
Pakistan's Relations with India During Imran Khan's Era

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ABSTRACT

The relationship between Pakistan and India under Imran Khan, from 2018 to 2022, is examined in this qualitative study. The two nuclear-armed neighbors' worsening relationship, which is characterized by increased tensions, terrorist attacks, and instability in diplomatic relations, is the main focus of the problem statement. This study is significant because it aims to comprehend the intricacies of Pakistan-India relations under Khan, with an emphasis on pinpointing the main causes of the relationship's decline. Examining the effects of this declining relationship on regional and international security is another goal of the project. Using a case study methodology, this research draws on primary as well as secondary sources, such as scholarly publications, media stories, and speeches and declarations by influential policymakers. Identifying significant themes and patterns was the main goal of the thematic analysis method used to examine the material. According to the study's results, Pakistan's relationship with India under Imran Khan was characterized by an interruption in bilateral communication, a lack of trust, and the military's dominance over the nation's foreign policy. The study also emphasizes how the relationship is affected by outside variables, such as the roles played by China and the United States. The study also reveals that the dispute over Kashmir is still a major source of conflict between the two nations, with opposing viewpoints on both sides. All things considered, this study advances our knowledge of the nuances of Pakistan-Indian relations and emphasizes the necessity of a more comprehensive and multifaceted strategy for relationship management. The study's conclusions emphasize the necessity of persistent diplomatic efforts to settle the Kashmir conflict and advance regional peace and stability, and they have important ramifications for practitioners, scholars, and politicians involved in Pakistan-India relations.

Keywords: Pakistan, Diplomatic, Instability, Terrorist, Kashmir, Conflict

Introduction

The years 2018–2022 under Imran Khan were marked by heightened tensions and a number of significant

events that had an impact on the bilateral relationship between India and Pakistan. The relationship was already fragile due to a number of ideological and historical conflicts, but it deteriorated even more throughout this period. The Indian government viewed Imran Khan's administration's attempt to start negotiations with India with suspicion, particularly in the wake of the 2019 Pulwama assault. A Pakistani extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack, which claimed the lives of 40 Indian security personnel. India launched airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan, in retaliation. Relations between the two countries significantly increased as a result of the incident, with both sides engaging in a verbal and diplomatic spat. Pakistan opposed India's attempt to repeal Article 370, which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status, which further complicated matters. The general direction of Pakistan-India relations under Imran Khan's leadership was tense and combative, despite certain diplomatic attempts, such as the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free route for Indian Sikh pilgrims to a holy site in Pakistan.

Other factors, like the role of the United States and China, also had an impact on the bilateral relationship. No nation had more influence over Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly its ties with India, than the United States. China continued to play a significant role in Pakistan's economic situation and security issues, which affected Pakistan's relationship with India. The Kashmir dispute was one of the main problems facing Pakistan-India relations under Imran Khan. Both countries assert authority over the state, and the Kashmir dispute has been the primary cause of friction between them. Under Imran Khan's rule, the matter gained more importance, especially as India decided to repeal Article 370. Perceiving the action as a deliberate attempt to alter the current status quo in Kashmir, Pakistan fiercely opposed it. In an attempt to rally worldwide opposition to India's activities, Imran Khan's administration started a diplomatic campaign, but it was mostly ineffective. There were some diplomatic initiatives between the two nations in spite of the tensions. The Kartarpur Corridor, which allows Indian Sikh worshippers to travel to the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan without a visa, was opened by Pakistan and India in 2019. The move was seen as a positive step toward improved ties between the two countries. However, relations between Pakistan and India remained strained and combative throughout Imran Khan's rule. A series of crises, including the terrorist assault in Pulwama and India's decision to repeal Article 370, dominated the relationship. The relationship was also impacted by internal conflicts in both countries. The way that Imran Khan's government handled the Kashmir dispute in Pakistan drew criticism from opposition parties who said the government was too lenient toward India. The administration of the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) in India came under fire for its handling of the dispute over Kashmir, with opposition parties charging with being overly conservative. Everyone saw the BJP's decision to repeal Article 370 to be a populist one intended to increase support for Hindu nationalism.

Under Imran Khan's leadership, external factors like the US and China's involvement also influenced the Pakistan-India relationship. Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly its ties with India, was significantly influenced by the US in particular. In 2019, the United States placed sanctions on Pakistani military leaders for allegedly aiding terrorists in Afghanistan. Many people believed that the decision dealt a severe setback to Pakistan's armed forces establishment, which had historically relied on US assistance. Nonetheless, China continued to play a significant role in Pakistan's economy & security system. Pakistan's economy has grown significantly as a result of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) launched by China, and the country has become more and more reliant on Chinese investment and commerce. However, India, which views China as a strategic rival, is also alarmed by China's growing influence in Pakistan. Pakistan's efforts to maintain a balance with both countries have been impacted by the tensions between China and India. Increased tensions and a series of significant events that affected the bilateral relationship were hallmarks of Pakistan-India ties under Imran Khan. Numerous internal and external forces, such as the involvement of China and the United States, influenced the relationship.

Due to fierce rivalry, distrust, and terrorism that have undermined efforts at peace and stability, the long history of ties between India and Pakistan might be seen as a time of lost opportunities. In 2019, India also

bombed the Pakistani enclave of Balakot using warplanes. Trade between the two countries has been restricted, especially since the Palwama attack and the Jammu and Kashmir Territory Reorganization Act of 2019, which levied severe penalties of 200 percent on commodities from Pakistan. Trade with India was then suspended by then-prime minister Imran Khan. As a result, interaction between the two countries has ceased for years, trade has been terminated, and diplomatic ties and exchanges have declined.

Pakistan's foreign policy has historically been dominated by Islamist groups such as the Jamaat-e-Islami and the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam, particularly with regard to India and the Kashmir dispute. Foreign policy was still influenced by Islamist parties under Imran Khan's leadership, particularly because of their opposition to any compromise with India regarding the Kashmir dispute. Islamist groups frequently thwarted the PTI government's attempts to engage India over Kashmir because they thought that making concessions on the issue would be betraying Pakistan's interests as a nation. The development of Pakistan's foreign policy during the rule of Imran Khan was also significantly influenced by the country's complex ethnic and sectarian realities. The government's foreign policy endeavors were frequently at odds with the Pashtun population, who had always been suspicious regarding the Pakistani army establishment. The government's Kashmir policies and response to the Pulwama terrorist attack were criticized by the Pashtun Tahafuz Movement (PTM), a regional Pashtun rights organization. The PTM's opposition to the government's foreign policy decisions reflected the deep-seated complaints of the Pashtun people, who have long been excluded and disenfranchised from the state's decision-making process.

This study will focus on the strategies employed to manage the complex and often hostile bilateral relationship in order to evaluate Imran Khan's government's diplomatic approaches and tactics toward India. Under Khan's direction, it seeks to investigate how Pakistan-India relations were impacted by foreign nations such as the US and China, highlighting the ways in which these superpowers impacted diplomatic ties and regional dynamics. The study will also look at how significant events, such as India's revocation of Article 370, which altered Jammu and Kashmir's unique legal position, have affected bilateral relations. Lastly, it aims to determine the challenges and successes of Pakistan-Indian diplomacy during Imran Khan's leadership, setting the stage for future interactions between the two nations.

Literature Review

Increased tensions and a deterioration in diplomatic ties characterized Pakistan-India relations during Imran Khan's 2018–2022 term as prime minister. The current research is still mostly unexplored in academic circles, particularly with regard to the events that took place between 2018 and 2022, which are crucial to bring to light. Hussain, Shujaat (2018) in the article *Imran Khan's Diplomacy: A New Approach to India?* The *Express Tribune* highlights Imran Khan's administration made multiple attempts to establish diplomatic ties with India at the start of his tenure. Khan has been a fervent supporter of peace throughout his political career. He urged communication between the two nations, emphasizing how crucial it is to resolve the Kashmir dispute and forge closer commercial ties. This strategy aligned with his primary goal of advancing peace and stability in South Asia. His most explicit call for peace was made in his 2018 speech to the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), in which he asked India to participate in talks and find a solution to unresolved issues like Kashmir.

Siddiq, Ayesha (2019) writes in her article *“Imran Khan and the Politics of Kashmir”* Pakistan condemned India's actions as an illegal annexation, arguing that they violated international law, notably the resolutions of the UN Advisory Council on Kashmir. Diplomatic ties deteriorated as a result: Pakistan severed communication, suspended trade, and launched an international campaign to mobilize support for Kashmir's cause, particularly within institutions such as the UN & the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Khan's government stepped up its patriotic rhetoric and cautioned that India's actions could escalate into a regional conflict because both countries possessed nuclear weapons. His government sought to win

international support for Kashmir's independence by highlighting international violations of human rights. Despite no international support, the crisis escalated tensions, highlighting the vulnerability of India-Pakistan relations.

Pandya, A. (2019) writes in his article "*The future of Indo-Pak Relations after the Pulwama Attack*" that the ongoing conflict and terrorism backed by Pakistani non-state actors have prompted India to adopt a more robust military and strategic response. The post-Palwama standoff, that raises concern about cross-border activity and the potential for escalation into full-scale confrontation, demonstrates India's resolve to fight terrorism. Furthermore, the dynamics of the conflict in Kashmir are changing as it attracts increasing attention from around the world. A qualitative approach involving case study analysis (the Palwama incident and the subsequent military actions) and possibly a historical assessment of Indo-Pak relations can be inferred, even though the book does not explicitly outline a formal methodology. A comparative analysis may also be useful in examining how similar situations have been handled in the past and the outcomes that have been achieved. The changing nature of the current Indo-Pak relationship, especially in light of terror and military responses, is the subject of the research gap mentioned in the text. Comprehensive studies that look at the effects of India's forceful tactics, the evolving Kashmir conflict, and how foreign perceptions affect bilateral relations may be lacking. Furthermore, the impact of operations across borders on foreign diplomacy and regional stability may not have received enough attention.

Sinha, A (2019) in his book "*Trust relationship: The way of peace between India and Pakistan*" explores that the primary causes of the conflict between the two countries are the lack of trust and the administrative barriers that prevent travel with India and Pakistan, the research claims. The primary issue mentioned is the drawn-out passport and visa applications, which hinder people's ability to engage in cultural, humanitarian, or professional exchanges. This inability to move around limits opportunities to build relationships and resolve old grievances, prolonging the battle. The proposed method, which would enable inhabitants of both countries to visit one another without undergoing the traditional visa application process, is based on mutual trust and identification verification by their respective governments. According to the proposed solution, a Trust Relationship agreement between India and Pakistan might lead to the establishment of Trust Corridors, allowing citizens to travel freely for a variety of purposes, including business, humanitarian, and cultural activities. This agreement would speed up the movement process by enabling individuals to recognize them using a passport issued by their country's government, doing away with the need for lengthy visa applications, and ensuring that their respective countries do criminal record checks. This agreement has the potential to improve bilateral relations generally, reduce cross-border tensions, and strengthen interpersonal ties.

Mohan, C. Raja (2019) in his article "*Imran Khan and the Pulwama-Balakot Crisis: A Diplomacy of De-escalation*" describes how another crucial moment in the two countries' relationship under Khan was the Palwama attack in February 2019, which led to a military conflict between India and Pakistan. More than 40 Indian military soldiers were killed in a suicide attack in Kashmir, which India blamed on militants based in Pakistan. In response, India launched airstrikes against what it claimed were Pakistani terrorist camps, including one in Balakot. The situation deteriorated and both countries came dangerously close to a full-scale conflict after Pakistani soldiers unleashed their own attacks in retaliation. The actions of Imran Khan's administration during this crisis were characterized by de-escalation initiatives. In an attempt to prevent the situation from worsening, Khan, who had previously called for peace, offered a discussion and said that Pakistan would release an Indian pilot as a gesture of goodwill. Scholars like C. Raja Mohan contend that Khan's wish to avert the catastrophic consequences of war was reflected in his realistic approach to India. Mohan, however, argues that Khan's handling of the matter required an intricate negotiation between maintaining Pakistan's national security and diplomatic standing and keeping the lines for communication open for upcoming peace talks.

Yousaf, S (2021) emphasize in his article “*Tourism and reconciliation in an enduring rivalry: The case of Kartarpur Corridor on India–Pakistan border*” that the extent to which the Kartarpur Corridor's significance as a unique location for collaboration and visa-free interaction among Indian and Pakistani tourists is understood. Even though tourism has the potential to foster peace and reconciliation between historically hostile states, little is known about how these settings foster human relationships that contribute to the tourist-peace nexus, particularly in light of present geopolitical concerns. The method used in this study is based on a conventional grounded theory approach, which collects qualitative data through interviews. Pakistani and Indian information for the study was supplied by both visitors and service personnel employed in the Kartarpur Corridor. The research gap noted in the text is the relatively understudied relationship between tourism and peace, particularly in the context of divided nations and their unique ecosystems like the Kartarpur Corridor. Though the contact theory has been applied in a variety of contexts, its exact application in the context of tourism and peace is still not well established. Additionally, more study is needed to comprehend how memory-heritagization and visitor identification affect interactions and aid in reconciliation initiatives. Future studies may also examine the long-term effects of such tourism on peace building initiatives and India-Pakistan relations.

Theoretical Framework

Major theories of international relations (IR) can be used to understand Pakistan's ties with India under Imran Khan's tenure (2018–2022). These theories collectively illustrate patterns of conflict, restricted cooperation, and enduring mistrust among the two states. The most basic explanation is provided by realism, which holds that under anarchic international systems, governments behave mainly to safeguard their security & national interests. Pakistan-India relations followed a realism path throughout Imran Khan's administration: The Pulwama assault and the ensuing Balakot airstrikes led to a sharp military escalation that reflected the fight for strategic balance and deterrence. Pakistan's view of a danger to its national security & strategic goals in Kashmir was further strengthened by India's unilateral repeal of Article 370 in August 2019, while both nations continued to modernize their militaries, highlighting the importance of power politics.

The security issue, which explains why tensions increased even though neither side intended a full-scale battle, is closely related to realism. The opposing side saw each state's efforts to strengthen its security as hostile, whether it was Pakistan's retaliatory actions and air defense preparation or India's assertive stance following Pulwama. Even in situations when both governments claimed to favor stability, the lack of effective communication and crisis-management procedures raised the possibility of miscalculation and escalation. Thus, the security conundrum demonstrates how mistrust and fear can lead to conflict regardless of true motivations.

However, the theory of construction addresses the deeper importance of individuality, memory of the past and social narratives; material considerations alone cannot adequately explain the persistent nature of enmity. Public opinion, political discussion, and policy decisions are influenced by the long-standing rivalry between Pakistan and India. Nationalist narratives in both nations grew stronger under Imran Khan's leadership, especially during and after significant crises, through political rhetoric and the media. Even when communication seems reasonable, compromise is challenging since Kashmir is still a fundamental personal identity issue for both governments, founded in conflicting national ideologies. Therefore, constructivism explains why mistrust endures in spite of diplomatic efforts.

Liberalism, on the other hand, emphasizes the lost chances for collaboration. Liberal theory believes that regional institutions, economic interconnectedness, and discourse all contribute to the advancement of peace; yet, these factors were weak during this time. Political conflicts hindered real participation, despite Imran Khan's repeated expressions of readiness to engage. Due to the bilateral dispute, organizations like SAARC remained mostly dormant, and economic links remained weak, which limited the ability for liberal settlement

mechanisms to be successful. Thus, liberalism contributes to the explanation of why collaboration was feasible in theory but challenging in reality.

The Two-Level Games hypothesis, which contends that leaders must strike a balance between internal political pressures and foreign diplomacy, helps explain an additional level of complexity. Domestic political factors, including as the impact of Pakistan's military establishment, coalition partners, and popular opinion about Kashmir, limited Imran Khan's diplomatic flexibility. In a similar vein, India's government used anti-Pakistan rhetoric to bolster its electoral standing at home. As a result, there was less room for compromise or ongoing participation due to internal pressures in both nations.

One side's defensive action is perceived as dangerous by the other, creating an endless cycle of distrust and animosity that characterizes the security problem. Tensions between the two countries are increased by India's perception of Pakistan's safety measures, such as military modernization. In a similar vein, Pakistan mistrusts US support for India, which heightens anxieties. In order to avert escalation and promote stability, communication and measures to increase confidence are essential because this dynamic renders it more difficult to establish mutual trust and collaboration between the two countries (**Jervis 1978**).

Lastly, Pakistan-India tensions can be placed within larger regional dynamics with the aid of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT). The security landscape in South Asia is intricately linked, between Pakistan and India at the center of a global security complex in which the acts of one state inevitably trigger responses from the other. Mutual distrust and bilateral calculations were further impacted by external influences, such as China's tight connection with Pakistan and India's growing ties via the United States.

When combined, these ideas offer a thorough framework for comprehending ties between Pakistan and India under Imran Khan. The rivalry in strategy and military tensions is explained by realism and the national security dilemma; constructivism explains the persistence of conflict narratives; liberalism draws attention to the barriers to cooperation; the Two-Level Games theory shows domestic limitations on foreign policy; and the Regional Security Conflict Theory places bilateral relations within larger regional dynamics. This integrated approach offers a sophisticated basis for examining why, despite repeated appeals for peace and communication during Imran Khan's administration, relations remained essentially antagonistic.

Sources and Methodologies

This research involves a qualitative methodology. The relationship between Pakistan and India under Imran Khan is examined using both primary and secondary sources. Interviews with various subject-matter experts will be done for primary data. Access to the official documents will also be attempted. Journals, research papers, books, newspapers like The Dawn and Express Tribune, and international media like Al Jazeera would all be considered secondary sources.

This study will primarily use thematic analysis to identify recurrent issues like security, diplomacy, and economic relations, based on significant events like India's 2019 Article 370 withdrawal and cross-border incidents, in order to present a thorough picture of how Pakistan's approach to India changed under Khan's leadership. In order to comprehend how public narratives influenced policy decisions, the research is also looking at public opinion and media framing. Process tracing will be utilized to follow important events in detail.

Pakistan's Relations With India During Imran Khan's Era 2018-2022

Between 2018 and 2022, Pakistan-India relations under Imran Khan were marked by heightened tensions and a number of significant events that had an impact on the two countries' relationship. Due to a number of ideological and historical disagreements, the relationship was already tense, but during this period it deteriorated even more. The Indian government viewed Imran Khan's administration's attempt to start negotiations with them with suspicion, particularly in the wake of the 2019 Pulwama assault. A Pakistani

extremist group claimed responsibility for the attack, which claimed the lives of forty Indian security personnel. India launched airstrikes in Balakot, Pakistan, in retaliation.

Tensions among the two countries significantly increased as a result of the incident, with both sides engaging in a verbal and diplomatic war. India's decision to revoke Article 370, which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status, further exacerbated the situation. Pakistan rejected this move. During Imran Khan's reign, Pakistan-India relations were generally tense and hostile, despite some diplomatic attempts, such as the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free route for Indian Sikh pilgrims to a holy site in Pakistan.

Extraneous elements, such the role of the United States and China, also had an impact on the bilateral relationship. Pakistan's foreign policy, notably its relations with India, was dominated by the United States more than any other nation. China continued to play a significant role in Pakistan's security and economic concerns, which affected Pakistan's ties with India. The Kashmir dispute was one of the main problems affecting Pakistan-India ties under Imran Khan. Both countries assert their dominance over the state, and the Kashmir dispute has been the primary cause of friction between them. During Imran Khan's administration, the matter gained more importance, especially since India decided to remove Article 370.

There were several diplomatic initiatives between the two nations despite the tensions. The Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free route for Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit Pakistan's Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, was agreed upon by Pakistan and India in 2019. The move was seen as a positive step toward improved ties between the two countries. However, the general trajectory of relations between Pakistan and India under Imran Khan remained harsh and antagonistic. A series of crises, including the Pulwama attack & India's decision to abolish Article 370, dominated the relationship.

Under Imran Khan's leadership, the relationship between Pakistan and India was also influenced by external factors like the United States and China. Pakistan's foreign policy, particularly its ties with India, was significantly influenced by the US. In 2019, the US placed penalties on Pakistani military leaders for allegedly aiding terrorists in Afghanistan. The move was seen by many as a significant setback for Pakistan's military system, which had historically relied on US assistance. Nonetheless, China continued to play a vital role in Pakistan's security and economic systems.

Foreign Policy and Domestic Politics

Foreign policy and domestic politics are intertwined because a country's internal politics can have a significant impact on its overseas affairs. When it came to Pakistan-India ties under Imran Khan, the country's foreign policy was greatly impacted by internal politics. When Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government came to power in 2018, it had a particular focus on international policy. The PTI administration made an effort to steer Pakistan's foreign policy in a different direction by emphasizing regional cooperation and economic diplomacy. However, this approach was typically at odds with the Pakistani military establishment's more traditional and assertive viewpoints.

The Pakistani military continued to play a significant role in international affairs under Imran Khan. Deep-rooted mistrust and the belief that India posed an existential danger shaped the military's views toward India. The Pentagon's foreign policy strategy, which prioritized having a potent defense and a reliable deterrent capability, reflected this worldview. The army's more conservative viewpoints often clashed with the PTI government's attempts to refocus Pakistan's foreign policy. The military said that Pakistan's security could only be guaranteed by a strong defense, viewing the government's emphasis on economic negotiation and regional cooperation as weak and foolish. Tensions between the PTI government and the armed forces establishment were evident in how the country responded to the 2019 Pulwama tragedy. A militant organization based in Pakistan was blamed for the attack, which claimed the lives of forty Indian security personnel. India replied with airstrikes in the Balakot region of Pakistan.

Imran Khan's Foreign Policy Decisions are Influenced by His Domestic Politics

Foreign policy and domestic politics are intertwined because a nation's internal political dynamics can significantly affect its overseas affairs. When it came to Pakistan-India ties under Imran Khan, the country's foreign policy was mostly determined by internal politics. After taking power in 2018, Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government has a well-defined foreign policy strategy. The PTI administration made an effort to alter Pakistan's foreign policy by emphasizing regional involvement and economic diplomacy. Pakistan's military has traditionally had a significant impact on foreign policy, particularly with regard to India. The military's impact on foreign policy is rooted in the nation's history, which dates back to the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The military has a significant stake in international policy because of its role in defending the nation against external attack, particularly from India. The Pakistani military continued to have significant influence on foreign policy throughout Imran Khan's administration. Deep-rooted mistrust and a sense that India posed an existential threat shaped the military's view of India. The military's foreign policy, which emphasized a potent defense and strong deterrence capability, reflected this mindset.

The nation's response to the 2019 Pulwama tragedy revealed the tensions among the government of the PTI and the military establishment. A militant organization headquartered in Pakistan was blamed for the attack, which claimed the lives of forty Indian security personnel. India responded by launching airstrikes against the Balakot region of Pakistan. Ten Imran Khan suggested working with India to look into the incident as part of the PTI government's initial conciliatory response to the problem. However, the military establishment took a more tough stance and was reportedly opposed to giving in to India. Tensions between the government and military establishment were eventually resolved by a compromise in which India agreed to lessen tensions and Pakistan agreed to free an Indian pilot who had been abducted.

Increasing Hostilities Between Pakistan and India

The relationship between India and Pakistan has never been easy, and under Imran Khan, the leadership, tensions have reached unprecedented levels. Although it appeared unlikely that Imran Khan would win the 2018 election, he was fortunate to have the support of the military. The foreign policy of Khan's administration was distinct, emphasizing regional involvement and economic diplomacy. However, this approach tended to contradict the more traditional and conservative views of the Pakistani security establishment. The 2019 Pulwama incident was a turning point in the escalating hostilities.

A militant group headquartered in Pakistan was responsible for the attack, which claimed the lives of forty Indian security officers. Ceasefire violations along the Line of Control (LOC) increased as India responded with airstrike in Pakistan's Balakot region. With formal avenues of communication among the two administrations closed and cross-border business relations suspended, the two nations' relationship continued to deteriorate. After Pakistan evicted the Indian higher commissioner in protest over the Indian administration's effective revocation of Kashmir's special status, relations further deteriorated in August 2019. The increased hostility was brought on by the following causes. There are significant ramifications for both regional stability and global security from the escalating hostilities between India and Pakistan. Kashmir has been the subject of multiple wars between the two countries, and there is still a significant risk of new conflict. The likelihood of a peaceful resolution is uncertain, despite the international community's calls for moderation and diplomacy.

Diplomatic Tensions and Kashmir Conflict

India and Pakistan, who both claim sovereignty over the region, are embroiled in an ongoing struggle over Kashmir. The conflict began in 1947 when British India was divided, and the princely territory of Kashmir had to choose between joining Pakistan or India. Despite the fact that Muslims made up the majority of the people, the Hindu Raja of Kashmir chose to join India. This led to considerable unrest and, eventually, war

among India and Pakistan. Since then, the conflict has taken on various forms, including multiple wars, boundary disputes, and diplomatic crises. Tension has persisted along the Line of Control (LOC), which separates Pakistan-administered Kashmir from Indian-administered Kashmir, with both sides accusing the other of breaking the truce.

Pakistan has consistently advocated for the right of self-determination for the Kashmiri people and said that a UN-hosted referendum may be used to determine whether Kashmir should be part of India or Pakistan. India maintains that there is no need for a vote because Kashmir is an essential part of its territory. Thousands of people have died as a result of the conflict, and many more have been forced to escape their homes.

A broad and long-lasting solution is required to address the deeply ingrained and intricate Kashmir issue. In addition to providing humanitarian aid to those in need, the international community must continue to support efforts to promote communication and rapprochement between India and Pakistan. In order to promote stability and peace in South Asia, the Kashmir dispute must be resolved because it has significant consequences for regional and international security.

Despite decades of diplomatic efforts, a long-term solution has not yet been found. The international community must continue to encourage diplomatic efforts, interpersonal relationships, and business dealings between India and Pakistan. A devotion to harmony, unity, and dedication to human rights will eventually be necessary to put an end to the strife in Kashmir. Initiatives to promote communication and collaboration among Pakistan and India while addressing the humanitarian requirements of the impacted communities must continue to receive support from the international community.

The Effects of The Kartarpur Corridor on Pakistan-India Relations

On November 9, 2019, the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib in Kartarpur, Pakistan, and the Indian border were connected by the 4.7-kilometer Kartarpur Corridor. Indian Sikh pilgrims can visit the Gurdwara, a revered location in Sikhism, without an avisa because to the corridor. Given their tense relations, Pakistan and India saw the opening of the Kartarpur Corridor as a significant step toward fostering confidence. Indian Minister of Food Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Pakistani prime minister Imran Khan, and other authorities graced the occasion.

Pakistan-India ties have been impacted by the Kartarpur Corridor in a number of ways. It has made it easier for thousands of Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit the Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, strengthening cultural linkages and interpersonal relationships between the two nations. Through pilgrims' stays, visa fees, and other services, the corridor has also significantly increased Pakistan's earnings. Given the tense relations among the two nations, the inauguration of the corridor was seen as a show of goodwill from Pakistan to India. India and Pakistan held talks to make the project possible, and the corridor's launch was a unique instance of their diplomatic cooperation.

With potential implications for other disputed regions, such as Kashmir, the Kartarpur Corridor has been seen as a model for regional collaboration and interpersonal interactions. However, despite these improvements, the Kartarpur Corridor nonetheless faced challenges. Due to the corridor's close proximity to the Indian-Pakistani border, both countries are taking precautions to ensure pilgrims' safety. In the end, the Kartarpur Corridor has significantly improved people-to-people connectivity, economic benefits, and diplomatic engagement between Pakistan and India. However, the corridor also faces difficulties like infrastructure problems, visa restrictions, and security concerns. The corridor's success has also raised expectations for increased diplomatic and interpersonal interactions between India and Pakistan. The corridor has shown that Pakistan and India can cooperate on issues of shared interest and benefit notwithstanding their disagreements and conflicts. It is unclear how the corridor will continue to influence the two countries' relationship, but its effects on Pakistan-India relations will probably be seen for years to come.

Conclusion

Between 2018 and 2022, Pakistan's relations with India under Imran Khan were marked by heightened tensions, a decline in diplomatic relations, and a lack of significant diplomatic engagement. Following a string of terrorist strikes against India's military and civilian infrastructure as well as unrest in Kashmir, relations were already strained when Khan took office. The relationship had continued to deteriorate despite Khan's first attempts at outreach to India, including as the establishment of the Kartarpur Corridor, a visa-free path for Indian Sikhs to visit a sacred site in Pakistan. A significant low point in the relationship occurred during the Pulwama-Balakot confrontation in February 2019, when India launched airstrikes on Pakistani territory in reprisal for a terror attack.

Khan's administration was criticized for failing to take decisive action against terrorist organizations operating in Pakistan throughout his tenure, which India saw as a major reason why ties between the two nations had not improved. Pakistan's military might, which was thought to have total authority over Khan's government, strained the relationship. Both countries had different opinions about the Kashmir conflict, which remained a major point of contention between them. Pakistan fiercely opposed India's decision to repeal Article 370, which gave Jammu and Kashmir special status, seeing it as an attempt to unilaterally change the status quo. One of the main obstacles to improving relations between the two countries was their lack of trust, and the breakdown in diplomatic communication made it difficult to resolve disputes. Another significant factor was the military's involvement in the development of Pakistan's foreign policy, since it was thought to have significant control over Khan's government. The main point of contention was the Kashmir dispute, and a major obstacle to improved relations was the presence of terrorist groups within Pakistan. In general, animosity, mistrust, and a lack of genuine communication characterized Pakistan-India ties under Imran Khan.

Long-standing problems and conflicting priorities kept the relationship tense despite Khan's efforts to strengthen ties. A uncommon bright point in 2019 was the Kartarpur Corridor initiative, which represented a possible route to peace and interpersonal interaction. The Pulwama-Balakot crisis, which put both countries on the verge of war, overshadowed this, too. Pakistan's diplomatic attempts to internationalize the Kashmir issue received little support when India abrogated Article 370 in August 2019, significantly complicating bilateral relations. The lack of confidence between the two countries continued during Khan's administration, with long-standing mistrust on both sides.

The entire community observed with interest as India and Pakistan negotiated their complicated relationship, understanding the possible ramifications of either collaboration or confrontation between the two countries. The relationship was further complicated by the involvement of outside parties, such as China, the United States, and other powers in the region, which affected the processes of conflict and cooperation. We can learn a great deal about the opportunities and difficulties that lie ahead by closely examining the variables affecting Pakistan-India relations at this time. Global security and regional stability are significantly impacted by Pakistan-India ties. Therefore, policymakers, academics, and everybody else interested in South Asia's future must comprehend the intricacies of this connection throughout the Imran Khan era. We might strive toward a more nuanced view of the politics of the area and the possibility of both collaboration and conflict by investigating the intricacies and difficulties of Pakistan-India relations.

Recommendations

- Strengthening ties between the Pakistan and India requires a calm, negotiated resolution to the Kashmir dispute.
- Promoting people-to-people diplomacy through travel, cultural exchanges, and educational programs can help build mutual respect and understanding between the two countries.
- Expanding investment and trade can help India and Pakistan become more interdependent and reduce

tensions.

- Through organizations like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), regional cooperation can support the region's social, cultural, and economic development.
- Promoting initiatives that foster confidence, such as the completion of the Kartarpur Corridor, can help to create trust and improve ties between the two countries.

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