

# The Quest for Peace and Reconciliation in Pakistan: A Historical and Contemporary Analysis

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## Abstract:

For many years, war has been a problem in Pakistan. Terrorist attacks, insurgencies, and civil conflicts have all occurred in the nation. This has caused a significant lot of instability and bloodshed. Promoting peace and reconciliation in areas where there are frequent conflicts is a difficult task. Conflict can result from a variety of circumstances, and no one solution will always be effective. To encourage peace and reconciliation, there are a variety of tactics that may be employed. Building trust and understanding between participants in a dispute is a crucial tactic. Dialogue, which is a process of communication between the parties, may be used to accomplish this. Conflict may be resolved by developing solutions that are acceptable to all sides via dialogue and identifying its underlying causes. Promoting justice and accountability is a crucial additional tactic. This entails making sure that those who commit acts of violence are held accountable and that the victims are given compensation. It also entails tackling the underlying causes of injustice and inequality, both of which can fuel conflict. Finally, it's critical to encourage growth in areas where there are frequent conflicts. This entails enhancing chances for employment, healthcare, and education. The chance of future violence can be lowered through development by fostering a more wealthy and stable society. Peace and reconciliation are not assured by the above-mentioned tactics. They can, however, aid in

establishing the conditions required for peace to flourish. These tactics will need to be applied in Pakistan in a thorough and persistent manner. But if they are successful, they may contribute to the nation's future prosperity and peace.

**Keywords:** *Pakistan, conversation, mediation, development, peace, reconciliation, and conflict.*

## 1. Introduction

**History of Peace and Conflict:** A technique involving acts connected to conflict resolution and peacemaking (Ibeanu, 2006). Peace is commonly thought to comprise a number of elements that create good conditions for human life (Jeong, 2000). Peace is more than just the absence of violence. According to Galtung (1967), peace is also a relationship that exists when there is no direct physical violence or when basic human needs are met. The human situation revolves around justice and harmonious cooperation with the environment (Author, 2022).

Conflict is a state of discord caused by actual or perceived differences in needs, values, and interests. When two or more parties believe their interests are incompatible, they may express antagonism against one another, act in a way that limits the ability of the other parties to pursue their own interests, or both (Sandole and van der Merwe, 1995; Fadhili and Rom, 2010).

Protracted and complicated disputes abound in Pakistan. The majority of Pakistan's problems are the result of social and economic power dynamics that are compounded by internal and external entities with competing agendas. They are thus internal to the state and are the result of difficulties that have not been resolved since the country's formation, necessitating political and economic solutions. Others have regional and international connections. There were riots that injured thousands of people shortly following Pakistan's announcement. This was the first important clash. Even before the country was created, Hindus, Muslims, and the subcontinent's British masters fought for several years. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has had a wide spectrum of conflicts, many of which have taken the form of linguistic, ethnic, and sectarian violence. Bangladesh was formed as a consequence of another conflict, this time nationalist in origin, that divided Pakistan's eastern part in 1971. Nationalism has been on the rise in Baluchistan since the province earned independence. They've become more obvious over time, and they've now reached deadly proportions.

**The Direct and Indirect Costs of Conflict in Pakistan:** Pakistan has experienced high levels of violence related to sectarianism, ethnicity, global and domestic politics, domestic abuse, drugs, and other criminal activities in almost all regions, but particularly in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), the Provincially Administered Tribal Areas (PATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Baluchistan, Karachi, Lahore, and other urban centers. There are considerable financial and societal consequences associated with violence. War is having a devastating social and economic impact. Because prevention is preferable to treatment, it will almost certainly be less than the costs associated

with the "conflict." Violence has a significant impact on young people (aged "between 15 and 24"), who are among the world's poorest and most vulnerable. Conflict costs and the financial burden of prevention are not allocated equally among the affected parties.

Loss of human life and livestock, destruction of public infrastructure, factory buildings, and machinery, damage to residential housing, vehicles, and other personal property, budgetary appropriations for wartime expenses, upkeep of law and order, and equipment replacement costs are among the direct losses. Conflicts harmed both foreign and domestic physical investments. The expenditures of population displacement and physical and mental health treatment would be enormous. Disability has a negative influence on earning potential, tourism, and decreased hotel occupancy, among other things.

**The Future of Peacebuilding in Conflict-Ridden Communities:** In today's linked world, many communities throughout the world are still dealing with long-standing hostilities and socioeconomic divisions. In this context, the compelling need to promote peace and reconciliation is a major problem for politicians, academics, and practitioners alike. The purpose of this research study is to investigate effective techniques and interventions that can promote peace and reconciliation among conflict-affected communities.

The effects of prolonged community disputes are far-reaching and severe, impacting not only the individuals directly engaged but also the region's general social fabric and growth. In such circumstances, the need for transformational approaches that address the root causes of conflict and foster long-term peace becomes critical.

This article aims to give an in-depth examination of the numerous reasons that

contribute to conflict within communities, as well as the obstacles that stand in the way of peace and reconciliation. We hope to discover viable tactics and interventions that have proven beneficial in encouraging peaceful cohabitation and reconciliation in conflict-ridden communities by reviewing existing literature, case studies, and empirical evidence.

### **The challenge of Peace and Reconciliation in Conflict-Ridden Communities:**

Pakistan has suffered greatly as it has been in the forefront of sectarian and terrorist wars. The use of religious tone and color obscures the ethical, intellectual, and emotional bases that produce and encourage societal turmoil and bloodshed. Even though Zarb-e-Azb officially ended terrorism, the philosophical desire to use force against the government remains. The argument in favor of utilizing soft techniques plainly illustrates that, as long as militancy's aggressive attitude remains, power and armed resources cannot stop the scourge of militancy (Gill, Mustafa, & Rizwan, 2020). Religious extremism in Pakistan is created and fueled by a confluence of capitalist, colonial, international, domestic, and local elements (Khan, 2015).

In Pakistan, violence and Islamic militancy have been serious problems, producing local and international turmoil. People utilize radicalization as a method to adopt exciting and risky forms of thinking, with views that need emotional exchanges to accomplish political or ideological aims. The extremism that takes or supports an irrational and exciting stance on a subject may result (Rathore & Basit, 2010). Religious extremism or Islamic militancy, according to Sial and Anjum (2010), demonstrates that Islam is a system with a lot of concepts and activities that appear to be anti-intellectual, anti-modern, anti-liberal, and anti-democratic.

### **2. Literature Review**

Although widespread violence remained a possibility, and governments worried about their own security, as Robert Jervis warned in his 1991 paper "The Future of World Politics," the nature of violence would surely shift from what it had been. International security studies, according to Hermann et al. (1999), are necessary to generate a new and greater understanding of the reasons of widespread violence, the instruments that may be employed, and the ways that could be used to reduce violence. Given the destructive impact of violent conflict on people's lives, the development cooperation community must renew its commitment to peace and prevention (OECD, 2001). As a result, cultivating the skill to resolve disagreements and sustain interpersonal harmony is critical. Clenched hands make constructive interaction with others impossible. Based on socioeconomic and demographic discourse, it is critical to establish an understanding of conflict, violence, and its roots and consequences in Pakistan.

Throughout the first 10 years of the twenty-first century, Pakistan served as the harsh yet realistic face of "collateral damage" in the war conducted by the United States and its coalition partners. After 9/11, the battle lines in Pakistan were clearly delineated. Pervez Musharraf was asked whether he supported or opposed America. While Pakistan's overseas devotion placed it in the 'good' camp in the eyes of the West, it created an impossible scenario at home (Lall 2010: 99). Despite the fact that cross-cultural interactions between nation-states are cynically used to destabilize the other country or nations, sometimes politically and sometimes economically, Pakistan's internal disputes and domestic problems are primarily the result of state institution collapse. Non-state terrorist organizations

play an important role in Pakistan's domestic war. There is a risk that non-state actors (Islamic extremists) are linked to Pakistan or operating on Pakistani territory without consequence.

Pakistan is on the verge of becoming a fragile state as a result of present government policies, which are only making it weaker. Many of its internal problems are the product of its disastrous economy, which has been exacerbated by a number of dishonest regimes. As a result of its unstable economic success, the country must deal with the impending impact of American donations as well as the increased risk of its "own" interest in Central and South Asia. The Baluchistan issue is one of Pakistan's most serious domestic irritants. Notably, the ethnic conflict in Baluchistan is known for 'kill-and-dump' techniques.

Tensions have been felt in Quetta, Karachi, the southern region of Punjab, and Baluchistan as a result of sectarian violence. Sectarian exclusivity politics are also gaining traction in Pakistan. Killing in the name of numerous religious sects has begun to become a trend. Similar to sectarianism, ethnic divisions in the country bring more harm than good. Pakistan advertises itself as a "multi-ethnic" country, although in fact, this ethnic variety is rarely acknowledged. Punjabis' domination over other ethnic groups has been a perennial concern. The situation has deteriorated as a result of the Baloch people's frustrating reality, the rejection of Sindhi identity, and the tribal areas' neglect.

Pakistan is dealing with both domestic and international terrorism, which may be further classified into two forms. There is a combined threat of religious extremism and ethnic strife. The primary source of actual security risk is "within." Outlawed groups with considerable racial and religious prejudice foment internal terror. This sort of terrorism is prevalent in areas such as

Kuram, Para Chinar, Dera Ismail Khan, and southern Punjab. Suicide bombings, attacks on essential infrastructure such as banks, schools, and railway tracks, as well as attacks on gas pipelines, are examples of domestic terrorism. International actions include strikes on high-profile targets in Pakistan, including as the President, Prime Minister, Marriott Hotel, Sri Lankan cricket team, Army GHQ, PNS Mehran Base, police stations, drone attacks, and FC training sites. These behaviors are promoted by state agents as a tool of state policy (Irshad 2011: 227). The country's multi-layered instability, brought on by different terrorist and militant organizations, has a complex and overwhelming influence. The Talibanization movement has had a negative impact on Pakistan's history.

Following 9/11, the battle invaded Pakistani territory in the second stage, when US forces followed Taliban fugitives into FATA tribal lands, notably the Swat region. In 2007, the third phase began with the Jamia Hafsa incident and Pakistani Army operations in FATA, which resulted in an increase in casualties in the region. A new generation of suicide bombers has arisen in the country, increasing the frequency of such attacks.

**Theories of Peace and Conflict Peace building Theory:** Following Galtung's use of the term "peacebuilding," Lederach (1997) is credited with developing this theoretical framework (Gawerc, 2006). Peace building, according to Sandole (2010), is a dynamic approach and framework for cultivating goodwill through third-party contacts in which numerous actors carry out distinct activities concurrently or at different times. To "stop the house from catching fire," proactive peace building requires third-party interveners to attempt and carry out an intervention before a conflict starts (Sandole, 2010, p. 13). Comprehensive

peace building is commonly used in regional and global governance to address the root causes of conflict, from prevention to resolution and transformation.

Maqoma (2020) defended communitarians by claiming that the imposition of a negative ethnicity on Africans is the outcome of Western concepts of unrestricted individual autonomy, which are now used to define an African. Africans are generally characterized as communal people with a worldview based on "communal thinking and values of generosity, compassion, benevolence, tolerance, kindness, and goodwill that bring people closer together in order to achieve a common good of the community, whether a single family or an entire country" (Maqoma, 2020: 1-2)

### **Theory of Justice:**

Rawls (1971; 1999) presented a moral theory of justice and stated that peace is conditional and guided by a shared public sense of justice by emphasizing equality and fairness in the allocation of goods for a well-ordered society. It is a fair choice paradigm in which individuals may choose just, equitable, and libertarian principles that are acceptable to both sides in their social interactions.

Since Aristotle said that natural justice exists and thrives in natural law, philosophy of justice and legal theory have been closely intertwined. According to Rawls (1999), the principles of justice inherent in the theory guarantee the rights emerging from these principles and the social institutions designed to defend and develop them as social justice or formal justice. Rawls' theory of justice, according to Dutta (2017), maintains that a good society is defined by a number of qualities, the first of which is justice. Justice is the foundation of society, and all political and legislative measures should be taken to satisfy its norms. PCR and legal experts agree on the theory's

conceptual foundations for distributive, punitive, and restorative justice.

### **Conflict Theory Realist Theory:**

According to Faleti (2006), realism, as the theory is also known, has its origins in classical political thinking, which tried to assign the cause of conflict to human nature's predisposition toward selfishness and the pursuit of power for oneself. The concept emphasizes the state's (state-centrism), national interests, and power in influencing global politics and order. Carr (1939) and Morgenthau (1948) established the theory to explain state conduct and a variety of policy possibilities for an analytical response to the exercise of state power in foreign policy and diplomatic studies. Waltz (1979) and Donnelly (2005) provided additional contributions to the realist theoretical stance on understanding internal interactions.

According to Faleti (2006), this theory has significantly helped to rationalize the militarization of international relations, the arms race, and ultimately elevating power and the state to the status of a philosophy with substantial implications for global conflict. This theory also gives a conceptual and analytical explanation of why countries have armies and, in certain cases, want to obtain nuclear weapons, even if simply for deterrence. According to Slaughter (2019), the authority of states and the mechanisms by which they can act to guarantee their security and national interests are at the heart of realist international relations theory. A realist analysis found that powerful states' actions condition and hinder global cooperation and governance (Slaughter, 2019).

### **3. Method:**

This study employs a qualitative, descriptive-explanatory methodology. This approach is utilized to get more precise and

thorough data on a study issue. According to Moleong (2013), qualitative research is defined as a study that uses the environment to explain events that happen and are caused by involvement.

#### 4. Conclusion:

Conflict and violence are key issues confronting Pakistan today. These difficulties have a detrimental influence on the country's human and economic growth. Several projects have been launched in recent years to address these concerns, but much more needs to be done.

Pakistan's core causes of conflict and violence are complicated and multifaceted. Poverty and inequality, sectarianism, political instability, and terrorism are among them. Addressing these root causes will require a comprehensive approach that includes social, economic, political, and security dimensions.

In Pakistan, there are several approaches to fighting conflict and violence. Addressing the core causes of conflict, encouraging discussion and understanding among various groups, establishing trust and collaboration among diverse groups, supporting local peace building initiatives, and holding those responsible for violence accountable are among these.

There is no simple answer to Pakistan's conflict and violence problems. We can, however, make progress toward a more peaceful and just Pakistan by addressing the core causes of conflict, fostering conversation and understanding, developing trust and collaboration, supporting local peace building efforts, and holding those responsible for violence accountable.

#### 5. Recommendations:

Ways to combat the issues of conflict and violence in Pakistan:

Address the underlying causes of conflict. Addressing challenges such as poverty, inequality, and a lack of opportunity is part of this.

Encourage communication and understanding among diverse communities. This can be accomplished through education, cultural interaction, and other types of participation.

Increase trust and collaboration among various groups. This may be accomplished through collaborative initiatives, common goals, and other types of collaboration.

Local peacebuilding activities should be supported. This involves giving groups working to promote peace and reconciliation funds, training, and other resources.

Hold those responsible for the violence accountable. This involves ensuring that abusers are held accountable and victims are compensated.

These are only a handful of the strategies for dealing with conflict and violence in Pakistan. It is critical to remember that there is no one answer and that a multifaceted approach is required. We can achieve progress toward a more peaceful and fair Pakistan by addressing the core causes of conflict, fostering conversation and understanding, establishing trust and collaboration, supporting local peacebuilding efforts, and holding those responsible for violence accountable.

There are numerous particular interventions that have been demonstrated to be beneficial in promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict-ridden communities, in addition to these generic strategies. Among these are: early warning and early action: This entails recognizing potential disputes and preventing them from escalating.

Mediation and conflict resolution entail bringing conflicting parties together and assisting them in reaching a mutually acceptable solution. Truth and reconciliation commissions are entrusted with examining past human rights violations and

encouraging healing and reconciliation. Ex-combatants' reintegration: This entails assisting former fighters in reintegrating into society and becoming productive members of the community.

Economic development may assist in addressing the core causes of conflict and creating opportunities for people to live in peace. These are only a handful of the various interventions that have been demonstrated to be helpful in promoting peace and reconciliation in conflict-affected communities. We can make progress toward a more peaceful and just world by applying these actions.

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