

JAMMU AND KASHMIR: PEDALING BACKWARDS

*A response to the Indian government's propaganda on exciting
Developments in Jammu & Kashmir since August 5, 2019.*



**The Indian Embassy has released a disingenuous
newsletter on Kashmir which is purely
propaganda to hide the oppression being carried
out under the garb of development.**

Photos by Muzammil Mattoo

Events after Article 370

1. INTERNET BAN: A DISCONNECTED VALLEY
2. INDUSTRIAL DOWNFALL SINCE REVOCATION OF ARTICLE 370
3. HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR SINCE AUGUST 2019
4. A YEAR WITHOUT EDUCATION: 2019-20
5. DELIBERATE DISRUPTION OF EMERGENCY HEALTHCARE



Internet Ban: A Disconnected Valley

On 5th of August 2019, India revoked the autonomy of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Prior to this, and in addition to the evacuation of Indian nationals (tourists and students) from the disputed territory, a complete internet shutdown was imposed by the Indian regime all across Jammu and Kashmir. The internet restrictions imposed in the internationally disputed region since August 5, 2019 have caused an economic loss of \$5.39 billion and caused more than 500,000 people to lose their jobs. India claims to be the largest democracy in the world, but has time and again used internet blackouts to suppress dissent and impose censorship in Jammu and Kashmir. In stark comparison to India's claims of economic upliftment in Jammu and Kashmir, the commercial sector is on the brink of collapse with an estimated loss of \$1.4 billion in a span of four months from August 5, 2019 to December 16, 2019. For example, an e-commerce venture, The Kashmir Box, supplying local produce and handicrafts to 50 countries, suffered a total loss of \$420,000.

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Industrial Downfall since the revocation of Article 370

Over the past year, Jammu and Kashmir's industrial sector including transport,, horticulture, commercial industries, and especially its tourism sector, which is the backbone of Kashmir's economy, have suffered humongous losses. According to the Kashmir Transporters Welfare Association, the lockdown affected nearly 150,000 people associated with the transport sector. Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI), a local body of industrialists in the region, has put the preliminary amount of loss to \$5.3 billion from last year's lockdown. As for the trader's body, an estimated half a million job loss has been recorded in the last year. Kashmir's economy stands crippled by the brutal communications and military lockdown. While the Indian government claims to be developing Kashmir by abrogating the autonomy of the state and integrating it fully with India, Modi's government instead of generating employment opportunities for the youth of Kashmir, has abolished essential employment schemes like SHGs (Self Help Groups), which reserved 30% of the total jobs in construction and upgradation of infrastructure work in various government departments and corporations for these groups. The scheme, launched in 2003 by the previous governments was abolished on August 10, 2019 leaving over 45000 engineers, both degree and diploma holders, jobless overnight in the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Kashmir's economy stands crippled by the brutal communications and military lockdown."



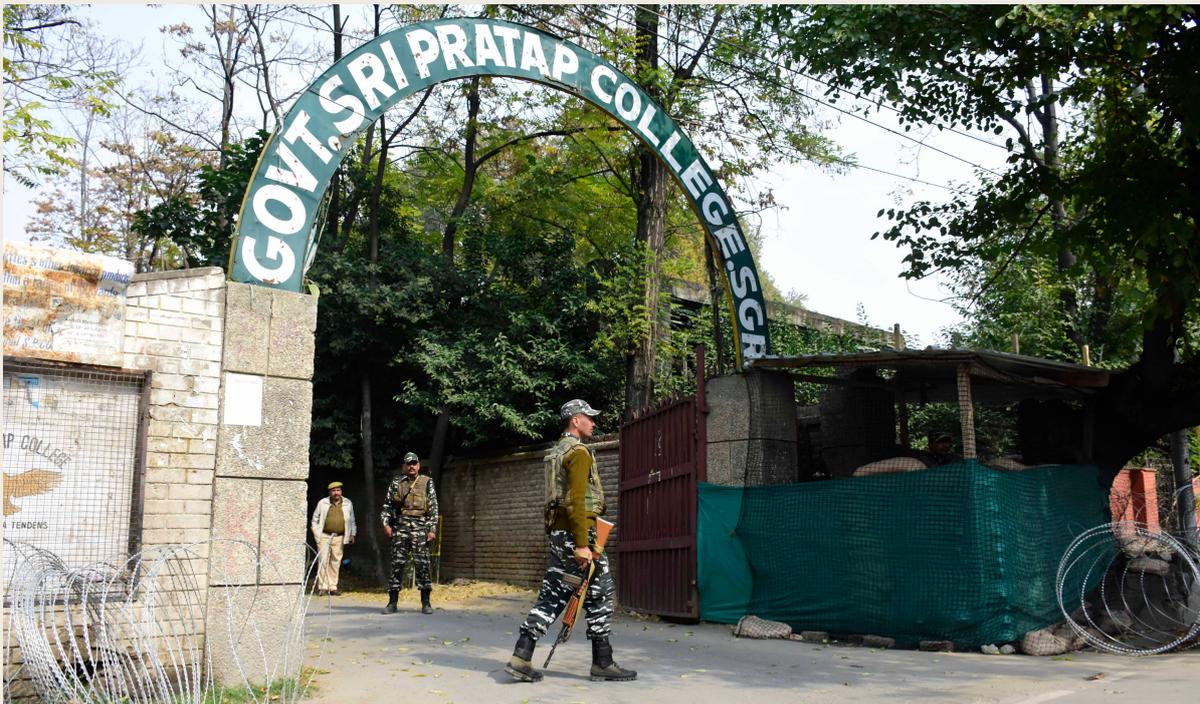
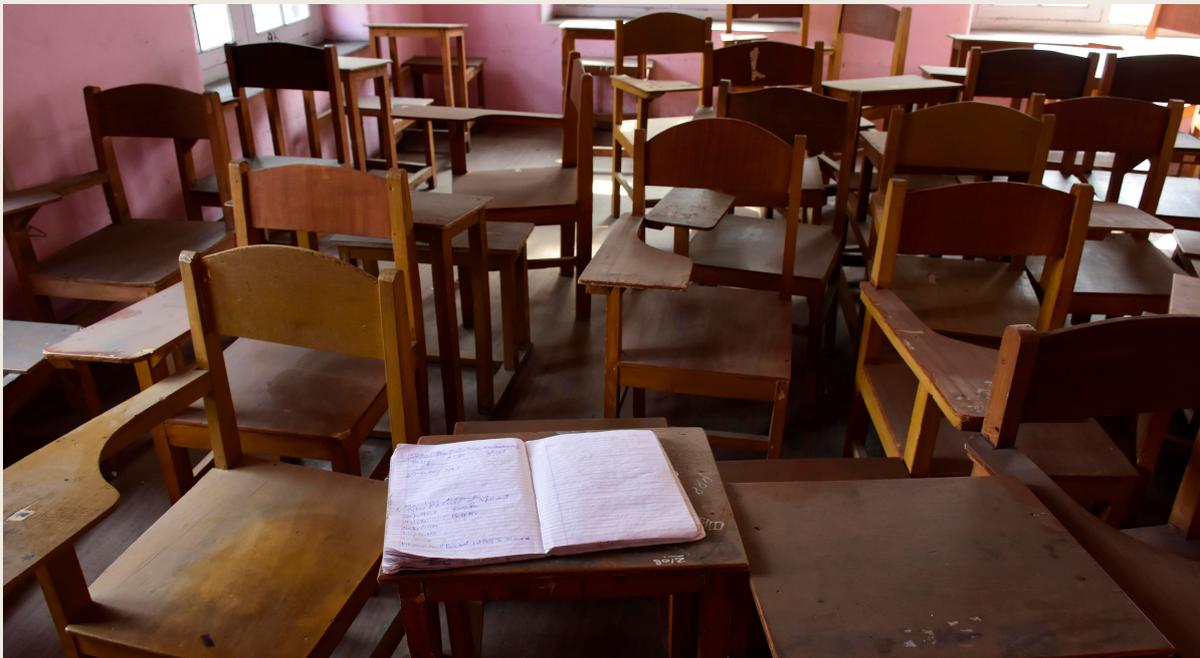
Human Rights Abuses in Jammu and Kashmir since August 2019

Under the guise of development, the Indian state has been systematically violating the human rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. According to a recent United Nations Report, there is an urgent need for India and the international community to address the historic as well as recent human rights violations in the disputed region since the abrogation of Article 370 in August, 2019. These include crackdown on freedom of expression, access to information, peaceful protests over the undemocratic decision to end the autonomy of Jammu and Kashmir, a decision that was undertaken without the consent of the people and the government of Kashmir. Further, human rights abuses include alleged arbitrary detentions on a large scale, torture and ill-treatment as well as the criminalization of journalists covering the situation and the detention and deteriorating health of a high-profile human rights lawyer, Mian Qayoom, who is also the president of the High Court Bar Association. By violating the rights of people - the right to freedom of speech, freedom of expression and freedom of information and in violation of international agreements including the United Nations Resolution and the Indian “democratic” constitution, the Indian regime has humiliated and disgraced the whole population of Jammu and Kashmir.

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A Year without Education in Kashmir: 2019-20

Kashmir has seen a year of siege wherein the education sector has borne the brunt of repeated shutdown of schools, colleges, universities and all academic institutions. Youth are the builders of a nation, but in Kashmir youth have been reduced to mere witnesses to this dystopia. Frequent disruptions in formal schooling, long periods of extended social closures as well as erratic schedules during years of conflict and civil strife have led to a rise in depression and behavioural issues among children, according to Dr. Syed Karrar, a child and adolescent psychiatrist at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS) in Srinagar, Kashmir's largest city.





Deliberate disruption of emergency healthcare

India's harsh lockdown has also been a deliberate attempt to paralyze emergency healthcare in Kashmir. This has been evidenced by ambulances being stopped at various checkpoints, arrest of health care workers and doctors who protested against the severity of the blockade and death of patients including a pregnant woman who lost her unborn child due to the inability to reach the hospital. Dr. Omar Salim, a urologist, at the Government Medical College in Srinagar, held a peaceful demonstration in 2019 to restart the internet services in the Valley, was taken into custody by the forces during a brief interview with BBC Urdu. Furthermore, as cases rise in a region that has already endured months of military clampdown, local doctors have warned that the clampdown has hobbled efforts to prepare and address the coronavirus pandemic. Local doc.

"In late August, a local doctor, Omar Salim, was arrested after he was filmed protesting"

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