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Research Article

Multidimensional Challenges and its Impacts on the Security of Pakistan

Naeem Ali¹, Faiza Arshad²

¹ The Women University Multan, Pakistan.

² Department of Economics, The Women University Multan, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

Over the last decades, internal challenges faced by Pakistan include a fractured state and society, weak governance, fragile institutions, extremism, and a poor economy which are also affecting the image of Pakistan in the outer world. This research explains the nature of security challenges and its impacts on the stability of the society and the state. It is an attempt to dig out the security issues and their influence on the state and society of Pakistan. The complex mix of the nature of challenges has created security threats for Pakistan, these are divided into two types, internal and external. The technological, cultural, political, social, religious, economic environmental and self-security are internal, while defense, nuclear proliferation, geography and foreign threats include the major external threats or challenges for Pakistan. The greatest challenge that the Pakistani government and its people are facing, is concerned with the national security. The inability of Pakistani security institutions is may not be fully equipped and ready to meet the internal and external security challenges effectively. The research is an attempt to create an alternative reading of various security threats related to the people at the social, political and economic levels in Pakistan. All these elements are negatively influencing the image of Pakistan at the international level as well.

Keywords: Challenge, Security, Internal, External, Stability, Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION

Security refers to the condition of being protected or safe from harm and potential hazards. Security refers to the state of being safeguarded from any potential harm, including threats, espionage, or attacks, whether they originate from individuals, social groups, or geopolitical entities, both within and abroad. National security refers to the imperative of preserving the existence of a nation by employing economic, diplomatic, military, and political means. According to Walter Lippman, a nation achieves security when it can protect its legitimate interests without having to give them up to prevent war, and is capable of defending them through military action if necessary. Security can be seen objectively as the state of being free from threats to one's possessions or achievements, and subjectively as the state of being free from anxiety that these possessions or achievements will be targeted. National security can be described as the preservation of the territorial boundaries and institutions of a nation. Berkowitz and Bock have defined the phrase as the 'capacity of a nation to safeguard its internal ideals against external dangers.' Charles Maier defines national security as the ability to manage both domestic and external circumstances that are deemed essential by the public opinion of a country to achieve self-determination, autonomy, prosperity, and well-being. A challenge is an expression of purpose to cause harm, destruction, or punishment, or it can be difficult to define the insecure situation and establish the top concerns for national security as a matter of security.



Correspondence

Naeem Ali
naeemali@wum.edu.pk

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Because of its geography, location, economics, and historical background, most of the problems that cause interstate conflicts and challenges in Pakistan come from within. Pakistan is a state with a diverse population of languages, cultures, and ethnicities in addition to its predominant religion. These characteristics have occasionally given her trouble. Pakistan, like any other modern nation, was not destined to seek security through physical means alone. Rather, it has requirements that are both psychological and physiological. Furthermore, the entity's physical security concerns were shaped by the social construction of its identity within a specific historical context (Sun *et al.*, 2020). According to M. Ahsan Chaudhry, there were numerous social and economic challenges that Pakistan, like other developing nations, had to deal with Ahsan, Muhammad Sheraz, *et al.* (2023). According to Sumit Gonguly, Pakistan is strategically located in a crucial part of the world (Ganguly *et al.*, S., 2010). But there are a lot of security issues, both internal and external. Manzar Zaidi elaborated on how terrorism, a major security concern in Pakistan, has significantly stunted the country's progress. S. A. Muni went on to explain how terrorism in South Asian countries threatens national security (Muni *et al.*, 2016). To dynamically benefit from or absorb the system's stresses and shocks, South Asians, according to the suggestion, must first overcome domestic restraints. Moreover, as a result of changes in global power, relationships are being rearranged all around the globe, including in Pakistan. Instead of working together, people are increasingly competing with one another.

SECURITY AND CHALLENGES

The Challenges of the Islamic World

There are three main schools of thought when it comes to the world after the Cold War. There is a neorealist, globalist, and regionalist framework for international security. Using Waltzian terminology, we mean the rules for how a system's components are organized and how they're distinguished from one another (Waltz *et al.*, 2015). If not bipolarity, then unipolarity or multipolarity must be the case, according to the neorealist view, which is state centric and based on an argument on power polarity. According to neorealism, the global political structure is determined by the distribution of material power in the international system, and this in turn interacts with the logic of balance of power. Concerned with determining the nature of a change in the global power structure and the security implications that may follow, world level security indicates a shift in global power dynamics. When one adopts a globalist stance, they are saying that they agree with the commonly held belief in globalization. In common parlance, it stands in stark contrast to the statist, power-political, and international system-structure-oriented realist perspective. International political economy, cultural studies, and transitional economics are the key pillars upon which globalization rests.

After decades of Cold War-era ideological polarization, the globe is now seeing a new configuration of power known as uni-polarity, which has brought with it a host of new security concerns and issues for the global community. Just like previously, the globe is split down the middle, with one side embarrassingly wealthy and the other side hopelessly impoverished. This division affects both the West and the Rest of the world. The "Rest," consisting primarily of Third World nations and constituting the vast majority of the world's population, suffers from abject poverty and technological regression in contrast to the very wealthy West. The authoritarian and undemocratic political culture is the core cause of most emerging nations' severe governance and rule of law difficulties. Perpetual intra-or inter-state conflicts ensnare some of them.

Indeed, the Muslim world is currently facing a crisis. The Muslim world ought to have been a political and economic behemoth, given that it comprises one-fifth of the world's population, 57 out of the world's countries, and consumes 70% of the world's energy and roughly 50% of its natural resources. Even though it's wealthy in every way, it's completely insignificant, contributing just 5% of the world's gross domestic product and having no say in international decision-making or even solving its problems. Most Muslim nations are among the world's poorest and most underdeveloped, even though several of them have some of the biggest oil and gas reserves. Muslim nations that have emerged from long periods of colonial domination, but have achieved statehood, lack true economic and political autonomy. Their populations are disproportionately poor and oppressed. They are all politically bankrupt and have no institutions other than autocratic control; with very few exceptions, they are politically vulnerable and dependent on the West for their continued existence. Their aims and policies lack any kind of institutional framework or history of systemic governance. Every single Muslim country's current political, economic, and military dictator is directly or indirectly responsible for their country's present state of political, economic, and military servitude to the West. Their bosses, who profit directly from their investments and oil revenues, maintain "protective" military control over their territories and resources.

Each component of political existence in these self-proclaimed sovereign nations has been counterfeited; the concept of sovereignty lacks authenticity, the legislative body does not function as a true parliament, the legal system lacks integrity, and the opposition parties are equally corrupt and ineffectual as the dominant parties. The transfer of power from colonial powers to local authorities did not result in genuine independence. Aside from their membership in the United Nations, they lack any sense of sovereignty, independence, or freedom.

Violence and conflict are commonplace in Muslim-majority countries. Foreign military bases are located in some states, while other states have granted free movement and use of their territory to foreign forces, allowing them to conduct "operations" whenever they want. Muslims around the globe feel powerless in the face of the ongoing catastrophes in Palestine, Kashmir, Iraq, and Afghanistan. If every Muslim nation chooses democracy and peace and puts knowledge and technology first, then the Muslim world can change its fate via its political and economic independence and military might.

Challenges of Pakistan

From the very beginning of Pakistan's independence, its policymakers have been concerned about potential dangers to the country's geographical integrity. Its strategic interests were occasionally jeopardized by Afghanistan, but the greatest danger came from its eastern neighbor, India. The security of the state can be perceived in a manner of ways. During the Cold War period (1949-89), for the big powers, security requirements went beyond the sole concern for national territorial rights as seen in its rigid meaning. A nation also faces threats from internal forces. The internal strife can lead to outside intervention and thus endangering the territorial integrity of a state (Gibler, 2012).

According to the nature of challenges, these are divided into two types, internal and external. The technological, cultural, political, social, religious, economic environmental and self-security are internal, while defense, nuclear proliferation, geography and foreign threats include the major external threats or challenges for Pakistan. When it comes to matters of national security, the Pakistani government confronts its biggest obstacle. It is concerning that the Pakistani army has not been able to adequately address the difficulties related to internal security. An ongoing security concern is the fissiparous tendency in Balochistan and the volatile Gilgit-Baltistan Northern Areas. Karachi still has all the makings of a bombshell. A number of Pakistani terrorist groups, including Lashkar-e-Toiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, Harkat-ul-Jihad Al-Islami, Tehreek-e-Nafaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi, and Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, have allowed Al-Qaeda to implant itself in over time. Despite the army's counter insurgency campaign, the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) has strengthened its control in North Waziristan and seems capable of expanding to surrounding areas. Pakistan has struggled internally during the past decade due to issues such as societal and governmental fragmentation, ineffective leadership, shaky institutions, extremism, and a faltering economy (Dorsey, 2018). There are a lot of failing forces and factors that contribute to national security, but Azam (1988) argues that each nation has its unique approach to addressing issues like integration, parochialism, and even secession based on its psychological, ideological, social, historical, and political characteristics, factors, and experiences.

Resolving the energy problem, recovering the economy, educating the children, and creating jobs to absorb the young bulge in our population to escape a coming demographic disaster are other difficulties in Pakistan. We must also eliminate militancy and extremism. All of these issues have obvious consequences for national security, and ignoring them would be extremely dangerous. Security has always been Pakistan's top national priority due to the country's precarious geographical position, unstable neighboring countries, major geopolitical fault lines, and the weight of history. We must alter our class attitude because we are establishing classes among our people. Today, Pakistan faces security concerns and challenges as a result of its inadequate social system. Also, our country's democracy has to be fortified.

There are two types of security threats that Pakistan faces: classic and nontraditional. Terrorism, feudalism, fanaticism, sectarianism, weak leadership, and the proliferation of weapons are all examples of classic threats (Emmers, 2017). In different parts of Pakistan, these age-old dangers take on unique forms. Criminal mafias, tribal chieftains, feudal elites, militants, clergy, and the state all play significant roles in the internal security situation. International participants are essentially an add-on in every scenario. The Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) are a crucial location for these operations. It is the country's primary flashpoint and a catalyst for terrorism. To top it all off, it provides a haven for terrorists and criminal gangs across the nation. In this area, terrorists are always testing the limits of government power. The main organization active in these areas is Tehrike-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), which is made up of twenty-eight separate groups. (Akbar, 2023).

Another major threat to Pakistan's national security is sectarian conflict. Serious sectarian violence has been plaguing Pakistan in recent years (Majeed & Hashmi, 2014). There is violence between different faiths, and there is

also violence within different sects. Christians, Parsis, Sikhs, and Buddhists make up less than 4% of the world's population of 180 million, whereas Ahmadis, Hindus, and Christians make up the bulk of the non-Muslim faiths targeted by the former. However, violent occurrences are also on the rise within the Sunni subsects of Barelvi and Deobandi, in addition to the main sects of Islam, Shias and Sunnis. The U.S.-led war on terrorism has unquestionably sown the seeds of sectarian conflict. Tit for tat, or the targeted murder of members of different sects, is the most common kind of sectarian violence in Pakistan. After terrorist attacks, sectarian conflict poses the greatest menace to Pakistan's national security (Saeed et al., 2021).

Terrorism and other external security threats include, among other things, the fallout from Afghanistan, tense relations with India and Iran as a result of Saudi Arabia's presence, and, most significantly, drone strikes, which are disrupting relations with the United States. A practical and comprehensive strategy is required to address all of these concerns. The past decade has been a time of conflict for Pakistan. The state is being undermined internally. The state has the same major question about terrorist groups and the Taliban. Natural catastrophes, sectarian strife, and ethnic tensions are all affecting the safety of certain regions, including Balochistan, Karachi, and Peshawar. The Sunni terrorist group Jundullah in Balochistan is located in Iran and conducts operations out of Balochistan. In addition to being a source of instability in the province, Jundullah is a security risk (Irshad, M. (2011)).

Pakistan faces two external challenges: its relations with Afghanistan and India. Persistent security challenges have been presented on both fronts. For this reason, Pakistan has, historically speaking, sought to sidestep a situation in which it faces challenges from both sides. As the Pakistani army battles militancy on its western front, tensions on the Line of Control and gunfire over the Working Boundary persist. Additionally, worldwide power movements are rearranging alliances. Instead of working together, people are increasingly competing with one another. As rivalry among the world's leading countries heats up, great power geopolitics is making a triumphant return. A more danger to global stability now exists as a result of tensions among key powers. Pakistan must contend with a wide range of security issues, including militancy and terrorism as well as conventional dangers and the unique task of establishing the veracity of its nuclear deterrent in relation to India (Rosendorf, 2024).

Indeed, due to both conventional and terrorist threats, Pakistani troops have had to juggle two fronts: ensuring internal security and dealing with external threats. The theory of comprehensive response has evolved to incorporate this dual involvement and deployment. The nation's primary objective in terms of security will continue to be the fight against militancy and violent extremism. The stabilization phases of the two previous successful military campaigns in South Waziristan and Swat, which precede the current war in North Waziristan, have not yet ended (Khan, A. (2021)).

Security Challenges for Pakistan in Asia

The great powers are engaged in Asia. By great powers, this study refers to states that possess real and potential cultural, diplomatic, economic, military and political resources to exert their influence on a regional and global scale. The United States has strategic and economic interests in Southeast Asia. The sub-region sits astride the major waterways linking the Western Pacific, Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf, Southeast Asia ranks as an area of strategic importance to Washington. Moreover, it has significant strategic and economic interests in Asia (Tan, S. S. (2020)).

Three key worldwide strategic changes are happening right now, and they all affect Pakistan's safety. Several factors have contributed to the current instability in the Middle East. Firstly, the Arab world's post-war order has crumbled. Secondly, China's rise and the US's pivot to Asia have sparked a new Great Game on this continent. Lastly, resurgent Russia and the West have rekindled tensions, which is commonly seen as a new cold war. Even while the military offensive in North Waziristan and other actions throughout the country are continuing to reduce space for terrorist groups, Pakistan's security planners take the danger presented by ISIS militants and their threat to seek friends and recruits in our region extremely seriously. Pakistan's security concerns are also affected by America's shift in policy. Many in Asia believe that the pivot is an attempt to slow China's economic progress, even though the United States is also trying to engage with China economically (Loong, 2020).

Furthermore, a stable regional security complex might be substantially shaped by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation if Pakistan and India minimize their bilateral fears. Preceding regionalism is individual security. It has to do with the state's capacity to avoid conflicts and win them when provoked, as well as the absence of threats to that value. Security in SAARC is jeopardized by Pakistani and Indian fears. With its strategic location as a land bridge connecting the resource-rich key Asian region to the Indian Ocean, Pakistan maintains its key position in Asia, even in the face of competing interests from major powers. A stable, safe, and peaceful neighborhood is in everyone's interest, but the only way for the two nuclear foes to do this is to work together. With the help of Pakistan

and India, as well as other Asian countries, it has the potential to become a dominant regional center. The Subcontinent can take advantage of opportunities presented by the international system as the economic center of gravity moves from the West to Asia. Both political and military authority could be affected by this change. Washington has sided with Beijing economically while forming strategic alliances with India and others to limit Beijing in response to China's ascent and the possible change in the power balance. A worsening of South Asian stability could result from Moscow's geopolitical alternatives triggered by India's alignment with the US, which could impact relations with Russia. Even as it develops, the US-India cooperation has some aspects that might compromise Pakistan's safety. Thanks to the Indo-US nuclear pact, India now has the domestic resources necessary to create a nuclear triad, and it has the confidence to reject Pakistan's peace building initiatives. Withholding civilian nuclear technology from Pakistan stunts economic development and cuts off investment opportunities in a market with a combined population larger than that of the United Kingdom, France, and Germany put together. Cooperation with Pakistan has been fruitful for Afghanistan. The decisive battle against the Taliban began in the aftermath of the Peshawar tragedy. Maintaining internal equilibrium can be facilitated by stable borders, and India can contribute to this effort. The nations of Saarc may face more challenges in the future than they have expected or are prepared to face. The geopolitics may be dictated by issues with governance, economics, population expansion, and repeated natural disasters. Pakistan is dealing with the situation while India tries to influence it. To dynamically benefit from or absorb the system's stresses and shocks, South Asians must overcome domestic barriers. South Asian stability requires leadership from India and Pakistan, who must act both directly and indirectly. Conflict management isn't the best strategy; restraint and resolving conflicts are. By resolving its long-standing differences, SAARC will be able to develop stronger stability and reclaim the chances they've missed in the past (Shambaugh, 2020).

Pakistan and Afghanistan are inseparable due to their shared history, population, religion, culture, and geography. The conflict in Afghanistan has been a major burden for Pakistan for more than three decades. More than two million Afghan refugees are currently residing in our nation; this makes us the country with the highest concentration of refugees globally. Therefore, a united, peaceful Afghanistan is in Pakistan's critical interest. Pakistan and Afghanistan have always had a strong relationship, and with the new "national unity" administration in Kabul, there is a new chance to strengthen that bond. To that aim, Pakistan has informed Kabul that it is prepared to lend a hand throughout the critical security, economic, and political transformations that Afghanistan would face after 2014. On his recent visit to Pakistan, President Ashraf Ghani made some encouraging first steps toward renewing security and economic relations. There was a sudden shift in the political climate, and swift consensus was achieved on many matters about trade, development cooperation, and security (Abbasi, 2023).

The complex internal difficulties in Pakistan have been indirectly impacted by its involvement in large coalitions with big nations, which is a result of its strategic location in the area. Her preexisting issues with internal security have been exacerbated by her collaboration with the US against the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (Black, *et al.*, 2022). The internal issue has been further exacerbated by her renewed commitment to the United States' involvement in Afghanistan in the aftermath of 9/11. Myriad have begun to doubt the Kashmir Policy as a result of the myriad internal concerns brought up by the backing for the US-led coalition. Threats to Pakistan's internal security have taken on new dimensions as a result of this complicated interplay of external and domestic factors (Kuszevska, A., & Nitza-Makowska, A. (2021)).

In light of the current climate of heated debates over religious extremism, social security, and democracy, we need a fresh approach to bridge religious and cultural divides through dialogical reasoning and promote the rational growth of civil society and democratic institutions. Changing the authoritative, coercive mindset is, however, of equal importance. Dialogues typically consist of just two people talking to each other. The judicial system is authoritarian, the educational system is national, and the religious mindset is deductive in Pakistan. The social mindset is mostly tribal or feudalistic. Those who threaten not just democracy but also the state and social security necessitate a multi-pronged response. Pakistan needs a system of government with checks and balances that helps establish institutions and ensures that they all operate together cohesively. The main issue originates from the government. Smooth governance is the solution to Pakistan's internal instability, which is necessary for the country to face external problems. The development and internal security threats could be mitigated or intensified with good governance, depending on the situation. This nation is in dire need of forward-thinking economic reforms. To achieve success in developing and stabilizing the country, education must be prioritized. Changes in the social sector are urgently required (Ahmad *et al.*, 2024).

Education is the key to a better society, and Pakistan should prioritize it. Most of Pakistan's problems can be solved through education. The dangers of terrorism, sectarianism, and ethnic divisions will be better understood as a result. By electing leaders who can deliver, we can put an end to corruption and incompetent leadership. This is because, as we've seen, voters won't be ignorant; rather, they'll be enlightened through education, which will help them discern between good and bad.

MEASURES TO COPE WITH THE CHALLENGES

To face the challenges, some measures should be taken by the higher authorities that are necessary for national security and integrity. There is an urgent need to remove hate material from textbooks and develop a humane state narrative to bring an end to intolerance and terrorism. It is not important that how many terrorists hanged but the real task is the elimination of extremism. The terrorism has entered in the schools as was witnessed in Peshawar. This call for creating awareness for security, maintain learning environment and continuity of quality education. Moreover, the students must be sensitized about the disasters and be able to take the message to their homes and community. Further, intolerance, religious extremism and terrorism are products of pro-jihad state policies, yet it is possible to build a counter narrative. The police department must do its utmost to protect the schools. They should categorize schools in terms of risk and hold meetings with principles and finalize detailed plans to check the terrorism (Muzaffar & Khan, 2021).

To improve the status of non-Muslim citizens in Pakistan, political leadership must take concrete steps to integrate non-Muslims by filling minority seats through joint electorates. Their representation in local body elections should be ensured. The stronghold of the powerful religious lobbies and their alliance with higher authorities should be discouraged. Moreover, extreme religious policies should be stopped from spreading blasphemous ideas or laws that aggravate the insecurity of non-Muslims in Pakistan. However, the government has no policy for dealing with faith-based discrimination. To deal with this problem, officials must be sensitized toward the rights of people belonging to different religions and sects and must take serious action against those who violate the rights of minorities (Wolf, 2020).

Thus, almost all segments of society have welcomed the National Action Plan adopted with a consensus by the political leadership to rid the country of terrorism. By the national leaders, some bold decisions should be taken to eliminate the problems permanently. Criminals and murderers will face punishment, according to the national preliminary committee. In addition, religious leaders should rationally oppose the Khariji sect and let their followers know that their faith forbids the murder of innocent people. The government must devise a system to put certain things into action, such as reducing the amount of money that terrorists receive from outside and preparing for those who will reject these limitations (Saeed *et al.*, 2021).

Everyone is on board with the political and security elite's decision to establish military courts to eradicate terrorists. The political and security establishment ought to establish military tribunals to eradicate terrorism. For there to be lasting peace in the country, the entire nation must stand together. To ensure Pakistan's safety, the political leadership should take a strong stand, and the army's resolve provides various forms of support in this regard (Aslam & Neads, 2021).

CONCLUSION

For the National security and integrity in Pakistan and to cope with challenges, unity among the people and the overcoming of hostility is required. The security challenges, that disturb the economic development in Pakistan are also attached to human security and the sources, for which the role of citizens and the institutions are required.

It deeply impacts the socio-economic and political history of Pakistan. They can increase the institutional development capacity and manpower through motivational activities and seminars. Gender equality and social harmony can be made possible in Pakistan by the promotion of projects related to women's empowerment and their legal rights. This type of research proves as a motivational force to make a smooth way for the people and their participation to remove security threats in Pakistan. Thus, there is a need for strong policies and practical steps for the security of Pakistan.

The proposed project will help to understand the nature of security issues in Pakistan.

- The research will enhance the vision of the people and how they can play a key role in social security and the development of Pakistani society.

- To improve the status of non-Muslim citizens in Pakistan, political leadership must take concrete steps to integrate non-Muslims by filling minority seats through joint electorates. Their representation in local body elections should be ensured.
- The people and national institutions can play a significant role in the stabilization of democratic institutions of the state through security measures.

It created a motivational approach among the people and the politicians to take measures for the social security, institutional stability and development of the country. It may help to develop a spirit of self and social protection developed among the people of Pakistan. The security institutions and their policies can be a step forward for the protection of Pakistan because the socio, economic and political security are essential elements for the stability of this country.

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