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India-Pakistan Conflict over Kashmir Issue: A Study of Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and Peace Initiatives

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ABSTRACT

The conflict between Pakistan and India over the state of Kashmir is one of the crucial concern in the International Relation. This prolong territorial dispute has been commenced after the inception of Pakistan and India in 1947 from the British Colonial rule, a central point of hostility, leading wars, military standoffs, diplomatic breakdowns, and persistent regional instability. Despite recurring crisis, both states have periodically adopted confidence Building Measures and peace initiatives aimed to reduce territorial tension, preventing boarder escalation, and fostering dialogue. The current study profoundly examines the evaluation, effectiveness, and limitation of CBMs and peace effort undertaken both the countries on the territorial dispute utilizing the qualitative and analytical research methodology, the current study evaluate political, military, and public-center CBM, alongside series peace initiatives to acquire their impact on conflict management. The current study finds that while CBMs have protected accidental border clash and maintained communication channels, they remained an abortive to address the root causes of the Kashmir concern confronted both the countries Pakistan and India. The study concludes that sustainable peace require institutional dialogue, mutual trust and inclusive approaches that consider regional realties and human security.

Keywords; Pakistan-India Relation, Kashmir issue, Confidence Building, Peace Initiatives.

Introduction

When the Maharaja of Kashmir signed the Instrument of Accession in favor of India, the partition of Sub-continent India in 1947 intensified the dispute between Pakistan and India over Kashmir. From that point on, Pakistan and India continued to be at odds, engaged in four overt wars, and had multiple near-daily confrontations.¹ The dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir is among the longest outstanding territorial conflicts in the post, colonial

¹ Razia.I. 2021 A Historical and Political Analysis of Kashmir Conflict: From Past to Present. *Journal of Development and Social Sciences*. V.02. No.04. 2709-6262

world. The dispute, which resulted from the partition of British India in 1947,² has been the main political, military, and diplomatic concern of both states. Kashmir's geopolitical importance, population, and emotional value have made the region the core of the national identity stories of India and Pakistan. The conflict has been the cause of wars, heavy militarization, and frequent crises that have plagued South Asia for a long time³.

The period for this research is from 1947 to the present time, with a special emphasis on the post, 1990 period when the nuclearization changed the strategic environment dramatically. The first use of nuclear weapons made the chances of a direct military confrontation much higher, but at the same time, it led to the implementation of Confidence Building Measures to ease the situation. During this time, structured peace dialogues, bilateral agreements, and military hotlines for crisis prevention became the features of relations between the two countries.

The Kashmir issue is a significant problem that affects not only the two countries directly involved but also the entire region and the world. India and Pakistan, two nuclear, armed neighbors with a history of hostility, are considered as the most likely cause of a limited war that can rapidly escalate to the international security level. The ongoing unrest in Kashmir hampers regional growth, jeopardizes the safety of the local population, and poses difficulties in establishing diplomatic relations with the major world powers. Grasping the concept of CBMs in this situation is vital for understanding the intervention, management mechanisms in a situation of nuclearized rivalries⁴.

This is an ambitious critical examination of the extent to which CBMs and peace initiatives have really made the conflict diminish, as opposed to only having served as brief crisis, management instruments. The negotiations on Kashmir which have been going on for years, have made no progress towards a solution. Hence, the issue of effectiveness of diplomatic frameworks arises. The research tries to achieve that by examining the first steps taken and by learning from them. The study uses qualitative research methodology and relies on historical analysis, policy review, and comparative evaluation of bilateral agreements. The investigator bases the study on publicly available documents, peace accords, and policy statements. The research is more of an exploratory study rather than a forecasting one, as it concentrates on the actual results, not the goals. The problem statement that directs this research is the inquiry about whether India and Pakistan have used effective measures to build confidence (CBMs) to reduce their tensions and promote peace over Kashmir. The core research question investigates how deeply CBMs can influence the political disputes that form the basis of the problem as opposed to merely dealing with the surface, level hostilities. This study uses a theoretical framework based on conflict resolution theory and debates about realism and liberalism in international relations. Realist views focus on power politics and security dilemmas, whereas liberal ones bring up dialogue, institutions, and cooperation. CBMs are neither one nor the other as they are at the intersection of these theories, thus offering some means for the rivals to manage their conflict until finally resolving it. The current research is a discourse of academic and policy matters wherein it acts as a major player by offering a thorough evaluation of the use of CBMs in the

² Ganguly, Sumit. *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947*. 4th ed. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

³ Basham, Anthony L. *The Changing Dimensions of Indo-Pakistan Relations: Problems of Conflict and Cooperation*. New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2014.

⁴ Haider, Muhammad W., and Tahir M. Azad. 2021. "The Role of Confidence-Building Measures in the Evolution of Relations between Pakistan and India." *World Affairs* 3: 294-317.

India Pakistan context. By looking into past trends and present issues, the study intends to become a source of insight for scholars, policymakers, and peace practitioners as well.

Significance of the Study

The Kashmir dispute is more than just a territorial conflict. It is a complex and multi-dimensional conflict that includes the elements of national identity, self-determination, and nuclear stability.

The relevance of the study emerges from the fact that the study focuses on the confidence-building mechanism (CBM) instrumental in managing conflict as distinct from conflict resolution. The importance of confidence-building mechanisms arose from the fact that the mechanism played a significant role in lowering the risks of miscommunication and maintaining communication between two nuclear-armed states that remain adversaries. An understanding of these mechanisms assumes significance not only because of the study aiming to determine the dynamics of the relationship between India and Pakistan but also because of the fact that the study aims to enable the estimation of the accuracy of the probable environment of peace in the South Asian region.

Historical Background on Kashmir Issue

The partition of British India in 1947 created the independent states of India and Pakistan and left over 560 princely states to decide to which dominion they would accede. Among these princely states, Jammu & Kashmir was the most controversial case due to its predominately Muslim population, but ruled by a Hindu monarch, Maharaja Hari Singh. As the Maharaja attempted to remain independent; the Maharaja faced a revolt inside the princely state and intrusions from tribal militants of Pakistan's North-West Frontier Province in October of 1947⁵. Consequently, the Maharaja sought military aid from India and signed the Instrument of Accession to accede Jammu & Kashmir to India. This action precipitated the first India-Pakistan war 1947-1948, which concluded with the assistance of the United Nations in the form of a ceasefire. The ceasefire line was later referred to as the Line of Control and served as a dividing line between India and Pakistan's separate administrations of territory⁶. Despite United Nations Resolutions calling for a plebiscite for the Kashmiri people to express their will regarding which dominion they wished to accede to, the lack of agreement between India and Pakistan regarding demilitarization and political conditions, has allowed the unresolved dispute to fester and has created permanent discord between India and Pakistan⁷.

Over the years Kashmir has continued to be a conflict and mistrustful area of contention between India and Pakistan. The two nations went to war again in 1965, mainly about Kashmir, this reinforced Kashmir's central importance in their rivalry. The 1971 war had changed the balance of power in South Asia and led to the signing of the Simla Accord in 1972 where both India and Pakistan agreed to resolve differences bilaterally and transform the ceasefire line into the so-called Line of Control; however, this Agreement did not provide a final resolution for Kashmir. Since the late 1980's the nature of the Kashmir conflict has changed again due to the insurgency which erupted in Jammu and Kashmir, which was caused by local grievances against India, political dissatisfaction with India as well as from the support of the Pakistan government

⁵ Akram, Ahmad Syauqi, and Aidatul Fitriyah. "Kashmir as a Center of Global Conflict: Historical, Political, and Diplomatic Perspectives." *Politeia: Journal of Public Administration and Political Science and International Relations* 2, no. 2 (2025). <https://doi.org/10.61978/politeia.v2i2.461>

⁶ Inam, Zaid Bin. "Re-Visiting the Traditional Conflict: Analysis of Kashmir Dispute Using Constructivist Framework." *ISSRA Papers* 15, no. 1 (2023): 49–59.

⁷ Amir, Shamaila, Muhammad Asadullah, Dawood Karim, and Fayyaz Ahmad. "The Indo-Pak Rivalry over Kashmir Issue: An Analysis of Past and Present of Kashmir." *Resistances: Journal of the Philosophy of History* 1, no. 2 (2020):

and military. The period following this saw both increased militarization and increased human rights concerns due to the long standing use of military and police force against civilians, which became particularly important following both countries nuclear testing in 1998. To further compound these issues is the international community's increased interest in how to deal with the Kashmir conflict given that all attempts to resolve the core issue have failed thus far⁸.

Independent Variable

India and Pakistan's Confidence, Building Measures (CBMs) and peace initiatives act as the independent variable. The list contains the components of the mechanisms such as agreements on ceasing fire, military to military communication (hotlines), diplomatic dialogues, bilateral agreements, trade and travel initiatives, people to people contacts as well as other formal or informal peace efforts aimed at de-escalating the situation and enhancing reciprocity of trust.

Dependent Variable

The level and intensity of the India Pakistan conflict over Kashmir is the dependent variable. This can be measured by the frequency of border violations, escalations or de-escalations of military tensions, stability along the Line of Control (LoC), diplomatic engagement or breakdowns, crises occurrence, and overall prospects for peace and conflict management in the Kashmir dispute.

Hypothesis

This research proposes that confidence, building measures (CBMs) and peace initiatives are major factors that have an impact on the India, Pakistan conflict levels and intensity over the Kashmir issue by resulting in temporary stability, better communication, and crisis management although they do not solve the political dispute at the core; additionally, it posits that the effectiveness of these CBMs depends on the domestic political situation in India and Pakistan and on the region and the world, whereas the null assumption is that CBMs and peace initiatives do not cause any significant reduction in tensions or change in conflict patterns between the two states.

Problem Statement

The Kashmir conflict is far from being a mere territorial problem; it is a multi-dimensional phenomenon involving issues such as national identity, self-administration, regional security, and the implications of nuclear militarization. The value of this study arises from its thorough examination of confidence building measures (CBMs) used in conflict management, focusing particularly on its application to reduce conflict tension instead of a complete conflict resolution. The role of CBMs in the Kashmir conflict cannot be overstated; they have played a very effective role in avoiding misunderstanding, avoiding any type of military escalation, and ensuring very significant communication channels between two nuclear states who are otherwise bitter enemies. This study aims to present a proper understanding of confidence building measures based on an in-depth assessment of its successes and failure in its application in a very sensitive security context, which eventually plays a very significant role in understanding current dynamics of relation between India and Pakistan.

Research Questions

1. How much have confidence, building measures (CBMs) and peace initiatives contributed to reducing the level and intensity of the India Pakistan conflict regarding Kashmir?
2. To what extent have CBMs succeeded in facilitating crisis management, lessening misunderstandings, and ensuring temporary stability between India and Pakistan while the political issue remains unresolved?

⁸ Usman, Sahibzada Muhammad. "Kashmir: Its Role in the Region and Impact on Pakistan and India." *Journal of Global Peace and Security Studies (JGPSS)* 2, no. 1 (2021): 26–38.

3. In what ways do internal political dynamics and external regional or international factors influence the carrying out and success of CBMs in the India Pakistan peace process over Kashmir?

Theoretical Framework

Realistic Approach

In Realism, international relations are viewed primarily as state-centric behavior pertaining to power politics and security competition. The Realist perspective regards the Kashmir conflict as arising from India-Pakistan strategic rivalry and both nations' differing views regarding their territorial integrity and national security. Due to the vital role Kashmir plays in both states core interests, establishing an agreement between them will be difficult. As such, confidence-building measures (CBMs) should be considered only tactical measures to ease tensions between both nations rather than true means of resolving the conflict.

Liberalism Approach

Dialogue, institutions, and cooperative approaches to reduce conflict are the focal points in liberal institutionalism. As a result, many observers look at confidence-building measures (CBMs) as a way to promote trust, improve transparency, and create shared interests between nations. Agreements regarding trade, travel, and military communications are viewed as small steps that can eventually lead to significant improvements in an adversary's relationship.

Conflict Resolution Theory

The theory of conflict resolution seeks to understand the causes of conflict, including identity, grievances, and perception, in order to resolve the problem. Therefore, in order for a confidence-building measure (CBM) to work, the political aspirations of parties, as well as their human/security needs and social/reconciliation efforts must also be considered. Since the Kashmir Conflict remains unresolved, CBMs have not effectively addressed the key political issues.

Levels of Analysis

The study primarily operates at the state and systemic levels of analysis, treating India and Pakistan as the two main units of analysis in the examination of the Kashmir conflict and the role of confidence, building measures (CBMs) and peace initiatives. The research explores the influence of government policies, diplomatic engagements, military strategies, and domestic political dynamics on the design, implementation, and effectiveness of CBMs. In addition, the study examines how regional security dynamics and international factors, such as the role of major powers and the broader South Asian strategic environment, affect bilateral relations and peace efforts. Although the study highlights the societal aspect of the Kashmir issue, especially its political and social implications, the main analytical emphasis is still on inter, state interactions and conflict management mechanisms between India and Pakistan.

Methodology

The study has utilized a qualitative and descriptive research methodology through historical analysis and secondary research. Various books, journals, research reports, and government statements are involved. The current research shall critically scrutinize major initiatives towards peace and CBMs adopted by both India and Pakistan, and how their aims, implementation, and result differ from each other. The comparative method has been utilized in the research study to determine differences due to regional and international circumstances.

Literature Review

Hanif, Mustafa, and Nawaz chronicle in detail the genesis of confidence, building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan starting from their independence in 1947 and culminating at the Kargil conflict of 1999. Their research draws attention to noteworthy diplomatic

milestones such as the Tashkent Agreement (1966), the Simla Agreement (1972), and the Lahore Declaration (1999), pointing out how each of these efforts aimed to end hostilities, set up lines of communication, and encourage dialogue as a response to recourse to arms. The authors emphasize that the introduction of these first CBMs did not solve the Kashmir issue; however, they were instrumental in laying down basic structures for interaction, initiating a limited trust, and making sure that escalations were not out of control. The authors assert that the implementation of the first CBMs did not solve the Kashmir issue; however, these measures were instrumental in laying down basic structures for interaction, initiating a limited trust, and making sure that escalations were not out of control. In spite of the persistence of mistrust and clashes, the authors arrive at the conclusion that these CBMs at the foundation level not only set important precedents for subsequent peace efforts but also served as a proof of the potential of dialogue and institutionalized mechanisms in dealing with the India Pakistan relations.

Haider and Azad dissect the utilisation of confidence, building measures (CBMs) as both a positive and a problematic factor in the evolution of PakistanIndia relations. Their argument touches on a multitude of military and non, military CBMs such as diplomatic engagements, security dialogues, trade initiatives, and people, to, people contacts, assessing the extent to which they have contributed to the de, escalation of tensions and the building of trust. In their view, CBMs have been able at times to mitigate antagonism and open channels of communication during crises, but their sustained influence has been compromised by ongoing political volatility, the absence of a continuous commitment, and the recurrence of conflicts.

Younis Ahmad Sheikh elaborates on the complex character of confidence, building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan and their expanded application across political, military, economic, and social areas. The study underscores the roles of communication through military hotlines, trade across the border, and cultural and people, to, people exchanges in alleviating tensions, enhancing communication, and creating trust to a certain extent between the two states. Sheikh points out that these CBMs not only function as means for crisis management at hand but also as ways for gradually fostering transparency and predictability in the bilateral relations. Nevertheless, the research also reveals that although these steps have been instrumental in achieving short, term stability, their potency is frequently limited by deep, seated political disagreements, recurrence of violence, and lack of institutional continuity, thus implying that CBMs cannot resolve the underlying structural issues of the Kashmir conflict.

This study dealing with the Pervez Musharraf era delves into the deployment and impact of confidence, building measures (CBMs) between India and Pakistan in a situation characterized by post, nuclearization tensions and changing security dynamics. Central to this period were the composite dialogue process, cross, Line of Control (LoC) trade, and ceasefire agreements, which the study presents as the main instruments through which the two sides sought to lower the temperature, re, establish communication channels, and gradually build trust. It points out that the CBMs served the vital function of crisis management and opening communication channels but were only faintly visible in the background due to the terrorists' episodes, political disagreements, and lack of will of the two sides to continue in the same vein. Stating that the CBMs of the Musharraf period reflected the potential of regularized engagement in stabilizing relations, the study nevertheless ends with the observation that their limited scope and unsatisfactory execution reveal the difficulties of maintaining confidence, building without a comprehensive political settlement in Kashmir.

Confidence Building Measures and Peace Initiatives

Military, diplomatic, and economic confidence, building measures (CBMs) have been instrumental in the interaction between India and Pakistan, each playing unique roles in the management of bilateral tensions and the facilitation of cooperation to a limited extent. Nonetheless, their effectiveness has been less than consistent and they have been, at times, susceptible to setbacks. Military CBMs have centered on activities such as joint exercises, establishment of military hotlines, and signing of ceasefire agreements, and have been, in essence, the main tools to prevent the escalation of conflicts resulting from misunderstanding and manage crisis situations. The ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) in 2019 can be considered a milestone in this respect, having allowed for a drastic reduction in the level of cross, border engagements in the following years. Yet, the return of border tensions and a general atmosphere of high military alert after the 2025 flare, up can be regarded as evidence of the limited capacity of such mechanisms and the vulnerability inherent in military CBMs, which can accomplish only so much when they are not fully functional and are not being maintained continuously. Diplomatic CBMs, through composite dialogues, visits of top, level delegations, and secret back, channel negotiations, have attempted to create recognizable frameworks for continuous communication, thus lowering the danger of absolute diplomatic breakdown and allowing for modest advances on dispute, ridden issues. However, changes in government, civil unrest, or fighting on the ground often result in the halting or even the regression of engagement, implying that diplomatic CBMs are primarily a means of communication and their real potential depends on the stability of the surrounding political environment. Economic and trade CBMs generally had a focus on initiatives such as the cross, LoC trade that started in October 2008 and were meant to be the foundation of economic interdependence.

Findings

The data shows that confidence, building measures (CBMs) have managed to have a small but notable impact on managing the India, Pakistan conflict by preventing immediate crises and lessening misunderstandings especially during periods of high tension, although they have not succeeded in addressing the core political and strategic issues of this conflict. Transparency has been improved, the information exchange has become faster, and the risk of misperception and unintended escalation has been reduced with the help of such mechanisms as ceasefire agreements, military hotlines, and communication channels, but their influence has mostly been limited to short, term stability and crisis management rather than long, term conflict resolution. The political dispute over Kashmir, the central issue of the India Pakistan conflict, is still there, as these CBMs have largely been implemented to manage the symptoms of the conflict instead of addressing its root causes such as different national narratives, strategic objectives, and the political, social, and economic aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Besides that, domestic politics in India and Pakistan have had a major impact on the effectiveness of CBMs and have even been a source of constraint. Changes in government, nationalist public opinion, media influence, and civil military relations have often interrupted the continuation of peace initiatives and resulted in their reversals. Apart from the factors inside the two countries, the bilateral relationship has also been affected by the regional and global dynamics as the changes such as the

1.9 Recommendation

In order to have sustainable peace between India and Pakistan, there has to be a mechanism of continuous dialogue, which is safeguarded from politically driven vicissitudes. Instead of the two nations opting for occasional dialogue, a framework of diplomatic engagement should be opted for, based on which communication between the two nations will be facilitated. This

apart, the existing ceasefire regime between the two countries should be fortified by developing rules of engagement, which will subsequently minimize the prospects of misunderstanding along the Line of Control. Another area, which apart from continuous dialogue should be emphasized, is people-to-people contacts between the two nations, which may include higher education interactions, cultural events, media engagement, as well as people-to-people travel.

Secondly, it is important to bring Kashmiri parties into the fold of the meaningful peace process because their politics, society, and economy share collective ambitions that play a significant role in creating sustainability in confidence-building measures. Integrating various Kashmiri voices in the dialogue processes would be an important measure to cope with the long-pending grievances of Kashmiri society to bring confidence-building measures beyond the framework of symbolic politics to the constructive conflict resolution processes in the region. Additionally, enhanced economic collaboration in terms of trade normalization, joint cross-line trade, and joint development endeavors will be an important factor in materializing pragmatic approaches between stability and cooperation that will further strengthen the sustainability of confidence-building measures in the overall framework of the peace architecture in the region.

Conclusion

The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan represents one of the longest-standing and most intricate international conflicts, characterized by historical trajectories, various national identities, security dilemmas, and unfulfilled political aspirations. In this regard, the current research work has explored confidence-building measure(s) and peace initiative(s) as conflict management tools, rather than conflict resolution tools. From the analysis, it is evident that confidence-building measure(s) have managed to make an impact in the sense that they have contributed toward preventing unintentional military action, decreased misperceptions, as well as maintained limited communication channels, particularly since the nuclearization of the conflict in 1990, but have not managed to make an impact in dealing with the human aspects of the Kashmir conflict. The findings highlight the presence of short-term stability and crisis management in military, diplomatic, as well as economic CBMs, which have been at work, specifically in the times of high tension along the Line of Control. Ceasefire agreements, military hotlines, as well as various dialogue efforts, as well as cross-Line of Control trading, have shown the effectiveness of the minimum level of cooperation even in the background of high-level hostility. However, all of the above have remained volatile and reversed in a short span of time due to the influence of domestic as well as regional politics. Thus, the functionality of CBMs has remained as short-term crisis management, rather than a stepping stone to a long-term resolution.

A key limitation to CBMs, emanating from the current study, is that they cannot engage the root causes of conflict: divergent national narratives, unresolved questions of sovereignty, and the political, social, and economic grievances of the Kashmiri people. Excluding Kashmiri stakeholders from meaningful dialogue has undermined the legitimacy and sustainability of peace initiatives. Domestic political constraints in both India and Pakistan such as nationalism, civil-military dynamics, and media-driven public opinion have repeatedly disrupted continuity in peace processes and weakened trust-building efforts. The study also underlines the impact of external and regional factors on the success of CBMs. While international actors have sometimes performed a stabilizing function, the preference for bilateralism and aversion to third-party mediation have curtailed the scope for external engagement in overcoming more deep-seated structural impediments. Thus, initiatives for peace have remained episodic rather than institutionalized. In short, CBMs solely cannot resolve the Kashmir conflict, but without

them, escalation and strategic instability between two nuclear-armed adversaries cannot be averted. Lasting peace calls for going beyond symbolic or crisis-driven CBMs to embrace a broad-based and inclusive framework that offers a structured dialogical process, helps generate mutual trust, reflects the views and aspirations of Kashmiris, and embodies concerns related to human security.

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