

KASHMIR SINCE AUGUST 2019 FACT-CHECK

Decoding the claims of "development", "economic rebuilding", "residency enhancements" and creation of a "Naya (new) Kashmir" by the Indian Government.

“ All Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) holders are automatically eligible for Domicile Certificate.
- India

REALITY

There was **no need for Domicile Certificates** because Kashmir already had a well-established system of PRCs. PRCs were based on historical claims of state subjecthood in Kashmir and protected the ecologically fragile region from a rapid influx of land sharks and mining companies from the outside.

It remains **unclear how indigenous Kashmiris who may not have their PRC will be able to obtain the domicile certificate**. This includes refugees or exiles from Indian-occupied Kashmir, as well as diaspora Kashmiris who have been unable to procure their PRCs.

“ Previously discriminated categories like West Pakistan Refugees, Gurkhas, Safai Karamcharies can now claim residency.
- India

REALITY

In the 1990s when the Indian state unleashed a counterinsurgency war to squash the armed rebellion in Kashmir, **Gurkha soldiers of Indian military terrorized ordinary Kashmiris**, and now India has weaponized them even after retirement, instead of repatriating them to their original homes, they are being 'rewarded' by offering them residency in Kashmir!

While India gives the non-Kashmiri non-Muslim West Pakistan refugees, who already have Indian citizenship, the right to obtain Domicile Certificates in Kashmir, it has for all practical purposes **barred the Muslim refugees from Jammu and Kashmir** to Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir the right to claim Domicile. This is not only **blatant religious discrimination**, but also a blatant attack on the right to return of Muslim refugees from Jammu and Kashmir.

“ Women married outside can claim residency in Kashmir now.
- India

REALITY

In a case known as **State vs. Dr Susheela Sawhney and others in 2002¹**, the J&K High Court struck down a proposed law by the pro-India government in the state that would have discriminated against women marrying outside the state.

While certain changes could have been made to fully guarantee the rights of permanent residence to children born to a Kashmiri mother and non-Kashmiri father (a very small percentage of the population), they could have been made in the existing legal courts not through Article 370 revocation.

Claims that the Indian state is acting as a "feminist" belies the fact that **Kashmiri women demand the right to self-determination** and do not seek further integration with India, and have been subjected to immense violence, including mass rapes, at the hands of the Indian state.

“ Series of laws have been passed on the pretext of initiating "robust development" of the region
- India

REALITY

These laws are aimed to **change the demography** of the region, choke the economy, ensure a pathway for **non-Kashmiris to take control** of the economy and Kashmir's resources, enable a systematic **erasure of Kashmiri history** through new education policies, and implement a **media policy that criminalizes any reportage** and documentation of Indian brutalities in the region.

According to most social and economic indicators, even as an occupied region, **Kashmir was ahead of most Indian states before India imposed the new laws²** that have now caused irreparable economic losses.

“ Plan to hold a "global investors summit" to attract non-Kashmiris to invest in the region.
- India

REALITY

The **local economy in Kashmir has been shattered**, as the government has blatantly choked the trade ecosystem of the region, and local traders and businesses, including important industries such a tourism, horticulture, handicrafts, e-commerce, information technology, and others, continue to **suffer losses to the tune of \$5.3 billion since August 5 last year³**.

Again this is another attempt to ensure a **pathway for non-Kashmiris to take control of Kashmir's economy and resources**. It doesn't serve indigenous Kashmiris in any way.

“ Unique Market Intervention Scheme for Apple introduced to protect farmers and stabilize the market
- India

REALITY

The **market scheme for apples was rejected by thousands of farmers in Kashmir**, and the claim made by the government that it stabilized the market wasn't true. Under this scheme, a kilogram of apples have been quoted for a price lower than last year.

Additionally, the deal had also tweaked the definition of quality apples in a way that **wouldn't be beneficial to the farmers⁴**.



“ New IT policy includes development of IT parks in the region.
- India

REALITY

On August 5, the Indian government shut down all forms of communication and **imposed an internet blackout for over 175 days**, the longest in the world.

Data services were resumed almost after a period of six months and that too only at 2G speed. These **"IT parks" will only benefit Indian settlers**, the truth is that Kashmiris have been struggling across the board - from attending classes online during this pandemic to accessing something as simple as the guidelines for preventing the spread of COVID because of 2G internet speed.⁵

“ Largest recruitment drive begins with 10,000 posts already advertised.
- India

REALITY

These jobs are now available to any Indian who can obtain a Domicile Certificate in Kashmir, and not just Kashmiris. This will lead to further **shrinking of employment opportunities for Kashmiri people, and incentivize settlement of Indians in Kashmir**.

Additionally, no details have been shared about the nature of these jobs. Given that many Indian mining companies have recently been given licenses to exploit Kashmiri resources, it is possible that **these "jobs" are in precisely such environmentally disastrous sectors—which will harm Kashmiri interests even more**.

“ Health insurance will be free to all residents under J&K Universal Health Scheme.
- India

REALITY

People generally go to government hospitals and receive free treatments anyway.

This insurance claim is only going to help the upper sections of society who have always had access to first class treatments in expensive private hospitals.

“ Jhelum Flood Mitigation Project (Phase-I) completed. Phase-II to begin shortly. Will increase carrying capacity by an additional 15000 cusecs.
- India

REALITY

Carrying capacity of River Jhelum was increased by 10000 cusecs in April 2018 so the **claim that this was done post August 2019 is clearly false**.

Additionally, the chief engineer of the irrigation and flood control department at the time of the phase-I completion in 2018, Shahnawaz Ahmad Mir had said during phase-II of the project the capacity of the channel would be increased up to 30000 cusecs.

So the **government is not only selling development previously carried out before August 5 2019 as an achievement of post Article 370 abrogation but is also degrading existing projects and calling it 'development'**⁶

“ 7 new medical colleges sanctioned with 1400 additional seats . 50 new degree colleges started with 25000 additional college seats
- India

REALITY

These are all in the 'sanctioning' stage and no work has started on these colleges. The reality is that because of the unilateral decision taken by Government of India on August 5, 2019, the education sector has been badly hit with children losing a complete year of education. From August 5, 2019 to this day, school children were only able to go to school for 10-15 days.⁷

Also, if these institutions do open up, they **will be targeted to non-Kashmiris/outsideers** as part of the domicile process making it harder for Kashmiris to get any benefit from them.

The Indian government lists these developments as “successes” achieved in the region, whereas it is the **onset of a settler-colonial project to dispossess Kashmiris economically, socially, and politically**.

All these "developments" are taking place while local businesses and industry have been shattered for a year now, thousands have been arrested under draconian laws, and **all fundamental rights of Kashmiris have been trampled upon**. Kashmir remains an internationally recognized dispute that can only be resolved by the will of its people.

The next time you come across someone telling you India has transformed Kashmir, ask them who has it been transformed for - Kashmiris or Indians ?

References:

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