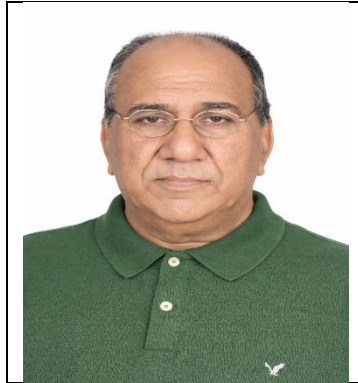


**MAPPING THE FORGOTTEN: PRE-1947 KASHMIRI SETTLEMENTS
ACROSS PAKISTAN**



BY MUNIR DAR

Toronto/Faisalabad, 23 June 2026 (LPC). A new historical reconstruction by the Kashmir-Origin Legal Identity, Documentation & Representation Foundation (KLIRF) has unveiled a detailed district-wise map of Kashmiri settlements that existed across the territories of present-day Pakistan before the Partition of 1947. The study, which forms the narrative layer for a future GIS-based mapping project, traces the migration patterns, occupational structures, and demographic footprints of Kashmiri families who left the princely State of Jammu & Kashmir between 1850 and 1947.

The findings reveal that Kashmiri-origin communities were deeply embedded in the social and economic fabric of Punjab, Karachi, NWFP, and Baluchistan long before independence yet remain largely invisible in official records.

A Historical Cartography of Migration

The KLIRF map identifies eleven major regional clusters of Kashmiri settlement, each with distinct occupational and cultural characteristics. The highest concentrations were found in **Rawalpindi, Sialkot, and Lahore**, where Kashmiri artisans, traders, and labourers formed thriving communities.

Region / Province (Pre-1947)	Key Districts	Main Localities / Clusters	Dominant Occupations	Relative Concentration
Rawalpindi Division	Rawalpindi	Kashmiri Bazaar, Banni, Raja Bazaar belt	Artisans, traders, military labour	Very high
Jhelum	Jhelum	City mohallas near GT Road, riverine villages	Labour, agriculture	Medium-high
Gujrat	Gujrat, Kharian	Sehna, Kharian town, Lalamusa belt	Agriculture, weaving	High
Sialkot	Sialkot	Inner city mohallas, artisan quarters	Leather, sports goods, weaving	Very high

Region / Province (Pre-1947)	Key Districts	Main Localities / Clusters	Dominant Occupations	Relative Concentration
Lahore	Lahore	Kashmiri Mohalla, Bhatti Gate, Mochi Gate	Trade, services, education	Very high
Lyallpur (Faisalabad)	Lyallpur	Canal colony villages, urban labour quarters	Agriculture, power-loom labour	Medium
Sheikhupura	Sheikhupura	Villages off Lahore-Sheikhupura road	Agriculture	Low-medium
Multan	Multan	Walled city trader lanes	Trade	Low
Karachi	Karachi	Old City, Kharadar, Mithadar, port labour lines	Port labour, trade	Medium-high
NWFP (now KP)	Peshawar, Kohat	Shawl-weaver mohallas, bazaar clusters	Weaving, trade	Medium
Baluchistan	Quetta	Railway and cantonment labour quarters	Labour	Low

These clusters, KLIRF notes, can later be converted into a **GIS shapefile or GeoJSON dataset**, assigning polygons to each district and tagging them with “Kashmiri settlement intensity: low, medium, or high.” The foundation’s researchers describe this as a “cartography of memory” a way to visualise the forgotten diaspora that shaped Pakistan’s early urban and industrial development.

From Artisans to Citizens: The Demographic Continuum

KLIRF’s accompanying population projection model estimates that by 1930, approximately **0.70 to 0.90 million** Kashmiris were living in what is now Pakistan. Using a compound annual growth rate of **2.2 percent**, consistent with historical South Asian Muslim fertility, the foundation projects that their descendants today number between **4.8 and 6.2 million**.

Year	Projected Population (Millions)	Notes
1930	0.80	Base estimate (pre-Partition)
1947	≈ 1.10	Pre-Partition peak; many already settled in Punjab and Karachi
1960	≈ 1.45	First post-independence generation born in Pakistan
1980	≈ 2.20	Second generation; urbanisation accelerates
2000	≈ 3.30	Third generation; strong presence in services, education, media

Year	Projected Population (Millions)	Notes
2024	≈ 4.8 – 6.2	Range to reflect uncertainty in base and growth rate

The projection formula used is:

$$P_t = P_{1930} \times (1 + r)^{(t-1930)}$$

where $r = 0.022$.

KLIRF summarises the central finding as:

“Between **4.8 and 6.2 million Pakistanis today** are of undocumented Kashmiri origin whose families migrated before 1947 and were never recorded as State Subjects of Jammu & Kashmir.”

Invisible in Records, Visible in History

Despite their scale, these communities remain absent from Pakistan’s census categories and AJK’s State Subject registers. Their contributions to trade, industry, and education are well documented in local histories, yet their legal and genealogical identity as Kashmiris has never been formally recognised.

KLIRF’s chairman, **Munir Ahmed Dar**, describes the project as “an effort to restore visibility to a population that history forgot to record.” He emphasises that the mapping initiative is not political but archival aimed at documenting the continuity of Kashmiri heritage across generations.

“These families-built markets, schools, and industries in Pakistan long before independence,” Dar said. “They carried their Kashmiri identity in their hearts, not in official papers. Our goal is to ensure that their story is finally written into history.”

Towards a Digital Map of Memory

The foundation plans to integrate the district-wise data into a **digital GIS map**, enabling researchers, policymakers, and descendants to trace ancestral migration routes. Each district polygon will be tagged with settlement intensity and linked to archival records, oral histories, and photographic documentation.

KLIRF’s researchers believe this will serve as the first comprehensive visual record of Kashmiri-origin communities in Pakistan — a bridge between historical demography and modern identity documentation.

A Legacy Waiting to be Recognised

The study concludes that the Kashmiri-origin population in Pakistan represents a unique demographic legacy: citizens by nationality, but undocumented by heritage. Their story, spanning nearly two centuries, is one of resilience, adaptation, and quiet contribution.

As KLIRF prepares to release its full GIS dataset later this year, the foundation hopes the map will spark a broader conversation about recognition, documentation, and belonging ensuring that the invisible becomes visible, not only in archives but in the collective memory of the nation.