

**RESEARCH PAPER****The Rise of India's Soft Power in the Post-Cold War Era and Its Regional Ramifications, with an Emphasis on Pakistan****<sup>1</sup>Hafeez Ul Rehman, <sup>2</sup>Dr. Saqib Khan Warraich\* and Sanwal Hussain Khari**

1. M Phil Scholar, Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, GC University, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan
3. Lecturer, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences(FOHSS), University of central Punjab, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan

**\*Corresponding Author** [dr.saqibkhan@gcu.edu.pk](mailto:dr.saqibkhan@gcu.edu.pk)**ABSTRACT**

The objective of the research is to evaluate India's soft power initiatives on the power dynamics and geopolitical landscape of the region as a whole, including the effects on Pakistan and the region. India's immense influence in South Asia and thriving economy make it significant in global as well as regional politics. New Delhi's strategic, political, regional, economic, and cultural policies affect Pakistan. Military and political aspects have been extensively studied, but the rising importance of soft power makes it vital to study. The developments in communication, the internet, social media, cultural programming (arts & film), and online video streaming (soft-power instruments) have changed the battlefields. This study employs qualitative techniques. India dominates the region in diplomacy, culture, and economy. Pakistan seemed to be influenced by Indian soft power instruments. It can improve its image globally, which is influenced by Indian propaganda through political stability, economic prosperity, and public diplomacy.

**Keywords:** India, Pakistan, Region, Soft Power, South Asia**Introduction**

Soft Power is a new emerging term in foreign policy, the word is new but the application of it is old. Through soft power, a country builds its image and shapes its ideas in a way that looks attractive to other nations. The growing areas of communications put fear on the realist powers of the world that through force they cannot achieve their goals. So to gain acceptability for its actions a country lobbies, makes its image better, and propagate the narratives through different mediums to get support from other nation. All this comes under the term of soft power.

India is a large country in terms of population, area, and economy with deep-rooted cultural and traditional links to the regional countries. Its huge population, growing economy, and renowned culture make it attractive to other nations. India's geographic location, natural resources, and young population make it an attractive destination for investment and trade. India always considered itself as a power; its first Prime Minister Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to see the place of India among the great powers of the world. During the independence movement, the leaders of the Congress Party saw the role of India in international politics. The Non-Alignment Movement was a soft power initiative of Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru which provided an opportunity for India to lead the nations which don't want to be part of any group in the Cold War era.

Conflicts with China, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, and Sri Lanka did not put a good image of India in the region as well as in the world. The wars with China and Pakistan were a burden on the economy and nation and they resulted in no sustainable solution. Wars without moral grounds and international acceptability damage the image of a country in the modern era of communication. India started to rebuild its image by following the ways of bilateral relations, trade, investment, and cultural linkages.

After the Cold War, India started revising its socialist policies and liberalized its economy and trade which provided opportunities to local as well as foreign investors. Indian-educated youth, highly skilled labor, and infrastructure provided opportunities for foreign investors to invest in India. Indian culture and political narratives are floated through Cultural Organizations, ICCR (Indian Council for Cultural Relations), High Commissions, Bollywood, and International Political Organizations.

The political instability, inconsistency in foreign policy, the interference of other powers in internal matters of Pakistan, and poor resources are the factors that compel it to come under Indian influence in the region. Besides this, terrorism, fundamentalism, extremist organizations, forced disappearances of civilians, military interventions, military operations in civil areas and extrajudicial killings are the causes that badly damage the image of Pakistan in the world. India uses its soft image, culture, resources, and international forums to damage the position of Pakistan. It always raises the question of international human rights violations and above mentioned drawbacks to defame Pakistan.

### **Literature Review**

Hend Alhinnaw claims public diplomacy is now regarded as being essential to India's foreign policy when referring to soft power. Indian public diplomacy is used in the areas of tourism, culture, and education because of the country's enormous size and diversity of ethnic groups (Alhinnaw, 2014). India has always desired to dominate the region, according to Philip Hultquist and Prakash Adhikari, but hegemonic status can only be attained by investments and friendly relations. Through its soft image, it consistently strives to repress Pakistan in international forums (Hultquist & Adhikari, 2022). Vijay Chauhan makes the argument that in this modern age, soft power must be used in conjunction with hard power to exert influence. Public diplomacy also helps to develop soft power. In a recent survey in Afghanistan, 91% of young people preferred India over Pakistan due to India's policy of strengthening public institutions and improving the lives of Afghans in general (Chauhan, 2014). Shantanu Kishwar asserts that whenever Prime Minister Modi travels to nearby nations (where there are Buddhist populations), he projects his moderate views on Buddhism to project a good image of India towards Buddhism (KISHWAR, 2018). According to Patryk Kugiel, soft power challenges established values and norms in a way that hard power can't, as seen by the Mumbai attack in 2008 by Pakistani nationals or supporters who damaged Pakistan's reputation on international platforms and increased support for India (Kugiel, 2017). Shashi Tharoor says the ICCRs of India organize seminars, cultural events, and concerts abroad and encourage locals to attend. The goal is to present a soft image of India to the world (Tharoor, 2008).

### **Soft Power**

Power is the ability to influence others, usually, it is considered in the sense of military strength, population, and resources. After the soft power evolution, the traditional modes of power are called hard power. The term soft power is new but its applications and importance were considered after World War II. Joseph S. Nye introduced the word soft power in the 1980s. According to him, the soft power of any country stays on following resources such as political values in his hometown or abroad, the culture that attracts others, and its relations with other countries of the world (Raimzhanova, 2015). These tools work effectively when are legitimized and cover a moral authority.

Soft Power is used effectively by the USA due to its liberal political system and values. The USA keeps its extraordinary dominance all over the world through its soft power in policies, diplomatic relations, USAID, dominant share in international financial institutes (IMF & World Bank) and the UNO, etc. The victory in wars only through hard power cannot be gotten. In the era of fast communication soft power is necessary for a country to propagate its narrative or to get support from the world. According to Joseph S. Nye the USA is more competent in influencing the world as compared to other powers because it is home

to iPhone, iPad, Microsoft, MTV, Microsoft, Twitter, Facebook, Boeing, Intel, Amazon, Ford, etc. The world's largest film industry (Hollywood) is situated in the USA. It helped to shape the narrative of the USA about the 9/11 attacks and got support from its viewers through movies (Nye, 1990). The movies in Hollywood are not only popular in the USA but have also viewers all over the world. The United Kingdom, Germany, Spain, and China have the British Council, Goethe, Cervantes, and Confucius Institute respectively working in different parts of the world. These institutes work to propagate their language, literature, culture, etc.

Soft power is assembled by numerous actors. The business chambers, NGOs, various cultural associations (Arts council, literary festivals, etc.), educational institutions (colleges and universities), electronic media (social media, digital media), intellectual and religious elites may all serve as soft power agents at the state level. These elements may be complex and time-consuming (Seymour, 2020). At the basic level, every person is viewed as the face of his or her home nation (who represents the image of that country through his or her relationships or employment). It is frequently observed that non-state actors may have more authority or control over others through soft power avenues. Governments and political parties always maintain positive relationships with them for this reason. Thus military powers and advanced technology of war types of equipment are not the assurance of victory in the conflicts.

Nothing exists, in fact, more powerful than the state or the government. The Mumbai terrorist attacks in 2008 by non-state actors and the Delhi gang rape in 2012, in which the Pakistani and Indian governments were not directly involved, respectively, both received significant international defamation. These are two examples influence of non-state actors, which a government cannot do easily. On the other hand, if a university, research organization, or scientist creates something significant or finds a solution to a problem, his nation and organization receive international recognition. Soft power is closely associated with policies that are grounded in moral or idealistic principles. However, it is important to note that it may also be driven by less noble aims. In more accessible terms, soft power may be seen as a means of subtly exerting influence through cultural and diplomatic channels, with the potential to be employed for both positive and negative ends. Primarily, soft power is characterized by its intangible nature and its ability to attract and influence people (Nye, 2021).

### **Background of Indian Soft Power**

India views itself as a major civilization worldwide with roots that date back thousands of years. The Indian Constitution begins with the phrase "India that is 'Bharat,' a Union of States. The term "Bharat" refers to India and was first used in Hindu holy texts between 3,000 to 4,000 years ago. Indian leaders therefore believed that their country had a long history of civilization, it was self-sufficient in terms of its economy and system, and was valuable in terms of global systems. They have long viewed India as a great power with a vibrant culture, unique values, and a self-sufficient outlook. During his address to the General Assembly in 2005, Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh stated: "The ideas/norms of the UN are parallel to our values of Indian civilization that the whole world is like one family" (Singh, 2005).

### **Post-Cold War Dynamics in South Asia**

In the post-Cold War era, due to the political and geographic realities of the map of the world especially Asia, soft power gained increasing significance. States were forced to liberalize their economies, borders, and societies as a result of globalization. As an outcome of the Cold War "Hard power" (military capabilities) lost significance. More focus was given to the free market, civil values, and human rights issues. The Cold War taught that, in the age of media and quick communication, a country's goals cannot be achieved exclusively by a strong army or a thriving economy (Wojczewski, 2019). Communication techniques are more crucial as perception is valued more than reality, according to Nye. The results of any

strategic measure are not measured in terms of military success but rather how this perception affects other factors.

The Cold War came to an end with the fall of the Soviet Union. India faced difficulties at this time because the "NAM" was a crucial tenet of her foreign policy. Due to its size and numerous obstacles, India's foreign policy now needs to be reshaped or liberalized. Without the help or support of the rest of the world, India can't grow or flourish. Rajeev Gandhi, a leader of the Congress party, made numerous efforts as prime minister to liberalize the Indian market and economy. After him, Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, and Dr. Manmohan Singh, the finance minister, enacted remarkable social and economic changes that made India more open to the rest of the world. This demonstrates how the economy of every nation is impacted by its foreign policy (Gey, Jobelius & Tenbusch, 2007).

India is the largest country in the region impact on the other countries of South Asia. Nepal and Bhutan (land-locked countries) are dependent on India for regional and international trade. Bangladesh has to establish good relations with India due to ethnic, religious, and geographical ties. Sri Lanka is surrounded by sea from all sides so it has only India near to its shores. All these countries are influenced by Indian foreign policy initiatives. Pakistan being the second largest country in the region is minimal influenced by Indian foreign policy measures due to its geography and nuclear assets.

### **Internal Reforms**

India was ready to accept foreign direct investment in 1990 without complexities, large-scale reforms were implemented. To become self-sufficient and to compete with the international food market, the agriculture sector was kept at the forefront. These policies were created without affecting the industry unnecessarily. To sell products there was a need for international markets, that's why India improved its image through bilateral relations, culture (cinema), and international engagements. The fifth goal of Indian foreign policy, known as "Soft Power," is to keep India's reputation as a peaceful, developing nation that only acts to defend itself and keep its citizens safe (Bhatti, Waris & Muhammad, 2019). Through its diplomatic offices abroad, the media, and multinational corporations, it is spreading the propaganda that Pakistan poses a threat to its security. To kill terrorists, India believes it has the right to attack or conduct surgical strikes within Pakistan.

### **India's Soft Power Assets: A Comprehensive Overview**

#### **Cultural Diplomacy**

The establishment of the Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR) was to facilitate the promotion of Indian culture and its soft image, while also fostering connections with the local culture of the respective countries. A significant number of International Centres for Cultural Relations are currently operational in American, European, African, and Asian countries. It planned to open additional centers. The ICCR offers scholarships to students at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctorate levels. The ICCR organizes seminars, cultural events, and musical programs to promote engagement and participation among the local people of the respective country. The aim is to present a soft image of emerging India (Tharoor, 2008).

#### **Indian Cinema**

Bollywood is one of the oldest film industries in the world. Indian films are viewed not only in India but also throughout the rest of the world. Bollywood celebrities have significant followings in the Arab, African, Central Asian, and South East Asian nations. Additionally, many films have subtitles in other languages. Every year, Bollywood generates about 4,000 movies. Even though the government does not provide the film industry with any support, it has succeeded in projecting a positive picture of India.

For a few years, Bollywood has been producing movies about ancient Hindu Rajas (Kings) to celebrate the culture and history of the country's ancient civilization. Examples include Bahubali, Padmawat, Panipat, Tanhaj, etc. These Bollywood films are screened with government support during the current Bharatiya Janta Party's government. Movies portray Hindus as nice and Muslim invaders as terrible or evil. Ala-ud-Din Khilji, for instance, was portrayed in the film "Padmawat" as a devilish invader who was devoid of moral or human principles, shameless, and who committed rape. That is not entirely accurate. The characters of Raja Ratan and Rani Padmavati, on the other hand, were exalted as holy as angels. These films have old traditions and history, and their dialogue and plot lines are influenced by old Hindu culture, Sanskrit, and allusions to Hindu holy texts. Sanskrit terms are increasingly being used in Bollywood films, which is a step in the proper direction towards comprehending India's ancient, exalted culture and ideals. Many films are free from paying taxes since they depict the ancient culture and soft image of India.

Bollywood has produced some films that highlight and represent the social and cultural aspects of modern India. Bollywood is also increasingly portraying Pakistan as a nation that supports terrorism and non-state terrorists (Atif & Shafiq, 2019). Some movies with anti-Pakistan themes are "Tiger," "Agent Vinod," "The Kashmir Files," "Sher Shah," "Bell Bottom," and "Bhuj: The Pride of India."

### **Economic Influence and Technological Advancements**

Growing economy give a nation the capacity to invest in soft power instruments. A nation's ability to attract investment depends on how appealing its economy is. India is one of the largest economies in the world, and it is a country where it is simple to find the trained labor that the expanding industry needs. The rise of industry has benefited the educated middle class. The middle working class is larger than both the populations of the USA and the European Union combined. The phenomenal economic growth of India compelled the political leadership (political parties) to continue promoting growth rather than making political decisions that slowed down economic expansion. They understood from history that political authority cannot control the market. The private sector is a key pillar of the Indian economy, which makes up 75% of the entire economy.

Foreign investors benefit from English's status as both an official language and a business communication language. The government is making business easier. To address business-related challenges, specialized institutes, and legal courts have also been established. India offers an opportunity for foreign corporations to invest because of its favorable geographical position. For trade with Central Asia, South Asia, South East Asia, the Middle East, and the Pacific region (Yaseen, Jathol, & Muzaffar, 2016). A free market, economical energy, abundant natural resources, reliable energy supply, and low-cost raw materials are also attractive to investors. India has several e-commerce sites including Amazon, Daraz, Alibaba, and others that can advertise Indian goods both domestically and internationally. The e-commerce market had a value of 70 billion US dollars in 2022, and it has the scope to expand going forward (Fortuneindia, 2023). The cost of using the internet for business is quite affordable. Dozens of airlines operate to serve both domestic and foreign passengers. The busiest airports in the world include those in Mumbai, New Delhi, and Kolkata. These communication channels and digitalization have improved local expertise and connected it to international demands.

Economic strength is a key component of soft power for any nation. Growth in the economy will only help to address this issue. If investments, especially foreign direct investments, flow into the nation, then the economy expands. India saw the biggest FDI influx of 84.84 billion US dollars in 2021–2022 (PTI, 2023). The Indian Union Minister for Defence responded to a question in Parliament on March 14, 2023, by stating that the Reserve Bank of India has permitted trade in Indian Rupees with 18 nations, including Germany, the United Kingdom, Russia, Sri Lanka, and others (Bhattacharjee, 2023). This

action was aimed at increasing Indian exports without worrying about a global monetary crisis. Indian rupees can be used by foreign traders to export or import from India. The Indian rupee is now set to replace other currencies for trade. Currency as a medium of international exchange is also a soft power instrument.

### Financial Aid

Influencing the consumer market and penetrating a nation's policies, financial support can be a substantial cost of soft power. India has acquired knowledge of this tool through its exposure to the United States, and the United Kingdom. In the fiscal year 2019-2020, the Indian government allocated a sum of 1.32 billion US dollars to provide international aid. In the year 2015, the amount issued was \$1.5 billion. Currently, these funds are being utilized by Indian institutes directly to facilitate the modernization and growth of their beneficiaries. A significant portion of the funds is allocated towards Asian and African countries to strengthen bilateral relations and sustain India's influence in both the recipient nations and the global arena.

The present Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) administration reflects a greater emphasis on the neighboring nations, including Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. The oceanic nations, namely Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka, are also receiving economic aid to ensure the presence of Indian influence in the Indian Ocean region. India has constructed a library and Parliament building in Afghanistan, strategically presenting itself as a proponent of democratic values and educational advancement on the global stage.

**Table 1.**  
**Indian aid to different countries**

<b>Assistance was given in the form of</b>	<b>Recipients nations</b>
Grain and food	Djibouti, Lebanon, Malawi, Eswatini, Bangladesh, Syria, Afghanistan, Comoros, Madagascar, South Sudan, Sudan, etc.
Vaccines	Tanzania (polio), about 51 nations using the Covid-19 vaccination
Medicines, prosthetic limbs, and medical gear, such as ambulances etc.	Syria, Zimbabwe, Yemen, Kyrgyzstan, Somalia, Uganda, Tanzania, Madagascar, Swaziland, Armenia, Kenya, Namibia, El Salvador, the Comoros, Madagascar, Palestine, Kazakhstan, and are among the countries that are included in this list.
Rehabilitation and aid to war-affected	Iraq
Non-food relief items for citizens	Congo, Cambodia, Vietnam, Fiji, and

Source: (Shanbog, Kevlihan, 2022)

### Regional Connectivity

In 2000, India, Russia, and Iran signed INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor) to connect the Indian Ocean to Central Asia and Europe via the Middle East. Rail, road, and shipways span 7,200 kilometers in this region. Indian interests in this deal include selling its products in Russia, Europe, and the Middle East through easy routes. This corridor gives member countries alternate routes and easy channels. Chabahar Port is in Iran's Gulf of Oman and is part of INSTC. India invests to expand this port and connect it to Central Asia via Afghanistan. Most Afghan trade goes through Pakistani ports. Pakistan affects Afghanistan's economy and society. Thousands cross each border for trade, investments, medical care, education, and jobs. India has maintained friendly relations with every Afghan government to diminish Pakistani influence in Afghanistan. It invested in electricity, transportation, infrastructure, and education. Not having land access to Afghanistan, is

India's biggest challenge. Chabahar Port is being developed to avoid Pakistan. Afghanistan also wants an alternative route to the sea ports, hence it supports this project.

### **Educational Initiatives and Academic Exchanges**

Indian higher education institutions are widely recognized for their contributions in the fields of Science, Technology, and Information Technology. Indian students have received an education encompassing developing knowledge from Western universities, and a significant proportion of these individuals are currently employed in Indian institutes. India has made modern education affordable for students from developing nations. The cost of living is relatively lower than those in European countries. India is now hosting a substantial number of international students almost 49000 (Kalra, 2021). Foreign students do not experience any difficulties enrolling because English is the language of instruction. India offers easy visa services to students from Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, enabling them to pursue their studies in the country. After 2002, India offered countless scholarships to students of the region, particularly in Afghanistan. Learning about India's history, customs, and society through formal education is another example of how soft power may be put to use.

Many students from India get higher education in countries such as the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, and other advanced countries. In the year 2022, more than 650,000 students departed from India to pursue higher education in foreign countries. These students receive contemporary information and skills not only to contribute to their home regions but also to their host nations. The Indian government, particularly the foreign office, consistently advocates for the provision of visas to Indian students in different international engagements. As a result, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States have subsequently made adjustments to their visa policies, facilitating increased access for Indian individuals to work and study. The ideas, cultures, values, and knowledge of these students, both Indian and non-Indian, were left behind in their host nations. These individuals serve as intellectual representatives of India. The government has initiated a cultural exchange program aimed at promoting educational opportunities for Indian students to study abroad.

### **Tourism Diplomacy**

The folk tales originating from various regions of India are predominantly fictional, rendering them highly captivating to a global audience. As an illustration, the film "Bahubali" achieved a global box office revenue surpassing 2000 crore INR. The fictional narrative of the film has garnered widespread recognition on a global scale. The portrayal of Indian culture and tourist destinations in these films is facilitated by the support of the tourism department. The Ministry of Tourism in India has initiated the "Incredible India" campaign to entice international tourists. In 2014, the media sector and tourism department collaborated to attract a significant influx of 7.68 million foreign tourists. This strength was 6.19 million in 2022 after the epidemic. Low transportation fees, food, and lodging prices attract travellers. As the world's 7th wonder, "Taj Mahal" attracts millions of visitors to remember love. The Indian government gives visiting delegates a Taj Mahal model to remember their visit. Recently, the Bharatiya Janta Party government began gifting foreign representatives' models of old temples.

### **Buddhist Diplomacy**

India claimed Gotham Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, belonged to its country; it has also many Buddha temples. New Delhi wants Buddhist people from South Korea, Japan, Myanmar, China, and Southeast Asia to visit religious places because of its extensive Buddhist ties. In November 2011, it launched the "Global Buddhist Congregation". Eight hundred researchers, representatives, and special visitors from 32 Buddhist-majority republics attended this conference. These actions made India a religious tourist hub. In his "Look East" policy, Narendra Modi uses Buddhist diplomacy (Kumari, 2023).

## **Indian Diaspora**

Many Indians moved to the Indo-Pacific and Africa for work in the colonial era. In 1930, P.M. Rishi Sunak's family moved to the UK. Though raised and educated in the UK, he is a non-resident Indian but his roots are evident because his wife was born in India and married him. P.M. Modi wants the Indian Diaspora to promote India and invest in India. Many of them are billionaires and the CEOs of numerous significant international corporations. Engaging this Diaspora can aid with infrastructure investment, foreign direct investment, and influencing the policy of the nations where they reside. India is one of the leading recipients of international remittances. India received \$100,000 million in remittances in 2022 (World Bank, 2022).

The speech P. M. Modi gave to non-resident Indians in Dubai was a remarkable act in UAE's history, 50,000 people gathered for the public meeting. Modi and President Trump met in front of a crowd in the USA for "Howdy Modi" in 2019. This demonstrates that Modi is clear about his intentions to engage the Diaspora with Indian foreign policy. The BJP government is also encouraging high-tech Diaspora to invest in India and spread their technology there.

## **Yoga and Ayurveda**

One of India's most important exports is yoga. It is gaining popularity as an ancient Indian practice all over the world. Yoga is promoted by the Indian government and its embassies as the finest form of physical, mental, and spiritual exercise. P.M. Modi addressed the UN assembly in September 2014, he highlighted the advantages of yoga and put up a motion to designate a day for yoga throughout the world. The UN General Assembly passed the resolution with the backing of 177 nations, including the USA, UK, France, Germany, Russia, China, Brazil, Egypt, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Iran. As a result, June 21 has been designated as International Yoga Day (United Nations, n.d.). Indian herbal medicine (Ayurveda) is not only encouraged in India but also promoted in other countries as an Indian product.

## **Regional Implications of India's Soft Power**

India's transition from the "Indira Doctrine" to the "Gujral Doctrine" began in the 1980s. When compared to the Indira Doctrine, the Gujral Doctrine was the opposite. The Gujral Doctrine called for excellent neighborly relations without meddling in their domestic affairs, respect for sovereign rights, and the peaceful resolution of disputes through bilateral agreements. It emphasizes peace through constructive interactions among the nations of the region. The Gujral Doctrine changed India's reputation as a benign regional power that wanted to interact peacefully with its neighbors.

India's size affects the region's economy, society, and security. Cultural, religious, and historical ties unite the region. Indian movies are popular in adjacent nations because of their culture, trends, music, and story. Bollywood helps India access Urdu/Hindi-speaking societies. Even though Pakistan and India have hostile relations, Bollywood artists, outfits, and dialogue are popular in Pakistan. Although Urdu/Hindi is neither their official nor regional language, but Nepal, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Afghanistan people can speak and understand it because of Indian films. Indian culture and language are spreading through Bollywood. To exalt ancient India and attract Hindus and Buddhists from the region, 'Ramayana' and 'Mahabharata' are edited and filmed. Indian movies also show how calm India is and how one culture can unite the whole region.

When regional countries observe the right-wing politicians of India shouting "Akhand Bharat," they get constantly concerned about Indian supremacy. It refers to the



region known as "Greater India", which also encompasses Bangladesh, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, the Maldives, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India. In public meetings, they spread the myth that Akhand Bharat is their last stop. The book "Akhand Bharat," which was initially published in 1945, briefly mentions this concept. The governments of the neighboring nations adopt such laws and regulations to set themselves apart from India and stay safe from Akhand Bharat. Thus, the neighboring nations are impacted by Indian soft power initiatives in the region.

### **Impacts on Pakistan**

Pakistan utilized soft power to confront India's growing threats. India has a large economy, reserves, resources, hard power, and political and administrative strength. The war against terrorism and instability in FATA and Baluchistan burdened the economy. India presents various foreign challenges to Pakistan. Military operations and security demand a lot of resources. Investors and wealthy nations prefer India's large market and developing economy. Modern foreign policy is only for economic and political gain. Pakistan has been on FATF's (Financial Action Task Force) radar because it supports terrorist groups. For many years, Pakistan was included on its "gray list," which discouraged international investors from investing there. The State Bank of Pakistan's reserves declined as a result. There is a severe economic crisis in Pakistan. The Indian Prime Minister publicly admitted that his country is responsible for Pakistan's isolation. "Our government (along with the lobby) forced Pakistan to beg like beggars from all over the world," claims Narendra Modi in a public speech (Modi, 2019).

India has intervened in Pakistan's domestic issues since it was established. The secession of East Pakistan in 1971 and its renaming as Bangladesh is proof of Indian intervention, which Narendra Modi acknowledged during his visit to Dhaka in 2015 (Staff Writer, 2021). These nuclear powers India and Pakistan cannot fight directly. To combat, they use non-state actors. India believes Pakistan aids Kashmiri Mujahedeen to destabilize it. The TTP (Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan), Baloch Insurgents, Separatists, and Terrorist Organizations are supported by Indian agents as a result; these terrorists destabilized FATA, Balochistan, and Karachi. The terrorist and target-killing attacks killed millions. Foreign-supported terrorism cannot be removed due to poor resources, civilian law enforcement incompetence, and military involvement in politics. Pakistan's law enforcement agencies' reputation has been damaged by terrorist attacks and targeted killings of Pakistani military personnel and other figures. As a result of this India's foreign office and embassies maintained that Pakistan is a terrorist sponsor, a fundamentalist society, and a failed state. Pakistan's Balochistan insurgency and Kashmir human rights issues are seen as crimes against humanity. India emphasizes terrorism and issues of minorities. Foreign forums stress Pakistan's poor economy, militant and fundamentalist political activity as regional security issues. The world accepts the Indian narrative and pressures Pakistan to address Indian concerns. The green passport lost value in the USA, Canada, Australia, the UK, France, Germany, and Japan because they toughened Pakistani immigration requirements. The foreign office and mission abroad just couldn't challenge India's narrative regarding Pakistan.

The Pakistani government has given foreign and UN officials various dossiers regarding Indian involvement in Pakistan. Pakistan accuses "RAW" of backing the Balochistan insurgency. Kalbhushan Yadev, who was detained in Balochistan in 2016, is irrefutable evidence, he backed Balochistan insurgents. Several factors prevent Pakistan from claiming India is involved in domestic problems or terrorism, it may be due to the growing economy and the soft image of India in the world (Bhatti, Waris & Muhammad, 2019).

### **Conclusion**

India consistently has civilian administrations elected by the people. Political parties and leaders implement their manifestos. Political stability, frequent elections trained

politicians earned the trust of the public, executives, and establishment. In the age of soft power, India's foreign ministry is aggressively promoting its image overseas. ICCR and other soft power institutes are influencing nations to adopt the Indian views in the post-Cold War information war. Instead of fighting, it strengthened its economy and improved its international image. It used contemporary ways to spread its regional politics, but also valued strategic connections with the US and its allies for wartime security.

Besides wars and border attacks, Pakistan and India have maintained a hostile relationship on the diplomatic front. India, as a substantial and advancing nation, has consistently demonstrated a propensity towards discrediting Pakistan on many occasions. Pakistan is not successful in combating the Indian soft power strategy which damages its image among foreign nations. States establish diplomatic ties based on their national interests. Consequently, India, being a dynamic and thriving economy, holds significant appeal for the international community. India has a good position to participate and influence the area due to its economy, resources, and geographic location.

Despite its lack of resources and political stability, Pakistan has numerous potential to strengthen its position and enhance its economy through regional connectivity and CPEC. Poor law & order, slow justice, and non-political interference in policy are the primary challenges. Due to its inability to allocate its already few resources, Pakistan falls far behind India in terms of soft power initiatives. It must first develop its political system and resources via various means before using them to fight the Indian narrative against Pakistan.

**References**

- Alhinnaw, H. (2014). *The Rising Soft Power; India*. USC Center on Public Diplomacy.
- Atif, K., & Shafiq, Z. (2019). Discourse on Terrorism: Image of Pakistan in Bollywood film Phantom. *Pakistan Journal of History and Culture*, 40(1), 163-180
- Bhattacharjee, K. (2023, March 15). RBI has allowed banks from 18 countries to trade in rupee: Government in rajyasabha. *The Hindu*
- Bhatti, M. N., Waris, M., & Muhammad, S. (2019). Indian policy to isolate Pakistan at international forum and the way forward. *Review of Economics and Development Studies*, 5(4), 703-712
- Chauhan, V. (2014). Soft Power: A Foreign Policy Choice For India. *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, 75(2), 403-410
- Fortuneindia. (2023, June 27). India's e-Commerce market size to surge to \$325 billion by 2030: Deloitte. *Fortune India*
- Gey, P., Jobelius, M., & Tenbusch, R. (2007). *India: Challenges On The Road To Becoming A World Power*. Friedrich Ebert Stiftung
- Hultquist, P., & Adhikari, P. (2022). Hegemonic Instability? India's Himalayan Hegemony in Theoretical and historical perspective. *Himalayan Research Papers Archive*, 2022, 1-27.
- Kalra, S. (2021, January 27). International education day: Engineering, diverse cultural experience attract foreign students to India. *The Indian Express*
- KISHWAR, S. (2018). *The rising Role of Buddhism in India's Soft power strategy* (228). ORF ISSUE BRIEF.
- Kugiel, P. (2017). *India's soft power: A new foreign policy strategy*. Taylor & Francis.
- Kumari, N. (2023). Soft power diplomacy in India's foreign policy under the Modi government: Challenges and prospects. *International Journal of Political Science and Governance*, 5(1), 24-28
- Migration and Remittances Data*. (2022). World Bank
- Modi, N. (2019, April 21). Our nuclear arsenal is not for Diwali: PM Narendra Modi warns Pakistan [Video]. *YouTube*
- Murthy, P. (1999). The Gujral doctrine and beyond. *Strategic Analysis*, 23(4), 639-652.
- Nye, J. S. (1990). SOFT POWER. *Foreign Policy*, (80), 153-171.
- Nye, J. S. (2021). Soft power: The evolution of a concept. *Journal of Political Power*, 14(1), 196-208
- PTI. (2023, January 31). FDI inflows expected to rebound in India: Economic survey 2022-23. *The Hindu*
- Raimzhanova, A. (2015). *The Annual Conference on Cultural Diplomacy 2015*. Institute for Cultural Diplomacy and the University of Bucharest.
- Seymour, M. (2020, September 14). *The problem with soft power*. Foreign Policy Research Institute

- Shanbog, R., & Kevlihan, R. (2022). *India's humanitarian assistance abroad: A domestic and foreign policy issue* (21). *Alternatives Humanitaires*.
- Singh, M. (2005, September). *High-Level Plenary meeting of the 60th session of the United Nations* [Conference session]. General Assembly, New York.
- Staff Writer. (2021, March 26). *I was 20-22 years old when I did satyagraha for Bangladesh's freedom: PM Modi*. *Mint*
- Subramanya, R. (2015, September 25). Can Modi harness India's high-tech diaspora? *Foreign Policy*
- Tharoor, S. (2008). India as a Soft Power. *India International Centre Quarterly*, 35(1), 32-45
- United Nations. (n.d.). *International day of yoga*. United Nations
- Wojczewski, T. (2019). Identity and world order in India's post-cold war foreign policy discourse. *Third World Quarterly*, 40(1), 180-198.
- Yaseen, Z., Jathol, I., & Muzaffar, M. (2016). Pakistan and India Relations: A Political Analysis of Conflicts and Regional Security in South Asia, *Global Political Review*, 1 (I), 1-09