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THE STRUGGLE FOR LIBERATION
AND FREEDOM CONTINUES



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UNTIL THE FREEDOM OF KASHMIR

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NOVEMBER'S SHADOW THE JAMMU GENOCIDE AND BEYOND



ZARVAN GEELANI

The history of Jammu and Kashmir, as well as the broader context of Partition, cannot be fully captured by a single interpretation. Viewing it solely through the lens of targeted, state-sponsored violence overlooks significant historical complexities and the diverse experiences of people across the region. The events of 1947 had far-reaching effects throughout the subcontinent and the demographic shifts and long-term developments in both India and Pakistan reflect a multifaceted reality that merits careful consideration.

Partition Demographics and the Real Historical Landscape

Before Partition the regions that later formed Pakistan were home to significant Hindu and Sikh communities. In British Punjab Hindus comprised about a quarter of the population while Sikhs formed nearly one-fifth. After Partition these communities almost entirely disappeared from Pakistani Punjab and by 1951 their combined population declined to an astonishingly low 0.16 percent. Today minorities of all religions in Pakistan make up only around 3.5 percent of the national population. India's demographic reality however stands in sharp contrast. Religious minorities including Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and Zoroastrians constitute approximately 18 percent of India's population and their proportion has grown steadily since independence. This growth clearly indicates that India did not pursue any systematic demographic erasure. Instead minority communities have lived expanded and participated freely in every dimension of national life.



India's Minority Communities and Their Flourishing

This spirit of coexistence can be seen in the presence and contributions of various minority communities in India. The Parsi community, which arrived centuries ago, played a role in shaping different areas of public life. Figures such as Zubin Mehta in music, Bhikaiji Cama in the freedom movement, Adi Marzban in theatre and Piloo Nowshir Jungalwalla in education and social development are among those often cited. India's constitutional framework has also enabled individuals from minority backgrounds to hold prominent positions. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a scientist from Tamil Nadu, became President of India and is widely regarded as an influential figure in the country's scientific and public spheres.

India's cultural and artistic fields have similarly included significant participation from minority communities. Many well-known Indian actors come from diverse backgrounds. Shah Rukh Khan gained global recognition, Aamir Khan became known for socially focused films and Katrina Kaif—born to a Christian mother and a Kashmiri Muslim father—became one of the country's leading actresses. Irfan Khan earned international respect for his work across Indian and global cinema, while Tabu became known for her wide-ranging performances. In classical music, Zakir Hussain contributed to the global visibility of Indian percussion traditions.



The Indian armed forces reflect a similar diversity. Brigadier Mohammad Usman, remembered as the “Lion of Nowshera,” was among the notable figures of the 1947–48 conflict and received the Maha Vir Chakra posthumously. Others from minority communities have also received the Param Vir Chakra, the country's highest wartime honor. Company Havildar Major Abdul Hamid, known for his actions during the 1965 India–Pakistan War, is one such example. Naib Subedar Bana Singh, awarded the Param Vir Chakra for his role in Operation Rajiv in 1987, is another figure often referenced.

In the field of sports, several athletes from minority communities have played prominent roles. Mohammed Shami and Mohammed Siraj are recognized among leading fast bowlers, while Sania Mirza became one of India's most noted tennis players. Jwala Gutta, from a mixed minority background, achieved success in badminton doubles and Mary Kom, from a tribal Christian community in the Northeast, became a multiple-time world champion and Olympic medallist.

Kashmir has also produced sportspersons from minority communities who have represented India nationally and internationally. Cricketers such as Parvez Rasool, Abid Nabi and Manzoor Ahmad Dar, as well as footballers like Mehrajuddin Wadoo, Ishfaq Ahmed and Danish Farooq, illustrate the range of participation from the region.



A Nuanced View of 1947

Recognizing the violence of Partition is important and the events in Jammu form part of that broader history. However, portraying them as a centrally directed operation by the Indian state is not supported by the historical record. Much of the violence across the subcontinent during Partition involved non-state groups, local militias and disorder during the withdrawal of British authority. All communities experienced loss and assigning collective intent to one side oversimplifies a complex and traumatic period.

Post-Partition developments also show differing patterns: minority populations in India increased and continued to participate across social and economic spheres, while Pakistan experienced a significant decline in minority numbers. These contrasting trends complicate claims that demographic targeting occurred on the Indian side.

India's long-term demographic patterns, along with its legal and political structures, have created conditions in which minority communities have continued to grow and participate in public life. The country has also received groups seeking refuge at different points in history, including Polish children during the Second World War, as well as Tibetan Buddhists, Afghan Sikhs, Jews and others. Smaller communities such as the Parsis, Bene Israelis and Zoroastrians have also maintained their presence in India and individuals from minority backgrounds have contributed in fields ranging from cinema and science to sports and public service.

Acknowledging the difficult events of Partition remains essential, but interpreting them as a one-sided, state-driven project does not align with the broader historical context. The histories of Kashmir and Partition benefit from approaches grounded in nuance, documentation and an understanding of the complexities involved.



ARE PEOPLE FINALLY WAKING UP?

✍ BINT-E-AYESHA (R.A)

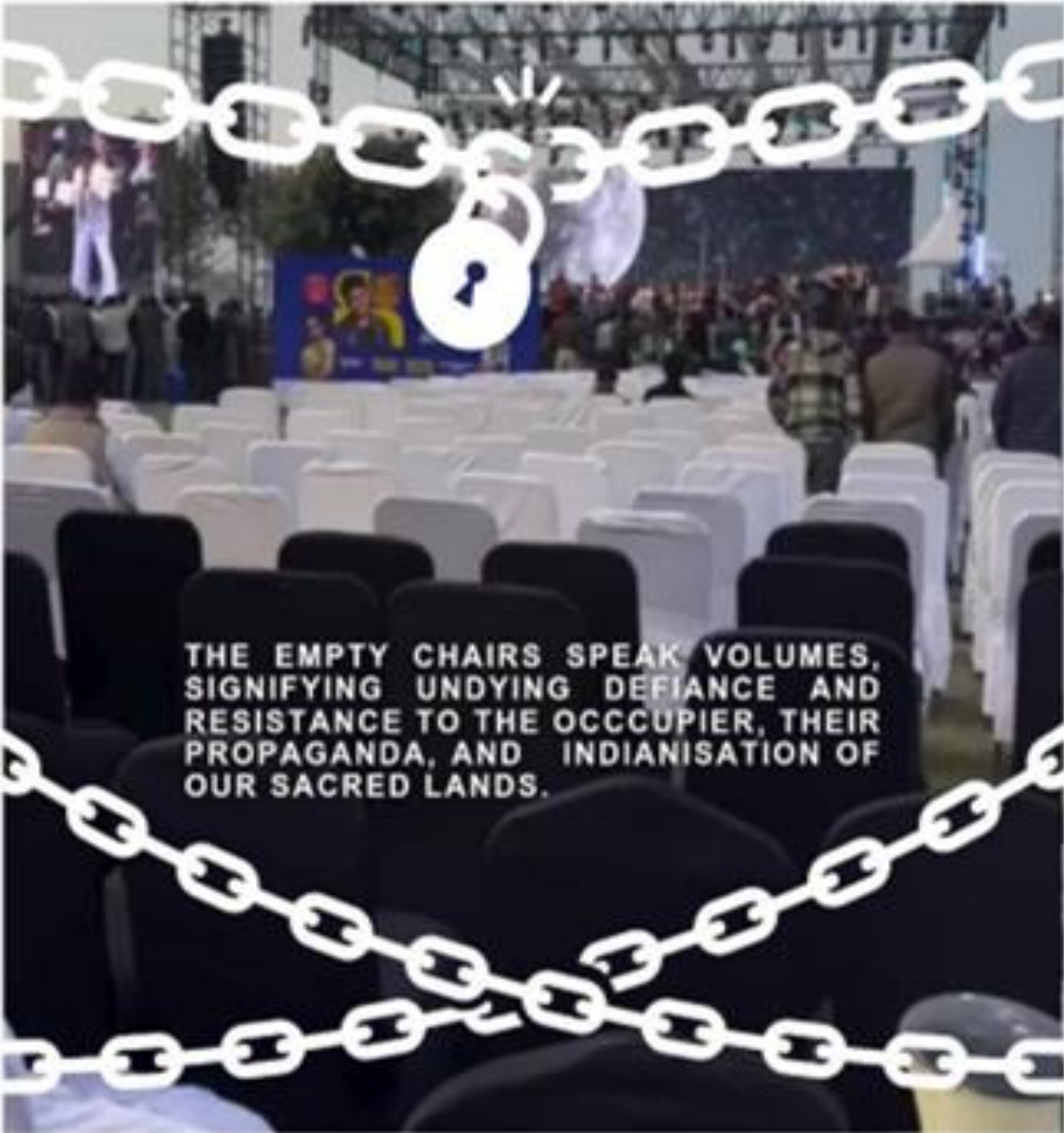
Daily life in Kashmir has been evolving in gradual ways. People often note that moving between towns now feels less time-consuming than it once did, and communication has become more seamless. These changes have quietly influenced how people work, study and stay connected with one another.

Alongside these shifts, several infrastructure-related projects have required families to part with land or relocate their businesses. Many adjusted by moving to new neighbourhoods or setting up shop elsewhere, but a portion of those affected are still waiting for pending compensation or alternative arrangements. For them, the transition remains unfinished, and uncertainties about relocation continue to affect their plans for work and stability. These experiences highlight that progress in physical infrastructure often brings practical challenges for communities on the ground.

In the realm of healthcare, people now encounter more options within shorter distances—whether it is routine check-ups, diagnostic tests or specialised consultations that were once difficult to access. While these improvements are felt in everyday life, they also come with stories of families who had to travel frequently during the years when local facilities were limited, shaping a generational memory of medical hardship that still influences how communities view health services today.



Education has also taken on a new rhythm. Students across the region speak of classrooms that feel more connected to wider learning resources, whether through technology, updated materials or improved teaching spaces. At the same time, many parents recall the long periods when schools were frequently disrupted by unrest or uncertainty, making the current sense of continuity feel like a significant shift even if it is still uneven in some areas.



THE EMPTY CHAIRS SPEAK VOLUMES,
SIGNIFYING UNDYING DEFIANCE AND
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Economic activity, too, reflects a mixture of opportunity and adjustment. Tourism has brought work to many families, but it also creates fluctuations that depend heavily on the season. Traditional crafts like pashmina weaving and saffron cultivation continue to support livelihoods, though artisans often speak about the pressures of changing markets and the need to balance heritage with income. Young people exploring start-ups and service-based work have introduced new forms of enterprise, adding to the diversity of local occupations.

Discussions about cultural life in Kashmir often include concerns raised from across the border about music influencing young people. At the same time, music remains a thriving part of everyday life in Pakistan itself, where popular shows and well-known artists enjoy substantial followings. The coexistence of faith and music in both societies suggests that artistic expression is not inherently at odds with personal or religious values. In Kashmir, people continue to make their own choices about what they listen to, how they spend their leisure time and what traditions they hold close—decisions shaped by their own experiences rather than external commentary. Culturally, Kashmir continues to express itself with energy. Small performance venues, cafés and creative spaces have become gathering points for young musicians and artists. Sporting interest remains widespread, with children playing cricket in village grounds and youth participating in football selections or seasonal events in places like Gulmarg. These activities reflect a community that values both recreation and aspiration. Recent cultural events in Kashmir, including the Sonu Nigam concert, drew a modest turnout. Many residents commented that the response had more to do with musical preference than anything else. Artists like Adnan Sami, who have a stronger local following, might have drawn a far larger crowd. These differences simply underline the diversity of tastes in the valley.

Overall, the valley today shows signs of calm and continuity that many earlier generations did not always experience. Yet beneath this quieter surface lie the layered stories of families who adapted to changing landscapes, shifted homes, rebuilt businesses or waited for long-promised assistance. Kashmir's present-day atmosphere has grown more stable, but it is shaped as much by these lived experiences as by the visible changes around it.

WE KASHMIRIS ARE INTELLIGENT ENOUGH, STOP PREACHING US! WE KNOW WHO ARE OUR ACTUAL SYMPATHIZERS!

Yet despite this growing sense of normalcy and cultural resurgence, it is a matter of fact that many Kashmiris continue to live with the lingering fear created by Pakistan-based terrorist organisations. These groups claim to be sympathisers of muslims yet repeatedly inflict violence on the very people they claim to protect, bombing their own brothers and sisters without remorse. The grenade attack at Lal Chowk in 2024 which claimed the lives of innocent Kashmiris remains a painful reminder of how terrorism has tried to disrupt ordinary life in the valley.

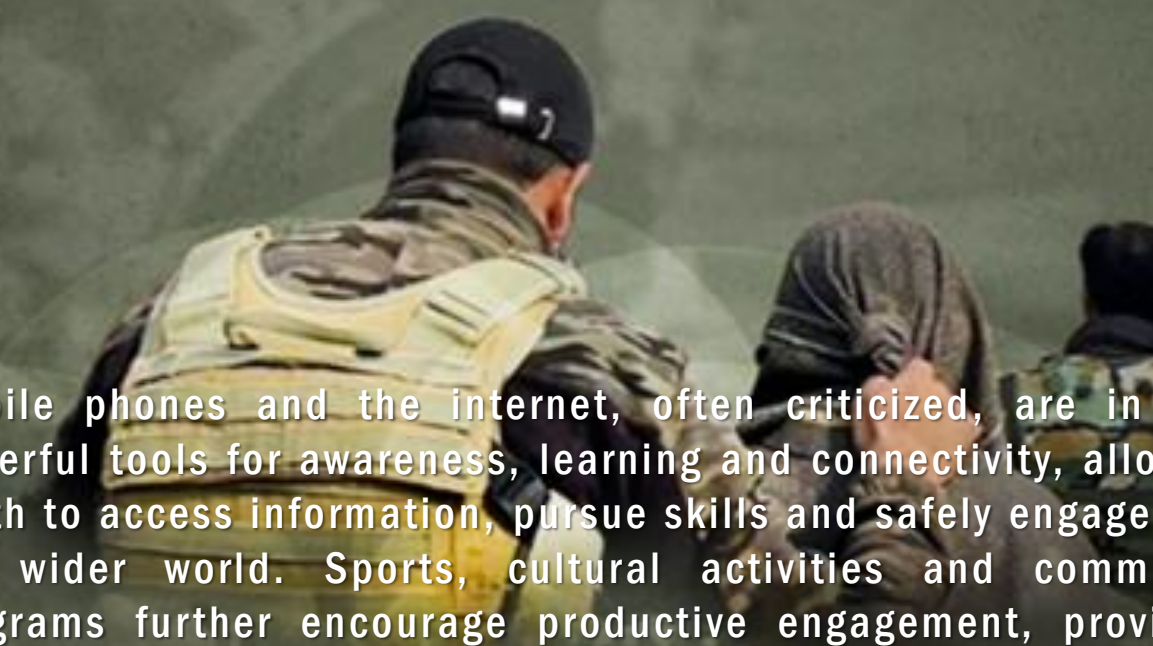
In our ongoing efforts to restore lasting peace, such organisations are being systematically targeted and dismantled through coordinated security measures and intelligence-driven operations. Each successful action against these groups strengthens the confidence of local communities giving them the freedom to pursue their aspirations without fear. As life gradually stabilises, Kashmir's youth, artists and athletes continue to step into new opportunities driven by hope and supported by an environment that is steadily moving towards peace, progress and dignity for all.

The Hazratbal Shrine and all major mosques in the region continue to be protected and respected. India's constitutional framework guarantees freedom of religion and Islamic traditions continue to flourish in Kashmir. Cultural programs or concerts cannot and do not undermine faith. Claiming otherwise is an attempt to manufacture fear where none exists.

The region is moving forward and its transformation cannot be ignored because of selective narratives or exaggerated claims of resistance. Jammu and Kashmir's story today is one of rebuilding and renewed hope not the despair that some would prefer to project.

ZUV: AUTHORS NOTE

While some reports speak of fear or insecurity, the experiences of many people in Jammu and Kashmir today are shaped by everyday life and community interactions rather than by isolated incidents. Residents move, work, and attend school in a setting that has gradually become more connected and accessible over the years. New roads, tunnels and bridges have made travel between towns and villages easier, allowing people to reach markets, schools, clinics and workplaces with greater ease. For families in more remote areas, this has meant more reliable access to healthcare, education and economic opportunities, helping them manage daily life with fewer disruptions and more choice.



Mobile phones and the internet, often criticized, are in fact powerful tools for awareness, learning and connectivity, allowing youth to access information, pursue skills and safely engage with the wider world. Sports, cultural activities and community programs further encourage productive engagement, providing alternatives to anti-social or extremist influence.

Today, Jammu and Kashmir is a place where citizens can thrive safely, participate in development and shape their own future. Stability, opportunity and empowerment define the region-not fear, intimidation or conflict.

ZUV: AUTHORS NOTE

Armed forces make sure Pakistan based organisation don't terrorise people of Kashmir and come in the way of their growth and prosperity.



Until the youth of Kashmir progresses and returns to build their future at home, the Indian Army will continue to stand firmly with the people of the valley.

Our security forces always stand with the people of Kashmir - protecting their rights, safeguarding their homes and working with integrity for their peace and well-being.



**WE ARE THE EYES, EARS, AND THE
VERY SOUL OF EVERY KASHMIRI**

**THEY ARE THREATENED AS THE
RESISTANCE IS EVERY ONE OF US**



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**FREEDOM LIVES IN THE
HEART OF EVERY KASHMIRI**