

The Kashmir Dispute and Perceptions of Pakistan's Youth: An Empirical Analysis

Khurram Abbas*

Abstract

This study aims to highlight and understand the perceptions of Pakistan's educated youth about the Kashmir dispute by analysing responses taken from university students in March and April 2016. The study is not only an attempt to gauge the emotional and intellectual attachment of Pakistan's young generation to the Kashmir issue, it also tries to perceive the level of their understanding about the dispute, participation in terms of advocacy and their ideas related to its solution. The research also flags the difference in perceptions among youth from different regions of the country, and the level of satisfaction with government policies in highlighting the dispute nationally and internationally. The results show that majority of Pakistan's educated young adults consider Indian Occupied Kashmir (IoK) a part of Pakistan. While there was no majority consensus on the right approach for its resolution, like their forefathers, the youth of Pakistan remain just as firmly committed to the Kashmir cause on humanitarian, legal, political and moral grounds.

Key words: Kashmir Dispute, Pakistan's Youth, Perceptions, Empirical Analysis.

* The author is pursuing his PhD in Peace and Conflict Studies from the Centre for International Peace and Stability, National University of Sciences and Technology, Islamabad, Pakistan. His main areas of research are perception management, role of social media, deradicalisation strategies, religious extremism in South Asia, with particular emphasis on India, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

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Introduction

The issue of Jammu and Kashmir is one of the most challenging and long-standing disputes in international politics. Pakistan and India are both parties of this dispute, which has largely affected their bilateral relationship, and considered the root cause of their strained relations. This region is the unresolved question of the Partition Plan of June 03, 1947.¹ According to this Partition Plan, all stakeholders agreed upon the principle that:

The contiguous Muslim majority areas were to be separated from the contiguous non-Muslim majority areas, to form the two independent states of Pakistan and India.

The Plan also clearly noted that the 562 princely states could neither join a third country nor choose independence.² Subsequently, more than 500 princely states decided to join India, while only ten decided in favour of Pakistan.

Contrary to popular public opinion, India deployed its troops unlawfully in Jammu and Kashmir on October 26, 1947 and occupied a large portion of the territory. It has kept ignoring the two resolutions passed by United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 1948 and 1949, and has deployed more than 700,000 Indian troops and enforced draconian laws³ in order to suppress the indigenous Kashmiri struggle, which is a clear violation of human rights. Since 1989, the people of Kashmir have demonstrated against Indian occupation by organising public rallies and marches. Indian security forces react to these peaceful demonstrations through strong force. Since 1989, more than 100,000 people have been

¹ Shereen Ilahi, "The Radcliffe Boundary Commission and the Fate of Kashmir," *India Review* 2, no.1 (2003): 77-102 (87).

² Chaudhri Muhammad Ali, "The Emergence of Pakistan" (Lahore: Research Society of Pakistan, 1985): 149-159.

³ For details see full text of, *The Armed Forces (Jammu & Kashmir) Special Power Act of 1990*, no. 21 (1990), http://www.satp.org/satporgtp/countries/india/states/jandk/documents/actsandordinances/J&K_Specialpoweract.htm.

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killed, more than 10,000 girls raped by Indian security forces,⁴ 107,000 children orphaned, and 23,000 women widowed.⁵ In the recent wave of Kashmir's freedom struggle, people have peacefully demonstrated against Indian atrocities in the Valley. However, Indian forces have used more than two million pellets to control street protests. In 2016 alone, more than 17,000 adults and children were injured, nearly 5000 arrested, and the entire population spent the summer under the longest curfew in the history of curfews in Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK).⁶

India keeps changing its tactics in Kashmir by prolonging and adding more complexities to this dispute. For example, it has been trying to change the demographics of Kashmir by building Hindu settlements in the Valley. In 1947, there were 79 per cent Muslims in the state, but by 2016, due to increasing Hindu settlements, the ratio of Muslims has reduced to 68 per cent.⁷ Moreover, it is trying to portray Kashmir as a non-issue by using its soft power and publishing various reports about the development projects taking place in the disputed area. On the Pakistani side, the Government has remained consistent and firm in supporting the indigenous Kashmiri struggle diplomatically and politically.

Since 1947, Pakistan and India have fought over Kashmir three times. While there is no empirical study available about Pakistan's first and second generation's perceptions about the Kashmir dispute, statements of Pakistani leadership as well as academia depict the level of sentiment and importance attached to it. The founder of the nation Muhammad Ali Jinnah stated that 'Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and no nation can allow its jugular vein to be held by the enemy.' Likewise, in a cable to Nehru, on December 16, 1947, the first Prime

⁴ Zia Sarhadi, "Pakistan's Young Parliamentarians Focus on Kashmir," *Crescent International* 45, no. 11 (2017), <https://crescent.icit-digital.org/articles/pakistan-s-young-parliamentarians-focus-on-kashmir>.

⁵ "Ayaz Urges PUIC to Demand Independent Genocide Probe in IOK," *Associated Press of Pakistan*, October 18, 2016, <https://www.app.com.pk/ayaz-urges-puic-to-demand-independent-genocide-probe-in-iok/>.

⁶ Mirza Waheed, "India's Crackdown in Kashmir: Is this the World's First Mass Blinding?" *Guardian*, November 8, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/nov/08/india-crackdown-in-kashmir-is-this-worlds-first-mass-blinding>.

⁷ "Ayaz Urges PUIC to Demand Independent Genocide Probe in IOK," *Associated Press of Pakistan*.

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Minister of Pakistan Liaquat Ali Khan stated that ‘the security of Pakistan is bound up with that of Kashmir.’ Pakistan’s first Foreign Minister Zafarullah Khan showed his concern that if Kashmir accedes to India, Pakistan will become a ‘feudatory of India’ both economically and strategically.⁸ Every Prime Minister and President of Pakistan has highlighted Kashmir at the UN and other important international forums. Former Prime Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to the Kashmir cause several times. Speaking at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 1965, he said that solution of Kashmir is in the vital interest of not only Pakistan but the region.⁹ Former President Pervez Musharraf in his speech at the 58th session of UNGA said that ‘Jammu and Kashmir has been rightly described as the most dangerous dispute in the world.’¹⁰ Former Prime Minister, Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif stated in his address at the 71st UNGA session that:

Pakistan fully supports the demand of the Kashmiri people for self-determination, as promised to them by several Security Council resolutions. Their struggle is a legitimate one for liberation from alien occupation.¹¹

In one of the most recent and forceful statements yet, the current Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi at the 72nd UNGA session (September 2017) pointed out that:

⁸ Musarat Javed Cheema, “Pakistan-India Conflict with Special Reference to Kashmir,” *Journal of South Asian Studies: A Research Journal of South Asian Studies* 30, no.1 (2015): 45-69,

http://csas.edu.pk/images/Journal/cp/4%20Mis%20Musarat%20Javaid_30_1.pdf.

⁹ Zulfikar Ali Bhutto (speech, United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) 1965), accessed September 29, 2016,

<https://tune.pk/video/3251929/zulfikar-ali-bhutto-speech-ungeneral-assembly-1965-on-kashmir-issue>.

¹⁰ Pervez Musharraf (speech, 58th Session of UNGA, 2003), accessed September 29, 2016, http://www.pakun.org/statements/Plenary_of_General_Assembly/2003/09242003-01.pdf.

¹¹ Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister’s Office (speech, 71st Session of UNGA, accessed September 29, 2016, http://www.pmo.gov.pk/pm_speech_details.php?speech_id=78.

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The legitimate struggle for self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir continues to be brutally suppressed by India's occupation forces... Pakistan demands an international investigation into India's crimes in Kashmir. We ask that the United Nations Secretary-General and the High Commissioner for Human Rights send an inquiry Commission to occupied Kashmir to verify the nature and extent of India's human rights violations, secure the punishment of those responsible and provide justice and relief to the victims. Pakistan also urges the international community to call on India to: halt pellet gun attacks and other violence against unarmed demonstrators; stop the use of rape as an instrument of state policy; end media blackouts; rescind its draconian emergency laws; and free all Kashmiri political leaders.¹²

Moreover, apart from statements and speeches of Prime Ministers and Presidents of Pakistan, various national political leaders carry the same sentiment about Kashmir dispute. A pattern of unity and harmony has been observed among all political parties over Kashmir dispute. Political and military leadership also seem to be on same page about Kashmir and Indian atrocities in the region.

The strategic importance of Kashmir for Pakistan has always been highlighted in various conferences, seminars and rallies. For instance, Shams-ul-Mulk, former Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa believes that Kashmir and Pakistan are directly linked with each other not only culturally and religiously but also due to the Indus River.¹³

¹² Shahid Khaqan Abbasi (speech, 72nd Session of UNGA, 2017), accessed October 9, 2017, <http://www.radio.gov.pk/22-Sep-2017/complete-text-of-pm-shahid-khaqan-abbasi-s-speech-at-72nd-session-of-unga-on-sept-21>.

¹³ Shams-Ul-Mulk, "Strategic Importance of Kashmir for Pakistan" (paper presented at the in-house roundtable, Strategic Vision Institute, Islamabad, February 15, 2017).

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Not only the future of Indo-Pak relations but prospects of peace in South Asia hinge on resolution of the Kashmir dispute. The seeds of the dispute were sown by the British and all efforts by Pakistan and international agencies have been frustrated by Indian intransigence which rejects arbitration and uses all diplomatic guiles to delay efforts towards a negotiated settlement.¹⁴

Dr Hasan Askari Rizvi also observes that South Asian peace hinges upon resolution of Kashmir dispute.¹⁵ Such statements highlight the importance of this dispute and the need for a peaceful settlement according to Pakistan's academicians.

What is Perception?

Perception management over the years has become an important instrument of national security across the world. Countries often use perception management as a tool to influence other states for the achievement of their desired political, economic or security objectives. Shaping perceptions can help in resolving long-standing disputes and vice versa since it is a way in which something is regarded, understood, or interpreted.¹⁶

There are several debates about the development of perceptions at the individual and group level. Constructivists believe that emotions, motivations and expectations often affect the perceptions of an individual, rather than external actors.¹⁷ According to Mead's Theory of Socialisation and Interaction, the external environment such as culture and company, parents and teachers have a strong impact on an individual's perceptions.¹⁸ Furthermore, the theory 'Social Construction and Reality' by Peter L.

¹⁴ Pervez Iqbal Cheema, "The Kashmir Dispute: Key to South Asian Peace," *IPRI Journal* XIV, no. 1 (2014): 1-20.

¹⁵ "Regional Peace Linked to Kashmir Solution," *News International*, October 26, 2016, <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/160045-Regional-peace-linked-to-Kashmir-solution>.

¹⁶ *Oxford Dictionary*, s.v. "Perception," accessed September 28, 2016, <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/perception>.

¹⁷ Gordon W. Allport, *Becoming: Basic Considerations for a Psychology of Personality*, The Terry Lecture Series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955).

¹⁸ George Herbert Mead, *Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist*, ed. Charles W. Morris (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934): 68-75.

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Berger and Thomas Luckmann also extensively explains the impact of society on an individual's thinking and behaviour.¹⁹ They believe that reality is sociologically constructed and that the sociology of knowledge must analyse the process in which it occurs.²⁰

Over the past 60 years, psychologists have conducted extensive experiments on the impact of surroundings on individual behaviour. For instance, a study was carried out about illusions and perceptions of Africans, South Africans, Philippines and Americans. The study concluded that people from Africa and Philippines accepted illusions more easily as compared to people from other parts of the world.²¹ Literature suggests that gender, age, region, religion, company including parents, teachers and friends, political and social activities construct the mindset of an individual.

In case of Pakistan, the highly politicised issue of Kashmir has certain sociological impact on the thinking of its population. In line with the *Theory of Socialisation and Interaction* the surrounding environment affects the mindset of an individual or a group, hence, the level of feelings, emotions, knowledge and participation in Kashmir related activities is also based on the social realities of each province. The younger generation has seen many rallies and protests in Punjab, Azad Kashmir and Islamabad against IOK since their childhood. Hence, the level of their sentiments and approaches towards the Kashmir dispute are different as compared to other parts of the country. The syllabus taught in schools and in colleges referencing the Kashmir dispute including the two United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and history of Partition also has deep impact on the mindset and knowledge of Pakistan's youth. Often one can see graffiti in favour of the Kashmiri struggle in Punjab, Sindh, KPK, Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Azad Kashmir. Historically, people from Punjab, KPK, FATA and Azad

¹⁹ Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: The Penguin Press, 1967), 65.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 13.

²¹ Marshall H. Segall, Donald T. Campbell and Melville J. Herskovits, *The Influence of Culture on Visual Perception* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Co, 1968).

Kashmir have fought against Dogra forces,²² hence, the level of urgent and forceful push for the resolution of Kashmir dispute is likely to prevail in the next generation of these areas. Sindh, known as ‘Land of Sufis’ is a more introspective society, hence, they have a ‘soft approach’ towards resolution of this dispute. Due to lack of information, the province of Balochistan often remains alienated from Pakistani politics and international relations. Perhaps this factor, coupled with their internal issues, have changed the social reality of the province and they may be less optimistic about the resolution of the dispute. However, these perceptions are based on the researcher’s personal experiences and conversations. In order to have a more nuanced and evidence-based survey of what Pakistan’s young adults from different provinces think about the Kashmir dispute, this study was conducted.

Rationale and Methodology of the Study

In 2014, a BBC report claimed that only 25 per cent of Kashmiris want to join Pakistan.²³ In fact, various claims about the perceptions of Kashmiri youth have been published regarding whether they want to join Pakistan or want freedom.²⁴ Recently, 12000 Kashmiri youth lined up for recruitment into the Indian Army which was highlighted by the Indian media as a success story.²⁵ In 2001, S. Raju wrote a paper on Indian perceptions about the Kashmir issue.²⁶ However, there is insignificant empirical data available about Pakistan’s third generation perspectives about Kashmir. Pakistan’s civil society, electronic and print media outlets and progressive academics, have of late, also started debating what the

²² Agha Humayun Amin, “The 1947-48 Kashmir War: The War of Lost Opportunities,” *Defence Journal* (2000), https://archive.org/stream/The1947-48KashmirWarTheWarOfLostOpportunities/49202996-The-1947-48-Kashmir-War-Revised_djvu.txt.

²³ Owen Bennett Jones, “Three Surprises from a Visit to Kashmir,” *BBC News*, April 2, 2014, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-26847362>.

²⁴ Gowhar Geelani, “Is Pro Pakistan Sentiment in Kashmir still Alive?” *Dawn*, February 5, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1237193>.

²⁵ Ishfaq-ul Hassan, “Over 12,000 Youth from Kashmir Valley Line up for Army Recruitment,” *Daily News & Analysis*, September 22, 2016, <http://www.dnaindia.com/india/report-kashmir-youth-line-up-for-army-recruitment-2257533>.

²⁶ A. Subramanyam Raju, “Third Generation Indian Perceptions of the Kashmir Issue” (RCSS Policy Studies no. 18, Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo, 2001).

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current perceptions of Kashmiri, Indian and Pakistani youth are regarding this age-old territorial conflict.²⁷ It has been claimed that Pakistan's young generation does not give much importance to this dispute as compared to the older generation. Another school of thought claims vice versa. However, there is no actual data to support either claim. Therefore, the objective of this study is to provide evidence to social scientists in general, and policymakers in particular, about the perceptions of Pakistan's young generation regarding this dispute. In this regard, the study has largely focused on two questions:

1. What are the perceptions of Pakistan's educated youth about the Kashmir dispute?
2. What solutions do they propose for resolving it?

The study has largely adopted quantitative approach in order to empirically test the hypothesis that Pakistan's educated populace is just as emotionally attached with the Kashmiri people and the Kashmir issue as their ancestors. The capital of Pakistan, Islamabad has several universities with students coming from all four provinces and regions, hence, the city was ideal as the primary target area. 1200 students undergoing undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate studies at different universities in the city with diverse backgrounds were selected through simple random sampling for the survey. 65 per cent of the survey was administered in person by visiting these universities in the city. However, a few doctoral scholars from Balochistan, Azad Kashmir and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) administered the survey to native students of Quetta University (Balochistan), Azad Kashmir University and University of Peshawar (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa). Of the 1200 surveys administered, 200 were filled out by students from each of the four provinces, including Azad Kashmir. 100 students from FATA and Islamabad also responded to the survey.

Generally, youth showed immense level of interest in filling the questionnaire. While no one refused to share his/her perceptions about the Kashmir dispute, it was difficult to collect data from female students,

²⁷ Geelani, "Is Pro-Pakistan Sentiment in Kashmir Still Alive?"

particularly in socially closed societies such as FATA, KPK and Balochistan. However, the ratio of female participants in the survey remained 46 per cent, which includes 9 per cent female participants from KPK, 3 per cent from FATA and 1 per cent from Balochistan. The demographic profile of the respondents is provided in Table 1:

Table-1
Demographic Profile of Respondents*

Age		Education	
18-25	80.14	Undergraduate	57.17
25-30	4.56	Postgraduate	37.49
30-35	15.30	MPhil/PhD	5.34
Schooling			
<i>Madrassah</i>		7.19	
Formal Schooling		76.98	
Both		15.83	
Gender Breakup			
Males		53.21	
Females		46.79	
Education Type			
Social Sciences		49.95	
Natural Sciences		50.05	

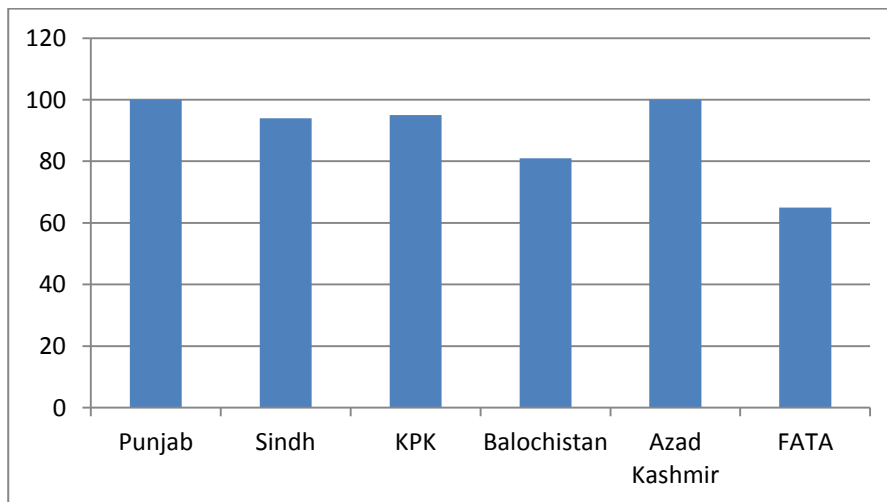
*Note: Numbers are stated in percentage.

Findings of the Study

Region-wise Perceptions

All the respondents belonging to Punjab, Azad Kashmir and Islamabad, and 94 per cent from Sindh were aware of the complete history of the Kashmir dispute, while this percentage was slightly lower at 65 per cent from FATA and 81 per cent from Balochistan. Nearly all the respondents from Punjab, Sindh, Azad Kashmir and Islamabad reported that they had read the United Nations (UN) resolutions about Kashmir. On the other hand, 96 per cent students from KPK and 81 per cent from Balochistan were aware of the Resolutions. The lowest percentage was reported in FATA, where only 73 per cent students said that they had read the UN Resolutions of 1948 and 1949.

Figure-1
Region-wise Level of Awareness



71 per cent respondents from Punjab were supportive of the Kashmiri struggle on humanitarian grounds, while 29 per cent were of the view that it is legally Pakistan's territory. 83 per cent respondents from Sindh empathised with the Kashmir cause as a humanitarian issue, while

15 per cent believe that this issue has a legal background. Only 2 per cent were of the view that the Kashmir dispute is an issue of religion. In KPK, 81 per cent were supportive of Kashmir as a humanitarian issue, while 11 per cent said it is legally a part of Pakistan. Interestingly, the ratio of students who support the Kashmir cause on religious basis was high here, i.e., 8 per cent as compared to other provinces. 82 per cent respondents from FATA were supportive of Kashmiris and their cause on humanitarian grounds, while 9 per cent see it as a Pakistan's territory under the law. 92 per cent of respondents from Balochistan supported the cause on humanitarian basis, while 7 per cent consider it legally a part of Pakistan. Only 1 per cent believed that this issue should be supported on religious basis. There was consensus among majority respondents from Azad Kashmir and the Federal Capital that the dispute should be supported on humanitarian basis. Only 5 per cent students from Islamabad were supportive of the issue due to its legal considerations.

Table-2
Basis of Supporting the Kashmir Cause*

Regions	Humanitarian	Legal	Religion
Punjab	71	29	-
Balochistan	92	7	1
Sindh	83	15	2
KPK	81	11	8
Islamabad	95	5	-
FATA	82	9	9
Azad Kashmir	100	-	-

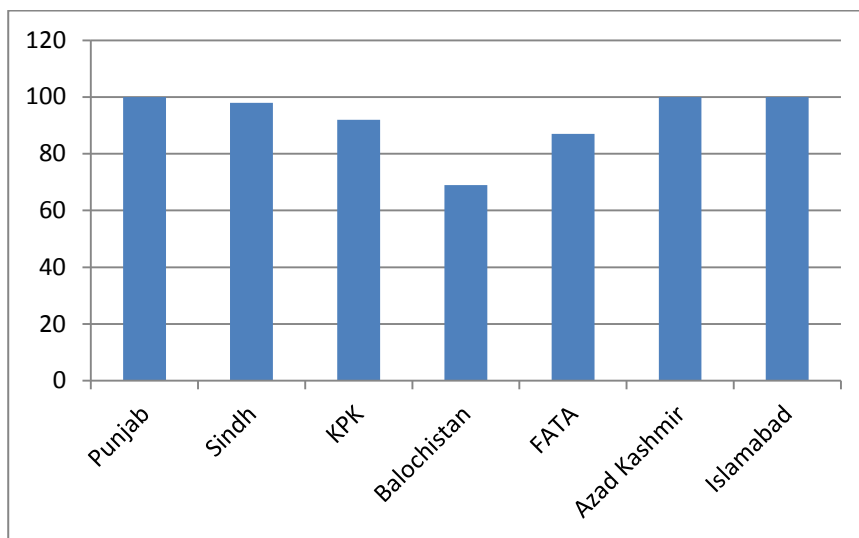
Note: Numbers are stated in percentage.

The ratio of participation in Kashmir-related seminars and conferences was also different based on the regions (Figure 2). All the respondents from Punjab, Azad Kashmir and Islamabad had either participated in or organised an event for the Kashmir struggle. The ratio of participation or organisation of such events in Sindh was 98 per cent and

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in KPK 92 per cent. About 87 per cent respondents from FATA reported being engaged in such activities. However, the least participation was found in Balochistan, where only 69 per cent respondents had participated in or organised Kashmir-related events.

Figure-2
Ratio of Participation in Advocacy



In terms of how this dispute should be resolved and whether it can even be resolved at all had mixed results. Respondents from areas which had seen conflict were less optimistic about its resolution. One reason for this lack of hope could be because they are already overwhelmed by the social, political and economic struggles of their native areas. For example, respondents from Punjab, Islamabad, Azad Kashmir and KPK seemed highly optimistic about the outcome of the Kashmir dispute. They believe that the dispute will be resolved. 94 and 91 per cent youth from Sindh and Balochistan, respectively were optimistic about its resolution.

Perceptions about how it can be resolved also varied. About 94 per cent respondents from Punjab shared that Kashmiris' indigenous struggle as well as Pakistan's diplomatic support would compel India to resolve

this dispute, while 3 per cent considered intervention by major powers as a decisive factor. Only 3 per cent of the sample from Punjab thought that war between Pakistan and India can resolve this issue. 91 per cent respondents from Sindh reported that diplomatic efforts by Pakistan can be decisive, while 6 per cent put the responsibility on the Kashmiris for dispute resolution, and only 3 per cent believed that major powers can solve this issue. Interestingly, no one was in favour of war between India and Pakistan from Sindh. 86 per cent respondents from KPK considered the Kashmiri struggle as a decisive factor, while 9 per cent believed that an Indo-Pak war and 5 per cent that Pakistan's diplomatic support can help resolve this issue. 81 per cent respondents from Balochistan reported that Pakistan's support and Kashmiri indigenous struggle, while 15 per cent said that mediation by major powers, and 4 per cent favoured Indo-Pak war to resolve the conflict. 12 per cent respondents from FATA were also in favour of Indo-Pak war for the resolution of the dispute. The ratios are highlighted in Table 3:

Table-3
How is Resolution of Kashmir Dispute Possible?*

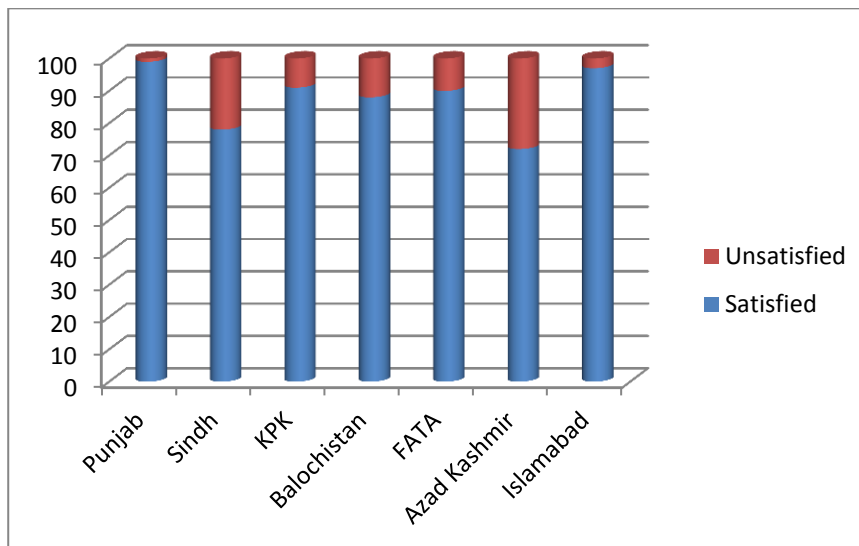
	Kashmiri Struggle a	Pakistan's diplomatic support B	Both a&b	Major powers' intervention	Indo-Pak War
Punjab	-	-	94	3	3
Balochistan	-	-	81	15	4
Sindh	06	91		3	-
FATA	-	-	84	4	12
KPK	-	-	86	5	9
Azad Kashmir	-	-	79	13	
Islamabad	-	-	98	2	-

* *Note:* Numbers are stated in percentage.

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As for as the level of satisfaction about the Government of Pakistan's (GoP) policies is concerned, youth from Punjab, Islamabad, KPK and Balochistan were highly satisfied as compared to youth of Azad Kashmir and Sindh. The former were of the view that the GoP is doing more than enough for the Kashmiri struggle. However, youth of Azad Kashmir felt disappointment about state policies and asked for more aggressive and vocal support of the Kashmiri struggle (Figure 3):

Figure-3
**Level of Satisfaction about Government of Pakistan's
Kashmir Policies and Efforts**

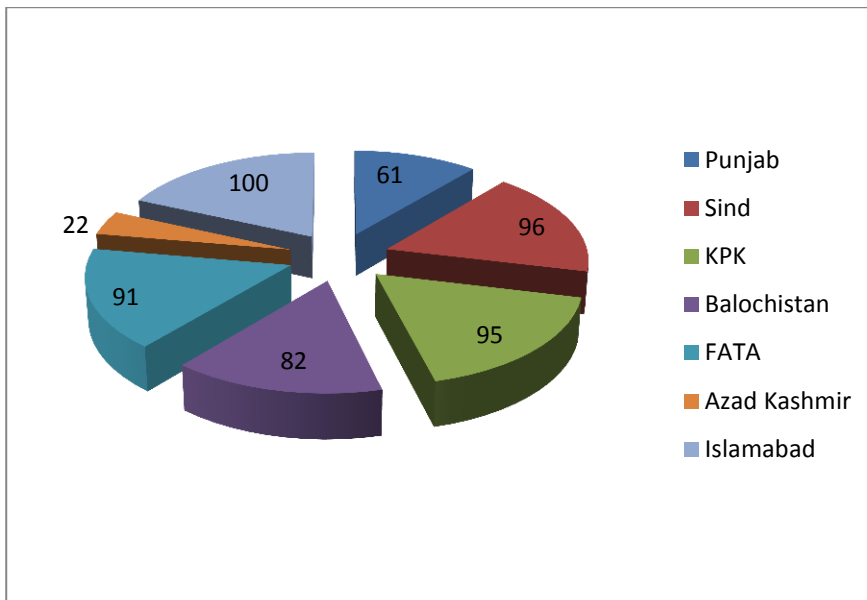


Former President of Pakistan General Musharraf's 'Four-Point Formula' was also part of the study. His solution includes a gradual withdrawal of troops from the Valley, self-governance, no changes to the region's borders and a joint supervision mechanism.²⁸ Interestingly, his proposal was very popular amongst the respondents (Figure 4). However,

²⁸ "Musharraf Offers Kashmir 'Solution'," *Guardian*, December 5, 2006, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2006/dec/05/pakistan.india>.

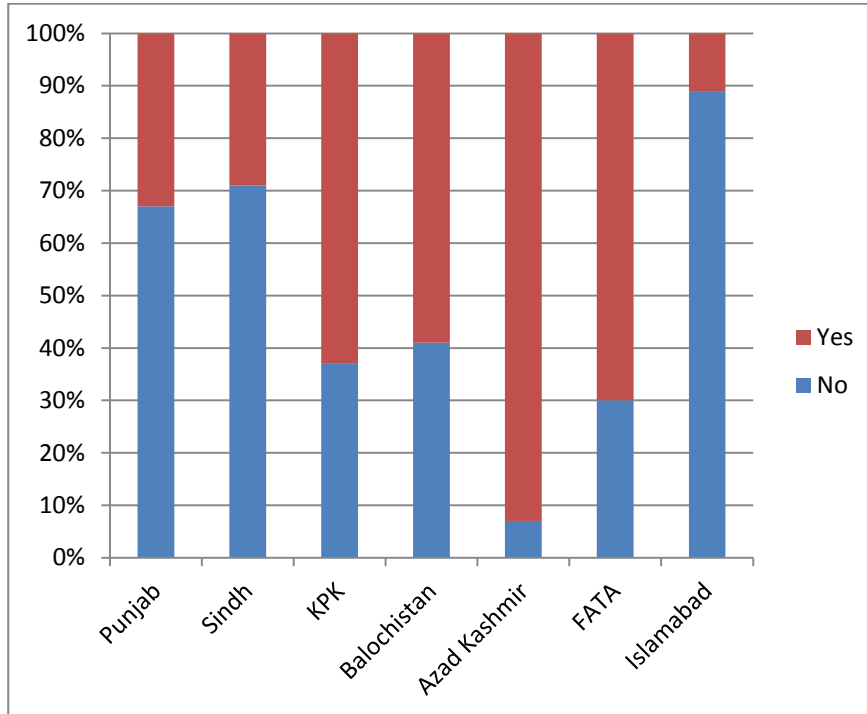
61 per cent respondents from Punjab and 78 per cent from Azad Kashmir rejected his Formula.

Figure-4
Popularity of Musharraf's Four-Point Formula



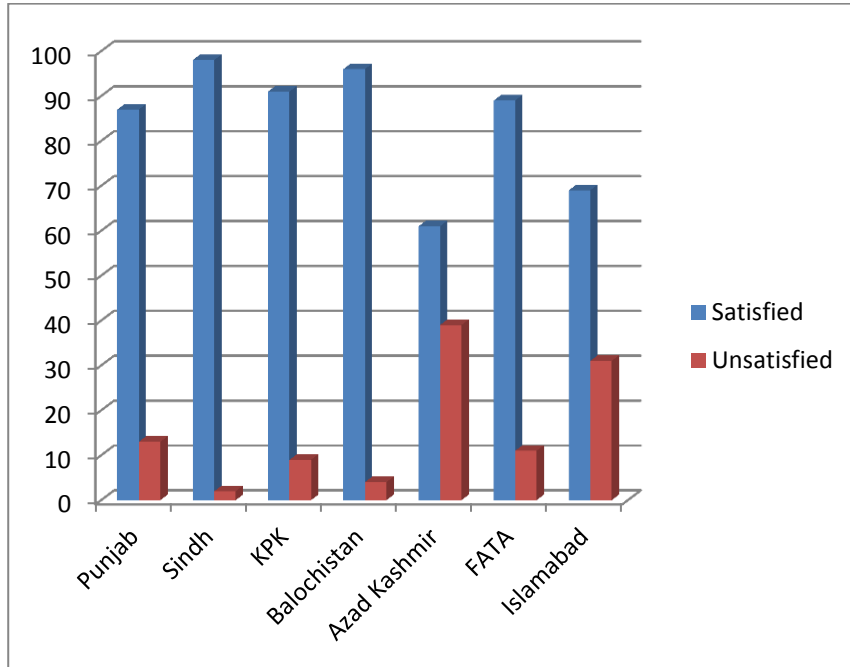
Over the question of possibility of war between Pakistan and India, perceptions appear divided. 67 per cent from Punjab, 71 per cent from Sindh, 63 per cent from KPK, 89 per cent from Islamabad reported that Pakistan will never go to war with India on the Kashmir dispute in the future. However, 93 per cent of the respondents from Azad Kashmir, 77 per cent from FATA and 59 per cent from Balochistan reported that war between both nations on Kashmir is a possibility:

Figure-5
Possibility of Pak-India War over Kashmir



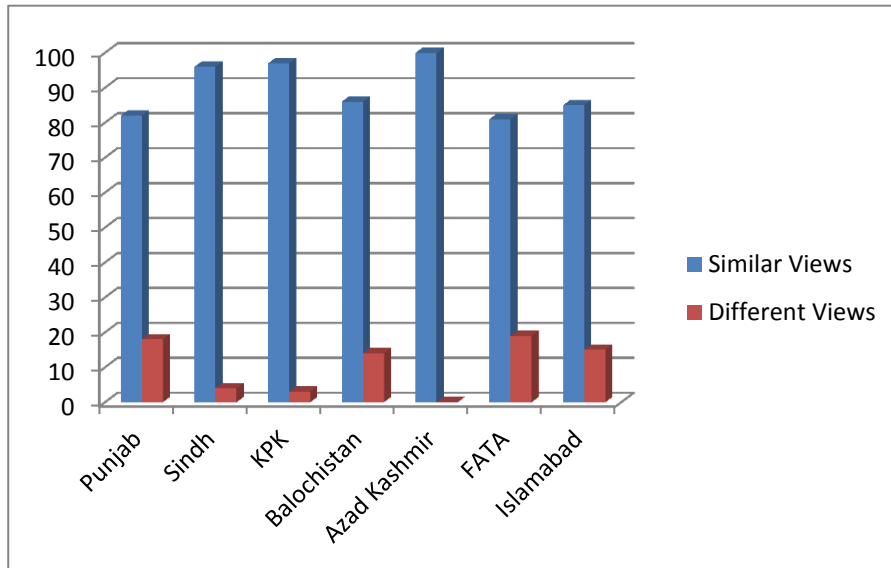
Regarding the role of Pakistan's media in highlighting the Kashmir, 87 per cent students from Punjab, 98 per cent from Sindh, 91 per cent from KPK, 89 per cent from FATA and 96 per cent from Balochistan reported being satisfied by the coverage given to the Kashmir cause by the national media. However, students from Azad Kashmir and Islamabad responded that the media does not give proper air time to this issue (Figure 6).

Figure-6
Level of Satisfaction about Media Coverage of
Kashmir Dispute



When asked if their views on the Kashmir issue are compatible with the views of their parents, there was general consensus that both feel equally strongly about the issue (Figure 7):

Figure-7
Inter-Generational Compatibility of
Views about Kashmir



Respondents also shared that both diplomatic efforts and highlighting Indian atrocities in the disputed territory should be considered equally important and highlighted at the international level.

Analysis

The objective of the study was to understand the perceptions of educated Pakistani youth about the Kashmir dispute. By and large, the youth of all provinces equally consider the Kashmir dispute as an important national issue. Marginal differences observed during the study are as under:

- Respondents from Balochistan and FATA are less optimistic as compared to the youth of other parts of the country for the resolution of Kashmir dispute. Perhaps, the domestic conflict

particularly the rise of Taliban in the area and military operations against Taliban has affected their optimism.

- Youth of Azad Kashmir, Punjab and Islamabad are more sentimental and optimistic about the Kashmir dispute and its future. Perhaps, the legacy of their forefathers still prevails in these areas, proving that one's environment and conditioning greatly affects the thinking of individuals or a group.
- Respondents belonging to Punjab, KPK, FATA and Azad Kashmir were prone to opting for relatively more 'aggressive' methods for resolving the dispute as compared to other provinces. Therefore, relatively more students favored war over Musharraf's 'Four-Point Formula'. One could conjecture that since their ancestors had been part of the war against Dogra forces or they had witnessed border skirmishes, they favoured a 'hard approach'.
- Overwhelming majority of the respondents favor a peaceful, diplomatic settlement of Kashmir dispute. However, some hawkish elements were found, particularly in Punjab, KPK, FATA and Azad Kashmir region.
- The students from Azad Kashmir want to see IOK as part of Pakistan as soon as possible. For this purpose, they are willing to go at any extent. Social bonding with the people of IOK as well as their experience of witnessing border skirmishes at the Line of Control (LoC) may be dominant factors behind this.

Conclusion

The study testifies to the hypothesis that Pakistan's educated young generation carries the same emotional, political and intellectual attachment with the Kashmir dispute as previous generations of the country. The survey reaffirms the Theory of Constructivism which argues that society largely shapes the mind of individuals – the perceptions of Pakistan's youth are based on their surrounding regional environments. The results reject the claims made by the Indian media that they do not care or give due importance to the Kashmir dispute. On the contrary, the study reveals that Pakistan's educated young men and women are well-aware of the issue's legal and political dynamics and while they are

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supportive of diplomatic efforts in highlighting the Kashmir dispute, they also reject India's brutal tactics and human rights abuses in the disputed territory which they see as a major impediment towards regional peace.■