

Jammu and Kashmir Reach back: Media Analysis of Extremist Activities in Indian and Pakistani News

A Media Ecology & Strategic Analysis (MESA) Group Report

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Executive Summary

The following study explored how extremist organizations may take advantage of the Kashmir crisis; it identifies prominent extremist organizations and stakeholder interests reported in Indian and Pakistani news media. Data was collected from 54 Indian and Pakistani news sources from May 16th to August 16th, 2019; a total of 437 articles were analyzed.

Extremist Organizations, Stakeholders, and Interests

Extremist organizations most prominently identified:

- *Indian media reports:* Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen, Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, Taliban, Pakistan Inter-Services Intelligence, ISIL-Khorasan, and Harkat-ul-Mujahideen.
- *Pakistan media reports:* Rashtriya SwayamSevak Sangh as a Hindu terrorist organization committing acts of genocide against Muslims.
- *Taliban:* US peace talks seen as empowering Taliban; bolstering their interests and increasing their influence in Jammu and Kashmir. LeT and Harkat-ul-Ansar are shown as benefiting from Taliban protection. The expectation that the US will leave Afghanistan is seen as increasing the influence of the Taliban.

Local dissatisfaction:

- Mass protests against local officials in Jammu and Kashmir. Local officials are perceived as failing to represent constituent interests, corrupt, and unable to deliver social goods.
- Pakistani media argue India's regional clamp down and draconian policies exacerbate local tensions and hurt business leaders. Indian troops shown as routinely profiling mosques and conducting unfair cordon and search procedures.

Indian government:

- Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A intended to end patronage system corrupting local officials in Jammu and Kashmir. Indian media describe the reforms as benefitting the local populace through economic development and educational opportunities.
- Retaliatory tit-for-tat against Pakistani backed terrorists with the goal of killing and preventing terrorist infiltration. Indian media reports considerable success in these endeavors.
- Pakistani media perceives India's goal as using "terrorism" as a shield to hide injustices against Kashmiris; India's strategy is described as following a policy of a "thousand cuts" similar to Israel's policy towards Palestinians.

Pakistan government:

- Goal is to destabilize the region and support Kashmiri right to self-determination.
- Attempts to internationalize the issue by highlighting human rights violations committed by Indian state; appeals are made to the international community to pressure India to oppressive policies in Jammu and Kashmir.

Extremist Organizations: Key Tactics and Targets

- Coordination between Pakistan's ISI, and special forces, with terrorist organizations is described as focused on infiltrating the LoC and establishing launch pads for attacks in

both border areas and Indian heartland. Pakistani government shown by Indian media as sanctioning attacks regardless of collateral damage to civilian population.

- Shifting tactics reported by Indian media, include emphasis on the use of IEDs, including vehicle based IEDs, among terrorists in order to reduce the casualties within their organizations.
- Terrorist groups are reported in Indian media as targeting corrupt officials in Jammu and Kashmir, Indian security personnel, as well as, rail transport, civil aviation centers, and economic infrastructure. Concerns are specifically expressed in Indian media over extremists targeting Armanath Yatra pilgrimage and disrupting rail construction/transport.
- Focus on recruitment of dissatisfied youth by terrorist groups is shown in Indian media. Pakistani media emphasize Indian state-sponsored humanitarian atrocities and provide the assumption that the Indian government’s goal is to erase Muslim culture and influence.
- Areas most frequently discussed include: Pulwama, Srinagar, Anantnag, and Shopian.

Method

Results were gathered from 49 Pakistan sources and six Indian sources published from May 16, 2019 to August 16, 2019. Articles selected for analysis were obtained by using the search term “Kashmir” and filtered by the subject “terrorism” occurring in “Jammu and Kashmir”. In total, 437 articles were analyzed (121 from Pakistan and 316 from India). Data was analyzed using a mixed-methods approach, including word co-occurrence networks, frequencies of key terms, and key word in context and qualitative narrative assessment by a human coder. AI assisted categorization was used to validate the human narrative coding by identifying key groupings of news articles. Researchers ran an entity extraction program to identify key meetings and goals of officials and extremist organizations (see appendix).

<i>Indian News Sources</i>	Kashmir Times	Kashmir Observer	Kashmir Monitor		
	Times of India	The Hindu	Hindustan Times		
<i>Pakistani News Sources</i>	Aurora	The Balochistan Times	Business Recorder	Cargo Talk	Daily Balochistan Express
	Daily Messenger	Dawn	Defence Journal	The Diplomatic Insight	Eastern Worker
	Energy Update	Enterprise	The Express Tribune	Flare	The Frontier Post
	Frontier Star	Herald	Hiba	HT Columnists	IBEX
	Insurance Journal	Journal of Political Studies	Lahore Times	The Nation	National Herald Tribune

New Horizons	The News International	Pakistan and Gulf Economist	Pakistan Armed Forces Medical Journal	Pakistan Business News
Pakistan Company News Wire	Pakistan Economic and Social Review	Pakistan Engineering Review	Pakistan Investor Guide	Pakistan Journal of Medical Research
Pakistan Journal of Weed Sciences	Pakistan Journal of Zoology	Pakistan Observer	Pakistan Official News	Pakistan Oral and Dental Journal
Pakistan Press International	Pakistan Sugar Journal	Pakistan Textile Journal	Pakistan Today	Pakistan Vision
Policy Perspectives	Pulse International	Slogan	South Asia	

Indian Media Coverage

Indian news media describe conflict as resulting from its abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status granted under Articles 370 and 35A. These are shown as causing local protests with Pakistani backed extremist organizations taking advantage of the situation.

Local dissatisfaction: Media present mass protests resulting from constitutional reforms and redrawing of constituent boundaries. Local concerns include financial flight out of Kashmir leading to business owners’ dissatisfaction. India’s security clamp down is recognized as feeding dissatisfaction, with workers staying at home instead of conducting business, furthering discontent. Local officials are discussed as corrupt and said to receive no sympathy from local citizens, who believe officials have failed to safeguard their interests. Indian political leaders handling of the situation is noted as contributing to ill will. Reports note that over the past year uncertainty and panic has continued to build in the region as with rumors circulating on social media about Indian troops and security forces profiling mosques. The increased troop presence has been characterized as a “sinister plot,” arguing that the extra troops sent to the region are a pretense for protecting the Amarnath yatra pilgrimage. Local political parties, including the National Conference and the Mehbooba Mufti-led Peoples Democratic Party, have unanimously resolved to fight the constitutional revisions.

Pakistan / Muslim Community: This community is shown as viewing India’s constitutional revision as attempting to marginalize and assimilate Muslims populations in ways akin to Nazi genocide (Tweets went viral comparing BJP to genocidal Nazis targeting Muslims). Pakistan is viewed as attempting to internationalize the issue with some help from China. Imran Khan is noted in media as sanctioning various terrorist outfits (JeM, LeT, and ISI handlers) to reactive training camps, infiltrate LoC, and conduct attacks designed to destabilize the region. Pakistan is

shown as not wanting a stable Kashmir, instead desiring continued local dissatisfaction arising from Article 370 abrogation.

Indian Government: The special status of Jammu and Kashmir is faulted for helping Pakistan gain aid from the West, and arms from China, enabling local politicians to develop Delhi or Pakistan patronage and helping terror networks fund and train in Pakistan and China. Indian media frames the constitutional revision as helping local populations, providing economic and educational opportunities, and connecting the region via railroad to Indian economy. Indian troop deployments are presented as protecting Armanath Yatra pilgrimage and other tourists.

Taliban: US peace talks with Taliban is shown as empowering the Taliban, who are said to have interests in increasing their influence in Jammu and Kashmir. LeT and Harkat-ul-Ansar have benefited are seen as benefiting from Taliban protection. The expectation that the US will leave Afghanistan is seen as increasing the influence of the Taliban.

Indian media reports a variety of extremist groups receiving direct approval from Imran Khan to step up activities designed to destabilize Kashmir and Jammu.

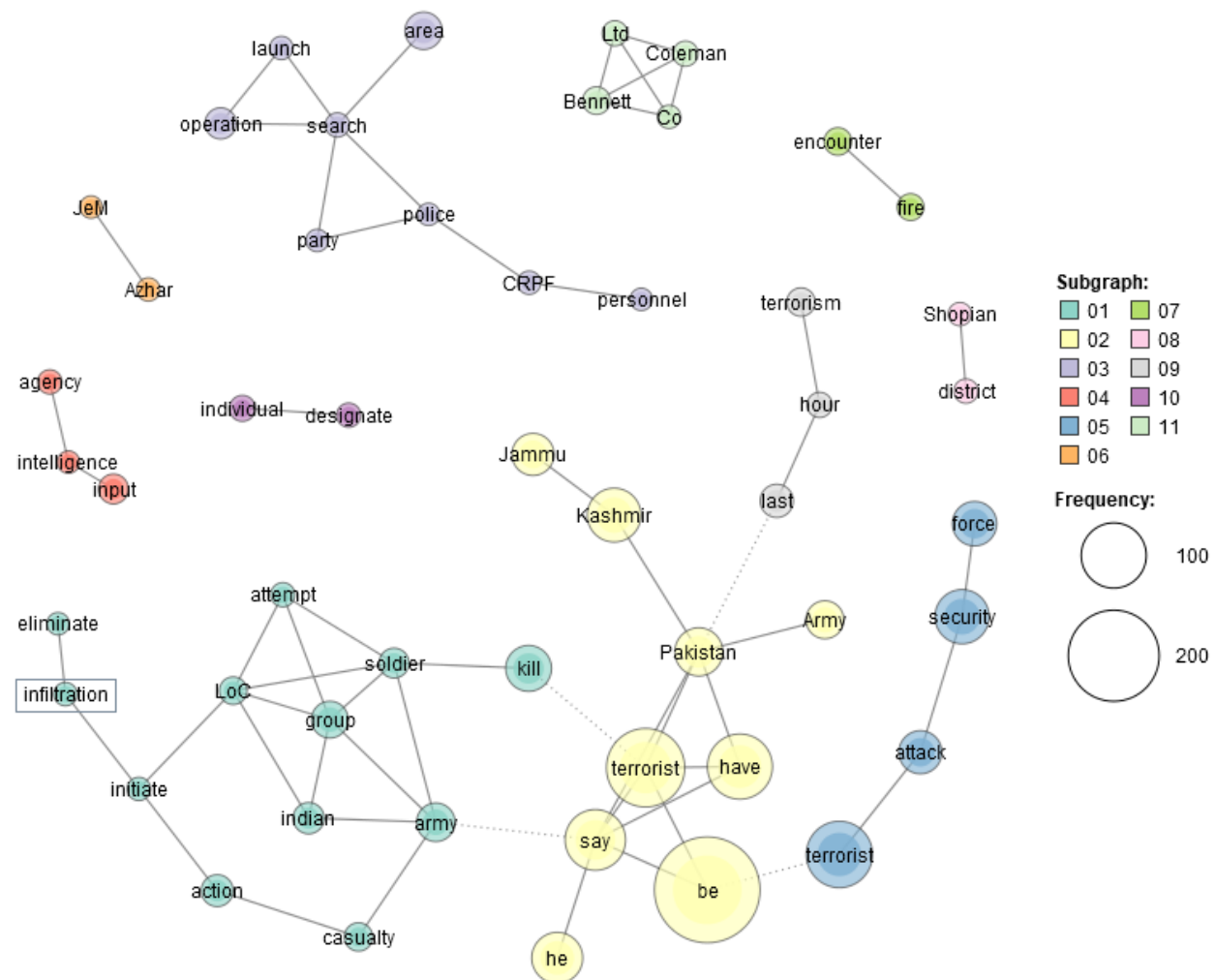
Goals and reported tactics: Coordination between Pakistan’s ISI and special forces with terrorist organizations is described as focused on infiltrating the LoC and establishing launch pads for attacks in both border areas and Indian heartland. The media argue ISI has given extremist organizations approval for attacks, including directions not to worry about collateral damage. There is a specific mention of the growing use of IEDs, especially in the Kashmir valley; including Nezapir area of Poonch. Some reports describe suicide attacks, though IEDs are most prevalently discussed and seen as preferred; as they prevent the loss of terrorists members. Terrorist cells are shown as being activated to target and kill Indian personnel and security forces, as well as corrupt politicians. By far the most reported targets have been Indian security forces. Indian media reports regularly on the attempts of extremist organizations to recruit young men to carry out attacks with extremist organizations conducting false-flag operations attacking mosques used to blame India to garner greater Muslim support.

Indian military response: Primary goal of Indian security forces is shown as decreasing the number of terrorist infiltrations beyond LoC. Indian media reports success toward this goal and provides documentation on a large number of arrests and terrorist casualties; including recruitment being down. Indian officials are shown as specifically concerned about the disruption of rail transport and rail construction projects, with protecting the Katra to Banihal line viewed as a top national priority, and as such, India is reported to have sent special commandoes to protect rail projects. Other targets of concern include: civil aviation, economic targets (especially in Mumbai), Indian military sites and personnel, Amarnath Yatris religious pilgrims, and civilians.

AI Assisted Narrative Clusters (Indian Media)

<i>Cluster 1</i>	Reports on Indian investigations and jailing of terrorists; particular focus on Indian judiciary and evidence against terrorists.
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<i>Cluster 2</i>	Reports on killing militants; occurs from gun fights, mass protests.
<i>Cluster 3</i>	Indian army offering to return bodies of Pakistani commandos and terrorists.
<i>Cluster 4</i>	Spikes in attacks in Pulwama, Shopian, Klugam, and Anantnag; killing of militants; recruitment of youth; connection to Amarnath Yatra pilgrimage; infiltration at LoC; use of IEDs, positive assessment of recruitment down, killing of militants.
<i>Cluster 5</i>	Prevalence of weapon stores; vehicle based IEDs; dismantling of terrorist infrastructure.
<i>Cluster 6</i>	Indian attempts to restore democracy, provide services to contested region; concerns over Amarnath pilgrimage; local politics—Lok Sabha is largest opposition group to new bills extending services to Jammu and Kashmir; BJB and Mehbooba Mufti’s People’s Democratic Party, once unified, are now incompatible partners.
<i>Cluster 7</i>	Killing of LeT militants; slain militants were identified as Naseer Ahmad Mir alias Tawseef of Brath Kalan; Sopore and Asif Ahmad War of Warpora.
<i>Cluster 8</i>	Police officers critically hurt in militant battle, dying in hospital.
<i>Cluster 9</i>	Indian forces gallantly striking against sinister Pakistan terrorists; predawn air strikes.
<i>Cluster 10</i>	Defense and explanation of purpose for Article 370. Previous situation only benefited separatism, corruption, terrorism, nepotism, and family rule; did not help the people. New system will help restore economic benefits; promises of democratic, transparent elections.



Pakistani Media Coverage

Pakistani media focus on Kashmiri’s right of self-determination in the face of human rights abuses perpetrated by the Indian State; claiming India makes accusations of terrorism as a shield to hide its injustices towards Kashmiris.

Indian Government as State-sponsored terrorism conducting human rights abuses: Pakistani media argue India uses “terrorism” as a shield to cover the injustices it commits against Kashmiris. The frequent reporting of state-sponsored terrorism and injustices perpetrated by India include descriptions of detainment, torture, disappearances, and the outright killing of Kashmiris. The media claim India is following a policy of a “thousands cuts,” viewed as similar to Israel’s policies toward Palestinians. Pakistani media reports that protestors chant pro-freedom, anti-India and anti-Israel slogans. Special attention is placed on the Indian state’s targeting of Kashmiri “youth;” describing young Kashmiris languishing in Indian jails. Terrorists and protestors are described as brave “martyrs.” The Jammu and Kashmir populace is shown as

having been alienated by India. The consensus of the reporting is that the crisis will continue given India's actions and that the overall despair of Kashmiris will worsen.

Hindu terrorists: Pakistan media reports Hindu terrorist organizations are targeting Kashmiris, committing acts of genocide against Muslims and chanting Jay Shri Ram slogans. Indian Hindu fundamentalist-extremist organization include RashtriyaSwayamSevakSangh, with its brainchild being the Bharatiya Janata Party.

International Community: Pakistani and Kashmiri leaders are shown as calling on the international community to recognize the right of Kashmiris for self-determination. Pakistani media cites international law and the UN High Commission on Human Rights to highlight the mounting human rights violations perpetrated by Indian state. Direct calls are made for world powers to differentiate between terrorist organizations and the legitimate movement for the right of self-determination.

Pakistan: Media argue that Pakistan is being used as a scape-goat for Indian human rights violations. Pakistani media claim that India, with the support of the US, spin terrorist organizations are supported by Pakistan while Pakistan media emphasize their deniability. Nonetheless, clear linkages between extremist organizations and Pakistan government are noted, including threats that Pakistan may up the ante with military or proxy organizations against India. Despite this, Pakistan is shown as having made overtures for dialogue with India to reduce tensions.

China: China is viewed as an ally of Pakistan that helped influence UNSC resolutions blocking the linking of terrorist activities to the Pakistani state.

US/The West: The US and the West are viewed as "in-bed" with India and supporting its anti-Muslim and anti-Kashmiri policies with a fixation on terrorist activities.

Pakistani media explains the goal of Kashmiri protestors as that of the right to self-determination. Pakistan is shown as appealing to the international community to support Kashmiris and aiding Kashmiris through proxy groups.

Kashmiri Goals: Pakistani media describe the goal as one of separatism in Jammu and Kashmir for the right to self-determination. Kashmiris are freedom fighters, not terrorists.

Indian Goals: Media show the Indian state as responding to Pakistani and terrorist groups in kind through military action, signaling continued Indian attacks until peace and normalcy is restored. India is viewed as establishing a humiliating system oppressing Kashmiris; akin to Israel's policies toward Palestinians. India is shown as pursuing constitutional and political reforms in Kashmir which it argues has led to corruption, nepotism, and separatism. Indian authorities are shown as dealing with protestors and regional instability through draconian measures. Most notable were Indian authorities use of pellet guns to kill and maim defenseless civilians, the extrajudicial killings in the garb of cordon and search procedures, and accusations of false-flag operations.

Pakistani Goals: Media report a mix of military and proxy terrorist organizations that support Kashmiris and degrade Indian security forces. Pakistan is shown as making overtures to the international community to stop Indian human rights violations and support Kashmiri self-determination, as well as having a willingness to negotiate with India to reduce tensions. Some indication is given that, regardless of Kashmir and Jammu's constitutional status, Pakistan would continue low intensity asymmetric warfare in the region.

Militant Goals and Interests: Discussions on the best ways to attack Indian officials and military personnel include leaving packed explosives in stationary cars with timed explosives on rural roads; this tactic helps prevent the loss of militant lives. Calls for more usages of IEDs and vehicle borne IEDs. There is some commentary on the strength of JeM and LeT, despite JeM deaths mounting. LeT personnel is shown as still strong.

AI Assisted Narrative Clusters (Pakistan Media)

<i>Cluster 1</i>	JeM attacks, listing of JeM as global terrorist; US and West's support, China's reluctance; India viewed as politicizing the process.
<i>Cluster 2</i>	Indian Forces "act of state terrorism" martyring Kashmiri youth.
<i>Cluster 3</i>	Appeals to international community for global pressure stopping Indian atrocities/human rights violations and respect Kashmiri's right to self-determination.
<i>Cluster 4</i>	Pakistani calls for dialogue and negotiations to reduce tensions with India.
<i>Cluster 5</i>	Indian attempts at crushing Kashmiris with the use of pellet guns viewed as further evidence of India's Hindu-based goals; India failing to crush freedom movement.
<i>Cluster 6</i>	India stripping Kashmiris of special autonomy. Process was rushed and wrong. US supported, especially within context of Pakistan-extremist/Afghanistan peace process.
<i>Cluster 7</i>	India's draconian policies denying Kashmiris fundamental rights, particularly in Srinagar. Mosques being targeted, India sending additional troops; cordon and search procedures causing alienation and anger; further political dissatisfaction with courts and leaders.
<i>Cluster 8</i>	Indian abuses, including abduction, instance of gang-rape, and murder; Kashmiris languishing in state jails; delegitimizing Indian police force as tool of state oppression.

