UN report on Kashmir - 2018

What is the issue?

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- UN Human Rights Council’s report on Kashmir is so fatally flawed.
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- Debating its accuracy, fairness, methodology or motive is a waste of time as it merely gives another reason for India and Pakistan to fight.
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Why is the report flawed?

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- In many ways, the Kashmir situation is back to the perilous 1990s.
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- **Content -** The report pricks India for its human rights record in Kashmir and equally questions Pakistan with allegations of supporting terrorism.
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- But neither allegation is likely to have any impact - as India believes that it is fight a nasty proxy war, and Pakistan believes that it is on a moral campaign.
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- Notably, such accusations are already aplenty and both countries wear them like badges of honour rather than disgust.
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- It swears by false hopes, which would to lead to greater polarisation of the issues with both India and Pakistan likely to harden their stands.
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- **Incompetence -** The UN report is hence at best lacklustre and is wholly superficial with little groundwork and insufficient knowledge of the situation.
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- The report is a clear case of UN delegating its responsibilities to NGO-type activists with little administrative oversight.
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- While activists taking the lead is welcome, it is a dangerous precedent for the UN to abdicate from its supervisory role altogether.
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- The report can also potentially damage those it sets out to defend and is an indication of the extent of UN incompetence.
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How were the previous situations in Kashmir handled?

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- **Violence-** 1989-1994 is regarded as the worst phase of Kashmiri unrest, which was triggered due to a weak coalition government at the centre.
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- The government headed by V.P. Singh and propped up by BJP and the Communists from outside, both of had radically different views on Kashmir.
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- While the BJP wanted a muscular approach, the left and the others within the government wanted a softer and reconciliation oriented approach.
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- This led to indecisiveness, and helped Kashmiri extremism gain steam, and precipitated in a cruel and violent campaign against Kashmiri Pundits.
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- **Suppression -** The situation slowly morphed into a full-fledged proxy war against the Pakistani–insurgents, which engulfed much of Kashmir.
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- It was only after a clear sighted and hard fisted campaign under next PM Narasimha Rao, that the kashmiri situation was brought under control.
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- Notably, Mr. Rao had given the military a free hand, and his reign was when there were large scale accusations of human rights abuses.
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- **International Action -** Akin to today, the 1990s also saw intense pressure on India from the UN and multiple human rights groups.
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- Back then, the union government had got a resolution passed unanimously in the parliament for full recovery of Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir.
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- A bipartisan delegation led by opposition leader A.B. Vajpayee, proceeded to the UN and won the historic Geneva vote on the same.
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- Notably, the current episode of UN involvement is also seeing opposition closing ranks with the government, mainly due to the irresponsible report.
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What is the current political situation?

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- India has rejected the UN report for formally asking for self-determination of Kashmiris, which implies giving credibility to secessionists.
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- Interestingly, Pakistan too hasn't accepted self-determination and it also wasn't part of the UN's 1948 resolution on Kashmir.
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- Notably, the 1972 Shimla Agreement (between India and Pakistan) also redefined Kashmir as a purely bilateral issue, and left little scope for plebiscite.
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- Kashmiri politics has currently lost credibility, human rights pressures are increasing, and LoC remains tense due to border aggression.
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- Despite the brute majority of the Modi government, the Kashmir policy seems to be faltering due to lack of strategic thinking and planning.
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- Hence, the ground situation sounds like a return to the 1990s unrest.
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Source: Business Standard

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