

Issues Relating to the Princely State of Kashmir (1947–51)

Introduction to Kashmir Problem

The princely state of Kashmir had a Muslim majority but a Hindu ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh. Most Kashmiris wanted to join Pakistan because of religion and geography. The Maharaja delayed his decision, creating tension between India and Pakistan.

Accession and First War (1947–48)

In October 1947, tribesmen from Pakistan entered Kashmir to help local Muslims. The Maharaja sought India's help and signed the Instrument of Accession with Delhi. India sent troops, and the first war between India and Pakistan began. Thousands were killed, and Kashmir was divided during the fighting.

Role of the United Nations

India took the issue of the princely state of Kashmir to the UN in 1948. The UN announced a ceasefire in 1949 and passed a resolution for a plebiscite so Kashmiris could decide their future. Pakistan agreed, but India delayed and created unfair conditions. The UN failed to enforce its resolutions.

Division of Kashmir

After the ceasefire, the princely state was divided. Pakistan controlled Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, while India controlled Jammu, the Valley, and Ladakh. The Line of Control (LoC) was established under UN supervision. This division was supposed to be temporary but became permanent. Kashmiris were denied their promised right to self-determination.

Impact and Unresolved Dispute

The Kashmir issue badly affected India–Pakistan relations. Pakistan considered Kashmir part of its unfinished partition, while India justified control through the Maharaja's accession. Kashmiris wanted freedom but were ignored. The UN failed to settle the issue, leaving Kashmir as an unresolved global dispute and a cause of wars in South Asia.