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REASSESSING MARITIME TERRITORIAL SETTLEMENTS IN SOUTH ASIA: STRATEGIC SILENCES SINCE PARTITION 1947 ON ANDAMAN, NICOBAR, AND LAKSHADWEEP ISLANDS

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Abstract

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Bay of Bengal) and the Lakshadweep Islands (Arabian Sea) were British possessions before the Partition of the subcontinent in 1947. During the division of the subcontinent between India and Pakistan, the British Government allocated these remote archipelagos to India, violating the principles of the Indian Independence Act 1947 and ignoring the constitutional and strategic status of the process, which received little attention in historiography. Archival evidence indicates that the geopolitical value of the islands was well established, due to which the British wanted to keep them under their influence; however, they were later illegally handed over to India, which, by use of force, converted these islands into a Union Territory in 1956 without the rightful consent of Pakistan, while effectively sidelining the partition narratives. Pakistani leaders briefly claimed this, but mainstream Partition narratives and Indian authorities have largely ignored these claims. Moreover, documents reveal that Pakistani negotiators realized the geopolitical value and proposed retaining or reassigning them at the time of independence. The study examines a careful review of British cabinet papers, based on colonial laws, the 1935 Government of India Act, constitutional law, and historical studies, and reveals how these islands were in the status quo during 1947–56. This study reveals that the islands' peripheral geography and strategic importance can be reasons for the historical neglect of the partition of the islands by historians due to their legal and administrative status in 1947. Thus, the study identifies gaps in existing narratives and conducts a critical discourse analysis to examine how discourse shaped the narratives that the islands are Indian. Furthermore, the study involves a comparative historical and geopolitical analysis to highlight Pakistan's 'strategic silence'.

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INTRODUCTION:

The Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Archipelagos are a group of islands in the Central and North Eastern Indian Ocean, which were handed over to India under the principles and provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947. Firstly, in the case of the (BEIC), the British kept the archipelago under their control until 1950, when the entire archipelago was handed over to India instead of being divided between the two dominions of Pakistan and India. Later on, considering the imminent political threat due to the unjust accession of the archipelago, India declared these Islands a Union Territory in 1956. Secondly, in the case of the Lakshadweep Archipelago, a Muslim-dominated territory was once again unjustly handed over to India, ignoring its Muslim majority, like Kashmir.

Similarly, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, with their strategic assets and colonial legacies, have their roots in the British penal colony origins. The Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago was inhabited by people of African origin who arrived approximately 60,000 years ago. The Jarawa, a cannibal tribe comprising approximately 500 individuals protected by the Indian Government, still live in the Andaman Islands. The entire archipelago, with a total area of 8250 sq. km, comprises 572 islands, of which the Nicobar Archipelago consists of 247. According to a survey conducted in 2020, only 38 islands are inhabited (Yaser, 2020). The Andaman Archipelago is divided into North, Middle, Lower, and Little Andaman (Yaser, 2020), with Port Blair as the capital, while the deserted Nicobar Islands are divided into Car Nicobar, Little Nicobar, and Great Nicobar (Raju, 2026).

Colonial and Historical Context: Governance of the Islands before 1947:

When the Danish East India Company (DEIC) arrived here on December 12, 1755, India became known as the "Jewel in the Crown" of the British Empire because it was such a valuable colony, providing Great Britain with imports of cotton, tea, and other commodities, just as the East India Company profited from it (Darryl, 2021). However, it is imperative to note that before he advent of the DEIC, the Lakshadweep Archipelago was ruled by the Muslim house of Karakul, followed by that of Tipu Sultan. When Tipu Sultan was martyred during the Battle of Mysore with the British in 1799, the three Individual Islands came under British rule. However, Bib and her husband were permitted to retain the other islands; later, in 1908, Bib surrendered these islands to the British (Forces, 1979). The British East India Company (BEIC) established the Cellular Jail at the Andaman & Nicobar Islands from 1896 to 1906 (Iqbal, 2025). Later, on March 23, 1942, during World War II, the Japanese captured the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and later handed them over to the Azad National Army. However, the British recaptured the archipelagos on October 7, 1947 (Narang, 2019).

Before 1947, the central colonial government directly administered the Andaman & Nicobar Islands (Murthy, 2005). They were classified as a "Chief Commissioner's Province" under the Government of India Act 1935, which is distinct from provinces with elected legislatures (Maheshwari, 1976). They were administered by the Government of India and reserved to the Governor-General under the Government of India Act of 1935," as Muhammad Ali Jinnah later noted. On the other hand, the Lakshadweep group was a constituent of the Madras Presidency, which also included the Kingdom of Chimerical, Karakul (Gabriel, 1986). Consequently, they did not possess any
distinct constitutional status.

The departing British declared their intention to resettle all Anglo-Indians and Anglo-Burmese on these islands to form their own nation at the time of India's (1947) and Burma's (1948) independence, but this never happened. The archipelagos are still under one status (Seekins, 2017). Both archipelagos had a long military history as British colonial outposts: Lakshadweep

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was annexed by the BEIC in 1854 and governed from Madras, while the Andaman Islands had been a penal colony since 1858 (Kelkar, 2020). The demographics of their indigenous peoples and small populations (Malayalam or Tamil), who followed Islam or tribal religions, were different from those of mainland India (Karlsson, 2013). However, British planners were aware of the strategic location of Lakshadweep, which stretches along Central and Western Sea Lines of Communication (Sloes) between East Africa and India, while the Andaman & Nicobar chain lies along the Eastern Sloes to the Bay of Bengal and southeast towards the Strait of Malacca (Roy & Cawasji, 2017).

Partition Negotiations (1947): Claimed by All Parties

By the mid of 1947, these islands were considered British Indian Territory under the subcontinent's partition plan. All British India's provinces were eventually to be handed over to either India or Pakistan in accordance with the Indian Independence Act 1947, which was based on the Mountbatten Plan of June 3, 1947. Each princely state was permitted to join separately. Clause 2 of the Act merely allotted the Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands to the newly formed Dominion of India (Copland, 1991). Later, sovereignty was transferred to India in 1947. Thus, the Andaman, Nicobar and Lakshadweep Archipelagos, a Muslim-dominated archipelago, were handed over to India without even asking the choice of 98 percent Muslim inhabitants, against the principles and provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947, according to which areas of Muslim majority were to be part of Pakistan. Instead of dividing these archipelagos between India and Pakistan in accordance with the Indian Independence Act of 1947, it handed them over to India. Indian Government felt insecure, and to avoid political turmoil, the archipelagos were declared as Union Territories in 1956 (Darraj, 2021), as was done in the case of Kashmir and Ladakh.

Being apprehensive of a Pakistani attack, Indian leader Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel dispatched naval troops to strengthen the hold and raise the Indian flag at Lakshadweep. In addition to being a region with a majority of Muslims, it was also a Muslim-ruled princely state that ought to have been allowed to join either India or Pakistan (Syed, 2022). However, the moral and legal right was taken away, and India was granted the state of Tupi Sultan; as a result, Pakistan's right was disregarded on two separate grounds. Lakshadweep was considered part of the Madras Presidency under colonial rule, while the Andaman & Nicobar Islands were either considered part of Bengal & Burma or a British Crown Colony.

Constitutional and Legal Aspects of Succession

These islands were governed by colonial constitutional regulations. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were governed by the central government (through a Chief Commissioner) under the Government of India Act 1935, while the Lakshadweep Islands were a part of Madras Province (Maheshwari, 1976). Legally speaking, this meant that Andaman & Nicobar joined the Dominion of India after gaining independence through the Indian Independence Act of the United Kingdom. British India was automatically divided between India and Pakistan under the Act's provisions, but Clause 2 specifically designated the islands for India (Chanda, 2026). The Andaman and Nicobar Islands were administered by the Government of India under the 1935 Act and were not in the same category as other Chief Commissioners' provinces; however, India received them as part of the succession of British India, as Jinnah's letter accurately noted and emphasized for the share of Pakistan. Jawaharlal Nehru was also fully aware of India's geopolitical and strategic importance. On March 17, 1950, in his speech in the parliament, he said, "We are in a strategic part of Asia, set in the center of the Indian Ocean, with intimate past and

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present connections with West Asia, Southeast Asia, and Far East Asia" (Panda, 2020).

The importance of sea trade and the security of India from the Indian Ocean side compelled India to strengthen and modernize its Navy and Air Force. The strategic location of the Andaman–Nicobar and other small islands further strengthens this aspect. Indeed, the Indian Ocean is a crucially important area in contemporary times because of its wealth and strategic location in the global economy. The islands situated in the midst of the Bay of Bengal, Andaman–Nicobar, possess a distinct geopolitical and strategic character because of their location, closer to erstwhile Pakistan at the Port of Chittagong than any other (Murthy, 2007).

Thus, archival records, including Cabinet minutes and Constituent Assembly debates (1950), show that the British and Indian leadership explicitly decided to retain these island groups within India. Section 2(1) of the Indian Independence Act of 1947 legally established the birth of two independent Dominions, India and Pakistan, from the former British India. Articles 2(4), 7(1), and 19(3) of the Indian Independence Act, 1947, provide a critical lens that offers concrete grounds for analyzing falsifications in Indian standpoints and illegal actions in occupying not only Jungian but also several other princely states, including vassal states and feudal jaguars (Asim, 2023).

The Act defined Pakistan's territories (Punjab, Bengal, Sindh, NWFP, and Baluchistan) and left all other British Indian Territories (including these islands) to India by default (Haines, 2017). 2.-(1) Subject to the provisions of subsections (3) and (4) of this section, the territories of India shall be the territories under the new sovereignty of His Majesty which, immediately before, were Dominions. appointed day, were included in British India, except the territories which, under subsection (2) of this section, were to be the territories of Pakistan (legislation.gov.uk, 1947).

Andaman Nicobar and Lakshadweep Case:

Bengal and Punjab were the two main areas of division during the 1947 Partition of British India (Spate, 1947), and less focus was paid to the destiny of India's two remote archipelagos, the Lakshadweep Islands off the coast of Malabar and the Andaman–Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal. The Indian Independence Act of 1947 did not provide for the transfer of either archipelago to Pakistan, and neither archipelago has a land border with Pakistan nor India (Rao, 2022); they were illegally handed to India after independence on August 15, 1947. The constitutional and strategic status of these archipelagos during 1947–1948 is thus examined in this study.

Since Lakshadweep was a part of the Madras Presidency, it joined Madras Province upon acceding to India on 15 August 1947 (Arunachalam, 2026). Lakshadweep was taken over by India's civil administration by August 1947. In order to prevent Pakistan's interference, India's Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, made arrangements for an Indian naval frigate to be anchored off the capital island on Independence Day.

Both island groups became part of Indian territory after being incorporated into India (first under the central government of the Indian Union); the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were recognized as a distinct Union Territory in 1956 (Murthy, 2005). Notably, neither case involved consultation with Pakistan; the 1947 legal handover was done by British statute and local administrative continuity, not bilateral agreement.

Strategic Importance of the Islands for India:

After the unjust division under the Indian Independence Act, the strategic use of these islands, including naval bases and communication lines, came under India's control. In present Indo-Pacific geopolitics, the archipelagos play a vital role in India's maritime strategy. China also has a presence in the Indian Ocean region. Therefore, India is insecure and uncertain in many ways. A

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military base in the Nicobar Archipelago is bolstering its presence. India's position in the Indian Ocean is strengthened by a military base in the Nicobar Islands. Since 1985, India has been developing defense facilities and installations on these islands. The islands now have a key position crucial to India's strategic role in the Bay of Bengal and the Malacca Strait (Collin, 2015).

India's insecurity has been so persistent and dominating that even after more than half a century, during his visit to Andaman Island in December 2018, Indian Prime Minister Modi changed the names of Ross Island to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Island, Neil Island to Shaded Have lock Island, and Sward Weep to project Hindu tones by abolishing the Christian legacy (Jena, 2024). Lakshadweep is a group of islands in the Lakshadweep Sea, 200–440 km from the southwestern Indian coast. The archipelago is administered as the smallest union territory and district of India, with a total surface area of just 32 sq. km. The lagoon area covers approximately 4,200 sq. km, with an Exclusive Economic Zone of 400,000 sq. km (James, 2011). According to the 2020 census, the total population of the Lakshadweep Archipelago is 65,998, of which the Muslim population is 96.58 percent, and Hindus are only 2.77 percent (Malik, 2024).

Currently, India has a brigade-sized force with 30 ships (Berlin, 2006). Moreover, it will soon commission a new base, called INS Hassock, approximately 300 km north of the archipelago's capital, Port Blair, to dominate the 'Six' and 'Ten' degree channels west of the Malacca Strait (Joshi, 2017). Both archipelagos are of great importance to regional security. The Andaman and Nicobar Islands stretch for more than 700 km from Myanmar to the Malacca Strait. They are located at the crossroads of key sea passages (including the Straits of Malacca), which are among the busiest oil and trade routes in the world.

Strategic Silence of Pakistan

During World War II and the Cold War, the Andaman were prized as Britain's easternmost naval bases; after 1947, India turned them into a three-service base (the only one in the Indian Ocean) to project power to Southeast Asia. A recent strategic study describes the Andaman as India's hinge towards Southeast Asia, citing its natural position as a maritime gateway through the Straits of Malacca. In other words, control of the Andaman gave India control of the approaches to the Malacca Strait and control of the Indian Ocean (Murthy, 2007).

Similarly, the Lakshadweep Islands lie on the east-west sea route across the Arabian Sea. British planners had anticipated that if they lost their continental air bases, Lakshadweep would be useful as a stepping stone for air reinforcement of forces in Australia and New Zealand. In 1947, the Joint Chiefs recommended excluding Lakshadweep from the route to India to preserve these routes. After 1947, India maintained a naval base at Lakshadweep (even setting up INS Vajrabhu and Kiltanand Baz) to patrol the maritime lanes (Roy & Cawasji, 2017). If Pakistan holds the islands, it gains a naval base 400-500 km off the Indian coast (and even closer to strategic shipping lanes). During Partition, British documents and Pakistani leaders repeatedly stressed these geographic factors. For example, the Joint Programming Committee warned that without the islands, Britain would have to rely on Ceylon as a base. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's letter of 1947 specifically mentioned the Andaman Islands as a coal port connecting Chittagong with Karachi and a refueling point for ships between the two wings of Pakistan. On the contrary, Nehru argued that the islands were not on the direct route between the two and that they were more strategic for India. However, Mohammed Ali Jinnah called the islands a vital link between West and East Pakistan, and claimed that they were the only channel of communication between the two sides of the sea. In other words, these remote islands controlled key sea routes.

Later on, during the Cold War, Indian control of the Andaman helped monitor Soviet submarines and, later, provided a base projecting into the

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Indian Ocean. Today, India's navy, air force, and tree-service command are central to India's maritime strategy, Act East. On the other hand, Pakistan's ambition to gain access to the Indian Ocean was thwarted, and the islands remained far from Pakistani practical control, rendering Pakistan's claims of 1947 effectively moot. Pakistan did not pursue these territories because of its limited naval capacity and leadership priorities. Pakistan has also faced continental security challenges, and there has been a lack of international advocacy at the same time.

Thus, in history, the issue remained "silent" because the scholarly focus was more on contiguous land disputes like Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir, and ignored maritime claims. Moreover, another strategic narrative was that India's central leadership (Nehru and Patel) placed borders above remote islands. Moreover, in 1947, Burma was offered post-colonial repossessions, such as the Andaman and Nicobar, but India kept those.

After all that happened in 1947-48, most of the history of the partition remained silent on these islands. The history of the Partition mostly focused on the Punjab, Bengal, Kashmir, and princely states, largely ignoring the Andaman and Lakshadweep. Moreover, Partition studies inherently concentrate on India's narratives while marginalizing peripheral experiences. The islands' remoteness, extension, and overwhelmingly nonviolent role in the partition riots were outside the dominant narrative of the community. Even on the Pakistani side, Leaders like Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Aquatint Ali Khan left little trace of the islands after 1947, and the story is hardly mentioned in Pakistan's subsequent histories.

This historical gap can be explained by their unique status: unlike the contests for Punjab or the princely states, the islands have not had a local referendum to determine their status. Moreover, once the two archipelagos were firmly under Indian control (in 1950-56), any Pakistani claim to those islands became a minority view. Scholar Sayeed Ferdous argues that decades of partition research have kept Indian experience at the center and pushed other experiences to the periphery. However, in the recent past, some experts began to uncover these truths. Press investigations and declassified archives, such as K.R.N. Swamy (Tribune) and Fateh-ul-Mulk (2019), exposed British notes and letters written by Muhammad Ali Jinnah. These studies highlight how close the dispute came to boiling over, and criticize the silence of the official accounts. But mainstream academic works and textbooks still rarely mention the island's divided fate, hence the term strategic silence.

Hence, the study attempts to revisit this maritime legacy of partition, while also highlighting historical lacunae and implications for the strategic history of South Asia. In this respect, the present study examines the strategic narrative approach to the framing of maritime space in national discourse and tries to identify legal and political gaps that were formalized during the partition of India and what is still not being discussed. The study offers an empirical archival legal interpretation of the partition and the territorial division, as well as highlighting the blatant disregard for the maritime dimension in the partitioning studies.

Studies like the Radcliffe Review and the principles of territorial distribution did not take into account that the division extended beyond continental boundaries, and there were also maritime aspects during the period of decolonization. One of these was Lakshadweep, which had a strong demographic composition and strategic importance in partition and politics in 1947. There was a gap between India's naval deployments and Pakistan's inactivity on the issue. In accordance with the principles and provisions of the Indian Independence Act 1947 and the rights of Pakistan, the United Nations must transfer one of the two archipelagos to Pakistan because it has not been repealed by the UK and is still in force; therefore, the United Kingdom can also achieve a just division. The Nicobar Archipelago, being the closer one geographically

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to Pakistan and uninhabited, should be transferred to Pakistan. Lakshadweep, being a strongly Muslim-dominated area, should also be handed over to Pakistan.

Research Questions

RQ1) Under what legal provisions were the Andaman–Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands allocated to India during the division of the subcontinent?

RQ2) What do archival records reveal about India's strategic rationale and evidence about Pakistan's strategic silence?

The first research question examines the constitutional and colonial administrative records (e.g., the 1947 Indian Independence Act, the orders of the Madras Presidency Government, and British Cabinet minutes, etc.) to study how island sovereignty has been allocated under the law. It focuses on the official archives in order to trace the decision-making process, as these territories were British possessions that were not expressly partitioned in the partition plan.

The strategic and historical aspects of the islands are examined in the second research question. Additionally, the purpose of this question is to ascertain the strategic silence surrounding the situation. Sources like the British defense reports, the Joint Planning Staff notes, official correspondence of Jinnah and Mountbatten letters, and similar academic critiques would examine how postcolonial narratives were overlooked in conventional partition studies, and other strategic factors like airport and shipping routes influenced the silence.

Research Objectives:

RO1) To examine the 1947 transfer of power, which illegally and administratively determined the status of the Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar archipelagos.

RO2) To find out the strategic silence about the islands that remained largely absent from mainstream Partition, and the reasons that archival and geopolitical evidence can reveal about this omission.

Significance of the study:

In line with the arguments and evidence, the current study may highlight and result in methods and possibilities for policy implementation. The legal and narrative framing of maritime politics is examined in this paper.

In addition to giving Pakistan the right, the split of the archipelagos will enhance Pakistan's economic and political standing as a member of the Indo-Pacific region. By expanding Pakistan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) to hundreds of square kilometers, the SLOCs would come under Pakistani influence, hence diminishing the Indo-U.S. domination, ultimately adding to the SLOCs' safety for global needs. The Indo-Pacific region's nuclear flashpoints, like Kashmir and Junagadh, can be resolved by completing the outstanding agenda.

Literature Review:

British Military Planning (June 1947): In a confidential report dated June 13, 1947, the Joint Planning Staff of the British Army cautioned that the Lakshadweep Islands were "sparsely populated coral strips" that would be "crucial for our air reinforcement and the support route to Australia, New Zealand, and the Far East" should Britain be unable to maintain its bases in India. At that time, the British Navy was unable to utilize the islands; however, if the successor states in India failed to ensure air facilities, Britain might have to depend on Ceylon, provided that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands could be kept out of Indian control. Consequently, Britain regarded both archipelagos as vital to its postwar strategic reach. In Indian national leadership, Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy, along with Pandit Nehru, sought to facilitate a smooth transfer of power and resisted British initiatives to divide any territories. Mountbatten later recalled that the separation of the islands would have "provoked violent opposition from all parts of India," which is why

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he chose not to publicly address the issue. Nehru argued that the islands' population in 1941 was roughly 34,000, with about two-thirds being non-Muslim (including Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, etc.), and asserted that they were strategically more significant to India due to the presence of richer communication lines in the vicinity. He noted that the islands were administratively associated with Calcutta's High Court and did not represent an "expressed wish" for Pakistan. The Indian leaders urged Mountbatten to confirm that the Andaman Islands would remain part of India, as outlined in Clause 2.

Hence, the legal framework of the study addresses the principles of state succession and administrative continuity upon independence. Moreover, the research examines the analytic hook; it deals with strategic communication on how and why these islands are absent or marginal in regional narratives, in contrast with highly visible disputes. Primary Legal Documents: Analyze the Indian Independence Act of 1947 along with the Government of India Acts to pinpoint provisions related to British Crown territories. Upon reviewing the colonial statutes and regulations governing Lakshadweep and the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, the administrative records indicate that the British India Office and the UK National Archives contain files from the Partition era. These include the Transfer of Power series, minutes from the British Cabinet, reports from the Joint Planning Staff (June 1947), and correspondence from the Viceroy's office regarding these islands.

Pakistan's claim: The All-India Muslim League vehemently objected. On July 5, 1947, Quaid-e-Azam Jinnah sent a letter to the British Secretary of State, voicing his worries that "Clause 2 of the India Independence Bill designates the Andaman and Nicobar Islands for the Dominion of India." Their sudden addition to India poses a significant problem. Jinnah emphasized that historically and geographically, these islands were never viewed as "part of India" (as they were British colonies) and claimed that "Pakistan's assertion for these islands is quite strong" since maritime routes were the sole means of connection between East and West Pakistan, rendering the islands essential for coaling and refueling. Representatives from Pakistan during the negotiations reaffirmed this position, warning that India might hinder overland troop movements, making the maritime routes via the Andaman crucial. They thought that the islands should be regarded as a shared "all-India" asset among the newly established dominions. In fact, Aquatint Ali Khan, who became Pakistan's Prime Minister after August 1947, later sought to reinforce Pakistan's claims Lakshadweep, and on 15 August 1947 (India's Independence Day), a Pakistani naval frigate came near Lakshadweep but withdrew when an Indian warship arrived.

Despite these challenges, the Mountbatten Plan, along with the legislation for Indian independence, ultimately designated both island groups to India. The British committee explored alternatives such as joint British-Indian governance and excluding certain islands; however, Mountbatten told Nehru that India would likely reject any special arrangements. In July 1947, he informally proposed that India lease the islands back to Britain for communication purposes, but Nehru did not agree. By August 4, 1947, the India and Burma Committee resolved against separating the islands due to concerns about the potential reaction from India. Consequently, when India achieved independence on August 15, 1947, the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands were assigned to India by default, despite written protests from Pakistani leaders and their contemplation of military actions.

Strategic and Geopolitical Sources:

In island geopolitics, it is imperative to study the Cold War and Indian Ocean strategic studies that shaped the direction of the Indian Ocean and Western Pacific regions during the forty-six years between the end of World War II and the collapse of the USSR in 1991 (Joshi, 2019). The Cold War

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conflict between the US and the USSR was evident in the Indian Ocean and Pacific regions, and European maritime power was declining across the Western Pacific and Indian Ocean basin. While Great Britain entered World War II as the naval hegemony dominating the Indian Ocean Basin, in the decades after World War II British national security policymakers had to adjust to a new, complex post-war international and military-technological environment (Joshi, 2019).

Similarly, much of the literature on the history of the Indian Ocean offers an extraneous perspective. In Europe and abroad, new goods have been introduced by maritime highways. The Mughal era's landward focus and abandonment of South Asia's huge coast laid the groundwork for foreign powers to entangle India. The machinations of the British Raj and the denial of the vitally important Andaman and Nicobar Islands to Pakistan were instrumental in turning the tide of post-independence history in India's favor (Safdar & Khan, 2021). However, Jinnah had earlier made a strong case for the two chains of islands to be given to Pakistan (Safdar & Khan, 2021). But Jinnah did not get much time to proceed with this case, as he died just after a year; Pakistan came into being; otherwise, he would have raised his voice to secure the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Later on, in the famous episode of December 1971, the U.S. Chief of Naval Operations had no clarity on the mission of his Carrier Task Force, USS Enterprise. However, Islamabad was kept in the dark, and an impression was created that assistance was on the way. In the twenty-first century, this ocean expanse once again came into the global spotlight, with power politics and competition for resources. (Safdar & Khan, 2021). However, nothing can alter the factual documentation that the Indian Independence Act, 1947, is a primary legal document that defines what goes to India or Pakistan. Only speeches and statements by Nehru and Patel in the Constituent Assembly Debates (1950) of India on making the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and other Union Territories an Indian-administered area, recorded in August 1949, also cannot make an illegal territory their haven. Moreover, one of the strongest pieces of evidence found in UK Parliamentary debates on the Indian Independence Bill in July 1947 records questions about these islands. The States Reorganization Act, 1956, underscores the legal outcome and formally created the Lakshadweep Union Territory. "There shall be formed a Union territory called Lakshadweep, Minicoy and Individual Islands" (Monika, 2017).

Henceforward, Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands joined independent India under the same Dominion-India settlement that established the two new states, according to the archival and legal evidence. All territories not explicitly designated for Pakistan or India were implicitly given to India by the Indian Independence Act of 1947. Both the United Kingdom's 1947 cabinet records and India's Constituent Assembly debates (1950) confirm that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were treated as a centrally administered Indian territory. The brief Pakistani interest in Lakshadweep in August 1947 was defused quickly by India's government and did not alter this legal outcome. Thus, contrary to some later claims, there was no outstanding legal dispute over these islands at Partition. Future work could explore how these cases have been interpreted in Pakistan's historiography, but the primary sources show that, in 1947–48, both island groups were integrated into India as uncontroversial parts of the inherited British Indian territory.

Research Methodology:

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) will be employed in the research while combining legal-historical analysis (documents, legal chronology) with historical critique, since the study deals with critical historiography, historical-legal analysis, and archival document review. The study uses comparative analysis of primary-source narratives. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) deals with

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relations of power and inequality in language. One of the main programmatic features and domains of enquiry of CDA, formulated by one of CDA's most prominent scholars, Norman Fairclough, is that it situates itself within the wider picture of a new critical paradigm development (Blommaert & Bulcaen, 2000). In the current research study, the study aims to present the wider picture of the maritime passage both in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean while critically discussing the legal status of these islands. Since the first research question deals with the legal-administrative status in 1947, it focuses on the Constitutional and legal history of decolonization; the formal transfer of sovereignty of islands under the 1947 framework. Moreover, question number two deals with narrative omissions & strategic context; it focuses on historiography and strategic analysis of partition: reasons for marginalizing these islands in mainstream discourse.

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) has become the general label for a special approach to the study of text and talk, emerging from critical linguistics and, in general, from a socio-politically conscious and oppositional way of investigating language, discourse, and communication (Dijk, 1995).

Findings & Discussion

The matter raised in this paper concerns the Lakshadweep Archipelago, which was the domain of Tipu Sultan; however, apart from the Indian National Congress-supported Red Cliff award, the British did not give Lakshadweep to Pakistan because of their enmity toward Tipu Sultan. Later, the Japanese-controlled Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago was given to the Indian National Army to fight against British Allies in World War II. It was again won by the British, and the share of the Andaman and Nicobar Archipelago was not given to Pakistan. Though the Andaman and Nicobar, being uninhabited, should have been equally divided between Pakistan and India. The present study tries to establish the fact that the Lakshadweep Archipelago was part of Pakistan, but was unjustly given to India. There is a discursive and analytical gap in how maritime peripheries were treated and later narrated. The historical-legal claim is that the Islands were "wrongly allocated" after 1947. The British allegedly retained control until 1950; India received them instead of Pakistan; from the normative angle, Pakistan should have received a share. Moreover, the Sea Corridor, East-West Pakistan connection, Indo-Pacific security relevance, and strategic importance are revealed by the strategic reasoning and claims of injustice and denial of rights.

The study's first research question's expected contribution clarifies an overlooked legal history: the islands, as British possessions, automatically acceded to India in 1947. It fills a gap in partition legal history by documenting how peripheral territories were handled. Mountbatten insisted on leaving the islands with India, while Pakistani negotiators insisted on sharing these islands; they were illegally integrated into India (Aldrich, 2005). The second and third research questions' expected contribution illuminates a "silent" dimension of partition, explaining why historians have largely ignored these cases. By foregrounding processing archival evidence of strategic interest, like Pakistan's attempted moves and the islands' postcolonial trajectory, it contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of partition's maritime geopolitical aspects.

Thus, the share of Andaman and Nicobar would have provided a Sea Corridor between East and West Pakistan. It must be noted that these islands were closer to Chittagong than any other port in the subcontinent; hence, they should have also been part of East Pakistan by the law of proximity as well. Since a request for a land corridor had already been denied. Pakistan must use all possible options to get its rights. Pakistani presence at these archipelagos will add to the security of the Indo-Pacific Region.

Moreover, Lakshadweep had more than 98 per cent Muslim population; hence, by all standards in accordance with the Independence Act of 1947, it is part of Pakistan.

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Limitations of the study:

The study was limited to evaluating the authenticity of Pakistan's claims because of its strategic silence. Further studies should be carried out to evaluate the option of giving Pakistan the right to the Archipelagos. This study should be shared and discussed at various opportunities to ascertain and adopt a course of action to get the archipelago rights for Pakistan, while raising awareness regarding Pakistani rights.

Conclusion

The study has opined that apart from these archipelagos, the English Colonial Masters, due to their relations with the Indian National Congress, unjustly denied the rights to Pakistan. Pakistan's share in the Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar Archipelagos was denied due to the conspiracy of the Indian National Congress and British Colonial Masters. The study reveals that there was a strong theoretical anchoring, and the subject explored original legal insights that link the history of Partition with maritime geopolitics and the strategic significance of island territories in the Indian Ocean. These archipelagos remained with India despite their strategic location and, in the case of Lakshadweep, a Muslim-majority population. The role of British authorities and the decisions made by Mountbatten significantly impacted the Partition plans and divisions.

The partition of the Andaman & Nicobar and Lakshadweep islands reveals how British imperial strategy and postcolonial state-building intersected in 1947. Legally, the islands fell under the same acts that divided British India, but geographically they might as well have been continents apart. Archival records show British planners wanted to detach them for strategic use, and Pakistani leaders staked claims based on contiguity and Muslim-majority arguments. India not only stopped those, but, considering their illegal occupation of the islands and to be cautious, the Indian Government quietly integrated those as Union Territories of Andaman and Nicobar in 1956, and Lakshadweep in 1956 without Pakistani consent.

However, historiography has paid little attention to these incidents. The islands were excluded from traditional histories, much like other peripheral partition concerns (in Assam, Tripitaka, or the boundary states). This "silence" is a reflection of power, and this claim faded as India rose to the side with the U.S. in the area. As a legacy of 1947, the Andaman and Lakshadweep remain India's strategic outposts. This study fills the gap in the partition narrative by reevaluating these settlements and acknowledging how maritime geography influenced South Asia's borders.

However, Pakistan's limited maritime capabilities and lack of political attention toward these islands at the time remained a hurdle in securing Pakistan's due rights. In contemporary geopolitics, these islands are of great importance in the Indian Ocean and Indo-Pacific strategy. Hence, receiving the Pakistani share will not only be vital for Pakistan but also for peace and tranquility in the entire Indian Ocean Region; therefore, Pakistan should adopt all possible options to secure its just rights.

Henceforth, these islands represent an overlooked or unfinished aspect of the subcontinent's territorial partition and a neglected chapter rather than a settled historical irrelevance. Understanding these territories enriches the broader narrative of Partition and postcolonial state formation. The article argues that the allocation and strategic implications of Lakshadweep and the Andaman-Nicobar archipelagos have received comparatively little scholarly attention within the broader historiography of Partition, making them an overlooked dimension of the territorial and maritime consequences of 1947.

In conclusion, the archival and legal evidence of the study reveals that Lakshadweep and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands entered independent India under the same Dominion-India settlement that created the two new states. The British India Act 1947 implicitly assigned all

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territories not specified for Pakistan to India. Both the United Kingdom's 1947 cabinet records and India's Constituent Assembly debates (1950) authorize that the Andaman and Nicobar Islands were treated as a centrally administered Indian territory. The brief Pakistani interest in Lakshadweep in August 1947 was defused quickly by India's government and did not alter this legal outcome. Thus, both island groups were integrated into India as uncontroversial parts of the inherited British Indian Empire. Contrary to some later claims, there was no outstanding legal dispute over these islands at Partition. Hence, future research work could explore how this case has been interpreted in Pakistan's history and how to get Pakistan its due and legal share.

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