

## **Reassessing the Narratives of Rancor in South Asia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

South Asian region has immense strategic importance for global peace and development as it is home to approximately 2 billion people. The region includes countries like Pakistan and India who have become nuclear powers and are emerging economies with massive potentials still untapped and various sectors of economic development not performing up to the mark. The dispute between Pakistan and India remains a major hindrance in fulfilling the dream of peace in South Asia. There is no question that the only solution lies in diplomacy. Many steps have been taken in this regard, but each attempt ends with a bitter experience. The reasons for failure of diplomatic and peaceful means of settling disputes are many and may extend beyond the domestic and bilateral scenario of both India and Pakistan but one of the major causes of the failure of such efforts is the sentimentalism blended with religious fanaticism that results in strengthening hawkish elements on both sides of the border who act as highly effective pressure groups that thwart such attempts very successfully. This research aims to answer the crucial question as to how the dream of peace and prosperity can be achieved between the two strong rival states. The research will focus on bilateral dialogues, people-to-people contacts with minimal security hindrances, exchange of intellectuals, and exchange of ideas, knowledge, and cultural values. The research also attempts to bring “right wing” nationalist political factions on both sides of the border closer by arranging group discussions and exchange of views and ideas which would be instrumental in bridging the communication gap between these contesting and competing factions.

**Key Words:** Pakistan, India, Diplomatic, Economic Development, Dialogue, Nuclear Powers

### **Introduction**

The region of South Asia owing to its immensely important strategic location and enormously diverse cultural and religious base has always generated interests among scholars from various backgrounds. The region has remained a focal point of various valuable intellectual outputs that are concerned with global peace and security as the region is home to two nuclear powers who have always found themselves on the brink of war. The region has never lost its relevance and still offers a daunting challenge for the students as well as experts of conflict and peace studies. The ever growing organic lists of books, influx of serious intellectual efforts in the form of seminars, symposiums, and research articles to date are actually desperate attempts to grapple with this long-standing challenge in a

manner that amicably solves the outstanding issue. Interestingly, South Asian regional politics and associated issues to a greater extent can very easily be generalized and condensed to a simple bilateral equation of Indo-Pak relations, the two so called traditional rival states of the region. The economic stagnation that surrounds South Asian region like an ominous bank of dark clouds, absence and no disposition towards cooperation and enhancing living standards of respective nations that has become a tell tale sign of successive regimes of the region in power, the perpetual threat of a nuclear apocalypse with potential to wipe out entire populations, a very little rather discouraging volume of bilateral and regional trade among the states, SAARC's inactivity and inefficiency, volatility associated with the security environment of the region, the expanding and growing plague of terrorism and a lot of other such problems emanate from the traditional security dilemma that has cast an ominous spell on the the Pakistan-India relations resulting in a characteristic 'two-step-backward-one-step-forward type relationship' between the two countries. These two countries are the key actors in the region whose priorities and nature of relationship is bound to cast a strong influence on the overall geo-political and economic environment of the region. This appears an overgeneralization but is taken as a fact in the intellectual circles familiar with the history and dynamics of the region. This apparent extrapolation carries considerable historical evidence and almost every expert on the region agrees on the fundamental role of Pakistan-India relations in influencing and shaping the overall political environment and trajectory of economic development and human security in the region. The issues and disputes between the two states are deeply enmeshed in the history during the colonial rule era of the subcontinent where a charged atmosphere marked with communal riots resulting in spreading a sense of insecurity, fear and lack of trust between two major communities of the subcontinent. The subsequent bloodshed and human massacre in the name of religion and identity led to the creation of two separate states primarily on religious notions, a Hindu majority India and a Muslim majority Pakistan. The bloody events of the pre-partition era had such a traumatizing impact on the national outlook of the two states and communities that those heinous episodes of human massacre in the name of religion by the fanatics still haunt their collective memories and both the states have been unable to stop thinking about their relations in communal and religious notions. The deeply embedded fear, hatred, and mutual suspicion have translated into military, political and economic rivalry resulting in the eruption of full scale wars and a perpetual blame game that in turn has become a characteristic hallmark of Pakistan-India relations.

A long list of complains is available in narratives of the both states each blaming the other for all the problems of their respective states. The trumpets of war and enormous spending on military and other defense related nonproductive sectors are encouraged, readily accepted, and proudly boasted in these courtiers which are notoriously backward in political and economic performance, where large chunks of population are deprived of basic human rights and needs and where overall environment is marked with extreme poverty, illiteracy, intolerance

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and many insurgent movements. The post 9/11 world has created a whole new set of problems and threats in the form of budding terrorism and extremism that challenges the stability and very integrity of the two rival states. Irrespective of how complex, historic and genuine the issues are, scholars dealing with peace and conflict resolution agree almost with a unanimous consensus on the point that the initiation and continuation of the process of negotiations is the only and ultimate key to the settlement of all outstanding disputes involving lives of millions of humans on both sides of the conflict equation. Apart from the bloodshed and deep rooted rivalry one encouraging fact is that the people on both sides want peace, but hawkish elements refuse to give peace a chance. This issue can only be efficiently tackled if those on the right are accommodated in bilateral negotiations. Governments on both sides should facilitate the travel of these groups to the other side to promote a better understanding of each other and to boost a feeling of camaraderie. The whole human history stands evidence to the fact that talks, discussions and exchange of ideas have been the only tools that have initiated all the process intended at bringing peace and development to human society. As a matter of fact the domain of pure natural sciences or the theoretical philosophical dominion the exchange of ideas and discussions form the basis of all developments and achievements worth mentioning in the two major fields. India and Pakistan entrapped in a complex riddle of issues mostly emotional and sentimental, springing naturally out of their need to construct “the other” leading to a ‘reactionary concept of identity and existence’ need to learn the great secret at work behind all landmark human developments and achievements that all those developments were only possible when free thought, exchange of ideas and discussion among thinkers were allowed. India and Pakistan will have to exhibit a sense of responsibility and maturity by taking measures that are conducive to an environment where cooperation replaces competition, words replace weapons, and hostility and animosity are supplanted by hospitality and friendly relations. By working on the environment that has hitherto supported wars and competition with clear motives of molding it into a conducive one that nurtures and encourages diversity and differences on the principles of peaceful coexistence is the only scientific and effective way to bring the communities of India and Pakistan together. The present research intends to prove that peace building in South Asia can only be achieved if the two traditional rivals, India and Pakistan, have bilateral dialogues with each other, and the dialogue process entails the exchange of scholars, artists and mutual conferences between the two countries.

### **Objectives of the Research**

- To produce and highlight a list of ‘ classic spoiler problems’ and issues that have been impeding the process of trust building
- To bring forth common woes and issues like the problems of poverty, population bomb and shortage of energy which equally confront and

impede the growth of both nations and to reach out at various strategies that can be employed jointly by Pakistan and India.

- To suggest the ways and reforms that will transform SAARC's traditional dormant role to an active forum of dispute settlement.
- To reach out at a clearly charted out plan for involving general public and enhancing public awareness with a special focus on dialing down negative perceptions.
- To find out ways and strategies that would encourage and involve right-wing elements (since both right wing nationalist religious and secular parties agree on the macro structures of political and economic systems) in the peace process that will be instrumental in easing the tense atmosphere prevalent in both societies.

## **Literature Review**

Zeb and Chandran (2005) apply the established conflict resolution theory of 'ripeness' to study whether the Indo-Pak conflict has reached a stage of a mutually destructive stalemate and assesses certain prerequisites that would make the timing ripe for resolution. The authors point out that the Kashmir conundrum is a mutually hurting stalemate that requires a political understanding as crucial component since none of the parties to the conflict (India, Pakistan, Kashmiris and those engaged in armed struggle for freedom) can alter the impasse through military means. They argue that in spite of twelve rounds of talks between 1989 and 1998, and the Lahore Summit in 1999 between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan which resulted in a statement pledging joint commitment to intensify efforts to resolve the Kashmir conflict, the outcomes fell short since the processes weren't sustained. The status quo over Kashmir could not be turned in Pakistan's favor during Kargil or in India's favor during the military confrontation in 2002. The book shows that there has been little or no agreement at the New Delhi-Srinagar level and in fact most of the population of the Kashmir Valley has been dissatisfied with the affairs of the state. They have little faith in the state political parties with the result that the status quo is hurting all three governments—of India, Pakistan and Jammu and Kashmir. The authors highlight the destructions that have been inflicted due to massive military spending by both countries. The human toll of four wars and innumerable border skirmishes and battles have incurred upon both societies is beyond calculation as human sufferings can never be measured. Amidst all this Pakistani and Indian governments have been unable to realize the gravity of the situation. Pakistan has been insisting on resolving the Kashmir issue first and then the issue of integration and trade while India has been insisting on discussing the issue of cross border terrorism first. The authors suggest improving and enhancing bilateral trade, increasing people-to-people contact by easing the visa process and by introducing confidence-building measures over nuclear weapons security concerns.

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Chitkara (2001) in his book explicitly expresses the Indian stance on the issue of Kashmir. According to the writer the issue of Kashmir is misrepresented in the literature. There were no options available to the princely states as they were given the Hobson's choice i.e., accede to India or Pakistan and nothing else. The writer alleges that political blunders on the part of Indian leaders and unscrupulous dealing by the international institutions aggravated the situation and hence the issue became complicated. The writer is right in stating that the original partition plan was clear about the fate of the princely states but later developments failed to comprehend the dynamics of the issue and turned it into a conundrum but he fails to justify the statements of Indian prime minister Nehru and many other Indian statesmen who publicly accepted to hold a plebiscite in the region.

Malik (2003) analyses Pakistan-India relations in the backdrop of rising Chinese influence in South Asia. The writer though focuses on the China factor in the bilateral relations of the two rival countries but he very aptly describes the historical, cultural, religious and political factors that have played their role in embittering Pakistan-India relations.

Wojczewski (2014) analyzes the role of major powers and the perpetual conflict between India and Pakistan. The writer has analyzed in detail the Composite Dialogue 2004 held between India and Pakistan. He has analyzed the factors that facilitated or impeded the composite dialogue process. The researcher has applied regional security complex theory and analyses Pakistan-India relations at four levels namely international, inter-regional, regional and domestic levels. According to the researcher encouraging developments have occurred at all four levels but traditional issues like political instability, role of intelligence agencies, and the identity clash remained unresolved and would continue to haunt the bilateral relations equation in the future. The writer has very objectively analyzed the issue of India-Pakistan rivalry since their inception. The writer ascribes the mutual animosity to the nationalist agendas both India and Pakistan have adopted since their independence. According to the writer time and events have proved both the nationalist ideologies as prone to question and doubt. The writer has also analyzed the nuclear acquisition by both countries and takes into account the future course of nuclear rivalry in the region.

Chari, Cheema, and Cohen (2003) have explored and analyzed the events in 1990s that did not culminate in war, but brought the two countries to the brink of war. The surge in Kashmir's freedom struggle took a violent turn and India blamed Pakistan for supporting cross border terrorism in Kashmir. This further widened the chasm between the two countries and the dialogue process came to a halt. The year 1990 is very important and relevant as events in international political order occurred in that era had far reaching consequences and impacted on the overall policies of the major powers? The Palestinian intifada, the fall of Berlin Wall and the demise of Soviet communism all are in one way or the other related to the new surge of tension between India and Pakistan in the 90s. Domestically both India and Pakistan were struggling to strengthen their governments. The respective governments in both countries were coalitional and had to face a lot of serious

problems ranging from poverty alleviation to law and order. The book thoroughly discusses the nature and dynamics of the Kashmir uprising of the 1990s and according to the authors the excessive interference and micromanagement of the affairs of Kashmir state by the Indian central government had become a norm in Indian politics. This authoritarian disposition was resisted by the educated and professional Kashmiri locals who soon became popular among masses because of the repressive mechanisms Indian authorities used to curb them. Soon the situation further aggravated and India and Pakistan got entangled in a blame game, with the former accusing the latter of training militants on its soil. The book details the war of words exchanged by the two governments that was to soon turn into military preparedness for war. The buildup of troops along the border on both sides is discussed in detail. But not all doors were closed as the foreign ministers of both countries met in April 1990 and resolved to devise mechanisms to avert tensions and conflict. "War was also averted due to the intervention of the United States. A high level delegation, known as the Gates mission, was sent to tease tensions in the region. Its objective was to help both sides avoid violent conflict over Kashmir. The authors point out that the mission was effective in its preventive diplomacy efforts. The book also discusses the nuclear aspect of the 1990 crisis in detail. According to the authors, the US intervened due to its conviction that the crisis was primarily a nuclear crisis. This book is indeed useful for those interested in Kashmir and Indo-Pak relations since it provides a comprehensive account of the lesser known 1990 crisis and the impact it had on diplomatic and military relations. It assesses in detail various factors that led to the crisis and the reasons why an outright war didn't break out. It explores the efficacy of dialogue and the importance of social and economic ties along with political acumen in any future settlement of conflict".

Kumar (2005) gives a lucid account of India-Pakistan relations and the options and practical solutions to resolve the outstanding issue between the two countries amicably. It highlights the important events in the history of their relations and analyses the failure and successes of past peace processes. Violence by the Naga groups from Nagaland has also spilled over into the hill districts of Manipur, where the NSCN (IM) and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland - Khaplang (NSCN (K) are the main players. Several clashes have occurred between the NSCN-IM and the NSCN-K. Following ethnic clashes between the Nagas and Kukis in the early 1990s, a number of Kuki outfits were formed. Many other tribes, such as the Paite, Vaiphei and Hmars have also established their own armed groups. Similarly, Islamist outfits like the People's United Liberation Front (PULF) have been founded to protect the interests of the 'Pangals' (Manipuri Muslims). Manipur had been declared a 'disturbed area' in its entirety in 1980 and the Armed Forces Special Power Act (AFSPA) 1958 was imposed in the state on 8 September 1980, and remains in force. The implementation of this Act resulted massive protests by citizens, including the infamous "mothers' nude protest" in July 2004 after the discovery of the mutilated body of Thangjam Manorama, after she was picked up by the Assam Rifles.

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Datta and Sharma (2002) have attempted to analyze the role of leadership in determining Pakistan's state behavior towards the external world. The book is a typical example of the Indian animosity towards the Pakistani leadership. The writers accept that Jinnah had never uttered the word Jihad in any of his speeches but still they consider him as the epitome of Jehadi discourse in Pakistan. According to them the leadership in Pakistan has intentionally created a jihadi discourse that has now culminated into terrorist onslaught and thus the relations between the two countries became hostage to this jihadi-terrorist onslaught. The authors fail to prove these allegations but the book is an insight into the Indian mind-set that misperceives the events and political scenario in Pakistan.

Hayt (2006) analyzes the importance of Pakistan and Bangladesh for creating a peaceful environment in South Asian region. According to the writer the only Muslim countries in the region with a democratic disposition can prove to be an asset for U.S.A if their capacities are built and they are facilitated. But unfortunately these two countries especially Pakistan has been plunged into such an array of problems and troubles that facilitates breeding of Islamist terrorism and most of these problems spring from unsettled disputes with India, particularly the unresolved issue of Kashmir.

### **Methodology**

The study will be carried out by employing qualitative research design guided by pragmatist paradigm. The pragmatists believe on addressing the issues of deprived and marginalized communities. Hence, it is considered appropriate to address the India-Pakistan issue which has taken hostage of the whole developmental process pertaining to South Asia. The semi-structured interviews will be conducted as it is appropriate according to the nature of the problem which is less explored in the context of Pakistan. The population of the sample would comprise of Academicians, Intellectuals, Policy Makers, former Ambassadors and members of Civil Societies from both sides of the border.

The participants will be approached by using snow ball sampling technique. The data will be collected personally by involving three assistants. The assistants are trained to conduct the interview by ensuring consistency of the data. The data will be analyzed by inferring themes and categorized. The Nvivo software will be used. However, any statistical data will be dealt by employing descriptive and inferential statistics using SPSS 22.

### **Data Analysis**

The data gathered after consulting and interviewing the population can be divided into the following themes.

## **Competing Narratives**

Respondents who were approached were almost consensually agreed on the issue of the competing historical narratives and were clearly of the opinion that the venomous historical narratives are responsible for perpetuating and transferring the animosity to the successive generations. Participant 1 responded that the issue of historical narratives is not just limited to text-books taught in academic institutions but the venom is spread in various spheres and shapes like media, movies, short stories and pictures which in one way or the other reinforces the belief of considering the other as enemy. Participant 2 was of the opinion that there are concocted stories of very negative content about the nature and life style of the two nations which inevitably lead to widen the chasm. Participant 3 was of the opinion that stories about the brutality of the one and bravery of the other are also very common among the people of both countries which further aggravates the feelings of hatred, revenge and eternal animosity.

## **Religious Extremism**

The surge of extremist and religious ideologies and the mushroom growth of the radical, violent religious groups and factions with ulterior motives spreading hatred and maligning the others is a problem that is considered as a severe threat to national security by the rational policy and security analysts of both the countries. The participants of the focused group discussion were all agreed on the fact that the extremist religious factions in both countries have negative impact on the bilateral relations and have hence aggravated the security situation of the whole region unpredictable. Such groups influence people in the establishment and other sensitive institutions and use them as the instruments of the nefarious designs of inflicting havoc on the other. The attack on the Samjhota Express stands testimony to this fact where in involvement of a serving military officer and his alleged connection with ultra nationalist Hindu religious factions casts a negative shadow on the role of such factions.

## **Persecution of Minority Religious Communities**

The interviewee 4 pointed out to the fact that the South Asian region is a multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious region. The huge diversity is bound to create conflicts and tensions if the governments in the region fail to take this fact into account. The disturbing fact about this diversity is that various cultural, lingual, and religious entities are distributed and spread throughout the subcontinent amidst weak and fragile administrative and governing systems. The political culture in the electoral democracies of both India and Pakistan has not yet touched the necessary level of maturity and tolerance. The mushroom growth of ethno-lingual factions and the onslaught of religious parties across the border are the irritants that evolve into a discourse condemning and demonizing the other.



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participant was of the opinion that until and unless both India and Pakistan put their houses in order, the issues of insecurity and peace won't be resolved.

### **Progress towards Peacebuilding**

The India-Pakistan relations equation has always been a disturbing one, especially after the two countries acquired the nuclear power. The negotiations process and bilateral rounds of talks have become a symbol of failures and at best considered as futile by many. Participant 7, Participant 4 and Participant 8 were of the opinion that the ice is melting now and the past attempts, even if they are considered as futile, have done a lot in bringing the two rival countries closer. Today, after the lapse of six decades, the people of India and Pakistan regardless of their status and class are questioning the wisdom of maintaining a state of confrontation, and are leaning towards establishing conditions for permanent peace. The power of the old mindset is receding and the momentum for peace is growing. Ordinary citizens in large numbers, peace activists, parliamentarians, cricketers, actors, artists, theatre groups, intellectuals, journalists, women, soldiers and professionals are making a great contribution to the peace building process.

### **The Issue of Kashmir**

The issue of Kashmir has been one of the oldest and long-standing, unresolved issue between the two countries. Almost all wars and border skirmishes that occurred between the two states hitherto are in one way or the other related to the Kashmir issue. Participant responded to the question of whether this issue will remain a hurdle in bringing the two conflicting parties to the negotiations table. He was of the opinion that Pakistan's stance on the issue of Kashmir has been legal and rational. The state of Pakistan has always insisted on resolving the issue of Kashmir amicably. There is no doubt that conclusion one can draw from the history of Kashmir dispute is that neither war nor could repression solve this dispute. It is also a matter of fact that quite logically a number of alternative solutions have been proposed over the years. Participant 10 commented on the role of Pakistan in resolving the issue of Kashmir. According to him, over the past 60 years Pakistani leadership, intelligentsia, academia and peace activists have explored the possibility of a negotiated settlement. Pakistan's diplomatic vision on Kashmir was futuristic and optimistic. He added that the efforts of Pakistani leadership in resolving the issue of Kashmir peacefully is globally recognized while the role of India in this regard has been that of an immature child insisting and crying for the moon. The refusal of India and its resistance to allow scrutiny of its human rights records in Kashmir speaks volumes about the role of India in efforts of bringing peace and stability to the region. The participants were consensually agreed on the point that armed struggle and repressive means to solve the problem would further deteriorate the security situation in the region.

## **Role of SAARC**

The participants of the focused group interview argued elaborately on the role of SAARC that the organization must be compared with its counter parts throughout the world like ASEAN and SCO. The regional cooperation organization has badly disappointed those who had expected some good to come out of SAARC deliberations and conferences. In Europe and East Asia, the EU, and ASEAN were guided by the vision of their respective leaders which was based on the principles of cooperation and avoiding wars and confrontation at any cost. Given the nature of Pakistan-India problems, in order to bring prosperity to the people of South Asia, there is a strong need for a bipartisan support for the peace process in both the countries, and for politicians to think and act as statesmen. Surely, with almost a quarter of the world's population, South Asia cannot be bereft of a few statesmen who can usher in a new paradigm of regional peace and amity. With regard to South Asia, SAARC (South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation) was formed on 8 December 1985, with Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka as its founding members. Afghanistan joined as a member in 2007. It is unfortunate that rivalry and tensions between South Asia of the Fruits of regional cooperation.

Unlike ASEAN and the EU, SAARC lacks an effective dispute resolution mechanism. SAFTA's (South Asian Free Trade Area) dispute settlement body under Article 10-(7) of the Agreement remains weak and ineffectual. It is worth referencing the approaches of ASEAN and the EU with respect to dispute settlement and conflict prevention as they are highly instructive in making SAARC a more effective regional organization.

The ASEAN's dispute settlement mechanism is a non-binding dispute resolution mechanism for cross-border issues of business, trade, and investment. It is implemented through online network of government agencies where complaints can be submitted through a website or a national office. It is considered to be a very expedient system of dispute resolution based on diplomacy. Member States of the organization not involved in the dispute are asked to review the case and issue their findings within an agreed time frame. In the event of a dispute remaining unresolved, it can be referred to the ASEAN summits. The system is based on WTO (World Trade Organization) settlement of disputes framework and given ASEAN's essentially non-confrontational culture, negotiated and diplomatic solutions are generally found. The South Asian regional organization should constitute committees engaging academia and intellectuals to understand and devise mechanisms that could be replicated in the context of South Asia. Thus the regional organization should follow and compare itself with the successful regional organizations by studying and understanding the mechanisms employed by those organizations.

## **Suggestions and Recommendations**

- For any possible solution to reach at, the two countries need to undertake measures that will bring them closer. And no activity can do this task better than enhanced economic cooperation. Political integration and cooperation is nothing if economic cooperation has not been ensured prior. Constraints on economic integration include high tariff and nontariff barriers, inadequate infrastructure, bureaucratic inertia, excessive red tape, and direct political opposition all have hindered the process of bringing the two states closer.
- Before undertaking more long-term and wide-ranging fundamental trade reforms, both countries need to build public support for trade liberalization between them. Initial steps should focus on bilateral measures that can be accomplished relatively easily—by executive order rather than via legislation and with minimal resource implications—and that would meaningfully increase trade while gaining support for bigger and bolder steps down the line.
- A joint committee of intellectuals from academia should be constituted to see the possible ways of erasing the colonial imprints on the historical narratives prevailing in both countries. There are a lot of myths and false accusations which have gained the status of true historical events and records which need to be rectified. The whole historical discourse should be molded and created in a way that would support integration and cooperation instead of perpetuating the animosity and feelings of hatred.
- The efforts and initiatives for reducing trade barriers generally have the support of businessmen on both sides of the border, broader constituencies in each country need to be built for greater bilateral trade liberalization. Trade will of course not solve all the problems between the two countries, but it could be an important catalyst in the lowering of tensions, which certainly has to be in the interest of both India and Pakistan.
- The process of negotiations and dialogue should never be stopped because of the slow pace and not-so-encouraging- results. The negotiations and dialogues no matter they reach at a solution or not are very important to continue as such processes have many hidden and unpredictable benefits. More importantly, these periods of negotiations, however superficial, deny the existence of a vacuum that could be used by militants and extremist ideologues and lead to regional insecurity, hostility between the countries and an exacerbation of unresolved issues.
- There is need for CBMs that actually work. Too many have been little more than formalities. The establishment and implementation of the timetable for talks is itself useful. Restoration of air, bus and train links has been welcomed and will help build confidence between the two countries. Similar opportunities in other areas need now to be seized.

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- There is a need to ensure more frequent and regular contacts between Indian and Pakistani parliamentarians and politicians.
- There is also a need to focus attention on the “Cultural diplomacy” mechanism of evading conflicts. Directing funding towards cultural peace projects like: Marathons (Walking Cycling) for violence against women and children, HIV/ AIDS and other diseases should more often be encouraged. More autonomy should be provided to the civil society and the government should refrain from creating hurdles rather should have a monitoring role.
- Promotion of sports, cultural exchange, student exchange programs, bilateral debates on the issues pertaining to state, society and political issues pertaining to both societies among students and intelligentsia, all these will help in easing the tensions and evading the perception of eternal animosity.
- For enhancing the people to people contacts both states must ease their visa policies and encourage various sections of civil society to make bonds across the border.
- The last but not the least the role of media cannot be ignored. The media should realize its crucial responsibilities that such a role carries. The venomous narratives of ultra nationalist factions should not be encouraged and propagated rather an open-door policy of supporting the “doves” across the border should be followed.

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