

India-Pakistan Relationship From Realistic Perspectives

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Introduction

Understanding the Pakistan-India relationship involves complexities due to the adverse historical experiences and the perceptual lenses of individuals and institutions. To understand the relationship between the two countries, it is crucial to consider perspectives of realism and liberalism. The reality behind the relationship depends on extensive research for the relevant information. Re-examining assumptions of validity is also a matter of concern in the present research. The Rational Actor Model is incapable of explaining the behavior from a diverse perspective. International Relations Theory and belief systems held by political decision-makers influence the behaviors of the state. The belief system remains one of the dominant factors in the International Relations Theory. It defines the behaviors of political decision-makers and ruling elites. The belief system involves information related to the physical and social environment, and it also enables the preferences of individuals and institutions. Indo-Pak conflict uncovers the realistic constructivism as it prevailed between the countries since 1947. The realistic and constructive aspects lead to different interpretations and offer different explanations regarding the persistence of conflict (Michael, 2018).

Empirical Evidence

Samuel Barkin's theory explains the nature of the conflict between two countries and the factors contributing to that conflict. The prevalence of the conflict also affects the future relationship between the countries. Different analytical dimensions combined in constructivism also explain power structures and normative changes. The uneasy relationship between the two countries is the result of 1947's partition. The countries represent one of the longest interstate conflicts in the history of the world. Three major wars constituting the periods of 1947- 1965 and 1971 intensified the circumstances between the two nations. The bilateral politico-economic crisis also plays a significant role in promoting a conflicting situation between India and Pakistan. The mutually acceptable settlement of the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir resulted in increased tensions between the two nations. The national identities and religious beliefs of the countries also influence relationships between countries. Pakistan follows a non-secular Islamic identity, while India supports a secular identity. The conflict between the countries is also an outcome of nationalism and statehood. The political-realist approach of classic international relations focuses on power asymmetries and the crucial factors playing a significant role in the dispute between countries.

Reasons For Unresolved Conflict

The literature on the Pakistan-India rivalry under realist theory reveals several elements that make the issue unresolved. Paul (2016) determines the truncated power asymmetry between countries as the primary cause of conflict. Rivalries persist between status quo power, and challenger states becoming equal in capabilities at the local level. The inability of countries to overcome a history of war influences future relationships (Paul, 2006). Ahmed (2010) explores the factors contributing to the Pak-India conflicting relationship. Realism or rationalism is more effective in explaining the impact of historical factors on international relations. The study identifies the perceptions and belief systems as important indicate involved in shaping the relationships. The engagement of countries in maximizing behaviors and policy capacity remains a prominent defining factor (Ahmed, 2010). Waheed (2017) studied the role of International Theory in Pakistan's relationship with India. International relations in Pakistan rely on the realist tradition, while the evolutionary trajectory creates the vicious circle of knowledge reproduction. Pakistan state's sovereignty and security-related issues also influence its relationship with India. Evidence suggests that the rise of the military, nuclear transformations and combined security paranoia are significant factors contributing to the never-ending conflict. The study highlights the role of nuclear power and increased investments in the military in defining relationships between the countries (Waheed, 2017).

Paul (2006) uncovers the factors involved in the conflicting relationship between two rival countries, Pakistan and India. Various interstate crises and four wars remain prominent in enduring rivalries. The literature on enduring rivalries between the identified countries depicts unsettled territorial issues and political incompatibility as the prominent causes of rivalry. Different national identities due to the irreconcilable positions also influence the relationships between the countries. Inadequate trade activities between the countries also resulted in the persistence of never-ending rivalry. Peculiar power asymmetries between the states prevailing for over half a century made the elimination of rivalry impossible. The study identifies the truncated power asymmetry as a causal factor involved in the persistence of rivalry. Frameworks of global superiority and local party power existing between the antagonistic countries further intensify the situation of peace. The study views the elimination of war as impossible due to the unchanging attitudes of the state and political powers (Paul, 2006).

Soherwordi, Abbasi and Javed (2015) identified the factors responsible for the Pakistan-India conflict. Internal power struggles in the two countries influenced the relationship between rivals. Historic rivalry in the country started since partition that controls the role of governments. Antagonistic feelings against each other have a significant impact on relationships. Analysis of the internal and external factors depicts the role of political and economic factors in the relationship. The realistic perspective to understand the relationship between the countries relies on structuralism. Core elements of the structure are dominant in defining the relationship. The structures involve rules and conventions controlling human behavior.

The theory of structuralism is vital in understanding realism in international relations. Instability and

war are the results of human behaviors and poorly constituted state decisions leading to a never-ending dispute between the countries. The varying distribution of power across states and the anarchical international system remains another visible factor. Waltz (1998) considers the internal and external factors that are contributing to rivalry relationships. Formulation of the relationship between states depends on the balance of power and regional systems. Foreign policy and the Theory of Regional Politics explain the factors contributing to the decisions of the states. The structural imbalance between the two countries had a long-lasting impact on their relationships. The prominent internal factors causing the dispute between India and Pakistan include the unfair divide. The territory received by Pakistan was only 23 percent of the total territory. Pakistan celebrated partition as they gained independence, but for Indians, it was a moment of defeat. The segregation was against the Indian agenda as the state wanted to rule the sub-continent. The division between the countries resulted in increased tensions and rivalry.

Literary evidence identifies the Kashmir dispute as one of the prominent issues affecting the link between the two countries. The aspects associated with the sub-conflict of Kashmir remain one of the dangerous and critical issues in South Asia. Both countries reflected their concerns about integrating Kashmir into their territories. India considered the Kashmir conflict as a territorial issue. The Indian state also claimed that being a secular state, it is capable of absorbing many groups. They claimed that India is a secular state that would not influence the people or their religion. India also states that the region was the homeland of Indian leader Nehru, so they must get entitlement. Pakistan, on the contrary, used a two-nation theory to support the claim of gaining entitlement to the territory.

The theory mentioned that “the Hindus and Muslims are two separate nations who cannot live together and that the Muslims of the subcontinent cannot lead their lives in full accordance with their beliefs under Hindu domination. Indian control over Kashmir was problematic because it was the sole Muslim majority region that was not given to Pakistan” (Cheema, 2015). Kashmir had geographical importance for both countries, which increased tensions between India and Pakistan. The economic and strategic importance of the region made it more valuable for the two countries. The river links of Kashmir with Pakistan were another significant factor for the country as its economy relied on the agricultural sector. Pakistan’s concerns over water issues made the region more vital for the state. History depicts that the stance of both countries never ended the dispute. The Kashmir issue had profound impacts on the relationship between the countries, while the dialogues failed to present any solution. Non-flexible attitudes of political leaders further intensified the conditions (Cheema, 2015).

The growth in the economic, military and technological powers between rival countries Pakistan-India influenced their relationships. India’s increased spending on the military allowed it to build a strong military base. India’s strategic decision to strengthen relationships with neighboring countries, including China, resulted in continued tensions between India and Pakistan. The elements of economic and military developments created conditions that resulted in a strong geopolitical profile of the country. Enhanced nuclear capabilities constitute a dominant factor in distancing the two countries according to the theory of realism in international relations. The relationship between India and Pakistan is extremely unfriendly and unstable. India’s continuous efforts to expand nuclear

capabilities encouraged Pakistan to invest in nuclear weapons. The testing of nuclear weapons by both countries during the end of the twentieth century affected the geopolitical climate of the states. Both states identified the need to enhance self-defense and improve the state of security. Regional pressures were apparent in the strategy of expanding nuclear power.

The reason for both countries to develop nuclear bases was to survive in the competitive nuclearized Asia. The historical impacts of the three wars continued to define the relationships between the two countries. The diplomatic relationships between the states became inconsistent due to the hostile environment between India and Pakistan. India's claims regarding Pakistani terrorist attacks further discouraged the relationship between the countries. India stated that the reason for the establishment of military strategies was to aim at retaliation for larger attacks (Sajjanhar, 2016).

The theory of realism recognizes the struggles of two countries to attain a relative advantage over the military and nuclear capabilities. The survival of the states was dependent on their nuclear capabilities and weaponization. The diplomacy between the two countries provoked the states to use their military strengths to maintain pressure on the rival country. India involved the United States with the intention of declaring Pakistan a rogue state. The US imposed restraints on Pakistan in the 1990s that prevented India from engaging in war. The involvement of America resulted in an advantage for India that it used to deter the political situation in Pakistan. Diplomacy acted in favor of India as it helped it attain relative power over Pakistan in the military and diplomatic sense (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013).

The relationships of both countries with China also create tension between India and Pakistan. Realism is important in understanding the role of both country's relationship with China. The emergence of India as a global economy and nuclear doctrine made it a strong Asian country. The relationship of Pakistan with China relies on the mutual dispute that the countries face due to Indian diplomacy. Pakistan-China relationships emphasized strengthening the military power and enlarging nuclear capabilities. Military exercises, drills and the development of nuclear equipment remain prominent outcomes of their relationship. The relationships increased the geopolitical advantages for China and Pakistan, but it placed India in a challenging position.

The joint operation capabilities increased the rivalry as it opposed India. The joint forces and military power focused on minimizing the strength of India due to its highly developed nuclear state. The comparison of the three countries independently depicts that each state acted in its best interest to survive in the nuclear competitive region. China did not recognize India as a threat, as the entire focus of the state was on deterring Pakistan. India was always concerned about Pak-China relationships and considered it as an advantage for the rival state. The strong bond between China and Pakistan convinced India to search for geopolitical allies of all sorts. India's nuclear doctrine was the dominant factor that brought Pakistan and China closer. Under the lens of realism, the emphasis of India was on maximizing power against Pak-China friendship. India also assumed that a positive relationship with China provides the edge to Pakistan. The nuclear policies of India aimed at proving itself as a dominant power due to its nuclear capabilities and military strength (Goldstein &

Pevehouse, 2013).

India's economic stability made it a global power the strong economic state of India acted in its favor, allowing it to invest in military capabilities. The emergence of India, with its economic wealth and military capability, increased the state's power and threatened the security and defense of Pakistan. Realism theory suggests that the rival country takes essential steps to minimize external pressures. India's emergence as a global war motivated the Pakistani state to further expand its military base and nuclear capabilities. Increased investments of the Indian state in nuclear power also provoked Pakistani leaders to raise spending on nuclear capabilities. The world recognizes both nations as atomic powers capable of causing harm to each other. The evidence also suggests that the main reason that discourages the countries from engaging in the war-like situation is the nuclear strength. Each country is capable of causing destruction and loss to the rival, thus restricting them from making excessive use of force (Paul, 2006). The literature on the complex rivalry between two countries recognizes water disputes as a significant factor influencing long-term stability. India holds upstream positions in water that limits Pakistan's access to the water. India holds control over river water, which intensifies the relationship. India's control over the river water system increases tensions between countries. The topic is also prevalent in the peace discussion and is identified as an effective step for resolving conflict (Usman & Hussain, 2017).

Indo-Pak Peace Process

The two countries, throughout history, represented the model of hostility, reversion and mistrust. The history of states living against British colonialism also influences the relationships. Peace between the states remains one of the prerequisites for attaining stability and economic development in the Asian region. Several agreements between the countries of bilateral and multilateral nature aimed at normalizing the relationship between Pakistan and India. The political and bilateral issues never eliminated the tensions between the two states. The sense of insecurity and mistrust are the dominant forces controlling the elements of peace and prosperity. Global factors hinder the process of peace, removing the possibility of attaining a normalized relationship. Political agendas played a negative role in improving the relationship between the two countries. The most desirable trait for the elimination of tensions relies on the adoption of a people-centric approach. The studies on Pak-India relationships depict the significance of the people-centric approach as it leads to prosperity and betterment for the two countries. The realist paradigms of international relations recognize the Cold War since intolerance was the central cause of conflict. Khan (2012) identifies the reasons for tensions as "having been placed in opposite ideological blocks, India and Pakistan remained hostile to each other over numerous issues, indeed, one of the most critical but unresolved issues of contemporary international relations" (Khan, 2012). Peace and security are the two main issues that undermine the positive relationships between the rival countries.

Realistic perspectives on the relationship between Pakistan and India reveal the repercussions of cultural tensions prevailing since independence. Peace could bring relief to the populations of both

countries, as 27.3 percent of the people live in poverty and deprivation. The increased military budget is for enhancing internal security and maximizing defense. The major cause of strengthening military bases is the absence of peace and trust between countries. The failure of the South Asian Association for Regional Corporations (SAARC) is also due to the elements of mistrust and lack of understanding. Political influences affect the peace between states, which is a continuous process and demands consistency (Cheema, 2015).

Impact Of Strategic Culture On Indo-Pak Relations

The realistic perspective of international relations depicts the negative role of strategic culture between rival countries. The history reveals the desire of Muslims to maintain an independent identity in the Indian state. The Muslims and Hindus maintained different religious identities that also affected the relationship between two populations. The societal divergence between the two nations was the result of independence. India aimed at gaining dominance and making Pakistan subservient by manipulating economic power. Indians wanted to maintain their supremacy, which was unacceptable among Muslims. The two-nation theory presented by Pakistan also acted against the decision of India to make Kashmir its territory. United Nation's failure to resolve the dispute between countries of the subcontinent intensified the environment for Pakistan and India. The antagonistic cultures prevailing in both countries influenced the states and became visible at political and societal levels. Khan (2012) identifies, "a graver problem is the covert quasi-alliance that "hawks" on both sides establish by thriving on each other's prejudices. This has an impact on domestic politics in that the objective, value-neutral, apolitical commentary by hardliners reinforces if only unwittingly, reactionary forces in the polity. This can be witnessed on both sides of the border" (Khan, 2012). The culture plays a negative role as the new generations learn about the history of war and conflict. The wars are taught in the academic courses that influence the thinking and develop a hatred for rival countries. The realism perspective depicts that the hatred passes from ancestors to new generations when they learn about the disputed history (Sajjanhar, 2016).

Improving The Relationship Between Countries

The prospects of improving the relationship between rival countries depend on the strategy of nuclear deterrence and economic cooperation. Limited trade between Pakistan and India undermines the realistic incentives of eliminating rivalry. The involvement of countries in trade and infrastructure projects is an effective strategy for enhancing cooperation. The empirical evidence identifies minimal economic activities between countries as a prominent reason for rivalry. Enhancement of security remains one of the significant aspects of promoting a positive relationship between rival countries (Michael, 2018). Sridharan (2006) presented nuclear deterrence, and agreement of limiting expansions of nuclear capabilities can improve the relationship between two countries. Positive security spillovers are an effective strategy to minimize the threats associated with the use of nuclear capabilities (Sridharan, 2006). Elimination of the Pakistan-India security dilemma is the central factor

that can eliminate regional tensions. However, it remains a contemporary challenge for both countries due to their perceptions of mistrust. Resolving the Kashmir dispute and water crisis can also improve the relationship (Goldstein & Pevehouse, 2013).

Conclusion

The realistic perspective identifies the reasons for the Pakistan-India rivalry that are responsible for the relationships between the two countries. The common issues contributing to increased rivalry include the expansion of nuclear capabilities, the water crisis, the Kashmir dispute and the history of war. The study suggests that the main reason for the unchanging role of each country towards others is the historical impact of mistrust and security. Both states assume perceived security threats from their rivals due to the enhanced military base and well-established nuclear capabilities. The resolution of these issues is difficult until both countries give up their cultural strategies.

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