

# Student's Quarterly

Research  
& News

Centre for Public Policy and Governance

Forman Christian College (A Chartered University)

ISSN 2076-9997

Volume 53 Number 1  
January 2022

## Contents

From the Director's Desk	2
Editorial	
> What is wrong with the Single National Curriculum?	3
Articles	
> The Rise of Modi in Indian Politics	7
> Pakistan's Period Poverty	11
> Theatre Art Ventures in Lahore Amidst the Pandemic	14
> Political Stability in Afghanistan & Emerging Regional Alliances	16
Thesis Papers	
> The Dilemma of Dealing with Terrorism in Cyberspace and Peoples Digital Rights: A Case Study of Pakistan	23
> Media's Role in Conflict Resolution: Framing of Government-TTP Dialogue in the Editorials of English and Urdu Newspapers	29
> Managing Durand Line: Stakeholder Perspectives	35
In Conversation With	
> Mr. Danish Zakir, Deputy Secretary Services, Sindh	42
CPPG Events Overview	
> Why Think Tanks Matter: A Virtual Forum	44
> The CPEC's impact on Pakistan's Cultural Hybridization through Media	45
> Evidence Based Policymaking during Covid	46
> Contestations of Pakistani National Identity	46
Reviews and Recommendations	
> Book Review: Circular History of Pakistan	48
> Book Recommendation: World on Fire	50
Student and Alumni News	
> Student News	51
> Alumni News	52
Faculty & Staff	54
Contact Us	54

## Advisors

Saba Shahid  
Raheem ul Haque

## Editorial Board

Neha Malik  
Neesa Abbas  
Mansoor Ahmad



CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY  
AND GOVERNANCE

## From the Director's Desk

*It gives me pleasure to share with you that since 2008, we have been publishing the Quarterly Research & News magazine. Raheem ul Haque has been the dynamic team leader ably assisted by Saba Shahid, since 2016 while, I have played only the supervisory role. Over the years Quarterly has performed a very useful function of sharing the Centre's activities and views of our guest speakers, while occasionally publishing research articles, policy briefs and consultative dialogue reports.*

*Now, the CPPG faculty is ready to launch a policy research journal, regularize its Monograph series, and enhance the quality and contents of policy briefs and discussion papers. Therefore, we have decided that from this year the CPPG students will take charge of the Quarterly. In that spirit the current issue is edited and managed by the student editorial team comprising Neha Malik, Neesa Abbas and Mansoor Nahra, and supervised by Saba Shahid and Raheem ul Haque, both of whom have done an excellent job in advising and navigating this student-led initiative.*

*I want to underscore that this is a student-led initiative and reflects the vigor, dedication and a sense of purpose of the CPPG's MPhil students. In the coming months/years the Executive Masters and the PhD students will also join enthusiastically and contribute towards making the Quarterly a flag-bearer of students' voice and research. The faculty supervisor's role is to advise and oversee that Quarterly becomes a torchbearer to promote a culture of research, deliberation and tolerance of opposing views in an academic environment, where student's views and voices are respected. We hope that through this venture, the students of the CPPG will become the backbone of the FCC research community, enabling the faculty to consolidate the Think Tank functions of the CPPG. Please join me in congratulating the Quarterly's editorial team for making a daring new beginning. Any comments and critical feedback is welcome and will give the editorial team and contributors a sense of confidence.*

Dr. Saeed Shafqat

## From the Editorial Board

*Together the editorial team and advisors have brought together a diversity of content. We have tried to represent different areas of public policy from arts and culture to the importance of think tanks in the field of policy sciences.*

*We sincerely thank our Director and advisors for their guidance and support. We would also like to thank our contributors for working with us on this edition. We further invite MPhil scholars of social sciences to submit their Thesis Paper abstracts for publishing in the Quarterly.*



Neha Malik



Neesa Abbas



Mansoor Ahmad

## Editorial

# What is wrong with the Single National Curriculum?

### Introduction

The Single National Curriculum claims to be a uniform syllabus being taught across Pakistan in a strive of the PTI government to eliminate disparity and provide equal opportunities for children. This policy is being framed to develop till 2023 following the details; grades one to five till March 2021, six to eight till March 2022, and matric to intermediate in March 2023. Punjab has accepted this policy except for a few institutes in the province including Aitchison college. Other provinces are reluctant to adopt this policy, notably the Sindh government, which has argued that “federation allows provinces in education choices so, we will see whether to adopt it or not”. The Single National Curriculum (SNC) is an abrupt policy transition of the PTI government to bring equality in the education system while ignoring the aftereffects to the students learning in different educational structures. The current educational structure does not necessarily fit in with the SNC pedagogy and language of the provinces. With an ideological thrust of uniformity on SNC, flexibility to sustain contemporary standards of educational institutes is minimized. Moreover, it would not allow those, who can afford, to pursue better options. Furthermore, the younger generation would be alienated from the regional languages and their cultural significance because SNC can’t advertise the cultural context and languages of all provinces. SNC also has a stereotypical approach towards women based on their representation. In the science subjects the references of Islamic teachings could adversely affect the views of the non-muslim students. The existing gap between the two syllabuses SNC and previous needs to be filled first, before implementing such a wide-ranging policy. An SNC wouldn’t only affect the private sector’s education system but also the public school’s curriculum. Both sectors would equally suffer in order to transition to such a system. SNC possibly doesn’t present an accurate picture of our

diverse culture as each province has varied historic, linguistic and cultural significance and a single curriculum would not be able to cater to these variations. Additionally, there are concerns with respect to gender representations as the SNC takes a stereotypical approach towards women by often representing them as housewives.

While proponents of the SNC make a case that it will eliminate disparities by requiring all children in the country to read and learn the same material, this article argues that it SNC will likely contribute towards furthering socioeconomic disparities.

### Differing Capabilities

The SNC does not take into consideration the aspect of accessibility or differing capabilities of students. If a parent can afford a better education that develops their child’s intellectual capabilities, the SNC will stand as a hurdle. Schools may have different pedagogy and ideology that is not consistent with the SNC even if a child is capable and has the potential to do better. Infrastructural differences and access to learning tools also vary across the country, with some schools offering state of the art technology to its students. If a SNC is to be enforced, schools with access to these resources may not be able to utilize them for their students, working below their potential.

According to an ASER survey in 2019, out of total enrollment 77 % of children were enrolled in public schools. The survey further highlighted that children enrolled in private schools were having better academic performance than those enrolled in public schools.<sup>1</sup> The SNC instead of creating a positive impact will create a negative impact on the child’s future forcing him/her to abide by a uniform system. This would eventually stagnate the child’s growth and impact Pakistan’s human capital development. It also forbids a parent’s right to choose the education for their child which is problematic. According to Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and Article 18 (4) of the International

<sup>1</sup> Pakistan Economic Survey, 212

<sup>2</sup> Nida Usman Chaudhary, “SNC and Shrinking Provincial Policy Space,” *thenews* (The News International, June 20, 2021), <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/852104-snc-and-shrinking-provincial-policy-space>.

Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) state parties must respect parents' choice and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.<sup>2</sup>

Pakistan recognises and abides by these articles, but the SNC fails to take them into account.

Instead of forcing schools to adopt an SNC, a better policy option may be to enforce an outreach policy, whereby it is mandatory for high-tech, well-endowed schools to offer financial support to students from low-income backgrounds. This would help ameliorate inequalities in educational achievement and employment opportunities in the long run.

### Language and Culture

Language and culture are areas of child education that the SNC fails to cater to. Firstly, English is to be taught as a language, not as a subject; which means that not all courses will be taught in the English language. This may have consequences for students in higher education, given that higher education in Pakistan uses English as a medium and the current research, which feeds into our bachelors and post-graduate courses, is available in English. This will in turn affect the quality of research being produced within Pakistan as well and the competitiveness of our university students in the international job market. Another aspect is that regional languages and cultures are not taken into consideration. Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi are equally important. Why are they not being taught as subjects depending on the province in which the school is located? Each province has its blend of history, art, culture, and language. According to the 18th Amendment in the constitution of Pakistan, education is a provincial affair, allowing people to promote their language and culture through the education system. Yet the SNC conflicts with this right and poses a challenge to the provincial education departments.

### Analytical, Critical and Creative Thinking

Proponents of the SNC make the case about analytical, critical, and creative thinking as a key consideration during its design. If this is the case then the SNC will not be enough to make it come to reality. Factors such as school environment, pedagogy and evaluation methods, socioeconomic situation, parent's income level and education, home environment, and so on all have an impact on a child's capacity to think analytically, critically, and creatively. Moreover, gender disparity also contributes to analytical, critical and creative thinking in children.<sup>3</sup> Many researches have highlighted this factor, for instance Torrance<sup>4</sup> emphasizes that female students are more influenced by the environment they are surrounded by and Zetriuslita et al., also had similar conclusions in terms of critical thinking and creative thinking among male and female students.<sup>5</sup> The culture and environment available for female or male students depending on circumstances will also play a key role. Government along with implementation of SNC should take other factors into account and develop programs that could be of help. Like after school programs or workshops for teachers to play a role in this process. Therefore, the SNC should not be promoted as a solution to the interlinking factors that may affect a child's overall learning and educational outcomes.

### Conservative values

The incorporation of religion and reinforcement of patriarchal hegemony in the newly developed SNC has caused quite a stir amongst educationists, women and minority rights activists circles of Pakistan. A textual analysis carried out by The Current, a digital news outlet in Pakistan, showed that around 7.47%<sup>6</sup> references of Islam were made in non-religious books like Mathematics, Social studies, Urdu, Science and General knowledge designed according to the SNC. In the same report, it is mentioned that around 41.6%<sup>7</sup> of females shown in the books are wearing the hijab, a veil covering the head, which is worn by some Muslim women but not by the majority of the female popula-

<sup>3</sup> E. Paul Torrance, "FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVE THINKING IN CHILDREN: AN INTERIM RESEARCH REPORT." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development* 7, no. 3 (1961): 171–80. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23082724>.

<sup>4</sup> E. Paul Torrance, (1983). Status of creative women: Past, present, and future. *The Creative Child and Adult Quarterly*, 8 (3), 135-14

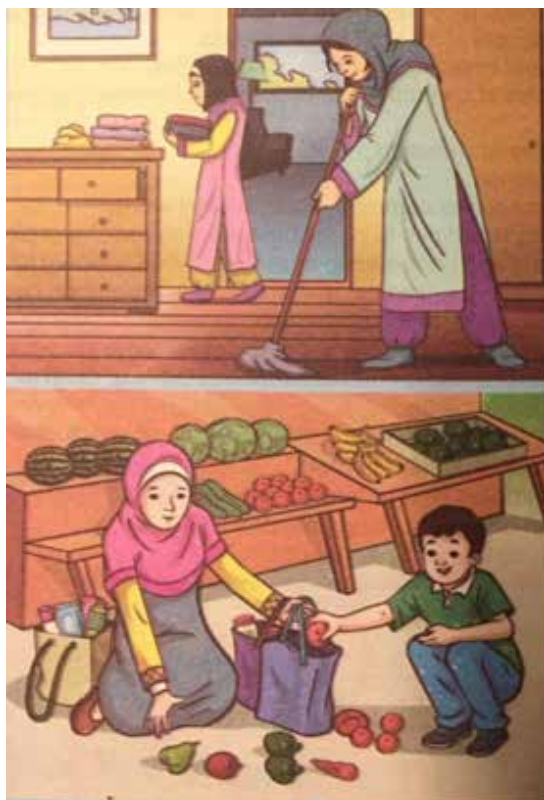
<sup>5</sup> H.J.Zetriuslita, Ariawan Rezi, and Nufus Hayatun, "Students' Critical Thinking Ability: Description Based on Academic Level and Gender." *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 12 (2016): 154-164.

<sup>6</sup> News Desk. "What is in the Single National Curriculum books? In-depth data analysis of the syllabus", The Current. (2021) [thecurrent.pk/in-depth-analysis-of-the-single-national-curriculum-what-is-in-the-books](http://thecurrent.pk/in-depth-analysis-of-the-single-national-curriculum-what-is-in-the-books)

<sup>7</sup> *ibid*



tion in Pakistan. Majority of the women that appear in the SNC designed textbook images are shown in subservient positions as compared to the men and are mostly seen doing domestic work or taking care of their families, internalizing gender roles in young minds from an early age.

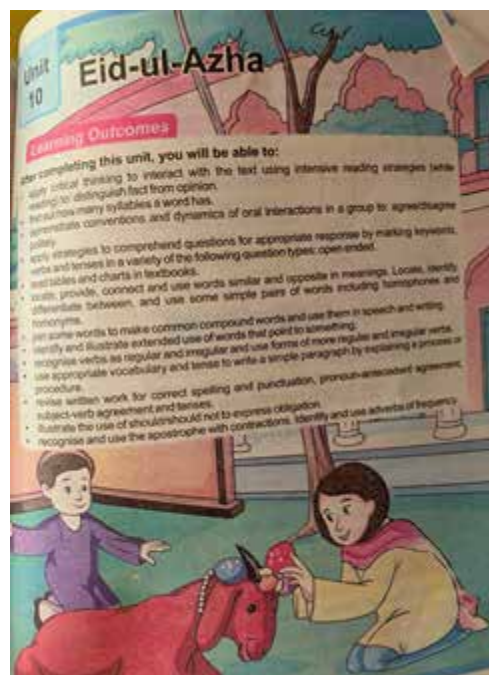


An Image from one of the textbooks published under SNC. Photo courtesy: The Current<sup>8</sup>

Hifz of Quranic Surahs and Hadith from class 1-8<sup>9</sup> has been made mandatory for all Muslim students according to the new guidelines for Islamic Studies. This not only forces religion, which is a private matter of each individual but also perpetuates a rote learning environment for students. These educational reforms are thus said to be mirroring President Zia ul Haq’s Islamization policy in the guise of national integration. In a country already plagued with religious extremism

and radicalization, the inculcation of conservative religious values at a very young age can lead to further radicalization of society. The texts pertaining to religion perpetuate the teachings of a single school of thought and lack religious inclusivity, failing to cater to other sects or faiths.

According to Article 22(1) of the Constitution of Pakistan, “No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instruction, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own.”<sup>10</sup> thus the inclusion of religious text in subjects like Science English or Social studies, which are taught to Muslim and non-Muslim students alike, is in direct conflict with the fundamental rights that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees non-Muslims citizens.



An image from an English Book with a chapter highlighting Eid-ul-Azha<sup>11</sup>, an Islamic event. Photo courtesy: Benazir Shah - @Benazir\_Shah /Twitter<sup>12</sup>

<sup>8</sup> ibid

<sup>9</sup> SNC. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan. (2021) <http://mofept.gov.pk/Detail/YzJiNGVjODgtNjIwOC00YzRiLThm-NmUtNjJyWlYmJkMWY2>

<sup>10</sup> Article 22(1). The Constitution of The Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (1973) <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>

<sup>11</sup> According to Muslim traditions, Eid ul Azha marks the day when Prophet Abraham presented his son Prophet Ishmael as an offering to God but God replaced his son with a lamb at the altar. As a remembrance of the act, well to do Muslims sacrifice goats, lambs, cows and camels to distribute amongst the poor and their family and friends. While the event principally fosters a sense of community, for students particularly belonging to the Hindu community, where cows are worshipped as deities, being forced to learn something against the religious values is not only insensitive but also unethical.

<sup>12</sup> Benazir Shah. *Twitter* (2021). [twitter.com/benazir\\_shah/status/1411219179131355138?lang=en](https://twitter.com/benazir_shah/status/1411219179131355138?lang=en)

## Conclusion

Several Surveys reflect the educational standard that could be dragged down by the SNC. The SNC policy has brought with it several gaps that remain unaddressed. Moreover, the education system's updation is a prerequisite to implement this structure; in the form of teacher training, countering cultural differences, providing equal opportunities to learn their regional languages and maintaining a standard for both private and public sectors. Pakistan has a rich cultural heritage and our cultural history is vibrant enough to teach the students about the history and culture of provinces rather than forcing one curriculum. The curriculum tilt towards a religion could raise extremism and can curb the democratic values. SNC must not be a tool of producing the same minds, instead a holistic, equality inducing education policy is needed that promotes critical thinking and innovation amongst students.

## Bibliography

Article 22(1). The Constitution of The Islamic Republic of Pakistan. (1973) <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/>

News Desk. "What is in the Single National Curriculum books? In-depth data analysis of the syllabus", The Current. (2021) <http://thecurrent.pk/in-depth-analysis-of-the-single-national-curriculum-what-is-in-the-books>

Shah, Benazir. Twitter (2021) [https://twitter.com/benazir\\_shah/status/1411219179131355138?lang=en](https://twitter.com/benazir_shah/status/1411219179131355138?lang=en)

SNC. Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan. (2021) <http://mofept.gov.pk/Detail/YzJiNGV-jODgtNjIwOC00YzRiLThmNmUtNjJjYWlwYmJkMWY2>

Chaudhary, Nida Usman (2021): „SNC and Shrinking Provincial Policy Space". *thenews*. The News International Retrieved am 01.12.2021 from <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/852104-snc-and-shrinking-provincial-policy-space>.

Torrance, E. Paul. "FACTORS AFFECTING CREATIVE THINKING IN CHILDREN: AN INTERIM RESEARCH REPORT." *Merrill-Palmer Quarterly of Behavior and Development* 7, no. 3 (1961): 171–80. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23082724>.

Torrance, E. P. "Status of creative women: Past, present, and future. *The Creative Child and Adult Quarterly*." 8 (3),(1983): 135-14

Zetriuslita, H. J., Rezi Ariawan, and Hayatun Nufus. "Students' Critical Thinking Ability: Description Based on Academic Level and Gender." *Journal of Education and Practice* 7, no. 12 (2016): 154-164.

## Articles

### The Rise of Modi in Indian Politics

by Neha Malik



Image Source: Pixabay

In recent years right-wing populist politicians and political groups have seen a significant increase in voter support. As a result, identity politics have become considerably more visible across the globe (Milner, 2018). India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who has the largest voting population in the world – is one such example. Modi's ascension into Indian politics has been attributed to three factors, his successful developmental thrust and policies as Chief Minister of Gujarat, the ineptitude of the previous government, and his strong connections and support base through the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In 2014, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), under the leadership of Narendra Modi secured majority seats in the lower house *Lok Sabha* and therefore formed the government. The BJP, as Adeney (2015) analyses, was quick to recognise and adapt to the ground realities of Indian politics (Adeney, 2015). For example, embracing federalism and accepting regional diversity to some extent (Adeney, 2015). Modi and BJP benefited from each other by exploiting the governance failures of the previous governments.

Modi's rise was a gradual process. He crafted his persona around strong narratives such as that of Hindu nationalism, making India an economic powerhouse, overcoming dynastic politics, and built a pan-Indian support base (Hinduism is a diverse religion, and much of this diversity manifests itself along regional lines) (Adeney, 2015 and Sinha, 2014). He used technocrats to further strengthen his narrative of Hindu nationalism, such as establishing the Chief Minister Office in Gujarat (Sinha, 2014). He very astutely exploited the growing anti-Muslim sentiments

and developed a sub-national identity of "Gujarat Asmita" (Sinha, 2014). Modi used an information-centric approach to target the BJP's weak organisational structure, making his speeches, trips, and activities public (Sinha, 2014). As a result, one can assert that Modi's image as a charismatic leader (Ammassari, 2018) was formed not only as a result of strong narratives that he adopted over time but also as a result of the incumbent dynastic politics, as Indian politics has long been a playground for families, with the Gandhi family and Congress serving as a prime example. His narrative against dynastic politics was central to building his persona. He claimed that for the past sixty years dynastic politics had been a threat to democracy and had caused inefficient resource mismanagement and corruption in the country (Tandon, 2021).

Many Indians embraced Modi's ideas because they were weary of dynasty politics' social distortions, and it was believed that 30% of ministers chosen were from the political family (Pandey, 2019 and Tandon, 2021). The following section will identify and analyse factors that led to his rise.

### Hindu Nationalism and Identity Politics

India is both culturally and ethnically diverse and therefore religion and identity play a central role in national politics. Previous governments, going as far back as the founding fathers, made numerous attempts to establish a secular state (Gettleman et al., 2019). Minorities were well represented in the assembly in the 1950s and 1970s, and Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act of 1951 prohibited any political campaign in the name of religion. Modi's nationalist narrative however diverted the public's attention from rational socio-economic issues towards identity politics of Hindu revival (Khokhar et al., 2019). The promotion of religious radicalism in the policy structure and forming anti-Muslim policies has been the source of inspiration for Hindu extremists (Islam, 2020). One of his prominent steps was the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 (Reuters, 2019). Another was removing personal laws for Muslims and Christians (Adeney, 2015).

Modi's attempt to build stability and become a source of national cohesion by deploying anti-Muslims, enforcing a curfew in Indian-occupied Kashmir, and modifying articles 375 and 35 A of the constitution gained him popularity

from the Hindu majority, but the parliamentary opposition grew stronger (Khokar et al., 2019).

### Reformist Policies

As noted above, Modi had been successful in introducing business-friendly reforms in Gujrat, therefore on becoming PM, he adopted a reformist posture and launched tax reforms. India has had a complex tax system and the tax was circumvented in numerous ways once the base failed to deliver the promised public revenues (Sharma, 2021). In 2017 Goods and Services Tax (GST) was implemented (Missaglia et al., 2018). The tax was designed to unite India's 1.3 billion people into a single market and to foster industrial development (Welle, 2018). In 2016 the "Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)" (Missaglia et al., 2018) was established. The rationale behind it was to provide assistance to defaulting companies, smoothen the Indian banking system to increase their capital base, and reduce the debt level in the economy as public banks own 70 % in loans and assets as compared to private banks.

Another reform was a step towards digital infrastructure. The demonetization of high-value currency notes increased the use of digital banking and digital transactions (Missaglia et al., 2018). The intention behind this was to reduce corruption and increase transparency and diligence and move towards establishing a modern economy (Aiyar, 2018). The reforms were favourable to the business sector since they relieved small enterprises of constraints, expanded the tax base, and improved government openness. The reforms benefited the formal economy that accounted for 15 % (Aiyar, 2018). In India, many are still dependent on the informal economy and cash transactions. The informal sector suffered, the job growth rate improved, but the quality of jobs among the educated unemployed remains an issue.

### Protectionist Policies

India is the fifth largest economy in the world with a GDP of \$ 2.87 trillion and a growth rate higher than 4% (Silver, 2021). Modi, though, did not lend support to protectionism on several occasions he criticised President Trump's measures to raise tariffs on Indian products, but he introduced several protectionist policies with the vision of India advancing its role in the Global Value Chain (GVC). His first one was the initiative of "Atmanirbhar Bharat"

(self-reliant India) to pace up India's development, create competitiveness in the industry and connection building in GVC (Singh, 2020). The government also increased tariffs to encourage local production and small businesses (Benniwal, 2020). The policies were against China and Chinese goods, oriented towards the private sector, and provided protection to small manufactures of electronic and consumer goods (Aiyar, 2018). "The Make in India" campaign was another successful policy measure taken (Aiyar, 2018). These policies attracted foreign investment and boosted the production in the domestic industry, leading to improvement in India's rank in the Ease of Doing Business Index (EDBI) (Aiyar, 2018 and Kapur, 2021). Meanwhile, Modi's constituency from the business community rose. These policies may help India's domestic industry, but would create several distortions for Indian products and in the GVC.

### Media & Modi

Modi is a media savvy politician. The BJP's information and technology department is incomparable to any other political party. A social media team of 11 people is assigned to each of the state's six zones. There are 11 members in each district, five in each mandal (a local government area i.e. tehsil or district), two in each ward, and five in each booth, the last point of contact with the electorate (Bansal, 2019). It was noted that Modi became the second most followed politician on Facebook in 2014 (Ali, 2014) and on Twitter after Trump (Bansal, 2019). Almost half a billion Indians have access to the Internet and 75 % of users are younger than the age of 35 (Bhansal, 2019 and Ali 2014). Manchanda has highlighted several incidents where the media deliberately played a role and BJP took advantage of the situation in shaping people's opinion about Hindu nationalism and promoting Modi's narrative. This eventually led to a polarisation of society and exacerbated ethnic hatred and minority suppression (Manchanda, 2002). The right-wing media campaigns used various social media platforms to create an ecosystem portraying Modi's image as the leader and conveying these messages especially to the youth (Marwaha, 2019). In the election of 2014, the median age of voters was 29 years (Marwaha, 2019). According to Marwaha, youth support is a critical aspect in Modi's rise since they see him as the only person who can fix societal problems, protect society from the threat of Pakistan, and pursue



his ambitious parliament agenda (Marhawa,2019). Bansal finds that social media has mastered the election campaigns. This has helped Modi mobilise his narratives to the masses (Bansal, 2019).

## Conclusion

Modi is an effective communicator, by invoking Hindu nationalism and rousing anti-Muslim sentiments he was able to highlight sensitive topics and gain sympathy from his Hindutva support base. When the plight of Gujarat Muslims gained attention in the aftermath of the Gujarat pogrom in 2002, Modi's contribution to Gujarat's economic development brushed the issue aside (Sinha, 2014). According to his narrative, any cacophony that occurs in society, the institutions, states, and people are to be blamed, not Modi because he had done everything he could and it's the institutions that had failed to live up to his vision. (Sharma et al., 2021). Modi does not stand alone, a similar case for Rodrigo Duterte from the Philippines (Sharma, 2021) and Boris Johnson from the UK was also observed (Williams, 2021). Modi has liberated the Hindu population of India through his policies. However, in the past two years the lure of Modi is fading away, as in the case of Mamata Banerjee's election victory in West Bengal in May 2021. Yet, his success in the states of Assam and Kerala proves that Modi can still reinvent and remodel himself as the leader to extend his stay in Indian Politics. The opposition is still weak and divided into regional politics. Now, all eyes are on the Uttar Pradesh election in 2022, which could be the real test, and decide the future of BJP and Modi's popularity.

## About the Author



*Neha is co-editor of the Student's Quarterly and an MPhil student at CPPG. Her research interests include globalisation, leadership, competitiveness, entrepreneurship, as well as innovation and institutions.*

## References

- Adeney, K. (2015). "A move to majoritarian nationalism? Challenges of representation in South Asia." *Representation*, 51(1),7–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00344893.2015.1026213>.
- Aiyar, S. S. A. (2018, October 18). India's New Protectionism Threatens Gains from Economic Reform. *Cato.org*. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.cato.org/policy-analysis/indias-new-protectionism-threatens-gains-economic-reform>.
- Ali, I. (2014). Social media played big role in India's Election. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from <https://www.voanews.com/silicon-valley-technology/social-media-played-big-role-indias-election>
- Ali, A. (2021, May 5). Pandemic second wave presents a moment of reckoning for modi – and Indian politics. Retrieved November 03, 2021, from <https://thediplomat.com/2021/05/pandemic-second-wave-presents-a-moment-of-reckoning-for-modi-and-indian-politics/>
- Image source: <https://pixabay.com/illustrations/narendra-modi-modi-2112081/>
- Baba, M. (2021). Modi's 'make in India' campaign lifts defense sector amid China row. *Nikkei Asia*. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://asia.nikkei.com/Business/Aerospace-Defense/Modi-s-Make-in-India-campaign-lifts-defense-sector-amid-China-row>.
- Bansal, S. (2019, June 19). How the BJP used technology to SECURE Modi's second win. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from <https://www>.

cigionline.org/articles/how-bjp-used-technology-secure-modis-second-win/

Calléja, L. (2020, February 14). The rise of populism: A threat to civil society? E-INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/02/09/the-rise-of-populism-a-threat-to-civil-society/>.

Dehejia, V. (2019, March 24). Opinion: Don't blame Donald Trump for Indian Protectionism. Retrieved September 30, 2021, from <https://www.livemint.com/opinion/columns/opinion-don-t-blame-donald-trump-for-indian-protectionism-1553451332297.html>

Gettleman, J., Schultz, K., Raj, S., & Kumar, H. (2019, April 11). Under Modi, a Hindu nationalist surge ... - The New York Times. The New York Times. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/04/11/world/asia/modi-india-elections.html>.

Islam, R. (2020, August 21). Hindu nationalism: A rise of new religious radicalism in India. Academia.edu. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from [https://www.academia.edu/43911975/HINDU\\_NATIONALISM\\_A\\_Rise\\_of\\_New\\_Religious\\_Radicalism\\_in\\_India](https://www.academia.edu/43911975/HINDU_NATIONALISM_A_Rise_of_New_Religious_Radicalism_in_India).

Khokhar, A., Ghaffar, T., Khan, R. S. J., & Yamin, T. (2019, December 29). Modi's identity RSS politics in Post-Secular India: A threat to peace. Strafasia. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://strafasia.com/modis-identity-politics-in-post-secular-india-a-threat-to-peace-in-south-asia/>.

Kothari, R. (1964). The Congress' System'in India. Asian survey, 1161-1173.

Manchanda, R. (2002). "Militarised Hindu Nationalism and the Mass Media: Shaping AHindutvpublic Discourse." South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies 25(3), 301-20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00856400208723504>.

Marwaha, V. (2019, May 24). Opinion | the secret behind millennial support for India's Modi. The Washington Post. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2019/05/24/secret-behind-millennial-support-indias-modi/>.

Milner, Helen V. "Globalization and its political consequences: the effects on party politics in the West." In Annual Meeting of the

American Political Science Association, Boston, August. 2018.

Missaglia, N., & Tramballi, U. (2018). India: The modi factor. Ledizioni. [https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/india\\_web1\\_4\\_1.pdf](https://www.ispionline.it/sites/default/files/pubblicazioni/india_web1_4_1.pdf)

Pandey, V. (2019, May 27). Has Narendra Modi ended dynastic politics in India? BBC News. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-india-48385611>.

Reuters. (2019, December 14). Explainer: What does India's new citizenship law mean? DAWN.COM. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://www.dawn.com/news/1522069#:~:text=A%20new%20Indian%20law%20that,has%20led%20to%20violent%20demonstrations>.

Sharma, M., Verma, A. M., Das, M., & Saran, S. (2020, September 11). Why modi remains world's most popular populist while Trump, Putin, Johnson Struggle. ThePrint. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://theprint.in/opinion/why-modi-remains-worlds-most-popular-populist-while-trump-putin-johnson-struggle/500241/>.

Silver, C. (2021, July 16). The top 25 economies in the world. Retrieved September 30, 2021, from <https://www.investopedia.com/insights/worlds-top-economies/#5-india>

Sinha, A. (2014, April 7). The making of Narendra Modi. Ballots & Bullets | School of Politics & International Relations, University of Nottingham. Retrieved November 18, 2021, from <https://nottspolitics.org/2014/04/08/the-making-of-narendra-modi/>.

Tandon, A. (2021, January 1). "Dynastic Politics Biggest Enemy of Democracy: Modi." Tribuneindia News Service. <https://www.tribuneindia.com/news/nation/dynastic-politics-biggest-enemy-of-democracy-modi-197402>.

Welle, D. (2018). Goods and Services Tax – how PM MODI Transformed India's Economy: DW: 28.08.2018. Retrieved August 12, 2021, from <https://www.dw.com/en/goods-and-services-tax-how-pm-modi-transformed-indias-economy/a-45256163>

Williams, Z. (2021, July 05). Boris Johnson ends COVID as a 'me problem' and makes it a 'you problem' | Zoe Williams. Retrieved

August 12, 2021, from <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/jul/05/boris-johnson-ends-covid-as-a-me-problem-and-makes-it-a-you-problem>.

## Pakistan's Period Poverty

By Neesa Abbas



Image Source: Pixabay

Female health and hygiene issues surrounding menstruation are a serious public health concern in Pakistan. Owing to the prevalent patriarchal culture and conservative mindset, female menstruation is often thought of as something unclean and dirty. Myths and taboos surrounding the issue make it impossible for it to be openly discussed and as a result, Pakistani women remain deprived of proper hygiene and menstrual education. In South Asia, 66%<sup>13</sup> of girls reported being unaware of menstruation before they experienced their first period. Period poverty in Pakistan is not only limited to financial accessibility to sanitary products but also extends to social poverty where women are deprived of opportunities to discuss their health problems and get educated about their bodies. Period poverty can thus be defined as the lack of access to sanitary products and the lack of awareness of menstrual hygiene education.

In urban and poverty-stricken rural areas alike, lack of awareness about Menstrual Hygiene Management (MHM) is a challenging issue. Women and young girls are not only misinformed about many issues regarding their periods but are also made to feel ashamed and embarrassed of discussing their issues openly.

Successive governments have also failed to make any significant changes in this regard since the issue has never

---

<sup>13</sup> Katharine Hanifen . “5 Facts About Menstrual Hygiene In South Asia.”, The Borgen Project. (2019) <https://borgenproject.org/5-facts-about-menstrual-hygiene-in-south-asia/>

been part of the mainstream public discourse and has been overlooked. Women make up half of Pakistan's current population; for them to contribute towards a better society, their health needs should be properly addressed. The following article aims to highlight how period poverty affects the lives of Pakistani women, especially young teenage girls and what potential measures the Pakistani government can pursue to alleviate period poverty in Pakistan.

## Factors affecting female livelihoods

### Mobility

Due to lack of proper menstrual hygiene products, the majority of women confine themselves to their homes or their rooms. Not having access to sanitary products like pads, tampons or menstrual cups, affects their mobility to a great extent. Often they become dependent on others for tasks they could otherwise carry out themselves. In a study carried out in urban Karachi, 60%<sup>14</sup> of the participants admitted to have avoided social interactions and limiting their movement during menstruation.

### Education

Countless young girls suffer academically because they are unable to afford sanitary pads or lack adequate knowledge about how to deal with symptoms that occur during the premenstrual and menstrual stage of their cycle, for instance, they would be unaware of what medication should be taken to alleviate menstrual cramps, in some cases, they might even be discouraged to do so as it would somehow make them less of a woman if they wouldn't withstand the pain. Thus for several days of the month, they are willing or unwilling compelled to stay away from their school, which has terrible implications on their academic learning and success.

### Health

Due to unhygienic practices of reusing dirty rags as alternatives to disposable products like pads or tampons leads to many vaginal infections in many girls and women. Uri-

nary Tract Infections (UTIs) can also be considered one of the common causes of infertility in many young women. If left untreated it can also lead to acute renal failure due to the body experiencing septic shock and resulting in death.

As a result of common misconceptions regarding menstruation, many girls also avoid taking bath during their days due to the fear of infertility, worsening their hygiene.

Many girls also suffer from iron deficiencies and undiagnosed anemia<sup>15</sup>, which can cause weakness and lethargy during their periods when they experience excessive flow. These issues can easily be cured with proper diagnosis and supplements.

## Measures to be undertaken

### Awareness campaigns

Awareness campaigns can play a very important role in ensuring that stigmas and misinformation around menstruation are eliminated and menstrual issues rather than being snubbed and dismissed become a part of public discourse.

UNICEF WASH, a program that ensures universal and affordable access to water, sanitation and hygiene and U-report, a social messaging tool and data collection system designed by UNICEF are actively working towards spreading awareness and knowledge through online live chat sessions where both men and women are encouraged to ask questions and share their experiences regarding menstruation.<sup>16</sup> According to a study carried out by U-report in Pakistan, 49%<sup>17</sup> young girls had no knowledge about menstruation prior to their first period.

The inclusion of menstrual issues and hygiene should be made a compulsory part of the curriculum for young girls and boys in schools and colleges. Instead of stigmatizing issues related to reproduction, sexual health and fertility, governments should encourage that these issues should be taught and talked about for the betterment of the

<sup>14</sup> Tazeen Saeed Ali & Syeda Naghma Rizvi. "Menstrual knowledge and practices of female adolescents in urban Karachi, Pakistan.", *Journal of Adolescence* 33(4), 0–541. (2010) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S014019710900075X>

<sup>15</sup> Tazeen Saeed Ali & Syeda Naghma Rizvi. "Menstrual knowledge and practices of female adolescents in urban Karachi, Pakistan.", *Journal of Adolescence* 33(4), 0–541. (2010) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S014019710900075X>

<sup>16</sup> Anushka Somani "Combating Period Poverty In Pakistan.", *The Borgen Project*. (2021) [borgenproject.org/period-poverty-in-pakistan/](https://borgenproject.org/period-poverty-in-pakistan/)

<sup>17</sup> Hira Hafeez-Ur- Rehman "U-Report Encourages Menstrual Health In Pakistan", UNICEF. (2017) [www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report/menstrual-hygiene-innovation-challenge-pakistan](http://www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report/menstrual-hygiene-innovation-challenge-pakistan)

society. And for this matter community leaders, especially religious leaders, can also be sought so that they can effectively engage with the people in their communities to promote healthy conversations regarding the issue.

### Sustainable products

Products like pads and tampons remain beyond the reach of many women due to financial constraints. These women mostly rely on using and reusing rags, towels or cheap cotton sheets which are friendlier on their pockets but remain a large concern in terms of hygiene. According to a study carried out by WaterAid, an international NGO working towards water and sanitation in Pakistan about 82% of girls interviewed used cotton cloth. In comparison, only 15% of the girls surveyed reported using sanitary pads.<sup>18</sup>

Educating women about hygienic measures that they can take in order to properly dispose off, sanitize and disinfect their choice of items can prove to be beneficial for them.

Menstrual cups, despite being a cheaper and more environmentally sustainable option, are not welcomed by many due to myths and taboos around them. Myths around them can only be dispelled through proper engagement with women. Through these engagements, they can be made aware of its use and its practicality while also having their religious and cultural concerns being addressed.

### Elimination of Tampon tax

Over the years feminine movements around the world are pushing towards tax exemptions for menstrual hygiene products. New Zealand recently passed a legislation that ensures access to free sanitary products around the country meanwhile in places like the United Kingdom and India tax reforms to eliminate tax on sanitary products were introduced to fight period poverty. The charity Bloody Good Period estimates the average lifetime cost of having a period amounts to £4,800<sup>19</sup> (Rs. 1118673.29) in the UK. For a developing country like Pakistan the costs can eas-

ily double up since most sanitary napkins in the market are imported and also subjected to multiple taxes. The government of Pakistan can abolish all taxes on sanitary products to bring the prices down for if not all then some consumers.

### Subsidised quality products

Access to quality menstrual hygiene products should be treated as a basic necessity for all women and not as a luxury that only a handful of the women population could afford. Supporting local manufacturing companies and ensuring the availability of menstrual products in all public buildings, schools and universities could make the lives of countless women and girls better.

### Conclusion

Period poverty is a prevalent yet an often neglected issue around the world. As of 2020, Pakistan's population is estimated to be around 220,892,331<sup>20</sup>, with women constituting 48.5%<sup>21</sup> of this estimate. With an ever-growing population Pakistan has done very little in terms of addressing female health and hygiene issues surrounding menstruation. With the ongoing pandemic, the financial situation of many households has worsened, with many people having been laid off from their jobs. In today's age, women and men need to contribute equally towards the well-being of their households and the community at large. Women still remain a largely untapped resource in terms of Pakistan's workforce. Period poverty affects women from both a financial and a societal point of view. While mitigating period poverty might not undo all the obstacles and problems women face but it can surely help in empowering them to gain a certain autonomy in their lives. To curb the issue, the conversation around periods needs to become part of the public discourse, only then could it be ensured that women in Pakistan have access to adequate information about MHM and menstrual products. By utilizing technology and framing progressive policies, government and citizens alike, can work toward eradicating period poverty in Pakistan.

<sup>18</sup> Cécile Laborderie, Deepa Shakia & Rehana Shaikh. "Ensuring girls' rights through school-based WASH and improved menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Nepal and Pakistan.", *WaterAid*. (2018) <https://www.wateraid.org/pk/sites/g/files/jkxooof326/files/end-review-report-pakistanpdf.pdf>

<sup>19</sup> Period Poverty: "What Is It & How Can We Help?", *Yoppie*. <https://yoppie.com/period-poverty>

<sup>20</sup> Total Population, Pakistan. *The World Bank*. (2021) [data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PK](https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PK)

<sup>21</sup> *ibid*



## About the Author



Neesa Abbas is co-editor of *Student's Quarterly* and is currently a student of MPhil Public Policy at CPPG. Her research interests include identity politics, social activism, institutional reforms, and women & minority rights.

## Bibliography

Ali, Tazeen S. & Syeda Nagma Rizvi. "Menstrual knowledge and practices of female adolescents in urban Karachi, Pakistan.", *Journal of Adolescence* 33(4), 0–541. (2010) <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S014019710900075X>

Hafeez-Ur- Rehman, Hira. "U-Report Encourages Menstrual Health In Pakistan", *UNICEF*. (2017) [www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report/menstrual-hygiene-innovation-challenge-pakistan](http://www.unicef.org/innovation/U-Report/menstrual-hygiene-innovation-challenge-pakistan)

Hanifen, Katharine. "5 Facts About Menstrual Hygiene In South Asia.", *The Borgen Project*. (2019) <https://borgenproject.org/5-facts-about-menstrual-hygiene-in-south-asia/>

Laborderie, Cécile & Deepa Shakia & Rehana Shaikh. "Ensuring girls' rights through school-based WASH and improved menstrual hygiene management (MHM) in Nepal and Pakistan.", *WaterAid*. (2018) <https://www.wateraid.org/pk/sites/g/files/jkxooof326/files/end-review-report--pakistanpdf.pdf>

Period Poverty: What Is It & How Can We Help? <https://yoppie.com/period-poverty>

Somani, Anushka. "Combating Period Poverty In Pakistan.", *The Borgen Project*. (2021) [borgenproject.org/period-poverty-in-pakistan/](http://borgenproject.org/period-poverty-in-pakistan/)

Total Population, Pakistan. *The World Bank*. (2021) [data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PK](http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.POP.TOTL?locations=PK)

## Theatre Art Ventures in Lahore Amidst the Pandemic

A case of Ajoka Theatre and Olomopolo Media  
By Ibra Ammad

The Coronavirus pandemic has triggered a worldwide economic downturn, forcing many entertainment ventures to shut down or suffer significant losses. This includes the theatre community, which faced financial constraints as well. This article pictures the tangible losses and intangible gains of the art-theatre community of Lahore amidst the pandemic. The article also calls attention to the government for financial support, acceptability, and representation of art to the masses in Pakistan, which the art theatre community in Pakistan has long been denied.

Theatre opens the door to the idea of spiritual, creative, and emotional nourishment. The perception of spirituality is often confused in Pakistan. The power of self-expression that the theatre community endorses, may sometimes be seen as being at odds with the more traditional aspects of our culture. Yet, the acceptance of the theatre community is a step further for opening doors for innovation, creativity, and critical thinking in Pakistan. These ventures can become a significant asset for the prosperity of Pakistan.



Source: Instagram @ib.rudim

<sup>22</sup>“Pakistan GDP Growth Rate 1961-2021”. Macrotrends.net. <https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/PAK/pakistan/gdp-growth-rate>.

The organisations consulted for the study include; Olomopolo Media and The Ajoka Theatre. Both ventures have created a safe space in Lahore to celebrate theatre and have pledged to foster performing arts in several ways. Olomopolo Media is a cultural and social innovation media and art management society founded in 2013 that gives space for individuals, performing art groups and other media related organisations to present their work at their premises. The Ajoka Theatre, is one of the oldest founded theatre institutes of Lahore, and it centers itself as a non-profit organisation that welcomes artists with open arms.

Theatre-related art ventures in Lahore have faced several challenges for the past two years.

The pandemic's critical impact on these stakeholders resulted in a significant transformation in the workplace environment, such that nearly two years after the pandemic, the institutes are still adjusting to the new ways of work. Everything at their premises was shut, which meant the events that had to take place in March 2020 also had to be postponed. Events such as open theatre nights, film screenings, documentary workshops, regular drum circles, and folk diaries hosted at the Olomopolo Media, had to be indefinitely delayed, which meant high financial losses. From consistently hosting events above the count of hundred and fifty, Olomopolo could only manage two to three, including the globally celebrated event, 'White Rabbit Red Rabbit' signifying the commemoration of art institutes due to the pandemic. The Banned Book Week' was conducted in the last week of September after one whole year of consistent lockdowns. Similarly, the Ajoka Theater intended to introduce new courses and plays. A play based on the life of human rights campaigner Asma Jehangir, "Saira and Maira," and with the collaboration of a Swedish Theatre Group, another event on the education activist Malala Yousafzai was to be held, but the COVID outbreak became a serious impediment.

Notably, art institutes in Pakistan have been challenged enough already in terms of consumer outreach and fi-

nances. Moreover, teaching and practising arts, especially the performing arts, through virtual platforms has become a serious challenge, 'There was no guidance or precedence'-<sup>23</sup> said Nirvaan Nadeem, founder of Ajoka Theatre. Exploring digital mediums gradually and thoroughly, the institutes started expanding their activities in the digital realm. The response from the digital platforms was immensely unexpected. The communications among the stakeholders improved as people engaged from all over the world. The diversity was such that 'An actress in Texas was performing live with an actor in Gujranwala'- Nirvaan Nadeem<sup>24</sup>. As a result, virtual theatres were established. Olomopolo Media too had strong engagement with audiences online, providing them a safe venue to showcase their art virtually.

Due to the nature of organisations, financial prospects for non-profit organisations such as the Ajoka Theatre were limited. In addition to the financial challenges amidst the pandemic, theatre art organisations had faced obstacles from the government multiple times before the Covid-19 pandemic, where their performances and events were frequently banned or censored.

Vicky Zhunag Yi-Yin, founder-director of Olomopolo media, discussed how the thought of being an artist contains zero value and perhaps is a 'non-essential' profession in Pakistan.<sup>25</sup> She further shared the experience of hosting an event on 'sex education' at a school. The event left many parents satisfied with the idea of endorsing sex education as a subject rather than exposing children to unacceptable sources. As a result, raising awareness about specific topics has the potential to change narratives and increase acceptance of subjects that may be culturally triggering to the masses. People will more likely develop the nerve and tolerance for the performing arts if its importance is stressed. In the case of Pakistan, it is essential to emphasise the possible societal transformations that theatre arts might offer.

Potentially effective ways of highlighting the importance of theatre arts in Pakistan include: raising awareness

<sup>23</sup> Nirvaan Nadeem, Whatsapp call with author, September 13, 2021.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid

<sup>25</sup> Vicky Zhuang Yi-Yin, Zoom call with author, September 13, 2021.

about the importance of theatre arts, providing a safe space for institutions to practice openly and fearlessly, providing a financial hand to institutions, particularly during the Covid-19 outbreak, and introducing literary courses about theatre arts in schools, colleges, and other significant institutions.

Theatre art needs to be secured and revived in a country like Pakistan as this will also help us challenge the prejudices surrounding our culture, which is in fact diverse and boasts an ocean of talent and creativity. A significant proportion of our population has no means of expanding their creative and innovative potential. Theatre and art groups have a role to play in helping people, particularly the youth, gain insight into how the performing arts and other artistic expressions can help them develop skills such as public speaking, self-expression, creativity and problem-solving abilities--all of which are assets to any economy and society.

### About the Author



*Ibra is an MPhil student at CPPG. Her curiosity regarding confined practices of arts in Pakistan inspires her to investigate the power of performance arts; and how it can help solve the problematic patriarchal structure and counter violence against women in Pakistan.*

## Political Stability in Afghanistan & Emerging Regional Alliances

By Saad Malik

After the USA's unceremonious exit from Afghanistan following a long, tiring and fruitless war, a political and diplomatic vacuum may add to an already volatile situation. This concerns the immediate neighbors and regional powers in particular, and world powers in general. To fill this void and to guard their interests, regional players and international powers have stepped in. This all may lead to the emergence of new blocs and regional alliances with the USA and India on one side and Pakistan, China, Iran and Russia on the other side with Turkey playing the role of a mediator and facilitator in order to safeguard its economic, political, and security interests (Sakhi & Pforzheimer, 2021).

There is a political vacuum in Afghanistan leading to regional players and international powers thinking about the region's future to safeguard their interests. There is also uncertainty concerning the impact on Pakistan's security and stability (economic as well as political), along with some optimism that a stable Afghanistan under the Taliban will contribute to a peaceful western border. It is also hoped that the Taliban will fulfill its promises of forming an inclusive government, giving the Afghan population due rights like freedom of expression and civil liberties to women and minorities to an extent that becomes acceptable to the international community, and they will eventually be recognized as a legitimate government (Ashraf 2021).

Right now, it is in the interest of Pakistan, China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, and the USA (to be debated) to have a politically stable Afghanistan because of various reasons like threats from Al-Qaeda, ISIS, TTP, East Turkmenistan Islamic Movement (ETIM), Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU), Jundullah, and other extremist and terrorist groups. The spillover effects on neighboring countries may include the disruption of CPEC, sectarianism, extremism, and terrorism. That's why all the above mentioned states have sought assurances from the Taliban to not allow Afghan soil for terrorism against other countries (Noorani 2021).

Experts believe that when the US realized that it cannot win this war, instead of negotiating a political settlement involving all stakeholders, it decided to leave Afghanistan in chaos to keep the region unstable and turbulent to counter China's influence (Khalek 2021). This is evident in the verbiage of the Doha deal which repeatedly mentioned the Taliban as someone the US did not recognize while at the same time stated and that the Taliban would not let Afghan soil to be used against the US and her allies (State 2020) The way the US directly initiated peace talks with the Taliban under President Trump, also created a sense of betrayal in the minds of the ruling Afghan government. Few even term it as Zalmay Khalilzad's coup against Ashraf Ghani's government since they both have a rivalrous background since their university days (Khalek 2021).

At the time of US withdrawal, almost all neighbors and regional powers had concerns in terms of terrorism, drugs, weapons, and a refugee crisis. These concerns continue to persist and can only be mitigated if a stable government is formed in Kabul. Given the current situation in Afghanistan after the Taliban takeover, the crisis situation can also be transformed into an opportunity if the US and regional players can devise a common strategy to root out terrorism and extremism. It is said that the enemy of the enemy is a friend. Right now, Al-Qaeda, TTP, ISKP (Islamic State of Khorasan Province), IMU, ETIM, Jandullah are common threats to the USA, Pakistan, Iran, Central Asian Republics (CARS), Russia, and China. The Taliban has time and again committed in the Doha Accord and after taking over the reins of Afghanistan that it will not allow Afghan soil to be used against other states. So instead of repeating the mistakes of the 1990s and 2000s of not engaging with the Taliban diplomatically and not recognizing them as a stakeholder, it is time to correct past mistakes and fight against the common enemies which do not include the Taliban government (Dar 2021).

However, evolution of a common strategy may be wishful thinking given regional and international rivalries. Thus, we also need to take into account divergent interests and state rivalries which may give rise to competing regional blocs.

During the last twenty years Pakistan has suffered from terrorism by entities like Al-Qaida, Tehrik-e-Taliban-Paki-

stan (TTP), Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) etc. which resulted in the loss of innocent lives and an economic meltdown. The environment was ripe for extremism and gave space to sectarian outfits that targeted minorities.

Pakistan's fear of India using Afghan soil to spread terrorism in former Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and Baluchistan through TTP, and additionally, former Afghan government's backing of nationalist Pashtuns against the state has been neutralized. On the other hand, there is a lot to be negotiated like the mechanism to deal with the TTP, the presence of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and, the issue of Durrand line (Khan 2021).

Iran can cooperate with the Taliban to protect the minority Hazaras in Afghanistan (Ali, Afghanistan: Proxy Conflicts 2021). Chabahar port can also be connected to China through Afghanistan. China wants greater connectivity towards CARs through Afghanistan. Central Asian states want to have greater access in the region to exploit their untapped resources. Projects like Turkmenistan Afghanistan Pakistan India (TAPI) gas pipeline and CASA-1000 will benefit a number of countries (Parwani 2021).

USA's exit from Afghanistan is the event Russia was looking forward to since a long time. The events which took place during the Cold War like the first Afghan war furthered the disintegration of USSR leading to a unipolar world. Russia lost its superpower status and remained merely a spectator afterwards. After decades Russia has found an opportunity to assume a dominant role in the region. So, it wants to contribute towards a stable Afghanistan under the Taliban Government because of multiple factors. Firstly, it sees USA's exit as an end to its regional hegemony and wants to assume the role of a security guarantor for CARs. Secondly, it fears ISIS might collaborate with other terrorist groups and use Afghan soil to spread terrorism in CARs which might pose a threat to Russia in the near future. In case of civil war, the flow of drugs and refugees is another concern. Therefore, Russia has sought assurances from the Taliban which include distancing itself from the terrorist groups and secure the borders (Fisher & Stanzel, 2021).

China also sees USA's exit as an end to the latter's dominance in the region. Keeping in view the diplomatic

engagement with the Taliban in recent years and particularly after its takeover of Kabul, it wants to use this opportunity for taking forward its economic ambitions by extending the Belt and Road Initiative towards CARs. It wants to explore the mineral resources in Afghanistan. Most importantly, it wants to stop the terrorists from inciting any violence by using Uyghurs Muslims in Xinjiang province. For that China has asked for assurances from the Taliban to keep the Wakhan border secure and to achieve the above mentioned objectives. Like Russia, China is also concerned with the flow of refugees and drugs in case of unrest in Afghanistan (Fisher & Stanzel, 2021).

Here, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) led by China intends to play a constructive role too. Recently, Iran was given full membership in SCO after 15 years, and it was stressed upon that member states should guide Afghanistan to stability by encouraging smooth political transition and ensuring an inclusive government to pave the way for moderate internal and external policies (Fathi 2021).

Turkey also has stakes in war torn Afghanistan owing to the investments it has made, ongoing projects and the presence of its citizens. It has an interest in protecting the Afghan Uzbeks because of their historical cultural ties with Turkey. Hosting of Afghan warlord Dostum of Uzbek origin was something the Taliban was not comfortable with. Turkey was seen as a supporter of the Afghan government in the past two decades and also maintained a non-combat NATO presence. This has created a trust deficit (Saifullah 2017). But, Turkey along with Qatar is close to making a deal with the Taliban to secure Kabul's airport which is in their mutual interest. An operational and secure air corridor is really important for Turkey to secure its interests and connect Afghanistan with the world. The reason being a secure Kabul airport will ensure smooth diplomatic missions of which NATO may be a part of in the future. This will in turn mend Turkey's ties with NATO which were strained because of the S-400 missile system it bought from Russia. Thus, if a deal is brokered, it will be a win-win situation for both Turkey and the Taliban. Turkey will be able to present a softer and moderate image of the Taliban which will pave the way for the latter's international recognition and legitimacy. Turkey will be able to improve its relations with NATO and other

western allies by acting as a bridge between Afghanistan and the West (Basit & Ahmed, 2021).

Logically, the role Turkey wants to play is supposed to be played by Pakistan. Instead Pakistan, a key US ally during the Cold War, in the Afghan Jihad in the decade of 80s and in the War on Terror stands as the most discredited state by her perceived support to the extremists and terrorists who harmed Western interests in Afghanistan. The USA takes Pakistan as a country responsible for her defeat in Afghanistan. Pakistan through diplomacy should improve its international image and emerge as a bridge between Afghanistan and the West just like it did in 1971 between China and USA when President Yahya Khan facilitated a meeting between the then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger and the Chinese government. Pakistan needs to be aggressive in her diplomacy (Desk 2021).

As far as Indian interests in the region are concerned, we have to look into the role its consulates are playing. They are aggressively using economic diplomacy, development and community engagement at the sub-national level to fulfill their foreign policy objectives which include becoming a hegemon or policeman of South Asia. So the way they invested in Afghanistan by engaging in cultural diplomacy, maintaining liaison with the Afghan government and minority Afghan groups and by undertaking infrastructure development projects (Xavier & Nayar, 2021), the Taliban takeover has been a huge blow to its investments (Ali 2021). This is because in all these years India maintained a hard anti-Taliban posture projecting them as the proxy of Pakistan. That's why they had to immediately close their missions after 15th August 2021.

To assess USA's role and how it will act after being defeated badly in Afghanistan, we can take a cue from President Biden's speech at the climate conference in Paris where he countered China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) terming it hazardous to the environment and hinted at funding environment-friendly initiatives instead. This can be one way of countering China's influence instead of going for armed conflicts to achieve hegemony (Lee 2021). Further, his recent statement of ending the USA's role of nation building across the world through military might indicates a change in US foreign policy (Rashid 2021). It is therefore in the interest of all the regional players to



prevent Afghanistan from plunging into another civil war because if it does, this will have serious repercussions for the neighbors who have suffered since long. There still exists a fear till a stable inclusive government is formed there. In this context, the visit by Pakistan's spy master, Lt Gen Faiz holds importance (Ashraf 2021).

In the wider interest of the region in general and Afghanistan in particular, the Taliban must be assisted in achieving political stability and economic prosperity. The Taliban will have to cooperate with the world and fulfill its promises in order to be recognized as a legitimate government because this will pave the way for cooperation with the West which will be instrumental in providing economic aid (Baluch 2021).

After the US withdrawal, there are a lot of challenges ahead for the Afghan Taliban which includes counter terrorism. To gain international support Taliban will have to project a softer image and come out as a changed entity as compared to its previous stint in power. In doing so it might face backlash from terrorist groups like Al-Qaida, ISKP and, other hardliners and the group might even face defections from within. If the Taliban do not act against the terrorists, it will again face international isolation which also became the reason for post 9/11 US invasion of Afghanistan (Ullman 2021).

In this tricky situation, prospects of engagement between the US and Taliban increase since there is a short history of cooperation between the two on combating ISKP in the provinces of Kunar and Nangarhar. So, this common threat can bring these two together at least in fighting terrorism which can in turn add stability to the unpredictable and volatile situation. Moreover, there is another issue of countering narcotics that both can work on (Threlkeld 2021).

On the other hand, the way the USA, NATO, and India backed Afghan government and Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) collapsed, there is a question whether they will opt for constructive engagement through non-military means or again initiate a proxy by arming and funding various ethnic groups and factions of the former Northern Alliance to counter Pakistan and China's influence in the region? It is yet to be seen but

keeping in view the ground realities and the role of Russia in restricting Central Asian Republics (CARs) from being used for this purpose, it is highly unlikely (Sehgal 2021). Either India can accept the reality of Pakistan and China in the region and can continue with its development projects as proposed by the Taliban or continue to support and fund ethnic minority warlords against the Taliban. Here the joint statement in the last QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) meeting holds importance. QUAD is a strategic alliance between the USA, India, Japan and Australia. It has reiterated its concerns regarding Afghanistan being used for cross border terrorism and has denounced support for proxies and any kind of military, logistic, and financial support to them (Lakshman 2021). Whether Afghanistan will again become a proxy for regional and superpowers is yet to be seen. Will this situation lead to another civil war or towards greater cooperation and stability? In both cases the emergence of another bloc consisting of the USA and India seems to be on the cards.

There are few policies and interests where international and regional players converge and diverge. Both SCO and QUAD called for the formation of an inclusive government in Afghanistan in their respective meetings. This is a policy where both the alliances converge in spite of all the rivalries. Economic dominance in the region is a point of divergence between China and the US. As far as regional players are concerned and if we particularly talk of an anticipated alliance consisting of Pakistan, Russian, Iran, and China, it was thought they will recognize the Taliban government right away paving the way for their international recognition but keeping in view the concerns they have with the Taliban, this did not happen. Pakistan along with China has the greatest stakes as far as stability in Afghanistan is concerned since CPEC/BRI is dependent on it. Then there are issues which are becoming a reason for divergence amongst the member states of this emerging alliance. Russia is critical of China's influence over CARs, similarly China is uncomfortable with a possible Russia-India strategic alliance (WISHNICK 2021). Iran had been apprehensive of the alleged Pakistan backing of the Taliban against former Northern Alliance and also absence of her proxies from the newly formed Taliban government.

It is evident from the above discussion that there are two emerging alliances after the USA's exit from Afghanistan.

One consists of China, Pakistan, Russia and Iran and the other constitutes Quad countries. The former countries are eyeing regional dominance in anticipation of an emerging multipolar world. For that they are consolidating their strategic and diplomatic ties through different bilateral and multilateral forums. Regional integration through CPEC like projects is another common interest. There is a strong realization that an unstable Afghanistan will make their borders insecure, will spread terrorism and make it extremely difficult to manage the turbulent region. Keeping in view the interests of the first alliance, it is evident that they all want a stable Afghanistan under Taliban government while influencing them to fulfill their commitments to the international community. So to ensure the dominance of this alliance, the Taliban will have to honor their commitments to gain international legitimacy.

On the other hand, the way the USA abruptly exited from Afghanistan ending its two decade occupation, it has a strong need to regain its dominance in the region to counter this new emerging alliance which can prove to be a threat to the hegemony of India in South Asia and USA's status of a sole super power ruling a unipolar world. Both the USA and India are dependent on each other to achieve their objectives. QUAD can play a role in the realization of these ambitions.

## About the Author



Saad is a CPPG Mphil alumnus from the 2014–16 cohort. He is currently a lecturer at the University of Management Technology's (UMT) Department of Political Science & International Relations (DPSIR). His research interests are in Afghanistan: shifting geopolitical situations and regional impacts.

## Bibliography

Agency, Anadolu. 2021. *Analysis: Tajikistan to host summits of regional players to discuss Afghanistan*. September 13. Accessed September 15, 2021. <https://www.pakistantoday.com.pk/2021/09/13/analysis-tajikistan-to-host-summits-of-regional-players-to-discuss-afghanistan/>.

Aikins, Matthieu. 2014. *Afghanistan: The Making of a Narco State*. December 4. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/8/2/why-is-turkey-eager-to-remain-in-afghanistan-after-the-us-exit>.

Ali, Nawazish. 2021. *Afghanistan: Proxy Conflicts*. September 22. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/819382/afghanistan-proxy-conflicts/>.

—. 2021. *Kashmir – Spillover beyond Afghanistan*. September 8. Accessed September 8, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/813342/kashmir-spillover-beyond-afghanistan/>.

ANI. 2021. *Close Sino-Russian coordination on Afghanistan, a surprising development since end of Cold War*. November 9. Accessed November 2021, 2021. <https://www.aninews.in/news/world/us/close-sino-russian-coordination-on-afghanistan-a-surprising-development-since-end-of-cold-war-expert20211109205653/>.

Ashraf, Malik Muhammad. 2021. *Challenges Faced by the Taliban*. September 8. Accessed September 8, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/813339/challenges-faced-by-the-taliban/>.

—. 2021. *Engaging Taliban for Inclusive Government*. September 28. Accessed September 28, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/822027/engaging-taliban-for-inclusive-government/>.

Basit, Abdul, and Zahid Shahab Ahmed. "Why Turkey Wants to Be in Charge of Securing Kabul Airport." *Politics | Al Jazeera*. Al Jazeera, August 2, 2021. <https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/8/2/why-is-turkey-eager-to-remain-in-afghanistan-after-the-us-exit>.

Baluch, Ambassador G Rasool. 2021. *Challenges for Afghanistan under Taliban Rule*. September 9. Accessed September 9, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/813816/challenges-for-afghanistan-under-taliban-rule/>.

Xavier, Constantino and Nitika Nayar. 2021. *India's New Consulates and Subnational Diplomacy in South Asia*. August 31. Accessed Sep-

- tember 5, 2021. <https://southasianvoices.org/indias-new-consulates-and-subnational-diplomacy-in-south-asia/>.
- Cordesman, Anthony H. 2021. *Afghanistan: Too Much Is Enough*. April 13. Accessed oct 5, 2021. <https://www.csis.org/analysis/afghanistan-too-much-enough>.
- Dar, U K. 2021. *Post-US Afghanistan*. August 31. Accessed August 31, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/809935/post-us-afghanistan/>.
- Desk, News. 2021. *Kissinger appreciates Pakistan's key-role in establishing China-US ties*. March 22. Accessed September 22, 2021. <https://www.globalvillagespace.com/kissinger-appreciates-pakistan-key-role-in-establishing-china-us-ties/>.
- Fathi, Nazila. 2021. *What will SCO membership mean for Iran?* September 28. Accessed September 28, 2021. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/what-will-sco-membership-mean-iran>.
- Ferrie, Jared. 2018. *Human trafficking on the rise in Afghanistan despite new laws*. April 3. Accessed October 17, 2021. <https://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/human-trafficking-rise-afghanistan-despite-new-laws>.
- Group, Afghanistan Study. 2021. *Afghanistan Study Group Final Report: A Pathway for Peace in Afghanistan*. News Report, Washington DC: United State Institute of Peace.
- Hannah, Harry. 2021. *Looking in the Rearview Mirror\* of the Afghanistan War*. August 25. Accessed September 26, 2021. <https://southasianvoices.org/looking-in-the-rear-view-mirror-of-the-afghanistan-war/>.
- Hill, Ian. 2021. *Afghanistan: Russia faces its own risks and uncertainty*. August 10. Accessed August 20, 2021. <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/afghanistan-russia-faces-its-own-risks-and-uncertainty>.
- Khalek, Rania. 2021. *US Pours Gasoline on Afghan Conflict on Its Way Out*. June 05. Accessed August 1, 2021. <https://www.breakthrough-news.org/post/us-pours-gasoline-on-afghan-conflict-on-its-way-out>.
- Khan, Muhammad Hunain. 2021. *Navigating Afghanistan's Political Crisis*. August 28. Accessed August 28, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/808832/navigating-afghanistans-political-crisis/>.
- Lakshman, Sriram. 2021. *Quad to deepen counter-terrorism in Afghanistan*. September 25. Accessed September 30, 2021. [https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/quad-leaders-denounce-use-of-terrorist-proxies-in-south-asia/article36662353.ece?\\_\\_cf\\_chl\\_captcha\\_tk\\_\\_=hhMSPqabRLQk1Kzz6.9T\\_QKJ6nY4FhFyBsBeXmKpTKI-1636719319-0-gaNycGzNF2U](https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/quad-leaders-denounce-use-of-terrorist-proxies-in-south-asia/article36662353.ece?__cf_chl_captcha_tk__=hhMSPqabRLQk1Kzz6.9T_QKJ6nY4FhFyBsBeXmKpTKI-1636719319-0-gaNycGzNF2U).
- Lee, Yen Nee. 2021. *Biden's focus on climate change could turn up the pressure on China's mega infrastructure program*. January 14. Accessed August 28, 2021. <https://www.cbc.com/2021/01/14/climate-change-biden-could-up-pressure-on-chinas-belt-and-road-initiative.html>.
- Myers, Meghann. 2021. *Afghanistan war cost more than \$2T and 240,000 lives, report finds*. April 16. Accessed September 11, 2021. <https://www.militarytimes.com/news/your-military/2021/04/16/afghanistan-war-cost-more-than-2t-and-240000-lives-report-finds/>.
- News, Tolo. 2021. *Blast Targets Nangarhar Mosque, Casualties Reported*. TOLO News.
- Nilofar Sakhi, Annie Pforzheimer. 2021. *Missing the bigger implications of US withdrawal from Afghanistan*. July 29. Accessed August 31, 2021. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/missing-bigger-implications-us-withdrawal-afghanistan>.
- Noorani, Sikandar. 2021. *Changing Scenario in Afghanistan*. September 1. Accessed September 1, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/810323/changing-scenario-in-afghanistan/>.
- Parwani, Soraya. 2021. *The TAPI Pipeline in Post-U.S. Withdrawal Afghanistan*. July 12. Accessed September 1, 2021. <https://southasianvoices.org/the-tapi-pipeline-in-post-u-s-withdrawal-afghanistan/>.
- Ramani, Samuel. 2021. *Balancing ties, Russia expands Afghanistan cooperation with both India and Pakistan*. September 13. Accessed September 27, 2021. <https://www.mei.edu/publications/balancing-ties-russia-expands-afghanistan-cooperation-both-india-and-pakistan>.
- Rashid, Dr Qaisar. 2021. *Joe Biden's Doctrine: Ending International Liberalism*. September 25. Accessed September 25, 2021. <https://www.futuredirections.org.au/publication/joe-bidens-doctrine-ending-international-liberalism/>.

- Sabine Fischer, Angela Stanzel. 2021. *Afghanistan: The West Fails – a Win for China and Russia?* September 22. Accessed September 26, 2021. <https://www.swp-berlin.org/en/publication/afghanistan-the-west-fails-a-win-for-china-and-russia>.
- Sahinkaya, Ezel. 2021. *Erdogan Reiterates Interest in Securing Kabul Airport, Faces Criticism*. August 21. Accessed August 29, 2021. <https://www.voanews.com/a/us-afghanistan-troop-withdrawal-erdogan-reiterates-interest-securing-kabul-airport-faces-criticism/6209814.html>.
- Saifullah, Masood. 2017. *Is Turkey's Erdogan seeking a leading role in Afghanistan?* July 6. Accessed September 1, 2021. <https://www.dw.com/en/is-turkeys-erdogan-seeking-a-leading-role-in-afghanistan/a-39575830>.
- Schwartz, H. Andrew. n.d. *Central for strategic and Et International Studies*.
- Sehgal, Ikram. 2021. *The Panjshir Bluff*. August 27. Accessed August 27, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/808293/the-panjshir-bluff/>.
- State, US Department of. 2020. "Joint Declaration between the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the United States of America." *US Department of State*. February 29. Accessed September 7, 2021. <https://www.state.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/02.29.20-US-Afghanistan-Joint-Declaration.pdf>.
- Threlkeld, Elizabeth. 2021. *The Limits of Leverage in Taliban-Led Afghanistan*. August 24. Accessed August 24, 2021. <https://southasianvoices.org/the-limits-of-leverage-in-taliban-led-afghanistan/>.
- Trigunaya, Anil. 2021. *On Afghanistan Et China-Pakistan, Is Quad Becoming a Lost Cause?* Sep 18. Accessed Sep 25, 2021. <https://www.thequint.com/voices/opinion/on-afghanistan-china-pak-is-quad-becoming-a-lost-cause>.
- Ullman, Harlan. 2021. *The Real Nightmare: Afghanistan a Failed State*. September 6. Accessed September 6, 2021. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/812454/the-real-nightmare-afghanistan-a-failed-state/>.
- Whitlock, Craig. 2019. *THE AFGHANISTAN PAPERS A secret history of the war*. December 9. Accessed October 10, 2021. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2019/investigations/afghanistan-papers/afghanistan-war-confidential-documents/>.
- Wishnick, Elizabeth. 2021. *PROSPECTS FOR SINO-RUSSIAN COORDINATION IN AFGHANISTAN*. November 08. Accessed November 10, 2021. <https://warontherocks.com/2021/11/prospects-for-sino-russian-coordination-in-afghanistan/>.

## Thesis Papers

*These papers have been submitted by scholars who received the Mphil Thesis Grant under the USIP's 'Institutional Development in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution Program'. Over the course of their research, scholars received feedback and guidance from the CPPG faculty in addition to their university supervisors, and were asked to submit a short paper at the completion of their thesis.*

### The Dilemma of Dealing with Terrorism in Cyberspace and Peoples Digital Rights: A Case Study of Pakistan

By Talal Raza

MPhil National Defense University 2017

#### Introduction:

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center transformed the world in many ways – one of them being that states began to opt for a series of legal and executive measures as part of the global "War on Terror". Some of these measures included collecting a huge amount of personal data and information to ensure that states would be in a better position to preempt any new terrorist attempt.

Pakistan was no exception to this changing security environment. It supported the NATO alliance in counter terror operations against Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan. Later it also began to crackdown on home-grown terrorist groups through a series of executive and legal measures to fight terrorism. For instance, it launched a number of military operations in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and destroyed terrorist training camps and hideouts; hunted down terrorists in urban areas through intelligence-based operations; seized hate material; and banned firebrand clerics from promoting sectarianism. The legal measures taken in this regard include (but are not limited to) amending the Anti-Terror Act (ATA) 1997, passing a new National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2014, and

giving sweeping powers to the military under the Protection of Pakistan Act (POPA) 2014.

The rise of internet penetration also meant changing dynamics of terrorism. Although there have not been any major cyber terror attacks in Pakistan till date, terrorist presence on the internet was too significant to ignore; the cyberspace continues to provide an avenue for disseminating propaganda and to reach out to potential recruits by both the named and unnamed terrorist outfits. Thus the Pakistani government extended counter-terrorism efforts into digital space. It first promulgated the Electronic Transaction Ordinance 2002 and later, the Prevention of Electronic Crime Ordinance 2007 which criminalized damage to information systems and cyber terrorism.<sup>26</sup> Further, the Pakistan People's Party government enacted the Fair Trial Act 2013 the purpose of which was to be able to acquire warrants for digital surveillance of terrorism suspects.<sup>27</sup>

However, it was only after the Army Public School (APS) Peshawar attack which shook the nation, that a robust counter-terror strategy under the National Action Plan (NAP) was devised. Some of the measures included removal of moratorium on the death penalty, establishment of military courts and revival of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA).<sup>28</sup> With respect to cyberspace, a subcommittee on internet/social media chaired by the Interior Minister was established<sup>29</sup>; articles specifically dealing with hate speech in online spaces and cyber terrorism were introduced within the Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA); and, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) blocked 5078 anti-state and 1894 hate speech-related web pages/links to date.<sup>30</sup> Further, the government has either acquired or are in the process of acquiring software that will allow increased digital surveillance.<sup>31</sup>

However, according to an investigation conducted by The Dawn newspaper in 2017, 43 out of 64 proscribed organizations still had a presence on Facebook.<sup>32</sup> There

<sup>26</sup> Herald, "Surf safely: Evolution of Cyberspace Laws in Pakistan," *Herald.dawn.com*, May 10, 2016, accessed January 10, 2017, <http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153380>.

<sup>27</sup> Waqas Mir, *Digital Surveillance Laws in Pakistan: A White Paper* by Digital Rights Foundation (Lahore: Digital Rights Foundation, 2014).

<sup>28</sup> Irfan Haider, "Terrorists operating 3000 Websites to propagate Agenda in Pakistan," *Dawn.com*, August 14, 2015, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1200276>.

<sup>29</sup> Azam Khan and Aamir Saeed, "Fighting Terror: Institutional Structur in the Context of NAP," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 7, no.2 (Spring 2015): 29-38.

<sup>30</sup> Ramsha Jahangir, "Pakistan's online clampdown," *Dawn.com*, October 28, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1441927/pakistans-online-clampdown>.

<sup>31</sup> Jahanzaib Haque, *Pakistan's Internet Landscape 2016*.

<sup>32</sup> Jahanzaib Haque & Omer Bashir, "Banned outfits in Pakistan operate openly on Facebook", *Dawn.com*, May 30, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335561/banned-outfits-in-pakistan-operate-openly-on-facebook>.



have also been reports that banned organizations had taken to social media to make appeals for animal hides' collection during Eid-ul-Azha.<sup>33</sup> This was in the midst of a government ban on proscribed organizations from collecting hides since their sale was an important source of funding for them. Although the government has tried to take down websites and Facebook pages of banned organizations, these re-emerge and continue to operate with impunity, thereby disseminating "hate material" and propaganda. In 2013, the government took down Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan's (TTP) social media page "Umar Media". However, it re-emerged within a few days. As of today, this page still exists. In fact, TTP also continues to post its press release over a Wordpress blog. Similarly, many social media accounts and web pages attributed to groups such as Baloch Republican Army, Hizb ut Tahrir et al., continue to be present. The Pakistani cyber security regime is quite weak when it comes to dealing with such emerging threats. According to the United Nations Agency on Information and Communication Technologies called International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Pakistan ranks even below Afghanistan when it comes to having robust cyber security readiness.<sup>34</sup> Furthermore, officials have acknowledged that there is no clear policy to battle terrorism in cyberspace.<sup>35</sup>

That said, lumping together of cybercrimes with terrorism in PECA, coupled with lack of transparency in digital surveillance of terror suspects, gives the state a carte blanche to obfuscate political and progressive voices in cyberspace.<sup>36</sup> Such measures have drawn criticism from rights activists on the grounds that they infringe upon digital rights (civil liberties in cyberspace) and violate constitutional as well as international rights of Pakistani citizens. Unfortunately, the successive governments' reluctance to take on board rights groups begs the question whether rights activists and government can ever reach a consensus.

This paper tries to understand the gap between the government and rights groups by exploring: what constitutes terrorism in cyberspace according to Pakistani legal regimes; what legal and executive measures have been taken to curb it and do these measures infringe upon the digital rights of Pakistani citizens? In light of the findings, it tries to answer how digital rights of Pakistani citizens can be preserved while curbing the menace of terrorism in cyberspace.

To explore the above questions, multiple sources have been used including newspaper articles, books, research papers, and Government and NGO reports. Sixteen in depth interviews were conducted including six government officials from the Ministry of IT, Ministry of Interior, Pakistan Telecommunication Authority, Federal Investigative Agency and Punjab Information Technology Board; six rights activists from renowned NGOs including Bytes for All Pakistan and Digital Rights Foundation. Further two lawyers with ICT expertise, a security expert and a journalist were also interviewed.

### Conceptual Framework:

Discussions at a global level with respect to the citizen's digital rights have broadly drawn a consensus on universal right to: have access to the internet; exercise the freedoms of association, assembly and expression in cyberspace; and privacy. These rights have been recognized by multiple resolutions passed in the United Nations Human Rights Council.<sup>37</sup> Further, efforts are also being made to re-interpret the traditional human rights frameworks, covenants et al. that have long been universally recognized.<sup>38</sup>

All discussions pertaining to digital and human rights should be linked with the human security framework as it gives room to go beyond the silos of the physical and digital realm and form a more holistic outlook. In short, the question of digital rights should be understood within the context of physical wellbeing of citizens.

<sup>33</sup> Jawad Awan, "Banned Organizations to go Online to Collect Hides," *The Nation*, September 21, 2015, <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/21-Sep-2015/banned-organisations-go-online-to-collect-hides>.

<sup>34</sup> Talal Raza, "Use of Facebook by Ethnonationalist Groups from Pakistan," *The May 18 Memorial Foundation*. Accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.518.org>

<sup>35</sup> Jahanzaib Haque, *Pakistan's Internet Landscape 2016: A Report by Bytes for All, Pakistan* (Islamabad: Bytes for All, Pakistan, 2016).

<sup>36</sup> Shahid, Kunwar. "Cybersecurity Work in Progress...: An Analysis of Pakistan's Cybersecurity Dilemma." *MIT Technology Review Pakistan* 2, no.2 (April 2016): 26-31 ; Verda Munir. "The Debate on Cybercrimes Law: A Study of the Proposed Law and the Way Forward." *MIT Technology Review Pakistan* 2, no.2 (2016): 32-37.

<sup>37</sup> James Vincent, "UN condemns internet access disruption as a human rights violation," *The Verge*, July 04, 2016, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.theverge.com/2016/7/4/12092740/un-resolution-condemns-disrupting-internet-access>; Article 19, "UN HRC maintains consensus on Internet resolution," July 09, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.article19.org/resources/un-hrc-maintains-consensus-on-internet-resolution>.

<sup>38</sup> Global Network Initiative, "Principles," accessed December 25, 2016, <https://globalnetworkinitiative.org/principles/index.php> ; Kimberly Carlson, "Necessary and Proportionate: International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance," accessed January 19, 2017: 1-15, <https://necessaryand-proportionate.org/july-2013-version-international-principles-application-human-rights-communications-surveillance>.

The concept of human security as proposed by the United Nations in 1992 emphasizes measures to enhance the overall wellbeing of the inhabitants of a state in addition to safeguarding its borders. It comprises seven elements including economic, food, health, and environmental, personal, community and political security.

Even though the Human Security model was proposed at a time when threats emanating out of cyberspace had not been envisioned by the proponents, these elements of the human security framework can be extended to cyberspace as well. For instance, the right to freedom of expression and freedom of association and assembly, which are a part of political security, apply as much to cyberspace as to physical space. Similarly, theft of USB containing sensitive information not only poses a threat to one's privacy and personal security but can potentially affect health security. Hate speech perpetuated by sectarian groups on social media can pose a threat to a person or community's security.

It can therefore be argued that a state's counter cyber terror and cybercrime methodology should be assessed in light of digital rights and human security frameworks as some of these interventions may have adverse implications for the human security of the population.

## Pakistan's Terrorism Framework in Cyberspace

**Definition:** This study has analyzed the 1997 Anti-Terrorism Act, and the 2016 Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act to identify the contours of terrorism in cyberspace. Although these laws do not explicitly define terrorism in cyberspace, they have incorporated punishments to deal with acts of terror online. Accordingly, the actions that could fall within the ambit of terror in cyberspace include all actions that: instill fear in government, public or any community or group; damage critical infrastructure (e.g. NADRA database); glorify any terrorist or proscribed organization or their activities using an information system or electronic device; spread hatred against a sect, ethnicity or religion using any software, system or electronic device;

and motivate other people through any software, system or electronic device to fund, join or plan terrorist activities.

**Legal Framework:** There are a number of existing laws that can potentially deal with the issue of terrorism over the internet. For instance, the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC), 1860. Although the PPC does not explicitly spell out provisions against terrorism over the internet, its hate speech clauses have been invoked to register cases against people for propagating hate speech online.<sup>39</sup>

The language of Anti-Terrorism Act, 1997 (ATA) is broad enough to be used in instances of hate speech over the internet and has been evoked on multiple occasions.<sup>40</sup>

The Fair Trial Act, 2013 (FTA) allows the government to carry out electronic surveillance (including email, Internet) of people suspected of terrorism related activity. According to FTA, if an officer of a law enforcement agency is suspicious that anyone might be committing acts of terror, he/she can file an application with his departmental head along with all relevant documents and proofs. The departmental head will review the application and send it to the Minister of Interior. The Minister of Interior will approve the application after reviewing it. There is hardly any chance of rejection if the application is coming from the powerful intelligence agencies. After its approval, the officer will submit the application to the High Court judge in secret chambers, who may issue the warrant after ascertaining the case on its merit. Even though the warrant is issued for a duration of sixty days, there is no bar as to the number of times a warrant can be issued against the same application.<sup>41</sup> There is no existing record of how many warrants have been issued under the FTA thus far. Further, it has been established from different sources that government institutions have the capacity to carry out widespread surveillance which can allow them to track emails, Whatsapp, Viber call data et al.<sup>42</sup>

The Pakistan Electronic Crimes Act (PECA) 2016 is the only law that explicitly recognizes the threat of terrorism over

<sup>39</sup> Ministry of Interior Government of Pakistan, *Annex Z: Historical Overview: Counter Terrorism Laws in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Ministry of Interior Government of Pakistan, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> "Anti terrorism act," *The Parliament of Pakistan*

<sup>41</sup> Parliament of Pakistan, *The Gazette of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Parliament of Pakistan, 2013)

<sup>42</sup> Jahanzaib Haque, "Customer 32-Who used Finfisher to Spy in Pakistan?," *Dawn.com*, August 24, 2014, accessed December 10, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1127405>; Jahanzaib Haque and Atika Rehman, "Hacking Team Hacked: The Pakistan Connection, and India's Expansion Plan," *Dawn.com*, July 28, 2016, accessed December 20, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1196767>

the internet and provides for the following punishments.<sup>43</sup>

Section	Offences	Punishment
9	Glorification of terrorists/proscribed organizations using “information system or device”	Jail: 7 years Fine: Rs.10 million
10	Cyber terrorism	Jail: 14 years Fine: Rs.50 million
11	Hate speech propagation using “information system or device”	Jail: 7 years Fine: Rs.10 million
12	Urging others to fund, recruit people or plan a terror activity	Jail: 7 years Fine: Rs.10 million

Since PECA has been enacted only recently, only one case [of cyber terror] has been registered under this law thus far. This case pertains to the suicide of a Sindh University student in which her friend was alleged to have misused her personal information, making her take her own life.<sup>44</sup>

**Institutional Framework:** A number of executive measures have been undertaken by the Government of Pakistan against terrorism in cyberspace. Under PECA, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) would primarily be looking at terrorism over the internet. However, other agencies such as Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) may also be involved. A report pointed out that the ISI had requested the Ministry of Interior to give it a stake in battling cybercrimes detrimental to national security.<sup>45</sup>

The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has been given the content management role under PECA, and though information is not available, PTA claims to have taken down terrorist content. Similarly, Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB) has made some technol-

ogy interventions. They recently handed over Hotel Eye software to hotels and asked them to enter the details of their clients. This software is linked to a central command system of the police and flags any name with criminal history. Further, the PITB's initiative “Peaceful Pakistan” is an attempt to promote a peaceful and positive image of Pakistan online while also receiving complaints against hate speech which are forwarded to the PTA.<sup>46</sup> Lastly, NACTA has also been taking part in building counter narratives in cyberspace through informal measures despite being under-resourced.<sup>47</sup>

### Digital Rights Concerns:

Multiple interviewees raised the issue that laws dealing with terrorism were overbroad. For instance, according to the framework's prescribed definition of terrorism, the lowest threshold for anyone to be declared a terrorist is that their actions infuse fear among the public or government or a section of society, irrespective of whether the act has religious or political undertones. By this yard stick, if one walks in and starts shooting, even if it is not politically motivated, it would still fall under terrorism as it infuses fear among the public. This results in overburdening the anti-terrorism court with cases that are essentially without a political motive. Moreover, there are different types of punishments for the same crime, that is, for hate speech under ATA, PECA and PPC. This leaves room for the authorities to pick and choose when to use the law that awards less punishment or one that awards maximum punishment, thus providing room for both misuse as well as disproportionate use of power. For instance under ATA, a man was sentenced to thirteen years imprisonment for posting religiously offensive material on Facebook when according to his defence lawyer, he had only “liked” the post.<sup>48</sup>

Selective accountability has been another growing concern. For instance, the government is very reactive towards political dissent as is evident from the recent crackdown against social media activists. However, it has failed to take down pages of proscribed organizations that

<sup>43</sup> Parliament of Pakistan, *The Gazette of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Parliament of Pakistan, 2016).

<sup>44</sup> Samaa Web Desk, “Shocking Details emerge as Naila Rind Death Mystery Solved”, *Samaa TV*, January 06, 2017, accessed February 26, 2017, <https://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2017/01/shocking-details-emerge-as-naila-rind-death-mystery-resolved>.

<sup>45</sup> Zahid Gishkori, “ISI to take Action against Cybercrimes Breaching National Security,” *Geo News*, October 20, 2016, accessed December 15, 2016, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/118292-Govt-accepts-ISIs-role-in-taking-action-against-cyber-crimes>.

<sup>46</sup> Hasnain, (Head, Peaceful Pakistan Project), in discussion with the author, November 03, 2016.

<sup>47</sup> NACTA Official, in discussion with the author, September 28, 2016.

<sup>48</sup> “Man Jailed for 13 Years over Offensive Facebook Post,” *Dawn.com*, March 04, 2016, accessed January 01, 2017, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243461>.

use the internet to recruit, receive funds and plan terror activities.

Whatever measures have been laid down, there seems a general lack of interest on the part of state institutions to share how they are using certain powers to battle terror in cyberspace. For instance, PTA claims to have taken down many terror websites but has never shared the list of these blocked websites. Also under FTA, the government can acquire warrants, the life of each warrant being 60 days. While FTA puts a bar on the life of a warrant, it doesn't put a limit on the number of warrants that an officer can receive for the same case.

From a digital rights perspective, some suggest that the government should also specify what sort of surveillance equipment they are using, as one surveillance technology may be more intrusive than another, and may impinge upon the privacy of citizens. Further, a disproportionate use of surveillance technology may end up revealing more information about people than is required.

A concerning research finding was that in spite of an extensive framework for tackling terrorism in cyberspace, extra judicial measures have been used to silence political dissent. For example, in January 2017, four bloggers were picked up mysteriously. While they were missing, an organized campaign commenced against them, declaring them blasphemers over social media.<sup>49</sup> After three weeks, they reappeared but quickly left the country as asylum seekers. No case was registered against them and the FIA stated in the Islamabad High Court in December 2017 that they had not committed any blasphemy. Interviewees who have closely followed the case shared that these bloggers did not have a favorable opinion of security policies being pursued inside Pakistan and that is the reason why they were picked up.

## Conclusion & Recommendations

Based upon the above discussion, it is clear that the contours of terrorism in cyberspace as defined by law in Pakistan are broad. Application of such laws can actually harm rather than help the fight against terrorism because of: a loss of focus; data aggregation of various types of

cases leaves the data useless for analysis; overburdening the anti-terrorism courts; and increasing the possibility for the misuse of power, thus discrediting the anti-terror regime. Further, the application of laws related to cyber-terrorism will become even more critical as internet access increases in the country.

It is also quite evident from the examples discussed above that counter terror measures not only have the potential to violate the digital rights of citizens but in some cases, these measures have been used disproportionately to try persons who were not affiliated with any proscribed organization. Ironically, some proscribed organizations have enjoyed unbridled freedom to operate in cyberspace while others have been clamped down upon.

The legal lacunae because of overbroad laws, selective accountability, lack of transparency, withholding of information, and extra-judicial measures taken by the state go against the digital rights of citizens and can only be addressed through a sustained dialogue among state institutions, government, parliamentarians and civil society. In light of this, following recommendations are proposed to balance digital rights against counter terror measures:

**Remove Duplication & Make Laws More Specific:** There is a need to review and revise laws related to terrorism to ensure a coherent definition, while removing any duplication by assessing to what extent punishment under various laws corresponds with a similar nature of crime. Efforts should be made to strike down outdated laws and replace them with revised anti-terror laws that are specific and provide uniformity. Further, overbroad clauses need to be made more specific. Otherwise, it would be difficult to prevent abuse of such laws.

**Strengthen Oversight and Increase Transparency:** An institutionalized mechanism should be put in place for both public representatives and civil society to conduct accountability of government's measures against terrorism. For instance, the government should be open towards sharing with the public, the number and nature of terror related websites/social media accounts that have been taken down, and the number of warrants issued in a

<sup>49</sup> AFP, "Abducted blogger breaks silence: "We want a Pakistan with rule of law," *Dawn.com*, February 09, 2017, accessed June 09, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1313745>.

certain time period. They should also share the nature of surveillance being carried out so as to put to rest talks about the infringement of citizens' digital rights.

**Build Capacity of Law Enforcement Agencies & Judiciary on Digital Rights:** To make cybercrime prevention more effective without impinging upon citizens' digital rights, it is imperative to prevent disproportionate exercise of powers conferred upon different state agencies through legal measures. Thus, both law enforcement personnel as well as members of the judiciary need to be trained on counter terror legislation for cyberspace and digital rights framework. Currently, only Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Judicial Academy trains judges on cybercrimes.



Talal Raza is working as Political Adviser to the British High Commission in Islamabad and advises on human rights in Pakistan.

## Bibliography

Herald, "Surf safely: Evolution of Cyberspace Laws in Pakistan," *Herald.dawn.com*, May 10, 2016, accessed January 10, 2017, <http://herald.dawn.com/news/1153380>.

Waqas Mir, *Digital Surveillance Laws in Pakistan: A White Paper by Digital Rights Foundation* (Lahore: Digital Rights Foundation, 2014).

Irfan Haider, "Terrorists operating 3000 Websites to propagate Agenda in Pakistan," *Dawn.com*, August 14, 2015, accessed August 14, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1200276>.

Azam Khan and Aamir Saeed, "Fighting Terror: Institutional Structure in the Context of NAP," *Conflict and Peace Studies* 7, no.2 (Spring 2015): 29-38.

Ramsha Jahangir, "Pakistan's online clampdown," *Dawn.com*, October 28, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1441927/pakistans-online-clampdown>.

Jahanzaib Haque, *Pakistan's Internet Landscape 2016*.

Jahanzaib Haque & Omer Bashir, "Banned outfits in Pakistan operate openly on Facebook", *Dawn.com*, May 30, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1335561/banned-outfits-in-pakistan-operate-openly-on-facebook>.

Jawad Awan, "Banned Organizations to go Online to Collect Hides," *The Nation*, September 21, 2015, <http://nation.com.pk/editors-picks/21-Sep-2015/banned-organisations-go-online-to-collect-hides>.

Talal Raza, "Use of Facebook by Ethnonationalist Groups from Pakistan," The May 18 Memorial Foundation. Accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.518.org>

Jahanzaib Haque, *Pakistan's Internet Landscape 2016: A Report by Bytes for All, Pakistan* (Islamabad: Bytes for All, Pakistan, 2016).

Shahid, Kunwar. "Cybersecurity Work in Progress...: An Analysis of Pakistan's Cybersecurity Dilemma." *MIT Technology Review Pakistan* 2, no.2 (April 2016): 26-31 ; Verda Munir. "The Debate on Cybercrimes Law: A Study of the Proposed Law and the Way Forward." *MIT Technology Review Pakistan* 2, no.2 (2016): 32-37.

James Vincent, "UN condemns internet access disruption as a human rights violation," *The Verge*, July 04, 2016, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.theverge.com/2016/7/4/12092740/un-resolution-condemns-disrupting-internet-access>; Article 19, "UN HRC maintains consensus on Internet resolution," July 09, 2018, accessed January 27, 2019, <https://www.article19.org/resources/un-hrc-maintains-consensus-on-internet-resolution>.

Global Network Initiative, "Principles," accessed December 25, 2016, <https://globalnetworkinitiative.org/principles/index.php> ; Kimberly Carlson, "Necessary and Proportionate: International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance," accessed January 19, 2017:1-15, <https://necessaryandproportionate.org/july-2013-version-international-principles-application-human-rights-communications-surveillance>.

Ministry of Interior Government of Pakistan, *Annex Z: Historical Overview: Counter Terrorism Laws in Pakistan* (Islamabad: Ministry of Interior Government of Pakistan, 2014).

"Anti terrorism act," *The Parliament of Pakistan*

Parliament of Pakistan, *The Gazette of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Parliament of Pakistan, 2013)



Jahanzaib Haque, "Customer 32-Who used Finfisher to Spy in Pakistan?," *Dawn.com*, August 24, 2014, accessed December 10, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1127405>;

Jahanzaib Haque and Atika Rehman, "Hacking Team Hacked: The Pakistan Connection, and India's Expansion Plan," *Dawn.com*, July 28, 2016, accessed December 20, 2016, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1196767>

Parliament of Pakistan, *The Gazette of Pakistan* (Islamabad: Parliament of Pakistan, 2016).

Samaa Web Desk, "Shocking Details emerge as Naila Rind Death Mystery Solved", *Samaa TV*, January 06, 2017, accessed February 26, 2017, <https://www.samaa.tv/pakistan/2017/01/shocking-details-emerge-as-naila-rind-death-mystery-resolved>.

Zahid Gishkori, "ISI to take Action against Cybercrimes Breaching National Security," *Geo News*, October 20, 2016, accessed December 15, 2016, <https://www.geo.tv/latest/118292-Govt-accepts-ISIs-role-in-taking-action-against-cyber-crimes>.

[1] Hasnain, (Head, Peaceful Pakistan Project), in discussion with the author, November 03, 2016.

NACTA Official, in discussion with the author, September 28, 2016.

"Man Jailed for 13 Years over Offensive Facebook Post," *Dawn.com*, March 04, 2016, accessed January 01, 2017, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1243461>.

[ AFP, "Abducted blogger breaks silence: "We want a Pakistan with rule of law," *Dawn.com*, February 09, 2017, accessed June 09, 2017, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1313745>.

## Media's Role in Conflict Resolution: Framing of Government-TTP Dialogue in the Editorials of English and Urdu Newspapers

By Ahsan Raza

MPhil Government College University, Faisalabad 2018

### Introduction

This paper attempts to explore leading Pakistani English and Urdu language newspapers' editorial treatment of the dialogue process between the Pakistani government and the Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), using this as a marker to understand agenda setting and framing by the print media to mold public opinion which could result in influencing government's policies. In the context of TTP-Government talks, there is little understanding of the role played by the print media as an opinion maker and agenda setter as the government and the state first took a position to negotiate and then to cancel peace talks. Though a newspaper is to present contents in objective ways, it does take liberty in its editorial section to put up the newspaper's stated policy position on a certain issue. The selection of the issue is done by the board of editorial writers of a newspaper, based on its importance to the readers<sup>50</sup>. An editorial may represent public sentiments and at the same time aims to convince the government and the public to buy its stated position. In the following pages, this research will analyse how the editorial pages covered the Pakistan Government -TTP dialogues on seeking peace in Pakistan.

On January 29, 2014, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced in the National Assembly that his government was starting peace talks with the (banned) Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). This initiative of the Government of Pakistan stemmed from the unanimous decision of leaders of the All Parties Conference in Islamabad held on September 9, 2013, recommending that the government should hold talks with the banned TTP to reach a peace deal to stop bloodshed. In the aftermath of 9/11 attacks in America, the US in collaboration with NATO forces invaded Afghanistan to uproot Al Qaeda. This had engulfed Pakistan into a vicious cycle of terrorism and violence.

Following this announcement, for almost five years the

<sup>50</sup> Passante, 2007

TTP and Pakistan continued to hold multiple dialogues, while terror attacks and violence in Pakistan persisted and nothing substantive came out; these talks remained empty and inconclusive and the fragile ceasefire broke down. This compelled the government to allow the Pakistan military to launch operation Zarb-i-Azab on June 15, 2014.

Table 1: Brief Timeline of Events<sup>51</sup>

Date	Event
September 9, 2013	APC mandates PML-N government to hold dialogue with the TTP
January 1, 2014	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif meets Samiul Haq
January 28, 2014	Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announces dialogue with the TTP while addressing the National Assembly
February 2014	Committees formed by both the government and TTP, and a few meetings are held
March 2014	Teams meet at Akora Khattak, Bilandkhel where both sides talk of terms of ceasefire; Ceasefire is announced but punctuated by targeted and suicide attacks at public places and government installations;
April 2014	Bilawal Bhutto, Chairman Pakistan Peoples Party opposes talks; Government releases TTP prisoners; Suicide attacks continue while army hits hideouts with airstrikes; Meetings of committees remain inconclusive;
May 2014	Army tells the TTP to accept State's writ; Miranshah airstrikes kill 73 people;
June 2014	Stalemate in talks continue; Operation Zarb-i-Azab formally starts on June 15;
July 2014	About one million people are displaced due to the military operation;

## Research Questions, Methodology & Theoretical Framework

Occurrence of conflict is sine qua non in relationships between individuals, groups, and nations. Some sort of conflict erupts whenever human beings interact with each other for a long time, and these conflicts can have both positive and negative aspects. Thus most communication experts and sociologists paint not for the eradication of conflict in human relationships but instead to comprehend the nature of conflict they come across, and individuals' capability to manage and surmount it to escape from the violence that may occur.

While the power of media is constrained, as it will never have the capacity to dispose of outfitted clashes out and out or to guarantee enduring peace and wellbeing, Kuusik suggests that media and news coverage can be helpful with refereeing and peace building<sup>52</sup>. This is because the mass media, through the tools of agenda setting and framing, plays an important role in shaping public opinion, influencing policymakers and analyzing the pressing issues of state and society. .

Galtung termed peace journalism as pro-peace, pro-truth, pro-people and pro-solution in contrast with war journalism, which he described as pro-violence, pro-propaganda, pro-elite and pro-differences.<sup>53</sup> Galtung and Ruge found that news contents, which glorify some war subjects, can intensify bloodshed<sup>54</sup> while events of death and destruction attract more media audience leading to more revenues<sup>55</sup>, thus creating a cyclical relationship that tends to support war journalism. Howard further adds that even though working media people are determined to conduct unbiased reporting of conflicts, they, however, unknowingly may become a tool for the conflicting parties to spread their objectives, which can result in less peace and more conflict.

The research analyzes the extent of editorial coverage of the peace dialogue by leading newspapers; how much stress was given to conflict resolution; what topics were

<sup>51</sup> Source: Authors own compilation

<sup>52</sup> Nora Kuusik, "The Role of the Media in Peace Building, Conflict Management, and Prevention," E-International Relations, August 28, 2010, <https://www.e-ir.info/2010/08/28/the-role-of-media-in-peace-building-conflict-management-and-prevention/>.

<sup>53</sup> Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News," *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 1 (1965): pp. 64-90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104>.

<sup>54</sup> Johan Galtung and Mari Holmboe Ruge, "The Structure of Foreign News," *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 1 (1965): pp. 64-90, <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104>.

<sup>55</sup> NStig A. Nohrstedt, "New War Journalism," *Nordicom Review* 30, no. 1 (January 2009): pp. 95-112, <https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0141>.

covered while discussing the government-TTP dialogue and lastly what kinds of stances/frames were used in the editorials. For this purpose, the editorials of leading daily English newspapers: *Dawn*, *The Nation*, *The News*, *The Express Tribune*, *The Daily Times*, and daily Urdu newspapers: *Jang* and *Nawa-i-Waqt* were assessed for the period of January 2014 to July 2014.

Both quantitative as well as qualitative analysis was done of the editorials, which were selected through purposive sampling – those containing the key words of 'peace talks', 'peace dialogues', 'dialogues', and 'talks' were included in the study. Content analysis of editorials was based on the newspapers' position on the stances of the Government of Pakistan, the army, the TTP and political parties, regarding the dialogue process. Further, editorials were also analyzed to assess newspapers' agenda setting role and whether this confirms the theory.

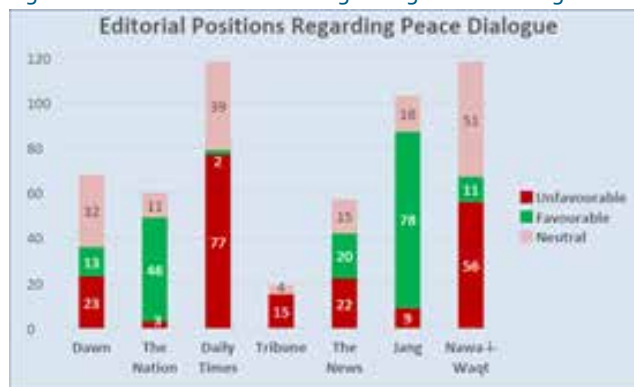
For quantitative analysis, the number of related editorials published in each newspaper were calculated, and further, the subject matter of these editorials were categorized as favourable, unfavourable or neutral of the dialogue process. For measurement, the Likert Scale was used, which is often used in social science research to get validity and reliability. In content analysis, reliability is a sort of pact among coders about coders' categories. In this research, two coders helped the researcher to test inter coder reliability. They, along with the researcher, coded editorials based on select categories. Using Holisti formula,  $(Reliability = \frac{2M}{N1+N2})$ , the inter coder reliability was calculated where M is the number of coding rates where two coders agreed, while N1 and N2 represent coding decisions by each of the two coders. After establishing the inter-coder reliability, the total number of all editorials were coded according to the criteria.

### Quantitative Analysis

The selected newspapers covered peace talks 543 times in the selected time period from January 2013 to July 2013 with *Daily Times*, an English daily and *Nawa-i-Waqt*, an Urdu daily giving the most amount of coverage to peace talks with 118 editorials each and both heavily inclined towards an unfavorable view of the peace talks. The coverage of each newspaper as listed in Figure 1 suggests

the following points: one, other than *The Nation* and *Jang*, all other newspapers had an overall unfavourable view of the peace talks; two, one can't suggest a difference in position based on the language of the newspaper because *The Nation*, an English daily had the most favourable view of peace talks of any newspaper; and lastly one also can't argue that newspapers of the same media group have similar positions, as *The Nation's* sister organization, *Nawa-i-Waqt* was quite unfavourable towards peace talks as compared to *The Nation*. However, *The News* and its sister newspaper, *Jang* both tilted towards a favourable position with *Jang* editorials taking a favourable position almost nine times to an unfavourable position.

Figure 1: Editorial Positions Regarding Peace Dialogue<sup>56</sup>



### Comparative Analysis of Editorials

**Before dialogue:** Most newspapers, regardless of government' difficult position regarding the dialogue, opposed the dialogue with militants. *Dawn* in its editorial, "The Wrong Choice" dated January 2, 2014<sup>57</sup> showed skepticism about the government's stance on dialogues. It criticized the "so-called strategy" to fight militancy through talks with the militants stating: "On Tuesday, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif appeared to have authorized Samiul Haq, the so-called godfather of the Afghan Taliban because of its leadership's ties to the maulana's infamous madressah in Akora Khattak, to reach out to the TTP and set the stage for dialogue. ... But how can a known Taliban sympathizer help achieve that?" Given the history of Samiul Haq's pro-Taliban stance, the editorial rightly questioned the Prime Minister's choice of the interlocutor as it could be seen as a sign of weakness on the part of the government. The government's stated position was to bring the TTP under the writ of the constitution, whereas the TTP had opposite

<sup>56</sup> Source: Author's own compilation

<sup>57</sup> "The Wrong Choice," DAWN.COM, January 2, 2014, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1077833/the-wrong-choice>.

views. *The Nation's* editorial, "A Self destructive Agenda" dated January 12, 2014<sup>58</sup> taunted the government stating that the choice of 'middleman' was "worthy of appreciation in itself". It also narrated Samiul Haq's past statements to establish that the middleman was not actually in the middle of the two sides, but rather a Taliban supporter which disqualified him for being government's representative. These editorials questioned the government's approach in the talks, viewing it as appeasement. *The Nation's* sister organization, the Urdu daily *Nawa-i-Waqt* took a similar position in its editorial "Prime Minister tasks Maulana Samiul Haq with contacting the Taliban and ground realities ... peace is our need but the government had better not expose its weaknesses" dated January 2, 2014<sup>59</sup>. It stated that "the militants had continuously challenged the state's authority while keeping up terrorist and suicide attacks intermittently and slaying both the officials of security forces and innocent citizens. Besides, they had clearly indicated that they would not surrender at any cost and would continue violating the constitution and rules and regulations of the country. In addition to this, the government policy is confused as the dialogue process with all TTP factions cannot be carried out simultaneously." Lastly, the *Daily Times* went even further in its editorial, "To be or not to be" dated January 1, 2014<sup>60</sup>, linking terrorism with development of the economy and nation, stating that "terrorism and law and order would not allow the economy to develop unless some action is taken."

However, other dailies did give more space to the government. For example, *Tribune's* editorial, "Finding an interlocutor" dated January 2, 2014<sup>61</sup> stated that "in the grim and debilitating struggle against forces of death and destruction, any action that promises breakthrough must be initiated if it has the unqualified support of all stakeholders", thus acquiescing with the government in selecting the cleric on the basis of his influence among the TTP circle. Pakistan's largest newspaper in terms of circulation, *Jang*, supported the decision of the government to open talks with the TTP. In its editorial<sup>62</sup>, "One more chance for

peace" dated January 2, 2014, the newspaper said that overall, the public had favoured the government's decision to hold dialogue with the TTP. Further, it also eulogized the TTP's Punjabi commander for accepting the government's offer for dialogue.

This optimism however diminished when blasts in Karachi and Hangu claimed the lives of SP Chaudhry Aslam and teenage student Aitezaz Hasan respectively. *Tribune* editorial, "Recognising our heroes" dated January 12, 2014 now cautioned the government stating, "we know that the government wants to talk to the TTP – and that is fine as long as it has a strategy in mind and given that it has the mandate to pursue peace talks. Yet, the monotone and metronomic manner in which this strategy has been pursued over the last few months seems less like steadfastness and more like a frightened retreat in the face of adversity by authorities that seem to have no strategy but a one-dimensional mindset that this is a war we cannot win or even fight." Similarly, *The News's* editorial, "TTP's murder spree" dated January 14, 2014<sup>63</sup> pinpointed that "as for the peace talks, which the government has been touting ever since it came into power, Interior Minister Chaudhry Nisar Ali Khan has now had to admit that they seem to be a distant prospect". This statement seemed appropriate as within a week of the announcement of the dialogue, the interior minister looked grimed and hopeless about the success of talks because of continued terrorism in the country. Thus, except for *Jang*, the above editorials show pessimism regarding the initiative even before the dialogue had taken place.

This difference of opinion among newspapers was also reflected in the Parliament as the treasury benches were not yet clear about the future of dialogue. Commenting on the first session of Parliament after a recent spike in terror attacks that was skipped by the Prime Minister, the *Dawn's* editorial "Indecision yet again" dated Jan 29, 2014<sup>64</sup> commented that the Interior Minister's "waffling on the dialogue option was almost cringe-worthy: talking about talks never was a policy and never will be an effective

<sup>58</sup> "A Self-Destructive Agenda," *The Nation* (The Nation, January 1, 2014), <https://nation.com.pk/02-Jan-2014/a-self-destructive-agenda>.

<sup>59</sup> "وزیراعظم کی جانب سے مولانا سمیع الحق کو طالبان سے مذاکرات کیلئے رابطے کا ٹاسک اور زمینی حقائق... قیام امن ہماری ضرورت ہے تاہم حکومت اپنی کوئی کمزوری نہ ظاہر ہونے دے۔" *Nawaiwaqt*, January 2, 2014, <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2014-01-02/page-14/detail-10>.

<sup>60</sup> "To Be or Not to Be," *Daily Times*, January 12, 2019, <https://dailytimes.com.pk/343545/to-be-or-not-to-be-2/>.

<sup>61</sup> "Finding an Interlocutor," *The Express Tribune*, January 1, 2014, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/653519/finding-an-interlocutor>.

<sup>62</sup> "امین مذاکرات: مثبت پیش رفت," *Jang*, March 28, 2014, <https://jang.com.pk/news/13767-todays-print-news>.

<sup>63</sup> "TTP's murder spree," *The News*, January 14, 2014.

<sup>64</sup> "Indecision Yet Again," *DAWN.COM*, January 29, 2014, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1083394/indecision-yet-again>.

tive policy". *The Nation's* editorial "Unnerved and undecided" for the same day<sup>65</sup> stated: "One faction is calling for a military operation... The other is insistent on holding peace-talks with the terrorists to resolve matters. The PML-N falls in neither of the two categories. The ruling party is unable to take any decision over the course that must be followed to eradicate terrorism from the country".

**During the dialogue:** The peace talks began with a controversy over TTP's choice of representatives as TTP chose its members from mainstream parties including Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) Imran Khan, and from the religious right. *Dawn's* editorial, "The TTP's choice" dated February 3, 2014<sup>66</sup> took these parties as an ally of the TTP stating "The outlawed TTP's nominees for the team that will negotiate with the government four-member committee on behalf of the Pakistani Taliban is terribly revealing — about the nominees and how they are viewed, and not necessarily by the TTP itself. Here, in short terms, are the five nominees: PTI, JI, JUI-F, Lal Masjid, Father of the Taliban. That the religious right in Pakistan has more in common with extremist ideologies than the democratic and constitutional values that Pakistan is meant to be rooted in is an old open secret. Abdul Aziz of Lal Masjid notoriety and Samiul Haq, long dubbed the 'father of the Taliban', do not even attempt to hide with which side their sympathies lie. But Imran Khan?" Similarly, the team also came under fire in *Daily Times's* especially its title "Imran Khan's embarrassment" dated February 5, 2014<sup>67</sup> stating that "as far as the TTP is concerned, they have announced what many believe to be the ideal team from their point of view: all pro-Taliban or at the very least sympathetic to them". This flurry of criticism influenced a deadlock as Imran Khan and JUI-F's Mufti Kafayatullah chose to withdraw from the TTP's committee. On this, *The Nation's* editorial "Comedy of terrors" dated February 5, 2014<sup>68</sup> wrote, "It seems the cat was set among the pigeons by the government's naming of a committee to negotiate with the Tehrik Taliban Pakistan (TTP), because the TTP's own attempts to name a committee has been marred by withdrawals."

Not only the committee, but TTP's demands also came under criticism. *The News's* editorial "Agendas" dated February 11, 2014<sup>69</sup> deliberated Taliban's wish list and commented, "The 15-point agenda of the TTP is a mixture of demands that are broadly reasonable and some that are completely out of bounds. Asking for equal rights for both rich and poor is surely something that can be accepted by all and calling for an end to drone strikes is something that is already the position of every political party in the country ... But then the TTP also wants Sharia law in the courts and Islamic education in schools, and since we know exactly how narrow and twisted the group's definition of religion is, this is not something the government will be or should be able to accept. Withdrawing troops from the tribal areas and releasing TTP prisoners cannot be carried out either until we are sure that the TTP has truly stopped carrying out attacks." Similarly, the government's committee also came under criticism as *Tribune's* editorial "Talking peace" dated January 31, 2014<sup>70</sup> stated that "The government needs to be more forthcoming about the committee's mandate and the agenda that the talks will follow. Also, it must be noted that no parliamentarian has been included in the committee."

It was only after the TTP offered ceasefire that there was some appreciation of the peace process as *Jang's* editorial, "Positive Development: Peace Talks"<sup>71</sup> welcomed it saying: "Notwithstanding the fact that the diligent accomplishment of the dialogue process at the first stage is sine qua non for peace building in the country, the whole nation had waited for it for a long time. Leadership of both sides handled these situations with harmony and mutual understanding. Both parties had compromised and the dialogue process was held in an unknown place in North Waziristan".

**Breach of Ceasefire:** When the ceasefire was breached by the TTP, the *Nawa-i-Waqt's* editorial titled "Dialogue is only possible with unconditional ceasefire by the Taliban"<sup>72</sup> explained that "the government dialogue committee presented its stance clearly that the dialogue process

<sup>65</sup> "Unnerved and Undecided," *The Nation* (*The Nation*, January 28, 2014), <https://nation.com.pk/29-Jan-2014/unnerved-and-undecided>.

<sup>66</sup> "The TTP's Choice," *DAWN.COM*, February 3, 2014, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1084597>.

<sup>67</sup> "Imran Khan's embarrassment," *Daily Times*, February 5, 2014.

<sup>68</sup> "Comedy of terrors," *The Nation*, February 5, 2014.

<sup>69</sup> "Agendas", *The News* February 11, 2014 .

<sup>70</sup> "Talking Peace," *The Express Tribune*, January 30, 2014, <https://tribune.com.pk/story/665475/talking-peace-2>.

<sup>71</sup> "امن مذاکرات: مثبت پیش رفت." *Jang*, March 28, 2014, <https://jang.com.pk/news/13767-todays-print-news>

<sup>72</sup> "طالبان کی غیر مشروط فائر بندی سے بی مذاکرات ممکن ہیں." *Nawaiwaqt* (*Nawaiwaqt*, February 19, 2014), <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/20-Feb-2014/282910>.



could not proceed until TTP stopped the violent proceedings. Whereas, TTP commander described the government's non-serious behavior in dialogue and threatened the government to face unbearable circumstances in case the dialogue could not be continued."

## Conclusion

Overall, the majority of newspapers kept a hardline view during the dialogue process by showing a harsh response towards talking to the militants, who they considered responsible for a relentless spree of death and destruction, and non-believers in the state or the constitution. Though their tenor differed as *The Nation* called TTP as terrorists while *Dawn's* editorial called them militants. Only the Urdu newspaper *Jang* tilted towards dialogue. But, this newspaper could not come up with a clear condemnation even when militants openly owned up to terrorist attacks.

Most took the government to task for its unclear and vague policy to tackle militancy through dialogue, and portrayed negotiations as a sign of state's surrender to a group of non-state militants who aimed to dictate their terms to a state with a large standing army. Thus, instead of showing restraint, they favored military action against the militants. Even a ceasefire offer by the militants or the army was viewed as a shaky arrangements and a time-buying tactic of the TTP to regroup for another rein of terrorism. Thus, every move by the state to further dialogue was discouraged by a majority of editorials as the newspapers, especially the English press, rejected the dialogue from the very beginning.

Writing 543 editorials on the dialogue process by seven selected newspapers over a seven month period attests to the media's agenda-setting power through the formation of public opinion. As the majority, five out of seven newspapers evoked a negative slant against the dialogue process, this was bound to influence public opinion and pressurize the government against the dialogue process. Conflicts bring testing times for a nation and call for unity, clarity and pro-peace approaches. While the analysis shows the diversity of newsrooms, still too much pessimism in editorials can hamper the objectivity and neutrality needed for peace journalism.

## Recommendations

**Openly criticizing the state in times of war should be avoided:** Media's role in wars and conflicts is of immense

importance. State's measures towards conflicts, riots, law and order and security related issues should be editorialised after a lot of discussion as in a war-like situation, criticising the state or army often and openly only gives psychological benefit to anti-state factions. It, however, does not mean that wrong policies as well as atrocities by the army or the state should be overlooked, as when media's reported excesses by army personnel in East Pakistan were not considered by the authorities, it resulted in the fall of Dhaka.

**Consultations between the media and policy making elite should be encouraged in times of war:** During conflicts and wars, the ruling and policymaking elites aside from defense personnel, should consult the media and exchange critical issues, so that either side understands the other's point of view as clarity of issues and positions will stem rumor mills and generate a clear and correct flow of information.



*Ahsan Raza is a journalist with Dawn newspaper and is interested in media's treatment of security issues.*

## Bibliography

"To Be or Not to Be." Daily Times, January 12, 2019. <https://dailly-times.com.pk/343545/to-be-or-not-to-be-2/>.

The Express Tribune. "Finding an Interlocutor." The Express Tribune, January 1, 2014. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/653519/finding-an-interlocutor>.

Galtung, Johan, and Mari Holmboe Ruge. "The Structure of Foreign News." *Journal of Peace Research* 2, no. 1 (1965): 64–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002234336500200104>.

"Indecision Yet Again." DAWN.COM, January 29, 2014. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1083394/indecision-yet-again>.

Kuusik, Nora. "The Role of the Media in Peace Building, Conflict

Management, and Prevention." E-International Relations, August 28, 2010. <https://www.e-ir.info/2010/08/28/the-role-of-media-in-peace-building-conflict-management-and-prevention/>.

The Nation. "A Self-Destructive Agenda." The Nation. The Nation, January 1, 2014. <https://nation.com.pk/02-Jan-2014/a-self-destructive-agenda>.

The Nation. "Unnerved and Undecided." The Nation. The Nation, January 28, 2014. <https://nation.com.pk/29-Jan-2014/unnerved-and-undecided>.

Newspaper, From the. "The TTP's Choice." DAWN.COM, February 3, 2014. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1084597>.

Newspaper, From the. "The Wrong Choice." DAWN.COM, January 2, 2014. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1077833/the-wrong-choice>.

Nohrstedt, Stig A. "New War Journalism." *Nordicom Review* 30, no. 1 (2009): 95–112. <https://doi.org/10.1515/nor-2017-0141>.

"Talking Peace." The Express Tribune, January 30, 2014. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/665475/talking-peace-2>.

"Unnerved and Undecided." The Nation. The Nation, January 28, 2014. <https://nation.com.pk/29-Jan-2014/unnerved-and-undecided?show=>.

اداریہ۔ ”وزیراعظم کی جانب سے مولانا سمیع الحق کو طالبان سے مذاکرات کیلئے رابطے کا ٹاسک اور زمینی حقائق...قیام امن ہماری ضرورت ہے تاہم حکومت اپنی کوئی کمزوری نہ ظاہر ہونے دے۔“

Nawaiwaqt, January 2, 2014. <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/E-Paper/Lahore/2014-01-02/page-14/detail-10>.

”امن مذاکرات: مثبت پیش رفت۔“ jang, March 28, 2014. <https://jang.com.pk/news/13767-todays-print-news>.

”طالبان کی غیر مشروط فائر بندی سے ہی مذاکرات ممکن ہیں۔“ Nawaiwaqt. Nawaiwaqt, February 19, 2014. <https://www.nawaiwaqt.com.pk/20-Feb-2014/282910>.

## Managing the Durand Line: Stakeholder Perspectives

By Hanzala Khan

MPhil Quaid-e-Azam University 2018

### Introduction:

The current Pakistan-Afghanistan border – also known as the Durand Line – was drawn during the British Raj as a buffer zone in a geopolitical contest between the British and the Russian empires.<sup>73</sup> When Pakistan gained independence in 1947, it inherited the Durand Line, which now forms the international border between Pakistan and Afghanistan. However, Pak-Afghan relations have not always been friendly, and at times have been marked by pronounced hostility due to the contested nature of the Durand Line.<sup>74</sup>

The Durand Line and its adjacent areas were a hotspot during the Cold War due to their geo-strategic importance. After the US led War on Terror, these areas became a safe haven for reclusive Al Qaeda and Taliban leaders.<sup>75</sup> A particular reason for continuous militancy in the border region is the porous nature of the border.<sup>76</sup>

Further, due to illegal movement and cross border attacks, the Pak-Afghan border came to be viewed as a vital security problem for Pakistan. This prompted a debate in the country about the appropriate border management of the Durand Line,<sup>77</sup> and with increased cross border attacks, border management emerged a core issue between Pakistan and Afghanistan as both countries blamed each other for terrorism in their respective countries.

The decision of fencing the border was taken after the attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar on December 16, 2014. The chalking out of the National Action Plan in 2015 and the admission of TTP's former spokesperson Ehsanullah Ehsan of support from Afghan and Indian intelligence agencies, further advocated for effective measures for border control. This compelled Pakistan to

<sup>73</sup> S. M. Qureshi. "Pakhtunistan: The Frontier Dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan," *Pacific Affairs*, 39, No. 2 (May 08, 2006):34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2755184>

<sup>74</sup> Methab Ali Shah. *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy 1947-1994* I.B. Tauris, New York (1997):181.

<sup>75</sup> Sana Haroon. "Frontier of Faith" *C. Hurst & Co, United Kingdom* (2011): 5.

<sup>76</sup> Dr A. Z. Hilali. "Fata: The Strategic Depth of Pakistan," *Margalla Papers* (2010): 10. [www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/.../02-FATA-The-Strat-Depth-of-Pakistan.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/.../02-FATA-The-Strat-Depth-of-Pakistan.pdf)

<sup>77</sup> Donald K. Alper and Bryant Hammond. "Stakeholder Views on Improving Border Management," *Research Report, No. 8, Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University, Bellingham, WA United States* (2009)1-60. <http://thetbwg.org/downloads/stakeholderviews.pdf>

unilaterally install vigorous border management including fences, trenches, security forts and a surveillance system. However, different voices including that of the Afghanistan government as well as civil society in Pakistan have raised reservations regarding this unilateral action.

### Research Objective, Questions, Methodology and Framework:

This study is an attempt to understand the Pakistani initiatives of managing the Durand Line. It asks, what are the initiatives taken by Pakistan to secure its border effectively in the post 9/11 era and whether the official stance of Pakistan and Afghanistan, coincide or differ with the perceptions of local communities and civil society on border management?

The study uses the theoretical framework of Integrated Border Management (IBM), a concept developed by the European Union in 2001 to ensure more secure borders as a part of its internal security strategy.<sup>78</sup> IBM is a pro-active solution which reduces loopholes at an institutional, infrastructural and human resource level by establishing robust coordination to achieve the objective of open, but well protected borders.<sup>79</sup> Through intra-service cooperation of IBM, integration of operational capacities, and definition of management practices and information sharing within agencies, all forms of cross-border infiltrations can be combatted. Similarly, cooperation between officials on both sides of the border is vital for proper border security which can be achieved through joint agreements, regional and international initiatives and by conducting joint actions.<sup>80</sup>

The research is qualitative in nature. Primary data was collected by interviewing experts on Pak-Afghan affairs both from Pakistan and Afghanistan, by interviewing jour-

nalists especially from the tribal belt, and by interviewing the local people of the area. Further, secondary data was taken from journals, newspapers, articles, books, content analysis and internet sources etc.

### Pakistan's Border Management Initiatives:

The phased fencing of the Pak-Afghan border started in mid-2017 with 432 km of fence set up in high [militant] infiltration areas like Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies, whereas areas like Khyber and Kurram agencies comprising 400km length, will be fenced later.<sup>81</sup> About 150-kilometers of fencing in Bajaur, Mohmand and Khyber agencies is complete.<sup>82</sup> A total of 338 border posts and small military fortifications are to be constructed by the end of 2019.<sup>83</sup> Advanced surveillance technologies like drones, radars and control systems have also been deployed along the border.<sup>84</sup> Gates in different agencies to facilitate legal entries are going to be constructed.<sup>85</sup>

Moreover, it is now necessary to present valid travel documents in order to cross the border. Pakistani passport is now mandatory for cross-border movement by Pakistani nationals with the exception of Shinwari tribesmen who have been granted special 'rahdari' (permit) status.<sup>86</sup> Initiatives for regulating trade with Afghanistan like National Tax Number, import permission, payment receipts, grading certificate, certificate from the chamber of commerce to check drugs and smuggling have also been made a part of the management process.<sup>87</sup>

### Afghanistan's Stance on Border Management:

Afghanistan has always rejected any unilateral initiatives to fence the border<sup>88</sup> and argues that unilateral actions along the Durand Line will be ineffective without Afghanistan's agreement. The Afghan embassy's political advisor argues that fencing will only deepen the mistrust

<sup>78</sup> Florian A. Alburo. "Policy Coherence and Coordination for Trade Facilitation: Integrated Border Management, Single-Windows and other Options for Developing Countries," *The Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade working Paper Series No 57* (August 2008): 16.

<sup>79</sup> "Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in Western Balkans," *OSCE Secretariat (2007)*:6. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/21153/download?token=3IOSGDjf>

<sup>80</sup> "Integrated Border Management, Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade," *The UN Trade Facilitation Network* (June 2005):7. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/21153/download?token=3IOSGDjf>

<sup>81</sup> Shahabullah Yousafzai. "Pakistan Army has Satellite Proof of Afghan Involvement in Cross-Border Terrorism," *The Express Tribune*, May 19 2017. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1413533/pak-army-satellite-proof-afghan-involvement/>

<sup>82</sup> Ayaz Gul. "Planned Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Fence Moves Ahead Despite Objections," *VOA*, December 30, 2017. <https://www.voanews.com/a/pakistan-afghanistan-border-fence/4185735.html>

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> "Pakistan starts fencing Afghanistan border in high-threat zones," *Reuters*, March 27, 2017.

Amina Khan. "Pak-Afghan Relations after devastating Terror Attacks in Pakistan," *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad* (February 2017):6.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> Rabia Nusrat and Zulfiqar Ali Shah. "Afghanistan's Cross-border Trade with Pakistan and Iran and the Responsibility for Conflict-sensitive Employment," *Boon International Center for Conversion* (2017). [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx\\_bicctools/bicc\\_workPaper\\_04\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/bicc_workPaper_04_2017.pdf)

<sup>88</sup> "Karzai opposed to border landmines," *Aljazeera*, 4th Jan 2007. <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2007/01/2008525123159104264.html>

on both sides of the border with serious implications for both countries.<sup>89</sup> Others consider fencing a harsh reality of dividing local peoples on both sides of the border. According to Mehdi Ahmad Munadi, Head of the Research Institute, Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS), Kabul, *"The problem is deep rooted and fencing will simply divide the people which can have serious implications. People to people management is needed which will help in combatting the issue properly"*.<sup>90</sup>

In addition, Senior Policy and Program Advisor, Ministry of Education, Afghanistan, Dr Attaullah Wahidyar made the same assertion on fencing the border. He said, *"Border management is not an issue but fencing the border is. Efforts are needed to get rid of the terrorists' safe havens on both sides of the border. Greater economic integration is necessary which will help in improving bilateral ties. This fencing will dim the prospects of any cooperation between the two states"*.<sup>91</sup>

#### Pakistan's Official Stance on Fencing:

Pakistan insists that fencing is instrumental in both monitoring cross-border movement of militants as well as in tackling smuggling. According to Pakistani officials, the presence of militants in Afghanistan makes the fencing necessary.<sup>92</sup> The then Foreign Minister Khwaja Asif insisted that the only aim of the fence is elimination of terrorism. Objections on the fence are meaningless when there are already examples of such measures in other parts of the world.<sup>93</sup>

The security officials are very much cognizant about the significance of border fencing. According to Major General Nauman Zakaria, Commanding Officer in South Waziristan, the fence is an epoch shift which will bring the whole border area under observation once the process is completed.<sup>94</sup>

Similarly, Maj. Gen (R) Ijaz Hussain Awan was of the view that the "ungoverned zone" in Afghanistan makes Pakistan vulnerable to terrorist attacks compelling Pakistan to secure its border. The only way left for Pakistan was to fence the border to check cross border attacks from Afghanistan.<sup>95</sup>

However, the management initiatives have received mixed reviews from the local people and intellectuals.

#### Views of Civil Society on Border Management:

The Pakistani civil society of academics, intellectuals, journalists, and members of Parliament are divided on the issue – though most have reservations about fencing the border.

Those who agree with fencing see no other option in resolving cross border terrorism. Musa Khan Jalalzai, a UK based Afghan affairs expert, states in his analysis that *"..fencing can help in intercepting terrorist's infiltration from across the Durand Line. It may possibly be effective in weakening insurgent forces. This can stop the blame game between the two countries"*.<sup>96</sup> Dr. Noreen Naseer argues that *"fencing becomes critical due to the emergence of Daesh in the Nangarhar province bordering Pakistan. They regularly infiltrate into the Fata region and carry out deadly attacks. The illegal trade and smuggling in the border region is the main source of terror financing which needs to be managed effectively in the whole management framework"*.<sup>97</sup>

Some accept fencing as a valid step from Pakistan's side, but also consider addressing the militant issue as more than fencing the border. Peshawar based BBC Correspondent Rehmanullah argues that fencing will not be easy considering the border terrain but after the tragic events of Peshawar Army Public School, the government was

<sup>89</sup> Interview with Hidayatullah Sherzad, Afghan Embassy political advisor, Islamabad, 10th December 2018.

<sup>90</sup> Interview with Sayed. Mehdi Munadi, Head of Research Institute, Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) Kabul, Afghanistan, on the sidelines of two days international conference on Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects May 10th, 2017.

<sup>91</sup> Interview with Dr Attaullah Wahidyar, senior Policy and Program advisor, Ministry of education, Afghanistan on the sidelines of two days international conference on Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects May 10th 2017.

<sup>92</sup> Zabihullah Ghazi. "Closed Pakistan-Afghan Border Causes Pain, Trade Losses", Dawn February 28th, 2017 <https://www.voanews.com/a/closed-pakistan-afghan-border-causes-pain-trade-losses/3744162.html>

<sup>93</sup> Khwaja Muhammad Asif's tweet on 5th February 2018. [https://twitter.com/KhawajaMASif?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/KhawajaMASif?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)

<sup>94</sup> "Border fence slowly pacing its way through treacherous Durand line" The Express Tribune (2017) <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1535299/border-fence-slowly-pacing-way-treacherous-durand-line/>

<sup>95</sup> Interview with Maj. Gen @ Ijaz Hussain Awan (HI) on the sidelines of a two days international conference on Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects May 10th, 2017.

<sup>96</sup> Interview with Musa Khan Jalalzai, A US based Afghan national who has numerous books on the borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan and regularly contributes in daily newspapers 23rd November 2017.

<sup>97</sup> Interview with Dr Noreen Naseer, Assistant professor Department of Political Science University of Peshawar 23rd December 2017.

forced to take this step as infiltration was a serious threat to Pakistan's security.<sup>98</sup>

Others disagree that fencing will make much of a difference while emphasizing that its cost on the human element and on the relationship with Afghanistan will be too high. Pushtoon Intellectual and former Awami National Party (ANP) Parliamentarian, Latif Afridi does not consider fencing as a viable solution to stop cross border infiltration. He argues that fences never solve issues between states and unilateral measures will further de-escalate bilateral ties with Afghanistan with serious implications for the region. Instead, tackling terrorism needs a commonly devised approach encompassing all elements. This requires a radical change in Pakistan's foreign policy, respect for Afghan sovereignty and non-interference in Afghan internal affairs.<sup>99</sup> Similarly, the ANP leader and former Senator Afrasaib Khattak is of the view that fencing the border is primarily military driven and needs to be debated in the parliament as local people have not been consulted which is causing alienation among them. Additionally, it is not earning Pakistan any goodwill in Afghanistan.<sup>100</sup>

Some interviewees emphasized on keeping the human element at the forefront. They argue that fencing will not stop militant infiltration but rather, it will divide the tribes living along the border. In an interview with Voice of America Pushto Service, Pakistan's former Ambassador to Afghanistan, Rustam Shah Mohmand said that fencing will have no major counterterrorism impact. However, it will violate "easement rights," which recognize the right to free movement of tribes along the border. It will thus harm millions for a few terrorists who can easily find new ways to move across the border".<sup>101</sup> Instead, ending no-go areas and giving comprehensive constitutional and economic uplift to the border region of Fata can help in improving the security situation. In this context, Dr. Fazal Saeed argues that, *"The recent measures taken by Pakistan pose no good gesture. It is obviously going to add to the misery of local people. The no-go areas with no*

*direct constitutional control in the areas of FATA provide edifice to militant organizations. Elimination of non-state actors, promotion of better ties between the two governments, economic activities and trust building are alternatives to fencing."*<sup>102</sup> Ambassador (Retd.) Muhammad Sadiq suggests that it is time to debunk the myths linked with the Durand Line. Fencing the border will not stop criminal infiltration. The legal crossings should be made easier and not problematic, which will otherwise alienate the people. Additionally, the colonial system of Frontier Crimes Regulation (FCR) needs structural reforms to make the border region safer.<sup>103</sup>

### Perspective of the Local Population:

Based on the above, it becomes critical to assess the perspective of the local population, who are the most important stakeholders. Like members of civil society, there is no consensus about fencing among the local population living in the border regions. The people living very close to the border areas generally support fencing while those living away from the border are skeptical about new management initiatives.

During interviews with local people in the area of Charamang and Mahmond in Bajaur Agency near the Pak-Afghan border, they said that they are in favour of proper management of the border as TTP's Qari Zia group had bases very near to the Pak-Afghan border in the Kunar province, from where they launched cross border attacks. Moreover once the Pakistan Army started fencing the area, the number of attacks reduced.<sup>104</sup> In an interview with Shah G from Kurram Agency, he stated that *"the majority of people support proper border management as the emergence of ISIS is a worry for the Shia community of Kurram Agency. The fencing and border management will stop their infiltration into the area"*.<sup>105</sup>

Similarly, according to Anwarullah Khan, a Dawn News reporter in Bajaur Agency, *"fencing is the only option for the Pakistani military to safeguard the border. Establish-*

<sup>98</sup> Interview with Rehmanullah, BBC Corresponding in Peshawar, 10th November 2017.

<sup>99</sup> Interview with Advocate Latif Afridi, Pushtoon Intellectual and Ex Parliamentarian, 22nd December 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Interview with Advocate Latif Afridi, Pushtoon Intellectual and Ex Parliamentarian, 22nd December 2017.

<sup>101</sup> Abubakar Siddique, "Can A Fence Help In Fighting Terrorism In Pakistan And Afghanistan?", *Ghandaraha* (November 08, 2017):3 <https://gandharah.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-pakistan-durand-line-fence/28842512.html>

<sup>102</sup> Interview with Dr Fazal Saeed, An Islamabad based researcher, associated with Fata Research Centre 6 January 2018

<sup>103</sup> Interview with Ambassador @ Muhammad Sadiq, former ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan and former National Security Secretary on the side lines of 6th International conference *Dynamics of Change in Pak-Afghan region: Politics on Borderland* 20 August 2017

<sup>104</sup> Interview with local people in Bajour Agency 12 November 2017

<sup>105</sup> Interview with Shah G (Name changed due to security reasons) Peshawar 29 December 2017



ment of new posts and other modern surveillance means are necessary to manage the border effectively".<sup>106</sup> A local tribal chief from Bajaur agency, (who wished to remain unnamed due to security issues) goes a step further and says that *"the tribal people have suffered a lot from the free movement of all kinds of militants. Pakistan should have fenced the border much earlier."*<sup>107</sup>

In contrast, Fazal Malik, a resident of the border region is of the opinion that border management is a bilateral issue and both states must build a level of trust with each other. Unilateral measures will further complicate the issue by affecting the social and economic lives of the already marginalized people living here.<sup>108</sup>

Others consider that a soft border management approach has more benefits for both the neighbors. According to Illam Khan, providing easy access to the markets of Afghanistan and Pakistan can change the violent motives into peaceful ones while fencing will only further create a love for irredentism. Instead, a systematic management approach will solve the problem by improving business opportunities on both sides of the border.<sup>109</sup> Rizwan Shinwari goes a step further. He says that *"understanding the issues and respecting the sovereignty of each other is vital. Bi-lateral trade should be increased to mutually benefit each other. The region is now ungoverned, and it is creating a space for other unwanted forces. They can introduce other methodologies for managing it"*.<sup>110</sup>

## Conclusion:

As a result of increased cross border attacks by TTP militants, Pakistan decided to unilaterally manage the Pak-Afghan border through fences, trenches and other modern surveillance systems. However, this management plan has been rejected by Afghanistan. It argues that fencing the border unilaterally is illegal and will further alienate the local people. Pakistan conversely argues that these objections are meaningless as the security vacuum in the border region makes Pakistan vulnerable to terrorist attacks, and the purpose of the fence is only to stop TTP militants' infiltration from Afghanistan.

Expert opinion varies on fencing based on ethnic ties and trade issues related to the border. A larger number of intellectuals, experts and local people agree to fencing but with additional border management steps like involving local people, considering cross border ethnic linkages, and making legal entries easy on both sides of the border. For example, the local people at Torkham crossing point have the view that border management is essential, but the process is very complicated and lengthy and due to these restrictions, trade has dropped significantly leading to serious impact on the local people.<sup>111</sup>

Experts argue that the management process needs proper legislation as conceived in the IBM, which must be debated in the parliament. Some experts argue that Pakistan, as advocated in IBM, should seek the cooperation of Afghanistan and utilize other platforms like Tri-Partite Commission between the NATO-led ISAF, Afghanistan and Pakistan for better management of the border. According to some experts and local people, cross border movement – perceived as a real security issue – requires enhancing inter-agency and intra-agency cooperation among agencies deployed on both sides of the border as advocated in IBM. Local people also contend that other alternatives like involving the local people, greater people to people contact, and Fata mainstreaming through a massive economic integration program are more viable options which can stabilize the border region.

## Policy Recommendations:

Use the Integrated Border Management (IBM) model to improve border security and minimize illegal movement across the border through proper legislation regarding border management; institutional linkages and coordination among the various border agencies on both sides of the border as well as the involvement of communities living along the border; and by facilitating entries and bilateral trade through legal crossings.

Utilize diplomatic initiative to pressurize Afghanistan for establishing an effective joint border mechanism. Pakistan can use different regional and international platforms

<sup>106</sup> Interview with Anwerullah Khan, Dawn news reporter in Bajour Agency 10 December 2017

<sup>107</sup> Interview with Aslam Khan (Name changed due to security reasons) A tribal chief from Bajour Agency. 15 January 2018

<sup>108</sup> Interview with Fazal Malik, PhD student at University of Peshawar and a resident of border village, charming in Bajour Agency 11 December 2018

<sup>109</sup> Interview with Illam Khan, belongs from Bajour Agency is a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Peace and Conflict studies at National University of Science and Technology (NUST). 09 November 2017

<sup>110</sup> Rizwan Shinwari, from Khyber Agency, is a Ph.D. at the Centre for Peace and Conflict studies at National University of Science and Technology (NUST). 09th November 2017.

<sup>111</sup> Interviews with local people in Tarkham 18th November 2017.



such as the Tripartite Commission between the NATO-led ISAF, Afghanistan and Pakistan to convince Afghanistan to establish joint border mechanisms.

Stabilize and mainstream the border region through a comprehensive political and economic program as these areas are key to peace and stability of the country. Comprehensive social and economic aid is needed to help eliminate decades-long sense of alienation and deprivation among FATA residents, to be able to restore their trust.



Hanzala Khan teaches Politics at the Post Graduate College Khar, District Bajour, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

## Bibliography

Interview with Dr Attaullah Wahedyar, a senior Policy and Program advisor, Ministry of education, Afghanistan on the sidelines of two days international conference on "Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects" 10th May 2017.

Interview with Hidayatullah Sherzad, Afghan embassy political advisor, Islamabad, 10th December 2018.

Interview with Sayed. Mehdi Munadi, Head of Research, Centre for Strategic Studies (CSS) Kabul, Afghanistan, on the sidelines of two days international conference on "Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects" 10th May 2017.

Interview with Rehmanullah, BBC Corresponding in Peshawar, 10th November 2017.

Interview with Rizwan Shinwari, from Khyber Agency, is a Ph.D. at the Centre for Peace and Conflict studies at National University of Science and Technology (NUST), 09th November 2017.

Interview with Advocate Latif Afridi, Pushtoon Intellectual and Ex Parliamentarian, 22nd December 2017.

Interview with Ambassador<sup>®</sup> Muhammad Sadiq, former ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan and former National Security Secretary on the side lines of 6th International conference "Dynamics of Change in Pak-Afghan region: Politics on Borderland" 20th August 2017.

Interview with Maj. Gen<sup>®</sup> Ijaz Hussain Awan (HI) on the sidelines of two days international conference on "Achieving peace in Afghanistan: Challenges and Prospects" 10th May 2017.

Interview with Musa Khan Jalalzai, Jalalzai is an US based Afghan national who has numerous books on the borderland between Pakistan and Afghanistan and regularly contributes in daily newspapers, 23rd November 2017.

Interview with Dr Noreen Naseer, Assistant professor Department of Political Science University of Peshawar, 23rd December 2017.

Interview with Anwerullah Khan, Dawn news reporter in Bajour Agency, 10th December 2017.

Interview with Fazal Malik, a PhD student at University of Peshawar and a resident of border village, charming in Bajaur Agency, 11th December 2018.

Interview with Illam Khan, a resident of Bajour Agency and a Ph.D. student at the Centre for Peace and Conflict studies at National University of Science and Technology (NUST), 09th November 2017.

Interviews with local people in Tarkham 18th November 2017.

Interview with local people in Bajour Agency 12th November 2017.

## Books and Articles

Akram, Zamir. "Pak-Afghan International Border and Regional Security" *Hilal* (2017).

Alburo, F. A. "Policy Coherence and Coordination for Trade Facilitation: Integrated Border Management, Single-Windows and other Options for Developing Countries" *The Asia-Pacific Research and Training Network on Trade working Paper Series No 57* (2008): 16.

Alper, D. K. and Bryant Hammond. "Stakeholder Views on Improving Border Management," Research Report, No. 8, Border Policy Research Institute, Western Washington University, Bellingham, United States (December 2009)1-60. <http://thetbwg.org/downloads/stakeholderviews.pdf>

- Asif, K.A. Twitter (2018) [https://twitter.com/KhawajaMASif?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://twitter.com/KhawajaMASif?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor)
- "Border fence slowly pacing its way through treacherous Durand line" *The Express Tribune* (2017) <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1535299/border-fence-slowly-pacing-way-treacherous-durand-line/>
- Dastager, Ghulam. "The thin red line: Problems with controlling movement across the Pak-Afghan border" *Herald Dawn News* (2017). <https://herald.dawn.com/news/1153857>
- Ghazi, Zabihullah. "Closed Pakistan-Afghan Border Causes Pain, Trade Losses" *VOA News* February 28th, 2017. <https://www.voanews.com/a/closed-pakistan-afghan-border-causes-pain-trade-losses/3744162.html>
- "Guidelines for Integrated Border Management in Western Balkans," OSCE Secretariat (2007):6. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/21153/download?token=3IOSGDjf>
- Gul, Ayaz. "Planned Pakistan-Afghanistan Border Fence Moves Ahead Despite Objections" *VOA* (2017).
- Haroon, Sana. "Frontier of Faith" *C. Hurst & Co, United Kingdom* (2011): 5.
- Hilali, A. Z. "Fata: The Strategic Depth of Pakistan," *Margalla Papers* (2010): 10. [www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra\\_pub/.../02-FATA-The-Strat-Depth-of-Pakistan.pdf](http://www.ndu.edu.pk/issra/issra_pub/.../02-FATA-The-Strat-Depth-of-Pakistan.pdf)
- "Integrated Border Management, Global Facilitation Partnership for Transportation and Trade," *The UN Trade Facilitation Network* (June 2005):7. <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/file/21153/download?token=3IOSGDjf>
- "Karzai opposed to border landmines" *Aljazeera* (2007). <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/asia/2007/01/2008525123159104264.html>
- Khan, Amina. "Pak-Afghan Relations after devastating Terror Attacks in Pakistan" *Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad* (2017).
- Khan, Ismail. "Military pushing ahead with Afghanistan border fencing" *Dawn* (2017). <https://www.dawn.com/news/1379690>
- Nusrat, Rabia and Zulfiqar Ali Shah. "Afghanistan's Cross-border Trade with Pakistan and Iran and the Responsibility for Conflict-sensitive Employment," *Boon International Center for Conversion* (2017). [https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx\\_bicctools/bicc\\_workPaper\\_04\\_2017.pdf](https://www.bicc.de/uploads/tx_bicctools/bicc_workPaper_04_2017.pdf)
- "Pakistan starts fencing Afghanistan border in high-threat zones," *Reuters*, March 27, 2017
- Qureshi, S. M. "Pakhtunistan: The Frontier Dispute between Afghanistan and Pakistan" *Pacific Affairs*, 39, No. 2 (2006):34. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2755184>
- Rahi, Arwin. "A Counterproductive Afghan-Pakistan Border Closure" *The Diplomat* (2017). <https://thediplomat.com/2017/03/a-counterproductive-afghan-pak-border-closure/>
- Shah, M. A. *The Foreign Policy of Pakistan Ethnic Impacts on Diplomacy 1947-1994* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1997):181.
- Siddique, Abubakar. "Can A Fence Help In Fighting Terrorism In Pakistan And Afghanistan?" *Ghandaraha* (2017):3. <https://gandharara.rferl.org/a/afghanistan-pakistan-durand-line-fence/28842512.html>
- Yousafzai, Shahabullah. "New rules hinder trade with Afghanistan at Torkham" *The Express Tribune*, (2017). <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1549362/2-new-rules-hinder-trade-afghanistan-torkham/>
- Yousafzai, Shahabullah. "Pakistan Army has Satellite Proof of Afghan Involvement in Cross-Border Terrorism" *The Express Tribune*, (2017). <https://tribune.com.pk/story/1413533/pak-army-satellite-proof-afghan-involvement/>

## In Conversation With

### Mr. Danish Zakir, Deputy Secretary Services, Sindh

#### *Debunking the truths about policy implementation failures in Pakistan*

By Naidah Aqeel



Bureaucracy is deeply involved in the articulation and shaping of policies because it involves the identification of the policy problems and policy agenda. The policy process involves close cooperation between bureaucrats and political executives. The interview focuses on the changes in policy norms over the years, the flaws in policy implementation, and how bureaucrats are handling it.

Mr. Danish Zakir is Deputy Secretary Services, Government of Sindh. His duties relate to transfer and postings of civil servants and framing policies about service matters of civil servants. He has also been part of the Shoaib Suddle Commission in 2014. This commission's sole purpose is to give judgments for the minorities and their well-being. For instance, to work on the progress of the quota system, education, and how it is structured. This conversation with Mr. Zakir helps in understanding what the government has done for the minorities and how the bureaucratic structure ought to work in his opinion.

#### 1. What are the reasons behind the lack of policy implementation in Pakistan?

Policy implementation in Pakistan has always been a challenge because of various factors. Firstly, policy implementation requires coordinated effort between different government departments, lack of coordination due to overlapping functions and competing jurisdiction of department leads to a staleness between departments or passing of the buck. Hence, there should be a clear responsibility for policy implementation and preset Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be followed up by effective monitoring.

Secondly, policy implementation should have a predefined period to achieve outcomes that a particular policy envisions.

Lastly, a particular policy that leads to the provision of public goods should continue regardless of a change in government. Successive governments should weigh the pros and cons of policies and programs implemented by the previous government before scraping them off.

#### 2. What policy implementation for the minorities should the government make to avoid further failures?

The critical aspect of policy implementation lies at the policy planning stage. Effective and scientific policy planning is imperative for policy implementation. The targets, outcomes, and KPIs for a particular program should be realistic, quantifiable, and concrete. Furthermore, in this digital age, policy implementation should be aided by the use of IOT technologies.

Digitalization of problem-solving in policy formation should be enforced. Sensors, geo-tagging, biometric devices, and data science techniques should be employed in problem identification, policy formation, policy implementation, and monitoring.

In addition, the government needs to approach public policy in a scientific manner which is the need of the hour. It is no longer viable for public policy to be driven by conventional wisdom, experience, and intuition alone.

Policy formulation should be data-driven and evidence-based.

### 3. In the selection process of civil servants, how accurately does the quota system work in Pakistan?

Recruitment processes in the federal and provincial governments have their own rules and quotas.

Selection in the federal services, i.e. The Central Superior Services (CSS) has provincial quotas for all provinces and territories of Pakistan based on population. It is because CSS represents the entire federation and plays a critical role in national cohesion and unity. The CSS also has quotas for women and minorities that depend on the provincial quota and the seats offered in the CSS in a particular year.

The quota system for women and minorities is effectively applied in the recruitment of federal and provincial civil servants. In addition, the Supreme Court of Pakistan had formed the Shoaib Suddle Commission. The commission works closely with the provincial governments to ensure that quotas for minorities are implemented in hiring and recruitment in provincial departments. The commission recently advised the government to mention the clauses for recruitment of minorities quotas when advertising job opportunities in a newspaper.

### 4. How often do the policies regarding civil servant recruitment change and what is the role of a bureaucrat in their formation and implementation?

Policies regarding the recruitment of civil servants keep changing to achieve policy outcomes. The Establishment Division, the Services, and General Administration Department in the provinces make rules for the recruitment of civil servants.

Bureaucrats or Civil Servants serving in the Establishment Division frame recruitment rules and policies in consultation with other divisions and departments in the light of laws and rules such as the Civil Servants Act, 1973.

## About the Interviewer



*Naidah is currently an Mphil student at CPPG. Her research interests include women rights and minority rights.*

## CPPG Events Overview

### Why Think Tanks Matter: A Virtual Forum

CPPG in collaboration with CBS, LUMS, held a discussion on the importance of think tanks in policy discourse of Pakistan on January 29, 2021.

This event was a collaborative discussion among various representatives from Pakistani think tanks. The panelists in the event highlighted the importance of think tanks in policy discourse, scope, challenges, and solutions to development problems. For example, the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) has brought sufficient research material in the context of climate change and food security in light of public and policy discourse. The Alif Ailaan campaign was also successful in creating awareness and bringing to the public's attention the flaws in the education system. The data in the public domain is the outcome of think tanks' efforts and research.

Policymakers, academics, corporate sector, political parties, and society, according to panelists, should all be participating in policy making discourse. The formulation of the Environmental Policy Act 1997, and the debate around the construction of Orange Line trains damaging the heritage sites were all efforts of different think tanks, thus highlighting its importance in Pakistan's policy discourse.

The session also noted how think tanks create a forum for dialogue amongst the individuals and highlight the issues and concerns that have been distant from the media's limelight. Researchers aim to bring a more nuanced understanding to various issues in an objective manner.

The panelists also highlighted some of the main problems these organisations face. For instance, being associated with an academic institute could take away the independence of researchers as the administration continues to change the agendas that may not accord with the ideology of the think tank. The second was to find the appropriate skill set and achieve the funding and sponsors. Another significant challenge identified was the absence of long-term research orientation.

The discussion ended on a high note, with panelists emphasising the need of such organisations and agreeing on a single strategy. The role of think tanks must be strengthened as they are major contributors to evidence-based analysis, data collection and data-driven policy recommendations.

Event covered by Neha Malik

## The CPEC's impact on Pakistan's Cultural Hybridization through Media

Dr. Kiran Hassan, Research Associate Fellow at School of Advance Study, (London) and Coordinator Media Freedom Initiative at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies UK, was invited to deliver a talk on December 17, 2020.

Hassan began her talk by presenting her article on the new narrative of CPEC's media and cultural influence. She highlighted the prominence of China in the region and how the Chinese state is formulating policies to integrate people with their culture through media, academic fellowships, and language institutions.

Furthermore, she added, China is investing millions of dollars in technical support to the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) countries including Pakistan. Surveillance systems as part of 'smart cities' in Pakistan are being built by companies such as Huawei and ZTE. The joint media collaborations between China and Pakistan held through different TV shows, advertisements, and publications have created an environment of cultural exchange among the public. The Chinese newspaper "Huashang" in Pakistan hit 26,000 readers in the first edition, representing a sign of media effectiveness and popularity.

China has heavily invested in the technical field of Pakistan. Pakistan's step towards digitization has strong Chinese support. Zong, the second-largest data providing company, is owned by China. Chinese-owned Social Media Networks (SNS) (such as TikTok and WeChat) are widely used in Pakistan. The session noted that the 2019 CPEC media forum focused on combating fake news and tales affecting the CPEC.

In 2018, Pakistan and China agreed to collaborate in areas like culture, art, research, press, and publication. She pointed out; Chinese are opening five Confucius Institutes in Pakistan. People are studying the Chinese language to improve their living conditions and job chances, while social media sites are supporting CPEC. People are learning the Chinese language to improve their living conditions and job chances, while social media sites constantly appraise CPEC. China is presenting itself positively through

electronic and print media. Even China and Islam are very comfortable in the cultural exchange, contrary to the western discourse. This is evidenced through the number of marriages taking place between Chinese and Pakistani couples.

Dr. Kiran's research highlighted the significant ways in which cultural exchanges are taking place between China and Pakistan, indicating avenues for further exchange between the two countries.

Event covered by Mansoor Ahmad



## Evidence Based Policymaking during Covid: The Media and Government's Public Messaging

Mr. Bilal Lakhani is a recipient of the James A Wechsler Award for International Reporting and a graduate of Columbia University's Graduate School of Journalism. He has a decade long global corporate career in communications and is a senior columnist for the Express Tribune. CPPG invited Mr. Lakhani for a conversation with Ms. Saba Shahid on August 18, 2020.

Mr. Lakhani began by explaining that managing the Covid-19 pandemic has been a challenge for all governments globally. Public messaging globally made institutions and the public uncertain, not only in Pakistan. However, Pakistan has fared better than most countries and this is due to evidence-based policymaking and reliance on data. Strict lockdowns were against the social structure of the state: as widespread poverty, inequality and a large informal sector characterised by daily wagers made it impossible to shut down economic activity. The speaker highlighted that strategies of communicating effectively with the public were necessary as these helped complement the government's decisions with respect to the economy. Otherwise, a certain class could afford to change human behavior willingly, not those who have to leave the house for livelihood.

Mr. Lakhani emphasized the success of Pakistan handling the Covid-19 situation, which in an interview was appreciated by Bill Gates as well. The availability of demographic data was accessed through polio registrations data district by district, which proved reliable and relevant. On the other hand, opposition and private media responded to this behavior of the government as the confusion that caused distrust among the public. Despite all the pressures, the government followed the plan of evidence-based policymaking that proved healthy to the circumstances.

Event covered by Mansoor Ahmad

## Contestations of Pakistani National Identity: Are we moving towards a less religious, more inclusive identity?

CPPG, FC College at Madison, Wisconsin (virtually)

In 2019, I decided to form an FCCU panel for the prestigious Annual Conference on South Asia at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in the United States. I invited former and current FCCU colleagues to join in. The panel included Chairman Political Science Department Ryan Brasher, Associate Professor Department of History Dr. Umber bin Ibad, and a former FCCU colleague who has now settled in the US, Dr. Charles Ramsey. The conference was supposed to be held in October 2020.

The panel proposal was accepted and all four of us planned to meet at the beautiful campus in Madison, Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic intervened. Initially, the conference organizers thought there was no need to change plans as the conference was several months away but, as time passed, it was clear the pandemic was going to stay. So, the conference was canceled. The news was disappointing for all of us but what could any of us, or the conference organizers, do. We were told that the conference would be held in 2021. In 2021, the success of the vaccination drive in the US raised our hopes and we again started dreaming of meeting. However, out of an abundance of caution, the conference organizers decided that the conference would be held online. In summer 2021, Ryan also departed for the US. So, our panel was evenly split between Pakistan and the US.

Finally, the time arrived and the 49th Annual Conference on South Asia was held on October 20–24. Our panel was given the time slot of 3.45 pm to 4.30 pm CST on 23 October which was a very awkward time for Umber and me (1.45 am Sunday morning) but we were glad to, at last, be part of it. At the start of our panel, I introduced the participants and their papers, and then each one of us gave a paper presentation.

The first paper, by Dr. Ryan Brasher, explored the dynamics of the uncritical acceptance of patriotism and Pakistani national identity by Christian and Muslim students in Lahore. Dr. Ryan's research, counterintuitively, found

that Christian students were likely to exhibit high levels of both uncritical patriotism and adherence to national identity. More surprisingly, his surveys showed that ethnic cleavages were more salient than religious ones as an ethnic minority (Pashtuns) students professed considerably less attachment to uncritical patriotism as compared to their Punjabi (Muslim and Christian) compatriots.

The second paper, by Dr. Umber bin Ibad, examined the increasing controversies of national memory because of globalization. He questioned the singularity of the state-held political imagination. He argued that the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor showed that the diasporic influences, tied with local voices, have created the potential for a non-antagonistic reimagination. Framing the study within the politics of memory literature, Dr. Umber's study unpacked the multiple threads of remembering the nationalistic heritage of contemporary Pakistan.

The third paper by me studied the contestation of national identity by comparing two Pakistan Army Museums, opened half a century apart in Rawalpindi and Lahore. I, based on academic literature, argued that Army museums can provide useful insights to understand how the Pakistani military wanted to construct or shape the identity of the country it controls. Many authors have argued that the military's narrative was not evolving and it continued to show a strong proclivity for Islam and a hatred for India. My comparative analysis, however, demonstrated that the narratives weaved in the two museums using exhibits, galleries, and selection of heroes are not the same. The army museum in Lahore, opened in 2017, was less Islamic and anti-India and promotes a more inclusive, territorially-based national identity.

The last paper, by Dr. Charles Ramsey, unpacked the ideological underpinnings of the movement away from Islamism in Pakistan. The author explores the concept of post-Islamism and expounds on how the religious thought of Ahmad Ghamidi, an Islamic scholar, could serve as both a harbinger and a catalyst for a new national narrative. The author also contrasted and rejected Islamism as an accurate descriptor of the aims of the traditional Hanafi schools of thought prevalent in South Asia.

After the presentations, there was a lively question-answer session. In the end, I thanked all the participants.

Event covered by Dr. Raja M. Ali Saleem

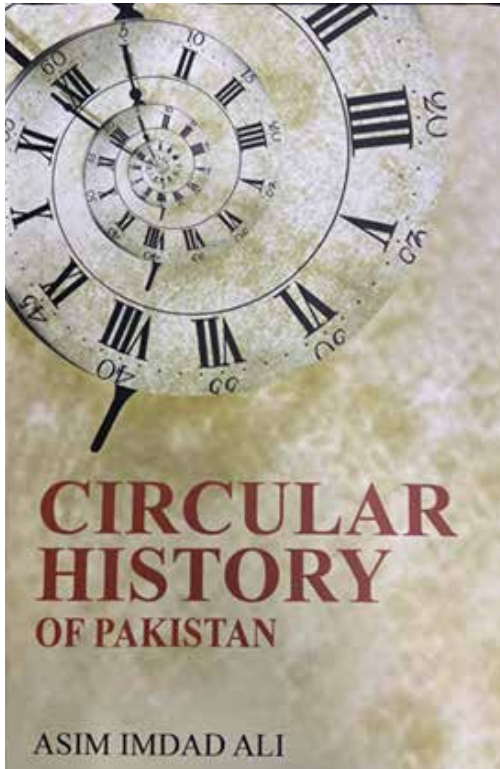
## About the Author

*Dr. Saleem is an Associate Professor at CPPG. His research interests include religious nationalism, politics of Pakistan and Turkey, Islamist politics, and financial management.*

## Reviews and Recommendations

### Circular History of Pakistan

Book Review by Dr. Saeed Shafqat



Asim Imdad Ali, *Circular History of Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2021)

Asim Imdad Ali, who joined the Civil Services of Pakistan in the early 1990s as a DMG officer (now labeled as the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS)), having served for about a decade and half. He opted out to enter the corporate world and excelled there as well. He has crafted a spectacular, wide ranging, and satirically innovative narrative that circles around Pakistan while also exposing awkward truths about British rule of undivided India and its lingering effects that continue to haunt and chaperon the region. The book is based on his observations, reflections and interpretations of Pakistan. Lamenting the fact that from inception to contemporary times, in each decade the actors may change but the play and setting continues to stay and reappears. Stylistic expression of the prose is absorbing and for some may evoke images of V.S Naipaul --the parables, metaphors and fictionalization of events and personalities are provocative and tantalizing. For example, which Pakistani leaders come to your mind

if a reference is made to Cromwell and Napoleon or if you are a fruit lover, from the 'Guava Orchards of Larkana' to 'Java Plum' from Gowalmandi Lahore? The author leaves it to your imagination and I will also encourage you to read the book and discover...

The title of the book is deceptive as it ventures to reveal and untangle more than the 'circular history' of Pakistan. The book provides insights on the rivalries and complexities of our relations with the neighboring states, and the intricacies of interactions with the great powers.

Asim has divided the book in three parts, the first part is titled, 'Our Circular History', which has eleven chapters, the second part is titled, 'Chronicles of Our Times', which has thirteen chapters and the third part is titled, 'Future Panoramic Realities', which comprises of eight chapters. Although each part is distinct and there is an underlying theme which evokes 'challenge and response thesis' of the legendary British historian Arnold J. Toynbee--societies and civilizations, which are unable to meet and respond to the challenges of the times, decline, wither away and vanish.

In that continuum Asim reminds the readers that the 'guardian angels' and their 'plantlets' continue to repeat the same mistakes, do not learn and mend their ways. Hence in the case of Pakistan, an erosion of values and institutions is visible and this emerging trend is perpetuating the vicious cycle of corruption, misgovernance, and people are losing faith in the very structure and functioning of our governments. Asim cautions this erosion and decline must be arrested if we care about our future generations. He asserts, we must learn from the past and avoid repeating the same mistakes and 're-enactments' of tragedies of our 'circular history' but how? There is no clear answer.

As noted above the book is an engaging read, however, I want to draw the attention of the readers to chapters 7 & 8 and chapters 23 and 24 in particular. In chapter 7, while analyzing the, 'ever changing tunes of politicians', Asim brings to light the role of "guardian angels" in making the selection of political elites, modeling their political and financial fortunes and in the process, how military, bureaucracy and politicians create an illusion of democracy and demonize the 'respect for vote' and ridicule, 'we

the people'. He digs into policy making in colonial times and astutely recalls for us that Guardian Angels are not a post independence creation but the British spawned this monster of 'doctrine of necessity' and military supremacy, when in 1943, Lord Linlithgow, a civilian was replaced by, Lord Archibald Wavell, Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army, as Viceroy of India: warily, Asim remarks, '*the Raj itself gave the top military man the top civilian role!*'

In the post-independence period the Americans replaced the British as new patrons. The Guardian Angels were quick to acquire training and expanded and institutionalized their supremacy through, what Asim calls 'external geo-rentals', —latching on to America in its mission to 'contain Communism'. Thus rulers of Pakistan have developed a habit of 'rent-seeking' through its geo-strategic location. This helped the 'Napoleons and Cromwells' to implant the 'Yes Minister' politicians. The Guardian Angels, and the implantations in their own ways worked overtime to tame and politicize and corrupt the bureaucracy (presumably, 'naive and innocent').

Continuing on the theme, Asim provides an insightful and critical appraisal of the bureaucracy's evolution, development and in his assessment 'decay' (Chapter 8). It is reflective and experiential, therefore, he divides it into seven ages, from 'the age of Steel-Frame' to the 'age of Mandarins to Napoleon' and fast forward to 'the age of Business' and according to him each age shows signs of decadence, thus he ends it on the promise of a better future for the bureaucracy by seeking refuge in a philosopher's quote; 'While I breathe, I hope'.

In that spirit, he highlights the competitive and merit driven origins of Indian Civil Service in the 1860's, acknowledging that it was meant to rule, collect revenue, maintain order and in the process craft semblance and substance of 'just rule' for the British Raj. The narrative on the decline, decay and corruption of 'men of integrity' that Philip Woodruff so assiduously built in *Men Who Ruled India* resonates in his chapter as well. Yet, like many of the ICS/CSP and eventually DMG/PAS 'breeds' he finds it hard to fathom and own the 1973 Civil Services Reforms and the Common Training Program (CTP) that it created, thus for the DMG/PAS *wallas* the vicious 'circular history' endures. Conceptually, it is fallacious to assume that civil services could be 'apolitical'. Late Aminullah Chaudhry—a

CSP and author of *Political Administrators: The Story of the Civil Service of Pakistan*, has judiciously remarked; "*Given the powers that they were equipped with, members of the ICS/CSP could not but act to perpetuate the status quo*", he continues to add, "*The civil service is as politicized as the armed forces, big business, lawyers, doctors, and educationists, the feudal and trading classes*". Ironically, such is the 'circular history of Pakistan', how can we deliberate on creating an alternative to this 'path dependency'?

In the third part, 'Future Panoramic Realities', Asim departs from the domestic to global and that obviates the 'circular history' and widens the range of his interpretation. Analyzing the superpower rivalry, he supports the emerging scholarly consensus that the balance of power is drifting away from the West and towards the East. While comparing India and China, he is torn between his liberal thinking and pragmatic realism. He is sympathetic and favorably inclined towards Indian democracy and its growing fault lines do alarm him to raise the critical question; is India destined to falter like Pakistan's 'circular history'? Grudgingly this leads him to acknowledge the rise of China. While recognizing the merits of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Asim digs into the history of Silk Road and draws our attention to two game-changing invasions—the Mongol Invasion (1258 AD) and the Ottoman's conquest of Constantinople (1453 AD) that disrupted the flow of trade through the Muslim lands, from Europe to Asia. Asim incisively remarks; "*The European businesses could not use the old land routes to Asia*". That paved the way for the Europeans to turn towards the seas and led to the emergence of the 'age of discovery' and rise of colonialism. By reviving the Silk Road—BRI, China is restoring that 'disruption' the Mongols and Ottomans created!

For future generations—Pakistani youth, Asim recommends investment in quality education, skills development, change in attitude orientation and technology. Are there any takers?

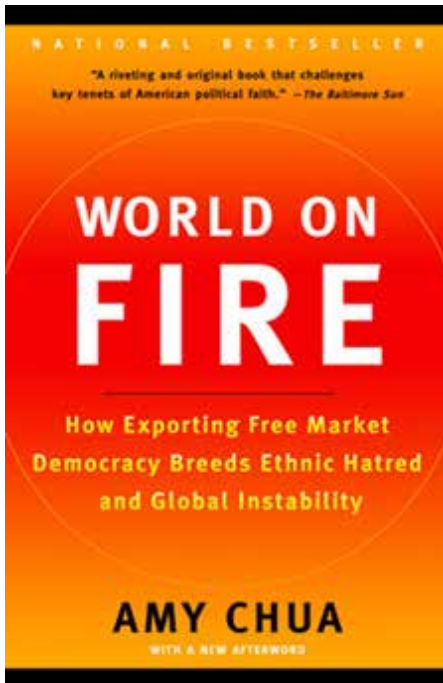
Imdad Asim Ali's, *Circular History of Pakistan*, is a commendable effort, highly engaging, and an insightful book that makes the history of contemporary Pakistan and its relations with the outside world both entertaining and thought provoking; academia, policy makers, media persons, business groups, university students and most importantly, civil and military bureaucrats would find it

informative and useful.

## About the Author

*Dr. Saeed Shafqat is Professor and Founding Director of CPPG*

## Book Recommendation: World on Fire



**World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability** by Amy Chua (2002).

By Neha Malik

Amy Chua is a well-known American lawyer, legal writer, and scholar. She is John M. Duff Jr. Professor of Law at Yale Law School. Her areas of expertise include international business, ethnic conflict, and globalisation. Her book *World on Fire: How Exporting Free Market Democracy Breeds Ethnic Hatred and Global Instability* was a New York Times bestseller, and both *The Economist* and the UK's *Guardian* have named it one of the Best Books of the Year 2002.

In the book, Chua highlights the dark side of globalisation. She makes an argument of how there are winners and los-

ers of globalisation. Some countries have benefitted from this phenomenon, but developing countries had to deal with its consequences. As a result, a market-dominated minority emerged, contributing to socio-economic injustice, ethnic hatred, and regional instability. To support her arguments, she provides examples from Africa, Russia, and Southeast Asia. It is a must-read book as it highlights the adverse effects of globalisation and how different regions in the world are affected by it. Although the book was published almost twenty years ago, I believe it is still relevant, particularly since countries' dependency on one another in terms of international trade and investments has grown, influencing mainstream society on multiple levels: socially, politically, and economically. I would recommend this book as a must-read especially to have a better understanding of the rise of right-wing parties around the world, protectionist policies, and ethnic conflicts.

## Sources

Information about Amy Chua <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/authors/4934/amy-chua/>

Image Source

<https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/27643/world-on-fire-by-amy-chua/>



## Student and Alumni News

### Student News

Ashab Lodhi  
Executive MA Class of 2021



Ashab was part of the delegation of **Future Team Pakistan (FTP)**. He attended different workshops on youth competence and empowerment at **EurAsia Global Youth Forum 2021**. He was the only delegate from Pakistan and presented on **The Role of Human Potential (Career-Skills-Institutes And Job Market)** at the forum's closing.

#### Experience at CPPG

"Looking back at the time, I see that there was a lot of help from my institution and mentors in grooming me for this time. Of course, if it were not for CPPG, I would not have been able to get here, and for that, I would be forever indebted to them. The informative courses enabled me to perform on a higher level at the EurAsia Global Youth Forum, 2021, Russia, on various discussions and were the reason I was one of the standouts in a forum that had no less than seventy-seven other country's delegates.

In my personal experience, Russia and Pakistan have much in common, with similar levels of hospitality, struggles in life, a traditional and cultural approach in the society and similar expectations of the youth. Their main problems include quality education, quality of life, mental health, lack of interest in climate change, sexism, unemployment, the gap between genders due to World War II, and environmental protection in Russia and Europe.

When it comes to quality of life, young people are eager for financial independence, but they acquire it much later due to problems with finding a job. Many are hired

through connections and even if they find a job they are not registered according to the requirements. They do not have enough free time, and a great deal of work is handed to them because they are "new and youthful". Also, there are no job opportunities for youth in rural areas or small cities. That's why nearly everyone moves to Moscow, Saint Petersburg, or other big cities.

The issues were discussed openly at the forum by the delegates from Russia and 77 other countries that come under EurAsia (Europe-Asia). The solutions discussed included the importance to have unity among the youth from around the world in raising their voices and giving a wake-up call to their governments, the ones in authority, and the ones who can bring about change. It also was discussed that awareness is the key to every problem as awareness brings understanding, and understanding brings change.

The Russian youth's openness with delegates, as well as their desire to interact with and learn from them, was particularly inspiring, as it demonstrated Russia's gradual evolution toward inclusivity.

One thing is for sure the youth is eager for change, they are ready to fight for their rights, they look to the future with a lot of energy and enthusiasm, although it is not easy at all."

Aleena Afzal  
MPhil Class of 2022



Aleena from the MPhil program got a Fulbright scholarship at New York University for MA in Political Science. She was also an intern at CPPG.



### Experience at CPPG

" I started out as an intern at CPPG in 2019 after graduating with a degree in history. Almost a year later, I went on to pursue an MPhil in Public Policy here. My time at CPPG has played a significant role in helping me get where I am today. During my time here, I have had the opportunity to learn from the best of the best and I couldn't be more grateful! Studying Comparative Politics at NYU as a Pakistani student so far has made me realise that there is an immense gap in accessible research from Pakistan and that we have a long road ahead of us. However, that gap has also allowed me to bring the Pakistani perspective to the table in my classes. NYU is known for its diverse student body and inclusivity, more often than not, this has made me feel at home. I hope to make an impactful contribution to the research community while representing Pakistan for the two years that I am here."

## Alumni News

### Zainab Altaf MPhil Class of 2016

Zainab Altaf is currently the Communication, Community, and Gender Specialist for PICIP II, a Government of the Punjab and Asian Development Bank project for improving municipal service delivery in 7 cities. She also holds a doctoral place at the University of Edinburgh's prestigious School of Social and Political Sciences.



"As a development practitioner, I owe the ability to synthesise policy frameworks with the situational context to CPPG's interdisciplinary approach to teaching public policy and governance. The Centre's focus on research methodologies gave me not just the skill set, but also the confi-

dence, to undertake empirical research in Gilgit-Baltistan, a project that informed my subsequent work in the education sector in Punjab. CPPG does not simply teach the theoretics of public policy. It also presents its students with the opportunity to interact with leading development practitioners and academics through policy dialogues and seminars. Participating in those consultations empowered me to engage with not just policy makers, but also the diverse socio-economic communities impacted by policy decisions. The hands-on learning experience at CPPG has enabled me to conduct multiple FGDs, write policy briefs, and provide evidence-based recommendations to policy makers on topics as diverse as innovation in education, local governance, and sustainable livelihoods"

### Ali Murad Khokhar MPhil Class of 2017



"I am an Educationist now. I started my own school with the name of The Cédre School, after graduating from CPPG back in 2018, Alhumdulillah now is running at its full capacity. It's because of CPPG that I was able to identify the main problem in our country and that is the lack of good education at primary level. Also it's because of CPPG that I am imparting the skills of research and critical evaluation to our young generation. It is for the first time that in a small city like Kasur, people are getting education based on modern techniques at a very low fee. Just three years in this profession and we are already competing with big names such as City School, LGS and American Lyceum".

## Rizwan Dawood MPhil Class of 2019



"Being an alumnus of MPhil CPPG Batch'19, I am currently serving as a full time lecturer in the department of History & Pakistan Studies, FCCU. CPPG has enabled me to analyze the issues critically.

The course that I am teaching in FCC mainly focuses on the history, present and the future aspects of Pakistan. CPPG equipped me with the knowledge that aids me to conduct discussions in the classroom and maintain a healthy environment that enables learning at both ends. From political leadership to governance and economy to international relations, along with globalization and institution building, this post-graduate program revolves around various areas that are relevant to the subject that I teach. Moreover, the workshops/seminars that CPPG conducted further helped me gain a broader perspective.

I am utilizing my research skills and polishing them further by working under the supervision of Director CPPG, Dr. Saeed Shafqat on a monograph that will soon be published."

## Dr. Ayra Indrias Patras Executive MA Class of 2011



"My time at CPPG in pursuit of a degree in Public Policy and Governance has broadened my prospects. I have been immensely motivated and encouraged by my Professors at CPPG to pursue Ph.D. in Gender Studies. Although my academic year ended in 2011 at CPPG, the constant support of academic advice from my Professors was extremely helpful in my doctoral studies too. CPPG has equipped me with the quest for intellectual inquiry. My interaction with diverse public and private organizations through various seminars at CPPG has allowed me to build my networking and social capital skills. Returning to FCCU with a Ph.D. degree in hand and being positioned as Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science is a rewarding experience for me."

## Kanwar Anwaar Ali Executive MA Class of 2020



"I am currently working in the Planning and Development Board, Government of Punjab as Deputy Secretary, which is an apex body for development planning in the Punjab where challenges about evidence-based Public Policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and appraisal of policies and programs for development in the Punjab Province are a daily task list. Doing Executive Masters in Public Policy at CPPG, FC College was instrumental in aiding my professional career and honed my policy analysis skills. I was allowed to contribute to human development and social protection policy reforms in the Punjab province."

## Faculty & Staff

**Dr. Saeed Shafqat** | Professor & Director  
> PhD University of Pennsylvania  
> saeedshafqat@fccollege.edu.pk

**Dr. Sikandar Hayat** | Professor  
> PhD Quaid-d-Azam University  
> sikandarhayat@fccollege.edu.pk

**Raheem ul Haque** | Sr. Research Fellow  
> Masters Intl. Public Policy, SAIS,  
Johns Hopkins University  
> raheemhaque@fccollege.edu.pk

**Dr. Rabia Chaudhry**  
> PhD Centre for Development Research,  
University of Bonn  
> rabiachaudhry@fccollege.edu.pk

**Dr. Raja Ali Saleem** | Associate Professor  
> PhD George Mason University  
> alisaleem@fccollege.edu.pk

**Saba Shahid** | Research Fellow  
> MSc in Local Economic Development,  
London School of Economics and Political  
Science  
> sabashahid@fccollege.edu.pk

**Shaleem Khokhar** | Administrative Associate  
> BSc (Hon) Economics. FC College  
> shaleemkhokhar@fccollege.edu.pk

## Contact Us

**Centre for Public Policy & Governance (CPPG)**  
E – 017 & 018, F.C. College (A Chartered University)  
Feroz pur road, Lahore – 54600  
Phone: 042. 9923 1581 – 88 Ext. 388  
Email: cpgg@fccollege.edu.pk, <http://cpgg.fccollege.edu.pk>  
Facebook: cpggfcu



CENTRE FOR PUBLIC POLICY  
AND GOVERNANCE

Copyright © Centre for Public Policy and Governance. All rights reserved.

## Board of Advisors

- : **Dr. William B. Eimcke** is the founding director of the Picker Center for Executive Education of Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.
- : **Dr. Salman Humayun**, Institute of Policy and Social Sciences, Education and Public Policy.
- : **Dr. Saba Gul Khattak**, former Executive Director SDPI specializes in comparative politics and state theory.
- : **Dr. Anjum Khurshid** (MBBS, MPAFF), Assistant Professor and Director of the Health and Behavioural Risk Research Centre, University of Missouri.
- : **Dr. Naushin Mahmood**, Senior Researcher at Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) specializes in demography and population issues.
- : **Javed Masud**, former Managing Director and CEO The Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited.
- : **Dr. Jack Nagel**, Professor of Political Science, Business and Public Policy, Wharton, University of Pennsylvania.
- : **Jean-Luc Racine**, Senior CNRS Fellow at the Center for South Asian Studies, School for Advanced Studies in Social Sciences, Paris focuses on geopolitics of South Asia.
- : **Babar Sattar**, LL.M, a Rhodes Scholar who writes on social, political and legal issues and runs a law firm AJURIS.
- : **Dr. Ayesha Siddiqua** is a security studies expert specializing in defense decision-making and civil-military relations in South Asia.

### Student's Quarterly

Saeed Shafqat Research Centre for Public  
Policy and Governance  
Email: cpggquarterly@fccollege.edu.pk



Forman Christian College  
(A Chartered University)

Student's Quarterly.Research&News