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Pakistan's National Narratives, Identity and the World's Views

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Abstract

Pakistan and Pakistanis today, even after 77 years of their inception, are in search of a strong identity to stand on in front of the world views. There needs to be a mechanism of offering a narrative, in defence of the encroaching events. A national narrative has to satisfactorily carry both the trust of the nation, and acceptance of the world around. This paper describes, briefly, the understanding of the contemporary research, as to what is a national narrative, how is there a principle of movement in it, what is the war of narratives, and whose job it is to build narratives, spreading them around, and obtaining power holders ownership. The paper takes a historical tour of the various narratives that have been thrown on the floor at different times, since the Pakistan movement, till the present day, as to their origin, service and destination. A model of the life cycle of a narrative has been presented. Based on the model, a number of narratives in the past have been examined. The findings, have given a guideline as to how should the narrative building be done. The paper gives a current picture, as to how many Pakistanis are there in different countries, and what image the people of those countries carry about Pakistan and Pakistanis. At the end, a way forward is presented, as to what can be done to improve the image.

Keywords: Narratives, Identity, Think tanks, Academia, Social media

Introduction

The key to long term sustainability of a nation, is the presence of a strong collective identity. It is developed from a sense of togetherness, either derived through geographical proximity, common language, religion or ethnicity. But, often, in spite of long spatial distances, and diversity of above characteristics, a strong

will of clinging together appears. This is because of three reasons: firstly, the presence of an external threat; secondly mutual economic benefits, and thirdly a common non- controversial leadership. The realization of these aspects, to all sectors throughout the nation is carried out by introducing a storyline,

rather a number of them at every occasion, one after the other, which is unanimously, convincingly, and equivalently accepted, not only internally within the nation, but is also respected externally by the world around. Such a storyline is a national narrative. Pakistan is a nation, which contains a wide ethnic and cultural diversity. It is spanned across 800,000 square kilometres, and houses around 240 million people. For a country, such as Pakistan, the analysis of national narratives, which have emerged at the occurrence of different events in Pakistan, their effectiveness, and fall-outs, is an important exercise, not only for setting out future line of action for Pakistan, but also for other nations, which are in the same race.

What is a national narrative?

A national narrative refers to the historical storyline constructed and disseminated by a nation-wide to legitimize its existence and unify its citizens.

A national narrative, forms the basis of a nation's socio-cultural growth, identity, pride and values.

The Principle of Movement of a Narrative

Many narratives fall under their own dead weight. In the above analysis, it is learnt that, a narrative needs continuous review and independent judgement. It needs expansion, development and roll-on according to needs of changing time and environments. A narrative is not for the past.

It is for the future. A narrative, is not merely an account of a nation's history; Rather it refers to the future of the nation. It serves as a reason for the citizens to support the policies and directions given by the leaders.

The War of Narratives

The War of Narratives is clash of different stories or interpretation of events, especially in politics or media. In this "war," each side tries to promote its own version of events and discredit opposing viewpoints.

Generators of Narratives: Academia, Intelligentsia, Think Tanks and Media

Academia, Intelligentsia, Think Tanks and Media are regarded as the first line of defence for every nation's ideological borders. Inadvertently, these defenders of ideological borders stayed entangled in minor matters, so allowing Pakistan's foes to continue their objective to harm the country from inside and outside.

Responsibility of the Educated Elite

Pakistan has sought an engaging story to tell about itself since its independence. However, Pakistan's present narratives are inadequate to build a strong society. Onus lies on the educated elite. They should keep feeding the people with totally convincing narrative, so that they have pride in their nation, and a reason to work for its cause.

Literature Study

Dr. Nazir Hussain and Amna Javed [1] have asserted the need for a cohesive, all weather, and all incumbent national narrative. It is not an easy task. It takes its own course and time, but requires continuous attention and wisdom of proper action at proper time. No country has a perfect success in this pursuit. The history, the culture, the values and the aspiration of everyone and all segments in the country need to be woven up into one cohesive mass. The nations, which have succeeded in this effort, have grown from almost nothing to strong entities. United States is a typical example. They were a most scattered and divergent people, almost

all of them migrants. They took a hundred years to attain harmony among themselves. Other examples are Germany and Japan. They were completely devastated from the World War II. They have stood up. They have brought harmony and cohesion among themselves, and have come up again. China is another example. A huge population, was most diverse, and most exploited once. They are now a world economic power. Turkey is a good example. Sitting on the confluence of Europe, Russia, Central Asia, Iran and Arabian diverse identity, it has stood up with its own identity.

Neera Chandhoke [2] has warned that, India's respect in the world has diminished, and global trading partners are looking towards other countries of Asia, and increasingly China, because of India's bias against their own religious minorities. The state devotes more time and energy on dealing with the demands from the minorities for their rights of self determination, than on integrating these minorities onto the main stream. The aggressiveness and intolerance of the middle class towards readily identifiable minorities, have serious deteriorating effect on their contribution on national productivity. The national narrative today seems to be focusing on majority and neglecting the minorities, which is neither healthy for the country's own economy nor is taken well by the international trade partners. It is the right time to change the current narrative, and build a new narrative which is more acceptable within the country as well which retches more respect in the global world around. A new narrative is needed which is inclusive of all segments of the society and which utilizes the skill and the spirit of everyone around.

Mehmood Ali and Muhammad Saad [3] have investigated the impact of Pakistan's national narrative on its foreign policy and diplomatic relations. At every new scenario on the international play field, it is important to investigate various factors that work behind, to present a historical perspective, a theme as to what the nation has to stand for, and assessing the impact of the chosen stand point on the nation's security, prosperity and progress. It is important to keep a balance in the midst of global power politics, and the race for hegemony. The task needs a continuous research, gathering objective data, situational analysis, building a number of options, evaluating them, choosing the best one for best outcomes, and finally arriving at a the story line narrative, with historical base, present implementation process, and future implications, that serves the purpose.

Inayatullah Magsi, Shahid Hussain Kamboyo, Syed Shameel Ahmed Quadri and Syed Shuja Uddin, [4], have laid emphasis on the role of intelligentsia, academia, think tanks, ad media as they are the generators of the national narratives, and they feed the power holders of the nation who make the narrative work for the purpose for which they are generated. Their roles have yet to be realized by the power holders and equally by the public. The world view, also has to be taken into account. The intelligentsia, academia, think tanks and the media, have their own shortcomings and limitations, which have been identified, and recommendations have been made to raise their competence and capacities. When all this network is fully developed, and is made operational, it is believed that positive and progressive narrative building will come into action. The national narratives, are a regular phenomenon. They are in-line with the goals of the nation. They go right up to the top level to the text books taught at schools, colleges and the universities. They foresee the challenges and tasks that are expected, and they prepare the nation a belief system and a philosophy to combat with the eventualities.

National Counter Terrorism Authority, [5], have issued a national narrative against terrorism. It carries the state's commitment to eradicate terrorism in the country, so that the people can feel safe and secure. It is pledged that the Pakistani way of life, its values, belief system, and work culture will be protected. In this effort, all segments of the society will be integrated.

Maria Grever , and Tina van der Vlies, [6], have observed that national narratives are constructed from historical past, arranged in such a way, as to prepare a nation for a war or a desired struggle that the nation is about to undergo. In other words, it is the war or a threat that is inflicted upon a nation, that makes a nation build a narrative. Since the historical past of a nation provides the base for a narrative, and the historical past can only be traced from the history books, it is important, as to how are the history books written, not only today, but also successively in the long past. It is important, as to how history is taught at the educational institutions. The authenticity and validity of the historical information can only be ascertained by research on history, its recordings into books, and its teaching at educational institutions. Narrative building requires further than this information. It requires the understanding of the current problems the nation has to face for which the narrative building is desired. IT requires the understanding and knowledge of the complex interaction of various state actors, the mind set of the people to whom the narrative has to reach, what are the outreach delivery systems and their effectiveness. It involves, holistic approach to integrate text books with media. The text books research is the focal point.

Kasim, [7], has described how powerfully narrations have been thrown on media, by India, of killings, looting, and criminal injustices have been done to force expulsions of non Muslims at the time of creation of Pakistan. This has been done to show before the world that creation of Pakistan has been an an evil doing. The killings and looting have not been less on the Muslims on the Indian side of the border. In contrast, Pakistan has not been that forceful in pulling up their own narratives on the media, defending the creation of Pakistan, that the situation had gone so bad, that the killings and looting could have been worst and multi folded, if Pakistan had not been created.

Kasim has suggested that in the war of narratives, Pakistani media should be more active and vigilant in answering what comes from the other side of the border, so that the world receives a balanced picture. There is no doubt that Pakistani media has in general upheld the cause of the nation. It has given Pakistanis a sense of identity. It has displayed the voice of the nation.

According to Cisse and Rasmussen, [8], it is through narrative analysis, that the bottom line of the thinking of a people, their experiences and their inspirations can be reached in the form of a story line. The story line connects the events that take place at different times, and the reactions that the people exhibit together with the determination as to how they wish to tackle with the respective events. The narrative analysis is a window of past, present and future of a nation. A narrative analysis has distinct set of advantages and handicaps, compared to other qualitative methods of societal psychological analysis. It dwells on how a happening is narrated, how it is felt, and what resolution is arrived with respect to it. Thereby, it is a study in totality, en mass, or as a whole.

As defined by White, [9], a narrative that appears at a national level, has roots deep into the thinking of the nation, the inspirations

of the people, and the impulsive reaction of the people against any occurrence therein. A narrative stands for the voice of the people both who are in majority and also those who are in minority. It is through a narrative analysis, that the perception of the people can be judged, with regard to certain reality.

Sabir, [10], has posed a positive picture of the media in Pakistan as to its ability to outreach the masses, and propagate healthy national narratives on each instance. The media generally is free. It avoids one sided political imagery. Further, the electronic media is strong and functional with more than 40 channels, relaying news, talk shows and interviews. It is regulated by an independent and constitutionally established federal government authority. In addition to digital media, there is the social media which runs of various platforms. According to Sabir, the media in Pakistan, ever since its birth, has backed up the state, with positive ideological basis. The media has given Pakistanis a strong national identity. The media has served the Pakistan's national interest very well. In some quarters, however, there is a voice that the media gets influenced from the politicians, and thereof serve rather their interest.

Amil Khan, [11], at the United States Institute of Peace, has acknowledged the narrative building as a normal process, which takes shape around occurrences, in the form of a storyline, that generate emotional response among the people. It is so far good, if this stays within the generally accepted world view. However, the narratives that were related to the birth of Pakistan, have been picked up and expanded by the Islamist organizations towards extremism and terrorism, with a purpose to aggrandize themselves. They create a hi-pee that the non Muslim world is at war with the Muslim world. Pakistani people are attracted to such a call for war. On the other hand, the efforts, to bring people to normalcy, fail to drive strength from the narratives of the Pakistan movement. An effort is required, to portray the Pakistan movement in its correct peaceful and civil rights purpose and perspective, rather than in a manner instigation towards war. War is not required against the non Muslim world, it is rather required against deprivation, impoverishment, self incrimination, and domination, which were the true targets of the Pakistan movement. Hitting the true enemies of the people of Pakistan, will fetch taller emotional appeal.

Sheikh Ghulam Jilani, [12], has described 'a national narrative' as a will of a nation, that is a necessary driving force, both at ideological level as well on operational level.

It spreads all around, from state machinery down to public. It is a guideline, and a central directive, under which the state officials make policies and act upon it, and the public is placed at ease, is motivated and feels secure. In addition, there is an international acceptance to it. The narrative building is the work of the intelligentsia, academia, think tanks and the media. The state machinery spreads it around. The public is pleased with it. The special place, where it is infused is the schools, colleges and the universities.

Sheikh Ghulam Jilani, however, feels, that in Pakistan, the national narrative building is not taken seriously. The academia, the think tanks and the media have limitations, inactivity and isolation. The people in power have their own agenda. Suggestions have been made as to how to bring them together, and enable them to come up with national narratives at each occasion which are agreed upon all around and can be acted upon.

Ghulam Shabbir, Sharaf Ali and Syeda Sajida Batool, [13], have described that Pakistan is a unique country which has come into being as a result of a number of historical events in then British India, which set forth ripples of responses of ideas, political inter-plays, reactions and counter reactions. The narratives have moved from a basic pursuit for civil rights of the minority Muslims in the subcontinent, to culmination as Muslim nationalism, and further on the desire of an Islamic state.

Starting from a struggle of gaining greater political influence, the conceptual constructs that emerged step by step, have included the plight of the impoverished Muslims, and realization of a separate cultural identity. Partition, which some people call it, has been a place of refuge in the eyes of others. A separate home land, did not mean, denial of rights of other minorities living within that home land. It also did not mean, blocking of cordial relations with the twin brother India, which takes birth a day later. The swing of the pendulum of the ideology of the Islamic state has gone too far. Coming back to normalcy is desired.

Dr Hasan ASkari Rizvi, [14], has described different narratives of Pakistan, as they appeared through the passage of time during the freedom movement. Through reference to the historical progression various circumstances have been described, around each narrative. There have been several of them competing with each other, namely:

1. The original grand narrative
2. The regionalist scenario
3. The Islamist vision
4. The Jihadi Pakistan
5. Islamic-sectarian Pakistan
6. New Pakistan
7. Jinnah's Pakistan.

Some of them carried selective use of history, picked and choose, that fitted. Politicians chose them as slogans to fetch their popularity. Some of them turned out more genuine and stayed longer.

The sustainability of Pakistan rested on going beyond slogans, working out different means to enhance the quality of life of an average man. Only those narratives will last, ultimately, which address this basic issue.

Ali Usman Kazmi, [15], has described the grand historical narrative, on the basis of which, the creation of Pakistan resulted, that there were two distinct nations that existed in India, who had different religions, different cultures, different languages, and different traditions. The minority of them, Muslims had a right to live as free nation without being under domination of the other that was in majority. Soon after creation of Pakistan, the All Pakistan History Conference was held, which brought out a historical narrative, which strengthened the distinct Muslim identity. It is argued that whenever a new national narrative is coined, it is worth the while to support it through a historical analysis.

Mehmood Ali and Muhammad Saad, [16], have investigated the effect of the national narratives of Pakistan, on its foreign policy and relations with other countries. A number of national narratives have been put forward, with a changed storyline, every time a situation has arisen. The Taliban take over Afghanistan has been given as an example, which has disturbed Pakistan's national narrative. The resulting new narrative in Pakistan has been described. It has been demonstrated how do the international

interests disturb the balance equilibrium of the local narratives. It has been argued that, the short term military objectives of global powers, should not be allowed to destabilize the local national narratives that have been evolved after a historical process and are prevalent in the area. The national narratives that a nation develops, is a result of a life long effort of historical research, scholarly reviews, and inputs of intelligentsia, academia, think tanks and media of the concerned local areas.

Salman Anwar, Waris Khan and Saeed Ullah, [17], has described the Khilafat Movement that started immediately after the First World War, pioneers of which have been Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar and Maulana Shaukat Ali, and has been backed by the Indian National Congress under Mahatma Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. The authors have described the impact of this movement on Indian politics during 1920 to 1940. Since the Khilafat-e Usmania in Turkey had fallen in the hands of Britain, France and Italy, Muslims of India were bitter about it. A narrative was created in support of Turkey. Instigated by the Congress, the narrative was turned to an appeal to the Muslims to leave India and go to Turkey. Hindu Muslims stood up against each other. They exploded violently at frequent intervals and continued till 1947. Along with Khilafat Movement, there was a strong Quit India Movement, whereby the British were asked to leave India, as it was not their land.

Neelam Sohail, [18], has studied the period of 1960 to 1970 in Pakistan, that was marked with the effort of bringing the nation close to the state, erasing the colonial culture, moving towards egalitarian and democratic society.

Anwar Iqbal, [19], has disclosed that Pakistan ka matlab kya, La Illaha Illal Allah. was a couplet and political slogan coined in 1943 by Urdu poet Asghar Sodai. His poem, however, proved to be the most influential piece of poetry, as this single poem shaped the country's official ideology. "Neither the Muslim League Working Committee nor I ever passed a resolution Pakistan ka Matlab kya—you may have used it to catch a few votes," said Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah when a Muslim Leaguer chanted this slogan at the last session of the All India Muslim League.

Nadia Zaheer and Dr. Rehana Saeed Hashmi, [20], have described that it is unfortunate that, India and Pakistan seem to be entrapped into an endless war of narratives on Kashmir. India places every possible obstacle to any attempt of conflict resolution. While, Pakistan has acquired nuclear capability, and while prospects of physical war have reduced, on the other hand, the war of narratives has escalated.

Encouraged by the strategic partnership with US, and encouraged by gathering an economic power position in the world market, India has resorted to broadcasting blatant misinformation.

Zubair Faisal Abbasi, [21], has explained how tensions between federation and provinces were simmering, when Commander-in-Chief Ayub Khan ruled the country under martial law in 1958-1962, while the national assembly had been dissolved. In an attempt to retain relations between federation, western part and eastern part, Ayub Khan, came up with a new constitution based on 'Basic Democracies', while the western provinces were amalgamated into 'one unit'. Ayub Khan fetched the support from the military and bureaucracy. He took power to federation, and almost nothing to provinces. This was the start point, of the unending conflict between the federation and the eastern part, which ultimately became an independent country, Bangladesh.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, [22] has written the book, 'the Myth of Independence' hardly two years after Ayub Khan's book, 'Friends Not Masters'. In the book, the author, has expressed the worry that Pakistan is being dragged to a cross road, where all other ways except one, is taking Pakistan to destruction. The one way and the only way, is dependency relationship with the US, in which Pakistan is being lured into. The notion of 'independence' there is therefore only a myth. The second way is agreeing to be friend with India. This is like committing suicide, because, India plans to destroy Pakistan, by Pakistan's own political leaders. The third way is, falling into China's lap, that is a communist world, which means end of the dream of Islamic state.

S. Samuel C. Rajiv, [23], has reported on the book, 'Eating Grass: The Making of the Pakistani Bomb, by Feroz Hassan Khan' that, gives the account of the determination that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto had, on making the atom bomb. The bulk of the book gives a detailed account of how De A Q Khan who was brought in on the task of making the bomb, maneuvered the whole process. The bomb was not only meant to serve domestically for the security of the country, but the technology so obtained could be dished out to other countries.

Hassan Abbas, [24], has portrayed Pakistan, as an atomic power, but short of stability, an extremist state, impoverished people, yet an ally to US on fight *Al-Quada*. According to the author, Pakistan runs by grafted government. Under the cover of the slogan 'Islamization', Zia-ul Haque perpetuated his rule. Washington took advantage of the sentiments, and prepared *mujahideen- a militant force* to fight Soviets in Afghanistan, in the name of *Jihad*. This transformation, damaged the cause of Kashmir. Allah, then Army and America's War on Terror, was the slogan coined to describe this situation, in which Pakistan moved itself in. In the author's opinion, making friends with India, was still a better option.

Muhammad Amjad, M. Ahmad Amjad .B. and Atiya Bano, [25], has performed a discourse analysis of the phrase, that then Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, used, 'Absolutely Not', during an interview on HBO in reply to a question if Pakistan will allow use by US the military bases targeted operations in Afghanistan. The phrase took the shape of a slogan, that reverberated by the media all around the world, taken as a blow to US-Pakistan relations. The authors are of the view, that the underlying meanings attached were a say no to war, and say yes to peaceful means. The tone depicted the emotional love for peace in the region, and respect for stand up as an independent and self pride nation. The response came from Afghanistan, with their agreeing to be together on peace negotiations. In the midst of the harsh ground realities of impoverished nation, Pakistan should say no to war.

Kamran Yousaf, [26], has described a three day visit of Liu Jianchao, Minister of the International Department to Pakistan, where he openly, stressed the need to improve security and the way business is done in Pakistan. According to the Minister, the security threats and political instability were the main obstructions on the progress of CPEC. He stressed that China was losing confidence in Pakistan. The main reason of losing confidence of Chinese investors was the problem of security, coupled with political instability. China broke out the silence for the first time. This situation was reflecting negatively on the Pakistan-China relations. It was hoped that the signal was correctly understood in Pakistan.

A Model for the Growth of a National Narrative and its Destiny

A typical model for the life cycle of a national narrative can be envisaged, to run through the following stages:

1. Exposition

An event occurs. Usually there is a vested interest of a group who makes the event to occur. This group can be called, a ruler, an aggressor, an event enforcer. Then there is a group who is affected by the event. This group can be called, the ruled, the grieved or the affected. On the ground, the occurrence of the event creates a scene. The scene can take the shape of a physical confrontation, a contesting debate, or propaganda campaign.

2. Rising Action

From either side, the aggressor and the affected, a story is constructed, justifying the event, to keep the morale up. When given a historical perspective to it, and when given an objective of keeping the group intact, the story becomes 'a narrative'. Moved by the narrative, either side starts taking certain actions. These actions emerge in response to the narrative fed to them.

3. Climax

Blinded by the heat of the war of narratives, often, the ground realities are ignored. Ground realities keep simmering, and getting piled up.

4. Falling Action

The cause of the event fades away, either the aggressor taking control, or abandoning. The cause of the event does also fade away, in the case, either the affected is defeated completely or gains full defence. At such a stage, the ground realities become more visible.

5. Resolution

In ultimate resolution, the narrative is judged from the ground realities it creates.

A typical model for the life cycle of a national narrative, running through the different stages can be displayed in the Fig-1 below:

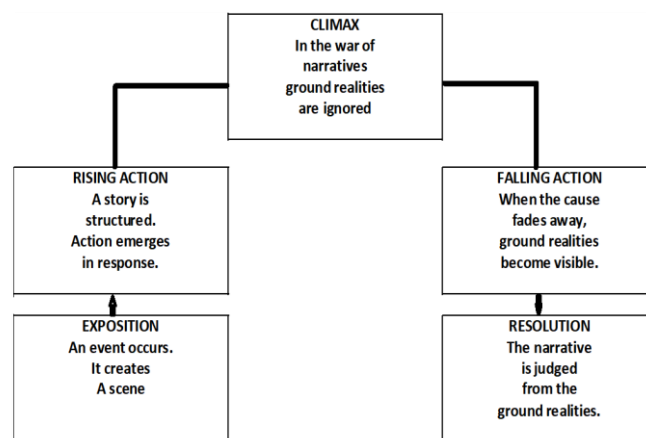


Fig-1: A typical model for the life cycle of a national narrative, running through the different stages

Khilafat and Quit India Movement

Khilafat and *Quit India* Movement carried a narrative of the injustices done to Turkey by British, and in support, Muslims of India to leave India and join the resistance in Turkey. It was an agitation by Indian Muslims, allied with Indian Congress, to pressure the British government to preserve the authority of the Ottoman Sultan as Caliph of Islam after World War I.

Two Nation Theory

The "Two Nation Theory" was a narrative that Hindus and Muslims in British India were different nations on differences in religion, society, and culture. It brought Muslims all across the area together under one banner. *Islamist* parties and moderate groups had opposing views on the role of the state in religion.

Islamist's Slogan

This was a slogan coined in 1943 by poet Asghar Sodai. Neither the Muslim League nor Quaid e Azam himself ever raised this slogan.

But the slogan became a battle cry on the streets and the independence movement geared up. This slogan shows the religious identity of Pakistan too. Today mostly Pakistani religious parties use this slogan in their rallies.

The slogan has been used to boost the morale in war times.

Narratives over Kashmir

Pakistan's narrative is to uphold the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination in accordance with the 1948-49 resolutions of the United Nations Security Council.

The Indian claim is that the State is an integral part of the Indian Union.

As per Simla Agreement of 1972, the issue was to be resolved by purely bilateral dialogue.

In 2019, the Government of India revoked the special status, or autonomy, granted under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution to Jammu and Kashmir—a region administered by India as a state.

Federation Provinces Tension and Basic Democracies 1959

The bulk of Pakistan's governing elite was provincial, and they pursued a *regionalist* agenda. East Bengal's political leaders were the first to seriously question the federal government's power over the provinces. To install national pride, General Ayub Khan chose a modernist narrative. He also developed a system of basic democracies that took the power of the provinces disbursed to local units who were easier to handle than the provincial big shots.

Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto: Myth of Independence 1969

'We have the attributes of an independent nation, and the will to remain free, though peace is our ideal, the defence of rights continues to be our supreme objective of the people of Pakistan'.

Bhutto Eating Grass

'Pakistan will eat grass, but will get one of our own atom bomb. There is no other choice', a narrative put forward by Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, seeing that India had tested its atom bomb, and seeing how India supported fall of Dhaka. He invited Dr A Q Khan and placed him on the job, who did it, and made Pakistan invincible. The narrative brought results.

Pakistan Drifting Towards Extremism: 3-A's Allah, America and Army

Allah, Army and America—have always mattered the most. The narrative of *Islamization* orchestrated by General Zia Ul-Haq, was amplified by Washington for parallel support of the anti-Soviet *Mujahideen* movement.

Mujahideen, members of a number of gorilla groups operating in Afghanistan during the Afghan War (1978–92) that opposed the

invading Soviet forces and eventually toppled the Afghan communist government.

Absolutely Not

A simple but very strong and amazing slogan 'absolutely not' by then Pakistani PM, used it, during an interview with on HBO, in 2021 when he was asked about giving military bases to the US in Pakistan. The narrative behind the slogan, 'an independent Pakistan' was too vocal that destroyed the confidence that the United States had in Pakistan, that Pakistan was in its kitty. It impacted the *Pak-US* relationships and, on future politics in the region.

China Takes Away High Priority Status of Pakistan

After the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's visit to China, he expressed, 'Our Chinese friends do say nothing, but their faces carry the question, as to when you will stop begging'.

Once China described their relations as an All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership China now reclassifies Pakistan in Diplomatic Priorities, Downgrades to 'Priority'.

China's concern is about two major issues — political instability and security — with Pakistan.

Identity - Pain and Struggle

In a number of countries, there is an anti-Pakistan sentiment, also known as Pakistan-phobia. It refers to hatred, fear, hostility or irrational fixation toward Pakistan, Pakistanis and Pakistani culture. Because of it, the people of Pakistan origin, now living in those countries, continue to be in a state of loss of identity, in pain and struggle.

Opinion of the World about Pakistan and Pakistanis

10 countries with the largest Pakistani population

As reported by Junaid Ahmed, [27], Pakistan's Emigration Trends and Insights, Pakistan Institute of Development Economics, Islamabad, February 2024, No: 112,

The population of top 10 countries which have largest Pakistani population is:

- Saudi Arabia: 2,600,000
- UAE: 1,700,000
- United Kingdom: 1,587,819
- United States: 526,956
- Oman: 235,000
- Canada: 215,560
- Kuwait: 150,000
- Germany: 140,000

The narratives, issued from Pakistan from time to time, reverberate round the world in many countries, through media, press, or person to person communication. They influence the opinion the people of those countries about Pakistan and Pakistanis. Some of these countries can be selected to see what opinion; the people of these countries have about Pakistan and Pakistanis:

BBC World Service Results of 2017 Poll

As per BBC World Service, Global Views of Pakistan, Poll, [28], Views of Pakistan's influence by country is as below, in Table-1.

Country Polled	Positive	Negative	Country Polled	Positive	Negative
India	5%	85%	Spain	5%	59%

Brazil	5%	81%	Peru	9%	59%
France	16%	72%	Greece	4%	58%
United States	14%	71%	Germany	1%	47%
Canada	14%	67%	Russia	10%	40%
Mexico	10%	65%	Kenya	36%	35%
Australia	18%	63%	China	47%	44%
Nigeria	19%	62%	Indonesia	48%	12%
United Kingdom	28%	62%	Turkey	58%	9%

Table-1: BBC Survey, Pakistan's Influence in Countries of the World

What People in Different Countries Think of Pakistan and Pakistanis

Following is a randomly selected compilation report from question answers at Quora.com, references [29] to [33], which reflect the thinking of the people in different countries about Pakistan and Pakistanis.

Turkey

Pakistanis enjoy the gracious attitude of ordinary Turks towards Pakistanis and are often termed as Kardeş (brother).

Pakistan and Pakistanis have enjoyed a positive perception in Turkey and amongst Turks for many decades. Pakistan and Turkey enjoy close cultural, historical and military relations which are now expanding into deepening economic relations as both countries seek to develop their economies.

China

In March 2022, a poll coordinated by Palacký University Olomouc found that 73% of Chinese citizens held favourable views of Pakistan, placing it behind only Russia in that regard.

United Kingdom

Pakistanis in United Kingdom are no strangers, having historic ties from colonial times. British people take Pakistan as ally to prevent the incursion of communism, though they are a bit wary of Islamic ways.

United States

According to a recent survey conducted by Leger USA (an opinion polling firm based in US) gauging perceptions that Americans have about Pakistan it was found that nearly 4 in 10 Americans view Pakistan as an Enemy Country and twice as many Americans believe India to be a friend (56%) compared to Pakistan (28%).

Arab Countries

There is a some level of sympathy and sense of brotherhood based on shared religion and loyalty to the shared history, but there is a view that Pakistan is at the bottom of 3rd world countries, also has extremist views.

Russia

From the common man's point of view, the name of this country is a bit... scary. It is still associated with a potential source of Islamic

Terrorism, though to a lesser degree than Afghanistan, Somalia or Saudi Arabia.

Suggestions for Building Narratives to Improve the World Views

There is a need to build new narratives, that gives strength to the people of Pakistan and that stirs the world opinion. Here below are a number of suggestions are given for this purpose.

Highlight Strategic Position of Pakistan on World Globe

Pakistan, in South Asia, is situated at most strategic location, with English speaking gear, connecting China in north east, Russia in north west, Iran in the west, Saudi Arabia and UAE in south west, and India in east. . It is the fifth-most populous country, with a population of over 241.5 million, having the second-largest Muslim population as of 2023. Lahore is the 32nd largest city and Karachi is the 26th largest city in the world. Pakistan serves the world with highly skilled professionals, agricultural and industrial produce.

Right of Nations to Self Determination

Pakistan Came into Being as the Free Will of the People

Pakistan was brought into being as an Act of the British Parliament, in response to the demands of the people: to enable equitable representation in their own country. It is a great example, one of the few in the world, of standing up for a genuine cause by the people, and accepting of the genuine demand of the people by the ruler.

Project positive values in Pakistani life style

Pakistani life style has many positive cultural values based on strong family bonds. This concept is shared in both Japan and China. Children are expected to take care of their elders, and respect is paramount. Children are taught to be stoic, respectful, and obedient to their elders. A good number of people in the Western Europe and in America, miss the pleasures of a strong family.

Highlight Achievements of Pakistanis at the World Level

Many Pakistanis make high achievements, at the world level, in international sports, introducing new methods and innovations, in participation in international conferences, and holding high positions at the international level. These should be highlighted, and advertised all around.

Scenic Beauty of Nature

Connectedness with Nature generates calmness, joy, and creativity, and concentration, that many people of the world cherish. Pakistan stretching from shores of Arabian Sea, through deserts and lush green land with streams and rivers to snow peaked mountains. Out of 11 highest peaks in the world, 9 are in Pakistan. These wonders of Nature can be the best tool to raise the profile of Pakistan in the world.

Conclusion

The historical discourse, in Pakistan, shows that a narrative, that has a bearing on the identity of a nation and its people, is placed forward, rather hurriedly and singularly, in response to certain compelling situation or event. In the heat of rising action, the ground realities get ignored. When the cause of action subsides, the ground realities become visible. This is the time when the real worth of the narrative, and the identity thereof, is exposed. The world opinion, towards a nation and its people, accordingly, goes up and down, but once an impression is indented, it takes longer to

reverse it. Pakistan, today, is facing a similar situation. A large number of Pakistanis, live in different countries, who have to face, these opinions. A survey is presented in the paper, which shows, what people in different countries, think of Pakistan and Pakistanis. It is concluded that a serious attention should be paid, when dishing out a narrative. It is proposed that the task of narrative building should be performed by intelligentsia, academia, and think tanks. Media should spread it around and fetch the people's ownership of it, also keep a check as to what the world views it. The power holders should administer the whole procedure. In the paper goes on suggesting ways to improve the impressions of the world about Pakistan and Pakistanis.

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