
Revocation of Article 370 and Digital Media: Unveiling Human Rights Violations in Kashmir

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Ever since the subcontinent's partition, Kashmir has consistently remained a source of tension between India and Pakistan, two prominent South Asian nations. It's reasonable to assert that Kashmir stands as one of the most enduring and contentious disputes in history. In August 2019, the Indian government made significant constitutional amendments, revoking the special autonomous status granted to Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. This initiative sparked widespread global debate and heightened tensions in the region. Following such amendments, Indian-Held Kashmir (IHK) has experienced an intensified manifestation of state-sponsored violence. India has used force and deceit to obstruct Kashmiris from exercising their lawful rights. Issues such as censorship and surveillance pose obstacles to the ability of digital activism to uplift marginalized voices and ensure accountability for misconducts. This research paper highlights how the modification of constitutional provisions has impacted the digital media landscape and subsequently influenced the reporting and dissemination of human rights abuses. By critically examining this interplay, this paper contributes to a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics at play in the region. This study illuminates the Indian government's use of digital media to promote favorable narratives, aiming to sway global opinion in support of its initiatives while suppressing information regarding human rights violations in Kashmir. To conduct this research, a qualitative approach has been employed, with data primarily sourced from secondary sources.

Key Words: Self-determination, Dispute, Political Dynamics, Human Rights Violations, Provocative

Introduction

The Kashmir conflict has consistently held a prominent place in global discussions, particularly within South Asia, comprising the analysis of demographic, social, religious, and economic factors. Geographically, much of Kashmir shared borders with Pakistan, and it was an undeniable reality that the majority of Kashmir's population were Muslims, marked with significant cultural and religious similarities with Pakistan. The Kashmir Valley, located in northern India, had unfortunately become a battleground where Indian security forces and the local Muslim community were engaged in a bitter conflict. The core of their struggle was the demand for the right to self-determination. "Throughout the years, the Indian military in Kashmir had been involved in extensive human rights abuses, such as unlawful killings, sexual assault, acts of torture, and deliberate attacks on healthcare personnel."¹

"The Kashmir problem can be divided into four distinct periods. Firstly, there was the initial phase when the issue first emerged and brought to the attention of the United Nations, but repeatedly blocked by the Soviet Union. The second stage, spanning from 1980 to 2010, saw an escalation in discontent among Kashmiris. The third phase, known as the "Kashmiri Intifada," began in 2016 when the younger generation of Kashmiris started challenging Indian curfews and restrictions. During this time, more than half of the Indian army was stationed on the streets of Kashmir."² The fourth wave of protests commenced following the Indian government's decision to repeal articles 370 and 35 A of the constitution. The primary focus of this study revolves around the recent phase of this issue.

The Indian government finally realized its longstanding goal by abolishing articles 370 and 35 A of the constitution, acknowledging Kashmir as no more disputed region but an integral part of India. "These articles granted Kashmir a degree of autonomy, allowing it to have its constitution, a distinct flag, and legislative independence."³ In 2019, the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) government eliminated these articles to assimilate Kashmir and alter the demographic landscape of the valley. The government's decision to revoke Article 370 of the Indian Constitution included the division of Jammu and Kashmir into two "Union Territories," each with limited original administrative powers. On August 5, 2019, the President of India issued Presidential Order C.O. 272, introducing these amendments to the Constitution of India.

In the aftermath of this decision, India consistently leaned towards adopting a "provocative" approach to suppress liberation movement in IJK. Such state of affair immediately drew global focus, prompting widespread coverage from media outlets. The decision of constitutional amendments not only changed the strategic and political dynamics in the area but also deeply impacted the digital media discourse regarding human rights violation in Kashmir. The global reach of digital media helped to amplify the voices of those affected and bring attention to the human rights crisis unfolding in the region. "India's decision to unilaterally revoke Kashmir's semi-autonomous status marked a significant turning point in the

conflict's history, drawing criticism from Pakistan and exacerbating tensions between the two nations.”⁴

A. Literature Review and Background

A substantial body of scholarship, produced by researchers and academics from Pakistan, India, and the international community, has explored the multifaceted situation in Kashmir. Alongside this, there exists a substantial collection of literature focusing on the human dimension of the issue.

Musarat Javed Cheema examined the genesis of the Kashmir conflict, highlighting the early resistance of the Kashmiri populace to the authority of the Maharaja. Cheema further elucidated the purported failure of the Indian government to uphold its pledge to conduct a plebiscite, as stipulated by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. In another book, Duschinski, Bhan and Robinson⁵ conducted a thorough examination of the Kashmir matter, presenting a collection of edited works featuring contributions from diverse experts, thereby providing a nuanced analysis. The publication delved into the historical context of the Kashmir territory, scrutinized its manifold administrative challenges, and notably, shed light on the human rights violations and injustices prevalent in the region.

Kuszevska and Balcerowicz⁶ The study undertook a comprehensive and impartial analysis of human rights concerns within the contested region of Kashmir. It underscored notable human rights violations perpetrated by Indian security forces, the military, and affiliated agencies, frequently occurring on a significant scale. The breadth of these transgressions, particularly within the Indian context, challenged its characterization as the world's largest democracy, thereby diminishing its international standing. Furthermore, the publication examined the regional and global ramifications ensuing from the abrogation of Article 370. Incorporating perspectives from local inhabitants facilitated a more nuanced comprehension of the conflict's multifaceted nature.

Minhas, Ahmad, and Khan⁷ discerned that India's unilateral decision to revoke Article 370 had resulted in the erosion of Kashmiri identity. Moreover, they highlighted that the abolition of this constitutional provision, initially intended to afford Kashmiris the prerogative to ascertain their destiny via a plebiscite, not only deprived them of their autonomy but also demonstrated India's inflexibility towards the international community and neighboring nations. This measure further undercut global institutions tasked with ensuring security and peace, notably the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

Aslam and Gul⁸'s discourse primarily centered on the role of modern communication technologies, particularly social media, in facilitating the global dissemination of the Kashmiri people's narrative regarding their struggle for liberation from the perceived unlawful occupation of Kashmir and the oppression by Indian security forces. Employing a social movement framing analysis, this study sought to delve deeper into how activists were reshaping the ongoing freedom movement in IHK by establishing connections with and drawing inspiration from other transnational protest movements. By reframing the narrative

to underscore the universal significance of contemporary human rights mobilization, the article primarily addressed traditional media, rather than focusing solely on the recent surge of digitalization and its implications for the Kashmir issue.

Misra⁹ conducted an ethnographic study to analyze the portrayal of the Kashmir conflict by the national media. The study explored the interplay between exercises of state sovereignty, the Kashmiri populace, and India's territorial aspirations in the region. Two incidents of violence were chosen as focal points in this study to underscore the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Indian government.

Numerous studies have scrutinized the Kashmir matter, tracing its development from its origin to the contemporary era. Yet, only a small number have examined the impact of social media in disseminating information concerning human rights transgressions, particularly following the revocation of constitutional provisions. Moreover, scant attention has been devoted to analyzing the utilization of propaganda strategies by the Indian military on digital platforms. This study aims to fill these lacunae by scrutinizing human rights violations amid the mobilization occurring on digital media channels subsequent to the constitutional amendments.

The Kashmir conflict traced back to the partition of British India when princely states were given the option to join India or Pakistan. Maharaja Hari Singh initially chose independence but faced protests. He sought India's military assistance against tribal incursions from Pakistan. In 1948, Pakistan also sent its troops in response to an Indian army operation. The Pakistani army's involvement was considerably more defensive, which helped to protect the regions that the freedom fighters had already liberated. "The Kashmir dispute has intensified over the decades and years since October 26, 1947, when the Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession, seeking to seize control of the State. This has led to four wars between India and Pakistan."¹⁰ Pakistan reacted strongly and claimed that the accession was completely based on fraud and deception of India. According to the British historian Alastair Lamb "this was certainly no blanket unconditional Instrument of Accession but rather a statement of the terms upon which an association between the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian dominion might be negotiated in return for military assistance."¹¹

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution granted special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir within the Indian Union, negotiated between Jammu and Kashmir's Prime Minister Sheikh Abdullah and Indian leadership, spearheaded by Jawaharlal Nehru. This special status sparked debates over its implications for Jammu and Kashmir's integration into India over the years. Since that time, the UN Security Council repeatedly emphasized that the ultimate determination of Kashmir's future should be based on the will of its people.

The Indian government's draconian laws and oppressive tactics in Kashmir intensified human rights abuses. Various human rights organizations have highlighted the distressing circumstances faced by Kashmiri people. Before the rise of digital media, human rights abuses in Kashmir were often highlighted

through traditional media channels such as newspapers, magazines, television, and radio. Journalists, activists, and international organizations relied on these mediums to report on and draw attention to the situation in Kashmir. Additionally, word of mouth, advocacy campaigns, and reports from on-the-ground observers also played a significant role in bringing attention to human rights violations in the region.

B. Revocation of Article 370 and its Fallout

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) pledged to amend the Indian Constitution by repealing Article 370, a commitment reiterated in the party's 2019 election manifesto. Following their resounding victory in the 2019 elections, there was a notable resurgence of Hindu nationalism in India. The BJP displayed a steadfast determination from the outset to nullify the constitutional article on the legal status of the IHK.

The PM Modi government's decision to revoke the concerned article resulted in the removal of the longstanding special residency privileges for Kashmiris. "These privileges included exclusive rights for permanent residents to purchase land, access government jobs and university positions, and participate in local elections. The revocation opened the door for mainland Indian citizens to apply for domicile certificates in Kashmir, extending eligibility to individuals residing in Kashmir for fifteen years, including around 1.75 million refugee laborers, a majority of whom were Hindus. Furthermore, those who served as civil servants in Jammu and Kashmir for seven years, and their children who had studied in Kashmir, also became eligible for domicile certificates".¹² Following the constitutional amendments, India pursued initiatives to create new settlements aimed at promoting a substantial influx of Hindu communities from outside the region, with the intention of altering the demographic composition.

India utilized all available means and resources to transform the Muslim identity of Kashmir, with the objective of influencing the outcome if a plebiscite was ever organized to determine the future of IHK, ensuring that it would favor India. "As per the Indian constitution's provisions, "Article 370 could only be altered with the approval of the administration of IHK. However, following the removal of this article, India implemented federal rule and enforced a lockdown, thereby depriving Kashmiris of their rights."¹³ PM Modi claimed that the revocation of such an article would mark key transformations in the favor of Kashmiris. Moreover, he regarded such articles as a hindrance in the way of the development of Kashmir.

The Indian army's punitive assaults on Kashmiris strained India-Pakistan relations further. The Indian government instigated a cold war in the region, not only cracking down on Kashmiri residents but also engaging in a war of rhetoric with the Pakistani government. The revocation of Article 370 and 35A has further fueled the recent upsurge in unrest within IHK. Despite ongoing UN Security Council discussions, neither nation made significant efforts to resolve the conflict. Despite the efforts for all-encompassing dialogues to resolve the Kashmir issue, this decision would further deteriorate the relations of India and Pakistan.

The revocation of concerned Articles triggered a varied response, with differing opinions spanning across various segments of society, from political leaders to the general populace. However, key international players such as the US, Russia, France, and Germany maintained their official diplomatic positions, considering Kashmir to be an internal matter of India. Likewise, the Foreign Minister of Sweden and Germany expressed concerns about the human rights situation in the region. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) demonstrated substantial support for India's actions in Kashmir, while Saudi Arabia emphasized the necessity for a peaceful resolution to the Kashmir dispute in conformity with UN resolutions. The pro-BJP faction of Indian society expressed support for the Article 370 revocation, while those who viewed the BJP as a potential threat to India's secularism strongly criticized this action. They believed that Modi and the BJP must be held accountable for steering India towards becoming a Hindu-centric state, moving it further from the principles set forth by its founding figures, such as Jawaharlal Nehru and Mahatma Gandhi.

According to the United Nations declaration, human rights are basic rights that everyone has, no matter who they are. These rights include things like the right to life and liberty, freedom from slavery and torture, freedom of opinion and expression, the right to work and education, and many more. "In India, there's a section of the constitution called "Fundamental Rights" which ensures all the basic rights. But in Kashmir, there's been a discussion about whether these rights are being respected, especially since Article 370 and 35A were removed."¹⁴

Despite being the member of the United Nations and UN Human Rights Council, the Indian government consistently refused entry to UNHRC investigators in the area. The Hindutva supremacist ideology of the Modi government had contributed to the utilization of rape and molestation as tactics of war and collective punishment. Since then, Human Rights Watch had reported an increase in cases of sexual violence. This breach of international humanitarian and human rights laws required urgent consideration.

In Kashmir, the majority of political figures were restricted and detained. Protests had broken out in IJK as a response to the atrocities of the Indian military. India had labeled those advocating for freedom as 'terrorists.' While explaining the recent wave of protests, Aakar Patel, the chair of Amnesty International India Board said since 2019, "the Indian government had enforced punitive measures on the Kashmiri population, justifying their actions as part of their 'counter-terrorism' efforts. However, the escalation in civilian targeting raised additional concerns about the government's conduct. The continued suppression of politicians, journalists, human rights advocates, and even the shutdown of the state human rights commission had significantly curtailed independent voices, leaving the people of Kashmir without an effective recourse".¹⁵ In early August 2019, Kashmiris were being prevented from engaging in prayer since numerous mosques had been forcibly closed by the authorities. "The Indian military employed advanced and contemporary weaponry against the Kashmiri civilians. Protests

against Indian rule and the ensuing confrontations with Indian troops had become a common occurrence in Kashmir”.¹⁶

A security crackdown commenced in the region, leading to the evacuation of tourists, suspension of Hindu pilgrimage and restrictions on community gatherings. Indian troops had routinely imposed extended curfews, leading to shortages of everyday essential supplies for the residents. Security forces cordoned off the areas with barbed wire and barriers, and the government in New Delhi disconnected all forms of communication, like phones, internet, and cable TV, creating the most severe communication blackout ever observed in the disputed area. They defended these actions as necessary for safeguarding national security. It took 70 days to bring back phone service, starting with landlines. But the internet ban lasted seven months and returned in phases in March 2020, only allowing access to government-approved sites, while social media stayed blocked. “This lack of communication caused loss of lives during medical emergencies. Schools stayed closed, leaving students unable to attend online classes.”¹⁷ This blackout severely restricted the ability of journalists and human rights organizations to report on the ground realities and document human rights abuses.

Leading up to and following August 5th, Kashmir witnessed a wave of arrests that targeted a broad spectrum of individuals, ranging from political figures and even minors. This crackdown occurred alongside the already existing detention of numerous Kashmiri separatist leaders who were either imprisoned or placed under house arrest. “Among those detained were high-profile politicians such as Mehbooba Mufti of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and Omar Abdullah of the National Conference, both of whom had previously served as chief ministers of the region. Additionally, Farooq Abdullah, another former chief minister, found himself detained on September 16, 2019.”¹⁸ This widespread and arbitrary arrest spree was carried out under the draconian Public Safety Act, reflecting a heavy-handed approach by security forces in Kashmir. Despite the heavy security presence and efforts to suppress dissent, numerous small-scale protests erupted in the aftermath of August 5th, resulting in clashes with law enforcement and injuries. “Since 2019, security forces had refrained from disclosing the identities of deceased militants and returning their bodies to families.”¹⁹ These actions not only suppressed opposing voices but also received widespread criticism for disregarding human rights and democratic values. Media reports proved that individuals who had been released from detention were required to sign a bond pledging not to participate in public rallies or make any remarks regarding recent events in the state. Several prominent figures remained in custody because they had allegedly declined to sign a bond in exchange for their freedom.

C. Transforming Digital Media Landscape in Kashmir

Digital media greatly influences perceptions and global comprehension of conflicts. The media's ability to shape opinions, gather support, and present stories is undeniable. "This extensive discourse presents diverse viewpoints, narratives, and ongoing debates. In the contemporary digital age, media holds significant sway over both individual behaviors and statecraft."²⁰ Therefore, within the digital landscape, the influence of digital media on politics cannot be disregarded. Digital media stands as the primary conduit of information across various societal strata, especially in situations where states and regimes regulate information dissemination.

In conflict-ridden areas, various actors including social activists, international organizations, and independent news agencies used digital media as a tool to expose human rights abuses. Instances of state-sponsored violence and large-scale killings bring to light the plight of the oppressed. "Since the initiation of 3G and 4G mobile networks in Kashmir in 2015, social media had played a significant role in fostering cultural bonds and connecting people. Residents of Kashmir increasingly relied on social media platforms to communicate with each other."²¹ These online discussions shed light on the aggression and human rights violations by Indian forces, as well as India's controversial annexation of Kashmir. Social media provided a means for this content to reach a global audience, even from remote areas. However, after the internet blackout imposed by the Indian government in August 2019, Kashmiris lost their connection to the world.

Over the past eight to nine years, digital media has transformed the Kashmir conflict landscape, enabling young researchers and activists to access information and advocate for freedom for future generations. In the IHK, digital media had played a pivotal role, particularly during recent movements advocating for the "right to self-determination." The Indian administration has responded by imposing significant censorship on both digital and mainstream media outlets to suppress coverage of human rights violations in the region. Consequently, social media activism had emerged as a formidable challenge to the Indian state in Kashmir, with many individuals opting for soft-power approaches to advance the cause of detaining human rights abuses.

Digital media depicting the realities of conflict zones had aided international organizations, NGOs, and governments in exerting pressure on Indian occupying forces to cease violence. The frequent shutdowns of the internet in Kashmir had faced widespread condemnation from global bodies such as the UN and Amnesty International. Many political experts worldwide depicted these bans as arbitrary actions meant to suppress dissent and inflict "collective punishment" on the people of Kashmir. On August 5, 2019, "the revocation Article 370 and 35A, led to political unrest, with people protesting against the Indian government's actions. Indian authorities enforced a widespread communication and internet blackout in the region, which lasted for months, marking the longest internet shutdown in a democratic country."²²

If activists or journalists were to succeed in publishing or sharing evidence of human rights violations, they might face arrest or become targets of the Indian army. For example, “Masrat Zahra, a Kashmiri photojournalist, was arrested in April 2020 for sharing what the government called "anti-national posts" on social media.”²³ Similarly, Khurram Parvez, a human rights activist, was arrested in September 2020 on charges of funding terrorism. During the same year, “Attorney Babar Qadri, known for championing human rights and defending his homeland in the Indian media, was tragically assassinated. Before his assassination, he had tweeted that he had been receiving death threats. He urged the police to investigate those individuals who were threatening him.”²⁴ His death adds to the violence in Kashmir, making him one of the most significant casualties of the ongoing turmoil in the area. These actions create fear, making it tough for journalists and activists to speak up or investigate human rights abuses independently. Without reliable information and the freedom to report, it's harder to hold those responsible for abuses accountable, letting them get away with it.

Kashmiri activists and artists responded to the challenges by using music, culture, and poetry to stand with Kashmiris facing oppression from India. These were the outcomes of digitalization where influential figures launched campaigns that transcend borders. “On September 20th, 2019, Kashmiri artists launched the "Resist to Exist" campaign, collaborating with British-Kashmiri artist Sumaya Teli and Kashmiri-American artist Nouf Bazaz.”²⁵ It stood out notably among numerous other global campaigns. This move aimed to shed light on Kashmir's struggle against Indian occupation and militarization, advocating for the right to self-determination. The campaign gained widespread attention globally, helping youth comprehend the Kashmir situation and India's mistreatment of Kashmiris.

Examining several instances of individuals affected by state-sponsored violence through videos posted on YouTube channels of different news outlets aided in understanding the suffering endured by the people of Kashmir. The discussion, as seen in news reports, also encompassed social media discussions involving Kashmiri and Pakistani politicians. The prominent personalities kept on highlighting their concerns via digital media. Pakistan's politicians posted on X (social media platform), formerly known as Twitter, condemning India's unilateral and illegal actions. They pledged Pakistan's continued diplomatic, moral, and political support for the Kashmiri struggle, urging India to reverse its actions post-August 5th. Military leadership of Pakistan appreciated the bravery and resilience of Kashmiri people. “Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) has reiterated its call on X for the revocation of all the illegal measures initiated on and after Aug 5, 2019, aimed at changing the demography of held Kashmir.”²⁶ At the fourth anniversary of this decision, Mehbooba Mufti expressed distress by posting on X, over the detention of PDP party members on the eve of August 5th 2023. She questioned why PDP leaders were being detained while BJP was allowed to freely celebrate the revocation of Article 370.” Mufti criticized these actions as an attempt to deceive public opinion, exposing the false narrative of normalcy being

propagated by the government. She tagged Manoj Sinha and Amit Shah in her post, directing her criticism towards them.

“International organization "Access Now" reported that social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube collaborated with the Indian government to remove content related to Kashmir's freedom struggle.”²⁷ This crackdown silenced Kashmiri voices on digital platforms, with accounts of artists, academics, and journalists from both inside and outside the region being suspended. Experts criticized this censorship, labeling it as unacceptable in a free society. Geeta Seshu, co-founder of the Free Speech Collective, “condemned both the government and social media companies for silencing dissenting voices in Kashmir.”²⁸

In fact, the government of India increasingly employed digital tools to regulate the dissemination of information, the environment for human rights advocacy and reporting became more arduous. Facebook's propaganda hunters discovered a large-scale social media campaign that involved numerous fake accounts. These accounts were used to support the Indian army's actions in the turbulent border area of Kashmir and to accuse Kashmiri journalists of promoting separatism and sedition. This situation reveals an additional aspect of collaboration, illustrating how the state used the media to shape a specific narrative about Kashmir, diverting attention from the core issues affecting the public. A close relationship was observed between the state, military, and digital media in the region.

The network was run by the Chinar Corps of the Indian army, a renowned unit stationed in the Muslim-majority Kashmir Valley. “The Chinar Corps conducted a secretive operation that not only continued to promote its narrative but also took additional steps. It targeted many independent Kashmiri journalists, revealing their personal details and attacking them through anonymous Twitter accounts such as @KashmirTraitors and @KashmirTraitor1, as reported by Stanford University's analysis and The Washington Post's investigation. The growing criticism on this issue prompted the Facebook Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior (CIB) unit, based in the US, to take action by removing a network operated by the Indian army's Chinar Corps. This network was accused of disseminating false information in Kashmir. However, there was resistance from the New Delhi office of Facebook against this decision. This resistance led to a delay in action for a year until high-ranking Facebook executives intervened and instructed the deletion of the fake accounts.”²⁹ Twitter followed Facebook and quietly removed the Chinar Corps's parallel network on its platform.

Through these fake accounts, the Indian government sought to promote its narrative and discredit independent Kashmiri journalists who might challenge that narrative. The accounts targeted journalists by revealing their personal details and launching attacks, aiming to undermine their credibility and influence public opinion in favor of the government's viewpoint. The government used these tactics to suppress dissenting voices and control the information flow regarding the situation in Kashmir, presenting a narrative that aligned with its interests and policies in the region.

Conclusion

The discourse on the digital media regarding the Kashmir conflict undergoes a profound change, resonating well beyond the region's borders. Following the revocation of Article 370 in Kashmir, digital media plays a pivotal role in shedding light on the human rights violations in the region. Despite extensive surveillance and censorship, citizen journalists, activists, and Kashmiri people persist in sharing real-time accounts, images, and videos, offering invaluable insights into the situation on the ground. This dissemination of information enables the world to witness firsthand the crackdown on dissent, mass arrests, communication blackouts, and reports of excessive use of force by security personnel.

The results of this research highlight the substantial impact that the digital media exerts in transforming narratives, swaying public sentiment, and structuring discussions on intricate geopolitical matters like the Kashmir conflict. The examination of Pakistani digital media's discussion on the Kashmir conflict following the revocation of Article 370 shows an obvious trend. Pakistani media predominantly focuses on portraying the Indian government's actions in the region as oppressive and unconstitutional. This narrative aims to emphasize the human rights abuses, imposition of curfews, communication blockades, and security crackdowns in the Kashmir Valley, garnering international scrutiny and criticism.

The tools of digital media have played a pivotal role in exposing India's propaganda tactics surrounding the revocation of Article 370. Through platforms like social media and online news outlets, discrepancies and manipulative narratives have been highlighted, revealing a concerted effort to portray the move as a constructive endeavor. By amplifying certain narratives, Indian authorities sought to discredit the viewpoints of Kashmiris and Pakistanis, painting them in a negative light and deeming their perspectives false. Through digital media dialogue, firsthand accounts, and independent reporting, the truth behind the revocation of Article 370 is gradually being unveiled, offering a more nuanced understanding of its implications for Kashmiris and the region as a whole.

Given the significant influence of digital media discourse on the Kashmir conflict, policymakers must navigate this intricate terrain strategically to promote a more constructive narrative to resolve this issue. Creating open channels of communication with global digital media outlets and foreign governments will facilitate a more balanced portrayal of the situation, countering any biased narratives that may arise. Moreover, fostering a robust digital media landscape within IHK is essential. This entails supporting local journalism and ensuring that journalists can report objectively. By empowering local voices in the digital media, a more authentic depiction of the ground realities can be achieved, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive global understanding of the IHK conflict.

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