

INDIAN CHRONICLES: AN ANALYSIS OF THE CAUSES OF INDIAN ENMITY AND THE INFRASTRUCTURE OF HYBRID WARFARE

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Abstract

After years of research, European Disinformation Lab's disclosures about fake Indian news networks, targeting Pakistan worldwide is a fresh reminder of the never-ending Indian animosity, demonstrated blatantly off the actual battlefield, through the amalgamation of real and fake networks of propaganda warfare. Disinfo Lab's findings have highlighted the enduring prevalence and relevance of propaganda warfare as a means and method of indirect warfare. At the same time, these disclosures reiterated the vital part technological progression plays in the dissemination of information/disinformation and the evolution of conflicts and warfare. This paper is an attempt to analyse the causes of enduring Indian hostility towards Pakistan for which it extensively employed the tools of information warfare documented and exposed by the EU Disinfo Lab in 2019 and 2020. This paper contextualises the issue highlighted by the EU Disinfo Lab's report in light of the evolution of warfare into indirect means and identifies the causes of enduring Indian hostility towards Pakistan. This would help to understand the dynamics behind this Pakistan-centred international war of narratives and perception-building to serve the geopolitical interests of India.

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Introduction

The traditional concept and practice of warfare, involving armed forces and battlefields have undergone a radical transformation. The Post-9/11 era witnessed states fighting against non-state actors and waging wars against an ideology under the rubric of 'War on Terrorism.' It involved diverse actors and factors, including disinformation, propaganda, construction of discourses, and employment of scholars, think tanks, and media to construct a desired image of the situation with little to no space for counter-arguments. Post-9/11 wars can fairly be described as media wars because media played a central role in the dissemination of unchallenged official narratives of the states and the construction of desired images and opinions reflecting official positions over the issues, hence, legitimising the use of force.

Historically, wars and conflicts are prevalent and indirect warfare has also remained an important tool of statecraft. "Subdue the enemy without fighting is the acme of skill," is an oft-quoted dictum from *The Art of War* of the renowned Chinese general and strategist, Sun Tzu, written some two and a half millennia ago.¹ Around the same period, *Arthashastra* (4th century BC), written by an Indian philosopher and statesman, Chanakya (also known as Kautilya), is also widely regarded as a masterwork on politics, economy, diplomacy, and war.² His treatise also emphasised the importance of deception and disinformation not just in wartime but during peacetime as well. He identified three types of wars: open, concealed, and silent. The silent war he explained is a kind of warfare in which:

The king and his ministers—and unknowingly, the people—all act publicly as if they were at peace with the opposing kingdom, but all the while secret agents and spies are assassinating important leaders in the other kingdom,

creating divisions among key ministers and classes, and spreading propaganda and disinformation.³

Plato is also referred to as stating, "Those who tell the stories also rule societies."⁴ These historic accounts reflect the importance of indirect means to warfare and also trace the history of discourse development and the significance of storytelling to politics and public opinion back to ancient times. It has been acknowledged widely that disinformation and rumours have always played an important role in the conduct of warfare to discredit the enemy, its forces, and people. World War I is generally identified as a decisive period of history when warring parties employed propaganda as an important weapon of war on an unprecedented scale to influence public opinion internationally. The purpose was to justify their actions and to build international support.⁵ Since then, it continues to be an integral part of conflict and warfare.⁶ The advent of social media in the last decade-and-a-half has only added to the critical role of storytelling and propaganda in the conduct of modern warfare.

This brief background sets the stage for subsequent discussion on *Indian Chronicles*, researched and disclosed by the Brussels-based NGO European Disinformation Lab's report in December 2019 and 2020. In the international system, states are engaged in power struggles, pursuing their national interests. This power confrontation is also a hallmark of South Asian politics that is generally defined in terms of Pakistan-India rivalry. Both states are involved in a perennial struggle of coexistence since their independence and both have relied on different means to balance each other's position and designs in the region.

The publication of *Indian Chronicles*, however, had a shocking impact on Pakistan. The sheer level of deceit and deception exposed by this report on the Indian part has been taken by Pakistani authorities as something unprecedented, especially in times of relative peace.⁷ The severity of this disinformation campaign can also be gauged by the comments of the very investigators and authors of the

report who described it as something they had never encountered in their other investigations.⁸

Brief documentation of the concept of evolution of warfare in the last few decades described as 4th and 5th generations and hybrid warfare is presented below to contextualise the revelations of Disinfo Labs' findings regarding Indian propaganda warfare. It is to highlight the significance of narrative-building as a vital tool of hybrid warfare in today's evolved battlefield, which is extremely important in public opinion-making and is greatly associated with cyberspace in terms of instant dissemination of information or disinformation. Hence, discourse development is part and parcel of this evolved form of warfare carrying far-reaching political and military implications. With this background, the paper analyses the Indian leadership's and strategic community's viewpoint about Pakistan and the causes of this massive Indian disinformation campaign. The study briefly documents the highlights of the EU Disinfo Lab's report. In light of its findings, it discusses the state of human rights violations inside India to question the validity of the Indian position over human rights issues in Pakistan.

Evolution in Warfare

Fourth Generation Warfare (4GW)

Advancements in tactics and technology have always played a key role in the evolution of warfare. In recent years, evolution in warfare is generally explained in terms of generations and hybrid warfare. The terminologies of fourth- and fifth-generation warfare, along with hybrid war are now being used and explained by national and international scholars explaining the evolution of warfare. Writing in 2004, American author and military theorist, William S. Lind characterised the evolution of warfare into four generations.⁹ Every generation of warfare is distinguished by the tactics and technological advancements of the time. The first three generations of war, starting from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 to the World Wars of the

twentieth century have at least two common elements; opposing armed forces in uniform and their presence on the battlefield.

To Lind, the fourth generation marks the most radical change since the time of the Treaty of Westphalia due to its transformation into wars against non-state actors in the post-9/11 period.¹⁰ In fourth-generation warfare, non-state actors have replaced regular armed forces wearing uniforms and as a consequence also distorted the differences between combatants and non-combatants on the one hand and between the war and peacetime on the other. At the same time, Lind reminded that the fourth generation is not quite innovative because this form of warfare had existed before the rise of the state, before the Treaty of Westphalia.¹¹

He further explained fourth-generation war in terms of religious and cultural aspects (Islam vs Christianity) and in the context of the trend of non-Western immigration to the West. To him, "In Fourth Generation war, invasion by immigration can be at least as dangerous as invasion by a state army".¹² Hence, he viewed fourth generation warfare in a broader context of cultural conflict as well rather than just focusing on the centrality of non-state actors as a force to fight with.

Writing in 2005, Thomas X. Hammes further elaborated fourth-generation warfare as the most serious challenge to international security due to the nature of its diverse networking with political, economic, social, and military spheres.¹³ He explained that the prime theme of fourth-generation warfare is that "superior political will, when properly employed, can defeat greater economic and military power."¹⁴ Fourth-generation warfare does not aim to win militarily, but it plans to directly attack the enemy's political will with a combination of various strategies including guerrilla tactics, civil disobedience, soft networking of social, cultural, and economic ties, disinformation campaigns, and innovative political activity.¹⁵ He categorised wars in Vietnam, Somalia, Lebanon, Afghanistan, and Chechnya as instances of

fourth-generation warfare that defeated superpowers for the last fifty years. Each of these wars explains that through their protracted campaigns, the insurgents defeated the will of the enemy rather than his military. He also identified that "4GW [fourth generation warfare] is conducted simultaneously in population centres, rural areas, and virtual networks. It moves constantly to avoid detection and to target its enemy's vulnerabilities."¹⁶

Fifth Generation Warfare

Since tactics and technology define evolution in warfare, fifth-generation warfare is also identified as another way to conduct the war by other means. It is explained that, "the very secrecy of 5GW [fifth generation warfare] makes it the hardest generation of war to study," and that "the most successful 5GWs are those that are never identified."¹⁷ Fifth-generation warfare is also studied in the context of the evolution of technology and analysed as a battle of perception.¹⁸ It is categorised as moral and cultural warfare that is fought "through manipulating perceptions and altering the context by which the world is perceived."¹⁹ Former US serviceman and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defence, Dr Steven Bucci defines fifth generation warfare as follows:

We no longer have the luxury of a linear, series-type engagement. We now require an integrated simultaneous approach that has soldiers who can do development and intelligence gathering, who know the psycho-social dynamics of the people among whom they live and move. It requires information operations that range from paper leaflets to the most sophisticated cyber campaigns, and it must be completely immersed in the overall policy thrusts of the nation's leaders. This new integrated concept is called Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW).²⁰

Another observer explained fifth generation warfare as the secret deliberative manipulation of actors, networks, institutions, states, or any forces to achieve a goal or set of goals across a combination of socioeconomic and political domains while

attempting to avoid or minimise the retaliatory offensive or defensive actions/reactions of actors, networks, institutions, and/or states.²¹

These analyses of fifth-generation warfare reflect the ancient understandings of Sun Tzu and Kautilya cited above. In this form of warfare, information and disinformation are used as weapons of war while various social networks, media, and social media act as a medium of communication. Both, information and disinformation coupled with propaganda tactics aim to construct desired images, perceptions, and narratives of the target audience and common people alike. Being secretive and being a battle of perceptions, designed to manipulate not just public opinion but states and institutions as well, fifth-generation warfare is extensively associated with the use of cyberspace. This advancement in communication technology almost coincided with the events of 9/11 and further advanced in the subsequent years, hence being studied by scholars since at least 2010.

Hybrid Warfare

In the evolution of warfare, another important characterisation is that of 'hybrid warfare'. Security analyst, Joshua Ball, explained hybrid warfare as a strategy that employs conventional military force supported by irregular and cyber warfare tactics.²² To him, it is a nonlinear war, fought by a state through the use of conventional and irregular military forces in conjunction with psychological, economic, political, and cyber assaults. As a result, "confusion and disorder ensue when weaponised information exacerbates the perception of insecurity in the populace as political, social, and cultural identities are pitted against one another."²³

Hybrid warfare involves the coordinated use of multiple instruments of power, designed to target the specific vulnerabilities of an enemy across the full range of societal functions to achieve greater effects through concentrated combined efforts.²⁴ Synchronisation is identified as a key feature of hybrid warfare that means the

simultaneous and effective use of various instruments of power and their coordination to produce the desired results. It employs coordinated military, political, economic, civilian, and informational (MPECI) instruments of power that extend far beyond the military realm.²⁵ It is further explained as asymmetric warfare that “uses multiple instruments of power along a horizontal and vertical axis, and to varying degrees shares an increased emphasis on creativity, ambiguity, and the cognitive elements of war.”²⁶

The ability to synchronise both military and non-military means simultaneously within the same battlespace is considered a fundamental characteristic of a hybrid warfare actor.²⁷ Hence, the key aspect of hybrid warfare is the employment of the diverse instruments of power in multiple dimensions and on multiple levels, simultaneously in a coordinated manner. This multipronged strategy is explicitly crafted to aim at the perceived vulnerabilities of the target state²⁸ and it is greatly fed on internal fissures and faultlines of the target state and society.

The abovementioned documentation explains the gigantic evolution in the field of warfare that has taken place at least in the last two decades reflecting on the persistent importance of indirect warfare through indirect means.

The abovementioned details about the evolution of warfare and the characteristics of each distinguished generation of warfare can be observed and analysed in the context of diverse traditional and non-traditional security challenges Pakistan has faced since the post-9/11 era. Simultaneous engagement of Pakistani forces with irregular warfare in the border region with Afghanistan, a massive campaign of terrorism across the country, and an international demonising media campaign targeting Pakistani image, intentions, and war efforts, all correspond to the various distinguishing features of different generations of warfare documented above. All that massive disinformation campaign was not without a planned strategy of

regional and international players and this is what was finally exposed by the EU Disinfo Lab's report in 2019 and 2020.

India's employment of evolved warfare strategies against Pakistan has been documented by the Pakistani authorities and by international organisations as well. The details have been documented and exposed to national and international audiences as well as international organisations in the form of dossiers containing proofs of Indian involvement in terror activities inside Pakistan. Responding to the exposure of Disinfo Lab's findings, Pakistan's National Security Adviser to Prime Minister Imran Khan, Dr Moeed Yusuf, and Pakistani Foreign Minister, Shah Mehmood Qureshi gave a detailed briefing to the press on 11 December 2020.²⁹ Based on official information, the foreign minister had categorically stated that India was involved in hybrid warfare against Pakistan. It is pertinent to briefly recap the highlights of the Disinfo Lab's finding to contextualise the abovementioned evolution of warfare into the realm of information and propaganda warfare followed by the identification of the causes of Indian sources of enmity towards Pakistan.

Findings of EU Disinformation Lab's Report

The first report published by the EU Disinfo Lab in December 2019 revealed a network of over 265 revived media outlets in more than 65 countries, traced back to the New Delhi-based Srivastava Group. The purpose of these diverse deceptive strategies was explained by the authors of the report to influence the international institutions and elected representatives with coverage of specific events and demonstrations and to provide NGOs with useful press material to reinforce their content's credibility. Repeated republishing and quotation by various hooked networks was to make it difficult for the reader to trace the manipulation, to construct an image of international support to the Indian narrative, and to influence public perceptions on Pakistan by multiplying republications of the same content available on search engines.³⁰

The second report was published in December 2020.³¹ This report further investigated the Indian deception network targeting Pakistan and to an extent China and disclosed the extension of this disinformation operation to over 116 countries with the help of more than 750 fake news media outlets. The report termed this as the 'largest network' of disinformation they had ever exposed.³²

This fake campaign involved identity theft through the resurrection of dead people, media, and organisations, imitation of European Union's institutions, and direct control of more than 10 UN-recognised NGOs affiliated with the UN Human Rights Council.³³ The objectives of this operation identified by the investigators of the report were as follows:³⁴

- To discredit the nations in conflict with India in Asia, particularly Pakistan and to a lesser extent China.
- Reinforce pro-Indian and anti-Pakistan (and anti-Chinese) feelings inside India.
- To improve the international perception of India.
- To damage the standing of other countries and ultimately benefit from more support from international institutions such as the EU and the UN.

Means and Methods used for 15 years campaign included subjective interviews with selected individuals, anti-Pakistan demonstrations in Geneva, display of poster campaign reflecting on Pakistan's internal issues concerning Balochistan, women rights, and minority rights, organisation of various events inside EU Parliament targeting Pakistan, the creation of groups of support within the European Parliament to influence the European and international policy-making circles, and arrangement of private trips for the Members of the European Parliament to Bangladesh, Maldives, and Kashmir and branding them as state visits to promote Indian perspective on regional issues.³⁵

These diverse activities targeted international centres of power intending to influence their perceptions and decision-making towards Pakistan by projecting it as a threatening other not corresponding to the international values of human rights and oppressive to its minorities. This massive Indian activity endorsed its stated policy (publicly announced in 2016) to isolate Pakistan internationally.³⁶ While writing in 2002, a renowned British journalist, Owen Bennett Jones, conversed upon this Indian policy and had noted that for a long time, Indian strategists had made every effort to undermine Pakistan's search for friends in the international community. To attain their objective Indians had represented "Pakistan as a rogue state filled with Islamic extremists" and an exporter of terrorism.³⁷ He had further deliberated upon it by stating that this Indian message resonated well with anti-Islamic prejudices of the West while he identified such a depiction of Pakistan as an unfair practice.³⁸ Hence, what is stated by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was not something new and being practised as a cornerstone of the Indian foreign policy for a long time.

Causes of Indian Enmity

With this background in place, the causes of such overwhelming Indian hostility towards Pakistan need to be explored and analysed. Indian enmity towards Pakistan can be examined on at least two accounts: historic and strategic. The first account is rooted in history and further strengthened by the great partition and the events that accompanied the partition. This is something that could have and should have been reduced through the years and decades after the partition. This is what was witnessed in post-WWII Europe (EU), especially in the context of France, Germany, and the United Kingdom. This pattern of conciliation in the EU is what did not follow in the subcontinent and India being a far larger country both in men and material can fairly be regarded as the main protagonist in this regard.

Continuous resentment towards Pakistan remained the cornerstone of Indian foreign policy throughout the post-independence period. Revelations of the EU Disinfo Lab's report have further added to this particular account. Various historic accounts reflect upon the open desire of the top Indian leadership since the beginning to undo Pakistan and to take it back into the Indian fold.³⁹ In his broadcast of 3 June 1947, former Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru professed that maybe through partition "we shall reach that united India sooner than otherwise."⁴⁰ It is also reported that he further deliberated upon this issue of Pakistan's reintegration into India with the then United Nations representative Joseph Korb.⁴¹

Pakistani political scientist, Khalid bin Sayeed had documented that even after India's humiliating defeat in the border war with China in 1962, Nehru declared in an interview that Indo-Pakistani "confederation remains our ultimate end."⁴² The most important statement concerning the burden of history was given by the former Indian Prime Minister Indra Gandhi on the role India played in the dismemberment of Pakistan in 1971. Addressing the Indian parliament on 16 December 1971, she declared, "India had avenged several centuries of Hindu humiliation at the hands of Muslim emperors and sultans."⁴³ This statement alone is the reflection of the deep-seated historic animosity of the top Indian leadership towards Pakistan that goes far beyond the partition of India. These open intentions and expression of enmity naturally caused security anxieties in Pakistan and a cycle of never-ending distrust and hostilities began in the region which continues to this day.

Another historic reference of ambition is the concept of *Akhand Bharat*. On the idea of *Akhand Bharat* (unified India including Pakistan and Bangladesh), the national-level politician of Indian ruling party Ram Madhav had categorically stated in an interview to *Aljazeera* that Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)⁴⁴ believed in the concept of *Akhand Bharat*. He elaborated the concept by stating that one day

India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, would again, through popular goodwill, come together and *Akhand Bharat* would be created which for historical reasons separated only 60 years ago.⁴⁵ Such expression by a senior ruling party member is something serious and reflects the level of recklessness that exists in the ruling party's political culture.

The second account of continuous Indian hostility is the strategic desires of India in the region and beyond.⁴⁶ An Indian South Asian security expert, Raja Mohan, explains that India's grand strategy divides the world into three concentric circles. The first includes the immediate neighbourhood in which India pursued supremacy without the interference of outside powers. The second comprises the extended neighbourhood of India, stretching across Asia and the Indian Ocean coastal areas in which India has sought the balance of power policy preventing other powers from undermining its interests. The third includes the entire global stage where India has tried to take its place as one of the great powers, determining matters of international peace and security.⁴⁷

This Indian ambition to attain not just a regional hegemonic position but a global power status as well is what explains the second source of its enmity for Pakistan for which it considers the latter the only obstacle in the region.⁴⁸

Indian political scientists, Manjeet Pardesi and Sumit Ganguly, have documented that in South Asia India, through its economic and strategic dominance, desires the status of regional hegemon, a great power of Asia, and eventually aims the global power status.⁴⁹ Pardesi explained that "India wished to be treated as *primus inter pares* ('first among equals') in the strategic affairs of South Asia/Indian Ocean Region."⁵⁰ He further enlightened that in its pursuit to attain hegemonic status, India tended to work with the smaller South Asian countries along with the extra-regional powers, only if they recognised that India was the "first in order, importance, or authority in regional affairs."⁵¹ It is also argued that as an emerging power, India "has a seat

at the global table, projecting confidence to shape events on a large canvas should be the hallmark of India's foreign policy."⁵²

Since Pakistan is identified as the only state hindering Indian aspirations of regional hegemony and global power status, Stephen P. Cohen and Sumit Ganguly have noted that one country in South Asia, where some Indians might welcome political disintegration is Pakistan since it institutes the only military opposition to India in the region.⁵³ In one of his papers, Cohen had also cited his conversation with the Indian strategists, explaining:

Not a few Indian generals and strategists have told me that if only America would strip Pakistan of its nuclear weapons then the Indian army could destroy the Pakistan army and the whole thing would be over.⁵⁴

This documentation presents the historic and strategic account of Indian grievances to contextualise the decade-and-a-half-long extensive fake media campaign against Pakistan disclosed by the EU Disinfo Lab's report. Indian attempts at undermining Pakistani position and its interests is logical in the context of its historic grievances and ambitious strategic desires. It further highlights that in pursuance of its objectives India would remain restless and regional stability would remain at stake.

Indian Record on Human Rights

Another important issue to be addressed is the issue of minorities in Pakistan magnified by the Indian-sponsored propaganda machinery to demonise the country internationally. It needs to be examined how far Indian allegations and campaigns are reflective of the reality in light of its own record on human rights.

India is a state and society divided along caste lines where the vast majority of people are classified as lower castes and untouchables. The Hindu caste system is traced to an ancient Sanskrit text called the 'Manusmriti' (the laws of Manu). These laws classify people into four varnas or castes. At the top of the social hierarchy are the Brahmins

(priests), followed by Kshatriyas (soldiers/administrators) and Vaishyas (merchants), with Shudras (servants/labourers) at the bottom. There are some 200 million Dalits in India out of a population of 1.3 billion and they are beyond the scope of this caste system, which characterises them as 'untouchables'.⁵⁵

Hence, birth into a certain caste determines the social and economic status in the wider Indian society. By this fact alone, the human rights record of India by any means can never be considered corresponding to international human rights standards. It is just beyond understanding that with this major foundational flaw in their social system, Indian strategists look for human rights 'violations' in other countries, especially in Pakistan to be exploited. Most recent studies further endorse this structural constituent of Indian social order and violent cultural practices. In addition to their caste system, non-Hindu Indian minorities also fall under the same category of being untouchables and lesser human beings.

Human Rights Watch's (HRW) 2021 report highlighted the severity of this caste-based structural violence in India, directed against the lower-caste Dalit community. Based on government data collected in 2019, the report stated that crimes against Dalits further increased by 7 per cent.⁵⁶ Dalit rights activists explain this spike in terms of a reaction by members of dominant castes against any efforts toward Dalit's upward mobility and they perceive it as a challenge to caste hierarchy. The HRW report documented many caste-based violent acts against Dalits over petty issues like one in Odisha where 40 Dalit families were socially boycotted when a 15-year-old girl plucked flowers from the backyard of a dominant caste family. A Dalit man was stripped and beaten along with his family members in Karnataka for allegedly touching the motorcycle of a dominant caste man. In Tamil Nadu, a Dalit man was beaten to death by the members of the dominant caste for defecating in their field and a Dalit lawyer was also killed over his social media posts criticising Brahminism.⁵⁷

Similarly, Hindu-Muslim rivalry is rooted in history and has further intensified since the partition of India. The current Modi government has taken this trend to new heights. According to the HRW's report for the year 2021, attacks continued in India against minorities, especially Muslims, and authorities failed to act against BJP leaders who vilified Muslims and BJP supporters who engaged in violence. The report documented that in Uttar Pradesh, state authorities continued to use allegations of cow slaughter to target the Muslim population. By August 2020, the Uttar Pradesh government had arrested 4,000 people over allegations of cow slaughter under the law preventing it and also used the draconian National Security Act (NSA) against 76 people accused of cow slaughter. In such cases, the NSA permits the imprisonment of suspects for up to a year without filing charges.⁵⁸ What is more alarming is the fact documented by a researched report that some 35 per cent of Indian police personnel feel that it is natural for a mob to punish the culprit in case of cow slaughter.⁵⁹

Concerning the drastic increase in violence against all minorities in India, The US Commission on International Religious Freedom has twice recommended to the US government that India should be designated as a 'country of particular concern'.⁶⁰

Drastic spike of violence against all minorities, especially against Christians in India, has recently compelled the 17 human rights and interfaith organisations in the United States to request and secure a Congressional briefing over the subject and sensitise the US lawmakers about the plight of minorities in India and to stress the US government to take stern action in this regard.⁶¹

The Congressional briefing of July 2021 highlighted that attacks against the Christian minority, who constitute the 30 million of the Indian population, have increased at an alarming rate and include the form of physical violence, disruptions of church services, restrictions on access to food and water, and false accusations of

forced conversions. Furthermore, desecration of churches and beatings of the clergy, violence against Christian women, and forced denouncement of their faith is also part of the violent campaign initiated by the Hindu nationalists of the ruling party.

One participant of the briefing Sydney Kochan emphasised the significance of recognising India's severe human rights violations at a government level. To him, "Yes, it is true that India is the largest democracy in the world, and that it is one of the United States' primary strategic partners; however, this should not serve as a justification for overlooking the accelerating persecution of India's religious minorities...."⁶²

As reported in the Status of Policing in India Report 2018, disadvantaged sections such as Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), and Muslims are disproportionately imprisoned in Indian jails. Similarly, the likelihood of the award of capital punishment to these segments of society is also much higher.⁶³

Hindu mob's attack on Muslim localities of the capital New Delhi in February 2020 was one of the most heinous crimes against humanity. It took place at a time when US President Donald Trump was visiting India. This was a blatant demonstration of mob violence against the Muslim community in which at least 53 people were killed, some burned alive, and according to Indian government sources, over 500 sustained injuries during the carnage, while security forces performed the role of a bystander.⁶⁴ Based on its research, Amnesty International of India found Delhi Police "complicit and an active participant" in the religious violence.⁶⁵ Delhi Minorities Commission, in its July 2020, report also characterised the Delhi violence as "planned and targeted," and found that the police were filing cases against Muslim victims of violence instead of action against the BJP leaders who incited violence.⁶⁶

Furthermore, according to the HRW, the BJP government increasingly harassed, arrested, and prosecuted rights defenders,

activists, journalists, students, academics, and others critical of the government or its policies.⁶⁷

Human rights issues are universal. They are common in the developing world and need a lot of consideration and effort to improve the livelihood of all the citizens within state boundaries, including Pakistan. However, with the above-mentioned documentation of structural and systematic violations of human rights and with the bleakest track record, India is least expected to launch a hateful campaign against Pakistan on the issues of human rights that matter little value to the current Indian government and high caste Brahmin society. Indian campaign against Pakistan on the issues of human rights can only be termed as self-deceiving.

Conclusion

Indian foreign policy is very much guided by its sense of superiority, domination, and ambition to attain a regional and global power status. It has been identified and discussed by numerous regional and international scholars. For this purpose, subduing smaller neighbours is identified as a policy objective without which this position cannot be achieved. This is the cornerstone of Indian strategic policy and in the region, Pakistan, being the only obstacle to Indian aspirations has suffered the most.

In search of its power status, post-Partition India could have selected the road to peace and conciliation with its much smaller neighbour, Pakistan. It could, thus, have moved towards its much-desired position as a major power of the region and beyond. Getting itself embroiled in a revenge-seeking policy, it not only compromised its own future prosperity but also of the region. Both historic and strategic enmities are lethal as both have evolved hand in hand. One yield into the other and continuation of the status quo in the volatile region of South Asia is intensifying Indian forms of aggression and its reliance on diverse indirect means of warfare.

There is an evident evolution in the realm of warfare and media has indeed proven to be a powerful weapon of modern combat. EU Disinfo Lab's report has exposed how skilfully Indian strategists have capitalised on the tools of modern warfare to demonise Pakistan internationally and to further their interests. For sure, these weapons of today's indirect warfare can subdue the enemy's will to fight or resist, but despite the two-decades-long extensive war, terrorism, and maligning international campaign, Pakistan proved to be persistent and resilient in fighting back and not to be subdued. Hence, exclusive reliance on hate-mongering and subduing the enemy without fighting does not bring prosperity to the nations feeding on hate-mongering. To claim the global status of power requires much more than illicit means.

India, after seventy-four years of enmity, needs to acknowledge that its broader objectives demand a broader vision as well. India can excel without conditioning its global aspirations with the desire of a weak Pakistan. Only a peaceful political and strategic environment can bring economic and strategic prosperity to India and its neighbours. By keeping the Indian state entangled in the spiral of hate and violence against Pakistan, India would not achieve what it desires. Exclusive reliance on deception and threat of force is only misleading India and its long-term interests.

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