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Pakistan-Bangladesh Unresolved Issues During the Era of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid

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Abstract

This research offers a thorough study of Pak-Bangladesh relations under the direction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid from her return to power in 2009 to the present. Understood within the larger framework of South Asian geopolitics, the study aims to clarify the evolution, dynamics, and subtleties of the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh. It looks at how interactions between the two countries have been shaped by historical legacies, home political environments, and regional as well as worldwide factors. The study is organized around themes of the historical background of Pak-Bangladesh relations, the effect of Sheikh Hasina's leadership on bilateral ties, the function of economic and trade alliances, and the influence of third-party countries and international organizations. Examined are important events, diplomatic interactions, and policy choices to find their underlying reasons and effects. Particularly under consideration are divisive topics including historical grievances, economic cooperation, security difficulties, and cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Pak-Bangladesh Relations, Hasina Wajid, Stranded Pakistani, Bihari Issue, Apology issue

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Abstract

This research offers a thorough study of Pak-Bangladesh relations under the direction of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajid from her return to power in 2009 to the present. Understood within the larger framework of South Asian geopolitics, the study aims to clarify the evolution, dynamics, and subtleties of the bilateral relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh. It looks at how interactions between the two countries have been shaped by historical legacies, home political environments, and regional as well as worldwide factors. The study is organized around themes of the historical background of Pak-Bangladesh relations, the effect of Sheikh Hasina's leadership on bilateral ties, the function of economic and trade alliances, and the influence of third-party countries and international organizations. Examined are important events, diplomatic interactions, and policy choices to find their underlying reasons and effects. Particularly under consideration are divisive topics including historical grievances, economic cooperation, security difficulties, and cultural diplomacy.

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Introduction

This chapter explores the outstanding issues between Bangladesh and Pakistan, emphasizing the need to put the past behind them in order to forge deeper ties. Instead of discussing arcane topics, the aim is to analyze the issues that have become roadblocks to building a more sustainable partnership over the years after 1971. Furthermore, the focus is on previous policies and what Pakistan and Bangladesh should do to address these

problems. There are still unresolved concrete and intangible difficulties between Bangladesh and Pakistan. And all of these are the results of the terrible things that happened in 1971. There are both good and negative aspects to relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Some have called them "cordial," while others have labeled them as "moderate." Despite sharing a common history and agreement on nearly all global and local matters, both nations have been unable to overcome the



painful legacy of their past. There is only a struggle in their relationship because of the problems brought forth by the terrifying events of 1971. Otherwise, there hasn't been a major conflict between them since 1976, when diplomatic relations were established.

When two countries have unresolved issues and bad memories of the past, they can maintain bilateral relations in one of two traditional ways: either by freezing the unresolved scores and continuing to cooperate in other areas (the Sino-India model) or by gradually resolving the issues and concurrently continuing to liaise politically, economically, and culturally. In reality, the latter strategy is more prevalent in today's international relations, and nations are embracing new strategies to keep up with the accelerating speed of globalization and trade as a result of shifting circumstances. After fighting a border war in 1962, India and China are now mending their differences, with unresolved issues being put on hold and rarely brought up (Sultana, 2020). But while presenting and creating analogies, care must always be taken. Not all conflict-ridden nations can use the same strategies since different states can find certain methods workable while others cannot due to political, historical, or ideological considerations. There have been suggestions that Bangladesh and Pakistan ought to adopt similar strategies. In their instance, one nation has long disregarded the other's requests to resolve outstanding scores, which has led to a state of mind among the Bangladeshi people. Thus, in actuality, the course of action envisioned here falls somewhere in between the two conventional approaches: bilateral ties are maintained while being frozen, reminded, and ignored. This strategy, which has been used for the past 34 years, has not been able to close the divide between these two South Asian Muslim states. The process of reconciliation has been impeded by Pakistan's avoidance of resolving disputes and Bangladesh's ongoing sense of resentment. Consequently, both nations have lost out on a robust political alliance as well as a positive economic collaboration that may help their respective populations overcome denial, hunger, and other forms of poverty.

The purpose of this in-depth investigation into Pakistan-Bangladesh relations during the two most recent administrations of Sheikh Hasina Wajid is to

delve into the intricate web of diplomatic initiatives, economic alliances, cultural exchanges, historical reckonings, and geopolitical considerations that have shaped the outcome of their interactions. Through an examination of the nuances of their relationship, we may be able to gain a better understanding of the opportunities and challenges that these two nations face as they attempt to navigate their shared history and work toward laying the framework for collaboration that will result in a South Asian region that is both secure and wealthy.

Research Questions

The research work answers the following questions.

- How did diplomatic engagements between Pakistan and Bangladesh evolve during Sheikh Hasina Wajid's last two eras, and what were the key outcomes of these interactions?
- What were the main areas of economic cooperation between the two countries during this period, and how did these collaborations impact their respective economies?
- To what extent did regional dynamics and relationships with neighboring countries affect Pakistan-Bangladesh relations during Sheikh Hasina's last two eras?
- What is the potential trajectory of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations in the near future based on the trends and developments observed during Sheikh Hasina's last two eras?

Scope and Significance of the Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

During Hasina Wajid's tenure, there was an opportunity to improve economic collaboration between Pakistan and Bangladesh. Both nations possess unexplored opportunities for commerce and investment that could be mutually beneficial. An opportunity arose for enhanced diplomatic interaction between the two nations. Engaging in diplomatic discussions to resolve mutual difficulties may enhance relations and foster greater comprehension of regional and global challenges. Enhancing cultural bonds between Pakistan and Bangladesh may facilitate interpersonal relationships and encourage comprehension and admiration of each other's cultures.

A Review of Previous Literature

“Issues and Challenges of Peace Building in South

Asial by (Mustafa, Khan, & Azhar, 2019) that the development of diplomatic relations requires a thorough investigation of collaboration for understanding. The states' attempts to establish a constructive and advantageous relationship may be better understood by tracing their areas of cooperation, whether in the cultural, economic, or security spheres. You may learn a lot about the practical aspects of diplomatic tactics by studying the successes and failures of these joint endeavors. Examination of official declarations, treaties, and agreements is essential to any serious examination of the development of Pakistani and Bangladeshi diplomatic relations during the Hasina Wajid period. So doing, this part hopes to reveal the tactics both countries used to deal with the complicated legacy of their past and encourage collaboration. Understanding the complexities of their diplomatic connections and contributing to a comprehensive representation of the ongoing relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh requires an examination of these milestones and turning moments. Pakistan and Bangladesh had a troubled past that had a lasting impact on their diplomatic ties. The 1971 Liberation War was a watershed point when tensions and animosity were at their highest. However, a myriad of variables outside the past have molded their relationships since then, which have evolved via a complicated dance of cautious rapprochement and periodic conflict. International pressure and practical considerations led to the 1974 creation of diplomatic ties, which was a first step towards normality.

"*The Changing Face of Pakistan's Economic Relations with India and Bangladesh: Prospects and challenges*" by (Ahmed & Shabbir, 2014) claimed that there are glimpses of hope among these difficulties. The energy and textile industries are two areas where bilateral commerce might provide enormous benefits for both countries. The textile sector in Pakistan and the garment business in Bangladesh are complementary, which might lead to more trade and perhaps joint ventures. Pakistan has an excess of gas and Bangladesh is experiencing rising demand; by working together, they may build a gas pipeline that would allow them to share resources and develop interdependently. In addition to improving economic conditions, these innovations promote a feeling of interconnectedness, which in turn encourages people to put aside their differences and work

together. Further economic potential might be unlocked by pursuing options such as collaborative ventures in agriculture, IT, and medicines, outside conventional commerce. Furthermore, regional programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative provide structures for joint infrastructure building and integration, which may open up new avenues for investment and commerce. A stronger friendship may be the result of overcoming emotional distance, increasing mutual understanding, and participating in cultural exchanges and people-to-people encounters. Hasina Wajid has put Pakistan and Bangladesh ties at a crossroads. Even while we face enormous obstacles due to our shared past, there are exciting new chances for growth because of regional cooperation, cultural interchange, and economic cooperation. To navigate this maze of problems and unleash the full promise of a better future for these two countries, it is essential to recognize all sides of the equation, handle complaints sensitively, and prioritize common interests.

"*Pakistan Bangladesh Relations*" (T.S. Cheema, 2013) claimed that understanding the intricacies of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations under Hasina Wajid's tenure requires delving into their intricately linked past. The tragic aftermath of the 1971 Liberation War has left an indelible mark on their diplomatic relations. In order to make sense of the here and now and the future, it is crucial to grasp this common history. The two countries' accounts of the Liberation War are quite different from one another. The harsh fight for independence is a dark chapter in Bangladeshi history, characterized by injustices and horrors that the country will never forget. A strong emotional and political problem, the question of who is responsible for war crimes remains unanswered, adding fuel to the fire of mistrust and making reconciliation initiatives more difficult. However, the official narrative of Pakistan often minimizes its involvement in the conflict, which only serves to deepen the divide in historical interpretations and obstructs any chance of true reconciliation. There were several difficulties in the first few years after diplomatic relations were established in 1974. Reflecting the lasting effects of the conflict and the difficulty in establishing confidence in the face of unsolved grievances, there were periods of cautious engagement interspersed with times of heightened tensions. Influential people in both administrations, burdened by their own histories, were pivotal in determining the

course of these relationships. Even the sincerest efforts at collaboration were sometimes overshadowed by the memory of 1971.

In *"Outstanding Issues between Pakistan and Bangladesh,"* (Noor, 2005) explores the intricate and varied historical, political, and economic conflicts that have existed between the two countries ever since Bangladesh gained its independence in 1971. The literature includes a thorough analysis of the geopolitical processes that have molded bilateral relations, concentrating especially on topics like the separation of assets and liabilities, the situation of Biharis in Bangladesh, and the divisive subject of war crimes and reparations. Academics have emphasized how the 1971 war and the political narratives that followed in both nations led to a lingering hostility. Frequently eclipsed by these unsolved historical issues, Noor's research also covers the attempts at economic collaboration and trade partnerships. Previous research has shown periodic advances in diplomatic relations, but it also highlights the absence of a thorough settlement to fundamental issues, which keeps impeding a strong bilateral relationship. Though a great deal of study has been done on the political and historical aspects of Pakistan-Bangladesh ties, little of it has been done on how these unsolved problems affect South Asian economic integration and regional stability. Most writing concentrates on past complaints without giving enough attention to how the geopolitical environment is changing or how outside players like China and India are influencing the dynamics of the present. Sanam Noor's study could make a big difference by combining these elements and providing a comprehensive picture of how unresolved problems impact not only bilateral relations but also more general regional cooperation and security structures.

"Governance, patronage politics, and democratic transition in Bangladesh" (Kochanek, 2000) argued that Prime Minister Hasina Wajid has led Pakistan and Bangladesh to optimistic economic ties characterized by pragmatism and mutual gain, despite the fact that the 1971 Liberation War's historical legacy hangs over the two countries' relations. Despite difficulties and geographical complexity, the two countries have recognized that economic cooperation might pave the way for peace and stability in the area. Looking at these interactions shows that there are opportunities and

challenges that need to be addressed. One cornerstone of this growing economic partnership is trade, especially in energy and textiles. Pakistan and Bangladesh have complementary strengths in textile production and garment manufacturing, which might lead to more commerce and perhaps joint ventures. Collaboration in the energy sector is possible due to the abundance of gas reserves in Pakistan and the increasing demand in Bangladesh. Agreements for the building of gas pipelines might pave the way for resource sharing that benefits both countries. As a result of these changes, not only is economic growth enhanced, but people are more likely to work together and talk about their problems, putting aside their differences in the past.

The research paper, *Bangladesh: Why it happened*, (Choudhury, 1972) argued that the current status of Pakistan-Bangladesh ties under Hasina Wajid may be better understood in light of the historical background. The 1971 Bangladesh Liberation War was a turning point in South Asian geopolitics and a defining event in the history of diplomatic ties between Pakistan and the newly formed republic of Bangladesh. It also changed the course of events in the region. The emergence of Bangladesh as an independent sovereign state was a result of this struggle, which was characterized by complicated political, cultural, and humanitarian issues; it also changed the power balances in the area. A new era in Pakistan-Bangladesh diplomatic ties began after the Bangladesh Liberation War ended. There was an underlying tension that reverberated through the decades after East Pakistan's partition since it severed the historical links. Both countries will always remember the psychological and physical wounds inflicted by the war. Pakistan and Bangladesh's bilateral ties are, hence, heavily influenced by the historical backdrop of the Liberation War.

Literature Gap

Although there is a significant focus on political narratives and high-level diplomacy, there is a lack of comprehension of grassroots initiatives for reconciliation and historical deliberation. Examining the manner in which individuals participate in cultural exchanges, academic alliances, and social media engagement has the potential to yield significant insights into the dynamics of shifting public perceptions and the possibility of

surmounting longstanding animosities through grassroots efforts. By conducting additional studies, we may enhance our comprehension of the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh during Hasina Wajid's tenure.

Apology Issue

Although the accounts of the excesses carried out by the Pakistan army in the former East Pakistan during the 1971 crisis were not widely accepted (many people in Pakistan are unaware of the events of 1971), the reality that had been concealed for the previous thirty years was finally revealed in December 2000 with the much-delayed declassification of the HRCR. Since 1972, the report has been kept confidential in government closets (Islam, 2020). However, in August 2000, some excerpts from the report were released in an Indian magazine, which led to media attention. The study urged for the prosecution of army leaders who had committed atrocities, and it made explicit what they had done; unfortunately, many of the offenders had already died by the time the report was published.

Pakistan has long been asked to apologize to the people and government of Bangladesh for the abuses carried out by its army, but Pakistan has consistently refused to budge on this demand. Rather, statements of remorse that the Bangladeshi government could be as irrational as to seek an apology were largely what came after it. Despite the passage of 34 years since the crisis of 1971, many Bangladeshis, particularly those who were affected by the stakeholder's action, still harbor animosity toward Pakistan. Stories of the horrors carried out by the Pakistani army have been transmitted to Bangladesh's younger population.

Nevertheless, there were two good things about President Musharraf's statement. First off, the apology from a president who doubles as the chief of staff of the Army was very noteworthy due to the longstanding stakeholder administrations' tendency to sidestep the matter and the widespread belief that the Pakistani army was mostly to blame for the 1971 misdeeds. Second, there was a different response at home than there was in 1998 when Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif labeled the 1971 fiasco as "a result of political injustice" during a visit to Bangladesh for the tripartite summit including Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India (Tandon & Kapoor, 1998). When, Nawaz Sharif said something that was not

even close to "regret," the reaction in Pakistan at the time was extremely negative. However, this time, Pakistan's intellectual elite was pushing for an apology. Notably, 51 Pakistani civil society organizations apologized individually for all the abuses and crimes

against civilians carried out in the former East Pakistan in 1971. As part of his trip to South Asia, Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri also expressed regret for the events of 1971 when he visited Bangladesh in September 2003. Remember that Pakistan has previously expressed apologies to Bangladesh before. This is not the first time this has happened. As early as 1974, Pakistan expressed sadness in the (PBI/AHI), which was signed on April 9, 1974 (Islam S. N., 2016). Article 13 of the Agreement states that Pakistan's then-minister of state for defense expressed remorse and denounced any crimes that may have been committed during the stakeholders' operation in East Pakistan (Noor, 2005).

Not only would an apology help the people of Bangladesh, but it would also benefit Pakistan's civilian-government organization. It would demonstrate that law enforcement and the stakeholder's personnel alike are held accountable. Bangladesh ought to acknowledge that the numbers of those killed in the disastrous 1971 incident were inflated. Dhaka asserts, in an obviously inflated statement, that three million people died in the battle and that just 200,000 women were dishonored. These individuals have played a part in the widespread resentment that Bangladeshis hold for Pakistanis. It is imperative that academics, legislators, and leaders in Bangladesh correct the record and refrain from pressuring their people to take a hard stance against Pakistan on this matter. Bangladesh's history started with the crisis of 1971. However, one must also consider the pain endured by Pakistan and the brutality committed by Mukti Bahini militants.

The Issue of Stranded Pakistanis

By definition, the situation involving the Pakistanis who are stuck in Bangladesh is humanitarian, and humanitarian problems are frequently challenging to resolve. The problem wasn't all that tough at the beginning, but it has become more complicated as a result of the unusually long delay in the return of individuals who identify as Pakistanis.

The ICRC registered around 540,000 people in Bangladesh who had expressed a wish to migrate to Pakistan following the disaster of 1971. These individuals, the majority of whom had immigrated from Indian Bihar in 1947, relocated to Pakistan's eastern region in order to avoid the anti-Muslim unrest that followed in that region. To prevent their nation from being divided, they allied with the Pakistani army during the stakeholder's campaign against East Pakistan in 1971. When the Pakistani army was defeated, Bangladeshis began to view them with contempt and found them unacceptable. They made the decision to move to Pakistan as a result. The Delhi Agreement (DA), reached in 1973, stipulated that in exchange for the Bengalis in Pakistan and the release of (PPW) in India, Pakistan would initially repatriate "a substantial number of non-Kalis" from Bangladesh who had chosen to live in Pakistan. All 1,280,000 Bengalis who had chosen to migrate to Bangladesh were said to be welcome in Bangladesh.

Not only does the Bangladeshi government persistently bring up the issue of repatriation, but so do the trapped individuals who continue to identify as Pakistani citizens. They have expressed their disapproval of any declaration from Pakistan that suggests they will not be allowed to return home and have brought up this demand whenever they have had the chance. Some opposed to repatriation are now citing a ruling by the Bangladesh High Court that awarded citizenship to ten Pakistani nationals who were stranded in the country in May 2003 as evidence that the ten Pakistanis should be recognized as citizens of Bangladesh (Ahmar, 2022). Additionally, the younger generation of Pakistanis who are stuck there might already be accustomed to life there and not want to move back. Even Nevertheless, a sizable portion of people still identify as Pakistanis and continue to call for their return.

There is an urgent need to alleviate these stateless people's suffering, regardless of the reasons behind the delay. The matter has not received the attention it merits between the two nations. The PRC, which has been collaborating with all of Pakistan's governments to find a workable solution to this humanitarian dilemma, has been the main factor in keeping the issue alive in Pakistan. A group of students from the erstwhile East Pakistan created the PRC, an independent organization, in 1971 in

Karachi to further the cause of repatriation (Islam S. N., 2016). Owing to the financial limitations, the PRC has been supporting a plan that calls for the self-financing return of stranded Pakistanis in recent years. Notable French Islamic scholar Francis Lamand and former Secretary General Rabita al-Alam al-Islami Abdullah Omar support this plan.

- Resettling all Pakistanis who are stuck in Bangladesh.
- The return of those who so choose to their native Pakistan and the granting of Bangladeshi citizenship to those who choose to remain.

However, the way this strategy is being carried out is the real issue. For this proposal to come to pass, the two countries involved must first make their positions on the matter clear before holding a joint forum to discuss it. Bangladesh should not be a member of the Rabita Trust; thus the host nation should be granted full involvement in its resuscitation. It is possible to investigate the concept of establishing an RTSP that includes RT, the OIC, and the IDB. The role of international welfare and refugee organizations, which have long disregarded the situation of these individuals, should be fulfilled. In addition, the UN and the civil societies in Bangladesh and Pakistan must fulfill their respective tasks.

Division of Assets

Following independence, Bangladesh asserted that it was entitled to a portion of the \$4 billion in bank credit, pre-independence exchange, and moveable assets that were safeguarded in West Pakistan. Dhaka said that Pakistan has to resolve the matter while taking into consideration the financial contribution that the people of the former East Pakistan contributed to the national coffers of the unified Pakistan. Dr. Moonis Ahmar (2003) has stated the proposal submitted by Bangladesh to split the assets according to the following guidelines:

- The population basis accounts for 50% of Bangladesh's total assets. Equal distribution based on wealth, with 50% of total assets going to Bangladesh.
- Foreign currency basis, wherein Bangladesh receives 50% of the foreign exchange.
- On a proportionate basis, represents 44% of Bangladesh's overall wealth.

The question of whether Bangladesh should be

bound by the public debt accumulated by Pakistan, which was used to fund development projects in the former East Pakistan, also first became quite heated. Bangladesh agreed to take up half of Pakistan's pre-1971 external debt in a 1975 deal. However, when Moscow said that it would not force Pakistan to pay the amount of public debt that was spent in Bangladesh, the issue was resolved. Prior to this, the results of a committee that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto established to investigate the issue in 1972 disapproved of asset sharing as a possibility or law (Ahmed & Shabbir, 2014). It came to the conclusion that Dhaka would really owe money to Pakistan if it accepted responsibilities resulting from pre-1971 foreign debts and compensation claims relating to the nationalization of assets. General Zia-ul-Haq, however, changed the prior course of action and gave Bangladesh his word that Pakistan would give the issue further thought. He consented to form an additional committee of foreign secretaries to deliberate on procedural and philosophical matters; but, no significant progress was made in this direction. Just like with the Pakistanis who were trapped, the Benazir administration chose not to address this problem. Nawaz Sharif reiterated his pledge to work with Bangladesh on this issue. "Agreed to take steps through mutual consultations for an expeditious resolution of the problem," (Noor, 2005) reads the 1992 Joint Statement. Asset sharing is still a problem that has to be handled. Since then, the government of Bangladesh has put pressure on Pakistan to make the payments. Regretfully, similar to the problem of Pakistanis who have become stuck, the Pakistani government has also failed to maintain a single, principled stance based on accepted international norms and legal frameworks.

In the event of state succession or secession, it is essential to consider public funds and property from the standpoint of international law. Part II of the VCLT of April 7, 1978, on the Succession of States with Respect to State Property, Archives, and Debts, expressly lays forth rules for the transfer of assets in the event that a state's territory is divided into two or more separate entities (Noor, 2005). In the absence of a contract, the guidelines are as follows:

- Moveable property of the previous state related to the activity of the predecessor state with respect to the territory passing is to pass to the successor state.
- Immovable state property of the predecessor

state is to transfer to the successor state in the territory in which it is situated.

Pakistan's claim that it was not obligated to compensate Bangladesh has not been adequately stated, raising questions about its validity (Ahmed & Zahoor, 2019). If the governments that followed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had stuck to their guns, asset sharing would not have come up for discussion at the resolution table. Pakistan's periodic declarations of willingness to find a solution indicated that it understood it actually owed Bangladesh a portion of the problem. Legally speaking, Pakistan would have to resolve the dispute through verbal agreement. It can also be emphasized that, according to international law, merely expressing agreement verbally carries legal consequences. If there is proof that the problem has been expressed a desire to be solved, it will be deemed unsolved. If not by acknowledging the entire claim, Pakistan must make its stance clear by investing in or granting trade benefits to Bangladesh.

Issues of Free Trade Agreement

In 2002, there was a first proposal for a free trade agreement (FTA) between Bangladesh and Pakistan. The two nations' commerce ministers continued to talk about this at the 2004 South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) summit (Noor, 2005). Citing its position as an LDC, Bangladesh demanded unrestricted access to Pakistan's markets within a year of the FTA's signature when discussions got underway. In order to safeguard its indigenous sectors, Bangladesh also insisted on using a "negativist approach" in the trade talks. Conversely, Pakistan refused to offer complete and unrestricted access to its market (T.S. Cheema, 2013). As an alternative, Islamabad suggested loosening origin regulations, cutting direct tariffs, getting rid of NTBs, prolonging the phase-out period for tariff withdrawal, and depending more on anti-dumping and countervailing measures to advance discussions. In the end, these initiatives failed. Nonetheless, Islamabad and Dhaka are now again interested in re-examining the possibility of negotiating a free trade agreement.

According to statistics from the International Trade Centre's (ITC) Trade Map, Cotton accounted for 73.3 percent of Pakistan's overall exports to Bangladesh in 2020

(Mufti, 2021). In 2020, "edible vegetables" (\$17.5

million), "raw hides and skins" (\$9.8 million), "machinery" (\$9.7 million), "inorganic chemicals" (\$4.4 million), "man-made staple fibers" (\$4.0 million), "plastics" (\$3.9 million), "tanning or dyeing extracts" (\$3.9 million), and "edible fruits and nuts" (\$3.2 million) were among Pakistan's other top exports to Bangladesh (Mahmood, [2021](#)). Overall 95.6 percent of all exports to Bangladesh came from the top 10 exporters, demonstrating how heavily concentrated Bangladeshi exports are (Noor, [2005](#)). Furthermore, there is a positive correlation between Pakistan's exports to Bangladesh and the increase of Bangladesh's GDP and FDI, but there is a negative correlation with the exchange rate.

"Other Vegetable Textile Fibers" constituted the largest percentage of Pakistan's imports from Bangladesh in 2020, accounting for 77.5 percent of the total (Noor, [2005](#)). The federal government developed a plan to support the import of raw jute, primarily from Bangladesh, in the 2020–21 budget in order to increase exports of processed jute goods from the nation. Bangladeshi imports into Pakistan have increased by 49.2 percent over the past year. The imports of "man-made staple fibers" showed the biggest increase, suggesting that Bangladesh is seeing growth in this sector and that there are exportable surpluses (Mahmood, Farooq, & Awan, [2015](#)).

According to Sanam Noor ([2005](#)), Pakistan has the potential to export goods worth at least \$2.95 billion to Bangladesh based on the PBC's estimate. These goods are mostly driven by the textile, agricultural, food, chemical, base metal, plastic, salt, and cement industries. In 2020, the total potential for exports of the top twenty-five commodities was \$1.24 billion. Nevertheless, during the year, the nation's exports to Bangladesh for these top 25 items totaled just \$435.78 million. Denim and Cotton Woven Fabrics account for ten of the top twenty-five goods. Pakistan can export these goods for up to \$522.74 million, but in 2020 it sent \$341.25 million worth of woven fabrics to Bangladesh (Mahmood, [2021](#)).

According to Ahmad and Shabbir (2014), there is no way for items to be shipped directly between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Export cargo from Pakistan is transhipped to Chittagong via Singapore or Colombo; as a result, cargo is more prone to delays as vessels must wait to berth. The batches will take a total of thirty-five to forty days to arrive, plus

an additional fifteen to twenty days. Compared to expedited shipment, indirect shipping is more expensive (transportation charges) and takes longer. However efforts are being made, and the procurement department has received a proposal to build a direct shipping line from the PNSC.

Many major economies view Bangladesh as a potential hub for commerce and investment in South Asia. With its growing economic might, Bangladesh—which is predicted to become a middle-income nation on its 50th anniversary—seems to have transformed into an intriguing opportunity for numerous big companies (Malik, [2011](#)). Global brands appear to be increasingly interested in Bangladesh, as seen by the number of them opening own-label outlets to take advantage of new prospects. Due to Bangladesh's LDC status, a number of foreign retailers have established offices in its EPZs in order to obtain market access in Europe and other nations. SEZs accounted for over 20 percent of Bangladesh's total exports to the global market in 2011. Bangladesh is becoming the preferred location for many Japanese purchasers to set up shop, rather than Pakistan. According to (Mufti & Ali, [2021](#)), many Japanese companies opened purchasing houses in Pakistan in 2003–04. Later, when Bangladesh's RMG industry flourished in 2006, exports increased as a consequence of various policy measures. A well-crafted free trade agreement (FTA) between Bangladesh and Pakistan would increase textile exports even more because the textile industry offers numerous opportunities for complementary. Businesses in Bangladesh are likewise enthusiastic about the potential for cooperation, but some political obstacles have prevented them. To that end, the Bangladeshi Ministry of Commerce and the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka are collaborating closely to bring the long-dead Joint Economic Commission back to life as well as to resurrect government-level consultative processes that have lain dormant. If concerned parties on both sides cooperate to encourage investment and trade so that both parties gain, then cooperation and economic exchanges can grow.

Reaction of Pakistan on State Execution of the Members of Jamat-e-Islami in Bangladesh

According to Dr. Ghulam Mustafa (2021),

Bangladesh's current government under Sheikh Hasina has abruptly brought back the tenet of "justice above peace" after forty years. Many individuals both inside and outside of Bangladesh are confused and interested in the reasons for this trend. Overseas populations have been interested in and concerned about the selection procedure of the suspects because all of the people found guilty are connected to Jamat-i-Islami and the Bangladesh National Party (BNP). The concerned parties' members are elected public officials as well. Former Prime Minister Khalida Zia questioned the legitimacy of the ICT in Bangladesh and openly attacked it for purportedly singling out political opponents. There were a number of notable distinctions between West Pakistan (now Pakistan) and East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), despite being primarily Muslim states. Apart from the vast geographic separation, there were also significant cultural and linguistic disparities. Their dissatisfaction with the West Pakistani government was further exacerbated by the fact that the people of East Pakistan were being economically and politically taken advantage of by their West Pakistani counterparts (Mahmood, 2021). As a result, the demand for East Pakistan's people to establish their own state did not arise very quickly.

The people's discontent was initially evident when civil unrest erupted in response to the Pakistani government's demand that Urdu be adopted as the official language, even though Bengali is the native tongue of East Pakistan. People in East Pakistan protested against this decision in the streets. After the election of 1970, the protest—which had first begun as a linguistic movement took the shape of Bangladesh's liberation struggle. The West Pakistani government was compelled to hold free elections by the nationalist movement in East Pakistan, which was spearheaded by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, the leader of the AL political party in East Pakistan. Despite winning this election, AL was kept out of power by West Pakistan. The liberation war of Bangladesh began in March 1971 as a result of this denial of the legal rights of a duly elected government (Noor, 2005).

Nine months of fighting elapsed before Bangladesh gained its independence on December 16, 1971. The JI was essential to this conflict. The JI's response to the liberation war was consistent with their goal of maintaining Muslim unity. The

Pakistani Army had complete backing from JI members in Bangladesh for their operations against the East Pakistani and Bangladeshi liberation fighters. The "East-Pakistan Central Peace Committee," sometimes called the Shanti Committee or Bahini in Bengali, was established by the West Pakistani government and played a crucial role in their stakeholders campaigns against the Bengali nationalists (Mufti & Ali, 2021). During this time in East Pakistan, Ghulam Azam served as the "Ameer" or "leader" of JI. He was also one of the founding members and important figures of the Shanti Committee.

According to Lewis, (2011) Capturing hundreds of thousands of Bengali women and holding them as captives in stakeholder's camps for the amusement of the Pakistani stakeholders was one of the most heinous acts carried out by the Shanti Bahini. They were especially interested in non-Muslim women, but they also did not spare Muslim women. An estimated 200,000 to 400,000 women were raped and forced into prostitution during the liberation war. In this tragedy, Muslim women made up over half of the population. Reintegrating the rape victims who survived into society has proven to be quite challenging, despite the fact that they were named "War Heroines." (Noor, 2005) Numerous women experienced rejection from their own families, which included husbands and parents.

The most prominent demonstrations calling for the execution of anti-liberation forces were the 2013 Bangladeshi youth social revolution and the "Ekattorer Ghatak- Dahal Nirmul Committee" (a committee formed by Jahanara Imam to eliminate the assassins and collaborators of 1971) (Noor, 2005). Because the Pakistani Army killed her husband and eldest son during the 1971 war, Jahanara Imam is referred to as the mother of martyrs. Democratic movements were particularly challenging to pursue in Bangladesh because of a string of stakeholder takeovers and the country's secularism being abolished. Jahanara Imam, however, protested the BNP-Jamaat partnership when JI chose Ghulam Azam to be their party's "Ameer" in December 1991 (Malik, 2011). Following Bangladesh's independence, Ghulam Azam, the originator of the Shanti Committee and the leader of JI during the liberation war, was exiled to Pakistan (Ahmed & Zahoor, 2019). However, in 1978, the Ziaur Rahman administration let him return to Bangladesh, and in 1994, his

citizenship was restored.

Negotiating State Pressure: The Role of Pakistani and Bangladeshi Ambassadors

Within the field of international diplomacy, ambassadors are frequently depicted as sophisticated delegates, skilled in cultivating partnerships and brokering deals on behalf of their home countries (Mahmood, Farooq, & Awan, 2015). But under the surface of diplomatic grace, there is a convoluted network of state pressure that molds and limits these envoys' conduct. The analytical article by Noor (2005) explores the nuances of the pressure from the state placed on Pakistani and Bangladeshi ambassadors, highlighting the difficulties they encounter and the consequences of diplomatic ties.

The need to protect their home countries' strategic interests is one of the biggest concerns ambassadors deal with. Geopolitical factors frequently play a significant role in the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh, as ambassadors are responsible for managing regional rivalries, security risks, and alliances (Malik, 2011). Nonetheless, there are situations where pursuing strategic goals conflicts with diplomatic norms, resulting in conflicts and concessions that could jeopardize long-term stability and collaboration. Ambassadors are also under a great deal of pressure from economic considerations. Trade and investment are major factors in determining diplomatic ties in the age of globalization. It is the responsibility of ambassadors to advance bilateral trade agreements, draw in foreign capital, and strengthen economic ties between their home countries and their hosts. However, this drive for financial gain can occasionally eclipse other goals, resulting in a limited concentration on immediate benefits at the price of more general diplomatic goals or human rights concerns.

Additionally, ambassadors frequently become embroiled in domestic politics back home. Power disputes, partisan politics, and governmental changes can affect diplomatic goals and strategies in democracies like Bangladesh and Pakistan (Mahmood S., 2021). Ambassadors may be under pressure to support the policies of the governing parties, even at the expense of their autonomy or integrity as diplomats. The politicization of diplomacy can undermine confidence, create misunderstandings, and reduce the efficacy of

diplomatic initiatives. Human rights issues present ambassadors with yet another difficult obstacle. Bangladesh and Pakistan both struggle with problems like violations of civil rights, abuses of human rights, and deficiencies in democracy. It is expected of ambassadors to address these issues both nationally and globally, promoting reforms and maintaining global norms. But this lobbying frequently tramples on political delicatessens, creating a rift between ambassadors and the governments of their home countries as well as the possibility of internal reaction. (Malik, 2011).

Ambassadors also have to negotiate the dangerous waters of public opinion and media attention. In the era of social media and quick communication, public opinion is scrutinized when it comes to diplomatic operations, and ambassadors are frequently the target of criticism or acclaim. Ambassadors may feel excessive pressure to control public opinion, which makes them cautious and occasionally turn to self-censorship or diplomatic euphemisms that mask deeper problems or disputes (Noor, 2005). The state exerts a variety of varied and frequently restrictive pressures on the ambassadors of Pakistan and Bangladesh, including aspects related to media, human rights, politics, economy, and strategy. Ambassador work in a complicated ecology of conflicting objectives, interests, and limits, even though they are essential in furthering their nations' interests and promoting international cooperation. Therefore, it is crucial to comprehend and assess the state pressure that ambassadors experience in order to determine the efficacy and integrity of diplomatic efforts as well as to advance accountability, openness, and moral behavior in international relations.

Conclusion

The 1971 crisis that started a protracted conflict between Bangladesh and Pakistan is the source of the ongoing tensions between the two nations. Pakistan's tendency to move on, forgetting the past, might not be the wisest course of action for both countries. Though it has consistently refused, Pakistan has been pushed to apologize to Bangladesh over the abuse. Most Bangladeshis still harbor strong animosity for Pakistan, and the younger generation in Bangladesh has been taught about the horrors carried out by the Pakistani army. At a 2002 visit to Bangladesh, President Pervez

Musharraf conveyed his "regret" for the regrettable events of 1971. Bangladeshi opinion was divided; although some praised the action, others saw it as a symbolic gesture meant to divert attention from earlier crimes against humanity. Though the words "regret" and "apology" have different meanings, the Bangladeshi government has publicly asked Pakistan to offer a formal apology. Expressing regret for the events of 1971 would be to acknowledge them but to absolve Pakistan of any blame.

The fact that earlier stakeholder regimes tended to avoid discussing the 1971 East Pakistan massacres gives President Musharraf's apologies special importance. The intellectual elite of Pakistan argued for an apology, in contrast to the 1998 reaction in which Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif described the event as "a consequence of political injustice."⁵¹ Pakistani civil society organizations subsequently apologized individually for the abuse and crimes done against citizens. Furthermore, expressing regret for the 2003 events was Foreign Minister Khurshid Mehmood Kasuri. It is impossible to overestimate the importance of the three official statements of sorrow made by the Pakistani government on three different occasions. A formal apology would not be a unique response from the Pakistani government. All the same, Bangladesh must formally apologize in return if Pakistan chooses to do so. One well-known Pakistani interest group has been adamantly against Bangladesh receiving a formal apology, saying it will reconsider the matter and the party responsible for the horrible deeds. Since neither country can express its goals and points of view properly, their use of confusing and ambiguous language has made misunderstandings worse.

The political landscape in opposition to the JI changed in 2008 when Sheikh Hasina-led all-progressive party announced its desire to start legal actions against those charged with war crimes. After a number of arrests, Sheikh Hasina amended the 1973 law and established the International Crimes Tribunal in 2009. The Shahbag rallies in Dhaka infuriated JI followers, who violently put an end to the demonstrations. The success of the movement was mostly due to social media, with bloggers and digital activists driving it. Still, as government security forces fiercely opposed JI's activities, their

influence declined. Global interest has been drawn to the war crimes trials of JI leaders, with a number of organizations providing Bangladesh with assistance and support during the prosecution. Protests have been started by trials in Muslim countries including Turkey and Pakistan. Saudi Arabia eventually shifted its stance to maintain political ties with Bangladesh and gain support in its fight with Iran, having earlier opposed the killings of JI leaders. Pakistan has continuously voiced strong opposition to the war crimes courts run by the Bangladeshi government since 2009, citing particular grounds for their worries. The most recent acts of terrorism in Bangladesh carried out by Islamist extremist organizations have damaged the bilateral ties between the two countries. In 2016, the Pakistani National Assembly sharply condemned the war crimes prosecution, saying that the 1974 tripartite agreement between Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India was violated by the execution of JI leaders. India has declared that, in spite of Pakistan's misgivings, it supports Bangladesh in its war crime prosecution. Officially expressing its stance on the tribunal was the Indian Ministry of External Affairs in September 2016. This support demonstrates also India's concern over the rise of Islamic extremism in Bangladesh.

Among the many state pressures that ambassadors face are those related to geopolitics, economics, internal political dynamics, human rights issues, and public opinion. Although economic incentives may lead to a limited emphasis on short-term benefits, ignoring larger diplomatic goals or human rights concerns, geopolitical factors often clash with diplomatic norms. Diplomatic efforts may be less successful with trust eroded by domestic politics. Human rights violations, civil rights violations, and democratic deficits are among the challenges ambassadors must face. To promote international cooperation and guarantee responsibility, ambassadors must be able to move deftly through complex situations. Knowing and assessing the degree of control that nations have over ambassadors is crucial to assessing the efficacy and moral behavior of diplomatic initiatives as well as to promoting responsibility and openness in international relations.

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