

Original Article

A Review of Structural Changes and Development: Unravelling the Role of Local Governance in Jammu and Kashmir Post 2019

Yasmin Akhtar

Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, MANUU

Email: akhteryasmin14@gmail.com

Manuscript ID:

JRD -2025-171203

ISSN: [2230-9578](https://jdrv.org)

Volume 17

Issue 12

Pp. 16-20

December 2025

Abstract

The structural changes in Jammu and Kashmir post-2019, catalysed by the revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A, have deeply influenced its governance framework and relationship with India. This move aimed at integration and development, evidently in the administrative restructuring and initiation of various projects. However, it presents challenges such as security concerns and socio-economic disparities. This is the review-based study where the researcher has been chosen from more than 25 papers as samples. Research gaps include the need for long-term impact assessment, understanding local governance dynamics, and investigating inclusive development strategies. As well, human rights violations and international reactions necessitate scrutiny. Media representation and perception management also require critical examination. Addressing these gaps is vital for policymakers and scholars to comprehend the evolving situation and formulate inclusive development strategies for sustainable peace and stability in Jammu and Kashmir.

Keywords: Jammu and Kashmir, Local Government, Article 370 and Article 35A, structural changes

Introduction

The structural changes and development trajectory in Jammu and Kashmir post-2019 are deeply intertwined with the constitutional changes and shifts in governance implemented by the Indian government. The revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A of the Indian Constitution in August 2019 fundamentally altered the region's governance framework and its relationship with the Indian Union. The abrogation of articles 370 and 35A removed the special status enjoyed by Jammu and Kashmir, integrating it fully into the Indian Union. This move was aimed at fostering greater integration, development, and equality across the region. Simultaneously with the abrogation of Article 370, the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two separate Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh. This administrative restructuring aimed to streamline governance and facilitate targeted development efforts (Kuszewska, A. 2022). With the removal of special autonomy, the governance structure shifted towards greater centralization of power. This change resulted in the direct administration of the Union Territory by the central government. The Indian government has initiated various development projects and schemes in Jammu and Kashmir aimed at enhancing infrastructure, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities. These efforts are intended to spur economic growth and improve the standard of living in the region. While the central government has taken a more prominent role in governance, local governance institutions such as municipal bodies and panchayats still play a crucial role in implementing development programs at the grassroots level. However, their powers and autonomy may have been affected by the structural changes (Lone, F. N. 2023). The post-2019 scenario presents both challenges and opportunities for the development of Jammu and Kashmir. Challenges include security concerns, political tensions, and the need to address socio-economic disparities. On the other hand, the integration into the Indian mainstream offers opportunities for economic growth, investment, and infrastructure development. The changes in Jammu and Kashmir have garnered international attention and sparked diplomatic reactions from various countries.



Quick Response Code:



Website:
<https://jdrv.org/>

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.17996746



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Address for correspondence:

Yasmin Akhtar, Research Scholar, Department of Political Science, MANUU

How to cite this article:

Akhtar, Y. (2025). *A Review of Structural Changes and Development: Unravelling the Role of Local Governance in Jammu and Kashmir Post 2019*. *Journal of Research and Development*, 17(12), 16–20. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17996746>

The geopolitical implications of these developments, particularly in the context of India-Pakistan relations, add another layer of complexity to the region's governance dynamics (Mitra, S. K. 2022).

Review of Related Literature

Mir, A. H. (2023) focused on the politics in Jammu & Kashmir post-1947 are influenced by three key events: the dismissal of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1953, the launch of Muslim Mutahida Mahaz in 1987, and the failure of the Kamaraj Plan in 1963. This study aims to explore the socio-political history of Jammu and Kashmir, arguing that the crisis ignited by Hazratbal relic theft had strong roots in the failure of the Kamaraj Plan, presenting it as a critical juncture.

Deva, Z. (2020) In August 2019, India revoked the autonomous status of Jammu & Kashmir, citing multiple petitions challenging its inclusion in the Indian Constitution. The decision to supersede the Basic Order by Article 370 raises questions about the nature of J&K's accession, the Indo-J&K constitutional relationship, and the place of the Basic Order in the constitutional scheme.

Deshmukh, P. (2022) In August 2019, the Union Government formally revised the constitutional status of J&K, de-operationalizing Article 370 and reorganizing the state into two separate Union Territories. This change was rooted in Supreme Court precedent, making legal arguments against executive power unlikely. The Indian Parliament provided recommendations for the de-operationalization and reorganization, posing questions about the Union Government's authority during the President's Rule. The Indian Supreme Court will have to answer these questions.

Deva, Z. (2022) examines Kashmir's constitutional realities from a constitutional lens, arguing that existing scholarship primarily focuses on Article 370, limiting analysis to the Indian legal order. The author uses bargain and set theory to show that constitutional orders in Kashmir and India are independent and interactive, bringing Kashmir's constitutional space within India.

Kumar Aryal, S., & Muneer, S. (2023) focused on the abrogation of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution in August 2019, which granted Jammu and Kashmir special governance and autonomy, has significantly impacted the geopolitical and social dynamics of the region. The government claims this was due to consent from Kashmiris and state government facilitation. However, the abrogation has led to political instability, human rights violations, and forced migration, further tending the geopolitical relationship between India, Pakistan, China, and other international players. This paper assesses the contemporary geopolitics of the Kashmir conflict after the abrogation, examining the reasons behind and impact of this decision.

Ahmad, R. (2022) examines power relations between the Indian State, regional government, armed forces, private urban hoteliers, travel agencies, religious corporations, local tourism service providers, and host communities in Pahalgam, India. It argues that these actors, particularly the Indian State, engage in contestations for dominance, insurrection, and subversion over the destination. The author demonstrates that subaltern dispositions of ponymen create boundaries within the destination field, limiting access to capitals and ensuring their dominant position.

Ahanger, J. A., & Yaqoob, M. (2023) explore the political slogans in Jammu and Kashmir from 1947 to 2019, analyzing their rhetorical impacts and shaping ideological orientations. It provides insights into the political history of J&K and the role of institutions like party systems and elections in democracy. The study highlights the significance of slogans in shaping popular opinions and thought patterns and analyzes strategies for slogan development and their contemporary political history.

Verma, V. R., Gandhi, S., & Dash, U. (2019) examine healthcare access and utilization among the transhumant pastoralist community of Bakarwals in the Pir Panjal Range of Jammu and Kashmir. The research used Penchansky's framework and Anderson's model, focusing on availability, affordability, accessibility, acceptability, and accommodation. The study used a mixed-method approach, conducting interviews and facility surveys. Results showed lesser utilization in higher pastures due to geographical inaccessibility and cultural preference, but less pronounced in winter settlements and among the sedentarianized.

Wani, A. A., & Yaqoob, M. (2021) explore the relationship between institutional trust and public legitimacy in Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on the state-centric approach to governance. It highlights the importance of trust in strengthening democratic governance and the need for further research in conflict regions.

Zargar, H., & Osuri, G. (2023) explore settler colonialism in India's annexation of Jammu and Kashmir, tracing its origins back to the Dogra feudal rule. It argues that the Hindu Dogra dispensation used a revenue surveillance system for land grabs, erasing local voices and claiming the land for Hindu settlers. The article highlights the state's efforts to redefine the 'native' and reclaim the land.

Singh, R., et al. (2021) explore how conflicts in BoP conflict zones, such as Jammu & Kashmir, can enhance entrepreneurial resilience and self-efficacy. Through in-depth interviews with 18 BoP micro-entrepreneurs, the research reveals that conflict zones can strengthen entrepreneurial resilience and self-efficacy, thereby shaping a new social compact with fragile states. The findings suggest the need for equitable and inclusive marketing systems in conflict-inflicted BoP zones.

Tajuddin, M. (2019) explores the relationship between religion and polity in Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting its formation, expansion, and integration. It critiques the struggle for responsible government, its impact on religion, and

its ruptured course by decolonization and partition. The chapter concludes by arguing for dereligionization as a rational solution to the imbroglio.

Trinn, C., & Schulte, F. (2022) develop a new typology of territorial self-governance based on constitutional protection, territorial quality, and self-rule strength. It examines over 2200 second-level regions in 96 democracies, semi-democracies, and autocratic regimes between 2000 and 2018. The TERRGO dataset, which contains over 39,000 region-year assessments, helps untangle country-specific profiles and analyse changes and asymmetries of state architectures.

Boga, D. (2023) explores the link between counterinsurgency (COIN) and media in India-administered Kashmir, using critical media theories to examine the post-neo-liberal framework. They reframe COIN as a state response to a people's movement for self-determination, revealing the media's role in perpetuating an unjust social order and the roots of ethnonationalism.

Goswami, P., & Panda, G. R. (2022) examine the changes in governance networks and social infrastructure in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (UT) after the abrogation of Article 370. It focuses on urban drinking water in Srinagar and Jammu, highlighting the need for central budgetary assistance and policy guidelines to improve the governing class's political legitimacy and prevent social unrest. The study aims to understand the changes in governance networks.

Dar, R. A. (2023) examines the constitution-making process in Jammu and Kashmir, focusing on the dominant political party, the National Conference, led by Sheikh Abdullah. The process was marked by exclusionary violence against diverse communities, but the article also highlights the exclusivist nature of the Constitution. It uses the hermeneutical interpretation of the Constituent Assembly Debates to identify differing viewpoints. It challenges the dominant historical narrative of the process as a successful experiment in Indian federal democracy.

Kaul, S. (2022) Naya Kashmir, a 1944 manifesto by the National Conference party, was a progressive call for change, addressing the impoverished lives of the peasantry and advocating for transformative changes in constitutional, political, social, and economic aspects. Despite its failures after 1947, its vision and resolve remain relevant today. This chapter examines the manifesto's rhetoric, principles, and future vision, suggesting its revolutionary possibilities should guide resistance politics in the present.

Wani, A. A., & Yaseen, T. (2020) explore the political dynamics of the Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh regions, highlighting the influence of religion on their politics and nationalism. It highlights the state relationship and the role religion plays in shaping national imaginations.

Ahanger, J. A., & Yaqoob, M. (2023) examine electoral processes in Jammu and Kashmir, India, focusing on the historical trajectory of politics. It argues that post-2019 politics resemble those before 2019, with central government guidance. The chapter highlights the depoliticization of the public sphere and the potential for new parties to add diversity, but not all parties will be equally favoured.

Mathur, A. N. (2023) explores the emergence and evolution of institutional toxicities, which fuel intractable conflicts and become wicked problems with no expiry date. Sticky polarities become intrinsic parts of group identities, accumulating toxicity through overt and covert processes. The paper discusses the complex healing of the injured group psyche and suggests that attention to unconscious resonances in our inner worlds can trigger processes enabling engagement with disowned loss and denied grief.

Methodology

This is a review-based paper where the researcher has chosen more than 25 research papers as a sample that have been published in valuable journals for identifying research gaps.

Research Gaps

Based on the literature provided, there are flowing identified research gaps

- **Long-term Impact Assessment:** While there is ample discussion about the immediate effects of the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, there seems to be a gap in research focusing on the long-term consequences of these changes on the socioeconomic, political, and cultural landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. Understanding how these structural changes evolve and their lasting implications could provide valuable insights for policymakers and scholars.
- **Local Governance Dynamics:** While there is mention of the shift towards greater centralization of power and its impact on local governance bodies, there is limited exploration into the specific changes in the functioning, authority, and effectiveness of these local institutions post-2019. Research focusing on the adaptation strategies of local governance bodies and their role in facilitating or hindering development initiatives could fill this gap.
- **Human Rights and Socioeconomic Impacts:** Several studies touch upon human rights violations and socioeconomic disparities post-2019, but there is a gap in comprehensive research that systematically investigates these issues. Further exploration into the extent and nature of human rights abuses, as well as their impact on various segments of the population, could provide a nuanced understanding of the challenges faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

- **International Reactions and Diplomatic Implications:** While there is mention of international attention and diplomatic reactions to the changes in Jammu and Kashmir, there is limited research on the broader geo-political implications of these developments. Investigating how the actions of the Indian government in Jammu and Kashmir shape regional dynamics, particularly in the context of India-Pakistan relations, could contribute to a better understanding of the geopolitical landscape of South Asia.
- **Media Representation and Perception Management:** There is a mention of the role of media in perpetuating social order and ethnonationalism, but there seems to be a gap in research that critically examines media representation and perception management strategies employed by various stakeholders post-2019. Understanding how different narratives are constructed and disseminated could shed light on power dynamics and influence public opinion in Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Inclusive Development Strategies:** While there is mention of development projects initiated by the Indian government, there is limited research on the inclusivity and effectiveness of these initiatives. Investigating the extent to which development programs address the needs of marginalized communities, such as ethnic minorities and women, could highlight gaps in policy implementation and suggest more inclusive strategies for sustainable development.

Conclusion

The structural changes and development trajectory in Jammu and Kashmir post-2019 are intricately linked to the constitutional amendments and governance shifts initiated by the Indian government. The revocation of Article 370 and Article 35A fundamentally altered the region's governance framework and its relationship with the Indian Union, integrating it fully into the Indian mainstream. This move aimed at fostering greater integration, development, and equality across the region. The administrative restructuring, including the bifurcation into two Union Territories, aimed to streamline governance and facilitate targeted development efforts. However, these changes present both challenges and opportunities for the region. Challenges include security concerns, political tensions, and addressing socio-economic disparities. Additionally, the centralization of power may have impacted the autonomy of local governance bodies. Human rights violations and socioeconomic impacts further complicate the situation, necessitating comprehensive research to understand their extent and implications. The international reactions and diplomatic implications of these developments add another layer of complexity to the region's governance dynamics, particularly concerning India-Pakistan relations. Media representation and perception management strategies also warrant critical examination, as they shape public opinion and power dynamics in the region. Addressing these research gaps is crucial for policymakers and scholars to gain a nuanced understanding of the evolving situation in Jammu and Kashmir and formulate inclusive development strategies. Long-term impact assessment, understanding local governance dynamics, and investigating inclusive development strategies are essential for promoting sustainable development and fostering peace and stability in the region.

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