

# India-Pakistan Relations Post-2019: Security, Diplomacy and Political Narratives

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*Abstract- This study looks at how India-Pakistan relations have developed since 2019, a time of increased hostilities and little interaction. Bilateral dynamics were drastically altered by the Pulwama attack, the Balakot airstrikes, and India's revocation of Article 370. To comprehend the nature of the current relationship, the study examines developments in three important areas: political narratives, diplomacy, and security. It concludes that although nuclear deterrence and the 2021 Line of Control (LoC) ceasefire reaffirmation have prevented major military conflict, there is still a great deal of mistrust. Both nations' internal political narratives have solidified positions, and diplomatic relations are still essentially frozen. According to the report's conclusion, India Pakistan relations are marked by "stable hostility," with little chance of normalization in the near future unless political will and measures to foster confidence materialize.*

and reliable media coverage released after 2019 have all provided data. Using a thematic approach, the study groups the evidence into three categories: political narratives, diplomatic engagement, and security dynamics. Examining official statements, ceasefire declarations, and policy announcements is known as document analysis. Comparative Analysis: Evaluation of the policy stances and narratives of Pakistan and India. Trend analysis: An examination of changes in trade patterns, diplomatic interactions, and cross-border incidents. Interpretive Approach: Recognizing how media framing and domestic politics affect bilateral relations. The study's limitations include its dependence on publicly accessible sources and the opaqueness of backchannel diplomacy, which limits comprehensive understanding of decision-making procedures.

## I. INTRODUCTION

Overview Since the 1947 partition, India-Pakistan relations have been characterized by rivalry, mistrust, and sporadic crises. The Pulwama terrorist attack and India's constitutional amendments pertaining to Jammu and Kashmir made 2019 a significant turning point. Since then, there has been little diplomatic activity, increased security concerns, and starkly different political narratives in bilateral relations, which have essentially remained frozen.

Examining security-related developments, diplomatic exchanges, and domestic political framing in both nations is necessary to comprehend the post-2019 phase.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in this study is qualitative and analytical, with a primary focus on secondary sources. Official government statements, policy reports, scholarly publications, think-tank analyses,

## III. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The Kashmir dispute, nuclear deterrence, and conflict persistence have historically been highlighted in scholarly literature on India-Pakistan relations. Stephen P. Cohen's classic works emphasized the structural rivalry that stems from identity politics and partition. Nuclear weapons lessen the possibility of full-scale war but not sub-conventional conflict, according to Sumit Ganguly's extensive analysis of the role of crises and limited wars under the nuclear shadow. Three new trends can be seen in post-2019 scholarship. First, analysts point out that coercive deterrence tactics have replaced dialogue-based engagement, especially since the Balakot incident. Second, a number of studies highlight the increasing influence of media nationalism and domestic political narratives in solidifying bilateral stances. Third, the 2021 ceasefire in the Line of Control is a crucial example of practical conflict resolution in the face of

political animosity, according to recent policy research.

According to think-tank reports from organizations like the US Institute of Peace and the Observer Research Foundation, the relationship has entered a stage of "managed hostility" or "cold peace." Scholars continue to disagree on whether the current calm along the LoC is a sign of long-term stabilization or just short-term tactical restraint. The literature generally shows that structural rivalry is still present, but it also acknowledges significant tactical changes in military signaling, diplomatic disengagement, and narrative competition after 2019.

#### IV. SECURITY DIMENSION AFTER 2019

Following the Pulwama attack in February 2019, which India attributed to the militant organization Jaish-e-Mohammed based in Pakistan, the security situation between India and Pakistan drastically worsened. In response, India launched the first airstrikes across the Line of Control (LoC) since 1971 with the Balakot airstrikes. Both nuclear-armed states were on the verge of escalation when Pakistan responded with its own aerial strike. Ceasefire violations along the LoC sharply increased in 2019–2020 as a result of these incidents. Tensions were maintained by militant incidents, infiltration attempts, and cross-border gunfire. The 2003 ceasefire agreement was reaffirmed by both parties in February 2021, which was a significant development. Compared to the immediate post-Pulwama period, relative calm has since prevailed along the LoC. The security relationship is still characterized by deep strategic mistrust in spite of this tactical de-escalation.

Pakistan has persisted in bringing up the Kashmir issue in international forums, while India's security posture has placed a greater emphasis on border management and counterterrorism. The nuclear dimension continues to be both a global source of concern and a background stabilizer.

#### V. IMPACT OF ARTICLE 370 REVOCATION

India's August 2019 abrogation of Article 370, which eliminated Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional

status and divided the state into two Union Territories, marked a significant structural change in bilateral relations. India presented this action as an internal administrative reform with the goal of improving integration and governance. Pakistan vehemently disagreed with the ruling, denouncing it as unlawful and severing diplomatic ties with India.

Islamabad began an international diplomatic campaign on Kashmir and halted bilateral trade. The action further narrowed already narrow channels for communication and solidified positions on both sides. The Article 370 ruling also changed the diplomatic discourse, with Pakistan stepping up efforts to internationalize the issue, particularly in forums like the United Nations, and India continuously stressing that Kashmir is an internal matter.

#### VI. DIPLOMATIC ENGAGEMENT AND BREAKDOWN

Diplomatic Interaction and Disintegration Since 2019, there has been little diplomatic interaction between India and Pakistan. Following the Article 370 ruling, Pakistan expelled the Indian High Commissioner and cut back on diplomatic personnel; India retaliated. The Comprehensive Bilateral Dialogue and other formal bilateral dialogue processes have not resumed. Backchannel diplomacy, however, seems to have been quietly involved, especially in the reaffirmation of the LoC ceasefire in 2021. Both nations have occasionally displayed tactical restraint, indicating that although public diplomacy is confrontational, certain lines of communication are still operational.

Additionally, trade relations have suffered. Although there were brief discussions of resuming trade with India in 2021, Pakistan's internal political pressures prevented normalization. Pakistan had suspended trade with India in 2019. Cultural exchanges, visas, and people-to-people contacts have all drastically decreased.

## VII. ROLE OF DOMESTIC POLITICAL NARRATIVES

Domestic Political Narratives' Function Post-2019 relations have been greatly influenced by domestic politics in both nations. The Indian government has presented a robust national security narrative that emphasizes tough measures against Pakistan and zero tolerance for terrorism. Politically, the Balakot strikes were presented as proof of a proactive security strategy. The military establishment and political leadership in Pakistan have persisted in making Kashmir the main focus of bilateral relations. India's Kashmir policy is portrayed in Pakistani narratives as unilateral and unstable. Both nations' media landscapes have frequently heightened nationalist sentiment, escalating public animosity and reducing political room for compromise. Diplomatic flexibility has become more challenging as public discourse has become more securitized.

## VIII. INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL CONTEXT

Regional and Global Context While not very significant, external actors have contributed to the stabilization of tensions. Particularly since the 2019 crisis, nations like the United States and Gulf states have subtly promoted de-escalation. Regional calculations were also impacted by the changing circumstances in Afghanistan following the U.S. withdrawal in 2021. Regional geopolitics have taken on a new dimension as a result of China's expanding strategic alliance with Pakistan and its tensions with India, especially following the Ladakh crisis in 2020. In the meantime, India's growing international alliances have improved its standing diplomatically. The majority of major powers have limited external mediation by treating India-Pakistan tensions as a bilateral matter, despite sporadic international concern.

## IX. PROSPECTS FOR NORMALIZATION

Opportunities for Normalization Due to ingrained mistrust, internal political constraints, and unresolved core disputes—particularly Kashmir and accusations of cross-border terrorism—full normalization seems

unlikely in the near future. Nonetheless, there has been some stability along the LoC since 2021, indicating that crisis management systems are still in place. A number of things could influence future progress, including continued adherence to the ceasefire, the resuscitation of trade relations, backchannel diplomacy, and adjustments to domestic political incentives. CBMs, or confidence-building measures, could be small steps in the direction of lessening animosity.

## X. CONCLUSION

In conclusion Relations between India and Pakistan after 2019 reflect a period of controlled military restraint mixed with icy hostility. After Pulwama and Balakot, security tensions peaked, but since the 2021 reaffirmation of the ceasefire, they have somewhat subsided. While domestic political narratives in both countries continue to support hardline positions, diplomatic relations are still essentially frozen. The best way to characterize the current relationship is as adversarial but stable. Although there is less chance of an immediate, major conflict than there was in 2019, the relationship is still precarious due to the lack of organized communication and ongoing mistrust between the parties. A gradual rebuilding of diplomatic engagement, measures to boost confidence, and political will are necessary for sustainable normalization; these developments are still uncertain in the near future.