



**RESEARCH PAPER**

**Kartarpur Corridor: Re-defining Security in South Asian Region**

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**ABSTRACT**

Relations between India and Pakistan have been a securitizing factor in South Asian Region, witnessing several breakdowns, a history of mistrust, broken promises, and unending conflicts. These conflicts de-secure the whole region. This paper seeks to analyze Indo-Pak relations in the context of security and conflict in the South Asian Region in an attempt to understand the national security paradigm and view the Kartarpur corridor as a 'Corridor of hope'. This paper is a qualitative theoretical study that uses the methodology of discourse analysis and implies the theoretical framework of Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) to re-examine the security concept. The Kartarpur corridor provides an opportunity to transform Indo-Pak relations from a military aspect to new concerns of security such as political, economic, social, and environmental changes, paving the way towards better diplomatic relations, greater economic ties, regional peace, and securitizing the region. The international security paradigm explicitly reveals that the Kartarpur corridor is a gesture of goodwill from Pakistan. In this paper, the RSCT model broadens the security definition, redefines the security dilemma among historical rivals -India and Pakistan- and highlights Kartarpur Corridor's prospects that enhance cooperation and peace in the region.

**Keywords:** India and Pakistan Relations, Kartarpur, Regional Security Complex Theory, Security, South Asian Region

**Introduction**

Asia's Nuclear Powers India and Pakistan relations, three wars have been fought, have always been in a fire-and-forget situation (Wolpert, 2010). There has always been tension between them on diverse issues, the main one is the Kashmir conflict, and the Hindu-Muslim ideological base (Verghese, 1997). Recently Pakistan Govt. Initiated a Peace and cooperation corridor on 9 Nov 2019 named as Kartarpur corridor. This corridor has major implications for regional security and is a primary step towards peace amid fatherly foes.

This research paper is an attempt to investigate the impacts of the corridor in the Region, new ways that are created through this, and to deconstruct the security definitions in the current scenario. This research paper analyzes the framework of "Regional Security Complex Theory" to de-construct and de-secure the security concept and the theory's four levels of analysis to reveal the puzzling trajectory of Ind-Pak relations in the region post- Kartarpur Corridor event. Relations amid Indo-Pak are chaotic due to their converging and diverging interests. India and Pakistan both are significant powers in the region and have divergent points of view on regional matters, such as the Kashmir conflict and water disputes, while America supports India and Pakistan has China's support. This is an attempt to recognize Kartarpur as an opportunity for peace and cooperation in the region and provides a pathway making harmony in the South Asian Region, as well as, this will divert the tension and distrust into long-lasting peace. Theoretically, this will emphasize regional

security politics as a De-securitization of security and re-examine the security issues between India-Pak.

### Literature Review

National security is a great concern for states, particularly regarding their national sovereignty, stability, and economic prosperity. Security plays a crucial role in regional hegemony and is the main focus of this paper. However, Classical IR theorists focus on the military aspect of security. This narrow definition of security proposed an alternative “wider” concept of security from different theoretical scholars attempting to broaden the security agenda (Buzan, 1983; Ullman, 1983). On a short note, this paper will spread light on the current economy, employment, and living standards of the citizens of Pakistan with a comparison of India and Bangladesh.

**Table 1**  
**HDI comparison of Pak VS India VS Bangladesh**

Countries	Unemployment	Foreign Reserves	GDP Growth Rt	Literacy	Poverty
<b>Pakistan</b>	12%	13.561\$B	4%	58%	39%
<b>India</b>	7.6%	573.9\$B	7.7%	77.7%	10%
<b>Bangladesh</b>	5.40%	39.48\$B	6.4%	74.66%	18.54%

It is crystal clear that India and Bangladesh are gradually becoming economic giants and are living more prosperous life than Pakistan. On the other hand, its Foreign Debt of Pakistan has reached 130.2 USD BN currently (PAKISTAN, 2022). IMF loan just pulled out Pakistan from becoming a default country. Imports are higher than Exports in Pakistan are also presented a threatening scene. In nutshell, India and Bangladesh are performing better than Pakistan in the world. The aim of this above-mentioned detail is that Pakistan is not stable in any sense, and with the passing of days, Pakistan is going more under foreign debt, political instability and moving backward instead of forward. People are compelled to live miserable and low-standard life. This discussion seeks to divert attention to revisit scenarios of development in every aspect of life. That’s why Kartarpur paves the way toward progress, harmony, and nation-building in a sense, it is a need of the hour to redefine the security definition. Security has been moved on from military, arsenal, and weaponry aspects to economic growth, the well-being of citizens, and cooperation and peace between states. As Offensive Realism is defined states are power maximizers (Toft, 2005) and Kartarpur can play a positive role in this if leadership wants to avail this opportunity.

### Regional Politics

Pakistan and India are situated in the South Asian Region. The pattern of conflict and cooperation in the bilateral relations and foe states is the converging and diverging of the “security” and “safety” of the interests (Hewitt, 1997). South Asian Region is plagued with diverse intra-region and intra-state conflicts across the boundaries. These historic conflicts never provide the space for peace and harmony in the region. India and Pakistan tried and failed many attempts at peaceful dialogues so that the region grow peaceful relations (Misra, 2007). These two countries invest their intentions in security rather than economic development although India is a growing economy in the world and Pakistan has recently won the war on terrorism. Both have natural resources abundance and trade also happens between them. However, with the growing tension over security and territory in the region, the trade became declined. These are the two largest nations in South Asia. The relations between them impact the entire region (Dash, 2008). Recently, the Kartarpur event open a door for starting from new scenarios. The political scientist takes this event as a game changer in the region. Muhammad Hanif views it as Kartarpur has opened a door for tourism which boost the economy of industry on both sides as well as will create economic cooperation and activity between two rivals. People on both sides want peace and this

development is closely attached to the Indian Sikhs community because their religious sentiments can play important role in establishing and maintaining peaceful friendly relations. More, this is contributing to the enhancement of foreign exchanges. Secondly, this is a step forward to promote peace in the region, and toward a bright future. The ties between India and Pakistan can be established through mutual trade agreements which will create a peaceful and cooperative environment in the region (Hanif, 2019). This thought was seconded by Tridivesh Singh Maini "Karatrpur is an economic linkage corridor between India and Pakistan, it will boost the economy of both sides (Maini, 2019). Iqbal Singh Sevea wrote that it increases the possibilities for better diplomatic relations, increases people-to-people contact, and leads to greater economic ties (Sevea, 2018). It signifies the end of bitter hostile relations between Indo-Pak. Because already both countries have suffered greater economic loss in war and establishing defensive strategies.

### **Theoretical Framework: Regional Security Complex Theory Analysis**

Security is a complex dilemma in any region. According to the RSCT, concepts of security broaden the subject, Buzan offered a comprehensive new framework that questions the idea of the primacy of the military element and the state's understanding of security. Buzan and other authors offered a different security paradigm and compared the costs and benefits of the security issues (Buzan, 1998). The security studies authors theoretically discuss security after the end of the Cold War. They rejected the traditional understanding of security which has been transformed into non-military elements such as environmental, societal, terrorism, and economic instability (Buzan, 1983; Ullman, 1983). However, the authors widen the concept of security threats (Baldwin, 1997). Buzan finds the common ground between traditionalists and wideners through their methods. He wanted to build a more radical view of security studies by exploring threats to referent objects and the securitization of those threats (Buzan, 1998; Baldwin, 1997). This concept basis argument was that "the security is not given but is instead constructed and it is about survival (Buzan, 1998). This RSCT framework offers considerable insights by focusing on regions and arguing that they are as important as states and global actors and by doing so from a security perspective. By viewing Kartarpur through the lens of RSCT, it will become clear that security is not only about strengthening and enhancing military forces and arsenals but in the recent era, it has been linked with economic stability and raising human living standards by providing them the greatest good in form of jobs, education, health, and political stability. RSCT diverts the attention of the countries toward regional ties through treaties, trade agreements, and peaceful relations, and these factors lead them to disarmament and arms control. When India and Pakistan modify their security definition under RSCT, they will definitely, change their strategies and regional behavior toward each other. Most importantly, a large amount of budget that is being spent on weaponry and military arsenals will contribute to the economic development of both countries.

### **The concept of the regional security complex**

The South Asian Region has complex security issues within the region. States growing interests in regionalism have been driven by the changing security context in international politics (Kelly, 2007). Baldwin, argues that it is necessary to deepen and broaden the security studies agenda (Baldwin, 1997). Barry Buzan is familiar with his work on regions, especially in the context of security that's why he developed Regional Security Complex Theory (RSCT) claiming that security is transformed from military to Political, economic, development, and environmental change. (Buzan, 1983) . He deconstructs the definition of security and spreads light on new issues which are more primary than the military. RSCT comprises four levels of analysis in research of security those are: state domestically generated vulnerabilities in the region and specific vulnerabilities of a state define the kind of security fears it has, state-to-state relations, the region's interaction with neighboring regions, and the role of global power in the region (Buzan, 2003).

Buzan's deconstruction of security opens new ways in international regional politics and spreads light on new issues regarding security. Kartarpur between India and Pakistan also offers a deconstruction of security and emphasizes re-examining the concept. Pakistan and India have to adopt this new way of thinking in which both are in a win-win game. RSCT offers states to reconsider the analysis and provides five sectors of security Political, Economic Military, Environmental and Societal (Buzan, 2003). These are an interaction of states like, Military sector is the relationship of conflict coercion, the political sector is for dialogue and relationships, the economic sector is about the relationship of trade and the social sector is the relationship of collective identity and the environmental sector is the relationship for human activity and environmental change (Buzan, 1998). Farzana Zaheer argues that the Kartarpur corridor is backing Pakistan's economy as religious tourism, as well as the principal stone of this event, is based upon religion (Zaheer, 2020). Religion is the main driver in creating harmony between individuals. This harmony and stability will not remain within the national levels but it will broaden outside the borders. Religious tourism plays a vital role in the state's image building, national power, construction of narratives, and economic development as well as promoting foreign and diplomacy policies with other nations. Religious sentiments of the communities are closely based upon affection. National security crisis possibly will resolve when relations among states are based upon spiritual feelings, mutual benefits, and interests (Bainiwal, 2020). That is what RSCT is offering in resolving hostility and bitter relations among long-standing rivals Indo-Pak via Kartarpur.

### **South Asian Region: India-Pakistan conflict and instability in the region**

India and Pakistan disputes are instability in the region and it is a challenge. Pakistan and India are facing serious security threats from civil violence, ethnic conflict, and intra-state separatist and religious conflicts. These conflicts inter and intra-state make integration of harmony within the region a challenge (Dash, 2008). Another perspective of regional insecurity is a lack of common threat (Bokhari, 1985), therefore, the region is unstable when they see a common threat, they will be together against it and somehow, peace can be maintained in the region. There is another aspect "lack of mutual understanding" between states which is a hurdle in peace integration and cooperation (Rubin, 2018) & (Yaseen, Jathol & Muzaffar, 2016)

Since the partition of the sub-continent India and Pakistan tried several times to make peace and solve the Kashmir dispute through the Tashkent declaration, the Shimla agreement, the Lahore declaration, and the Agra summit (Singh, 2012). Under the sight of the RSCT, this paper argues that the mitigation of threats and conflict between India and Pakistan may enhance regional cooperation. RSCT offers a different paradigm of security and Kartarpur is a tool for this phenomenon.

While Kumar argues that India can play a major role in the integration of peace by making trade agreements within the region. Trade is a key to making peace in inter and intra-regions (Kumar, 2009). He further argues that when regional peace integrates then there is a possibility of a regional bloc and European Union case and these states can interact outside the region as a body of states and a trade agreement may welfare them. This cooperation would bring South Asia into the mainstream global market. South Asia integration would have a stronger voice in multilateral relations (Kumar, 2009). Studies have shown that South Asia integration will provide significant benefits for the region (Francois, 2008). Regional cooperation is a win-win game. The World Bank report shows that India is gaining larger from East Asia than South Asia, while the gain in South Asia is more if India and Pakistan cooperate with each other (Economic, 2010). The theorists postulated many insights for securing the state and unveiling new security concerns. Iqra Jathol also presents a religious tourism perspective of the Karatrpur Corridor. She believes that these initiatives will create a sense of tourism business between interprovincial and countries that will boost Pakistan's tumbling economy. Secondly, it will reflect the goodwill

of Pakistan in the world and establish nation-building. This religious economic harmony will portray Pakistan as a promoter of peace and cooperation in the world (Akhter, Jathol, & Hussain, 2019). This corridor is an initiative of peace-building. The coming section discusses the Kartarpur cooperation in India and Pakistan regarding future security concerns.

### **Kartarpur corridor of cooperation: India and Pakistan security re-examining**

Pakistan Govt. got credit for opening the corridor for Sikhs' holy place. Political scientists are taking this key for integration in the region. Kartarpur reveals new insights for peace but the Indian Govt. is not taking this likewise. During the inauguration ceremony, no Indian leader or BJP minister came across to visit Kartarpur. Indian PM Modi did not forward a dialogue due to his Ego and the Hindu-Muslim conflict. The Indian Govt. says that this corridor will not impact India-Pakistan tension (Kaura, 2019). India and Pakistan can use this corridor as tension easing and enhance their relations on other grounds like economic, social, and environmental (Shams, 2019). India and Pakistan require to re-examine and redefine the definition of security as RSCT mentioned above.

India and Pakistan can enhance the region on global levels on many fronts they have a Platform of SAARC to maintain peace in the region (Saez, 2012). Kartarpur will play a role in changing histories in the region if India leaves his ego behind and convince himself to dialogue. India's minor thinking is hindering the region's prosperity and disturbing the adjacent states. Here Pakistan created an opportunity for peace and re-think the relations by putting issues behind. RSCT explained that there are many security issues rather than the military. India and Pakistan have to rethink their security concerns. Kartarpur offers heady insights into policy-making regarding Religious-Political harmony, affection towards unity, and diverting the conflict to cooperation. Insecurity and instability crises will mitigate if the agreements on diverse developments will base upon mutual understandings and common benefits. India and Pakistan can play a major role in stabilizing the South Asian region by agreeing upon common goals. Again, security is not about military maximization but nowadays, it is about how a state is economically and politically stable as well as how much it is contributing to saving the environment, and how much it serving the interests of the citizens (Nye, 1988), as mentioned by Neoliberalism because there is no win in war. In nutshell, India and Pakistan have to make effective use Kartarpur corridor that serves mutual interests and will be effective in saving the South Asian region from violence and wars as well as a corridor of peace-building. Both states need to re-evaluate their realistic security concept and divert their efforts to other non-military security issues. Therefore, Kartarpur is a bridge to peace-make and peace-keep emerged as a symbol of love in the time of cholera.

### **RSCT and Kartarpur corridor: Analysis and Discussion**

RSCT reveals and conceals various aspects of security in the regional domain. Buzan, Bellay, Baldwin, and Ullman deconstruct the previously defined definition of security and divert the intentions into other modern securitize aspects. Regional harmony is the symbol of prosperity and the removal of states crisis as mentioned by Bokhari, Dash, and Hewitt. Kartarpur is a great opportunity for both, Pakistan and India, to gain and preserve their place as world peacemakers and peace maintainers. South Asian region has an abundance of Natural resources as well as economic resources if they invest their abilities into innovatory. In this paper, RSCT offers both Pakistan and India the to think beyond the box and start from new perspectives. RSCT emphasizes new concerns of security, one being economic development in the region. The south Asian Region has third-world countries that are economically marginal and underdeveloped. Under the sight of RSCT, these states have to adopt the framework of de-securitize the region, re-define the term security, and re-construct it.

India is the world's largest growing economy in South Asian Region (Mukherji, 2009). India has to maintain flexible relations with adjacent states in the region so that India

can make trade agreements with Pakistan and other regional states. If India wants to make its economy worth it, then Kartarpur offers a peaceful and respectful way for trade relations with Pakistan. Pakistan too needs to maximize its trade with adjacent countries so that it can pull out the nation from the economic crisis.

On the hand, RSCT puts light on, Environmental change and is also a futuristic security threat to the region. Pakistan and India have to play nicely and put all the issues behind them so that in the future they can save the regional environment. India is the world's #2 populated country and India has to think before the time that climate change is also a security threat that will demolish the nation, resources, and economy. By using Kartarpur India and Pakistan can plan to save the environment and secure the region in the climate crisis. Thirdly, RSCT offers India and Pakistan the to jointly make peace in the region, when the region is stable then it will turn into a regional bloc when this bloc will compete for the outer world, it will enhance the importance of the South Asian nations. Kartarpur plays a moderator role in this dilemma.

The fourth perspective which has given by the RSCT is social relations with other countries. Kartarpur offers an opportunity to build strong social and cultural relations with each other in the region. This aspect makes the region stable and united. The main and fifth aspect that RSCT discusses is a threat from the outer region. Global threats to the region can only face when the regional nations have strong ties and common interests, they can defeat the out regional threat as one.

RSCT offers four levels of security analysis, first, Domestic, India, and Pakistan can domestically evaluate their security issues and threats that are weakening them. Secondly Bilateral, India and Pakistan are always in confronting positions, they have to re-consider their issues and security issues and try to make bilateral peaceful relations within the region. Thirdly RSCT discusses regional security threats when regional states are always in confront, then the region is insecure, India and Pakistan need to make regional harmony by mitigating the conflict. Fourth is Global security concerns, when a region is weak then external power actors can easily involved in regional politics and violate the regional environment. So, to avoid this, India and Pakistan have to take Kartarpur as a peacemaking bridge for the prosperity and well-being of the region and regional states. This security analysis emphasizes on India and Pakistan define their security and reconstruct it. They have to take advantage of the opportunity of Kartarpur.

RSCT nakedly declares military is just an aspect of security. So, India and Pakistan both have to minimize their economic contribution to military efforts regarding other security threats. India and Pakistan can deploy peace in the region by putting military activities nearer the border and attacking each other. Both can invest and divert their military skills into another common security threat which is the need for time. No nuclear bomb can save any of them from climate change, no military can save them from the economic crisis and no tension can save the region when these are confronting each other. For competing with the world, for labeling the development state and region, they have to re-define, and re-construct their traditional definition of security and need to adopt peaceful forward relations via, trade, harmony, climate change agreements, social agreements, and economic agreements between them and the path and way is already opened as Karatarpur corridor.

## **Conclusion**

Security is a complex juncture of states. Buzan unveils a new threat of security which is also a threat to security. Buzan and Ullman postulate an alternative approach to security that is distinguished from traditional concept and spread light on new security threats like economic, social, cultural, and environmental change. South Asian region is unstable due to the India-Pakistan conflict. This conflict insecure the regional states and turn them into mistrust dilemmas. The instability in a region disturbs the states security and it is happening

in South Asian region. Regions have crucial importance for nations when the region is stable then nations grow their relations and prosperity spread in the region. This paper investigated the security aspect in the paradigm of RSCT in the aspect of the Kartarpur corridor. This Kartarpur corridor is unveiling security concerns and offering states to make peace and ease the tension. Kartarpur is a bridge of peace by using this India and Pakistan can stable the prosperity of the region and turn the region into a regional bloc like the EU. This paper offers an alternative way of redefining security by RSCT. Kartarpur can ease military security and divert security Buzan's new security concerns. This paper argued that military security is just an aspect and wider the concept of security by transforming it into political, economic, social, and environmental change. India and Pakistan can divert their intentions and ease the tensions by thinking beyond the box. Kartarpur offers them to think cooperation and long-lasting harmony in the region. India and Pakistan can use the Kartarpur event as a historic change event by making new agreements on various aspects of security like Economic, social, military, cultural, and environmental change. Both Pakistan and India can stable the region and compete in the world but they just have to put their conflicts aside and redefine, reconstruct and re-examine the security into current newly emerging security threats. Together they play they win and the key is the Kartarpur corridor which has to be a corridor of cooperation. Kartarpur Corridor is a Win-Win game for India and Pakistan.

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