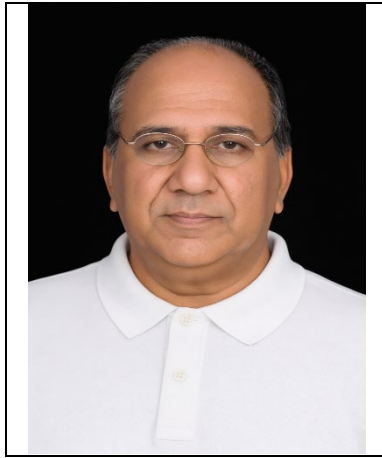


RECOGNISING THE INVISIBLE: MAPPING UNDOCUMENTED KASHMIRI-ORIGIN COMMUNITIES IN PAKISTAN



By Munir Dar, Chairman KLIRF

Faisalabad/Toronto, 23 June 2026 (LPC): A landmark research initiative by the **Kashmir-Origin Legal Identity, Documentation & Representation Foundation (KLIRF)** has unveiled the most detailed historical reconstruction yet of Kashmiri migration into the territories that now form Pakistan. The study, titled *“Recognising the Invisible: Undocumented Kashmiri-Origin Communities in Pakistan and the Need for Legal Identity Reform,”* traces the forgotten demographic footprint of hundreds of thousands of Kashmiris who left the princely State of Jammu & Kashmir between 1850 and 1947 and whose descendants today number in the millions.

The findings reveal a vast, undocumented population whose Kashmiri identity has survived socially and culturally but remains absent from official records, census categories, and legal frameworks.

A Forgotten Migration

Between the mid-19th century and the Partition of 1947, waves of Kashmiri artisans, traders, and labourers migrated from the Valley and adjoining regions to British India. Political repression, Dogra-era taxation, and the collapse of traditional industries such as shawl weaving drove this movement. Many sought refuge and opportunity in Punjab, Karachi, the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP), and Baluchistan.

Despite their deep historical roots, these migrants were never registered as “State Subjects” under the **Dogra State Subject Notification of 20 April 1927**, which defined hereditary belonging to Jammu & Kashmir. When they settled outside the princely state’s borders, they carried their Kashmiri identity informally through lineage and community but not through law.

After 1947, they became citizens of Pakistan under the **Pakistan Citizenship Act, 1951**, which regularised nationality but did not preserve Kashmiri legal identity. Generations of Kashmiri-

origin Pakistanis thus remained invisible in official documentation, uncounted in census data, and unrepresented in Kashmir-related institutions.

District-Wise Map of Pre-1947 Kashmiri Settlements

KLIRF’s research reconstructs a district-wise map of Kashmiri settlements across pre-Partition Pakistan, forming the narrative layer for a future GIS mapping project. The study identifies eleven major regional clusters, each with distinct occupational and cultural characteristics.

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
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 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.”

KLIRF describes this as a “*cartography of memory*” a visual record of the Kashmiri diaspora that helped shape Pakistan’s early urban and industrial landscape.

Demographic Scale and Growth

KLIRF’s population projection model estimates that by 1930, approximately **0.70–0.90 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
2024	≈ 4.8 – 6.2	Range to reflect uncertainty in base and growth rate

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.”

Legal and Administrative Gap

The invisibility of these communities stems from a structural divide between Pakistan’s citizenship regime and AJK’s State Subject system. Pakistan’s **Citizenship Act of 1951** recognises all persons born or residing within its territory as citizens, without regard to ethnic or ancestral origin. In contrast, AJK’s State Subject framework based on the **1927 Notification** defines belonging through hereditary descent and pre-1947 domicile.

AJK recognises only those who can prove direct lineage from a pre-Partition State Subject. This excludes most Kashmiri-origin families who migrated to British India before 1947 and were never registered in the princely state’s records. The result is a large diaspora with:

- **No State Subject documentation**
- **No structured access to AJK-linked rights**
- **No representation in Pakistan’s Kashmir policy discourse**

KLIRF stresses that this gap is not deliberate exclusion but historical oversight a legacy of two legal systems that evolved independently after Partition.

Policy Recommendations: The KLIRF Agenda

To address this identity vacuum, KLIRF proposes a four-part reform framework:

1. **National Recognition Category** Introduce a voluntary “Kashmiri Origin” self-identification field in census forms, NADRA registration, and national surveys to allow individuals to record their ancestral identity.
2. **Archival and Genealogical Programme** Establish a **Kashmiri Origin Documentation Unit** to digitise family archives, migration histories, and community records, and issue **non-territorial Kashmiri Origin Certificates** to verified lineages.
3. **AJK–Pakistan Coordination Mechanism** Form a joint working group between the Governments of Pakistan and AJK to define criteria for recognising pre-1947 Pakistan-settled Kashmiri families and explore a special SSC-1/SSC-2 conversion window for documented descendants.
4. **Representation and Voice** Reserve consultative seats for Kashmiri-origin Pakistanis in parliamentary Kashmir committees, AJK–Pakistan liaison forums, and official delegations on Kashmir.

KLIRF’s Role and Vision

KLIRF positions itself as a research and documentation hub dedicated to restoring visibility to Kashmiri-origin families across Pakistan. Its work includes district-wise mapping, population modelling, and legal analysis to support evidence-based policy reform. The foundation also assists families in reconstructing genealogical records and preparing lineage dossiers for potential State Subject conversion.

Chairman **Munir Ahmed Dar** describes the initiative as a mission of historical justice:

“These families-built markets, schools, and industries in Pakistan long before independence. 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.”

A Legacy Waiting to Be Recognised

KLIRF’s research concludes that the Kashmiri-origin population in Pakistan represents a unique demographic legacy citizen by nationality, but undocumented by heritage. Their story spans nearly two centuries of migration, adaptation, and contribution.

As the foundation prepares to release its full GIS dataset later this year, it hopes the project 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.