



Enhancing Pakistan's Global Image through Soft Power Strategies

Mehboob Ali Khan,¹ Niyamatullah,² Sameeullah Safi,³ & Faiza Naseem⁴

Abstract:

In the current era, states put a lot of effort into building a strong, reliable international image that allows them to enhance their powerful status and gain desired outcomes at global level. However, Pakistan's soft image has been suffering from adverse image problems in the global community. Additionally, it ranked low in the soft power index which determines the image of the state in the community of nations. The reason is that Pakistan put all its eggs (efforts) in one basket of hard power. This study highlights the suitable strategies of soft power for enhancing Pakistan's image at global level. Therefore, Pakistan needs to shift itself to global emerging realities and invest in its soft power capabilities to change the country's reputation from a weak to a strong position in the international arena. Furthermore, this study is carried out through a qualitative method. In addition, this research paper is explorative type along with the use of both primary and secondary approaches. This study has utilized the soft power approach for restructuring the adverse image of Pakistan.

Keywords: Pakistan, Cold War, international image, soft power, hard power, strategies

INTRODUCTION

The state's influence and strength are considered national power, which is composed of both tangible and intangible elements. Within the intangible category, the state image is important to a nation's standing and its influence in the eyes of the world (Holsti, 1964). There are different sets of images of nations on the global level; being positive, negative, clear, or vague. For decades

¹ MS Scholar (International relations), Department of Humanities, COMSATS University, Islamabad, Pakistan. Email: mehboobk712@gmail.com

² PhD Scholar, Department of Politics & International Relations, International Islamic University, Islamabad. Email: niamatullah40@yahoo.com

³ MS Scholar (International relations), Department of Humanities, COMSATS University, Islamabad. Email: samisafi161@gmail.com

⁴ MS Scholar (International relations), Department of Humanities, COMSATS University, Islamabad. Email: faizanaseem449@gmail.com

national images have been studied in various academic fields because the soft image of the state helps to create a solid social fabric with threads of humanism, tolerance, and coexistence, and develops a strong national character (Fan & Shahani, 2016).

In the Soft Power Index, the standing of Pakistan is in the bottom half of the list of countries. The reason is that Pakistan did not give importance to its soft power projection as a result it faces negative perceptions (Brand Finance, 2022). On the other hand, through the use of their soft power in terms of their culture, language, values, diaspora overseas, and improvements in information technology, China and India, in particular, have achieved both regional and global influence (Gupta, 2013). Neglecting the value of soft power might be seen as a primary factor for the country's infamous portrayal. Therefore, Pakistan has been suffering from adverse image problems worldwide. The international media, international academia, and government officials have declared Pakistan a "problematic" nation regarding its international image. According to a Lowey Institute for International Policy study on Indian popular assessments of their prospects in the globe, about 94 percent of Indians considered Pakistan a danger. It is terrible, but one needs to accept that dependency on physical power is a key component on the list (Rahman, 2014).

Since the development of information technology, power differences have shifted. Smartphones, social media, and news networks have made every regular individual even more knowledgeable and exceptional. It gradually transformed public perception into something more important and meaningful. Positive Persuasion with hard power only makes achieve intended objectives, it is harder in modern times when people are so well-informed and conscious of almost everything (Sandoval-Almazan & Gil-Garcia, 2014). Now the soft power attractiveness of a country is a powerful instrument for narrating any story using accessible communication channels. Consequently, Pakistan has been the source of several terrible stories in this respect. Terrorist activity, a bad education system, few tourists, bribery on all levels, persecuting minorities, and robbing females of their basic rights are all part of it. There are pleasant pictures of Pakistan, but they do not represent the story adequately, and even if they do, problematic storylines obscure any remaining optimism (Saleem, 2013).

Pakistan's reputation has suffered greatly since the Afghan-USSR war despite having many outstanding attributes (Khalid, 2013). Pakistan is working hard to dispel the perception of terror and other negative stereotypes associated with its name. Therefore, this study has discussed the soft power strategies to enhance Pakistan's weak image in the community of nations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Muhammad Usman Askari and Muhammad Musab Saeed discuss in their research paper "Significance of Soft Power for Pursuing Foreign Policy Objectives" (2021) that Soft Power became a popular term after the cold war era in international relations. Nowadays, states' cultures, political ideologies, policies, and values are becoming the leading determinants of states' power for more significant influence in the international community. For instance, after the disintegration of the USSR in 1991, the rise of the US as a superpower was not only due to its strong hard power but its soft image had also contributed to its status which it gains through its democratic political system, liberal policies, Hollywood, and literature. In addition, the rising interdependency has weakened the power of aggression and now requires different methods other than hard power to influence

the community of nations (Shah et al., 2016). Moreover, Muhammad Ahsan Abbas and Dr. Abdul Majid have explained in their research paper "Soft Power Implications to Revive the National Image: Case Study of Pakistan" (2020) that nowadays state's reputation on the world stage has been directly linked to its soft power capabilities. In modern times through soft power states attract money and business to their own countries.

According to Khan, Pakistan is still facing enormous challenges, such as a fragile economy, shaky law, and order, corruption, and terrorism. However, above all these challenges, the most crucial one is restructuring its image in the international arena. Pakistan has quickly become a target of international media because it cannot even use its own media properly to respond to the allegations made by international news channels and analytical opinions (Khan, 2020). In the list of Soft Power countries, Pakistan lies at the bottom half concerning their rank because the element of soft power has not been used in the history of Pakistan. On the other hand, with soft power its neighboring countries, especially China and India, have acquired regional and international influence. Pakistan is suffering from an image crisis on a global level, which is the primary reason behind its not effectively achieving its foreign policy objectives. Pakistan needs to grasp the value of soft power correctly. Despite its enormous potential, it has not been able to cash in on its values, culture, ideology, or system worldwide (Saeed & Askari, 2021).

Muhammad Shabbir said in his research article "Pakistan Image Dilemma: Quest for Remedial Action" (2012) that Pakistan assisted the US in a global war on terrorism more than its allies. Pakistan has lost both in terms of men and resources. However, being the frontline ally and with concerted efforts, Pakistan has been portrayed negatively in the international arena by the Western media. They used dangerous and problematic words for Pakistan, which became the cause of tarnishing their image at the global level. That is why most people in Pakistan believe that Western media is the big hurdle in our development. The government can eliminate its negative image in the world through soft power policies. (Shabbir, 2012).

Similar views were stated by Hadia Rahman, in her research article "Pakistan Soft Power: Prospects and Limitations" (2014) that the USA War on Terrorism could not give fruitful and peaceful results to the world. After 9/11 according to Hadia Rahman, the West portrays Pakistan on the global level in a negative manner (Rahman, 2014). While the research by Ying Fan and Akram Shahani confirmed this by a survey conducted by asking several countries' students. This empirical study has mainly focused on the comparison between self-perception and perceptions made in the mind of people from other countries. The authors conducted an empirical study by asking questions about the image of Pakistan from four types of people who belong to different parts of the world. Europeans answered negatively or vaguely about the image of Pakistan. The second group of people from the African areas had more negative perceptions than Europeans. Apart from these two groups, the responses of Asian and Pakistani peoples were mixed regarding the image of Pakistan. The authors stated that the media is the primary agent in creating a state image because of its high credibility and influence in this area. Moreover, government policies also play a crucial role in the state's standing in the community of nations. It is clear from these groups' studies that due to global and political instability, they had a negative image in their minds. The government of Pakistan remains behind in portraying the right image of its country and effective use of its soft power abilities (Fan & Shahani, 2016).

The researcher has thoroughly reviewed the pertinent information; it becomes clear that the relevant literature reviews only talk about the problems and the negative portrayal of Pakistan's national image at the global level. After the review of the literature, no significant academic study has mentioned the antidote for this problem. In addition, they do not apply soft power strategies to repair Pakistan's image in the international arena. Therefore, this study fills the gap in the existing research by highlighting the significance of soft power in repairing Pakistan's tarnished image globally.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The value of an image in today's society cannot be underestimated. As a result, whenever a reputation is at risk, people, organizations, and countries come forward to offer image defenses like reasons, justifications, apologies, or excuses to repair its image. Image is also essential for states that need to maintain a positive image in the international arena to achieve their desired outcomes. Generally, image is described as the perceptions of the audience regarding an entity. In this regard, Soft power plays a significant role in creating a positive image of a country on a global stage. The concept of "soft power" was introduced in 1990 by Joseph Samuel Nye in Bound to Lead book. According to Nye, 'Soft Power is 'the ability to get what you want through attraction rather than coercion or payment' (Nye, 2004). This type of power nature is now considered more important in world politics because it is different from hard power. Soft power is based on three main resources: culture, political values, and foreign policies as discussed by Nye. However, other studies and writers have mentioned other sources and values as well after an in-depth study of the concept. For instance, now Brand Finance measures the state's soft power in the 7 key pillars: Business & Trade, Governance, International Relations, Culture & Heritage, Media & Communication, Education & Science, and People & Values. Therefore, this theory offers various kinds of image repair procedures that Pakistan can gradually reshape its global image, promote a more positive narrative, and strengthen its influence in international relations.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study has been conducted through a qualitative method and exploratory type because it has explored how Pakistan will repair its persona by employing its soft power capabilities. Furthermore, this study is based on primary and secondary data. Peer-reviewed academic articles, published books, and news outlets are used to gather secondary data. Moreover, the views of experts in the form of personal communication are also mentioned in this study.

HISTORY OF PAKISTAN'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE ITS SOFT IMAGE

The history of Pakistan's efforts to create a soft image in the global arena is traced back to its early decades of independence, because, since 1960, Pakistan becomes one of the highest contributors to UN peacekeeping Missions in the world. In these missions, Pakistani troops fulfilled their responsibility beyond the actual duty while providing humanitarian support by rescuing people in different parts of the world. The other countries' officials always praise and acknowledge the efforts of Pakistani troops and thank Pakistani government to send such splendid troops. The kind of acknowledgment Pakistani troops get shows the efforts of Pakistan to prove itself keenly interested in maintaining peace and security in the world (Farwa & Garewal, 2018).

Moreover, in 2001 Pakistan joined the global war on terrorism (GWOT) to combat terrorism. Pakistan has played an impressive role against terror groups by demolishing their networks within the country. In this regard, Pakistan has lost 83000 lives that has cost the country almost 126 billion (Khan, A. I. 2021). Although the international community did not fully appreciate Pakistan's counter-terrorism efforts. In addition, the Pakistani government also played a constructive role in ending the US-long war in Afghanistan. Pakistan facilitates U.S. and Taliban in Doha Peace Process to show the world that Pakistan has a keen interest in the peace of the region as well as in the world (Hadid, 2019).

Apart from this, recently the government of Imran Khan was more focused on improving the state's soft image in the world. For instance, in 2019 Imran Khan government fulfilled the promise it made during its election- campaign by introducing its new visa policy in January. The main reason for this new visa policy is to boost Pakistan tourism. The characteristics of the new visa policy are that it provides an e-visa option to 175 countries and makes tourism a stimulus for economic growth (Syed et al., 2020).

Furthermore, cultural assets are playing a significant role in the soft power capital of a country. Due to this reason, the Khan government has opened the Kartarpur corridor for the Sikh community of India to freely travel and worship in their holy place. This is another step that has been taken by Islamabad to improve its international image by using cultural diplomacy. The opening of the corridor has displayed a positive image of Pakistani leadership with a pro-peace mindset (Maryam, 2019). Besides this, Pakistan is the hub of historical monuments and holy places for almost all the religions of the world. Many historical Hindu temples and Buddhist places are located in Pakistan. Moreover, it has memorials to notable Sufis who spread Islam throughout South Asia. (Malik, 2017).

Moreover, in this technological and information era in which social media is also an essential element to present a country's positive image in the world, the government of Imran Khan has invited various bloggers and vloggers to promote a peaceful and culturally rich image of Pakistan to the world by presenting the vibrant and authentic diversity of its people, culture, music, and cuisine. Similarly, many renowned footballers and cricket teams were invited to play and interact with Pakistani sport-loving fans (Saeed & Askari, 2021). In addition, Pakistan's recent inclusion in Forbes' list of the top 10 "underrated" tourist destinations for 2020 is a proof of the country's attempts to show off its softer side to practically eradicate the threat of terrorism ("Forbes names Pakistan," 2020). These steps have had a very positive impact and contributed to the soft image of Pakistan. In the Global Terrorism Index GTI of 2020, Pakistan had made successful efforts in combating terrorism and improved from fifth (2019) to seventh (2020) (Global Terrorism Index, 2020). In a related development, improving the security situation in Pakistan attracts many investors to invest in Pakistan. Due to providing a peaceful environment for easy investment, the rank in the Business Index has improved from 130 to 72, placing it second among South Asian nations in terms of how simple it is to launch a business ("*Pakistan improves in*," 2021). Moreover, the role of Filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, who won double Oscars and Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize cannot be ignored in the enhancement of Pakistan's reputation in the international arena, said Ahmad Ali a professor at Government Post Graduate College, Bannu. He further mentioned that the Billion Tree Tsunami project (to fight Global Warming) as well as Transgender Protection Bill 2018 has received positive responses worldwide (Professor Ahmad Ali,

personal communication, October 14, 2022). Similarly, Dr. Rahman Ullah, Broadcast Journalist on BBC World Service, Peshawar stated that since 2019, Pakistan has made good progress in fulfilling the technical compliance weaknesses regarding anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT). Pakistan has been stuck on the FATF gray list for four years, but Pakistan has completed all substantial, technical and procedural requirements of both 2018 and 2021 Action Plans. As a result, Pakistan has been removed from the gray list (Dr. Rahman Ullah, personal communication, October 24, 2022).

However, despite these above mentioned efforts the image of Pakistan in the world's eyes is perceived as unfavorable and getting worse day by day. Pakistan has not fully projected its soft power which improves its image in the eyes of the world. In South Asia, Pakistan has been considered a 'sick man' as compared to other states. The reason is that it is positioned at the bottom not only for its fragile economy but also for other social and governance indicators. For instance, Pakistan's per capita income is 178th in the world, below Bangladesh and India by 69 and 61 percent, respectively. Pakistan's per capita income was 138 percent of Bangladesh's and 130 percent of India's twenty years ago. In addition, the ranking of the Human Development Index is horrible, 154th globally. Human development refers to the capacity for a long and fulfilling life, for high-quality education, and for economic engagement to live a life of dignity. In 2019, foreign direct investment into the country amounted to 0.8 percent of GDP, less than half of India's average (1.8pc of GDP). Pakistan receives roughly \$3 billion in gross FDI yearly, compared to India's \$50 billion or more. In terms of both expenditure and achievements in education and health, Pakistan ranks among the lowest and poorest countries in the world. The country ranked on the World Justice Project's Rule of Law Index after Mozambique, Bangladesh, Uganda, Honduras, Zimbabwe, Myanmar, and Bolivia, Pakistan is ranked 130th out of 139 countries. It is the second-to-last country in South Asia, just ahead of Afghanistan.

Moreover, Pakistan currently ranks in the 25th percentile on 'Rule of Law' (lower than 75 percent of countries worldwide), the 22nd percentile on 'Control of Corruption' (worse than 78 percent of countries worldwide), and the 32nd percentile on 'Government Effectiveness' in the latest Worldwide Governance Indicators (i.e. worse than 68pc of the countries worldwide). It is in the fifth percentile for 'Political Stability' and 'Absence of Violence' (i.e. worse than 95pc of the countries globally) (Sherani, 2022). Furthermore, in the Foreign Service Programmed class at the University of Oxford, some questions were asked regarding Pakistan; What three things come to your mind when you hear about Pakistan? Most of them answered that nuclear weapons, terrorism, security, Islam, and the Taliban (Shaikh & Cheema, 2017).

Hence it is clear that Pakistan has failed to recognize the importance of soft power. It has failed to pick up on its ideals, culture, and foreign policy on a worldwide scale. Pakistan's ranking in the International Soft Index Score, 2022 has dropped to 83rd from 53rd since 2020 amongst 120 nations (Brand Finance, 2022). The instability and constraints do not only exist in Pakistan, but are also present in other states too, but they are still able to maintain a positive image at a global level. Now, what is required to promote a soft image is the collaboration of states, civil society, diaspora, and Social media campaigns to showcase the true strength of Pakistan's soft power.

STRATEGIES FOR PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER PROJECTION

The 21st-century technological advancement, specifically social media has enhanced the participation of people in state policies. Although, the state dominancy is still present. Pakistan needs to change its policies to not depend only on hard power but give more importance to resolving issues by emphasizing softer techniques. In this regard, all state officials and non-state actors set together to play an important role by first focusing on the current internal crisis and working to address them; in other words, getting your own house that will positively contribute to its global image. Thus there are some key areas and strategies for Pakistan's soft power projection that need to be adopted to alter Pakistan's existing global image:

Political Stability

It is very difficult in the current era to gain a good reputation among the comity of nations. It needs strong leadership, democratic values, and sincerity on both public and government levels (Fan & Shahani, 2016). However, in Pakistan, there has always been a trust deficit present between its institutions that lead to political instability. A lack of public trust in political leaders and their governments can even produce a legitimacy gap (Lodhi, 2022). It comes as no surprise that since Pakistan's founding, the civilian government has had very little opportunity to function with full authority in governance. Now for political stability, according to Professor Ahmad Ali, stable democracy and the rule of law are the first and foremost tools for Pakistan to improve its soft image at the global level. Furthermore, he argues that un-democratic forces shall not be intervened in the political affairs of the state (Ahmad Ali personal communication, October 14, 2022). In this respect, Pakistan must install mature democratic ideals through democratic governance, democratization among political parties, giving political institutions priority, and interdepartmental cooperation. This is possible if there are consistently free and fair general elections, an independent and free Election Commission, intra-party elections, and an impartial court. Furthermore, Political parties should behave properly and should show respect to each other in international forums at any rate. Political stability is the need of the hour for Pakistan, without this, the country's image cannot be improved.

Economic Development

Pakistan has greater geo-economic worth due to its location in the region. In global politics, the geography of the state plays a very crucial role to attract developed countries for investment opportunities. Pakistan lies in South Asia, and it has four neighboring countries (Afghanistan, China, India, and Iran) which are also considered major players in global politics (Gul et al., 2021). The significance of Pakistan as a trade route for China, Central Asia, and the rest of the world is growing in recent times due to the signing of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which got attention in the eyes of the world and was looked at as a game changer for the region. The reason for CPEC's attraction is the correct direction of media and government policies. CPEC and other proper initiatives by the government can revert Pakistan's lost image. According to Dr. Saima Gul, lecturer at the Department of International Relations Peshawar University, that the economic interdependency among states is compelling them to bring changes in their behaviors, and now states prefer peaceful coexistence. In this regard, Pakistan should also bring some changes to its policy and adjust itself to the new realities of the world by emphasizing more economic policy.

Moreover, she argues that in regional connectivity, Pakistan can become an Asian gateway for regional states which not only contributes to its wealth but also its reputation in the community of nations (Dr. Saima Gul, personal communication, September 19, 2022).

Formation of Pakistan Cultural Council

Despite being blessed with diverse and rich culture Pakistan is unable to showcase the true strength of its culture to a foreign audience. Therefore, to promote Pakistan's cultural festivals, Pakistan Cultural Council is urgently established in the EU, ASEAN, Scandinavian, American, and Canadian nations. Cultural counselors should be chosen based on merit and should have training in cultural studies. There is no disagreement about the intrinsic value of culture, cultural resources, and cultural services (Khan, 2020). Therefore, efforts made in foreign policy that reflect cultural capital automatically strengthen a country's soft power. Hence through well-articulated cultural councils, Islamabad can get the world's attention, while, film and media can also project a state's culture well. Thus, Programs for cultural exchange should be promoted. It greatly aids in clearing up misunderstandings and improves interpersonal relationships. So, to alter the public negative perception of Pakistan, more cultural festivals should be organized, particularly in the Western.

Building a Positive Image through the Media and Film Industry

Media is the key element of soft power. News channels such as BBC, AL-JAZEERA, CNN, and TRT have globally operated and attracted foreigners to their states. Media plays a crucial role in shaping public perceptions of a country's image at both the national and international levels (Khattak, 2021). According to Walter Lippmann, for most people, the news media is a major source of the mental pictures of the larger world of public events that are out of their grasp, out of their sight, and out of their minds. The media chooses to inform us about the world, which accounts for most of what we know about it (Mccombs, 2014). However, Pakistani media is not doing enough to portray the positive side of the nation; they occasionally focus on negative events that make it unappealing for tourists to come here. Furthermore, majority of the themes covered by its print and electronic media are related to a home audience. Therefore, regular national media workshops are required by many reputable national and international institutions for media personnel that are taught to demonstrate a country's image that would entice foreigners rather than repel them. Moreover, Triplomacy (a term used to describe the effective use of Twitter) is another way for both government representatives and the general public to improve perceptions of Pakistan around the world.

While talking about the entertainment and film industry, Hollywood and Bollywood have played a significant role in enhancing the appeal of their respective countries. According to J. Nye films are more effective in projecting the soft power of the state to foreign audiences (Nye Jr, 2004). For instance, this year a South Korean Drama name "Squid Game" has gained tremendous viewers in digital media history. One can only speculate as to how much South Korean culture and lifestyle are being taught to viewers through such a well-liked series ("Pakistan must show," 2021). In this regard, the Pakistan film industry has not generated content worth export. Therefore, it is the need of the hour that Pakistan too can use its film industry by showing its culture, tourist places, and its sports heroes to the world. Pakistan should develop films about its national heroes since Pakistan has surely produced a large number of heroes throughout its history and in the present. The

government of Pakistan can utilize its Pakistani State Television (PTV) which recently regained its popularity with the broadcast of *Dirilis Ertugrul* (Turkey drama). However, it's no secret that Pakistani dramas are widely watched, not just in their own nation but also internationally. For instance, dramas like *Humsafar*, *Zindagi Gulzar Hai*, *Tere Bin* have a huge fan following across borders (Ismail, 2021). Pakistani dramas are avidly followed for various reasons: with accessible content and a realistic picture of life and events. Furthermore, they are all family-friendly which is perhaps the most significant factor. Additionally, there are not many episodes, so the audience won't get bored. Therefore, dubbing more of Pakistan's dramas in foreign languages to promote its culture and attract foreign audiences is the key to changing the stereotypical perception of foreigners

Tourism is an Essential Tool for the Projection of Soft Images

Tourism is one of the main strategies of soft power for enhancing a nation's positive image. Pakistan is extremely lucky to have such stunning scenery and environments. Pakistan is a major tourist destination that has unfortunately not given more importance to this. To begin with, the indigenous tourism industry must be rehabilitated to attract foreign tourists. The government should incentivize both domestic and international tourists by building cheaper, safe, and protected hotels for international travelers with subsidized prices; offering cheaper ticket deals on all forms of transportation; and developing entirely devoted cooperation centers with up-to-date spatial information and information about tourist attractions, as well as expert guides covering all possible tourist spots. Planned events can be organized throughout the summer period to lure tourists to Pakistan's northern areas to promote local and foreign tourism. A possible week with the name of "Blossoming Pakistan Week," should be arranged which would include activities such as going out to parades of the Pakistan Military Academy and, polo and golf competitions, musical performances, and road trip excursions. Similarly, "Ecotourism Week" might focus on making it easier for travelers to see Pakistan's natural beauty by offering package deals to places like Gilgit, Hunza, Skardu, and Chitral, among others. Additionally, an "Archeological Week" may highlight the Mohenjo-Daro, KotDiji, Harrapa, Mehrgarh, and Gandhara civilizations (Khan, 2020). The government needs to work on religious tourism, particularly those belonging to Non-Muslims.

Cumulative State Image Abroad Through Foreign Policy

A nation's foreign policy is crucial in enhancing its positive reputation. In the context of foreign policy, soft power refers to things like moral authority and bilateral, multilateral, and Track II diplomacy. The foreign policy of a country always depends upon the domestic capabilities of a state. The Foreign Office of Pakistan must involve new areas and rising entities while maintaining connections with longstanding partners. The goal of public diplomacy is not manipulation, rather the development of a tactical communications language based on fair information and the truth. One of the helpful components of Pakistan's efficient public diplomacy is investing in Track II diplomacy; Encouraging unofficial dialogues and interactions between Pakistani and international scholars, policymakers, and opinion leaders can foster mutual understanding and bridge gaps in perception. These interactions can help present a more nuanced and accurate image of Pakistan's domestic realities and foreign policy objectives (Syed et al., 2020). Furthermore, a state's foreign policy gets credibility when its organizations are viewed as operating and promoting the nation's image beyond the borders. For instance, The Pakistan Pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai continues to be

a major attraction and has now seen over 100,000 visitors (Adil, 2021). The projection of a soft image at the global level is missing in Pakistan's foreign policy, said Dr. Rizwan Naseer a Strategic and Security Analyst and Former Assistant professor at COMSATS University Islamabad. When communicating with the international world, Pakistan must be genuine and sincere, which will not only help develop trust but also forge long-term relationships. Further, he quoted the example of India that she properly promotes its soft image in the eyes of the world through its foreign policy, that's why its reputation is enhancing day by day. So, it is time for Pakistan policymakers to properly portray their soft power capabilities because Pakistan has much more than India in soft power (Dr. Rizwan Naseer, personal communication, October 6, 2022).

Use of Military for Soft Power Projection

The military is more than simply a sign of physical power; it may also be utilized to represent soft power. Pakistani participation in UN peacekeeping missions dates back to 1960, with the first operation in Congo (Farwa & Garewal, 2018). Since then, numerous troops, police, civilians, and paramedics have been frequently engaged in different missions and have carried out a variety of tasks under the flag of the UN, extending from humanitarian aid to rigorous security operations. In reality, with over a hundred nations supplying soldiers and police for peacekeepers, Pakistan is rated first. However, for this publicity, campaigns in the media and on social media must be started to promote the nation as a proud international peacekeeper. The government-run media should collaborate with international news organizations like CNN, BBC, and others to produce few documentaries that showcase the military of Pakistan's role in maintaining peace in the world. Additionally, Project Pakistan as a moderate nation that has fallen victim to extremist and terrorist beliefs as a result of the Russian-Afghanistan War and the Global War on Terror, is also included in these campaigns and movies

Internationalization of the Local Education Sector

One of the most effective tools used by governments to attract foreigners is student exchange programs. Student exchange programs such as the Fulbright and MEXT attract good and ambitious students from all around the world. International students come back to their homes usually with the values and culture of the state where they complete their studies. As American Secretary of State, Colin has said, "The friendship of future world leaders who have received an education here is the only thing I can conceive of that is more precious to our nation" (Nye Jr, 2004). From 2020 to 2021, 625 Undergraduate and 282 Postgraduate Scholarships were Awarded to Afghan Students to Study in Pakistan. In addition, 47 Sri Lankan Scholars joined Studies in Pakistan, and 22 Scholarships were awarded to the Nationals of Least Developed Countries of OIC. Moreover, only 3 Scholarships are awarded to the Nationals of the Least Developed Countries of the Commonwealth (HEC, 2021). These programs typically draw the most talented individuals since they are merit-based, making them more likely to hold future significant positions within their home country which will spread favorable perceptions about Pakistan. While there is a room for further improvement, to become an international education hub. Pakistan has a distinct advantage that it is a Muslim-majority nation that's why students from numerous South, Central, and West Asian nations may find it easier to adjust to Pakistan's academic and social settings. Relations with countries in these regions have been crucial to Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and will probably continue to enhance its influence. Given the unparalleled effectiveness of foreign exchange

programs in fostering a state's soft power, the Pakistani government would be well advised to launch its comprehensive exchange program in order to draw talent from the developing world.

The Role of Commerce in Building a Positive Image

In the era of technology and open markets, commerce plays a crucial role in the building of a state's image internationally. For instance, Apple and Huawei brands contribute positively to their states. In addition, India is gaining popularity in Information Technology and Germany in its Automobile Industry (Khattak, 2021). However, Pakistan is lagging behind in commerce, because its export basket is not diverse. Its product is not globally recognized with its manufacturer name. Thus to enhance the level of export the government can offer incentives to exporters who develop goods used globally and are ready to explore new markets to effectively leverage the nation's commercial opportunities. For enterprises that are focused on exporting, the Chamber of Commerce might also organize product marketing and branding courses to assist them to gain more international reputation. The association of the nation's name with local brands in the international markets will defiantly enhance Pakistan's soft power influence.

Role of Diaspora and Sports in Building a Positive Image

According to Nye "As overseas nationals are supposed to be powerful agents of their homelands, the politics of soft power is frequently intimately related to the politics of the diaspora (Isaakyan & Triandafyllidou, 2017). To introduce own culture and values abroad through diaspora is the most effective and easiest way. With a population of almost 9 million, the Pakistani diaspora is one of the world's largest immigrant groups. Especially in the Arab Gulf States, it is the Middle East where the vast majority of them are based. With 2.6 million people, Saudi Arabia has the greatest population; followed by the United Arab Emirates have 1.4 million Pakistanis. Besides these some of the other important nations are the United Kingdom with 1.5 million, the United States (500,000), Oman (239,000), Canada (216,000), Qatar (125,000), Malaysia (120,000), Italy (114,000), Kuwait (114,000), Bahrain (110,000), and France (104,000) (Guides, 2023). An efficient way to engage in development initiatives that can contribute to Pakistan's image is through funding diaspora-led programs.

Apart from Diaspora, Sports can be used as a source of peace-building and image-building in the international arena. For instance, in 1971, the US table tennis team paved the way for Nixon's visit to China, and then internationally it is called as Ping- Pong diplomacy (Syed et al., 2020). Through sports diplomacy, political objectives of diplomatic relations between the US and China has become normalized. In addition, hosting mega sports events on the global level can enhance the reputation of the community of nations. It is a quintessential example of the use of soft power. Moreover, along with hosting sports competitions by states, national players need to acquire good positions that would enhance their international reputation (Nygard & Gates, 2013). In the sports world, Pakistan had established a good reputation in hockey, squash, and especially cricket. Pakistan had won multiple championships, titles, and records in all three categories. But ignoring other sports areas is the mistake of the government and society. There is no shortage of talent, potential, and skills in Pakistanis, as recently proven in Common Wealth Games by Pakistani players winning gold medals. This victory offers significant lessons for the entire country, especially the leaders and policymakers. Imagine the wealth of benefits Pakistan may earn by carefully and deliberately

uniting and utilizing our talent in other sports if one event victory can have such a strong positive impact on the image of a nation (Awan, 2022). A current example that helps to spread a soft and positive image over the world is PSL. It is necessary to keep holding these kinds of activities.

CONCLUSION

The Pakistani government invested and defines their interests in terms of hard power whereas other means like the arts, culture, education, and diplomacy are rarely used to promote foreign policy objectives. Dr. Shaikh rightly stated the fundamental problem faced by Pakistan with conflicting power centers. On the one side, Pakistan has elected officials from the government, political parties, and other spheres of society who work to show Pakistan in a liberal, contemporary, and democratic light (Shaikh & Cheema, 2017). While, on the other hand, Pakistan has a very powerful military that projects a completely different image of Pakistan as a highly militarized state where issues of democracy must be put aside in favor of issues of sovereignty and where the so-called national interest is almost exclusively defined in terms of security. These self-definitive national security strategies have damaged Pakistan's reputation abroad. In addition, now Pakistan has found it more challenging to present its alternative image to the world community because it does not give importance to its soft power capabilities.

Indeed, the media is the "fourth pillar" of the government. The significance of it in developing and carrying out a policy cannot be reiterated. The media has a big role in shaping opinions and creating a positive image of its own country in the minds of foreign audiences. For instance, CPEC got much attention in the eyes of the world due to its correct direction of the media and government policies. The media in Pakistan does not portray the country's positive aspects adequately; on occasion, they concentrate on unfortunate incidents that deter tourists from visiting. Additionally, most of the topics covered by its print and electronic media are relevant to a domestic audience. Therefore, many reputable national and international institutions mandate that media professionals attend regular national media workshops where they are taught how to portray a country in a way that would attract rather than turn away foreigners.

A state's soft power projects its soft image, its soft power qualities are beneficial for the state's image. Without soft power projection, policymakers will find it challenging to restore Pakistan's positive reputation. The era of globalization and soft power go hand in hand. Pakistan can gain advantages to boost its economy and its diplomatic relations with other nations by using soft power strategies. To conclude, regarding the issue of soft image, it is necessary to keep in mind that there are no short-term strategies available to fix the Pakistan's image problem. There are clear and important soft power strategies discussed in the above literature which will get back Pakistan a good image in the eyes of the world. The finding of this study articulates that the nation has been blessed with many positive capabilities, but there is a dire need to address the ground realities and foe propaganda through media or different programs if Pakistan wants to achieve a good reputation. Moreover, in the soft image, Pakistani youth should actively participate with the true spirit of patriotism, because history reveals that the youth had changed the fate of the nations. Thus, Pakistan should rethink and broaden its national strategies from an overly militaristic paradigm to a paradigm of human security. Our foreign relations are largely based on defense concerns and a large portion of our meager resources is consumed to buy fancy weapons. Moreover, investment in institutions, social development, literature, culture, democracy, education,

and public diplomacy will prepare the path for the growth of Pakistan's pull factors, which in turn will enhance Pakistan's ranking as well as its image at the global level.

References:

- Adil, M. M. (2021, Oct. 28). The Pakistan pavilion has been a game-changer. *Daily Dawn*.
- Awan, P. (2022, Aug. 11). Will our athletes be respected and supported only if they win? *The Express Tribune*.
- Brand Finance. (2022). Global Soft Power Index 2022. *Brandirectory*. <https://brandirectory.com/softpower/report?>
- Fan, Y., & Shahani, A. (2016). Country image of Pakistan: A preliminary study. *International Journal of Tourism Research*, 18(3), 220-27.
- Farwa, U., & Garewal, G. A. (2018). An Analysis of UN Peacekeeping as Pakistan's soft power asset. *NUST Journal of International Peace and Stability (NJIPS)*, 1(2), 91-102.
- Forbes names Pakistan among top 10 underrated travel destinations for 2020. (2020, Jan. 7). *The News*.
- Global Terrorism Index 2020 Measuring The Impact Of Terrorism. (n.d.). <http://visionofhumanity.org/reports>
- Guides, P. (2023). *The Pakistani Diaspora*. www.Pilotguides.Com
- Gul, S., Asghar, M. F., & Khalid, M. (2021). Shifting national security paradigm of Pakistan from geo politics to a geo economics era. *Global Economics Review*, 6(1), 81-94.
- Gupta, A. K. (2013). The soft power of the United States, China, and India: A comparative analysis. *Indian Journal of Asian Affairs*, 37-57.
- Hadid, D., & Sattar, A. (2019, Aug. 30). The key role Pakistan is playing in US-Taliban talks. *npr*. <https://www.npr.org/2019/08/30/754409450/the-key-role-pakistan-is-playing-in-u-s-taliban-talks>
- Higher Education Commission. (2021). *Annual Report 2020-2021*. <https://www.hec.gov.pk/english/news/AnnualReports/Annual Report 2020-21.pdf>
- Holsti, K. J. (1964). The concept of power in the study of international relations. *Background*, 7(4), 179-94.
- Isaakyan, I., & Triandafyllidou, A. (2017). *Reflections on diaspora and soft power: Community Building among Female US Expats in Southern Europe*. 1-18.
- Khalid, I. (2013). Restructuring the image of Pakistan: Internal challenges and external pressures. *Dialogue*, 8(1), 17-33. http://www.qurtuba.edu.pk/thedialogue/The Dialogue/8_1/Dialogue_January_March2013_17-33.pdf
- Khan, A. I. (2021, Jul. 3). Absolutely not. *Daily Dawn*. <https://www.dawn.com/news/1632900/absolutely-not>
- Khan, H. U. (2020). Global image of Pakistan: Significance of public diplomacy. *South Asian Studies*, 34(1), 309-17.
- Khattak, S. (2021). Pakistan's Untapped Soft Power Potential. *South Asian Voices*. <https://southasianvoices.org/pakistans-untapped-soft-power-potential/>
- Lodhi, M. (2022, Aug. 8). A crisis of trust? *Daily Dawn*.
- Malik, A. P. (2017, Aug. 16). The importance of soft power. *The News International*. thenews.com.pk/print/224201-The-importance-of-soft-power

- Maryam, H. (2019, Mar. 9). Is Pakistan reviving its soft-power? *The Diplomat*. <https://thediplomat.com/2019/03/is-pakistan-reviving-its-soft-power/>
- Mccombs, M. (2014). The agenda-setting role of the mass media in the shaping of public opinion. https://www.infoamerica.org/documentos_pdf/mccombs01.pdf
- Nye Jr, J. S. (2004). *Soft power: The means to success in world politics*. Public affairs.
- Nygaard, H. M., & Gates, S. (2013). Soft power at home and abroad: Sport diplomacy, politics and peace-building. *International Area Studies Review*, 16(3), 235-43.
- Pakistan improves in WB's ease of doing business index. (2021, Jan. 9). *The News*.
- Pakistan must show its own soft power. (2021, Dec. 21). *Daily Dawn*.
- Rahman, H. (2014). Pakistan's soft power: Prospects and limitations *Journal of South Asian Studies*, 2(3), 257-63. <http://www.escijournals.net/JSAS>
- Saeed, M. M., & Usman Askari, M. (n.d.). Significance of Soft Power for Pursuing Foreign Policy Objectives. *Journal of Indian Studies*, 7(1), 123-38.
- Saleem, I. (2013, Jul. 1). Need to build soft power. *Daily Times*. <https://dailytimes.com.pk/108459/need-to-build-soft-power/>
- Sandoval-Almazan, R., & Gil-Garcia, J. R. (2014). Towards cyberactivism 2.0? Understanding the use of social media and other information technologies for political activism and social movements. *Government Information Quarterly*, 31(3), 365-78.
- Shaikh, F., & Cheema, N. (2017). Pakistan in the eyes of the world: a new perspective on a blemished international image. *South Asia@ LSE*. [http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/75555/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Pakistan in the eyes of the world A new perspective on a blemished international image.pdf](http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/75555/1/blogs.lse.ac.uk-Pakistan%20in%20the%20eyes%20of%20the%20world%20A%20new%20perspective%20on%20a%20blemished%20international%20image.pdf)
- Syed, A., Gul, S., & Akbar, Z. (2020). Pakistan's international image and need for public diplomacy. *Global Social Sciences Review*, 5(2), 456-67.

Date of Publication	May 15, 2023
---------------------	--------------