



INDIA'S FOREIGN POLICY IN THE MODI ERA: A HINDU NATIONALIST LENS ON REGIONAL DIPLOMACY

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Abstract

Relationship between India and Pakistan has continued to deteriorate since the emergence of Narendra Modi as the Prime Minister of India since his foreign policy and national security strategies have remained primarily centered on Hindu-Nationalistic agenda. Modi has focused on promoting the Hindu Narratives through BJP cadres by undermining and unfairly treating the Indian muslims as well as other religious minorities. Furthermore, the Indian foreign policy towards Pakistan has pre-dominantly remained assertive while continuous tensions alongside LoC, the apprehension of Kulbhushan Yadav, the 26th February attacks and subsequently the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution to revoke the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir has actually led Pakistan to completely halt its diplomatic ties with India. Since 2019; relationship between Pakistan and India have remained halted, intense and have been marked by high tensions while the leadership of both sides continually accuses each other in public discourse in order to keep the other side pressurized while subsequently appease their domestic audience. Furthermore, the Intensified relationship between the two countries has seriously jeopardized the regional dynamics as diplomacy, economic cooperation, security relationship and socioeconomic cooperation remains ceased while organizations like SAARC have practically remained non-existent in managing or controlling the affairs between the two nuclear states. Extremist tendencies promoted by Modi led India have the propensity to further polarize and deteriorate the regional stability while bring Pakistan and India on



the verge of military conflict that could transform in to a nuclear conflict as a result of one miscalculated decision from either side. There is a need for global powers and International Organizations like the UNMOGIP to intervene and bridge the trust between Pakistan and India by addressing issues like Water Dispute and collaboration on countering terrorism in order to eventually address the bigger elephant (Kashmir Dispute) that has remained the major dispute between the two states. This research study is qualitative, analytical and deductive in nature while identity theory has been applied in order to analyze the decisions of both states through constructivist framework.

Introduction

Over the course of last two decades; South Asian region has been characterized by long-standing geopolitical complexities, polarized sociocultural environment and extremist religious tendencies. The region continues to remain vital to regional and international security challenges as it is inhabited by countries with entangled and complicated histories and enduring geopolitical and economic aspirations. India plays an influential role in determining the futuristic dynamics of South Asian region due to its foreign policy choices and partnership with the global actors (Azam, 2022). Its decisions tend to have a major impact on not merely its close neighbors but also the broader trends of geographic integration and international involvement. Under the leadership of Premier Narendra Modi; India has transitioned from a regional player to a global actor by strategically refocusing the country's domestic and international priorities; however, this has come at the expense of worsening relationship with the regional states while concurrently promoting the extremist Hindu nationalist ideology.

Indian foreign policy has remained aggressive and conflicting with all of the South Asian neighbors since Prime Minister Modi has been in power which has actually intensified the overall environment of the South Asian region (Basrur, 2017). Modi's foreign and national security policies have remained tilted and biased which has led the regional dynamics of the South Asian region to be antagonistic. Pakistan, Srilanka, China, Nepal and Bangladesh have all shared strained relationship with India during last ten years which leads to questions on the basic ideology of Hindu Nationalism that has been followed by the successive government of Prime Minister Modi (Miller & Sullivan de Estrada, 2017). While India has remained a focal member on initiatives and platforms to promote regional diplomacy and cooperation; cross-border conflicts, competing and intense political environment and ever-changing alliances have refrained them to actively engage its neighbors (Vanaik, 2021).

This paper takes in to account the evolving dynamics of Hindu Nationalist ideology that has continued to influence Indian foreign and domestic policy during Prime Minister Narendra Modi era. Policy Shifts and relationship with Pakistan will be analyzed through the context of Cross-border conflicts and Indian actions of revocation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian constitution in order to invalidate the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir region. Furthermore, it will be analyzed as how Pakistan has been responding to the Indian aggression while how the dynamics of overall South Asian region have been impacted due to India-Pakistan



rivalry. Research methodology of this study will be qualitative, analytical and inductive in nature. Books, Research articles and credible newspaper websites have been consulted to gather the data while data analysis technique has been employed to assess the data. A thorough analysis of this Indian foreign policy in Prime Minister Modi era will highlight the tendencies of Indian Nationalist ideology through the lens of regional diplomacy.

Hindu Nationalist Ideology Influencing Indian Domestic & Foreign Policy

It is an established fact that the Political ideology of BJP has remained deeply embedded in the conceptual dynamics of Hindu Nationalism which reciprocally had substantial impact on foreign and domestic policies implemented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This ideological tendency substantially altered the administrative, diplomatic and governance approach of the Indian government which lies on the concept of Hindutva, a phenomenon that has been promoting intolerance, extremism and polarization within the Indian society(Wojczewski, 2020). Several instances of brutalities and inhumane treatment by the BJP cadres against Muslims, Christians and other minorities have been reported over the course of last one decade which has led the Indian face of secularism being completely tarnished in front of the International community(Chatterjee et al., 2023). Muslims constitute roughly 14% of the Indian population; however, the inhumane treatment by BJP cadres has made it extremely hard for them to survive, particularly with low backgrounds. United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) has reported a decline upon the religious freedom in India in its Annual Report of 2024. U.S Department of State has categorized India as a “*Country of Particular Concern*” (CPC)(India, 2024). While the Indian Government has termed this report as biased and malicious; it is a fact that incidents of violence reported throughout India against the minorities provide a firm base for such placement by a globally recognized body(Affairs, 2024). Subsequently, it is an undermining fact that such extremist and polarized tendencies are promoted and supported by the Indian government and its bureaucracy while its law enforcement agencies as well as its justice system seemingly has failed the minorities within the society.

While analyzing the domestic policies of Indian Government since 2014; it can be highlighted that Indian government has remained primarily focused on promoting Hindu Identity and disregarding other segments of society. Legislative policies such as the enactment of the CAA Act and the revocation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution to revoke the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir have been particularly criticized in terms of promoting institutionalized discrimination(Bajpae, 2023). Despite being presented as National Security policies; these actions are generally perceived as attempts to marginalize Indian inclusive culture while establishing a Hindu-majoritarian state. Degradation of democratic values and promotion of practices such as the intercommunal violence, restriction on minorities and lower-caste Indian on practicing their religion, prohibition on the slaughtering of dairy cows and the wearing of headscarves have raised the concerns within the international community and has led towards further polarization of Indian society(Mishra & Miklian, 2016). Moreover, the assessment of Indian foreign policy over the course of last one decade indicates that Prime Minister Modi has promoted the concepts of Hindu Nationalism by fusing symbolic cultural elements with



conventional realpolitik. Modi has portrayed the Indian face within the global community as a regional civilizational power that embraces a distinctively Hindu Identity. Promotion of Cultural and Hindutva based narratives are promoted at all levels that may encompass the diplomatic engagements, the State-level visits, through delegations, business community and entertainment industry(Chandra, 2017). However, it is also true that India's relations with practically every South Asian nation have deteriorated due to the hostile and prejudicial conduct of its Political elite and its foreign office. While it is a fact that Hindu Nationalist tendencies have promoted extremist and polarized tendencies in Indian domestic and foreign policy; Prime Minister Modi continues to focus on intensifying the regional environment through his Hindutva led strategies.

India's Policy Shift towards Pakistan Under Hindu Nationalist Tendencies

Hindu nationalist sentiments under the Modi government has significantly altered the Indian attitude towards Pakistan. Historical analysis of bilateral relationship suggests that there have existed problems over the course of history, yet it is a fact that the Modi administration has taken a more aggressive, antagonistic and unyielding approach; thereby refraining from earlier attempts to preserve continued engagement between the leadership and bureaucracy of both sides(Shahzad et al., 2021). This change has been frequently framed in the realm of national security, territorial integrity and national sovereignty which has evolved as a reflection of profound ideological flows associated with the Hindu nationalist ideology. These ideological tendencies perceive Pakistan as a civilizational and geographic enemy despite the fact that common people of both sides predominantly disagree with the aggressive and unfriendly ideology that has been pursued by the Indian government(Khan & Naazer, 2023). An important turning point between the bilateral relationship of Pakistan and India during Modi Government was the revocation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution which ended the Special Status of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019. While Pakistan has always witnessed the Kashmir region as a disputed area between India and Pakistan; such a unilateral action by the Indian government was fiercely opposed by the Government of Pakistan and the matter was pertinently highlighted in the United Nations as well as other international bodies. Pakistan severed its relationship with India and cut down its diplomatic ties while a situation of conflict was initiated between the two sides. Although India presented this matter as a domestic issue; Kashmiris out rightly rejected this act of the Indian government. Indian actions were primarily motivated by an impulse to solidify its territorial authority irrespective of the intricate historic and legal complexities of the conflict(Syed, 2023). This act was actually representative of the Hindu nationalist objective and the aspirations of the Modi government to establish supremacy over a territory with an overwhelming proportion of Muslims. Although the Indian government continues to control the territory through its authoritarian rule; Kashmiris continue to demand their right to self-determination.

Furthermore, the Modi Government has adopted a more aggressive and militarized approach in its relationship with Pakistan. Pulwama attack and Balakot strikes followed by the Naval standoff between the two sides in the Arabian sea indicate the aspirations of the Modi Government(Sarfraz et al., 2024). While India portrayed these actions as a necessary response to cross-border terrorism; it is widely argued that this aggression between the two sides was to



showcase authority to domestic audiences of the respective states; a spectacle that the Indian government miserably failed in after the fall of their fighter Jet and its pilot in the Pakistani territory. Subsequently, incidents of cross-border firing and retaliatory statements from the leadership of both sides intensified the regional environment and compelled the global powers to intervene in pacifying the bilateral relationship (Khan et al., 2024). Modi administration consistently employed rhetoric that stoked sentiments of nationalism rather than employing sophisticated diplomatic efforts which has diminished the likelihood of discussions and eventual prospects of bringing peace and stability in the region. Furthermore, it is an established fact that India has adopted an isolationist stance in a bid to distance itself from Pakistan on the international front by charging it of supporting terrorist activity. Although this perspective is accepted by the Indian supporters in the West, it is frequently criticized for overgeneralizing the intricacies of international and regional security dynamics (Jaffery & Akhtar, 2023). Additionally, the reluctance of Modi government to have meaningful discussions with Pakistan on issues of mutual importance such as the Indus Water treaty suggests a deadlock and an intensification of sentiments between the two sides that puts mechanisms for bilateral cooperation in jeopardy. It is also an additional factor that Hindu nationalism has additionally influenced Indian debates in the social realm concerning Pakistan. Anti-Pakistan rhetoric has evolved as a prevalent theme in political discourse which often encompasses communal connotations as well (Ashfaq & Durrani, 2024). This progressively divides the community along lines of religion while widens the gap between social categories inside India; thereby fostering antagonistic sentiments between the two nations. Indian policy change towards Pakistan puts ideological rhetoric ahead of practical governance. India runs the danger of solidifying an endless downward spiral of animosity that is detrimental to long-term interests of both sides by portraying Pakistan as an unending enemy and ignoring the common problems which make the case for collaboration. Coordinated approaches are needed for problems like water sharing and cross-border terrorism; however, the existing strategy's doctrinal inflexibility hinders effective and long-term engagement from both sides (Malik & Qayyum, 2022). Indian policymakers may need to comprehend the fact that adoption of polarized, extremist and Hindutva driven policies may have important ramifications for the security and stability of the region. Miscalculation and war are more likely when hostilities along the Line of Control (LoC) increase and diplomatic pathways breakdown. By giving nationalistic ideologies precedence over fruitful diplomatic efforts, this combative approach undercuts Indian objectives of being regarded as an upright and respectful diplomatic player (Shani, 2021). Policies of regional security and peace have to be reevaluated in order to place more emphasis on continued engagement and reverence for one another in order to acknowledge common difficulties. South Asia's chances of peace and stability would become farther away as this region struggles with the effects of ideologically motivated animosity.

Pakistan's Response to India's Hindu-Nationalist Driven Policies

Indian aggression has been countered by the successive political governments of Pakistan through a combination of strategic maneuvers and ideological resistance which is deeply ingrained in its foundational character as a South Asian Muslim state. Pakistan perceives the Indian efforts



under the Prime Minister Modi government as ideological acts of provocation with the objective of weakening the Islamic identity, territorial integrity and national sovereignty rather than mere geographical hurdles (Siddiqui, 2016). Furthermore, the Balakot Strikes, the ongoing rhetoric against the Muslims and other religious minorities in India and New Delhi's strategic collaboration with Israel and the United States have been perceived as global efforts to further the Hindu Nationalist Ideology within the region while weaken Pakistan on ideological, strategic and regional level (Idrees & Javed, 2023). These plans have not only threatened the regional peace and security but has also created a continuous threat of a nuclear conflict between Pakistan and India in the region. Although Pakistan has demonstrated its eagerness to counter Indian aggression through peace maneuvers such as former Prime Minister Imran Khan's decision to return captured Indian Pilot Abhinandan Varthaman, it has repeatedly demonstrated through its actions and leadership statements that its desire for peace should not be interpreted as a weakness, and that if necessary, Pakistan will respond the Indian aggression militarily. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan in a statement on 6th September, 2021 said that;

“Our desire for peace must not be misconstrued as weakness, rather it must be reciprocated for sake of economic wellbeing and peoples' prosperity in the entire region. On our part, we will continue to expose the real face of radicalized India. The saner international elements do recognize our role for peace.” (Pakistan, 2021)

Operation Swift Retort conducted by Pakistan against India on 27th February, 2019 depicted the country's commitment to maintain a minimum credible deterrence against India. Nevertheless, Pakistan has remained more focused on responding the Indian aggression diplomatically and has worked comprehensively to highlight the brutalities of Hindu Nationalism on all the international forums (Hassan & Khan, 2021). While engaging the United Nations General Assembly as well as its Security Council through its permanent mission in the UN; Pakistan has also engaged OIC, SCO and international media outlets to highlight the oppression against the Indian Muslims and other minorities in the Prime Minister led BJP government in India. These incidents have been portrayed as evidence of a greater ideological shift in India which have not only endangered regional security but has also threatened the prospects of greater peace and stability in the region (Salik, 2022). While the Pakistani state has countered the Indian efforts through military engagement and diplomatic efforts; it has simultaneously enhanced its efforts to further strengthen its relationship with China, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Turkey and Malaysia.

Chinese investment in Pakistan in the shape of CPEC has solidified the relationship between two sides; whereas the relationship with ME states is being continually strengthened through economic partnerships. Successive governments in Islamabad have been making efforts to position the country as an increasingly secure and inclusive economic partner. Additionally, Pakistan has established and designed its repute as a critic of the BJP-led government's divided leadership and governance approach by spotlighting domestic division in India through discourses centered on situations such as farmer demonstrations (Saeed, 2022). While the ideological reaction of Pakistan against India deeply resonates with its National aspirations; it is likewise a fact that



Islamabad has established and furthered its credibility domestically as well as internationally by highlighting its position as a voice against Hindutva-driven authoritarian rule and a champion of subjugated Muslims throughout India. This has included lobbying in groups like the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and interacting with the Muslim population throughout the world. Islamabad has always sought to raise awareness about how Hindu nationalist policies affect Muslims throughout the surrounding region.

It can be ascertained that Pakistan's response to Indian aggression throughout the Modi era has been multifaceted and deeply resonated with its ideological underpinnings as well as the conceptual dynamics of Neo-Realism. There have been systematically domestic as well as the international factors which have guided Pakistan's response towards the Indian aggression and its Hindu Nationalistic strategies aimed towards disrupting its relationship with Pakistan in particular and regional peace and stability in particular (Shaikh et al., 2023). While Pakistan has responded India militarily as well as diplomatically; it has subsequently made its efforts to strengthen its position in the global world as well as throughout the region. Furthermore, Islamabad has also fulfilled its responsibility by becoming the voice of the oppressed Kashmiris and subjugated minorities throughout India. A comprehensive response of Pakistan against the strategies and policies of the Indian state has led towards a continued rift between the two sides over the course of last one decade.

Identity Theory in Foreign Policy

Identity theory highlights how a state's external strategies are primarily shaped by its common identity. This theoretical framework has its roots in Constructivism while it argues that the activities of the state in the realm of international sphere are shaped by ideas, notions and belief system that it has created for itself alongside its practical and realistic objectives. Identity of a state in the international system is shaped by the manner it perceives the place of its supporters as well as its foes in the international system. The validity of this particular concept can be witnessed in the Identity-driven politics between India and Pakistan; particularly in the light of strategies employed by Pakistan against the Hindu Nationalism driven initiatives throughout the Modi government (Sridharan, 2020).

It is an established fact that the very genesis of Pakistan's identity lies in its basic foundation of Two Nation Theory which posits that Hindu and Muslims are two separate nations in the British Sub-Continent with irreconcilable sociocultural, religious and social identities. Pakistan's foreign and domestic policies are continued to be shaped by this conceptual foundation. Subsequently, the Indian state has evolved under the Modi era and has moved from secularism to Hindutva driven policies. Evolution of this National Character and Identity has evolved and created a challenge for India itself. Negative attitudes and belief system has been promoted in India while its domestic strategies against Muslims and other religious minorities have actually backfired its reputation and global image. India is no longer considered a safe place for even the lower-caste Hindus while the extremist tendencies promoted by the BJP government within the society are gradually bearing its fruits as violence and bloodshed have aggravated (Qurban, 2023). Promotion of India as a Hindutva majoritarian state by Prime Minister Narendra Modi presently seems to reap



India benefits in the international realm; yet it will eventually backfire in the shape of communal riots and regional tensions with the neighboring countries. Identity divide between India and Pakistan are expected to further worsen tensions between two sides while their perceptive dynamics are expected to remain passive in the lieu of their bilateral relationship.

Dynamics of Identity theory are broadly evident in the foreign policy of Pakistan towards India. Islamabad continues to perceive New Delhi as the existential threat in the region and highlights the policies of Indian state that may include targeting and persecution of Indian muslims, the controversial and inflammatory comments made by Indian officials against Pakistan and the exaltation of individuals linked to anti-Muslim sentiment (Azad, 2020). Though the Identity framework negates Pakistan's perception; it is critical to highlight that response of Pakistan has predominantly been based on the classical notions of State Sovereignty and broader commitment to maintaining regional peace, security and stability (Shahid, 2022). Furthermore, it may also be noted that Pakistan has been continually employing identity-driven tactics to offset Indian strategies by relying and promoting the notion of Muslim Identity by making efforts to strengthen the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC).

While no substantial results have been produced through such efforts; yet rallying and supporting an organization of 57 Muslim countries have the tendency to create international pressure in the realm of international affairs and conflicts like Kashmir and Palestine dispute. While Identity dynamics have played a role in Pakistan's foreign policy; its military strategy is also influenced by the norms of identity. Operation Swift Retort can be highlighted as a strong declaration of Pakistan resolve and its display of deterrence in the international system (Masatoğlu, 2024). Actions of a state frequently support its discourse as well as its place in the global realm and Pakistan chose to showcase itself as an advocate of peace despite initiation of a conflict oriented environment. Status of Pakistan to present itself as a Sovereign; yet peace oriented military power highlights its capacity and ability to intrinsically oppose the Indian Hindutva driven Nationalistic policies in the international system. Both Pakistan and India are continually engaged in identity-driven foreign policy behaviour with evolving contestation that eventually fuels the security environment of the South Asian region.

List of Major Events between Pakistan and India During Premier Narendra Modi Era

Following is a list of major events between Pakistan and India that have intensified the bilateral relationship between the two sides and have consequently contributed towards worsening of the overall peace and stability of the South Asian region. Data has been collected from reliable news and research websites;

S.N	Date	List of Events
1.	June, 2014	Ceasefire Violations intensified along LoC
2.	August, 2014	Foreign Secretary level talks Cancelled after P Ambassador to India met with Syed Ali Gillani.
3.	October, 2014	Eruption of Border Clashes along LoC
4.	June ,2015	Premier Modi accused Pakistan of harboring terrori
5.	July, 2015	Gurdaspur Terror Attack



6.	January, 2016	Pathankot Airbase Attack
7.	February, 2016	Jawaharlal Nehru University Demonstrations and accusation of Pakistan to support separatist movement
8.	July 2016	Burhan Wani Killing and subsequent demonstration
9.	September 2016	Uri Attack - India blamed Pakistan
10.	November 2016	Escalation of Cross-border shelling
11.	April 2017	Kulbhushan Yadav sentenced to death by Pakistan
12.	July 2017	Skirmishes alongside LoC & Civilian Casualties
13.	December 2017	Premier Modi accused Pakistan of meddling in Elections- Pakistan condemned Modi's claims
14.	February, 2018	Sunjwan Army Camp Attack
15.	March, 2018	Pakistan categorically blamed India for harassment of diplomats in the global missions.
16.	August 2018	Premier Imran Khan offered India dialogue- Offer by India after an attack in Jammu and Kashmir
17.	February 2019	Balakot Airstrike
18.	February, 2019	Pulwama Attack
19.	February 2019	Operation Swift Retort
20.	March 2019	Naval Standoff between Pakistan and Indian Navy
21.	August 2019	Revocation of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Constitution- Special Status of Kashmir withdrawn
22.	November 2019	Kartarpur Corridor Reopened for Sikh Pilgrims
23.	February 2020	Delhi Riots and Condemnation by Pakistan for promoting Anti-Muslim policies in India
24.	May 2020	Intensified LoC Skirmishes / Indian Drone Shot Down
25.	November 2020	Dossier on Indian Sponsorship and Systematic support to terrorism within Pakistan titled as " Indian Chronicle "
26.	February 2021	Ceasefire Agreement Reaffirmed by both sides
27.	June 2021	Drone Attack on Jammu Airbase- India accused Pakistan of this incident, however, Pakistan denied it.
28.	February, 2022	Pakistan expressed strong concern against the Hijab targeting of Muslims and other religious minorities
29.	June, 2022	Kashmiri Pundits were attacked- Human Rights abuses highlighted in Kashmir by Pakistan
30.	May, 2023	G20 Meeting in Kashmir - India showing Normalcy, India refuted this showcasing by the Indian state.
31.	September 2024	Verbal Clashes between both sides over Kashmir at Meeting
32.	October 2024	Pakistan accused India of supporting insurgency in Balochistan.

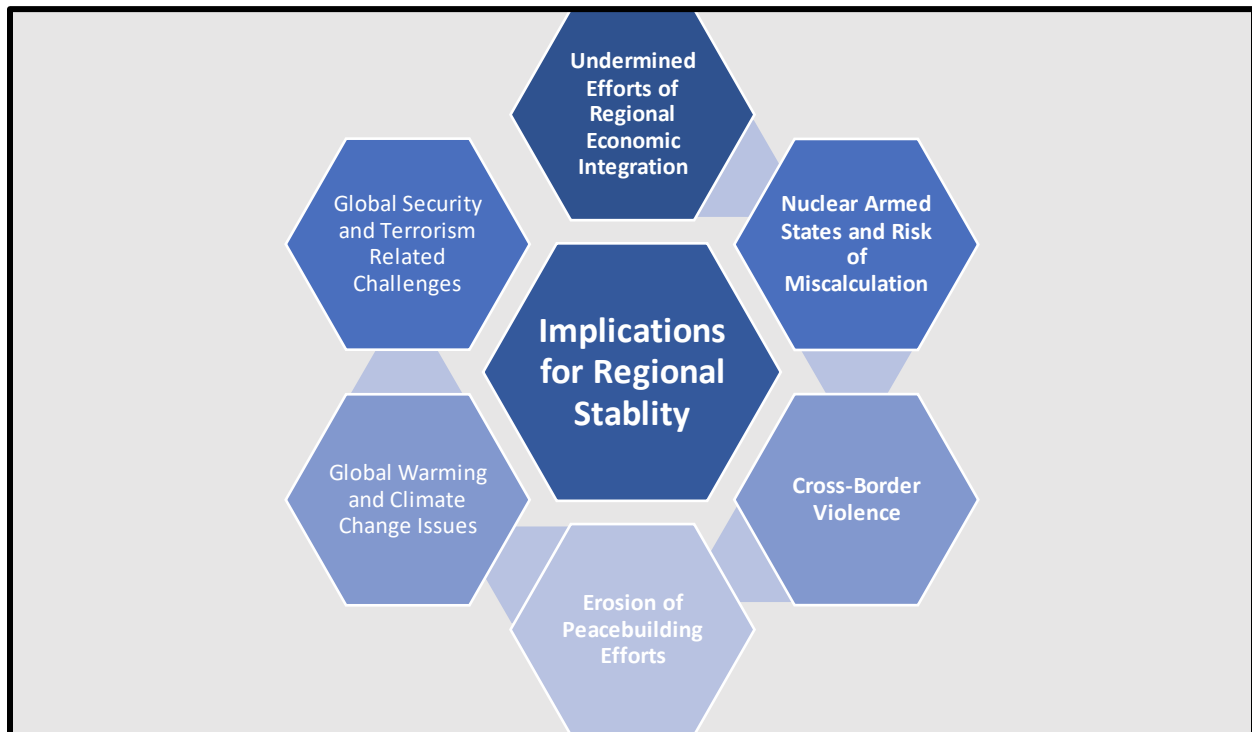


While the aforementioned incidents have been some of the major conflicts between Pakistan and India during Modi era; an important notion worth understanding is that peace and strategic dialogue has predominantly remained elusive in the bilateral relationship which has not only impacted the regional stability but has also severed the overall dynamics of the region (Effendi & Ahmad, 2020). Moreover, the mistrust between both sides have led them to implicate each other over different conflicting issues in the international organizations (Aslam et al., 2021). Pakistan and India are nuclear powers with continually upgradation of Nuclear capabilities by both sides. Strategies employed by Prime Minister Modi will eventually lead both sides on the verge of a nuclear conflict and hence the global powers as well as the international organizations must assume their responsibility of pacifying the bilateral relationship of both sides. United Nations Observer Group for India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) must come forward to establish peace between India and Pakistan by resolving less conflicting disputes in order to create trust and understanding between the two sides (Aslam et al., 2021). Issues like Kashmir conflict would require intervention of global powers, the UN, power brokers and foremost the Kashmiris themselves in order to resolve this long-standing conflict between the two sides.

Implications for Regional Stability

It is an established fact that there are significant ramifications for South Asian regional stability from the ongoing animosity between India and Pakistan. While Prime Minister Modi is known for his assertive policies; his strategies have impacted the dynamics of overall peace and stability in the region. Continually evolving dynamics of the relationship has affected the Regional Collaboration, Integration of Economies, and Regional Security Issues (Ullah & Hayat, 2021). While it is an established fact that the Indian foreign policy has intensified the regional environment through its Hindutva centered ideologies; its diversified implications for regional security and stability are seldom taken in to account.

India is recognized as an antagonistic state in the global realm since its relationship with regional states like Pakistan and China tend to continually remain hostile, intimidating and unreceptive. Likewise, Prime Minister Modi tends to adopt a transactional approach with smaller states while keeping itself on the dominant position. Such strategies eventually lead towards an environment wherein states prefer to maintain distance rather engaging constructively. India may face a diplomatic isolation in the near future if its intimidating strategies led to creation of security and economic challenges for the regional states (Mukherjee, 2024). Furthermore, the Indian policymakers also need to realize this fact that the implementation of Hindutva oriented strategies has polarized the Indian society which will eventually impact their image through its foreign diaspora. While India was recognized as a *Secular Democracy*, its contemporary dynamics have spilled over its global repute and diplomatic strategies (Mahmood, 2019). Following infographic highlights the widespread implications for regional stability due to the ongoing intensified relationship between Pakistan and India.



The aforementioned infographic clearly indicates that there are widespread implications for regional peace and stability which are seldom realized by the leadership as well as the policymakers of India and Pakistan. While prospects to engage in a meaningful discussion and dialogue have been eliminated until and unless a mediating actor intervenes and brings both sides on the table; however, it is a fact that bilateral discussions on issues like countering terrorism through collaborative efforts and climate change are essential since these issues are impacting the overall environment of the region as well as the bilateral ties between the two sides (Nayan & Shekhar, 2020). Ideological differences and the introduction of Hindu Nationalistic ideology by Prime Minister Modi will have the tendency to further deteriorate the relationship and hence sane voices are required to address the outstanding challenges. Unilateral actions have to be refrained as such tendencies would further deteriorate the relationship and may leave very little space for both sides to engage in a meaningful discussion. India-Pakistan relationship has put a halt to economic cooperation initiatives in the region while organizations like SAARC are practically non-existent (Winand, 2024). Terrorism has persisted as a long-standing phenomenon that has jeopardized the peace and stability of both states. It is an unfortunate fact that the leadership of both sides implicate each other in case of terror attacks while overlooking the fact that groups like TTP, Afghan Taliban and ISKP are the major beneficiaries in furthering instability within the region (Akhtar & Ullah, 2024). Although India itself has remained a major actor in funding and providing logistic support to these groups in destabilizing Pakistan; nevertheless, such activities have actually hampered the ideological dynamics and political as well as the socioeconomic



foundations of the South Asian region and India has played a major role in furthering the instability by means of its Hindu-Nationalistic ideology (Bibi et al., 2024).

Concluding Arguments

Conclusively, it can be argued that the events of bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan since 2014 have been predominantly influenced by Hindu-Nationalistic ideology. While India has remained more focused on harboring terrorism inside Pakistan by supporting the proxies; it has subsequently damaged its repute as a Secular state. Furthermore, the Modi-led government has supported the BJP elements to further extremist tendencies within the society by unjustly treating the Muslims as well as other religious minorities. India has evolved to become a time-bomb in the South Asian region under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi. If such trends continue to evolve in the near future and India's relationship with Pakistan continued to deteriorate; both states may be expected to engage in a military conflict with a possibility for its intensification in to a nuclear conflict.



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