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Abstract

The failure of regional integrity in South Asia has much to do with the enduring rivalry between two belligerent states – India and Pakistan. The dispute between these two neighboring countries is as old as the two states are. After the Partition, Pakistan has persistently called Kashmir ‘the unfinished business of partition while as for India, Kashmir is very much a part of the nation’s secular identity. Pakistan being an irredentist state has always tried to alter the status to her advantage diplomatically as well as militarily. And every time India responded as sternly as possible to prevent any territorial loss. The hostility and aggression persisted for all these years and the main reason why this hostility and aggression continues even today is the issue Jammu and Kashmir. This work deals with the strategies and policies adopted by India and Pakistan vis-à-vis Jammu and Kashmir. While writing or researching about the issue of Jammu and Kashmir the majority of writers and scholars quite often make a mistake of making it a part of larger dispute between two South Asian neighbours and rivals – India and Pakistan – while completely ignoring the important and the main party to the conflict – Jammu and Kashmir. Those who take a somewhat broader look and include all three in their analysis again fail to neatly point out the internal complexities and inconsistencies of the parties that has greatly influenced the outcome for last seven decades.

The ideational incompatibility between India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir and the inconsistencies within these three need to be neatly explored for a comprehensive understanding of the issue. The divergence of the policies can only be understood if one objectively engages with all the major and minor identities who directly or indirectly are involved and often shape the state strategies and policies. Informed by these realities, this study titled “India’s and Pakistan’s Policy towards Jammu and Kashmir: A Comparative Study” approaches the issue from a very different standpoint. The dominant state-led or other narratives narrowly tend to make it a mere territorial dispute between two states while as this study moves away from the traditional dominant narratives and delves deeper to shed light on various significant and often neglected factors which over time made the issue intractable one. The focus of this study is not strictly limited to the policies of India and Pakistan towards Jammu and Kashmir rather it also tries to locate in

the evolution of national identity conceptions of the three parties the reasons for divergence of policies and plurality of political responses.