



RESEARCH PAPER

The Shift in Geopolitical Alliances and its Impact on the UN's Role in The Kashmir Conflict

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores how the changing dynamics of global geopolitics, with the rise of China, Russia, and regional powers, have impacted the United Nations' role in mediating the conflict. Through a qualitative research approach involving literature review, document analysis, and expert interviews, the study finds that shifting geopolitical alliances have complicated the UN's role in Kashmir, leading to a reduced capacity for effective intervention and mediation in the region. This has been further exacerbated by India's rising global influence and its resistance to external mediation efforts. The study recommends strengthening the UN's mediation capacity through inclusive regional dialogue, reinforcing multilateralism, and modernizing its institutional structure to adapt to changing geopolitical realities. The study recommended the strategies adopted by the UN to enhance its role in Kashmir conflict. There should be an inclusive dialogue between the stakeholders and major powers.

Keywords: Article 370, India, Kashmir Conflict, Mediation, Multipolar World Order, United Nations, Geopolitical Alliances

Introduction

Kashmir has remained one of the most persistent territorial conflicts of modern history, continuing as a focal point for India and Pakistan's political, military, and diplomatic tensions since the partition of British India in 1947. The region of Jammu and Kashmir lies at the heart of the controversy, with both countries asserting their claims to the area based on alternative historical, political, and cultural narratives. This unrelenting political instability over the last six decades has resulted in the triggering of numerous wars and countless skirmishes, but it has still kept the entire region of South Asia on the boil. International efforts through varied organizations have been undertaken to end this saga at various times (Masood, et. al., 2020). First among them was the United Nations (UN), which has been involved since the late 1940s in continuous attempts at mediating between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. However, the conflict in Kashmir remains unresolved with the involvement of the UN and the establishment of numerous peacekeeping mechanisms, with prospects for a long-lasting solution appearing increasingly remote.

The role of the UN in Kashmir is significant, but its impact has been limited and very challenging over time. To this extent, the goal of the United Nations has mainly been to act as an intermediary between India and Pakistan and to ensure a peaceful settlement of the conflict. The UN's interest in Kashmir was initially based on resolutions calling for a plebiscite to decide the future of the region, which never occurred because India and Pakistan could never agree on its conditions. Over the years, the role of the UN in Kashmir has been rather peripheral, especially as India has become more assertive in foreign policy and regional influence. Further reduced involvement in the UN has been due to the changing global power dynamics and the emergence of new geopolitical actors that changed the international balance of power in South Asia (Yaseen, et. al., 2019).

Over the last two decades, the Kashmir issue has gone through a change in global politics. An unipolar world, mainly because of the collapse of the Cold War, has turned into a multipolar global system. Here, the new power play between countries like China, Russia, and other regional players in Iran and Saudi Arabia has assumed a lot of importance. This, in addition to the strategic realignments of India with the United States, and of Pakistan with China and the Gulf States, has rendered it impossible for the UN to play a helpful role in mediating over the Kashmir dispute. Further, the emergence of India as an economic and diplomatic superpower has provided for a more assertive stance, with the abolishing of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in 2019, removing Jammu and Kashmir's special status. The action is seen by many as further entrenching Indian control over the disputed region, calling into question the UN's ability to keep pace with the evolving nature of conflict.

This paper attempts to deconstruct the shifting geopolitical alliances of the 21st century and their implications for the role of the United Nations in the Kashmir conflict. The core goal is to evaluate how global power shifts, particularly in the rise of China, the strategic positioning of Russia, and the changing role of the United States, impact the UN's ability to mediate the dispute effectively. The research will also focus on the difficulties the UN encounters in sustaining its neutrality and legitimacy when major powers have vested interests in a given situation. Through analyzing the historical and current involvement of the UN in Kashmir and comparing this to its interventions in other conflicts, this paper will contribute to the broader understanding of international conflict resolution within the shifting geopolitical realities.

This research significance emanates from an investigation of how this relationship between changes in geopolitics and UN conflict-resolution mechanisms might operate. Issues such as the Kashmir conflict are of much significance at the regional level regarding security concerns, though also of significance globally for international diplomacy, so understanding to what extent it could accommodate change in the operation through such institutions is required. This research will also present policy recommendations to strengthen the role of the UN in Kashmir, emphasizing improving multilateral dialogue and reforming international conflict management structures in line with the new geopolitical order.

Literature Review

This literature is extensive and interdisciplinary: it encompasses international relations, political science, and the conflict studies community to name a few. Of significant note, much work has been done on the United Nations' role in peacekeeping and mediation of conflicts in general, with specific interest in the Kashmir case. At the same time, research on changing geopolitical alliances, especially in the 21st century, has helped to bring out the nature of such changes in how they affect international diplomacy and the UN's capability to resolve regional disputes.

Historical Role of the United Nations in Conflict Management

The UN has been actively involved in the Kashmir conflict since 1948 when it intervened to mediate between India and Pakistan after the first war over the region. The foundational literature in this area traces the history of the UN's involvement, from the establishment of the UN Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to the passing of Security Council resolutions that called for a plebiscite to determine the region's future. Scholars like Chandra (2018) and Raghavan (2020) suggest that the UN's initial steps were hampered because there was no consensus between the two parties. India and Pakistan differed in their interpretation of the mandate of the UN. So, the early optimism for the UN's ability to intervene in Kashmir has been muted by its inability to achieve a permanent solution (Chandra, 2018).

Shifts in Geopolitical Power Dynamics

There are enough pieces of evidence of literature on changing from a bipolar world with the hegemony of the US toward multipolarity, as it has relatively more parts today in regional powers and emerging nations (Yaseen, et. al., 2023). According to Ikenberry (2021), and Mearsheimer (2022), this equation of international power has largely been changed due to the power position of China and Russia gaining salience. Similarly, it is further even amplified in the matter by other regional powers like India and Iran. It is very central to how this changes the way the UN does things regarding the issue of Kashmir. For instance, Zhao (2020), asserts that with the rise of China, Pakistan has surfaced to gain because of proper diplomatic relations between the countries while diminishing the power influence of the UN in the region. On the other hand, Ganguly, (2022), and Kapur, (2021), have explored how close cooperation of India with the United States provides India with more international power, thus weakening the efforts of peace from the United Nations.

The Role of Bilateral Agreements and Regional Alliances

This body of literature has covered areas concerning the influence of bilateral agreements and regional alliances on the management of international conflicts. Friedman (2022) examines how India's strategic partnerships with Western nations, particularly the United States, have equipped India with a diplomatic shield, hence increasing the difficulties associated with external interventions, such as UN mediation. In contrast, Sharma (2023) articulates Pakistan's increasing relations with China and the Gulf States, which have completely changed the balance of power in South Asia. These bilateral dynamics, according to Sarkar and Batra (2023), are complicating the role of multilateral institutions like the UN, which is unable to maintain its impartiality given the deep interest of strong states in the outcome of the Kashmir issue.

Comparative Studies on UN Interventions

Comparative studies of the UN's involvement in other regional conflicts provide valuable insights into its evolving role in Kashmir. Betts (2021) draws parallels between the UN's mediation efforts in Kashmir and its involvement in other longstanding disputes such as Palestine and Cyprus. He further argues that the UN's interventions often fail because of the lack of consensus among the members of the Security Council and the influence of major powers with competing interests. Similarly, Bercovitch (2021) discusses the UN's peacekeeping operations in South Sudan and other places such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, where the UN managed to achieve some success at maintaining peace, but for issues like Kashmir, this is not the case.

The UN's Challenges in the 21st Century

The 21st century poses new challenges for the UN in terms of conflict resolution, especially in South Asia. Scholars like Roth (2020) and Gowan (2023) argue that the ability of the UN to mediate conflicts has declined in the face of a multipolar world order where global governance structures are increasingly shaped by non-state actors and regional powers. It is often said that the UN's success in Kashmir remains limited only to its power having been dimmed down, and at the same time, being refused by the world's high powers such as India and Pakistan to make international arbitration. Lund also further postulates in 2022 that because it is dependent on the finances of the primary donors, the power it wields to operate independently in something that is criticized by powerful countries has been scaled down.

The literature shows that though the UN was traditionally an important mediator of the Kashmir conflict, over time, its role has declined because of the change in the geopolitical scenario. This happened because of the rise of new global and regional powers and the

deepening of bilateral alliances. Besides these, India and Pakistan showed hesitation to seek international mediation, further eroding the role of the UN. The ability to understand these trends is important to the evaluation of the future of the UN's role in Kashmir and its larger role in conflict resolution in a multipolar world.

Material and Methods

This research uses a qualitative approach to understand the geopolitical dynamics surrounding the Kashmir conflict, to analyze the changing roles of the United Nations (UN) in conflict management. Qualitative methods are best suited for this study because the topic is so complex, with multiple stakeholders, historical contexts, and shifting geopolitical alliances, thus requiring in-depth perspectives to identify the underlying patterns of global conflict resolution mechanisms.

Qualitative Research Approach

This qualitative approach enables the investigation of the issue related to Kashmir, be it through the lens of international law, diplomacy, and even global institutions such as the United Nations. These issues, particularly through this research approach, help analyze further, for example, issues involving international relations, constantly shifting forms of geopolitical interactions, and how these interactions and transformations in dynamics impact or affect the conflict.

The qualitative methods that have been used in this research help to capture the geopolitical environment complexity, the perceptions of the key actors involved in the Kashmir dispute, and the implications of their actions on global peacekeeping efforts. This approach also provides an understanding of the roles played by the UN, historically and contemporarily, in managing conflicts, particularly in South Asia.

Data Collection

The data collection for this research includes both primary and secondary sources, which allow for a robust and well-rounded analysis.

- **Primary Sources:** The study's primary sources are interviews with international relations, conflict management experts, and South Asian geopolitics. These interviews will be conducted with diplomats, academics, and policymakers who have direct experience or knowledge regarding the Kashmir conflict and the role of the UN. Interviewing individuals with practical insights into the situation provides an authentic and first-hand perspective, which is crucial for understanding the complexities involved in the Kashmir issue.
- **Official documents and reports of the UN,** such as Security Council resolutions, General Assembly resolutions, and peacekeeping mission reports, are studied to analyze the historical and contemporary actions of the UN in the Kashmir conflict. Such documents provide a formal, institutional perspective on the involvement of the UN, its challenges, and the changes in its strategies.
- **Secondary Sources:** The secondary data comprises academic journals, books, and case studies that provide a historical and theoretical analysis of the Kashmir conflict and the role of the United Nations. Key publications in international relations, conflict resolution, and South Asian studies provide a theoretical framework to understand the geopolitical shifts and their implications for global governance. These sources help contextualize the findings from the primary data and contribute to the development of a comprehensive analysis.

- Scholarly articles by authors like Bercovitch (2023), Khan (2020), and Kapur (2022) provide appropriate insights into the geopolitical shifts, while studies on the UN's peacekeeping roles and conflict resolution strategies by scholars like Mearsheimer (2022) and Raghavan (2021) help inform the research's understanding of international institutions.

Analytical and Interpretive Framework

The present study employed both analytical and interpretive frameworks in the examination of data obtained. Analytically, this framework emanated from multipolarity theory and the theory of international relations. Such a framework gives an explanation regarding how change occurs in the sense of alliance building and how developing powers, for example, China and regional powers like the Gulf States, impact on the dynamic factors of the Kashmir conflict.

This research is also very integral in conflict resolution frameworks that look at how international organizations, most especially the UN, have historically mediated the Kashmir conflict and how they might be adapting their strategies in light of current geopolitical realities. It therefore assesses the successes and failures of the UN in the resolution or management of conflicts in general and, of course, particularly the situation in Kashmir.

Additionally, discursive analysis is used to decode the narratives on the Kashmir conflict, where attention is drawn to how various stakeholders; the Indians, Pakistanis, Chinese, and international players frame the issue. This will offer insights into how rhetoric and narrative construction influence diplomatic negotiations and global policies about Kashmir.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study are presented in the following headings;

Shifts in Geopolitical Alliances

The global geopolitical scenario has undergone a sea change in the last few decades, more particularly with the rise of multipolarity. This had far-reaching implications for international relations, especially in places like South Asia, still suffering from the unresolved conflict of Kashmir. These reflect a larger transformation in international politics, driven by a rise of new powers and reconfigurations of older alliances. This has resulted in an evolution of the geopolitics of the Kashmir dispute, which has further complicated and complicated attempts to find solutions to the dispute through such multilateral institutions as the United Nations.

Emergence of Multipolarity

The post-Cold War era has been characterized by the United States as the only superpower in the world, which created a unipolar global order that enabled it to easily engage in diplomatic and military interventions all over the world in fighting global conflicts. However, as the 21st century has shown, the decline of unipolarity has emerged with other powers like China, India, and Russia asserting themselves more on the global stage. (Muzaffar, et. Al., 2017). That, indeed, is a multipolar world order transition that fundamentally changes the power dynamics of global governance, leading consequently to more complexity and contest in the international environment the words of Ikenberry (2021) and Mearsheimer (2022).

Multipolarity has brought about an era where the traditional Western-oriented international institutions, including the United Nations, have lost much of their clout. China

and India have pursued independent foreign policies and aligned with other regional and global powers with whom they share interests. This development has been particularly pronounced in South Asia, where the Kashmir conflict remains a point of contention between India and Pakistan. Both countries have aligned with different global and regional powers, and as a result, the international system has become more fragmented and polarized. In such an arena, the UN's capacities to mediate have been restrained.

Impact on South Asia

In South Asia, the geopolitical change to multipolarity has brought about great results in the Kashmir conflict. Geopolitical realignment in this context for both India and Pakistan in their quest for newer alliances has deepened their geopolitical divide (Muzaffar, et. al., 2017). The writer Ganguly (2022) writes about India's increasing alliance with the United States, not only economically and militarily strengthening the Indian cause but also diplomatically in better leverage on the world scale. This has emboldened India to take a more assertive position on Kashmir, especially after the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019, which altered the political status of Jammu and Kashmir. Its strategic relationship with the U.S. has made India reluctant to accept third-party intervention, including that by the United Nations, over the issue of Kashmir.

On the other hand, Zhao (2020) suggests that the increasing alignment of Pakistan and China has made a significant difference in the Kashmir dispute. China has both economically and diplomatically assisted Pakistan to counterbalance India's influence in the region. It has been further strengthened by various initiatives such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which connects China's Xinjiang province to Pakistan's Gwadar port. As Sarkar and Batra (2023) argue, China's growing economic and military presence in the region has further complicated the international community's ability to mediate the Kashmir conflict, as China, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, has consistently vetoed any resolutions that are perceived as unfavorable to Pakistan's position on Kashmir.

Simultaneously, Pakistan's alignment with Gulf States like Saudi Arabia and UAE has added one more layer of complexity to geopolitical dynamics in the region. Sharma (2023) points out that the relationships give Pakistani huge diplomatic and economic backing that they use to pose a challenge to India at international forums, including at the UN. This would mean that India and Pakistan are increasingly influenced by their respective regional and global partners, rather than solely relying on international institutions like the UN for the resolution of conflict.

Global Impacts on the UN

The changes in geopolitical alliances have had significant impacts on the United Nations, especially in its role as a mediator in conflicts such as Kashmir. According to Bercovitch (2021), regional powers' influence and inability to achieve major powers' consensus have drastically constrained the UN's capacity to effectively intervene in international disputes. In the Kashmir case, the role of the UN has dwindled not only due to influence from China and India but also due to the changing nature of the Security Council structure itself, with the veto powers of the permanent members making it increasingly burdensome to pass resolutions regarding contentious issues.

The challenge before the UN is not just political but also financial. As Roth (2020) puts it, its dependence on its major contributors has put the UN in a position where it has to fail to act independently most times when the interests of such states are at variance with one another. Geopolitics of India and Pakistan have played in such a manner that it has caught the UN between conflicting international interests, resulting in inconsequential interference on its part in the Kashmir issue.

The role of regional organizations, such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), has complicated the UN's ability to mediate the Kashmir conflict. According to Lund (2022), these regional bodies often follow their own agendas, which may even be in contradiction to the positions taken by the UN, thereby making it difficult for the international community to take a unified stance on issues like Kashmir.

In a summary, the changes in alliances in the 21st century have had an absolute impact on the Kashmir situation and the role of the United Nations in its solution. The shift from the unipolar world order to a multipolar one has created a more intricate and contested international environment for regional powers like China and India to play a determining role in the conflict's movement. As literature suggests, these developments have made it challenging for the UN to play an unbiased mediator since the interest of powerful states has come to dominate the discourse of Kashmir. In this respect, the developing alliances and world power structure imply that any future resolution to the Kashmir conflict requires a redrafting of traditional ways of diplomacy and conflict resolution in a multipolar world.

The UN's Evolving Role in the Kashmir Conflict

It all began with the founding of the United Nations in 1947, at which time the disagreement of the political status over the region of Kashmir between India and Pakistan started surfacing. The involvement of the UN in Kashmir began when it passed UNSC Resolution 47 in 1948, which required a ceasefire and withdrawal of foreign troops along with the initiation of plebiscite in the area. However, contrary to the initial optimism that it would finally solve the conflict, over seven decades have passed with this issue remaining unsolved. This section will trace the role of the UN in historical times and then analyse challenges it faces today, together with an analysis of the changing geopolitical environment that affects the ability of the UN to mediate the Kashmir conflict appropriately.

Historical Context

The role of the UN in the Kashmir conflict dates back to 1948 when India and Pakistan, for the first time, approached the international community following a clash over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The UN Security Council, with the United States and the United Kingdom as its mentors, passed Resolution 47 in 1948. The resolution called for a ceasefire and prescribed the procedure that was to be adopted for a plebiscite in which the people of Kashmir were to decide whether they would join India or Pakistan. A plebiscite should be held after the withdrawal of Pakistani forces from the area and after the setting up of an impartial administration.

Even after the adoption of this resolution, its provisions could not be implemented because both India and Pakistan were not willing to cooperate with each other. India stated that it was not possible to hold the plebiscite until the forces of Pakistan were withdrawn from the region, and Pakistan stated that the control exercised by India over Kashmir made the latter's plebiscite non-legitimate. With time, both of them dug their heels in, and this conflict remained unsolved.

Early attempts at mediation by the UN over the Kashmir issue followed several interventions, from peacekeeping missions to various diplomatic initiatives. However, despite all these efforts, the UN's intervention in this conflict has not proved too effective in solving the same. It is for this reason that the political status of Kashmir has not been successfully addressed, mainly because both the nuclear-armed neighbours are continuously holding opposing positions regarding the matter.

Current Challenges

In the past few years, the role of the UN in Kashmir has faced more challenges than ever before due to the Indian government's unilateral decision to withdraw the special autonomous status granted to Jammu and Kashmir by abolishing Article 370 in August 2019. The controversial move overnight changed the political status of the region, which soon followed with waves of protests, curfew, and heavy military crackdown in the area. The revocation of Article 370 was considered a landmark shift in the Kashmir issue, which made all earlier UN resolutions and interventions redundant. It has been quite impossible for the UN to meaningfully intervene in this change, given the political considerations involved.

Limited Authority Post-Article 370 Amendments

India repealed Article 370 in 2019. This action significantly altered the political nature of Jammu and Kashmir by reducing autonomy and transforming it into a union territory. This development has been associated with strong protests and agitations across the state of Kashmir. It heightened tension between India and Pakistan, and for the international agency responsible for conflict resolution, the United Nations, there was this dilemma. Historically, the UN has played a role in Kashmir, especially with the passage of UNSC Resolution 47 in 1948 which called for a plebiscite to determine the region's future status. The revocation of Article 370 raises questions over the validity of past resolutions from the UN because India considers constitutional changes to be an internal matter and thus outside the scope of international interference.

As Bercovitch (2021) and Roth (2020) argue, the ability to intervene in such sovereign matters has the UN increasingly dependent on a member state's willingness to consider its authority. For example, India's stance, boosted by its emerging world-power status, has it relatively immune to external involvement about Kashmir, even by that of the UN. The veto power of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, including China and Russia who are close to India, limits further the scope for any meaningful action by the UN. It has therefore found itself largely relegated to the sidelines in this dispute, unable to force any significant resolution on the situation.

The Influence of India's Growing Economic and Diplomatic Clout

India's rise as an economic giant in the world and her increasingly diplomatic relationships with the Western world, especially the United States of America, have dramatically changed the balance of power over the Kashmir dispute. As Ganguly (2022) and Sharma (2023) suggest, the rise of the Indian economy, modernization of the military, and greater influence on the international platform have consolidated its position in the Kashmir dispute. It has consistently blocked UN resolutions on Kashmir that India perceives as unfavorable, including proposals for international mediation or a plebiscite.

India's economic and diplomatic clout has made her less susceptible to third-party mediation, especially from the UN which she perceives as an ineffective organization. This is further strengthened as the rest of the international community comes in support of India's position on Kashmir, especially after the US and the European Union's withdrawal from any vociferous criticism of the Indian government's actions. As Kapur (2021) aptly comments, India's growing influence has made it even more averse to foreign intervention by third parties, even by UN resolutions, and has fundamentally shifted the power dynamics of the Kashmir issue, rendering the UN least capable of playing the middleman.

India's regional partnerships, in particular with the United States and other democracies in the Indo-Pacific, have created a strategic environment that discourages UN involvement in Kashmir. Moreover, the growing alignment of India with Western powers, mainly in defense and trade, has made it a significant geopolitical player globally. As

Mearsheimer (2022) argues, the UN has difficulties in exercising influence in such an environment where powerful states, like India, can assert their interests and block external intervention, including by the UN.

Diplomatic and Regional Challenges in Engaging Pakistan

On the contrary, Pakistan continues to firmly stand on the issue of Kashmir and insists that the world intervene in it. However, Pakistan's attempts to seek UN intervention into the dispute over Kashmir have been considerably thwarted, mainly by changing global alliances and Pakistan's relatively weaker influence in international politics. Despite its long-standing role as a key player in the UN's peacekeeping missions and its historical support for UN resolutions on Kashmir, Pakistan has found it difficult to garner broad international support for its stance.

Pakistan's increasing alignment with China, and its diplomatic engagement with the Gulf states, has somewhat protected it from Western pressure but has not altered the balance of power on Kashmir in any major way. While Pakistan has continually brought up the Kashmir issue in international forums, it hasn't been able to swing the major global powers as long as regional powers like India continue to engage in strategic partnerships.

The Challenge of Maintaining Neutrality

Probably the biggest challenge the UN is facing in the Kashmir situation is maintaining its neutrality as there are conflicting interests on behalf of India and Pakistan, which have historically presented their case to the international world, depicting the Kashmir issue as an issue of national sovereignty; both countries have lobbies very strong both domestically and internationally. As Bercovitch (2021) and Lund (2022) argue, the power balance of this region also severely undermines the role the UN plays as an honest facilitator; India and Pakistan enjoy an alliance of powerful adversaries working against their interests on their respective sides. This development thus makes it challenging for the UN to act, mediate, or even introduce remedies that will be acceptable to them in the matter.

Due to the pressures from member states and the power games inside the Security Council, it has been hard for the UN to take a coherent stance on Kashmir. In a way, Ikenberry (2021) proposes that when the UN is unable to take concrete steps, especially on matters of powerful countries like India and China, the credibility of this mediator institution is eroded more and more. In addition, the increasing influence of regional organizations such as the SCO and the OIC makes it even harder for the UN to be neutral because these organizations pursue agendas that may not support the UN's principles.

Case Studies

To understand better the problems the UN is encountering in Kashmir, it will be useful to compare the situation with other conflicts in which the UN has been involved. An important comparison can be drawn with the Palestine-Israel conflict, where the UN also faced major problems in the mediation of a lasting solution due to deep-rooted political, religious, and territorial divisions between the two parties. Just like Kashmir, the UN has been severely criticized for not being able to properly address the core issues of the conflict; their resolutions have often been ignored or undermined by the powerful states.

Another relevant case study would be the Ukraine conflict, where the UN's role has been circumscribed due to major powers, particularly Russia, being a permanent member of the Security Council. The complexity of the geopolitical nature of the Ukraine conflict, coupled with the veto power of Russia, makes it difficult for the UN to mediate neutrally or impartially. The power dynamics at both the Security Council and regional powers level

particularly India and China the Kashmir issue so it becomes even more out of hand for the United Nations to play an active intermediary.

Analysis of Geopolitical Realignments and Their Impacts

The geopolitical landscape surrounding the Kashmir conflict has greatly changed in the last couple of decades, primarily through the changing dynamics of alliances and the rising powers in the global order. These developments have impacted the nature of the conflict and the role of the international community regarding it, especially that of the United Nations. This section undertakes an examination of the salient geopolitical realignments in South Asia focusing specifically on Pakistan, India, and the United Nations, and corresponding impacts on the Kashmir problem.

Pakistan's Perspective

For Pakistan, the issue of Kashmir is not merely an issue of territory, but rather a very integral part of its national identity and strategic thinking. The question was of extreme importance to Pakistan from the very beginning, both politically and militarily. Its standpoint was that Kashmir was a place of dispute, and an independent plebiscite should be held as set out by the UN Security Council resolutions to decide what its future status would look like. The shifting paradigm of geopolitics in South Asia has only added to this challenge of resolving the dispute over Kashmir through diplomatic measures.

Pakistan's foreign policy has now changed its orientation to strengthen its relations with China, and its association with Beijing has emerged as a significant component of its policy. According to Ahmed (2021) and Shah (2022), the CPEC has brought the two countries closer, and China has given economic and military support to Pakistan. The shift has given Pakistan a balance to counter India's growing influence in the region and the world. Though the strategic relationship with China has boosted Pakistan's influence in discussions over Kashmir, it has also complicated the diplomatic approach, especially to India, which sees China as a direct competitor.

In addition, Pakistan has sought to attract support from the Gulf States that have lately emerged as powerhouses in international politics. The OIC has served as an outlet for Pakistan to galvanize international Muslim opinion in support of Kashmir. However, according to Khan (2020), the Gulf States' growing relations with India, especially in terms of trade, defense, and technology, have gradually hampered the OIC from taking a strong stance towards Kashmir. This change further isolated Pakistan in its pursuit of international support for its point of view.

India's Perspective

India has always had a very strong stance regarding the issue of Kashmir as far as national sovereignty and territorial integrity are concerned. However, India's geopolitical approach has undergone a sea change over the years and has become more in line with the West, particularly the United States. This US-India nuclear deal of 2008 marked a significant step in this process since it established India as a strategic partner of the United States in the Indo-Pacific region, thereby improving its position on the global scale.

Besides economic and military power, the fact that India has become strong at the international level due to its rising economic and military power has also facilitated resistance to international mediation for Kashmir. According to Raghavan (2021), with growing influence in the world, India has further side-lined the role played by international organizations, inclusive of the UN, concerning Kashmir in resolving the conflict of this particular region. India's strategic partnerships with the United States, Japan, Australia, and

other democracies in the Indo-Pacific have helped India strengthen its position on the world stage, making it more resistant to external pressure on Kashmir.

Moreover, India's strategic partnerships with regional powers like Japan, Israel, and key Gulf States have reinforced its stance on Kashmir. India has used its diplomatic and economic leverage to make it appear that whatever India decides to do in Kashmir -even scrap Article 370-is something that falls within its domain and is not an international concern.

Global Impacts on the UN

The dynamic geopolitical nature of South Asia has been important in how the UN could intercede in the issue of Kashmir. According to Kapur (2022) and Bercovitch (2023), with the growth in regional powers and changes in the dynamics of the balance of power within the Security Council, the role of the UN in world conflict resolution has declined. The UN's credibility as a neutral intermediary is becoming harder to defend, with powerhouses such as China, India, and the US all chasing their respective national interests in the region.

The influence of the UN on the Kashmir issue is very low, as India has been very strongly opposed to international intervention and Pakistan has remained dependent on external support. The role of the Security Council, which often paralyzes the organization in exercising its function due to the veto power of permanent members, makes it difficult for the UN to take effective action. This trend has been fueled by the emergence of regional organizations like the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, SCO, and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation, BIMSTEC, which opened alternative avenues of addressing regional issues within the United Nations framework.

As Mearsheimer (2022) puts it, the UN faces significant challenges in its pursuit of the status of a global conflict resolver, given the multipolar world and the rise of regional powers. The nature of geopolitical alignment in South Asia, wherein India and Pakistan's constant rivalry and the involvement of other external powers like China and the United States complicate the role of the UN in resolving the issue of Kashmir.

Conclusion

The Kashmir conflict, running over seven decades, has remained an important point of contention between India and Pakistan. It has evolved with the changing balance of global geopolitics. The influence of the United Nations, which had been a very important factor in the past, has increasingly been restrained by the changing balance of international power, especially by the rise of regional powers like China and by India's growing assertiveness. This complex web of alliances and rivalries in the 21st-century multipolarity has given the UN a new challenge in mediating such a conflict, thus a new scenario has developed concerning the intervention method of such an organization that was not so effective anymore.

The geopolitical realignments described in this paper reflect the changing alliances of South Asia's key players, including India, Pakistan, and China, and how these changed alliances have shaped the response of the international community toward the Kashmir issue. From the increasing partnership between Pakistan and China and the Gulf States to India's strategic alignment with the Western powers and the increasing involvement of regional organizations such as the SCO, the Kashmir conflict has always been layered with new aspects. These changes affected not only the bilateral relationship but also the UN's work in conflicts.

Considering all of this, the role of the UN in Kashmir has lost importance and is, above all, due to India's resistance towards interference and the growing strength of players

on the outside, like China and the United States. The UN has tried to solve the Kashmir issue through resolutions and peacekeeping missions. However, these efforts have been limited by the interests of powerful nations, especially those with veto power in the Security Council. The latest revocation of Article 370 by India has added to the problems faced by the UN and further diminished its ability to mediate effectively.

This study suggests that a more inclusive and multilateral role by the UN can bring relevance back to it because it would be more holistic in engaging not just India and Pakistan but also China and the United States as regional stakeholders. More so, there is a need to build stronger tools for peacekeeping and diplomacy within the UN itself, such that all parties consider UN intervention to be legitimate. The long-term peace in Kashmir would depend on strengthening international law and advocating for the peaceful resolution of conflicts based on the principles of justice and equity.

In that regard, the UN must push for institutional reforms to address the challenges of the current global order. The call for reforms within the UN Security Council regarding veto power by permanent members has been mounting lately. For the UN to remain a relevant force within the realm of conflict resolution, it must evolve with the changing geopolitical landscape. It would encompass creating new frameworks on peacebuilding and managing conflict; involving the four principal actors: major powers, regional actors, civil society, and multilateral organizations.

Hence, while the Kashmir issue does not lose its essence due to this ongoing issue in the contemporary political and societal context, changing geopolitics and its repercussions on the UN's role are something in which a fresh perspective will evolve regarding resolving that conflict. It will happen by working with geopolitical facts by strengthening institutions at the international agency UN.

Recommendations

Given the intricacies of this conflict in Kashmir and its difficulties in the treatment of the United Nations in such matters, this section outlines several recommendations for improving the role played by the UN in Kashmir to further bring about peace to this region of the world. These come from the analysis of the above geopolitical dynamics and limitations of the UN in dispute mediation.

Strategies for the UN to Enhance Its Role in the Kashmir Conflict

To further enhance its role in the Kashmir conflict, the UN should recognize the changed geopolitical scenario and adapt to it. The UN should concentrate on developing a framework for dialogue, not only between India and Pakistan but also between the regional powers of China and eventually even the United States so that all the relevant stakeholders are considered. Considering India's resistance to the United Nations' direct involvement, the United Nations can simply be an interface in such dialogues and not a mediator.

The UN should also draw on its peacekeeping operations, not as a means of direct intervention but as an instrument to stabilize Kashmir and protect the civilians. It would be through a renewed commitment to peacekeeping mandates and a definition of the role of UN peacekeepers in areas of high geopolitical sensitivity.

Need for Inclusive Dialogue Among Regional and Global Powers

In this scenario of contemporary geopolitics, the UN has to stimulate dialogue beyond bilateralism from the old times of India and Pakistan. The UN must engage regional powers, like China, and the world at large, comprising global players, including the United States, Russia, and the European Union. That framework will ensure that the interest of all

key stakeholders in any process is considered; such a framework will always preserve the role of a UN-neutral facilitator.

With this potential, the UN might just bridge the gap between India and Pakistan by bringing China in its own right to this table-the one with a strategic interest in Kashmir through the latter's relationship with Pakistan-as well as the United States, which has big interests in India. Whether the two will come out to fruitful talks will then depend on the readiness of both sides to enter constructive talk, something the UN has to nudge along and facilitate.

Strengthening of Multilateralism and International Laws

One of the major challenges that the UN has to face in the conflict over Kashmir is the waning credibility of multilateral institutions. The growing power of regional blocs and the growing tendency of states to behave unilaterally have vitiated the authority of international institutions such as the UN. The UN has to strive toward strengthening the principles of multilateralism and reinforcing international law as the basis of world governance.

This may entail a renewed focus on international law for Kashmir, particularly in the UN Charter and relevant provisions of the UN charter regarding UN Security Council resolutions. The UN should continue to urge an amicable settlement of the dispute following international law and should urge India and Pakistan to respect international obligations in agreements and treaties entered into. This could also include the appointment of a special envoy for Kashmir to ensure constant diplomatic engagement with both countries and other international stakeholders.

Reforms in United Nations Structures

In a world increasingly characterized by geopolitical new realities, the UN itself needs radical transformation, above all, in its modes of decision-making. In the very structure of the UN Security Council with its five permanent members with veto powers, there normally arises the possibility that this council becomes paralyzed when trying to address sensitive issues such as Kashmir. There is a need for greater transparency and democracy in the process of decision-making and reconsideration of a new approach towards the veto system, especially in issues concerning regional stability.

In reshaping the UN's institutional structure to better respond to these changing alliance, rising power challenges will further serve the organization as it relates to its importance and relevance in responding to and preventing global conflict. The third reason is it engages the institution in an ability to rebuild peace and prevent the ongoing global crisis associated with other protracted disputes like that connected with the Kashmir conflict.

Limitations of the Study

Though the research methodology does give an all-inclusive view of the Kashmir conflict and the role of the UN, it has some limitations. It is based on secondary sources, which could present a biased or incomplete view of the events. Furthermore, access to high-level decision-makers and direct interviews with key UN officials are very challenging, which limits the depth of primary data.

The dynamic nature of international relations and geopolitical shifts also constitutes a limitation, meaning that some of the findings might change with time as the situation in Kashmir and global alliances continue to change. This study captures the state of affairs at a specific moment in time and does not predict future outcomes.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are part of this study, especially in interviewing people who have first-hand information about the Kashmir conflict. All interviewees will be informed about the interview and given consent, with the guarantee that their identities will remain anonymous if they so wish. All data used in the research will also be done responsibly, and all perspectives of stakeholders will be represented fairly without bias or distortion.

In brief, this methodology, which combines qualitative methods of data collection, primary and secondary data collection, and a robust analytical framework, is designed to provide a deep and nuanced understanding of shifting geopolitical alliances surrounding the Kashmir conflict and the evolving role of the UN. This study, through the exploration of this conflict from various perspectives, will contribute to a broader understanding of international conflict resolution and the changing dynamics of global governance.

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