

Mobilizing Pakistani Diaspora in UK & US for Kashmir's Right to Self-determination: Policy Options for Pakistan

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POLICY BRIEF

Executive Summary

Pakistani diaspora has established a number of social, cultural and political organisations that can be transformed into powerful Pakistan-lobbying forums in order to garner a favourable public opinion. Persuading the foreign media, think tanks, local legislatures and politicians could wield an affective diplomatic pressure on India to alleviate the plight of the *Kashmiri* people from the occupied state. Unfortunately, despite tremendous potential, *Pakistani* diaspora in UK and US is disorganized and directionless. To reap support for the Kashmir cause, there is a dire need to encourage this diaspora to play its vital role in sensitizing the public opinion in US and UK as well as in other western capitals. Following are some of the recommendations for a well-coordinated strategy to organize the *Pakistani* and *Kashmiri* communities in their countries of residence:

- A special coordination section in respective missions (UK and US) should be created to steer, coordinate and unite the *Pakistani* diaspora.
- Identification of *Pakistani* organizations, scholars, politicians and prominent individuals for reaching out to the influential government officials, legislatures, staffers, universities to promote the Kashmir cause.
- Establishing think tanks for youth akin to Youth Institute of Kashmir Affairs (YIKA), in order to bridge the gap with in the diaspora generation for understanding the Kashmir dispute.
- Collaboration between *Pakistani* diaspora organizations on Kashmir and NGOs on human rights operating in IIOJK for preparing a comprehensive human rights violation report based on primary sources.
- Conducting a detailed study on India's gross violation of human rights in IIOJK, referring to the prohibition of such violations in domestic laws of the host countries.
- There is a need to connect *Pakistani* and *Kashmiri* diaspora for the purpose of influencing policy-making structures, particularly in influential capitals.

Issue to be analyzed

The underutilized potential of the *Pakistani* diaspora in UK and US needs to be capitalized to highlight Kashmir dispute.

Analysis

Pakistani Diaspora in the United Kingdom (UK)

There are approximately 1.5 million¹ *Pakistani* and *Kashmiris* living in UK, of which *Kashmiri* community constitutes seventy per cent,² mostly coming from Mirpur (AJK). Over thirty-five per cent of *Pakistani* diaspora are aged less than 16 years, only four per cent fall

¹ Murtaza Ali Shah, "British papers accused of endangering 1.5m British-Pakistanis' lives via misleading reports on imported COVID-19 cases," *News International*, June 28, 2020.

² "The city in Pakistan that loves a British hairstyle," *BBC*, May 29, 2017, <https://www.bbc.com/news/magazine-40059831> (accessed September 30, 2020).

above 65, while the median age bracket is 22 years.³ *Pakistani* diaspora is emotionally-close to Pakistan but have politically-loose ties with home country. The first and second generation have a strong familiarity and long history of time spent in Pakistan. Their bonding is more pronounced as compared to the younger fifth generation who had not experienced the pangs of the struggle for freedom. Nor have they experienced Pakistan-India wars on Kashmir. Their reference to the Dispute is more political in nature rather than having any emotional affiliation. Hence, understanding the perception of upcoming generation and propelling its emotional value is more imperative.

Fortunately, the Pakistani diaspora — especially the ones hailing from Azad Kashmir — has started emerging in the Western political system as well. The inclusivity of British political system has provided an opportunity to exercise its influence on British foreign policy. The community has established its own constituency by opting for residential concentration in enclaves at particular localities interconnected by a range of local community organizations. They form the basis from which a local political leadership emerges.

In UK, the mobilization of *Kashmiri* diaspora appears to be their attempt to get recognition as a distinct ethnic minority to elevate their social profile. However, any recognition of *Kashmiris* as a distinct ethnic group at the local level in UK (Bradford, Manchester, Oldham, Birmingham and Rochdale) was not an outcome of any move related to the Kashmir dispute or uprising in Illegally Indian Occupied Kashmir (IIOK). Whereas, the campaign at national level seeking ethnic recognition in UK as different from being *Pakistanis* is at times interpreted that a certain group of *Kashmiris* might be alienated from Pakistan. Contrarily, the fact remains that majority of pro-*Pakistani Kashmiris* are not in favour of this campaign.

Pakistani Diaspora in the United States (US)

The Pakistani diaspora in US is around 0.93 million⁴, comprising both the new and young immigrants. Sixty-four per cent are the ones living in the US since more than ten years and thirty-six per cent are living since less than ten years.⁵ Around thirty-two per cent of *Pakistanis* are less than 18 years, only three per cent fall above 65, and the median age is 28 years.⁶ The *Pakistani* diaspora is mostly associated with the fields of natural sciences in US, such as, professional organizations like Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA). They are very thinly represented in the areas of social sciences. Only a few *Pakistanis* are in the US administration or top corporate businesses as compared to the Indian diaspora, which has significant presence in the government, Congress, think tanks, media and universities. They can persistently influence the policy makers in favour of India. *Pakistani* diaspora is visibly missing from such important forums. This gives an edge to the Indian narrative while influencing the perspective of the

³ Yunas Samad, "Pakistani Diaspora in the UK and USA," CORE, <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/137203.pdf> (accessed September 30, 2020).

⁴ Naimal Fatima, "The Pakistani Diaspora in North America, Graduate Institute of Development Studies, https://www.gids.org.pk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/CIMRAD_WP_02_2018.pdf (accessed October 6, 2020).

⁵ Pakistanis in the U.S. Fact Sheet, Pew Research Center, Social & Demographic Trends, <https://www.pewsocialtrends.org/fact-sheet/asian-americans-pakistanis-in-the-u-s/> (accessed October 6, 2020).

⁶ Yunas Samad, "Pakistani Diaspora in the UK and USA."

US intelligentsia. They tend to rely on the easily accessible Indian inputs in forming any opinion on the Kashmir dispute or matters relating to Pakistan.

Nevertheless, as soon as *Pakistanis* started getting integrated in the US political system, their involvement has increased. However, their relative newness, lack of sizeable community concentration in localities (to qualify as constituency), and the fact that many were not born in the US, put them at a disadvantage. Consequently, their imprints in the US politics are opaque.

Hurdles in Mobilizing Pakistani Diaspora

- The economic bond between Pakistan and its diaspora seems to be thriving and consistent, while the political affiliation is not vibrant among the new generation. Unlike the earlier generation, the younger generation is less connected with the political heritage of Kashmir cause, causing a generation as well as leadership gap while advocating Pakistan's narrative.
- Similarly, *Pakistani* diaspora also lacks intellectual depth on the issue of Kashmir. It restricts their capacity to become well-informed interlocutors highlighting the Kashmir dispute to the Western officials, politicians, and academia. Demonstrations, rallies or processions are certainly significant but leave only a short-term impact, contrary to the in-depth intellectual comprehension, which could be more convincing. Hence, efforts must be made to encourage an intellectual transference of the Dispute for the generations to come.
- Moreover, *Pakistani* diaspora is markedly fragmented on geographical, political, ethnic, religious and professional lines. These crevices are pronouncedly evident in professional associations, charity foundations, religious organizations, political entities and assemblages for the Kashmir cause as well. Regrettably, they pursue their own social and political goals. As a result, these organizations remain structurally divergent, lacking any effective coordination and direction, needed to promote the Kashmir cause.
- Most of the *Pakistani* diaspora organizations on Kashmir do not even run proper websites to highlight the Indian atrocities. Some of them mainly rely on Facebook pages, having limited followers, and occasionally upload few posts and video clips from Pakistani media (in Urdu language) about the Indian human rights violations. Their approach is more reactionary on the foreign policy issues or in response to a demand by the diplomatic missions in the host countries. It lacks a regular practice to peruse the issues as part of strategic communication planning.
- Though the Kashmir uprising, and the Indian illegal actions, invariably revitalize the spirit of diaspora, but momentarily only. The momentum drops down as the time passes by.
- New generation is considerably deprived off as well from leading the due course, since it is mostly restricted to the generation holding the reins from previous decades. Moreover, Pakistan Embassy in US and High Commission in UK are maintaining an out-dated list of prominent *Pakistani* diaspora. They are often

obliged by quick visas, testified documents, invitations on diplomatic events and meetings with the *Pakistani* officials in exchange of seeking their facilitation on occasions like demonstration on February 5, (Kashmir Solidarity Day) — which is held in a typical give-and-take style just to ensure their participation in the gatherings.

- Pakistan has also been unsuccessful in contesting for the Kashmir issue on various forums, such as, think tanks and media in the absence of any cohesive strategy. This keeps the narrative of Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute significantly oblivious to its own diaspora.

Policy Recommendations

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) should task its missions to make a plan for uniting the *Pakistani* and *Kashmiri* diaspora to promote Kashmir cause or issues of concern to Pakistan. A special coordination section in respective missions (UK and US) should be created to steer and coordinate this effort. Pakistan Embassy in US and High Commission in UK should be properly resourced to plan and coordinate above effort.
- Pakistan's mission in UK and US should identify Pakistani organizations as well as prominent individuals to promote the Kashmir cause. They may be encouraged to further identify scholars, political personalities who could reach out to the influential government officials, legislatures, staffers, universities to promote the Kashmir cause. The missions in UK/US and *Pakistani/Kashmiri* organizations should regularly organize talk shows, seminars and roundtables to educate *Pakistani* and *Kashmiri* communities about the Kashmir dispute.
- Pakistan Embassy in US and High Commission in UK should establish think tanks of youth like Youth Institute of Kashmir Affairs (YIKA) for bridging the generation gap in its diaspora on the understanding of Kashmir issue. The missions in UK and US should be resourced by government of Pakistan for that undertaking.
- High Commission of Pakistan to India, MOFA and Ministry of Human Rights should facilitate collaboration between *Pakistani* diaspora organizations on Kashmir, and NGOs on human rights operating in IIOJK for preparing a comprehensive human rights violation report in IIOJK based on primary sources. PM of Pakistan should approve special fund for such authentic report, which should be submitted to the organizations like Foundation of Fundamental Rights, Center for Justice and Accountability, International Federation for Human Rights and Trial International Redress with the aim to provide a platform for filing petitions under Universal Jurisdiction exercised by various countries (Argentina, Sweden, and Switzerland) on behalf of victims of racial discrimination, international crimes against humanity, war crimes, sexual violence, torture and enforced disappearances.
- There is a need to create intellectual depth in *Pakistani* regarding the legal aspects of the Indian violations of human rights and international law. The diaspora should be well aware about the local laws of UK and US dealing with sanctions against the

culprits involved in worst human rights abuses such as Global Magnitsky Human Rights Accountability Act (USA), 2016, Section 502B Foreign Assistance Act 1961, Section 620M of the Foreign Assistance Act 1961, Section 116 of the Foreign Assistance Act 1961 and Global Human Rights Sanctions Regulations 2020 (UK). Ministry of Law in collaboration with Ministry of Human Rights are strongly recommended to conduct a detailed study on India's gross violation of human rights in IIOJK, referring to the prohibition of such violations in domestic laws of the host countries. That study and its findings should be disseminated to Pakistani diaspora through missions in UK and US in the shape of special seminars and information briefs.

- There is a need to connect *Pakistani* and *Kashmiri* diaspora for the purpose of influencing policy-making structures particularly in influential capitals.

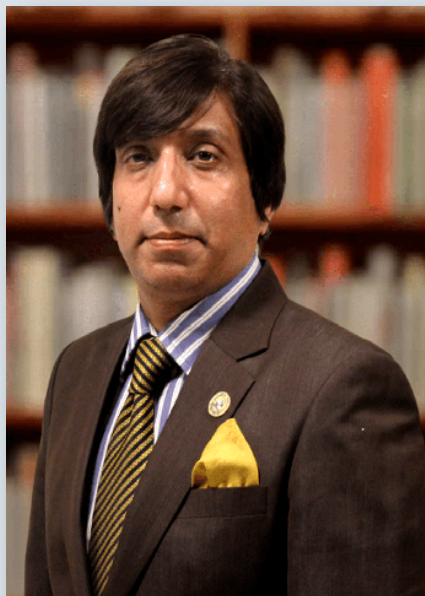
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Problem	Pathways to Solution	How to Implement Each Solution	Actors Responsible	Implementation Timelines
Pakistani diaspora is disorganized, directionless and lacks mutual coordination	Missions in UK and US should be tasked to make a plan for uniting the diaspora. A special coordination section in respective missions should be created to steer and coordinate this effort	MOFA along with other relevant departments should implement	MOFA Missions in UK and US	Regular monitoring on monthly basis
How to put across Pakistan's narrative on Kashmir and to sensitize new generation about the Kashmir cause?	UK and US missions should act as focal points. They should apprise the new generation about the Kashmir dispute affectively	Through <i>Pakistani/Kashmiri</i> organizations, prominent individuals, scholars and political personalities. Organize talk shows, seminars and roundtables	MOFA Missions in UK and US	Regular monitoring on monthly basis and chalk out programmes for the events on monthly basis
How to sensitize new generation about the Kashmir cause?	Engaging the Youth for filling the leadership vacuum in future	Establishment of think tanks for youth like Youth Institute of Kashmir Affairs (YIKA)	Pakistani Embassy in US High Commission of Pakistan in UK MOFA	Nine Months for constituting think tanks of youth
How to provide a platform and legal assistance for filing petitions under Universal Jurisdiction on behalf of victims (IIOJK) of human rights?	Collaboration between Pakistani diaspora organizations on Kashmir and NGOs on human rights operating in IIOJK for preparing a comprehensive human rights violation report based on primary sources	Approval of special fund by PM of Pakistan for getting prepared an authentic report, which should be submitted to the organizations like Trial International Redress	High Commission of Pakistan to India PM Office MOFA Ministry of Human Rights	One year for preparing comprehensive human rights violation report

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Problem	Pathways to Solution	How to Implement Each Solution	Actors Responsible	Implementation Timelines
How to enhance intellectual depth of Pakistani diaspora about host country's domestic laws (UK and US), dealing with sanctions against the culprits involved in worst human rights abuses?	Capacity-building of Pakistani diaspora engaged in Kashmir cause	Conduct a detail study on India's gross violation of human rights in IIOJK, referring to the prohibition of such violations in domestic laws of the host countries	Ministry of Law Ministry of Human Rights	Six months for commissioning a detailed study

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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Muhammad Nawaz Khan holds Msc in Defence and Strategic Studies from Department of Defence and Strategic Studies (DSS), Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad. He has been working as Research Associate (RA) at Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) since February 2015. Previously, he had joined IPRI as Assistant Research Officer (ARO) in 2009. Before joining IPRI, he worked in Police Department. He got Training of Trainers (TOT) for Master Trainers Programme co-sponsored by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Royal Norwegian Embassy conducted at Administrative Staff College, Lahore, in 2006. He also participated in the Gansu International Fellowship Programme (September-October 2014) sponsored by Gansu Provincial Foreign Affairs Office, China. He is a Near East South Asia-NESA ALUMNUS from Center for Strategic Studies, National Defense University (NDU), Washington, D.C., USA. He has extensively travelled and participated in roundtables/closed moots, conferences/seminars, workshops and dialogues/plenaries in the Germany, China, Jordan, and Thailand. His area of research includes Strategic Studies with particular emphasis on security issues of South Asia, Middle East, Central Asia (SAMECA) along with P-5 countries of UNSC and Afghanistan. Numerous published research papers, co-authored "Introduction" book chapters along with separate book chapters and book reviews are on his credit. He regularly contributes Op-eds/articles on current strategic issues in English dailies/online source of Pakistan/abroad. He writes articles for University of Nottingham's Asia Research Institute.

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