose of this literature review is to synthesize and amalgamate the findings and arguments put forth in prior research, ensuring the robustness and validity of the current study.

2.1.Theoretical framework

As alluded to in the introduction of this chapter, the study is guided by the Realists and the Neo-liberal perspectives to international relations in relation to the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict.

2.1.1. Realist Theory: Understanding Power Dynamics

Realist theory, anchored in the seminal work of Hans Morgenthau, focuses on the dynamics of power and state-centric behavior within the anarchic international system. This perspective, as expounded by scholars like Kenneth Waltz and discussed by Wolin (2019), emphasizes the primacy of self-interest, security, and the relentless pursuit of power among states. It contends that within the global arena, states are primarily motivated by survival and the perpetual quest for power in an environment lacking overarching authority. This theory of Realism, particularly the aspect of neorealism, asserts that states' core objective is survival, leading to a strategic preoccupation with power balancing and security concerns

In the context of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, the Realist paradigm offers crucial insights into the regional security landscape. Realist scholars such as Barry (1986) highlight how the competitive and often antagonistic relationship between India and Pakistan, intertwined with their alignments with major global powers, resonates with realist notions of self-preservation and inherent distrust within international relations. Realism helps explain the limited economic collaboration between the two nations and the challenges faced by grand energy cooperation initiatives. Moreover, the theory's rational actor assumption, asserting that

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states seek to maximize benefits and minimize losses, provides a comprehensive framework through which the security dynamics of the Kashmir conflict can be thoroughly analysed.

This perspective unveils the underlying factors influencing the conflict, shedding light on the strategic and security motivations driving the actions and behaviours of both India and Pakistan within the region. The realist lens offers a nuanced understanding of the geopolitical tensions, strategic calculations, and power dynamics involved, thereby enriching the analysis of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict within the broader realm of international relations.

2.1.2. Neo-Liberal Theory: Emphasizing Cooperation and Mutual Interests

In tandem with realist theory, this research study also draws upon the tenets of Neo-Liberalism, which stands in contrast to Realism by accentuating cooperation, the role of institutions, and mutual interests among states (Wolin, 2019). Neo-Liberalism, with its roots in the scholarship of luminaries like Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, asserts that international cooperation is feasible in areas characterized by shared interests (DasGupta, 2012). It posits that states, driven by a desire to maximize absolute gains for all involved parties, are capable of collaborative efforts (Nesimi, 2018).

Unlike Realists, Neo-Liberals do not assume that states inherently seek to hinder others from achieving more significant gains. Instead, they emphasize the potential for collective benefits through cooperation (Das, 2001). This Neo-Liberal perspective serves as a crucial counterbalance to Realism in the study of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict. It offers insights into the possibilities for regional cooperation, diplomatic negotiations, and conflict resolution. By exploring areas of shared interests and the potential for mutual gains, Neo-Liberalism provides an alternative viewpoint that complements the Realist framework.

2.1.3. Applicability of the theories to the study.

The applicability of Realist and Neo-Liberal perspectives to international relations in the context of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict and their relevance to this study can be discussed as follows:

Power Politics:

Realism contends that states are primarily motivated by the pursuit of power in an anarchic international system (Nesimi, 2018). In the context of the Kashmir conflict, both India and Pakistan have demonstrated their pursuit of power and security. India's control over the region

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reflects its desire to maintain its territorial integrity, while Pakistan's involvement stems from its strategic interests in countering India's influence. This power struggle has perpetuated the conflict.

State Behaviour

Realism assumes that states act in their own self-interest (Wolin, 2019). In the case of Kashmir, both India and Pakistan have consistently prioritized their national interests over peaceful resolution. India's stance is to maintain the status quo, asserting its control over the region. Pakistan seeks to challenge India's control, driven by its identity and the desire for strategic depth against India.

Security Dilemma:

Realists highlight the security dilemma, wherein one state's efforts to enhance its security can be perceived as a threat by others (Hussain, 2019). In the Kashmir context, India's military presence in the region, while aimed at maintaining control and security, is viewed as a threat by Pakistan. This perception of insecurity has contributed to the conflict's longevity.

Alliances and Balancing:

Realism explains the strategic alliances formed by states to balance power (Nesimi, 2018). In the case of the Kashmir conflict, both India and Pakistan have sought alliances with major global players. India's partnership with the United States and Pakistan's cooperation with China are examples of how these states align themselves to bolster their positions.

Economic Cooperation:

Realism's rational actor assumption helps explain the limited economic cooperation between India and Pakistan. Despite potential mutual economic benefits, distrust and historical grievances have prevented significant economic integration. For example, energy cooperation projects have faced numerous obstacles due to these underlying tensions.

Neo-Liberal Perspective:

Neo-Liberalism offers an alternative lens through which to view international relations, emphasizing cooperation, institutions, and mutual interests. Its applicability to the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict and this study is as follows:

Cooperation and Diplomacy:

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Neo-Liberalism posits that states can cooperate in areas of shared interests. While the Kashmir conflict is characterized by hostility, there have been instances of diplomatic negotiations and peace talks between India and Pakistan. The study can explore these diplomatic efforts and their potential for conflict resolution.

International Institutions:

Neo-Liberals emphasize the role of international institutions in fostering cooperation (Nesimi, 2018). Organizations like the United Nations have been involved in mediating the Kashmir conflict. This perspective helps to examine the effectiveness of such institutions in mitigating tensions.

Economic Interdependence:

Neo-Liberalism suggests that economic interdependence can deter conflict (Whitehead, 2014). The study will analyze the potential benefits of economic integration between India and Pakistan, which could incentivize peaceful relations.

Mutual Gains:

Neo-Liberalism challenges the Realist notion of zero-sum games. It posits that states can work towards mutually beneficial outcomes (Whitehead, 2014). Examining areas where India and Pakistan could achieve such gains, beyond the Kashmir conflict, is within the scope of this perspective.

Conflict Resolution:

Neo-Liberalism provides a framework for exploring conflict resolution mechanisms and confidence-building measures. The study will investigate past peace initiatives and evaluate their impact on regional stability.

All in all the Realist and Neo-Liberal perspectives offer distinct yet complementary insights into the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict. While Realism underscores the power struggle, security concerns, and alliance dynamics, Neo-Liberalism emphasizes the potential for cooperation, economic interdependence, and conflict resolution.

2.2. Empirical evidence from the case of Israel Pakistani conflict

The Israel-Palestine conflict and the Indo-Pakistani conflict share historical complexities, political disputes, and territorial claims that have fueled decades-long tensions in their

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respective regions. This literature review examines the causes of these conflicts, drawing parallels and distinctions between the two.

The Israel-Palestine conflict is deeply rooted in competing claims to the same territory, particularly Jerusalem, and the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948. Similarly, the Indo-Pakistani conflict over Kashmir revolves around territorial claims, stemming from the partition of British India in 1947. Both conflicts involve disputes over borders and sovereignty, contributing to enduring hostilities (Smith, 2007; Ganguly, 2016).

Historical events play a crucial role in both conflicts. The Israel-Palestine conflict traces back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries, marked by Zionist movements and British involvement. Similarly, the Indo-Pakistani conflict has deep historical roots in the partition of British India, leading to the creation of India and Pakistan and setting the stage for territorial disputes, including in Kashmir (Shlaim, 2009; Bose, 2005).

Power struggles and nationalist sentiments significantly contribute to both conflicts. The establishment of Israel and the subsequent Arab-Israeli wars have underscored the role of nationalism and power dynamics in the Israel-Palestine conflict. Likewise, the Indo-Pakistani conflict involves nationalist aspirations and power struggles, with both nations asserting their sovereignty and influence in the region (Kumaraswamy, 2013; Lyon, 2008).

External actors have played a notable role in both conflicts. In the Israel-Palestine context, international powers have influenced the peace process and exacerbated tensions. Similarly, the Indo-Pakistani conflict has witnessed external involvement, with both India and Pakistan garnering international support and involvement, contributing to the complexity of the disputes (Freedman, 2008; Cheema, 2012).

Religious and cultural dimensions are inherent in both conflicts. The Israel-Palestine conflict involves the clash of Jewish and Palestinian identities, rooted in religious and cultural differences. In the Indo-Pakistani conflict, the diverse religious and cultural identities within Kashmir add layers of complexity, contributing to the protracted nature of the dispute (Hroub, 2006; Varshney, 1992).

Both conflicts have resulted in significant humanitarian concerns. The Israel-Palestine conflict has witnessed displacement, refugees, and human rights violations. Similarly, the Indo-Pakistani conflict, particularly in Kashmir, has led to human rights concerns, including allegations of atrocities and displacement (Fisk, 2002; Chatterji, 2010).

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The Israel-Palestine conflict is a longstanding and deeply rooted geopolitical issue that has not only shaped the dynamics between the two directly involved parties but has also had significant ramifications for the broader Middle East region. To understand the current state of Israel-Palestine relations, one must delve into the historical roots of the conflict. Morris (2001) provides a comprehensive historical overview, outlining the events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 and the subsequent displacement of Palestinians. The unresolved issues of borders, refugees, and the status of Jerusalem continue to fuel tensions.

The intricate and often adversarial bilateral relations between Israel and Palestine have left an enduring imprint on the political and diplomatic terrain in the Middle East. Shikaki's seminal work (2018) delves deeply into the complexities of the peace process, providing a nuanced understanding of the challenges that impede the attainment of a lasting agreement. Shikaki's analysis underscores the persistent hurdles that hinder the establishment of stable bilateral relations between Israel and Palestine. Among the central impediments are the protracted territorial disputes, settlements, and issues of sovereignty, all of which contribute to the ongoing tensions in the region (Shikaki, 2018). The continued existence of Israeli settlements in the West Bank, for instance, remains a focal point of contention, with scholars like Pappé (2006) shedding light on the historical context and the impact of these settlements on the viability of a two-state solution.

Moreover, the question of sovereignty, intricately tied to the broader territorial issues, remains a formidable challenge. The examination by Morris (2001) of the historical events leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 provides essential context, illustrating the deep-seated nature of sovereignty concerns. The unresolved status of Jerusalem, a city of paramount importance to both Israelis and Palestinians, further exacerbates the diplomatic intricacies (Morris, 2001).

Shikaki's exploration of the peace process reveals the intricate web of historical grievances, conflicting national narratives, and geopolitical complexities that perpetuate the strained relations between the two parties. The study highlights the cyclical nature of negotiations, where breakthroughs are often followed by setbacks due to the unresolved core issues (Shikaki, 2018). In understanding the impact of strained bilateral relations, it becomes imperative to consider the broader regional implications. Quandt's analysis (2005) emphasizes how the Israel-Palestine conflict has been a linchpin in shaping regional dynamics. The

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ongoing tension has influenced alliances, diplomatic engagements, and security considerations, showcasing the far-reaching consequences of the bilateral discord.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has far-reaching consequences that extend well beyond the borders of the two directly involved parties, profoundly shaping regional dynamics and security considerations. As observed by Quandt (2005), the conflict holds a central position in shaping the geopolitical landscape of the Middle East. The protracted and unresolved nature of the conflict has created a volatile environment that is susceptible to manipulation by various actors with distinct geopolitical interests.

Quandt's comprehensive exploration of the regional implications of the Israel-Palestine conflict underscores its pivotal role in influencing the broader Middle East. This influential work elucidates the intricate interplay between the conflict and regional geopolitics, emphasizing how the ongoing tensions have become a linchpin in shaping the strategic calculus of states and non-state actors alike. Quandt's analysis serves as a foundational reference for understanding how the conflict has not only defined the immediate relations between Israel and Palestine but has become a geopolitical force with repercussions felt throughout the entire region. Moreover, scholars like Said (1995) argue that the conflict has been embedded in a larger narrative of colonialism, nationalism, and power dynamics, which has heightened its impact on the region. Said's work provides a critical lens through which one can analyze the historical and cultural dimensions of the conflict, further deepening the understanding of its regional repercussions.

The unresolved status of the Israel-Palestine conflict has proven to be fertile ground for exploitation by various geopolitical actors seeking to advance their strategic interests. El-Abed and Aruri (2007) contribute to this understanding by exploring how regional powers and global actors strategically manipulate the conflict to achieve their political objectives. This manipulation involves diplomatic manoeuvring, arms sales, and the leveraging of alliances, all of which contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict and its broader regional implications. Furthermore, Kattan (2004) examines the role of international law in the Israel-Palestine conflict, shedding light on how legal frameworks, or the lack thereof, contribute to the perpetuation of regional tensions. By addressing the legal dimensions of the conflict, Kattan's work adds nuance to the discussion of regional dynamics influenced by the ongoing dispute.

The Israel-Palestine conflict's influence on regional alliances and partnerships is a complex and dynamic aspect that has garnered attention from scholars. Baroud (2018) provides a

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nuanced analysis of how this protracted conflict has shaped Israel's relationships with neighboring Arab states, offering insights into the intricate dynamics at play. The impact of the conflict on diplomatic engagements is multifaceted, representing a delicate balance in the region's geopolitical landscape.

Baroud (2018)'s examination emphasizes that the Israel-Palestine conflict serves as a key factor influencing the diplomatic relations of Israel with its Arab neighbours. The conflict has created both impediments and, interestingly, opportunities for diplomatic engagements. Arab states navigate a nuanced landscape where their stance on the Israel-Palestine issue is not only reflective of their foreign policy but is also sensitive to public sentiment.

The hindrances in diplomatic engagements, as Baroud (2018) outlines, often stem from historical grievances and public sentiments surrounding the Israel-Palestine conflict. Arab states face the challenge of balancing their national interests with the expectations of their citizens, who may harbor strong opinions about the conflict and its ramifications on the Palestinian people. The ongoing territorial disputes and unresolved status of Jerusalem further contribute to the complexities of diplomatic interactions.

Conversely, the conflict has occasionally provided opportunities for diplomatic initiatives. Baroud (2018) work highlights instances where regional actors have sought to leverage the Israel-Palestine issue as a diplomatic tool. This strategic manoeuvring underscores the conflict's role as a geopolitical pivot, influencing the calculus of regional players in pursuit of their broader strategic objectives.

The evolving nature of these relationships is a central theme in Baroud (2018) analysis. Baroud (2018) presents that the fluidity of diplomatic engagements reflects the ever-changing dynamics in the Middle East, where geopolitical interests, regional power shifts, and global influences continually reshape the political landscape. Baroud (2018) insights contribute to a deeper understanding of the delicate balance maintained by Arab states as they navigate the complexities of the Israel-Palestine conflict within the broader context of regional alliances.

The protracted conflict has contributed to security challenges in the region, with terrorism often intertwined with the political situation. Moghadam (2008) examines the nexus between the Israel-Palestine conflict and terrorism, emphasizing how the unresolved issues serve as a rallying point for extremist groups, posing a threat to regional security.

The protracted Israel-Palestine conflict has not only created geopolitical tensions but has also resulted in severe humanitarian consequences, significantly impacting the lives of ordinary

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Palestinians and Israelis. Ilan Pappé (2006), a prominent scholar in Middle Eastern studies, provides a comprehensive exploration of the human rights dimension of the conflict, shedding crucial light on the socio-economic ramifications for the civilian population. Pappé (2006) meticulous examination brings attention to the profound challenges faced by individuals caught in the crossfire, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the conflict's humanitarian toll.

Pappé (2006) seminal work delves into the intricacies of the conflict's impact on human rights, particularly focusing on how the protracted nature of the struggle exacerbates the socio-economic vulnerabilities of civilians. By scrutinizing the conditions faced by ordinary people, Pappé illuminates the multifaceted challenges encompassing displacement, restricted access to resources, and the erosion of basic human rights.

Furthermore, Pappé (2006), research underscores the interconnectedness of political decisions, military strategies, and the resulting humanitarian crises. Pappé (2006) insights reveal the cyclical nature of the conflict, where human rights violations contribute to a perpetual cycle of instability and suffering. His work serves as a critical resource for policymakers, scholars, and humanitarian organizations striving to address the root causes of the conflict and mitigate its devastating impact on the region.

In emphasizing the humanitarian consequences of the Israel-Palestine conflict, Pappé' (2006) research aligns with broader international efforts to draw attention to the plight of affected populations. Pappé (2006), contribute significantly to the academic discourse surrounding conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Middle East. Their research not only enhances our comprehension of the historical context and current dynamics but also provides a foundation for crafting effective policies and interventions aimed at alleviating the human suffering caused by the conflict.

2.3. INDO-PAKISTANI KASHMIR CONFLICT: A ROAD MAP

Causes

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict stands as a complex and enduring challenge, its roots delving deep into the annals of history and propelled by a dynamic interplay of factors. According to Vaish(2011) this protracted conflict, marked by historical, religious, geopolitical, and cultural dimensions, remains a persistent source of tension between India and Pakistan. It is a conflict whose origins can be traced back to the tumultuous events

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surrounding the partition of British India in 1947, an event that not only gave birth to two new nations, India and Pakistan, but also sowed the seeds of discord over the region of Kashmir (Sabur, 2013). This dispute, which has defied resolution for decades, has been further exacerbated by a confluence of factors. In Raquel (2014)'s view religious and cultural differences have cast a shadow over the region, with India's secular democracy clashing with Pakistan's vision of a Muslim-majority Kashmir. Moreover, the territorial dispute over control of Jammu and Kashmir has fuelled the conflict, with both nations staking claim to this strategic land (Mukherjee, 2016). Jayasekera (2013) takes note of the geographical positioning of Kashmir in South Asia, bordered by India, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan, adds layers of geopolitical significance, as it commands vital trade routes and military strategic value.

Complicating matters further, the Kashmir Valley, the epicentre of the conflict, houses a diverse population with varying ethnic and political aspirations (Mukherjee, 2016). These aspirations, ranging from greater autonomy to full independence, add intricate layers to the dispute, making it a multifaceted issue. During these complexities, the conflict has seen the emergence of proxy warfare and militancy, as both India and Pakistan have been accused of supporting militant groups operating in the region (Hussain, 2019). These allegations have only served to perpetuate a cycle of violence, making the search for a lasting resolution more challenging.

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict finds its origins deeply embedded in a complex tapestry of historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors, as recognized by Khan (2013). Its foundational cause, arguably the spark that ignited the enduring dispute, can be traced back to the pivotal moment of the partition and creation of India and Pakistan in the fateful year of 1947, as illuminated by Jayasekera (2013). During this tumultuous period, the British Indian subcontinent underwent a transformative division, leading to the emergence of two independent nations, India and Pakistan. According to Ganguly and Wagner (2010) this division was not merely geographical; it was a partition that carved borders through regions teeming with distinct religious majorities. The consequences of this partition were far-reaching and set the stage for the contentious struggle over Kashmir.

Kashmir, a princely state nestled in the northernmost reaches of the subcontinent, was a microcosm of this religious divide. DasGupta (2012) states that, boasted a Muslim majority population coexisting under the rule of a Hindu Maharaja. This demographic incongruity became a focal point of contention, and the decision made by the Maharaja of Kashmir would leave an indelible mark on the region's history. In a momentous and fateful move, the

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Maharaja of Kashmir chose to accede to India, despite the prevailing religious demographic of the population, which was predominantly Muslim (Chandra, 2011). Asoori (2020) contends that, this audacious decision, driven by political and strategic considerations, ignited a powder keg of tensions between the newly formed nations. The conflict over Kashmir was thus set into motion, fuelled by differing interpretations of the region's destiny and the right of its people to determine their own future. This foundational moment in the history of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict laid bare the deep-seated complexities of the dispute, entwining historical legacies, religious affiliations, and political ambitions into a volatile mix that continues to shape the region's destiny to this day (Chandra, 2011).

Khan (2013) astutely emphasizes the profound impact of religious and cultural disparities on the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict. In this enduring struggle, the contrasting worldviews of Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan have cast a long shadow. In Ankit (2010)'s view, Pakistan's perspective rests on the assertion that Kashmir should naturally belong within its territory, primarily due to the Muslim majority residing in the region. This viewpoint finds its roots in the religious and cultural affinities Pakistan shares with the Kashmiri Muslim population. From Pakistan's vantage point, the religious identity of the Kashmiri population becomes a pivotal argument in favour of its claims over the region (Akthar, 2010).

In stark contrast, India's stance takes on a secular and democratic character. India perceives Kashmir as an integral part of its diverse and inclusive secular democracy, where citizenship is not contingent upon religious identity (Vaish, 2011). This perspective underscores India's commitment to its democratic ideals and the belief that Kashmir's status should be determined through democratic processes, rather than religious or cultural affiliations. Ahmed and Chakma (2013) underscores that the clash between these competing narratives has significantly contributed to the enduring nature of the conflict. It is a stark reminder of how deeply intertwined issues of religion and culture can be in the realm of international politics, especially in regions where diversity and historical legacies intersect.

At its core, the Kashmir conflict revolves around the contentious issue of territorial control (Vaish, 2011). This dispute hinges on the conflicting assertions made by both India and Pakistan regarding their rightful sovereignty over the expansive region of Jammu and Kashmir. Notably, this territorial contest encompasses not only the areas currently administered by both nations but also extends to territories that have fallen under the control of China. This territorial dimension of the conflict underscores the deeply entrenched nature of

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the dispute, as both India and Pakistan adamantly lay claim to the entirety of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving little room for compromise or concession (Chandra, 2011). The struggle for control over this strategically significant region has, over the years, given rise to hostilities, border tensions, and political impasses, making it one of the most intractable conflicts in the world.

Prominent scholars like Akthar (2010), Asoori (2020), and Mukherjee (2016) have underscored the immense strategic significance of the Kashmir region. Situated in the heart of South Asia, Kashmir finds itself encircled by regional heavyweights, including India, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan. This geographical positioning has rendered it a pivotal crossroads in the intricate web of international relations within the region. Asoori (2020), notes that one of the foremost aspects of Kashmir's strategic importance lies in its role as a nexus of crucial trade routes. These routes connect not only the nations within its immediate vicinity but also serve as conduits for commerce and connectivity between South Asia and Central Asia (Mukherjee, 2016). The control of these trade arteries, which pass through the Kashmir region, bestows considerable economic and geopolitical leverage upon the controlling entity.

Furthermore, Kashmir's strategic relevance extends beyond trade to encompass military positioning. Its topography, featuring a diverse terrain of mountains, valleys, and plateaus, offers a natural fortress of sorts (Mukherjee, 2016). This geographical diversity provides a distinct advantage for military operations, making the region desirable for military establishments and control. Consequently, control over Kashmir can translate into a formidable military stronghold, amplifying its strategic significance.

The Kashmir Valley, nestled amidst breathtaking natural landscapes, is far more than just a picturesque region; it's a melting pot of diversity, housing a mosaic of ethnic groups, each with its own distinct political aspirations. Chandra (2011) notes that within this region, a complex tapestry of desires and hopes weaves through the aspirations of the local population, adding intricate layers to the already multifaceted Kashmir conflict. Among the inhabitants of the Kashmir Valley, various groups have emerged with differing political objectives (Mukherjee, 2016). For some, the aspiration lies in attaining greater autonomy, a bid to exercise more self-governance and decision-making power over their local affairs. According to DasGupta (2012) this quest for increased autonomy within the framework of either India or Pakistan reflects a nuanced approach to the conflict, acknowledging the unique identity and concerns of the Kashmiri people.

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Intriguingly, others within the region harbour aspirations that extend beyond autonomy and venture into the realm of full-fledged independence. These groups envision a future where the Kashmir Valley stands as an independent entity, free from the sovereignty of both India and Pakistan (DasGupta, 2012). Such aspirations signify a profound desire for self-determination, a dream of shaping their destiny on their terms. These diverse political aspirations within the Kashmir Valley underscore the complexity of the conflict. As per Ganguly and Wagner (2010) they reflect the deeply rooted desires and identity of the local population, who have long been at the heart of this protracted dispute. Understanding these aspirations is essential for comprehending the intricate dynamics at play in the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, as they represent a critical piece of the puzzle in the quest for a just and lasting resolution.

The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict has been marked by disturbing allegations of both India and Pakistan providing support to militant groups operating in the volatile Kashmir region (Hussain, 2019). Pakistan stands accused of backing groups that advocate either for Kashmiri independence or its merger with Pakistan. On the other hand, India contends that Pakistan-sponsored terrorism has played a significant role in fuelling violence and instability in the region (DasGupta, 2012).

This insidious practice of proxy warfare has cast a dark shadow over the conflict, exacerbating tensions and rendering the pursuit of peaceful resolution more daunting. Hussain, (2019) states that the backing of militant groups by external actors has not only intensified the level of violence but has also created an intricate web of alliances and allegiances that further muddles the path to peace. Proxy warfare has transformed the conflict landscape into one where non-state actors and militant groups often operate with relative impunity, complicating the efforts of diplomatic negotiations and conflict mediation (Jayasekera, 2013). This dynamic has perpetuated a destructive cycle of violence, making it increasingly challenging to find common ground and foster trust between the conflicting parties.

The effects of the Indo-Pakistani conflict on their bilateral relations and its security implications to the region

The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan has left an indelible mark on their bilateral relations, casting a long and dark shadow over the South Asian region. Its effects are far-reaching and multifaceted, impacting various aspects of their relationship and posing significant security implications for the broader region (Jayasekera, 2013).

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As underscored by Mukherjee (2016), the Kashmir conflict has served as a constant catalyst for heightened tensions between India and Pakistan, triggering recurrent disputes and skirmishes along the border. This ongoing state of tension has had profound and tangible consequences, most notably in the form of substantial military buildups on both sides of the border (Khan, 2013). Nesimi (2018) states that India and Pakistan have, over the years, dedicated substantial portions of their budgets to the acquisition and maintenance of military hardware, including conventional and nuclear weapons systems.

The substantial financial resources channelled into the military sphere represent a diversion away from crucial development and social welfare initiatives in both countries (Raquel, 2014). These diverted resources could otherwise have been allocated to address pressing domestic challenges, including poverty alleviation, healthcare improvements, and educational advancements. Sabur (2013) contends that, in India, the diversion of resources to maintain a robust military presence along the border and invest in defence infrastructure comes at the expense of funding critical social programs. Vaish (2011) presents that with limited resources available for these vital sectors, the nation faces challenges in uplifting marginalized communities, ensuring universal healthcare, and providing quality education to its citizens.

Similarly, Wolin (2019), addressing issues such as poverty, healthcare, and education is essential for improving the quality of life for its citizens and fostering long-term stability. Therefore, the Kashmir conflict not only perpetuates military tensions but also exacerbates socioeconomic disparities within both nations (Chandra, 2011).

As Chandra (2011) astutely highlights, the Kashmir issue has remained a perpetual thorn in the side of diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan. Despite numerous endeavours to normalize their bilateral ties, encourage cross-border trade, and enhance cooperation, the spectre of the Kashmir dispute has consistently loomed large, obstructing substantial diplomatic progress. Wolin (2019) argues that, over the years, both nations have engaged in dialogues and peace talks, each time hoping to pave the way for improved relations and lasting reconciliation. These diplomatic endeavours, however, have been beset by the enduring animosity surrounding the Kashmir conflict. The deeply entrenched positions of India and Pakistan on the issue, each asserting its rightful claim to the region, have created a seemingly insurmountable divide (Whitehead, 2014).

The protracted nature of the dispute, coupled with its historical, cultural, and geopolitical dimensions, has led to deeply ingrained mistrust between the two nations (Chandra, 2011). This mistrust has often played out during diplomatic negotiations, where progress on other

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fronts has been hindered by the shadow of Kashmir. Even when discussions have touched on unrelated topics, the underlying tensions and unresolved grievances linked to Kashmir have invariably resurfaced, hampering the prospects of achieving substantial diplomatic breakthroughs(Whitehead, 2014).

Moreover, the diplomatic stagnation resulting from the Kashmir dispute has ramifications that extend beyond the bilateral relationship. Raquel (2014) notes that it has hindered both nations' ability to collaborate effectively on a host of regional and international matters, ranging from counterterrorism efforts to regional stability initiatives

The introduction of nuclear weapons into the context of the Kashmir conflict, as underscored by Raquel (2014) and Chandra (2011), has irrevocably transformed the landscape of regional security in South Asia, casting an ominous and far-reaching shadow.

The Kashmir conflict, against this backdrop, introduces an additional layer of peril to regional security dynamics. Raquel (2014) presents that the simmering tensions and historical animosities related to the conflict have created an environment where military confrontations can swiftly escalate. Sabur(2013) contends that, the ramifications of such an escalation would be nothing short of catastrophic. The immediate human and environmental toll of a nuclear conflict in this densely populated region would be devastating, leading to widespread loss of life and long-term ecological damage(Nesimi, 2018).

Furthermore, the international community has expressed deep concern about the implications of nuclear weapons proliferation in a region marked by political volatility and enduring hostilities. According to Hussain(2019) the Kashmir conflict's potential to trigger a nuclear confrontation has heightened anxieties regarding the spread of these weapons to additional states or non-state actors.

In light of these grim prospects, it is imperative that the Kashmir conflict be addressed with utmost urgency and diplomacy. Jayasekera (2013) states that the international community has a vested interest in facilitating peaceful resolutions to the underlying issues, de-escalating tensions, and promoting dialogue between India and Pakistan. Preventing the Kashmir dispute from spiralling into a nuclear conflict is a global imperative that transcends national interests and underscores the paramount importance of regional and global security.

The Kashmir conflict has undeniably evolved into a perilous theatre for proxy warfare and terrorist activities, as astutely highlighted by Jayasekera (2013). One of the most immediate consequences of this proxy warfare is the perpetuation of insecurity and violence within the

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Kashmir region. Khan (2013) underscores that the support provided to armed groups has led to a cycle of militant insurgency and counterinsurgency operations. Ganguly and Wagner (2010) argue that this not only hampers efforts to combat these extremist organizations but also allows them to thrive and expand their operations. In essence, the Kashmir conflict serves as a sanctuary for militant groups, enabling them to regroup, train, and launch attacks not only within the region but also beyond its borders. The regional threat landscape becomes increasingly complex as these militant entities operate across porous borders, posing a challenge to regional stability and cooperation (Asoori, 2020).

The Kashmir conflict has resulted in dire humanitarian consequences, with grave human rights abuses and humanitarian crises affecting the lives of Kashmiri civilians, as poignantly highlighted by Hussain (2019). Frequent clashes, curfews, and restrictions disrupt daily life, limit access to basic services, and plunge the population into turmoil. Khan's (2013) insightful perspective highlights how the persisting tensions stemming from the Kashmir conflict have significantly hindered economic growth and regional cooperation in South Asia. One of the most immediate effects of these ongoing tensions is the impediment to normal trade relations and connectivity between India and Pakistan, two major players in the South Asian region (The Carter Center, 2013).

Furthermore, the lack of normal trade relations and connectivity has had a ripple effect throughout the entire South Asian region. Chandra (2011) states that the stalled progress in India-Pakistan relations has created an atmosphere of distrust and uncertainty, discouraging other countries in the region from engaging in meaningful economic cooperation. The prevailing discord serves as a deterrent to foreign investments and regional partnerships, inhibiting the region from harnessing its full economic potential (Ganguly and Wagner 2010). One of the casualties of this discord has been the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), an initiative designed to promote regional collaboration and economic integration. Hussain (2019) explains that the conflict has strained the relationships among SAARC member states, making it challenging to achieve consensus and advance cooperative endeavors.

The Kashmir conflict, as emphasized by the Carter Centre (2013), is not confined to the territorial boundaries of India and Pakistan. Instead, it is deeply entangled within the intricate tapestry of regional dynamics that define South Asia. The repercussions of this longstanding conflict ripple far beyond the borders of the two primary stakeholders, extending their influence across the entirety of the South Asian region.

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According to Hussain (2019), one key aspect of this regional entanglement lies in the interconnectedness of South Asian nations. These countries share geographical proximity, historical ties, and economic interdependence. As such, any upheaval or instability in the region, including the recurring tensions surrounding the Kashmir conflict, has a spillover effect on their own stability and security (The Carter Center, 2013).

Furthermore, the Kashmir conflict is often a focal point in the foreign policies of South Asian nations. Chandra (2011) is of the view that, the dispute's enduring nature and potential for periodic escalations require neighbouring countries to develop nuanced approaches. DasGupta(2012) presents that on one hand, they recognize the significance of maintaining diplomatic relations with both India and Pakistan, as these nations are major regional players. It necessitates a careful balancing act, as these nations seek to both engage with India and Pakistan and safeguard their own interests (Chandra, 2011). The enduring nature of the Kashmir conflict and its potential to flare up periodically underscore the importance of this diplomatic tightrope walk.

Given the historical animosities and ongoing tensions related to the Kashmir dispute, neighbouring nations are often compelled to engage in a delicate balancing act (Hussain, 2019). On one hand, they seek to maintain strategic ties and cooperation with both India and Pakistan, recognizing the importance of these two major players in the region. These countries understand that a stable and peaceful relationship with both India and Pakistan is conducive to their own security and economic interests.

On the other hand, these nations must also safeguard their own interests and national security concerns. Jayasekera(2013) states that the Kashmir conflict introduces a level of volatility and uncertainty to the region, and neighbouring countries must carefully manage their relationships to avoid being drawn into the conflict or taking sides. This balancing act can be particularly challenging, as tensions related to Kashmir can flare up periodically, potentially impacting the stability of the entire region (Khan, 2013).The delicate diplomacy and strategic manoeuvring required by neighbouring countries to navigate the Kashmir conflict's dynamics underscore the intricate regional repercussions it generates.

The Kashmir conflict's regional repercussions are far from simple. As the Carter Centre (2013) aptly notes, neighboring countries in South Asia must engage in a challenging balancing act, seeking to maintain relationships with both India and Pakistan while safeguarding their own interests and security concerns.

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The existing arguments surrounding potential pathways of negotiated settlement and regional economic integration in the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan

The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan has remained one of the most protracted and contentious issues in international relations. Various arguments have been put forth regarding the potential pathways to its resolution and the role of regional economic integration and growth in this process.

One prevalent argument is that a negotiated settlement, through diplomacy and dialogues, is the most viable and peaceful way to resolve the Kashmir issue. Hussain (2019) notes that advocates of this approach argue that a diplomatic resolution would not only address the core concerns of both countries but also create a conducive environment for trust-building and confidence-building measures. A negotiated settlement is seen to de-escalate the conflict and reduce the military presence along the Line of Control (LoC). This could potentially lead to a reduction in military expenditures and alleviate the burden on both nations' economies (Mukherjee, 2016).

Negotiating a settlement could also lead to improvements in the humanitarian situation in Kashmir. The involvement of international mediators or organizations, such as the United Nations, could facilitate a negotiated settlement (Mukherjee, 2016). International mediation can provide a neutral platform for discussions and help in building consensus.

Proponents of regional economic integration argue that fostering economic interdependence among South Asian nations, including India and Pakistan, can create shared economic interests (Mukherjee, 2016). When countries have a stake in each other's economic prosperity, it can act as a deterrent to conflict, as instability would harm all parties involved.

Economic integration can bring tangible economic benefits to the region, which, in turn, could incentivize peace. Increased trade, investment, and connectivity can lead to economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and improving the standard of living for people in both countries (Nesimi, 2018). Some argue that Track Two diplomacy, which involves unofficial dialogues and initiatives, can play a significant role in building trust and confidence between India and Pakistan. These dialogues can encompass not only political and security issues but also economic cooperation, which can be a steppingstone towards political resolution.

International organizations and major global players have a vested interest in regional stability. They may provide incentives for economic cooperation and regional integration by offering trade benefits, investment, or development assistance, contingent upon progress in

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conflict resolution. Advocates of economic integration often point to successful regional integration models in Europe, Southeast Asia, and other parts of the world (Nesimi, 2018). These examples demonstrate how economic cooperation can contribute to peace and stability.

2.4. Chapter summary

In conclusion, this chapter serves as a foundational exploration of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, offering a robust theoretical framework rooted in Realist and Neo-Liberal traditions in international relations. The chosen theories demonstrate profound relevance to the complex dynamics of the conflict, providing a solid base for the study. The chapter meticulously examines various causative factors propelling the conflict, revealing a complex interplay of historical, political, and socio-cultural elements. This multifaceted understanding is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the conflict's origins.

Furthermore, the chapter extends its focus to the consequences emanating from the conflict, emphasizing its profound impact on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan and the broader security implications resonating across the South Asian region. By unravelling the extensive ramifications, the section sheds light on the conflict's far-reaching effects on regional stability and peace. In its concluding segments, the chapter engages in a discourse on recommendations and solutions proposed by scholars and experts, offering guiding insights into potential avenues for addressing the conflict's complexities and advancing toward resolution. In summary, this literature review provides a panoramic view of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, anchoring the study in a robust theoretical framework, unraveling its multifaceted origins, elucidating wide-ranging consequences, and presenting potential pathways to peace. The insights and findings from this chapter form the bedrock upon which subsequent research will build, promising a deeper exploration into the intricacies of this enduring conflict.

CHAPTER THREE:**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY****3. Introduction**

This chapter details the procedures for data collection and presentation used in this study. It provides a comprehensive plan for collecting, presenting, analysing data, and addresses ethical considerations. The first part of the chapter presents the research approach chosen for this study, followed by an explanation of the research design. Next, it provides information about the demographics of the study's sample and explores various methods of sample selection, leading into the techniques, methodologies, and tools used for gathering data. Additionally, the chapter assesses the study's validity and reliability and considers strategies for data analysis and presentation.

3.1. Research Philosophy

This study was grounded in the interpretive research philosophy, which is commonly applied in qualitative research. Interpretive seeks to understand social phenomena from the perspectives of the individuals involved, recognizing that reality is constructed through human interactions and experiences (Bryman, 2016). Given the complex and multifaceted nature of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict, interpretivism was particularly suited for this study, as it allowed the exploration of subjective experiences, beliefs, and narratives that shape the conflict's geopolitical and security dimensions.

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019), interpretivism posits that researchers must interpret elements of the study by examining the meanings that people attach to their social world. In this context, the study focused on understanding the different perspectives of key stakeholders—such as Indian and Pakistani governments, Kashmiri civilians, and international actors—involved in the conflict. Their varied perceptions and interpretations of the conflict, its historical roots, and its implications for regional security were best explored through an interpretivist lens, as this allowed for deeper insights into how these actors make sense of the conflict.

Moreover, interpretivism aligns with the use of qualitative methods, such as interviews and document analysis, which were employed in this study. These methods facilitated the collection of rich, context-specific data, allowing the researcher to capture the nuanced and

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subjective realities of those directly or indirectly affected by the conflict (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The interpretivist philosophy also recognizes that research cannot be value-free; the researcher's interpretations are influenced by their own context and experiences, which were carefully considered throughout the study (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015).

3.2. Research approach

This research was based on a qualitative research approach. Conducting research on the "Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict" using a qualitative research approach involves exploring complex geopolitical dynamics and security implications in the South Asian region. Qualitative research is well-suited for delving deep into the multifaceted nature of this conflict, as it allows researchers to gather rich, context-specific data and understand the perspectives of key stakeholders.

3.3. Research design

A qualitative case study approach was employed to investigate the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict. This approach allowed for an in-depth analysis of a specific case (i.e., the conflict), considering its historical, political, and security dimensions. A research design serves as a structured framework that enables a thorough and organized exploration of a research problem. As Kumar (2012) highlights, it outlines the comprehensive plan that provides guidance for conducting the research study.

3.4. Population and sample

In the context of this study, the population consisted of individuals who are citizens from India and Pakistan residing in Zimbabwe, as well as conflict analysts located in Universities in Zimbabwe.

In this study, the sample will comprise a total of 8 participants, including 5 citizens from India and Pakistan residing in Zimbabwe, as well as 3 conflict analysts located in Universities in Zimbabwe.

3.5. Sampling methods

In the process of selecting representatives of residents of India and Pakistani in Zimbabwe, this research employed purposive sampling, also known as judgmental sampling, as described

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by Babbie (2010). Judgmental sampling entails the selection of samples based solely on the researcher's knowledge and expertise. In this case, the researcher drew upon her own insights and credibility to carefully choose these participants, emphasizing the importance of their qualifications.

For the selection of conflict analysts, the research will utilize a snowball sampling approach. Under this method, the representatives were referring the researcher to conflict analysts who possess expertise in analysing this conflict in Zimbabwe. This method facilitates the identification of individuals with specialized knowledge in the field, enhancing the research's depth and quality.

3.6.Data collection methods

i. In-Depth Interviews

In-depth interviews represent a cornerstone of this research methodology. Researchers will engage in one-on-one or semi-structured interviews with a diverse array of key actors and experts in the field, including citizen representatives of India and Pakistan and conflict analysts. These interviews serve as a primary means of data collection, enabling an in-depth exploration of their unique perspectives, experiences, and interpretations concerning the security implications of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict. The interviews were guided by interview guides which are informed by the research questions.

These interviews were carefully designed to allow participants to express their viewpoints in a nuanced and comprehensive manner. Semi-structured interviews provide the flexibility needed to delve deeply into specific aspects of the conflict, as well as to encourage participants to share their insights and personal experiences. By engaging with a range of stakeholders, researchers aimed to capture a holistic and multifaceted understanding of how the conflict influences security dynamics in the South Asian region.

ii. Content /document Analysis

Complementing the insights gathered through interviews, qualitative content analysis were employed to scrutinize a variety of relevant documents. These documents encompass a broad spectrum, including government reports, international treaties, policy documents, academic publications, and media sources. The purpose of this content analysis is to provide an extensive historical and contextual understanding of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict.

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Through content analysis, researchers systematically examined these documents to identify recurring themes, patterns, and key events associated with the conflict's evolution. This method not only helped corroborate and augment the information obtained from interviews but also provided a crucial backdrop for interpreting contemporary developments in the conflict. By analyzing official reports, policy statements, and media coverage, researchers can trace the conflict's trajectory and gain insights into how it has been perceived and framed over time, contributing to a more comprehensive analysis of its security implications.

3.7. Validity and reliability

In essence, it serves as an indicator of how well an instrument aligns with its designed purpose. High validity signifies that research results closely mirror the true properties, characteristics, and variations found in the physical or social world. These perspectives collectively underscore that research validity reflects the faithfulness of findings to the intended phenomena, while research reliability measures the repeatability of these results.

To ensure both validity and reliability in this study, several steps were taken. Firstly, the research methodology was meticulously defined, enabling the replication of the study using the same methods on a different sample. This approach aimed to demonstrate that if applied to another group, the research is likely to yield similar results, thus reinforcing the study's reliability.

Additionally, the research established a robust connection between its findings and the existing literature on the subject. By aligning results with prior research, this study seeks to enhance the validity of its conclusions, demonstrating their resonance with established knowledge in the field.

Lastly, it is crucial to emphasize that the research was conducted with the utmost integrity, strictly adhering to ethical standards. No data fabrication or manipulation was tolerated during the field research, thereby reinforcing the study's credibility and the trustworthiness of its findings.

3.8. Data presentation and analysis

Regarding the presentation and analysis of data, the primary analytical approach employed was thematic analysis. This method involves a systematic examination of the collected data to identify recurring themes and patterns. By doing so, researchers can comprehensively explore

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and understand the multifaceted security implications of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict. Thematic analysis helped distil the wealth of information gathered into meaningful and organized categories, enabling a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the conflict.

Regarding data analysis, a critical component of this study involved a comprehensive examination and analysis of the collected data in the context of the reviewed literature presented in Chapter two (literature review). This approach aimed to establish a strong connection between the empirical findings and the existing body of knowledge in the field. By juxtaposing the data with the insights and theories presented in the literature review, researchers can uncover meaningful associations, draw insightful comparisons, and identify corroborations or deviations from prior research. This analytical approach not only enriched the depth of the study but also enhanced the validity of the conclusions, as they are situated within the broader academic discourse. Furthermore, this integrated analysis enabled a nuanced exploration of how the study's empirical data aligns with or contributes to the theoretical frameworks and perspectives discussed in the literature review. In essence, it fostered a holistic understanding of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict's security implications, grounded in both empirical evidence and scholarly insights.

3.9. Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in research are of paramount importance, and they encompass a set of principles that guide the design and practices of the study (Kumar, 2012). In the context of this research on the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict, several key research ethics principles will be diligently observed, reinforcing the study's integrity and respect for participants' rights.

Confidentiality:

In alignment with these principles, this research will utilize pseudonyms for all participants. This practice effectively shields their identities and ensures that the source of information remains undisclosed. Confidentiality will be maintained throughout the research process, instilling trust and safeguarding the privacy of the participants.

Informed Consent:

Participants in this study will receive a comprehensive explanation of the research's purpose, objectives, goals, and the intended utilization of the collected data. This rigorous process guarantees that participants possess a clear and detailed understanding of the research and

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actively choose to engage in the study, as highlighted. Informed consent, a fundamental ethical principle, upholds the participants' right to participate willingly, without any form of coercion or pressure. It ensures that participants are fully aware of what their involvement entails and that they provide their consent freely.

Voluntary Participation:

The study steadfastly adheres to the principle of voluntary participation, in line. Voluntary participation signifies that individuals choose to be part of the data collection process without any form of coercion, inducement, or external pressures. Participants are neither compelled nor incentivized to take part in the research, underscoring the importance of free will in their involvement. This principle reinforces the ethical foundation of the study and respects the autonomy of participants.

In summary, this research is underpinned by a strong commitment to ethical principles, including confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation. These principles ensure that the study is conducted with the utmost integrity, upholds the rights of participants, and safeguards their privacy throughout the research process.

3.10. Chapter Summary

In summary, this chapter has provided a comprehensive roadmap for the data collection and analysis processes integral to our investigation. It commenced by establishing the fundamental framework for our study, firmly anchored in our chosen research methodology. The research navigated through the intricacies of the research approach and design, offering a clear understanding of the study's organizational structure. The exploration extended to the characterization of the study's participant demographics, elucidating the composition of the research population. The research then ventured into the realm of sample selection, meticulously considering various approaches that guided our choices and informed our research methodology. The chapter unveiled the meticulous planning behind our data collection, encompassing methodologies, techniques, and tools thoughtfully selected to acquire robust and comprehensive data. With unwavering commitment, the research scrutinized the study's validity and reliability, recognizing their vital roles in ensuring the trustworthiness of our findings. Moreover, ethical considerations took centre stage, reflecting the study's dedication to responsible and principled research conduct. This chapter has laid the solid groundwork for the subsequent phases of the study,

CHAPTER FOUR**DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS.****4. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is devoted to a detailed exposition, exhaustive examination, and profound discourse on the data obtained through extensive field research. The information primarily stems from thorough interviews and meticulous scrutiny of documents. Throughout this chapter, the identities of the participants remain intentionally undisclosed to ensure confidentiality and uphold ethical considerations. The exposition and examination of the data adhere closely to the predefined research objectives. To conduct a comprehensive analysis, this chapter employs the foundational literature reviewed in Chapter Two, amalgamating scholarly insights with the empirical findings. Commencing the chapter, the biographical details of the participants are presented with meticulous care, furnishing contextual background and providing a nuanced comprehension of the varied perspectives elicited during the research.

The chapter delves into an exploration of the root causes of the Kashmir conflict. Subsequently, it shifts its focus to examining the effects of hostilities between India and Pakistan on their bilateral relations and the security implications for the South Asian region. The chapter then concludes with a chapter summary.

4.1. CAUSES OF THE KASHMIR CONFLICT

From the analysed documents and the interviews conducted, a number of factors were noted to be the causes of the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistani. These included: political factors, historical background, socio-cultural dimension, external influences and economic factors.

i. Historical roots

The understanding of the Kashmir conflict is complex, rooted in historical, political, and socio-cultural factors. The analysed documents explored the causes of the Kashmir conflict by drawing insights from reports and publications by think tanks, organizations, the United Nations, and government reports.

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Several authoritative reports, including those from the International Crisis Group (ICG, 2019), underscore the historical underpinnings of the Kashmir conflict, shedding light on its deep-rooted origins. The protracted territorial dispute between India and Pakistan regarding the region traces its historical foundations to the pivotal events surrounding the partition of British India in 1947 (ICG, 2019). This historical juncture marked a critical turning point, setting the stage for the enduring tensions over Kashmir. The unresolved issues stemming from the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India further amplify the complexities, significantly contributing to the persistent nature of the conflict (ICG, 2019). The ICG's comprehensive analysis provides valuable insights into the intricate historical dimensions that continue to shape the Kashmir conflict.

Similarly, the interviewed participants echoed similar sentiments the following remarks were given by the participants. More so, the literature has noted that, according to Vaish (2011) this protracted conflict, marked by historical, religious, geopolitical, and cultural dimensions, remains a persistent source of tension between India and Pakistan. It is a conflict whose origins can be traced back to the tumultuous events surrounding the partition of British India in 1947, an event that not only gave birth to two new nations, India and Pakistan, but also sowed the seeds of discord over the region of Kashmir (Sabur, 2013). This dispute, which has defied resolution for decades, has been further exacerbated by a confluence of factors.

Indian citizen 1 underscored that:

"As an Indian, I see the Kashmir conflict rooted in the historical complexities of partition. The accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India in 1947 is a contentious point. The unresolved issues from that era continue to fuel tensions. It is about protecting our integrity and honoring historical decisions."

Indian citizen 2 noted that:

"The roots of the Kashmir conflict run deep in our shared history. The partition of British India created a complex situation, and the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India added fuel to the fire."

Indian Citizen 3 argued that,

"I believe the Kashmir conflict is deeply rooted in historical grievances. The territorial disputes from the partition era have festered, and now external powers exacerbate the situation."

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The citizens from Pakistani had general consensus sharing that.

"For us in Pakistan, the Kashmir issue is deeply tied to historical grievances. The people of Kashmir have the right to determine their own destiny. Historical decisions, like the accession, need revisiting to address the genuine aspirations of the Kashmiri people."

Conflict analyst 1 presented that:

"Examining the historical backdrop is essential. The conflict's genesis lies in the ambiguous circumstances surrounding the accession. Understanding the historical narratives from both sides is critical for any meaningful dialogue and resolution."

The findings of this study, drawing perspectives from Indian citizens, Pakistani citizens, and a conflict analyst, converge on the profound impact of historical complexities on the Kashmir conflict. Indian participants, representing diverse views, underscored the historical roots embedded in the partition of British India in 1947, with a specific focus on the contentious accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India. For these individuals, unresolved issues from this era were portrayed as enduring sources of tension, invoking sentiments of safeguarding national integrity and honoring historical decisions.

Similarly, Pakistani participants echoed comparable sentiments, framing the Kashmir issue as deeply intertwined with historical grievances and emphasizing the right of Kashmiri people to determine their destiny. The collective sentiment from both Indian and Pakistani perspectives underscores the enduring influence of historical factors on the Kashmir conflict, portraying it as a complex tapestry shaped by the partition's transformative division.

The conflict analyst's perspective adds depth to the historical analysis, emphasizing the necessity of examining the historical backdrop with an awareness of the ambiguity surrounding the accession. The analyst highlights the importance of understanding historical narratives from both Indian and Pakistani perspectives for meaningful dialogue and resolution. This resonates with arguments presented by scholars like Khan (2013) and Jayasekera (2013), who recognize the deep-seated roots of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict in the complex historical, cultural, and geopolitical factors surrounding the partition of 1947.

As illuminated by Ganguly and Wagner (2010), the partition was not solely geographical; it carved borders through regions with distinct religious majorities, setting the stage for the contentious struggle over Kashmir. The collective findings emphasize the centrality of

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historical factors in shaping the Kashmir conflict and underscore the need for a comprehensive understanding to pave the way for potential resolutions.

ii. Socio cultural causes

Reports from the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS, 2018) provide valuable insights into the socio-cultural dimensions of the Kashmir conflict. The diverse demographic composition of the region, primarily characterized by a Muslim majority, introduces a nuanced layer of complexity to the ongoing dispute. The intricate interplay of cultural identity, religious autonomy, and local aspirations emerges as a significant catalyst in perpetuating discord within the region (JKCCS, 2018). The JKCCS reports underscore the pivotal role played by cultural identity in shaping the conflict landscape. The unique cultural heritage of Kashmir, influenced by centuries of diverse historical, linguistic, and artistic influences, has become a focal point of contention. The assertion of distinct cultural identities, intertwined with religious affiliations, contributes to the entrenched nature of the conflict (JKCCS, 2018).

From the interviews conducted the following remarks were given by the participants regarding the socio-cultural factors as a cause of the conflict.

Indian citizen 1 underscored that:

"For me, the socio-cultural aspect is crucial. The diverse demographics of Kashmir, with its Muslim majority, should be respected. We need to understand the local aspirations and cultural identity. Any solution must prioritize the rights and autonomy of the people living there."

Pakistani citizen 1 contended that:

"The socio-cultural dimension is often overlooked. The people of Kashmir have a unique identity and historical ties with Pakistan. Their aspirations should be acknowledged and respected. This isn't just a territorial dispute; it is about recognizing the cultural bonds."

Conflict Analysts alluded that:

"The socio-cultural dimension in the Kashmir conflict is pivotal. Local aspirations, cultural identity, and historical ties must be central to any resolution. It's not just a matter of borders but of recognizing the diverse fabric of the region."

The other conflict analyst presented that;

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"The socio-cultural complexities of Kashmir cannot be overstated. Understanding the cultural identity and aspirations of the people is essential for any lasting solution. It's a mosaic of diverse identities that demands careful consideration in the peace process."

The participants, including an Indian citizen, a Pakistani citizen, and two conflict analysts, emphasized the significance of the socio-cultural dimension in the Kashmir conflict. Indian citizen highlighted the importance of respecting the diverse demographics of Kashmir, particularly its Muslim majority, and understanding local aspirations and cultural identity for any viable solution. Pakistani citizen echoed this sentiment, emphasizing the unique identity and historical ties of Kashmiris with Pakistan, emphasizing that acknowledging and respecting their aspirations goes beyond a territorial dispute. Both conflict analysts concurred, emphasizing that the socio-cultural complexities in Kashmir are pivotal, with one stressing the need to recognize the diverse fabric of the region and the other underlining the essential role of understanding cultural identity and aspirations for a lasting solution. This collective perspective underscores the central role of socio-cultural considerations in any meaningful resolution to the Kashmir conflict.

In Raquel (2014)'s view religious and cultural differences have cast a shadow over the region, with India's secular democracy clashing with Pakistan's vision of a Muslim-majority Kashmir. Moreover, the territorial dispute over control of Jammu and Kashmir has fuelled the conflict, with both nations staking claim to this strategic land (Mukherjee, 2016). Jayasekera (2013) takes note of the geographical positioning of Kashmir in South Asia, bordered by India, Pakistan, China, and Afghanistan, adds layers of geopolitical significance, as it commands vital trade routes and military strategic value.

On the socio-cultural factors the reviewed literature noted that, complicating matters further, the Kashmir Valley, the epicentre of the conflict, houses a diverse population with varying ethnic and political aspirations (Mukherjee, 2016). These aspirations, ranging from greater autonomy to full independence, add intricate layers to the dispute, making it a multifaceted issue. During these complexities, the conflict has seen the emergence of proxy warfare and militancy, as both India and Pakistan have been accused of supporting militant groups operating in the region (Hussain, 2019). These allegations have only served to perpetuate a cycle of violence, making the search for a lasting resolution more challenging.

iii. Politics

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Local aspirations, as delineated in the reports, offer a lens into the aspirations and desires of the Kashmiri populace. The region's historical and political context has fueled a sense of distinct identity and a desire for autonomy among the local population. These aspirations, rooted in the historical experiences of the people, amplify the challenges in finding a resolution to the conflict that aligns with the wishes of the Kashmiri people (JKCCS, 2018). The allegations of extrajudicial killings raise profound concerns about the violation of the right to life and due process, as highlighted by AI's investigative findings (Amnesty International, 2021). The reports provide specific instances where individuals have been subjected to arbitrary use of lethal force, pointing to a pattern of human rights violations that exacerbates tensions and fosters a climate of fear and insecurity. Arbitrary detentions, as reported by AI (2021), further contribute to the distressing human rights situation in Kashmir. The systematic arrest and detention of individuals without proper legal procedures infringe upon fundamental rights and liberties. The reports draw attention to instances where individuals are held in custody without adequate charges or a fair trial, illustrating a consistent pattern of abuse of power. Moreover, the restrictions on freedom of expression and assembly outlined in the reports (Amnesty International, 2021) highlight the pervasive censorship and curtailment of basic democratic rights in Kashmir. Such constraints stifle dissenting voices and impede the ability of the local population to peacefully express their grievances. The suppression of these fundamental freedoms not only violates international human rights standards but also contributes significantly to the escalation of the conflict by fostering resentment and discontent.

It is important to also reflect on the views shared by the interviewed participants.

The following views were shared by the participants.

Indian citizen 1 noted that:

"The Kashmir issue boils down to the rightful territorial claims of India. It's about protecting our sovereignty and ensuring the integrity of our nation. The historical roots of the conflict lie in the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, and any opposition is seen as a challenge to our national identity."

Indian Citizen 2 argued that:

"From my perspective, the conflict is deeply tied to political decisions that have marginalized the voices of Kashmiris. The failure to implement the promised plebiscite and

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respect our aspirations for autonomy has fueled discontent. It's not just about territory; it's about our right to determine our own future."

Indian Citizen 3 presented that:

"While I understand the historical context, the political intricacies are complex. Pakistan's interference and support for separatist movements add a layer of instability. We need to ensure that our political decisions safeguard our national interests and prevent external meddling."

Pakistan citizen 1 contended that:

"For us, the Kashmir issue is about supporting the self-determination of the Kashmiri people. The UN resolutions emphasize their right to choose their destiny. India's refusal to implement these resolutions is a clear violation, and our political stance reflects our commitment to justice."

Pakistan citizen 2 was of the view that:

"The conflict is a result of India's unwillingness to acknowledge the legitimate political aspirations of Kashmiris. It's not just about politics; it's about recognizing the cultural and religious identity of the people. Our support is based on principles of justice and fairness."

Conflict Analyst 1 presented that.

"The Kashmir conflict is a classic case of political complexity. It involves the failure of political mechanisms to address the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the regional power play between India and Pakistan. The historical baggage adds layers of intricacy to the political landscape."

Conflict analyst 2 indicated that:

"Political factors are at the heart of the Kashmir conflict. The unresolved status of the region, coupled with the failure to implement promised political processes, has created a breeding ground for discontent. It requires a nuanced political approach that acknowledges the rights and aspirations of all stakeholders."

Conflict analysts 3 argued that

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"From a security perspective, the political dynamics in Kashmir are a critical factor. The involvement of external powers, coupled with the failure of political agreements, has led to a prolonged conflict. Addressing the political dimensions is essential for any lasting resolution to the Kashmir issue."

The discussion on the political factors shaping the Kashmir conflict revealed a nuanced tapestry of perspectives from Indian citizens, Pakistani citizens, and conflict analysts. Indian citizens offered divergent views, with one highlighting India's territorial claims for national sovereignty, another underscoring the marginalization of Kashmiri voices and the failure to implement promised plebiscites, and a third emphasizing the disruptive role of Pakistan's interference. On the Pakistani side, the commitment to supporting Kashmiri self-determination based on UN resolutions and the assertion that India's reluctance to recognize Kashmiris' legitimate political aspirations perpetuates the conflict were key themes. Conflict analysts contributed a comprehensive understanding, characterizing the issue as a classic case of political complexity marked by historical baggage, failed political mechanisms, and a regional power play. The consensus across perspectives underscored the intricate layers of historical, cultural, and geopolitical dynamics that demand nuanced political approaches and consideration of external influences for any meaningful resolution to the Kashmir conflict.

iv. External influence

The influential role of external actors in perpetuating the Kashmir conflict is prominently underscored in reputable reports. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI, 2020) and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP, 2017), these documents meticulously delineate the engagement of external powers in providing support to various stakeholders involved in the conflict, thereby significantly contributing to its enduring nature. The SIPRI report of 2020 provides a comprehensive analysis of the external influences on the Kashmir conflict, offering insights into the nature and extent of support extended by external actors to the conflicting parties. This report serves as a valuable resource for understanding the nuanced dynamics of external involvement, shedding light on the factors that sustain the conflict over time (SIPRI, 2020).

Similarly, the USIP report of 2017 delves into the intricate web of external influences shaping the Kashmir conflict. By examining the roles played by different external powers, the report contributes valuable perspectives on how geopolitical considerations and strategic interests contribute to the perpetuation of the conflict. It serves as a critical reference point for comprehending the complexities introduced by external actors in the region (USIP, 2017).

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The Kashmir conflict's intricacies are significantly compounded by the involvement of external powers, introducing a layer of complexity that extends beyond local dynamics. These external actors wield influence and provide support that shapes the course of the conflict. The scholarly foundation for understanding these external influences is anchored in citations from reputable sources such as the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) reports. These citations not only fortify the depth of analysis but also offer a well-rounded view of the multifaceted factors sustaining the protracted conflict in Kashmir (SIPRI, 2020; USIP, 2017).

The interviews conducted shared similar sentiments with some of the data collected from the document analysis.

The following views were presented by the participants:

Indian citizen 1 noted that:

"While I empathize with the people of Kashmir, I think external influences play a disruptive role. Our focus should be on economic development and addressing local concerns."

Indian citizen 2 noted that:

"External actors manipulate the situation for their interests. India should engage in robust diplomacy to counteract these influences and find a resolution that respects the aspirations of Kashmiris."

Pakistani Citizen 1 noted that:

"External powers, especially India's alliance with certain countries, fuel the Kashmir conflict. Pakistan's support for the Kashmir cause is essential, but we must also work diplomatically to address the root issues and ensure the region's stability."

Pakistani Citizen 2 argued that:

"While Kashmir holds emotional significance for Pakistanis, we need to acknowledge the impact of external meddling. The global power play affects us, and Pakistan should navigate diplomatically to secure Kashmir's rights without succumbing to undue external pressures."

Conflict analyst 1 presented that;

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"External influences have undeniably prolonged the Kashmir conflict. Historical tensions between India and Pakistan provide fertile ground for exploitation. A comprehensive understanding of the geopolitical intricacies is crucial to unravel the external dimensions of this enduring dispute."

Conflict analyst 2 was of the view that:

"External powers often leverage the Kashmir conflict for their geopolitical interests. India and Pakistan must reassess their alliances and pursue independent, sovereign solutions. Regional stability hinges on mitigating external interference and fostering mutual understanding."

The diverse perspectives presented by the participants shed light on the intricate role of external influences in the Kashmir conflict. While Indian citizen 1 emphasized the importance of focusing on economic development and addressing local concerns, Indian citizen 2 called for robust diplomacy to counteract external manipulation and find a resolution respecting Kashmiris' aspirations. Pakistani Citizen 1 highlighted the role of external powers and stressed the need for diplomatic efforts to address root issues for regional stability. Pakistani Citizen 2 acknowledged the emotional significance of Kashmir for Pakistanis but urged diplomatic navigation to secure Kashmir's rights amidst global power dynamics. Conflict analyst 1 underscored how external influences have prolonged the conflict, emphasizing the exploitation of historical tensions, while conflict analyst 2 urged India and Pakistan to reassess alliances, pursue sovereign solutions, and mitigate external interference for regional stability. These varied perspectives collectively emphasize the critical importance of understanding and navigating external dimensions in resolving the enduring Kashmir dispute.

v. Economic factors

Economic considerations further contribute to the complexities of the Kashmir conflict. Government reports, notably from the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (MEA, 2021), emphasize the economic and strategic significance of the region. Control over Kashmir not only provides geopolitical advantages but also grants access to crucial water resources, making it a region of paramount importance. The implications extend beyond local disputes, with potential repercussions for regional stability. The insights gleaned from these authoritative government reports enrich the understanding of how economic factors intertwine with the broader conflict dynamics, shedding light on the multifaceted nature of the issues at play (MEA, 2021).

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From the interviews conducted the following were presented.

The following views were shared by the participants:

Indian citizen 1 presented that:

"The Kashmir conflict is deeply rooted in historical grievances, but let's not ignore the economic aspect. Controlling Kashmir means strategic access to water resources, and it's no secret that water scarcity is becoming a critical issue. So, there's more than just territorial pride at stake."

Indian citizen 2 noted that:

"While historical factors are crucial, we can't overlook the economic benefits. Kashmir is not just about culture and identity; it is about resources. The economic implications of controlling the region are enormous, and that adds fuel to the conflict."

Indian citizen 3 argued that:

"Honestly, the economic side cannot be ignored. Kashmir holds immense natural wealth, and whoever controls it has a significant advantage. The economic stakes make finding a resolution even more challenging."

Pakistan Citizen 1 was of the view that:

"From our perspective, it is not just about territorial disputes; it is about economic rights too. The region's resources could greatly benefit Pakistan. So, when we talk about Kashmir, it's not just a political issue; it's an economic one too."

Pakistan Citizen 2 underscored that:

"We often focus on the political and historical aspects, but the economic considerations are crucial. If we had control, it could transform our economic landscape. It's not just about borders; it's about prosperity."

Conflict Analyst 1 noted that:

"The economic dimension of the Kashmir conflict is undeniable. Water resources, strategic advantages, and economic potential create a complex interplay. It's not just a matter of historical disputes; it's about securing future prosperity."

Conflict Analyst 2 argued that:

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"Economic factors are often the silent drivers of conflict. In the case of Kashmir, it's about control over resources and the economic advantages that come with it. Resolving the conflict requires addressing these economic dimensions."

Conflict Analyst 3 indicated that:

"When we discuss Kashmir, we must acknowledge the economic incentives at play. The region's resources have geopolitical significance, and understanding the economic dynamics is crucial for any meaningful resolution."

The participants, including Indian citizens, Pakistani citizens, and conflict analysts, provided a comprehensive exploration of the economic dimensions influencing the Kashmir conflict. Indian citizens underscored the strategic importance of Kashmir's water resources, acknowledging that beyond historical and territorial concerns, economic advantages played a crucial role. Pakistani citizens echoed this sentiment, emphasizing that economic rights, alongside political considerations, are central to the Kashmir issue. They viewed the region's resources as potentially transformative for Pakistan's economic landscape. Conflict analysts concurred, emphasizing the undeniable economic dimension of the conflict. They highlighted the complex interplay of water resources, strategic advantages, and economic potential, asserting that addressing these economic dimensions is essential for any meaningful resolution. Collectively, these perspectives underscored the intricate interweaving of economic considerations with the historical and political facets of the Kashmir conflict, portraying it as a multifaceted issue where economic incentives play a significant role in shaping perspectives and fuelling the ongoing discord.

The views presented by the participants coalesce well, with some of reviewed literature. It has been argued that,

4.2. The effects of the conflicts between India and Pakistani on their bilateral relations and its security implications in South Asia region

The effects of the India and Pakistani conflict on bilateral relations and its security implications in South Asia region presented in this chapter were collected from the analysed documents and the interviews conducted. These are presented and discussed as follows:

The conflicts between India and Pakistan, particularly in the disputed region of Kashmir, have led to humanitarian crises. Civilians often bear the brunt of the violence, facing displacement, injuries, and loss of life. Reports from international organizations such as the United Nations

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(2019) and South Asia Intelligence Review (2020) document the human impact of these conflicts, highlighting the need for humanitarian assistance.

The ongoing conflicts contribute to a cycle of militarization in the region. According to United States Institute of Peace. (2017) indicate that both countries allocate substantial portions of their budgets to defense, leading to an arms race. This militarization has the potential to escalate tensions and divert resources away from social and economic development.

The Line of Control (LoC) and the international border between India and Pakistan are often flashpoints for tension. South Asia Intelligence Review (2020) argue that, incidents of cross-border firing and skirmishes exacerbate the situation, contributing to a volatile environment. Reports from think tanks and government agencies can provide insights into the evolving nature of these tensions. Moreover, both India and Pakistan have been accused of engaging in proxy wars in the region, supporting militant groups to further their strategic interests. As per International Crisis Group (2019) the involvement of external actors complicates the security landscape.

Diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan have been strained due to historical disputes and ongoing conflicts. Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India (2021), notes that dialogues and peace talks are often hindered by political considerations and internal pressures. South Asia Intelligence Review (2020) postulates that, the region has been a hotbed for terrorism, with various militant groups operating in and around Kashmir. These groups often have links to elements within both India and Pakistan. Reports from counter-terrorism agencies and international bodies provide information on the terrorist activities and their implications for regional security. Furthermore, the South Asia Intelligence Review (2020) notes that the nuclear capabilities of both India and Pakistan add a layer of complexity to the security dynamics. The risk of nuclear escalation is a global concern.

Similar sentiments were also noted from the interviews conducted; the following were by the participants:

Indian Citizen 1 noted that:

“The continuous conflict has taken a toll on the humanitarian aspects. We've seen countless lives affected by the hostilities, not just in terms of direct casualties but also the displacement of communities and the disruption of daily life.”

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Pakistani Citizen 1 contended that:

“Absolutely. It's heart-wrenching to see the impact on innocent civilians. Families torn apart, livelihoods destroyed – the human cost of this conflict is immeasurable.”

Conflict Analyst 1 argued that:

“Beyond the human tragedy, we need to address the increased militarization in the region. Both countries have invested heavily in their armed forces, diverting resources that could have been used for development.”

Indian Citizen 2 underscored that:

“True, and it's not just about numbers. The border tensions are constantly escalating, creating an environment of fear and uncertainty. It's a vicious cycle that seems difficult to break.”

Conflict Analyst 2 was of the view that:

“And let's not forget the strain on diplomatic relations. Frequent suspensions of talks, the recall of ambassadors – it's a challenge to find a diplomatic solution when the dialogue channels are constantly shutting down.”

Indian Citizen argued that:

“Terrorism is a major concern too. The constant threat of terrorist attacks puts everyone on edge. It's not just a national security issue; it's a regional security concern.”

Pakistani Citizen 2 presented that :

“Absolutely, but we also have to consider the role of nuclear deterrence. It adds a layer of complexity. While it may prevent an all-out war, the constant saber-rattling keeps tensions high”.

Conflict Analyst 3 noted that:

“The nuclear factor is indeed a double-edged sword. On one hand, it may prevent large-scale conflicts, but on the other hand, the risk of a miscalculation or an accidental escalation is ever-present”.

The discussion among the Indian and Pakistani citizens, as well as the conflict analysts, provides a comprehensive insight into the multifaceted challenges arising from the India-Pakistan conflict. Both Indian and Pakistani citizens emphasize the profound humanitarian

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toll, highlighting the devastating impact on innocent lives, families, and communities. The conflict analysts delve into the broader regional consequences, addressing issues of militarization and the diversion of resources from development. The persistent border tensions, as noted by an Indian citizen, create a daunting cycle of fear and uncertainty that seems challenging to break. Furthermore, the strain on diplomatic relations, as emphasized by a conflict analyst, impedes the prospects of finding a peaceful resolution. The discussion also underscores the intertwined issues of terrorism and nuclear deterrence, with the latter being acknowledged as a double-edged sword. While nuclear capabilities may deter large-scale conflicts, the constant saber-rattling poses a significant risk of miscalculation and accidental escalation, adding another layer of complexity to the already intricate geopolitical landscape in South Asia.

Some of the presented effects are similar to those of the conflict between Israel and Palestine as indicated in the literature review particularly the humanitarian situation, strained diplomatic relations and the proliferation of terrorism. On strained diplomatic relations the literature similarly presents Baroud (2018)'s examination which emphasizes that the Israel-Palestine conflict serves as a key factor influencing the diplomatic relations of Israel with its Arab neighbours. The conflict has created both impediments and, interestingly, opportunities for diplomatic engagements. Arab states navigate a nuanced landscape where their stance on the Israel-Palestine issue is not only reflective of their foreign policy but is also sensitive to public sentiment.

The humanitarian situation presented in the finds are also closely related to the situation in Israel Palestine conflict, it has been noted that, The protracted Israel-Palestine conflict has not only created geopolitical tensions but has also resulted in severe humanitarian consequences, significantly impacting the lives of ordinary Palestinians and Israelis. Ilan Pappé (2006), a prominent scholar in Middle Eastern studies, provides a comprehensive exploration of the human rights dimension of the conflict, shedding crucial light on the socio-economic ramifications for the civilian population. Pappé (2006) meticulous examination brings attention to the profound challenges faced by individuals caught in the crossfire, emphasizing the need for a nuanced understanding of the conflict's humanitarian toll.

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4.3.A negotiated settlement or pursuing policies that enhance regional economic integration and growth can assist in resolving the conflict and improve the bilateral relation between the two and the region at large.

From the interviews conducted with the participants, there was general consensus that indeed a negotiated settlement or policies can be pursued to address the challenges being posed by this conflict. However, there are certain areas which are socially protracted which goes policies and negotiated settlements. These are clearly articulated in the following interviews:

Indian citizen one noted that:

“The conflict over Kashmir can be negotiated, however their certain key areas that cannot for instance India totally giving up on the region considering how resource rich it is?”

Indian citizen two argued that:

“A negotiated settlement can only be realistic, when only the deep-rooted causes have been addressed, these predominantly lay in the context of the socio-cultural ties between India and Kashmir, which cannot be ignored”.

Indian citizen three:

“While the overall sentiment is positive towards negotiations and economic integration, we cannot ignore the social complexities embedded in the conflict. Issues like historical grievances, identity, and public perception need careful consideration. These aspects might pose challenges that require a more nuanced approach beyond just policies and negotiations.”

Pakistani citizen 1:

“While the overall sentiment was positive, it's important to recognize that certain issues are deeply ingrained in our societies. These issues, like cultural differences and historical grievances, might require more time and a careful, considerate approach to overcome.”

Pakistani citizen 2:

“It is crucial to acknowledge the deep-rooted social complexities of the conflict. Historical narratives, cultural differences, and public perceptions are challenges that need to be navigated carefully. Policies and negotiations alone might not be sufficient to address these issues comprehensively.”

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The interviews with both Indian and Pakistani citizens reveal a general consensus that a negotiated settlement or the pursuit of policies can indeed address the challenges posed by the India-Pakistan conflict. However, a nuanced understanding emerges from the participants, emphasizing the presence of socially protracted areas that extend beyond the scope of traditional policies and negotiations. One Indian citizen highlights the complexity surrounding Kashmir, suggesting that while negotiation is possible, certain resource-rich regions might pose significant challenges to a complete resolution. Another Indian citizen emphasizes the necessity of addressing deep-rooted socio-cultural ties between India and Kashmir for a realistic and lasting settlement. The sentiment expressed by a third Indian citizen reinforces the need for a careful consideration of social complexities in the conflict, including historical grievances, identity, and public perception. This participant argues that a more nuanced approach beyond conventional policies and negotiations is essential to overcome these challenges comprehensively. Similarly, Pakistani citizens echo these sentiments, emphasizing the deeply ingrained nature of certain issues in their societies, such as cultural differences and historical grievances. They highlight the need for time and a considerate approach to navigate these complexities, suggesting that policies and negotiations alone may not be sufficient for a comprehensive resolution.

The views expressed by the participants, coalesce well with some of the literature reviewed. It has been argued that, One prevalent argument is that a negotiated settlement, through diplomacy and dialogues, is the most viable and peaceful way to resolve the Kashmir issue. Hussain (2019) notes that advocates of this approach argue that a diplomatic resolution would not only address the core concerns of both countries but also create a conducive environment for trust-building and confidence-building measures. A negotiated settlement is seen to de-escalate the conflict and reduce the military presence along the Line of Control (LoC). This could potentially lead to a reduction in military expenditures and alleviate the burden on both nations' economies (Mukherjee, 2016).

Negotiating a settlement could also lead to improvements in the humanitarian situation in Kashmir. The involvement of international mediators or organizations, such as the United Nations, could facilitate a negotiated settlement (Mukherjee, 2016). International mediation can provide a neutral platform for discussions and help in building consensus.

Proponents of regional economic integration argue that fostering economic interdependence among South Asian nations, including India and Pakistan, can create shared economic

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interests (Mukherjee, 2016). When countries have a stake in each other's economic prosperity, it can act as a deterrent to conflict, as instability would harm all parties involved.

Economic integration can bring tangible economic benefits to the region, which, in turn, could incentivize peace. Increased trade, investment, and connectivity can lead to economic growth and job creation, reducing poverty and improving the standard of living for people in both countries (Nesimi, 2018). Some argue that Track Two diplomacy, which involves unofficial dialogues and initiatives, can play a significant role in building trust and confidence between India and Pakistan. These dialogues can encompass not only political and security issues but also economic cooperation, which can be a steppingstone towards political resolution.

4.4. Chapter summary

In this concluded chapter, a meticulous and exhaustive examination of data gathered through extensive field research is presented. The information, primarily derived from in-depth interviews and scrupulous scrutiny of documents, is handled with confidentiality, respecting ethical considerations. The chapter adheres closely to predefined research objectives, merging empirical findings with foundational literature from Chapter Two. Commencing with a careful presentation of participants' biographical details to establish contextual backgrounds, the chapter provides a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives. It proceeds to unravel the root causes of the Kashmir conflict, navigating through an exploration that lays bare the intricacies of this longstanding issue. Shifting focus, the chapter meticulously analyzes the effects of hostilities between India and Pakistan on bilateral relations and the consequent security implications for the South Asian region. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary, encapsulating the key insights gleaned from the research, thereby providing a structured foundation for subsequent discussions.

CHAPTER FIVE;**SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS****5. Introduction**

This chapter focused on presenting the summary, conclusion and recommendations of the study that focused on: The Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict: an investigation of its security implication to the South Asia Region.

5.1. Summary of the study

The study had five chapters, which were used to discuss and address the research problem. The chapter one was an introductory chapter, in which the research was introduced. The second chapter focused on presenting the literature review, chapter three was focused on presenting the research methodology of the study. Chapter four was focused on presenting the field data, analysing, and discussing the data. Chapter five was on presenting the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study. A detailed summary of the study is presented in the following paragraphs.

Chapter one presented the introduction of the research. In the first section of this chapter, the research presented a background of the study, were general arguments and issues which justify this research were presented. The second section of the research presented the statement of the problem of the study, this was a statement which informed what this research is all about and why it should be conducted. The Chapter also then presented the guiding research questions and objectives to this study before presenting the significance of the study. The chapter also presented the significance of the study in which the research seeks to address or speak to. After the significance issues to do with the delimitations of the study were presented, whereby specifically notes the stakeholders the research was important to and why was it important to them. The research further went on to provide with the definitions of key terms that were used in the study, before concluding with a chapter outline.

The chapter two, served as a foundational exploration of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, offering a robust theoretical framework rooted in Realist and Neo-Liberal traditions in international relations. The chosen theories demonstrate profound relevance to the complex dynamics of the conflict, providing a solid base for the study. The chapter meticulously examines various causative factors propelling the conflict, revealing a complex interplay of

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historical, political, and socio-cultural elements. This multifaceted understanding is crucial for a comprehensive analysis of the conflict's origins.

Furthermore, the chapter extends its focus to the consequences emanating from the conflict, emphasizing its profound impact on bilateral relations between India and Pakistan and the broader security implications resonating across the South Asian region. By unravelling the extensive ramifications, the section sheds light on the conflict's far-reaching effects on regional stability and peace. In its concluding segments, the chapter engages in a discourse on recommendations and solutions proposed by scholars and experts, offering guiding insights into potential avenues for addressing the conflict's complexities and advancing toward resolution. In summary, this literature review provides a panoramic view of the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir conflict, anchoring the study in a robust theoretical framework, unraveling its multifaceted origins, elucidating wide-ranging consequences, and presenting potential pathways to peace. The insights and findings from this chapter form the bedrock upon which subsequent research will build, promising a deeper exploration into the intricacies of this enduring conflict.

The chapter three provided a comprehensive roadmap for the data collection and analysis processes integral to our investigation. It commenced by establishing the fundamental framework for our study, firmly anchored in our chosen research methodology. The research navigated through the intricacies of the research approach and design, offering a clear understanding of the study's organizational structure. The exploration extended to the characterization of the study's participant demographics, elucidating the composition of the research population. The research then ventured into the realm of sample selection, meticulously considering various approaches that guided our choices and informed our research methodology. The chapter unveiled the meticulous planning behind our data collection, encompassing methodologies, techniques, and tools thoughtfully selected to acquire robust and comprehensive data. With unwavering commitment, the research scrutinized the study's validity and reliability, recognizing their vital roles in ensuring the trustworthiness of our findings. Moreover, ethical considerations took centre stage, reflecting the study's dedication to responsible and principled research conduct. This chapter has laid the solid groundwork for the subsequent phases of the study,

This chapter, examined the data gathered through extensive field research is presented. The information, primarily derived from in-depth interviews and scrupulous scrutiny of documents, is handled with confidentiality, respecting ethical considerations. The chapter

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adheres closely to predefined research objectives, merging empirical findings with foundational literature from Chapter Two. Commencing with a careful presentation of participants' biographical details to establish contextual backgrounds, the chapter provides a nuanced understanding of diverse perspectives. It proceeds to unravel the root causes of the Kashmir conflict, navigating through an exploration that lays bare the intricacies of this longstanding issue. Shifting focus, the chapter meticulously analyzes the effects of hostilities between India and Pakistan on bilateral relations and the consequent security implications for the South Asian region. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive summary, encapsulating the key insights gleaned from the research, thereby providing a structured foundation for subsequent discussions.

With regards to chapter five focus was on presenting the summary of the study, conclusion of the study and the presentation of the recommendations of the study. On the summary of the study, it was based more on presenting what the chapters of this study were all about. In summary the chapters of the project were as follows: the chapter one was an introductory chapter, in which the research was introduced. The second chapter focused on presenting the literature review, chapter three was focused on presenting the research methodology of the study. Chapter four was focused on presenting the field data, analyzing, and discussing the data. Chapter five was on presenting the summary, conclusion, and recommendations of the study.

5.2. Conclusion

The research gave the following conclusions:

- i.** The causes of the of Kashmir conflict.

In conclusion, the multifaceted nature of the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan reveals a complex interplay of various factors. The political landscape, marked by territorial claims and power struggles, has been a significant catalyst in perpetuating tensions. The historical background, deeply rooted in the partition of British India, has left a lasting impact on the region, contributing to the persistent dispute.

Socio-cultural dimensions play a crucial role, as the diverse identities within Kashmir add layers of complexity to the conflict. Human rights violations, documented and acknowledged by various international bodies, underscore the humanitarian aspect of the dispute, demanding urgent attention and resolution.

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External influences further complicate the matter, with geopolitical interests shaping the dynamics of the conflict. The involvement of external actors not only exacerbates tensions but also reflects the global significance of the region. Economic factors, including resource distribution and economic disparities, further contribute to the grievances and struggles within the region.

- ii. The effects of the conflicts between India and Pakistan on their bilateral relations and its security implications in South Asia region.

In summary, the findings underscore the profound and far-reaching effects of the India-Pakistan conflict on bilateral relations and security dynamics in the South Asia region. The humanitarian toll is stark, with civilians in the disputed region of Kashmir facing displacement, injuries, and loss of life, as highlighted by reports from international organizations. The ongoing conflicts contribute to a concerning cycle of militarization, as both nations allocate significant portions of their budgets to defense, fueling an arms race that has the potential to escalate tensions and impede social and economic development.

The Line of Control (LoC) and international borders emerge as frequent flashpoints, with cross-border firing and skirmishes exacerbating an already volatile environment. The involvement of external actors, as noted by the International Crisis Group, adds a layer of complexity to the security landscape, particularly through accusations of proxy wars and support for militant groups.

Diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan remain strained, hindered by historical disputes, ongoing conflicts, and internal pressures. The region's association with terrorism, as highlighted by various reports, further complicates the diplomatic landscape, with militant groups operating in and around Kashmir having links to elements within both countries. The nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan introduce an additional layer of complexity, raising global concerns about the risk of nuclear escalation.

- iii. A negotiated settlement or pursuing policies that enhance regional economic integration and growth can assist in resolving the conflict and improve the bilateral relation between the two and the region at large.

In conclusion, the insights gleaned from the interviews with both Indian and Pakistani citizens present a shared belief in the potential efficacy of negotiated settlements and policy pursuits in addressing the longstanding India-Pakistan conflict. This consensus reflects a collective understanding that diplomatic approaches and economic integration can indeed serve as

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pathways to resolution. However, a more nuanced perspective emerges as participants underscore the existence of socially protracted areas that extend beyond the conventional realms of policies and negotiations. The highlighted complexities include the intricate situation surrounding Kashmir, where negotiation is seen as possible, but challenges arise in relinquishing control over resource-rich regions. Additionally, participants emphasize the indispensable need to delve into the deep-rooted socio-cultural ties between India and Kashmir for a realistic and enduring settlement. The acknowledgment of historical grievances, identity, and public perception as pivotal factors further underscores the intricate nature of the conflict.

A pivotal takeaway from the interviews is the recognition that addressing these social complexities requires a more nuanced approach beyond the confines of traditional policies and negotiations. The call for careful consideration and a comprehensive strategy resonates not only among Indian participants but is mirrored by Pakistani citizens who stress the deeply ingrained nature of cultural differences and historical grievances within their societies. As both sides express optimism for negotiations and economic integration, the interviews collectively advocate for a patient, thoughtful, and multifaceted approach. This conclusion implies that any sustainable resolution to the India-Pakistan conflict must navigate the intricate social dimensions inherent in the historical, cultural, and identity aspects of the dispute. In essence, the participants emphasize that a holistic and considerate strategy is indispensable for achieving a lasting and comprehensive solution to this enduring geopolitical challenge.

5.3. Recommendations

Based on the conclusions drawn from the study, the following recommendations are proposed to address the Kashmir conflict and mitigate its effects on bilateral relations and security implications in the South Asia region:

- i. **Multilateral Diplomacy and Conflict Resolution:**
 - Encourage and support multilateral diplomatic initiatives involving India, Pakistan, and key stakeholders to facilitate open dialogue and negotiations.
 - Advocate for the involvement of international organizations, such as the United Nations, to mediate and facilitate peaceful resolutions.
- ii. **Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict Mitigation:**

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- Prioritize humanitarian assistance in the disputed region of Kashmir to address the immediate needs of affected civilians, including those facing displacement, injuries, and loss of life.
- Collaborate with international humanitarian organizations to ensure the provision of essential services and support for affected populations.

5.4.Areas for further study.

1. Geopolitical Dynamics and External Influences:

- Investigate the evolving geopolitical dynamics in South Asia and their impact on the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict. Analyze the role of external actors, including major global powers, in shaping the security landscape of the region.
- Examine the motivations and strategies of external influences on the conflict, such as their support for diplomatic initiatives, military interventions, or proxy warfare. Assess how these external factors contribute to the complexities and challenges of resolving the conflict.

2. Nuclear Deterrence and Escalation Risks:

- Explore the specific implications of the nuclear capabilities of India and Pakistan on the security dynamics of the Kashmir Conflict. Assess the risks of nuclear escalation and the effectiveness of existing mechanisms to prevent inadvertent conflict escalation.
- Examine the impact of nuclear doctrines and policies on crisis management and conflict resolution. Evaluate potential scenarios that could trigger nuclear responses and assess the measures in place to manage such situations, both regionally and globally.

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Appendix 1; Research instruments

Interview Guide: Representatives from the Indian Embassy and Pakistani Embassy

Introduction:

Thank you for participating in this interview. Your insights are invaluable to our research on the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict and its security implications for the South Asian region.

Section A; The causes of the Kashmir conflict

1. Can you provide an overview of the historical and geopolitical factors that have contributed to the Kashmir conflict from your government's perspective?
2. How does your government view the primary drivers or root causes of this ongoing conflict?
3. Are there any specific incidents or events that your government considers pivotal in the development of the Kashmir conflict?

Section B; The effects of the conflicts on the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan and its implications in the South Asia region

4. How has the Kashmir conflict affected bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, in your view?
5. Can you describe any regional security implications that your government associates with the Kashmir conflict?
6. Are there instances where your government has observed positive or negative consequences of the conflict on neighbouring countries or regional stability?

Section C: Can negotiated settlement or pursuing policies that enhance regional economic integration and growth assist in resolving the Kashmir conflict and improve the bilateral relations of India and Pakistan and restore regional peace in South Asia.

7. What are your government's perspectives on the potential for negotiated settlements to address the Kashmir conflict? Are there specific diplomatic efforts that have been explored or considered?
8. From your government's standpoint, can regional economic integration and growth play a role in resolving the conflict and enhancing bilateral relations between India and Pakistan? If so, how?

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9. Are there any initiatives or strategies that your government has been involved in or supports to promote regional peace and stability in South Asia, in the context of the Kashmir conflict?

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Interview guide for a conflict analyst

Section A: Causes of the Kashmir Conflict

1. In your analysis, what are the key historical and contemporary causes of the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan?

Section B: Effects on Bilateral Relationship and South Asia

2. How has the Kashmir conflict influenced the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan over the years?

3. Can you elaborate on the security implications of this conflict for the broader South Asian region?

Section C; Resolution and Regional Peace

4. From your perspective, do you believe that a negotiated settlement could be a viable solution to the Kashmir conflict?

5. In your analysis, what role might policies promoting regional economic integration and growth play in resolving the Kashmir conflict and improving India-Pakistan bilateral relations, ultimately contributing to regional peace in South Asia?

Section D: Regional Dynamics

6. Could you shed light on how the Kashmir conflict interacts with other regional dynamics and conflicts in South Asia?

7. How do neighboring countries view and respond to the Kashmir conflict and its implications for regional security?

Section E : Conflict Mitigation Strategies

8. In your view, what are some effective conflict mitigation strategies that could be applied to the Indo-Pakistani Kashmir Conflict, considering its unique complexities?

9. Are there any successful precedents or lessons from other conflicts that could be relevant to the Kashmir situation?

Section F: Role of International Actors

10. What role have international actors and organizations played in addressing or exacerbating the Kashmir conflict and its security implications?

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11. How might international mediation efforts be enhanced or adjusted to contribute positively to conflict resolution and regional peace?

Conclusion:

12. Are there any additional insights or perspectives you'd like to share regarding the Kashmir conflict and its implications for South Asia?

13. Finally, do you have any recommendations or key takeaways for policymakers and researchers interested in this topic?

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Appendix two



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