

Indo-Pak relations: Perspective analysis

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the role of discourse indicating socio-political and economic situation of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. It gives an analysis of 37 articles published in Dawn regarding bilateral trade ties between India and Pakistan over the period of 2 years i.e. June 2011 to June 2013. This study is an overview of Dawn's perspective regarding the changing ties between two nations on the basis of increasing interaction in business sector. Further, the nature of relationship is explained with help of revealed themes and characterization of the words and grammatical features. The article concludes that shift in bilateral relations of two countries is visible in context of increasing trade ties on parallel basis.

Keywords: trade relations, indo-pak relations, economic factor, discourse analysis, dawn, bilateral ties

Introduction

The origin of the acerbic relations between India and Pakistan dates back to 1947, when the British left this subcontinent for ever. The "threat perceptions" between the two countries have "a physical expression in the form of dispute" of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), a core issue to Indo-Pak relation from the beginning (Siddiqi, 2004) [3]. When the ruler in Kashmir acceded to India in 1947, the two states got engaged in a war over the claim of the princely state. The issue later was raised by India in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) for its resolution and it passed Resolution 47 wherein the right of self-determination of the people of Kashmir was hinted. But the issue remained unresolved and in fact, set the tone for bitter relations between the two countries. War ensued in 1965 where once again the issue was Kashmir. The same script was used for the war in 1971 in which Pakistan lost its eastern wing, now named as Bangladesh. Hostility between the two countries continued to intensify. In 1986, the two countries were almost on the brink of a war followed by the overt nuclear tests by the two nations in 1998. Bilateral relations came to the lowest ebb when militants attacked Mumbai and the Indian parliament. India was in a no mood to spare the culprits and armed forces marched towards the Pakistani borders. India threatened of surgical strikes in Pakistan (Pandit, 2008) [2].

Today, both countries are spending billions on its armed forces and have also become nuclear stalwarts. Attempts have been made by numerous persons to normalize the strained relations. Shimla Agreement and the visit of Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to Lahore were aimed discuss and resolve all outstanding issues between the two countries. Confidence building measures of 80s and 90s have given some respite to both the nations. The two has signed various agreements like the Indus Water Treaty in 1960 as confidence building measures. Mutual trust deficit has marred the bilateral trade and trade did not expand because of numerous problems of "non-tariff barriers, poor infrastructure resulting in costly transportation, poor trade facilitation measures, and restricted visa regime" (Mehta, 2012). India has granted the Most Favourite Nation (MFN) status to Pakistan in 1996, although

whereas Pakistan is yet to reciprocate it (Mehta, 2012). Attempts are onerous to bring back the derailed peace process. With the advent of Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 2014 and the tough stance taken by Indian Prime Minister, Pakistan has started believing that India seems achieve a political mileage by according threats to Pakistan. Whereas ideological extremism is on the rise in India there seems to be a religious and political force in Pakistan's all decisions that are taken with respect to their policy about India.

The Indian stance over the Kashmir dispute is clear and curt. But it would be worthwhile to discuss in order to understand the stance of the political parties in Pakistan over this eternal dispute. Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) is currently holding the regime in Pakistan and is a centre-right and socially-conservative party. Most of country's policy issues have been expressed by the Party's manifesto wherein the Party cries of an independent foreign policy and a detailed layout of national security. It also supports refreshing economic ties with India though, and strangely too, has always supported building of weapons of all kinds. Party wants the citizens of both the nations to live in a kind of cultural and mutual harmony!

Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's founded Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is the most supported party in Pakistan and has won elections four times. Party firmly believes that all outstanding issues with India can be resolved through dialogue. It rather wants to move beyond South Asia and wants cooperation through organizations like SAARC and ASEAN. Party reiterates and believes in the policy of building trade, social and cultural ties with India and other nations. It wants to achieve reconciliation with India keeping in mind Pakistan's alliance with China. Party understands the challenges of tensions with India and has pledged to resolve them through confidence and stability. The adamant stance of the two countries over Kashmir is in the heart of party's decision making.

Pakistan Muslim League (Quaid-e-Azam) came to existence in 1999 as a break away group. It lays stress on a sovereign foreign policy where the interest of Pakistan is paramount. Any dialogue or act of conciliation should not be at the cost of Pakistan. Party believes that in achieving parity in relations with India is also the responsibility of India as of Pakistan.

Kashmir has always remained a core issue wherein the aspiration and the sentiments of the people of J&K should be honoured.

The political support from Urdu-speakers in the Sindh province gave birth to Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) which believes that the basis of Pakistan's foreign policy lies in having strong ties with its neighbours. For the party the SAARC forum is the appropriated forum for integration of all types. The party wants to create a healthy environment of peaceful coexistence on the principle of "live and let live."

The cricketer-turned politician Imran Khan founded the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) as a party to end corruption and injustice in Pakistan. Party's popularity graph is on the rise since its inception and is presently ruling in the Khyber province. Party firmly believes that the foreign policies are governed and driven by the internal policies. Party wishes to have a peaceful subsistence with India and believes that disputes must be resolved by mutual understanding. Regarding the problem of Kashmir party believes in the principle of self-determination. The policy on nuclear weapons is by and large India-centric.

National Party, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl, Pakistan Muslim League Functional, Awami National Party and Jamaat-e-Islami are some other prominent or provincial political parties of Pakistan which play a vital role in making and shaping of policies in Pakistan. Whatever be the case, fact remains that most of the political parties in Pakistan want to bring Pak-India relations on a smooth track. Most of the parties want to resolve the Kashmir issue wherein the participation and the inclusion of Kashmiris must be ensured. Confidence building measures at all levels should be harbingered between both the sides. Cultural ties, business consolidation, a viable and relaxed visa system and the revival road and rail links are some of the many measures that could boost the ties between the two nations. The allegations of both sides of harbouring internal insecurity in each other's land is often the bone of contention in which some of the radical parties from both sides fuel the fire. The recent comments on Baluchistan by India have made the matters worse. In pursuit of maintaining a power balance and the deterrent capability, both countries at times reach unproportional levels. Nuclear capability and the status of most favoured nation must be positively and constructively explored and exploited by both the countries. Agricultural being the driving force of the economy of the two countries it will be in the interest of the two nations to work on it collectively. All outstanding bilateral disputes can be resolved if India and Pakistan engage in a dialogue where the interests of its citizens are always kept in mind. These efforts have to be sincere and deep rooted only then the relations can be permanently cordial and eternal.

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