

Pakistan and India Use of Soft Power in Afghanistan- A New Foreign Policy Approach

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Abstract

The international system is dynamic in nature and since the evolution of globalization and communication technology, shift in terms of power and policy has occurred. States are now inclined to establish soft power in order to pursue their interests. Similarly, India has used its soft power policies as a foreign policy tool in order to dominate regional politics and expand its presence in the region. India has its interests in Afghanistan for a very long time. Afghanistan's geo-strategic importance provides many benefits to India in political, strategic and economic terms. Indian policy makers want India's foothold in Afghanistan in order to achieve its strategic objectives, easing their way to achieve the regional power status and globally to become an active emerging power. Conversely, Pakistan and Afghanistan share geostrategic and cultural bonding. India's increasing influence in Afghanistan troublesome for Pakistan due to long border namely Durand line it shares with Afghanistan on west, hence, any affair in latter will directly affect the former. Over the years, Pakistan has always been suspicious about Indian presence, as it believes that India's growing influence will marginalize Pakistan's role in Afghanistan. Despite being blessed with rich culture, ancient civilization heritage, and religious similarities, Pakistan has failed to project its soft power policies. If Pakistan adopts soft power as a foreign policy tool it will not only help Pakistan to increase its presence in Afghanistan but will also help to improve its image globally. This research is qualitative, and exploratory in nature. Where the data will collect from secondary sources like articles, journals, official documents and books. Thus, this research study explores the soft power projection of India in Afghanistan, the implications of India's soft power on Pakistan and what should Pakistan do to overcome this situation.

Key Words

Soft power, foreign policy, Pakistan, India, security, South Asia, World Politics, International Relations, Economy, Terrorism, Culture

Introduction

In an anarchic nature of the world, states are engaged in maximizing power particularly militarily and economically in order to achieve security. As this anarchic nature has created self-help regime, thus every state is engaged to become

powerful in order to increase its influence and achieve its objectives. As stated by Kenneth Waltz, in his book, *Theory of International politics*, self-help leads to power maximizing behavior. Looking at this concept, states in the previous times have engaged in many wars by using hard power in order to achieve their security and goals. Hard power includes tangible resources such as armed forces and economic means in order to engage in military intervention, economic sanctions, and coercive diplomatic measurements. 1939 German invasion in Poland, 1991 UN economic sanctions against Iraq, 1965 and 1971 war between India and Pakistan are all prime examples of using hard power.

With the advent of time and especially the introduction of global information age, the nature of power has changed. Winning hearts and minds is crucial now. In the earlier times, the main concern for powerful states was warfare power in international politics was but as technologies have evolved, this concept has slowly changed.

Joseph Samuel Nye coined the term soft power in 1990, where He explained soft power as co-optive power which is the ability to get things done through cooperation and attraction instead of hard power. With the changing dynamics of technological revolution and power, states are now focusing on obtaining their interests through soft power in several manners. According to Joseph Nye, having power resources does not guarantee to achieve the outcome, for example, US unable to prevent 9/11 attacks and lost Vietnam war despite being militarily advanced and powerful country. In a realistic world, where self-help is mandatory, the importance of military force is still present, but its too costly for modern nation state system as compare to earlier states.

. Eventually, the other areas such as culture, values, ideas, communication have become more important. Due to the realization of soft power, states are including these areas as foreign policy tools to pursue and gain their objectives.

India is an emerging power in the region, hence it is extensively using soft power tools in its foreign policy to expand its influence both in regional and global affairs. India has its interest in Afghanistan for a very long time. For India, Afghanistan's geo-strategic importance provides many benefits to India in terms of political, strategic and economics. Indian policy makers want India's foothold in Afghanistan in order to achieve its strategic objectives and also ease their way to achieve the regional power status.

Because there is a deep bond between Pakistan and Afghanistan with respect to geostrategic importance and culture, hence India's use of soft power as its foreign policy tool in Afghanistan is a real concern for Pakistan. Any strategic, political or policy shift in Afghanistan directly effects Pakistan, especially when cause of the change is its arch rival India. Both India and Pakistan are engaged with each other in order to achieve their foothold in Afghanistan and for undermining the influence of one another. For this purpose, both have used different policies in order to achieve their respective objectives. Over the years, Pakistan has continuously blamed India for causing disruption in Baluchistan and marginalizing its role in Afghanistan. Pakistan despite having largest border and sharing traditional ties with Afghanistan, fails to project its soft power policies effectively. However, the current scenario highlights that India's influence is increased in Afghanistan due to their soft power policies.

As Joseph Nye claims that in order to achieve a specific objective, states must combine both hard and soft power i.e. smart power. Pakistan's foreign policy is

based on defense purposes and for this it uses hard power. As a result, There is a need of time for Pakistan to appropriately use soft power in such a way that it doesn't rely on its hard power alone. Soft power policies will not only help Pakistan to establish its presence in Afghanistan but will help to improve its image globally.

Objectives

Due to the changes in technological revolution, many states are now pursuing soft power policies as their foreign policy tool. In case of India-Pak relations with Afghanistan, both states want their influence in order to pursue their strategic objectives. India since 2001 is continuously trying to increase its footholds in Afghanistan, which is a major concern for Pakistan. Hence, The objective of this research is to study and explore the phenomenon and the importance of soft power viz a viz policy making. Even more, to explore the soft power projection of India in Afghanistan. Lastly to study and examine the implications of India's soft power on the foreign policy of Pakistan Hence the Questions arises are

1. India has immensely invested in Afghanistan using its soft power image and tools. What measures India has taken to enhance its soft power in Afghanistan since 2001?
2. What are the implications of India's employment of soft power in Afghanistan on the foreign policy of Pakistan?
3. How can foreign policy of Pakistan be reformed to incorporate an extensive role of soft power?

Methodology

Research methodology attempts to analyze, predict and interpret a phenomenon. All scientific research is based on principles and assumptions derived from epistemological and ontological foundations. One of the aims behind the research is to examine the importance of soft power as a foreign policy tool and to explore its projection by India. For this, the study is based on applied research to explain events through the application of accepted theory i.e., soft power. The soft power phenomenon its very nature is intangible and immeasurable especially when opposed to hard power; and hence, due to its immeasurable nature qualitative analysis approach will be applied. As the research focus on India's soft power projection in Afghanistan, an in-depth analysis will be made on the measures taken by India to enhance its soft power in region. This will be measured by the resources of soft power that are culture, foreign policy and political values as explained by Joseph in his theory. These resources of soft power can provide an in-depth information about India's soft power strategy and policy in Afghanistan. As qualitative research provides descriptive detail, hence it fits within this thesis. The study is exploratory in nature and use qualitative data to achieve the understanding of the problem. The research will exclusively use secondary resources in a wide range such as books, documents, research articles, presentations from conferences, journals and net browsing. The will selected on the quality, content, relevance and accuracy to the topic at hand. A focused approach to ensure absence of bias will be employed and for that reliable secondary sources will be used.

Discussion

Since the unfortunate event of 9/11, the dynamics of politics in Afghanistan has

changed. The Taliban are controlling some parts of Afghanistan and US forces still exist since 2001. The major change that has occurred is that new global and regional players have taken their positions in the region as well. Even though Afghanistan is an unstable country it is still providing numerous benefits to global as well as to regional powers. Every state is enhancing its influence in order to achieve their objectives. For example, Pakistan wants its influence in Afghanistan so it can achieve strategic depth against India.

On the other hand, US wants its foothold in the region so it can counter China's growing influence and India wants to gain access to Central Asian region and encircle Pakistan.

Pakistan and Afghanistan, both Muslim states with large ethnic Pashtun populations have not shared cordial relations in the past. Pakistan's involvement in Afghan affairs dates to the Soviet invasion in 1979 after that the reasons for unstable relationship between Pakistan and Afghanistan were mainly because of Durand Line issue. Afghanistan refuses to recognize the Durand Line as it cuts and divides the ethnic Pashtuns and Baloch people who live on both sides.

Another main reason for Pakistan to be involved in Afghanistan is because of India's growing presence. India's foreign policy always targets Afghanistan in strategic terms because of its proximity to Pakistan. To enhance its influence, India joined Treaty of Friendship in 1950 and signed various agreements in order to strengthen bilateral ties and establish peace between the two. Since Afghan miracle and USSR invasion India has increased its efforts to influence Afghanistan but the diplomatic tables turned against India with the rise of the Taliban. However, India established its link with Northern Alliance opposing the Taliban regime. In post 9/11, the US brought pro-Indian forces in Kabul and it became much easier for India to establish its footholds in Afghanistan. After 9/11 tragic attacks and US invasion in Afghanistan, India has successfully managed to strengthen its influence in Afghanistan, they not only maintain full time diplomatic relations, enhanced cultural interaction and provided huge help in terms of monetary aid for development and construction purposes. India's investments and influence in Afghanistan is helping India to achieve objectives of economic empowerment and becoming a strong regional state. On the other hand, Pakistan sees India's increasing presence in Afghanistan as threat to its security and its own interests. Therefore, India is using soft power to enhance its role in Afghanistan which is a major concern for Pakistan.

The major problem of our research to explore is that influence in Afghanistan is a crucial part of Pakistan's regional policy as it will provide strategic depth against India. However, this objective is challenged by growing presence of India in the region. To pursue her objectives, India needs to increase its influence in the region. For this India has initiated soft policies towards Afghanistan by engaging in development and assistance projects. Looking at the scenario, Pakistan is deeply concerned by its influence as the growing India's ties with both Afghanistan and US have led Pakistan believe that its state is being marginalized.

The question which arises is that why Pakistan has lagged India despite sharing same border, culture and religion with Afghanistan? Both Pakistan and Afghanistan are Muslim countries with large ethnic Pashtun population then why India has more influence in Afghanistan as compared to Pakistan? Pakistan is blessed with its cultural heritage, but the problem is that it does not know how to

utilize it. With the existence of intangible resources why Pakistan has not pursued soft power in its foreign policy? It is unfortunate that Pakistan's foreign policy is based only on defense and security purposes and has ignored other tools such as culture, values and diplomacy to promote its foreign policy objectives. Thus, this research focuses on the options available to Pakistan in order to utilize its soft power to achieve its objectives.

India's enhanced use of soft power image will have consequential effects on Pakistan's Foreign Policy. Global affairs are dynamic and since the beginning of the 21st century many changes have occurred in the international system. With the evolution of globalization and communication technology, shift in terms of power and policies have occurred. These changes have brought a number of opportunities and challenges for Pakistan. Despite being blessed with rich culture, ancient civilization heritage, natural beauty, Pakistan instead of being a tourist haven is considered as a state of extremist haven. Pakistan has failed to address the true strengths of its land, culture and values to the world.

The main argument of this paper is that Pakistan needs to review its goals, priorities and desperately need a readjustment of its foreign policy in order to cope with the challenges and opportunities. After discussing the changes in power policy, the paper then evaluates number of policy responses and recommends suggestions that maybe helpful in the formulation of Pakistan's foreign policy in the future.

Power has always remained a core concept in international relations. The changes in the international structure have also changed the definition of power. Previously, power was defined by military and economic assets but due to technological revolution and globalization, the concept has introduced a new dimension of power. The changes between global powers after the cold war mainly penetrated new contents to the classical power theories. The concept was first highlighted by a renowned professor Joseph Nye defined soft power as when a country get its objectives through influence and other tools instead of hard power and military forces.

Joseph Nye mentioned that the emerging concept of soft power is continuation of traditional power concept i.e. hard power. He criticizes that it is not always necessary that hard power can achieve outcomes but sometimes there is a need of another power called soft power. Joseph Nye explains when an objective is achieved without violence through influence, it's called use of soft power. And if the use of such policy is endorsed by other states as legitimate, it further strengthens the power of the state that is using soft power.

Resources of Soft Power:

The soft power is explained by Nye to achieve success in the international relations. He further elaborates that there are three resources on which soft power could be explained that are culture, foreign policy and political values.

Culture:

A meaningful society's traditional practices and norms, collectively known as culture according to Joseph. He further highlights that if values of one culture are either accepted in other cultures or like values of another culture, then once nation can influence the other through its cultural values and traditions and achieve its objectives of soft power.

In Joseph Nye's opinion, soft power rests on a nation's popular culture and plays an important role in its influence. Cultural values despite being invisible impact a society and individuals on a large scale. Hence, it is a crucial resource that can be

Political values

Political values which are projected both internationally and domestically make one of the resources of soft power. Political ideals and values have important meaning on a nation, as they are reflected as nation's political ideology. Western states carry out their liberal democracy as political ideal and because of this; it represents their ideas on freedom and democracy which is then seen attractive by other nations.

Foreign policy

The policy of a country makes it attractable to other states and cultures. According to Nye, long term interest based foreign policy draws more attraction as compared to policy based on short sighted interests. A state can influence others by drawing attraction through its cordial and positive values. Foreign policy is a very important tool of defining status of a country in domestic, regional and international affairs. Hence, its status defines the extent of influence it exerts on other nations. However, if the foreign policy of a nation is perceived as damaging or it harm others then it loses other nation's attraction.

Soft Power and Hard Power

If there is an ability that makes things done it is known as power, this is the reason every state seeks to attain maximum power in order to pursue its foreign policy in a compact and comprehensive manner. The concept of power is most widely discussed concept in the terms of political science and international relations. different researchers hold different views in terms of what consists of actual power for a state. but there is a consensus on the point that it is an ability that not only enables the state to make things done but also enables to pursue its foreign policy as per the needs and demands of the foreign policy plans. traditionally the concept of power was there which was associated with the tangible assets. the most important tangible assets are military and economic resources. this is the reason in past, any country was perceived to be powerful it possesses superior military and economic resources. this is debatable that weather presence of military and economic resources importance fades out or not, according to the school of realism presence of tangible resources always makes a state powerful. This traditional form of power is also known as hard power. hence hard power is that power which is assumed by a country by having superior military resources and economic resources through which she can exercise her foreign policy in world affairs. using hard power, state can also exercise its objectives in other countries by rewards and threats policy. the use of hard power to pursue a foreign policy is also referred as "carrot and stick policy." Where carrot refers to inducements or rewards a state offers to other state, and stick refers to threats and warnings used in exercising policy matters.

The hard power is also known as coercive force that is used to make things done, hence off power is usually referred as anything which is not coercive or not meant to coerce others. The concept of hard power is one of the favorite concepts of the reader school of thought, we are famous realists like Machiavelli and others believe that it is better to be feared than loved by other states. in simple he meant that it is better that a state possesses tangible resources instead of a state that is

purely relying on cooperation and outside help. the realist school of thought also highlights that because state is the central actor in the world affairs, hence it is the sole responsibility of the state to not only pursue its national interests, but also ensure sufficient hard power, because security and survival is the goal of the state as the world system anarchic and self-help is the only way to ensure existence. Although in the world liberalism is practiced and many areas of world affairs, but at the same time states weather announcer are not realist in nature. They not only accept the anarchy in the world but also prepare themselves with hard power that is military resources and economic resources to cope with international affairs, these resources are used in military advancements, economic sanctions, threats, economic inducements and limited scale invasions to exercise its power. As per the neo-realist school of thought use of such resources or known as use of hard power.

The use of the term soft power has emerged greatly since end of Afghan war that also ended the tensest phase of cold war, in which USSR was torn in to pieces. A famous article namely, the end of the history by Francis Fukuyama where on one hand, provided democracy is the ultimate solution to run world affairs at the same time the use of term 'soft power' also emerged. in literal sense soft power means any power that is not hard power. soft power is an ability possessed by non-state or state actor to get things done in terms of foreign policy and other policy related matters without use of hard power. this soft power can be defined in terms of cultural and ideological resources that are intangible sources, where these resources enable one actor to enhance its influence in other States and regions. It is an ability through which one state persuade the other state to do those things and perform those actions which are part of one state foreign policy by not using the traditional sources but on the other hand use the cultural, institutional and ideological means. if a state invests in a human development infrastructure project in another country, and people and government of that country buying that goodwill and strengthen their relationship with that state, will also be termed as use of soft power by one state to persuade the people of other state in her favor. there is no single reliable method of using soft power, where it can be employed in its individual capacity or in combination of multiple resources that involves bought tangible and intangible resources.

Soft power is a great way of making impact in international affairs, because of the global institutions like United Nations, International Monetary Fund, World Bank, nongovernmental organizations and international nongovernmental organizations; the use of hard power in current era comes with many repercussions. Hence, this is the reason you do soft power relatively easier do impact the populations at massive level and present yourself as an ally in foreign states. we are living in a globalized world, where interactions and means of communication are enhanced and interactive. In such era, the use of soft power is a perfect tool to build your good image in foreign states and make them do what aligns with the foreign policy of your state. the use of soft power is also important because it directly impacts the populations of the other states where one state want to pursue its policy. Because the democratic system, the governments are afraid of going against the will of its population; and through soft power one state can directly impact the attitude of the population of that state, so that attitude later can also be used to influence their government's actions that are desired by other state who is exercising soft power.

Pakistan and Afghanistan Today

Since 2001, the power dynamics have changed in the South Asian region. Afghanistan has become one of the central places of interest for both India and Pakistan. There is a strong history of rivalry between Pakistan and India, we're both states not only went into full scale military wars but also continue to fight at various other fronts, whether economical military or security wise. The global War on Terror (GWOT), where on one hand, made Kabul a violent destination, at the same time it serves as an opportunity for both India and Pakistan to pursue their foreign policies accordingly and gain strategic depth in this region. Since 2001, India is using soft power is one of its most effective strategies to gain strategic depth in Afghanistan. Instead of using the traditional hard power, or deploying military, India is more interested in strengthening its ties with Afghanistan through investments, development funding and cultural linkages. The previous decade highlights that among the other countries of the world, India has emerged as one of the nations that generated goodwill through use of its soft power among people of Afghanistan. Where on one hand, through soft power India is enhancing its strategic depth, at the same time it's denting Pakistan's policies and interests viz-a-viz Afghanistan. From cultural point of view India have won many hearts of people in Afghanistan my funding development and infrastructure projects in the urban end remote areas of Afghanistan. The most important part of this use of soft power was that not only Afghani people appreciates the efforts of India in Afghanistan, at the same time other powers of the world also recognize India's development and reconstruction efforts in that region.

This acknowledgement enhances India position in the world in terms of reconstructing the war affected society. On the other hand, the scenario in the past 20 years was totally different for Pakistan. After US imposed global War on Terror, Pakistan becomes its most important ally and supported US and NATO forces in the war against Afghanistan. As a result of participation in the global war and terror, Pakistan faced a setback and allies of terrorists on Pakistani side launched systematic and disastrous terrorist attacks in Pakistan. In this war against terror Pakistan lost approximately 70,000 lives that includes both military and civilian lives. There were many terrorist groups in Pakistan that went against the state because of the anger that's why Pakistan joined United States and NATO forces. To counter that reaction, Pakistan have fought many counterterrorism operations to eliminate terrorism from Pakistan. This is the reason instead of using soft power like India Pakistan mostly used of hard power in pursuing its foreign policy in Afghanistan. The anti-Taliban population of Afghanistan believes that it is Pakistan and its intelligence agency due to which Taliban and its leaders are able to operate in Afghanistan. In her foreign policy, although Pakistan clearly mentions that without friendly relations with Afghanistan peace in the region cannot be attained. But at the same time, Pakistani think tanks are assured that Pakistan cannot afford two red hot borders on its eastern and western borders. Moreover, there is another firm believe that, if India able to strengthen her position in Afghanistan, then they may encircle Pakistan, and that would pose serious security threat for its existence and survival. This is the reason for Pakistan its presence in Afghanistan is not only part of its foreign policy, but at the same time Pakistan history counter India's foreign policy in Afghanistan to ensure its security objectives.

A part of Afghan population also believes that without the weaponry and logistics support from Pakistan Taliban cannot operate in Afghanistan with freedom. They also believe that Pakistan is using hard power in Afghanistan by supporting terrorist groups and not allowing any US supported government to operate with freedom. Although many of the allegations are exaggerated by the western and Indian media, but at the same time one cannot deny the fact that previously Pakistan and Taliban fought against Soviet Union during of Afghan miracle, hence the military of Pakistan and Taliban leaders shares some history. It is also alleged that Pakistan use Taliban as a tool to influence and exert its foreign policy in Afghanistan and to counter the influence of India in Afghanistan. In the similar manner, to counter the United States of America and western policies in Afghanistan, it is alleged that Pakistan use Taliban leaders. Due to these allegations, Afghans allegedly believes Pakistan is involved in anarchic plans and want to control their country through its physical presence, which is in the form of Taliban leaders. Hence, Pakistan needs to apply the foreign policy chances that includes but not limited to stretching its political affiliation with Afghan legislators. Moreover, Pakistan shares a cultural bonding due to proximity, it should further enhance its cultural ties with Afghani people by enhancing cultural activities that mutually involves people from both side of border.

Conclusion

It is concluded that Pakistan needs to formulate new foreign policy design viz a viz Afghanistan, where it should focus more on soft power as compared to hard power, the reason is that this is not an era of war or usage of weapons, instead if you win the support of the locals, there is a better chance that two countries can come together in a compact and comprehensive manner. Furthermore, Pakistan has a competitive edge over India regarding use of soft power, because of cultural proximity, same religion, hey Afghan refugees' case and strong ties between population of two countries. Moreover, use of soft power should include economic projects, cultural interactions and political affiliations, and policies that enhance the bonding between two nations. In Pakistan, participation of females' eve in the forces is increasing (Gull & Qaisar 2023), Pakistan needs to enhance gender equality and women participation projects in Afghanistan so that population of both countries can come closer. Furthermore, the women rights in both countries are very compromised, as research highlights that women face harassment in workplaces (Qaisar et.al. 2022), hence Pakistan can also initiate women empowerment and workplace equality projects that can include citizens from both countries and will be considered as a good soft power initiative by Pakistan. India have done same, by initiating several rights and issue-based projects with Afghanistan to successfully exercise her software. The horse reality is that India have successfully used its soft power in the previous decade and to cover their damage, Pakistan needs to change its policy directions urgent basis to ensure good ties. peace and better security conditions in the region. this would also allow Pakistan to deny the regional hegemony India wants to create in South Asia. lastly Pakistan can also use the CPEC projects, launched by China in Pakistan, and initiate similar small-scale trading and economic activities with Afghanistan, that would also increase the ties between two countries. A better relationship with Afghanistan will also ensure that Pakistan can successfully pursue its goals of development without fears of excessive role of India in Afghanistan.

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