
India's Counter-Terrorism Discourse Towards Pakistan: A Critical Analysis (2016-2025)

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Abstract

South Asia has witnessed a significant transformation in the previous decade marked by the meticulous preservation of strategic restraint. With the increased ambiguity between diplomacy and aggression, the region has also seen significant shift in traditional norms since 2016. From strategic restraint to pre-emptive strikes, this research seeks how Indian counter terrorism discourse has developed over time (2016-2025) transforming its nature from being covert to overt using media as a tool to project narrative. Using communication, government discourse and media as its primary strategic tools, India has made persistent efforts to transform standards of regional interaction. It has also discussed the Grey Zone Tactics which explains how conflicts move from conventional battlefield to cognitive sphere in a decade which involves highly integrated tech operations and deliberate framing of rival in a certain way at global forums like SAARC and FATF. India's discourse intends to develop dominating narrative to prove that Pakistan is a global threat by normalizing overt operations across the border. The rhetorical shift has converted line of control from strict zones to a flexible area for severe actions. By redefining 'red lines' of combat, the post-2016 discourse has formalized an approach giving symbolic demonstration of power equal significance like military engagement in the media as well as diplomatic sphere. This research ultimately concludes that the New India doctrine depends upon the strategic combination of military coercion and rhetorical influence to sustain regional dominance, strongly affecting regional security architecture for the future.

Key words: Counter Terrorism, Grey Zone Tactics, Strategic Restraint, Rhetorical Shift

Introduction

The evolution of contemporary terrorism has proved a major threat to the global security nexus. Some states have addressed this issue through collective security arrangements of that of the UN or NATO whereas few states have also designed a 'Counterterrorism (CT)' policy mechanism within the scope of the foreign policy framework to safeguard their national security. This research has a major objective to analyze the recent Counter Terrorism narratives of India's foreign policy focused upon active military engagement of its rival state Pakistan'. The initial Counter Terrorism policy was designed in post-2001. The parliament attack in 2001 in India shaped their narrative from cross border terrorism to counter terrorism with a broader spectrum of engagements within their domestic trajectory. Clashes with its archival country had its volatility in the conflicting areas majorly Kashmir, but the parliament attacks were an entire infiltration into the domestic body

politics of India that spread chaos and uncertainty. ‘Zero Tolerance with Terrorism’ is the principal ideology on which India’s entire Counter Terrorism policy framework is built. The Indian Parliament Attack of 2001 had a long-lasting impact on India’s internal security policies which exposed the gaps in intelligence sharing and coordination among various security agencies. As a result, the Indian government implemented several measures to enhance its defensive capabilities shaped through the framework of counter-terrorism measures (Suryawanshi, 2019).

Indian government has accused Pakistan blatantly regarding the infiltration within its borders backed by the military establishment. India is pursuing its roadmap towards isolating its neighboring country Pakistan to reckon the world that Pakistan is unsafe and terror sponsored. Projecting its roots in Mumbai attacks, it started after the Uri incident back in 2016 where an Indian Army Brigade was attacked near Uri (a town of Jammu and Kashmir) killing 19 Indian soldiers. Although the attack was originated by a non-state actor (Jaish e Muhammad), but Indian government accused Pakistan of planning and organizing the attack. It was not for the first time that Indian Government had accused Pakistan of such treachery, but this incident paved the way for their strategic shift towards counter terrorism policy. It resulted in India’s shift from “strategic restraint” to “assertive pre-emption” according to Doval’s doctrine (Hussain, 2025).

For the first time ever, the term surgical strike was phrased by India in response to the Uri attack by bombing the sites of non-state actors residing in Kashmir. Afterwards, in 2019, Indian military faced another setback known as Pulwama attack, which killed 40 military personnel eventually confessed by Lashkar e Tayyaba (another non-state actor). Another setback in India’s securitization policy led to India’s National Security strategy 2019 also known as Hooda report which was formulated after the Pulwama attack deeply envisioned with the Hindutva ideology (Pandey, 2020). As a result, Indian government claimed its first surgical strike inside the Pakistan territory at Balakot as a response to Pulwama attack. Later, August 5th, 2019, Indian government abrogated the article 370 which gave special status to Kashmir (the major bone of contention between the two countries) regarding provisional autonomy sabotaging the rights and interests of the Kashmiris. As a result, Pakistan called off its bilateral ties with India as a sheer form of protest after which there has been no significant diplomacy between the two countries.

As per the historical context between both countries, both the countries have been involved in cross border espionage activities against each other to curb terrorism. The nature of these operations has always been opaque for the mainstream public to avoid chaos and mismanagement. This covert nature saw a shift in the last few years where Indian government led by BJP publicly admitted these operations transforming their covert nature towards an overt approach opted by the Indian government. The Guardian published an interview of RAW intelligence officials entitled “Indian Government Ordered Killings in Pak”. In this interview with officials of RAW disclosed that they were operating in the United Arab Emirates in the form of sleeper cells to exterminate terrorist activities that are being operated from Pakistan (Hannah Ellis-Petersen et al., 2024). This was the first precedent where the Indian authorities admitted their extraterritorial counter terrorism operations being held publicly. It gave a significant impact that Indian stance on counter terrorism was global and overt.

Following the hype of this article, Rajnath Singh, the current Defense Minister of the ruling party BJP, gave a statement on their local channel News 18 in which he admitted that they have killed 20 officials of Pakistan in their territory which again got the attention of international media. Guardian published another article entitled on the very next day ‘India Appears to Confirm Extrajudicial Killings in Pakistan’ (Hannah Ellis-Petersen, 2024). Turkish media also reported it under the article “India Admits to Foreign Soil Assassination after Bombshell Report by Guardian (TRT)” (Medha Upadhyaya, 2024). This is the focus of the research where the Indian narrative has reshaped in the last decade from its covert nature to overt approach.

As a response to cross border terrorism accusation, Pakistan offered Indian Government to establish an unbiased inquiry into the matter with the involvement of international experts, but

Indian Media had propagated a war against Pakistan which eventually initiated with the launch of Operation Sindoor. As a result, Pakistan retaliated and counter launched operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos as a counter defense. Never had been there a limited scale war between both these countries over the terrorism incidents but this showed the world that India was on an offensive keeping in view its counter terrorism policy strategic shift from covert to overt (Shahid, 2025).

Problem Statement

The research aims to identify the causes behind the transformation of Indian counter terrorism strategy from being restraint to pre-emptive. The strategic shift from covert to overt in the recent decade has its own peculiar reasons that can be observed in the last decade which the research has emphasized upon especially 2016-2025. To understand the transformation in South Asian security landscape, it is imperative to decode that shift. It also seeks to explain how constant systematic framing using language by elites can trigger public emotions to establish specific discourse, shape policies and redefine nuclear threshold. Sub-continent comprises of two countries mainly India and Pakistan, but their relationship impacts the security of entire South Asia. In fact, it has been seen in the aftermath of recent conflict that even international powers like US and China have their reservations over Pak Indo relationship as these two countries are nuclear powers and any conflict amongst these countries is a threat to international security as well.

Literature Review

This study employing thematic literature review and highlight following key themes:

- Evolution of India's Counterterrorism
- India's Discourse Towards Pakistan
- India's Policy after Modi
- The "new normal" doctrine

Evolution of India's Counterterrorism Policy and Zero Tolerance

Ashok's notable work highlights evolution of India's CT policy to "Zero Tolerance" following the Parliament attack which resulted in the securitization of foreign policy, prioritizing the national security over everything. Considering the ongoing security threats from its neighbors', this research also examines the representation of this perspective in the shifting counter terrorism discourses and diplomatic mechanism, arguing Delhi's continues attempts to reconcile its internal security issues with its global engagements. It also highlights the need for this policy reform emphasizing the changing dynamics of contemporary terrorism in the 21st century. Incorporation of advanced weapons and technologies has dramatically increased the intensity and scope of destruction. Considering the different patterns of contemporary terrorism from previous, calls for reassessment of state's counter measures tactics. Ashok's work employing analytical and explanatory techniques from both primary and secondary sources concludes with an important recommendation that government should address the confusion regarding its CT policy and release a comprehensive white paper on 'National Terrorism policy' and a plan of action in changing global threats (Ashok, 2025).

India's Discourse towards Pakistan: The Media Lens

Employing quantitative content analysis method and framing theory, Husnain studies the tussle of 2019 by few Pakistani and Indian media. Acting as a bridge between government and people, media dictate their relation especially for warfare information during conflict. This study has highlighted or divided media information into fact-based vs. fact less or supported vs. unsupported content. Regardless of the authenticity of the information, content was broadcasted in a way that promoted global conflict showing public's inclination towards pro-war narrative. Similarly, almost 70% of Pakistani channels showed or supported pro-war narrative. Since it was particularly discussing Indian media for broadcasting fake, baseless and exaggerated rumors regarding Balakot strike, this research reveals the prominent trend in both nations where media glamorize populist

narratives that intensify disputes during already existing geopolitical tensions (Husnain, 2021).

India's Counterterrorism Policy after Modi

In his article, Bajpai and Pandey interpret the India's National Security document, Hooda Document as a fundamental move towards an integrated model. The document goes beyond the traditional military-oriented definitions and inculcates economic prosperity, human security as an essential component and disruptive technology. Authors describe how this approach seeks to guard national interests by addressing inequality and internal fragmentation which are regarded as threats to lasting systemic equilibrium. Following the Indo-Pak protracted strategic competition, the article also explains the proactive strategy to interstate relations. While maintaining the regional balance and advocating for a unified political-military approach to sort internal dispute such Kashmir issue, it provides a critical assessment of regional disputes. Authors argue that to ensure state's crucial national interests and preserve sovereign integrity, state's security foundation must be revised inculcating energy, space and cyber into a unified doctrine (Pandey, 2020).

Calling the current era 'calculated difference', the article explains Modi government's systematic erosion of diplomatic ties amid Pakistan and India. India's vision of 'terror and talk' are irreconcilable had established into a protracted posture from temporary strategic hibernation. Following the recent events for instance surge in militant activities in Jammu and Kashmir and revocation of Article 370, author sheds light on India's foreign policy transition to a 'Neighborhood first Pakistan minus strategy'. Decades of voluntary caution have paved a way for the policy of preemptive response, India clearly demonstrating that it is ready to strike on targets in Pakistan forming a stronger mutual deterrence. It has also evaluated both internal and external factors that have restricted Modi administration to reconcile during the third term. India views maintenance of adversarial status quo more beneficial by comparing Islamabad's recent efforts for expanding trade with India. It highlights an absence of quiet diplomacy by questioning the discontinuation of diplomatic, cultural interaction as well as media participation. Lastly, the article depicts the bleak picture of the regional equilibrium claiming that the diplomatic relations will continue to suffer and remain in prolonged stagnation accompanied by higher risks and insufficient interaction as long as Modi government view cooperation as a liability rather than strategic imperative (Misra., 2024).

The India's "New Normal"

Neyaz Forooquee sheds light on Prime Minister Modi's address to the state following the military strikes 2025 in which he articulated a firm posture on defense security labeling contemporary geopolitical environment where trade and terror cannot coexist. He justified India's military response, Operation Sindoor as an inevitable departure from strategic precaution in response to the Pahalgam incident resulted in more than 20 casualties. Additionally, he justified the suspension of the Indus Water Treaty that water and blood do not flow together by pointing out that contemporary era is not dictated by war but also would not welcome state-sponsored terrorism. Intended to impose responsibility on Pakistan through aggressive response, Modi framed India's diplomatic and military operations as "new normal".

The Indian PM Narendra Modi in his initial address after the Operation Sindoor announced the transformative shift in nation's counter terrorism policy framing this aggression as "the new normal". Operation Sindoor represents a paradigm shift in India's counter terrorism strategy. Following the national security strategy formulated as Hooda Report (2019), the Indian Govt has been taking proactive measures since then. The culmination of this new normal can be seen in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor. This assertive approach is a clear message to the adversaries that India has transformed its strategic shift from strategic restraint to preemptive. It gained domestic support as well when CM Uttar Pradesh reiterated his support to Modi's leadership that engulfs the Hindutva ideology in domestic circuit of Indian politics (Desk T. N., 2025).

This strategic shift has further led India formulating their first comprehensive anti-terror policy. From reactive response to proactive national security doctrine; PRAHAAR (Policy for Response

against Hostile Activities and Radicalism) is not merely a short-term reactionary document but a national doctrine. Mehul Rastogi is of the view that India's belligerent stance opting PRAHAAR policy is a milestone achievement for a safer India. Keeping it aligned with international powers and human rights intact; it can revolutionize the India's counter terrorism stance. Unlike previous anti-terror policies like TADA and POTA which failed to protect human rights; he feels PRAHAAR inclusive and holistic approach shall be lucrative for India if it attains the integrated framework as designed in the policy (Rastogi, 2026).

Literature Gap

The existing literature on India's counter-terrorism discourse towards Pakistan mainly focused on foreign policy or security framework without the credible documents sourced or cited. While the literature addresses the content analysis, there is limited information in the form of documents which is why documentary analysis cannot be performed. Primary evidence against the Indian clandestine counter terrorism operations is hard to identify as they are held covertly. By tracing the key security events during 2015-2025 and providing critical analysis of political objectives behind India's counter-terrorism strategies, this research seeks to address this gap and develop link between internal and external security parameters directed towards Pakistan as an existential threat.

Theoretical Framework

Developed from Copenhagen School of Security Studies, by Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde, Securitization Theory primarily shifts security analysis focus from conventional, materialist approaches towards social construction. Through core components including speech act and securitizing moves, Securitization Theory explains how terrorism has been discursively established as an existential threat to global security justifying exceptional measures with serious policy and human rights consequences (Otukoya, 2024). It argues that security is not simply waiting to be discovered but is rather established through 'speech act'.

The foundational concept of CT is securitizing move or the attempt of securitizing actor i.e. government or political elite to present an issue as existential threat to the Referent Object (for instance in this case India) through targeted audience. When this threat is legitimized by the targeted audience like key institutions or public, it shows the successful securitization of the issue which is known as discursive process. This process uses the representation of an issue in a way that requires extraordinarily non-democratic measures justifying what is unacceptable in normal political discourse (STONE, 2009).

Securitization theory reveals a state-led, intentional reinterpretation of cross-border terrorism as an existential risk that demands extraordinary military actions. The political executive, namely Narendra Modi and the leadership of BJP, with the support of significant national security officials, are the securitizing entities and their referent object is the security and integrity of the Indian state, and there, main existential threat is the idea of Pakistan-sponsored non-state actors i.e. Jaish-e-Muhammad and LeT. This process intensified significantly after the 2019 Uri attack and was cemented after the 2019 Pulwama attack, which caused India to abandon its previously conservative, "strategic patience".

Methodology: Case Study Analysis

The case study analysis proves to be lucrative in this research. Using qualitative content analysis, this research has scrutinized secondary resources such as articles and publications. Using flexible data sources, various articles have been pruned in order to establish the research framework. The case study analysis helps extracting the best information as different incidents have been reported within the timeline. Different viewpoints have been merged together forming a stronger case study analysis.

Following cases are of utmost importance that has been scrutinized in the research:

1. The Uri Attack - 2016

On September 18, 2016, terrorists attacked an army post in Baramulla district near Uri, Jammu & Kashmir. Considered as the most horrific attack on security personnel in 2 decades in Kashmir, Uri attack shocked the country. This attack was recorded around 5:30 am, 10km away from east of Pakistan's LoC after 4 terrorists targeted Indian Army HQ. In the period of 3 minutes, 17 bombs were thrown resulting in death of 19 soldiers. In this attack and counterattack, which lasted for 6 hours, more than 80 soldiers were injured and all four terrorists were killed.

Following the attack, a meeting was called in which Home Minister Rajah Singh, then Chief of Army Staff Dalbir Singh, defense Minister Manohar Parrikar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval met to analyze the security situation. Jaish-e-Mohammad, Pakistan based terrorist organization was believed to be responsible for the organizing and executing this deadly attack. Consequently, on 21st September, a letter was sent to Pakistan High Commission indicating this Pakistan based organization involvement in this attack.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, soon after the attack utilized Twitter to address the nation and international world. The primary aim of this tweet was not just to discuss the event but to set a tone for national discourse. In his tweet, he stated, *"I will make sure that whoever faces consequences is behind this coward attack"* (BBC, 2016). This statement was a strong statement indicating the exit from past rhetoric.

Another immediate reaction was from the media. Media actively addressed the situation and soon after the attack, Indian TV channel named 'Zindagi' stopped showing Pakistani shows. Chairman of the channel, Dr. Subhash Chandra tweeted *"we won't shut down the channel but will alter the content and add Indian subjects rather Pakistani serials"*. He also made a harsh statement saying that Pakistani artists should leave India as soon as possible (Shakeel, 2016).

On Sept 24th, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi delivered a speech in Kozhikode addressing public rally and setting ground for people to accept extreme measures stating that, *'terrorism is not just a threat to India but to humanity.'* He went beyond merely criticizing the act to question the morality of the opponent. He stated: *'A day will come when the people of Pakistan will confront the government of Pakistan to combat terrorism. India will never forget the terrorist attack of Uri'. Calling the leadership of Pakistan, he said that he will not let the blood of eighteen jawans go in vain'* (Sasikumar, 2019).

In the same year, 2016, DGMO, Lt Gen, Ranbir Singh also for the first time used the term 'surgical strikes' to present military intervention as inevitable. The word 'surgical strike' was a smart move by the Modi government which framed the crossing of LoC necessity not merely as an act of war but a medical intervention to eradicate cancer of terrorism. States used this language to gain legitimacy from domestically as well as internationally to fulfil the need for action and signal that action was fair.

He stated that, *'as per the authentic and reliable information we have acquired, a group of terrorists has positioned themselves at launch pads along LoC to carry out terrorist activity in Jammu and Kashmir. Considering the severity of consequences, the Indian Army conducted surgical strikes at these launch pads'* (experts, 2025). Adopting the pre-emptive defense argument, DGMO justified the crossing of LoC by portraying the strikes as based on authentic information an unusual yet necessary step that India has resisted for decades just to prevent nuclear tensions. After DGMO, then Home Minister, Rajnath Singh also took Twitter and stated, *'Pakistan is a terrorist state which must be isolated'* (Munir, 2016). Adding to this, he also shows his disappointment with Pakistan for being safe haven for terrorists. However, no proof was provided by Rajnath Singh to support his claim. This statement by Home Minister proved to be crucial since it transformed the rhetoric to 'state-sponsored terrorism' representing Pakistan as evil and conflict as a structural problem with state administration.

The then External Affairs Minister, Sushma Swaraj carried the discourse to international forum to justify India's anticipated shift in stance. In her address at United Nations General Assembly, Sushma Swaraj said: *'There are states among us that are responsible for providing safe havens for terrorism, nurture and export it. Providing sanctuary to terrorists has become their distinctive*

character. It is concerning and equally important to identify these states and hold them accountable' (HINDU, 2017).

2. Pulwama Attack and Balakot Air Strike: Intense Securitization and Institutionalization (2019-21)

After Uri attack, on February 14th, 2019, another incident fueled the discourse against Pakistan. Pulwama attack is also considered as one of the major attacks on Indian soil. It happened when a van of the Central Reserve Police Force was traveling to South Kashmir Pulwama district from Jammu. A car carrying 350 kg of explosives crashed into CRPF van. Consequently, 44 soldiers were killed leaving a terrible scene of death and destruction. This incident further intensified the situation and already struggling Indo-Pak ties. Once again, Jais-e-Muhammad was called responsible for the deadly attack. In the wake of this attack, India showed extreme reaction and blamed Pakistan for the nourishment of terrorism. Indian media was flooded with demand of revenge. Different slogans like we want revenge, Time for blood, the enemy's blood displayed on channels to intensify the situation. Gaurav Sawant, Indian journalist said on India Today, 'Strike again and again'. This was not just a statement but a speech act to make extreme measures normal and unavoidable. He also emphasized on revenge and putting heavy cost on Pakistan for this act by raising a slogan 'Eye for an Eye' and calling strategic restraint a complete failure (Masahiro, 2019).

On February 15th, 2019, an official statement was released by PM Modi in which he condemned the coward attack and stated, '*The supporters of Pulwama Attack will be punished. Those who have been involved in planning, carrying out this attack and supporting terrorism have made a big mistake.* He also added that Pakistan should not daydream that it can destabilize India (Jazeera, 2019). India's Ministry of External Affairs also denounced Pakistan's alleged backing to Jaish-e-Muhammad and Masood Azhar. Defense Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman stated, '*I would not want to predict the next move of our government since no words are adequate to comfort people's grief and anger. However, the army has been given full authority to deal with the situation and do the needful*' (Delhi).

Following the Pulwama attack, India retaliated and launched an airstrike on February 26th, 2019. Balakot airstrike is considered as significant military event since it was for the first time after 1971 that international borders were crossed by the Indian Air Force. The next day, Pakistan shot down Indian warplane and captured Indian pilot, Abhinandan Varthaman. The attack was described as non-military preventive measure. This term made this attack as counterterrorism measure rather act of war. After the capture of Abhinandan, Indian Ministry of External Affairs issued a strong protest the vulgar display of wounded officer in video. India's response to Pulwama attack, Balakot airstrike, was celebrated in India initially since it comforted the nationalist sentiments of people. However, the capture of Abhinandan changed the dynamics which changed the feelings of celebration into fear unrest and his security. His capture turned him into a national hero instantly. Not only that, his unique 'gunslinger' mustache became national trend. People started using patriotic slogans over social media such as, 'Salute to our brave IAF'.

Another hashtag #BringBackAbhinandan was all over social media setting discourse that Abhinandan's release was not Pakistan's gesture but India's diplomatic win. After the release of Abhinandan, PM Modi welcomed him and tweeted 'Welcome Home Wing Commander Abhinandan!' The nation is proud of you and your courage. Our army is an inspiration for 130 crores Indian' (RIAZ, 2019). However, the airstrike and Abhinandan's capture was viewed in a different way in Pakistan. Initially, ISPR displayed a video of his capture on which Pakistan faced extreme diplomatic protest from India. Consequently, the rhetoric shifted after Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan announcement of Abhinandan's release as a peace gesture. This move was framed by an attempt to minimize hostility and prevent catastrophic battles amid two nuclear states (Today, 2019).

3. The Pahalgam attack: Operation Sindoor & Media Warfare

The Pahalgam attack on April 22 empowered Indian government narrative when an offshoot Islamist group according to Indian media killed 26 people in Pahalgam valley, Kashmir. The Indian media is so swift to make its claims that even before the official statement from Indian government; the media linked the attack to Pakistan. The claim was initially made by TRF, an offshoot of LET which was later denied, indicating the occurrence as a cyber-intrusion that links to a false flag operation. It is because the previous claims were held by the off-shoot groups directly targeting military, not civilians. The pahalgam attack is distinct in its nature as it was the first attack targeting civilians instead of military personnel or installations. India suspended Indus water treaty as a counter measure to this attack that is also a violation of international law. Operation Sindoor was finally launched on 9 may violating the sanctity of the borders attacking the resistance group leaders residing in Pakistan. Pakistan has undoubtedly supported these groups in past, but they have been banned after UNO barred these organizations. The two countries are members of the Global Counter Terrorism Forum, and they must have attended to its proceedings rather than violating each other's sanctity (Mehra, 2025).

It is the culmination of media propagation that the two countries have come face to face at the verge of war in recent times (Shah, 2025). The question arises why? The research indicates the fact that media channels work on a corporate business model that survives viewership which requires sensationalism. The war mongering Indian media has lost its credibility after sensational citations. They have often linked Indo Pak conflict to Israel Hamas conflict compelling the government to carry genocide in a similar way. Palki Sharma in her program, "vantage" attributed the conflict to turn into genocide.

Npr.org exposes the Indian media falsehoods through this transcript issued which unleashes the truth of the India media propaganda. On several occasions, the claims attributed to this transcript were false and fabricated. Even the prominent news channels like ABP news and Zee news claimed the detention of Pakistani COAS General Asim Munir (Farooq, 2025). Aaj Tak and Zee news even aired clips from the Israel strikes on Gaza attributing it to Indian strikes. Mitali Mukerjee, director of Reuters institute for study of journalism at Oxford University confessed that the influence of pro-government business houses over the media has accompanied a deterioration of press freedom in India (Omkar Khandekar, 2025).

Media framing theory supports securitization theory that has been primarily applied in this research. The Indian media has framed Pakistan on different occasions as state sponsored terror nation financially backing resistance groups in different parts of India especially IOK. . Without providing substantial proofs, Indian media has always accused Pakistan of the terrorism incidents inside India. The reason behind is the animosity between the extremist mindsets of the two countries which not only provides significant viewership but also serves the corporate interests of the Indian media enhancing their TRP and viewership.

This split between both nations is a result of systematic media reporting and language that elites have been using for decades. News channels constant usage of terms like terrorist state provided people with specific lens. Consequently, people started considering Pakistan as existential threat rather ordinary neighbor. Slogans like #IsolatePakistan and #GharMaiGhussaKMarna gained popularity increasing people's demand of immediate aggressive measures. This hate narrative grew so much that by the time of Pahalgam attack, people were not just extremely angry but also prepared for severe replies and measures for instance using water as weapon and suspension of Indus Water Treaty.

Conclusion and Findings

Language that seems to act as a mode of communication holds much more power that can shape reality and alter perceptions. Scholars view language as a powerful weapon that frames the opponent in a certain way through deliberate use of labels. By affecting individual perceptions and setting limits of what may be spoken and thought, language can convert subjective narratives into accepted normal. Michel Foucault argues that dictating discourse is just like exercising power

(Landa, 2014). It presents certain ideological stances in a way that provides actors with the legitimacy to use extreme measures to justify violence and disregard the rival.

Narendra Modi further reiterated in his 12th May speech that the conflict is just paused due to the world intervention and the mission is still on its way. His exact words quoted are "Terror and trade cannot go together; water and blood cannot flow together". He claimed in his post war speeches that ceasefire is not the ultimate achievement of the Government; it is just put a halt as the world most powerful president intervened in the war (Pakistan I. M., 2025). According to Indian Media, they are enrooted to their mission to isolate Pakistan at global stage. Contrary to this, US president has made tall claims of peace by mediating the war and has appreciated Pakistani leadership on different occasions (Desk, 2025). This clearly suggests that India's claims of isolating Pakistan at international stage are not celebrated globally but within India. No country has sabotaged its diplomatic missions with Pakistan upon the insistence of India.

The ministry of foreign affairs (MOFA) has claimed that the world community has been presented with irrefutable evidence of India's state sponsored terrorism against Pakistan as a counter effort to minimize the Indian discourse. MOFA made its claim on the basis of transcripts included in Mumbai police charge sheet against republic TV anchor in TRP case which is sensitized through false flag operations of Indian Government. As applied in the research, using language as a mode of discourse, the Indian government maintains its narrative through media. This pattern is often seen at the time of elections in India. The BJP Government is led with Hindutva ideology maintaining a Anti Pakistan stance which helps them win the elections (Pakistan L. r., 2021).

There has been no trade since 2019 which sabotages the process of any possible diplomacy between the two countries. The two countries shared immense trade before 2019 when Indian government abrogated article 370 regarding the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. This unilateral move resulted as a suspension of trade by the Pakistan government in sheer protest. Before 2019, both nations even shared MFN trade status but this eventually came to halt till now (Jayaswal, 2025).

Cricket diplomacy, which got attention in the subcontinent in the times of Zia Ul Haq and Rajiv Gandhi, has even ceased to exist contrary to the past. There has been no cricket bilateral series between both the countries since the last decade. The two countries were interacting only in international tournaments over neutral venues as the Indian government is persistent to inoculate politics into sports. Even in the recent times, the Indian players have refused to shake hands with their Pakistani counterpart which is against the basic spirit of sports (Guardian, 2025).

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