# Disinformation and Propaganda Tactics: Impacts of Indian Information Warfare on Pakistan

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**ABSTRACT**

The study seeks to comprehend the information warfare revolution that has occurred in the twenty-first century. Pakistan is also severely hit by Indian disinformation and propaganda warfare. It is a descriptive and qualitative investigation of historical as well as advanced information warfare to understand information warfare that includes subcategories of propaganda and disinformation. To broaden the understanding of Indian tactics and means used against Pakistan's image, portray it as a chaotic, in-humanitarian, and undemocratic regime. The primary focus of the study is on the Indian propaganda warfare campaign against Pakistan's military personnel, politicians, an internally fragmented society, and intelligence services. This study was conducted with the help of the theoretical lens of neoclassical realism and the theory of political propaganda to understand the Indian-led narrative buildup against Pakistan and the worsening domestic conditions. This study critically aims to explore Indian information warfare and its impact on Pakistan's internal stability and international image. The findings are based on highlighting campaigns and narratives from various news websites (including ANI, Indian news channels, and Twitter trends), as well as EU Disinfo lab publications that promote Indian propaganda. In addition to domestic issues that contribute to social fragmentation, manipulating citizens and misusing technology provide propagandists with an advantage in carrying out nefarious activities. Moreover, it aims to chalk out recommendations for countermeasures.

**Key Words:** Information warfare, non-kinetic warfare, propaganda, disinformation, DIME matrix, media campaigns

## Introduction

The warfare strategies are multidimensional with the sophistication of weapons and technology. However, non-lethal methods are used to conduct covert operations to infiltrate the opponent, especially when adversaries have non-conventional weapons. There is a plethora of terminologies for the gray zone strategies such as asymmetrical, unconventional, non-linear, non-kinetic, and sub-conventional to depict such warfare tactics. Information warfare is also one of its modern kinds. Information and Communications Technology (ICT) has emerged as a critical and high-risk security challenge for today's world.

The information revolution has taken place, but the principles are still traditional. However, information warfare is a tactic utilized in war and peace due to a comprehensible and synchronized blend. Even, governments tend to use these maneuvers domestically against political parties or to shape their public opinions. In the twenty-first century, the use of brains is more important than brawn in the art of warfare. Governments, intelligence agencies, and security experts have adopted this strategy throughout history.

Hence, it can effectively be employed, maintain anonymity, have a lasting impact, and be cost-effective as compared to conventional warfare. It can also be a form of espionage to collect information about other states (Taddeo, 2012). It is a blend of physical and virtual action to bleed the enemy from the inside. It requires countries, organizations, and individuals to perform, or not perform actions so that goals and objectives are achieved, simultaneously while preventing competitors from doing the same.

The term "image" or identity of a country is typically the product of other people's perceptions or prejudices. It will neither appear, nor vanish unexpectedly, as it also develops slowly over time. In the recent past, Pakistan has been a target of such an "image" crisis by its enemies. According to Javed Jabbar, former Information Minister of Pakistan, "If not physically damaging, the media war is, in some ways, worse. In the minds of billions of people exposed to it abroad, it erodes and distorts the contours of our identity" (Shabbir, 2012)

Due to the consistent lobbying and support of enemies against Pakistan especially India, global media, foreign think tanks, international academia, and even government representatives are almost involved in framing Pakistan as a "terrorist harboring", "problematic", and "chaotic" nation. Almost all-important news frames and analytical statements about Pakistan in the global and national media are negative and aggressive.

According to Sun Tzu, a well-known strategist, "Know your enemy, know yourself, and you will never be in peril in a hundred battles" (Griffith, 1963). Consequently, knowing the enemy's strengths and weaknesses is necessary for attempting to attack. Information warfare (IW) is more of an attack on the opponent's information system, which will cause suspicion and fear. The dissemination of fake news, misinformation, and propaganda can bring about extraordinary impulsive behavior in the adversary. The use of information operations is to target an adversary's critical foundation, such as population, ideology, or national security.

Conventional warfare is coupled with psychological, cyber, economic, and intelligence-based warfare, diplomacy, and other disciplines. According to Martin Libicki, there are seven types of IW: economic information. warfare (EIW), command-and-control warfare (C2W), intelligence-based warfare (IBW), electronic warfare (EW), hacker warfare, psychological warfare (PSYW), and cyber warfare (Bronk, 2008). However, many of these subfields may have their specific field of operations and impacts, such as Cyberspace/security is a critical

warfare tactic and usually considered individually. However, many address information warfare as ICT coupled with other physical (battlefield operations), mainstream and ethnic media, and cyberspace as tools for IW conduct.

To gain a better understanding of the problem, Political scientist *Harold Laswell* worked on the term propaganda. The theory of "Political Propaganda" entails manipulating narrative or symbols represented to the target audience that encourages the psychological impact required for an adversary to shape an opinion. It is to inculcate the idea that the enemy creates war. Furthermore, propaganda conducted can be through disinformation, digital media, campaigns, media, academic articles, or any other means. Moreover, *Gideon Rose's* concept of "Neoclassical Realism" is used in the following study (Rose, 1998). Since it is a middle-range theory of realism, it employs a mixture of systemic and state (domestic) level influences to comprehend the effects of information warfare through a transmission belt.

The application has analyzed propaganda, disinformation cultivation, and deception through various means to destroy the image of Pakistan globally. The Indian media has been conducting various fake news reports and cyber skirmishes portraying an intense image of Pakistan in the world. The study focuses on past and present examples to have better knowledge of the continuous attacks Pakistan endures.

## Historical Perspective of Information Warfare

The word propaganda means to propagate ideas. There is a plethora of synonyms such as manipulation, deceit, fabrication of news, disinformation, or alteration of the image is a traditional tactic. These terms are a subcategory of information, as well as persuasion. A proponent of propaganda Jacques Ellul presented this term as a technique that can be used in the technical era with identical impact. He suggested it as "…a moral form of utilizing truth, limited or half-truth removing essential information…" (Kellen & Ellul, 1973). Even the agitation caused by propaganda leads to rebellion.

Currently, the internet has become the modern platform of information warfare utilized for multidimensional conflicts. Therefore, it can be utilized in information warfare on the more advanced platform with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), algorithms, and easy access to the general population for manipulating beliefs, norms, ideology, values, and much more. Hence, the utilization of these means in the global south by the state and non-state actors is highly usual and instigates discourse and partisanship in the democratic institutions which are already in a transition state.

The types of propaganda are gray, black, and white. Firstly, gray is when the information is spread but the actual source is unaware of his/her account or

identity being used. For example, fake accounts or registering names like well-reputed companies' domains is also known as a process of cybersquatting. Secondly, Black propaganda is covert and misleading information such as the term disinformation emerging from the name of the KGB division that was devoted to black propaganda.

For example, incorporating false information such as Russian tactics against the US for developing AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) for biological warfare. For credibility, the information was spread in foreign newspapers, such as in India. Whereas white propaganda may be the use of informative communication where information is collected for understanding and the information can be accurate. However, informative communication can be utilized in gray-and-black propaganda that may be inaccurate (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2012).

However, these tactics existed in the advent of history as the Roman and Byzantine empires conducted psychological operations through communicating information, fake images, or chiseling out the officials from history. This only transitioned towards British strategies that have been improvised through media or deception on the battlefield, such as Operation Bodyguard for the battle of Normandy against Germans in 1944, regarded as the best deceivers during their leading era (Macdonald, 2007).

## Indian Conduct of Information Warfare

All the cultivated propaganda and turmoil in the South Asian region can be traced back to Pakistan's independence when Maharaja Hari Singh acted as a sleeper agent or a decoy in favor of siding with India, where many Muslims lived in Jammu and Kashmir. In addition, another example is the Mukti Bahini, (Khetran, 2017) which was a war of freedom fighters for some and militias working as terrorists in some respects. Indian support of Mukti Bahini was funded and supported by Indian Bengali citizens. Not only was a deceptive organization involved, but also news also played a role in the numerous psychological operations to establish a humanitarian schism between Pakistan and the international community.

International journalist Anthony Mascarenhas wrote about Abdul Bari, a Pakistani journalist who used to write against Pakistan that pushed Indira Gandhi toward the "liberation" of East Pakistan (Dummett, 2011). Therefore, in a variety of incidents, Pakistan has experienced Indian interference that has exploited or caused havoc in Pakistan. Some incidents such as remarks used by the Indian power for the nuclear program, frames used such as terrorists, dysfunctional states, and even the double game in Afghanistan to portray Pakistan as the culprit of the war.

With the advent of the digital age, internet propaganda has exceeded the limit and holds no boundaries. On 18th September 2016, the Uri attack and the so-called

surgical strikes had consequences and created computational propaganda. The conflict did not remain within the boundaries, the propagandist brought it towards a media war for a retaliatory response. Along with trending tweets and hashtags through bots and multiple internet users manipulating mindsets. Propagandists utilized professionals for developing smart bots for the achievement of the BJP government for the show of power and to gain more support from the public (Neyaz, 2019). Moreover, movies were made to over-hype the surgical strike and represent the patriotic muscularity of the BJP.

India may not be among the six mature states, such as Russia, China, the UK, the US, Israel, and North Korea that have sophisticated information and cyber warfare capabilities. However, simple social engineering may be enough to manipulate and create an immense threat among the other South Asian states to prove power and dominance. Apart from the misinformation, it utilizes hacking espionage or cyber scams to obtain information from other states to improve their security posture and enhance pro-Indian sentiment in the subcontinent (Leyden, 2021).

Furthermore, AT&T Alien Labs (Hegel, 2021) also investigated a group known as Sidewinder which is highly active in Southeast Asia and South Asia. They use spear phishing and exploitation of documents in support of Indian political interests. Attacking the South Asian region for the display of power. Similarly. India has been investigated by Texas-based Exodus Intelligence utilizing Windows liabilities, and new zero-day research that allows access to the Microsoft operating system for malicious hacker espionage against China and Pakistan (Brewster, 2021).

Moreover, the hate and misleading information about Indian Muslims that goes on about every day increased tremendously during the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak. They were called out as super-spreaders of COVID-19 and plotting to infect Hindus by the BJP (Bhat & Banaji, 2020). The disinformation led to the marginalization of service to some Muslims which increased the number of death cases.

However, the Indian media was outraged over the Uyghur genocide in China. Indian news channel India Today called it "Xi'tlers demographic genocide of the 21st century" to compare Xi Jinping's atrocity with Hitler's genocide. An Indian News anchor, Ajay Kumar stated that "…China's Muslims do not have the freedom to practice religion…" whereas Hindutva bans religious practices in India as well (Grewal, 2020).

## Relevance to Pakistan

Pakistan is facing many domestic issues, international pressures, and regional proxies. It is now confronted with new warfare structures through the propagation

of news, framing, computational propaganda, and trolling which give adversaries the ability to tarnish its reputation. India is cultivating war journalism with the help of better cyber technology and opinions on social media. Hence, it must be acknowledged it is superior as compared to Pakistan in utilizing its tactics (Rawan & Inam ur Rahman, 2020).

Moreover, Pakistan and India both have jingoistic media coverage that is inclined towards a war-oriented mindset that carries out propaganda and hate. These mainstream media and ethnic media perceptions are more inclined to war journalism and less on the peace motive (Salman, 2020). Therefore, factors such as the external environment can shape the mindset of the citizens and elites' perceptions that are manipulated through symbolic narratives and threats. These are instigated through malicious propaganda and disinformation to exploit religious, political, and ethnic fissures in society. The following study shall discuss these activities in detail.

Similarly, there is an increase in mobile users in Pakistan in January of 2021, out of the total population was 223.0 million up to 77.7 %, whereas internet users are 27.5% along with social media usage up to 20.6 % (DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, 2021). Comparatively, the Indian population is 1.39 billion out of which 79% use mobiles, 45% of the population use the internet and 32.3% use social media (DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, 2021). This creates more advantages for them to create opinions based on the majority that is anti-Pakistan.

## External variable: Indian threat to Pakistan

As Joseph Goebbels, a Nazi minister of propaganda said "…if you repeat and tell a lie long enough, it becomes the truth…" (Stafford, 2016). India is involved in cultivating psychological upheaval in social media news. The involvement is extremely anonymous that the campaigns and propagated news are hard to grasp. According to (Castell, 2012) there is an international media ecology of self-publication and easy access with increased internet usage and political agendas. Thus, the media uses propaganda frames and agendas to spice up the information, leaving out the remaining information. (Walker, Mercea, & Bastos, 2019).

Moreover, in 2006 Indian Chief of army staff, J.J Singh released his doctrine, "The philosophy of Iron fist with a velvet glove" as the cornerstone of their sub conventional operations (Smith, 2020). However, disrupted Pakistan's foreign policy in process for several decades. Tarnishing its image since 9/11 over allegations of sponsoring terrorism. In June 2018, Pakistan landed on the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) gray list due to accusations that the country failed to curb money laundering and financing for terrorist entities. Pakistan has been struggling since to remove its name from the list with the hope of getting its economy back on track.

On the other hand, New Delhi has been continuously propagating against the CPEC project with campaigns through their intelligence RAW-sponsored terrorist

activities in Pakistan and cultivating doubts such as "debt diplomacy" in China's pursuit of economic advancement (Mirza & Babar, 2020). Financing terrorist attacks on Chinese delegations frustrate investors to prevent developmental projects. RAW's chief operator, Kul Bhushan Yadav, a serving commander in the Indian Navy, was detained by Pakistani law enforcement authorities in 2016 during a counterintelligence operation. His involvement and the Indian government's support for Baluch separatists and opposition to the CPEC project were explicitly stated in his confession statement (Khetran, 2017).

Moreover, it has been supporting and financing the Sunni/Shia sectarian divide, and many ethnoreligious conflicts such as Baloch and Sindh separatist movements in Pakistan, especially Quetta (Haque & Bashir, 2017). There are investigations conducted by the police that observed 91 killings of which 41 were Shiites and 50 were Sunni. However, the murder weapon was a single pistol (Al Jazeera English, 2013). TTP representatives Latif Mehsud and Ehsanullah Ehsan both confessed to Indian maneuvers and make anti-Pakistan sentiments even in Afghanistan (Mirza & Babar, 2020).

A report, circulated by a Brussels-based organization the EU DisinfoLab, stated that Indian campaigns have targeted the European Union and United Nations to continue their operations by gaining support. As a continuation of Indian Chronicles, which has been in existence for 15 years and had recently launched EU Chronicles (a fabricated EU outlet to build information and publications).

Furthermore, Srivastava, a New Delhi-based corporation that is also a brainchild of RAW, has 750 fake outlets and 10 zombie agencies that have been running since 2005. They revived the Commission to Study the Organization of Peace, a US-based NGO that had been dormant since the 1970s and was founded by Louis V. Sohn. Identity fraud was carried out in this manner. Propagandists exploited his profile by saying he attended the UN Human Rights Council in 2007, even though he died in 2006 (Machado, Alaphilippe, Adamczyk, & Grégoire, 2020).

To discredit Pakistan, fake EU chronicles website was created to carry out misinformation tactics by signing a contract with European MEPs to write Op-eds that could undermine Pakistan's humanitarian laws. The disseminating source was Asian News International (ANI), established in 1971, it is also the biggest news and video agency in India. ANI has a strategic partnership with the Reuters news agency that fed mainstream media articles that were further carried by fake websites.

Moreover, UN-accredited NGOs work along with Indian anonymous groups, such as the European Organization for Pakistani Minorities (EOPM), Baluchistan House, and the South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF), extended UN humanitarian campaigns to Brahumdagh Bugti of the Baluchistan Republic Army (BRA) and the

Pashtun Tahafuz movement, giving a platform to anti-Pakistan sentiments proxy NGOs voice in the UNHRC (Machado, Alaphilippe, Adamczyk, & Grégoire, 2020).

These agencies also disseminated "Free Baluchistan" posters across Geneva, support groups within the European Parliament, and influenced European and International policymaking against Pakistan. Using such propaganda symbols to instigate psychological impact that eventually forms opinions in the public, in Pakistan's case the domestic and international public opinion. Consequently, tarnishing the image of a good foreign policy, tourism business, and identity.

Furthermore, a few government-controlled media institutions are also involved in information operations. Privatization of the media and the advancement of social media resources has liberalized to the point where dissemination of information operations is uncontrollable. India still manages to play its "responsible democracy" card and refutes all allegations and blames Pakistan. Proving that it is misinformation against the Indian National government aimed at instilling hate, and Pakistan is blaming them with a fictitious dossier. Defense minister Rajnath Singh stated Pakistan is the land of impure conduct "Na-Pak acts" to blame Pakistan for cultivating misinformation and support for the Khalistan movement (Press Trust of India, 2019).

There are a few examples of jingoistic behavior of journalists, such as Arnab Goswami, who is known for his pro-BJP and obnoxious anti-Pakistan stance (Thapar, 2020). He snubbed BBC news for presenting fake news on violence in Kashmir; he claimed peace and normalcy. His objectives have resulted in higher Television Rating Points (TRP) for his channels. A closer look shows that the use of Indian media campaigns and NGOs is done in ways that endorse their motives and convince the world that Pakistan is a failing state that must be controlled (ANI News, 2018).

For example, their media analyst has propagated statements to frame and demean Pakistan on WION, an Indian channel, by framing Pakistan's internal right-wing TLP protests blasphemy laws as an "out-of-control civil war". Their news analysts described it as, "…the riots are so out of control in Pakistan that they would destabilize the region, which is no longer an internal problem for Pakistan..." (WION, 2021).

Unlike the farmer's movement in India, which was suppressed by press coverage that also included the murder of civilians. Also cracked down on the dissent, media, and journalists that cover its atrocities. Indian Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology had to shut down more than 1,178 Twitter accounts during Farmer's protest and forced Twitter to oblige with the laws of the land (Bhargava, 2021). Whereas the BJP government has conducted genocide in Kashmir and on the Indian minority, taking away their right to freedom of speech and abolition of article 370 A. This took away their special status to integrate Kashmir into India.

Moreover, with the withdrawal of the US and the fall of Ashraf Ghani's government, both India and Pakistan played a critical role in information warfare. However, India jumped on the opportunity to enhance the sentiment that Pakistan controls the Taliban and utilized hashtags to sanction Pakistan. To add insult to injury, anchors such as Arnab Goswami circulated a piece of misleading news that said Pakistan Army officers operated from the fifth floor of the Serena Hotel in Kabul, whereas originally there were only two floors (Dawn News, 2021).

Moreover, there were video clips released in Hindustan Times, an Indian channel instigating Pakistan's air force jets attacking Panjshir, Kabul. They claimed Pakistan was helping the Taliban attack. Later, however, George Allison editor at the UK defense Journal cracked the fake news stating it was an American jet flying through Welsh valley (Sarfraz, 2021).

Domestic variables: National security, political agendas, psychology, polarized polity, and leadership

Information and communication technologies may be used in support or against the state. Technology and the media have paved the way for public opinion, openly holding society interested in state affairs. However, when it is misused, it causes a problem in intra and interstate relations. Governments and unidentified activists nurture a secret agenda to spread hatred that people do not understand due to a lack of awareness.

Similarly, malicious newsgroups and campaigns are becoming a new normal through online Apps, smartphones, news bots, trolling, online propagandists, and technological warfare (DiResta, 2021). The internet is being used to manipulate the opinions of the next generation and increased information sharing to the point that national security is threatened (Qureshi, 2019). Hence, commenting on social media wars on Instagram, YouTube, WhatsApp, Twitter, and other platform facilitates cyberbullying and incite animosity among people.

Pakistan's cultural relations are destroyed through propaganda which crashes film businesses and the image of Pakistan. For example, after the Uri attack, similar bans were put after the Pulwama incident the All-Indian Cine Workers Association (AICWA), banned Pakistani actors from working in India. Many of their Bollywood movies, web series, and Netflix shows represent Pakistan as a terrorist state, enhancing psychological manipulation in the world (ARY News, 2019).

Comparatively, India has controlled media coverage that does not portray the unhumanitarian side of the Indian extreme ideology of Hindutva. BJP government and Prime Minister Modi resembles a nazi mindset. Their film industry is targeted by the government agencies that oppose BJP and its opinions (Bhatia, 2020). People like Anurag Kashyap who is an Indian film director have been vocal against the hyper-nationalism of the BJP government that is controlling the film industry using the hashtag #urbanNazi for PM Modi whereas comments and

hashtag trollers on Twitter have replied as #UrbanNaxal or Sickular liberals (Kashyap, 2019).

Due to the digital era, the lack of accountability for media campaigns pushes toward a blurring social media that is highly unpredictable due to algorithms, invisible rulers of propaganda, scams, and trolls online to create websites for manipulation of the truth. The media has intensified the relations among countries constant remarks and hate tweets are exchanged even among citizens of both rival countries. It quickly leads to data or identity theft, leaving anonymous internet communities to inflict psychological imprints on society (Younus, 2018). With a lack of conformity and economic and political grievances, citizens have exploited and believed much of the fake news regarding their state.

Similarly, some individuals benefit from organizations articulating their agendas through platforms to destroy the Pakistani image for political, socio-economic gains, yellow journalism, and negative promotion. Supporters of different political or religious groups use the media to motivate and manipulate the people to further their agendas. Propaganda is cultivated by religious terrorist groups like Tehreek – Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and ISIS. They have also utilized social media outlets such as Twitter and WhatsApp to increase recruitment (Aly, 2017). "Umar Media" is an official channel on the internet that is utilized by TTP that appeared after 2014 (Tahir, 2021).

However, Pakistan's government banned such prints and media channels, yet they have access through various outlets. Moreover, the audience of such extremists is amongst the trauma or insecure communities that get influenced by such organizations. Even youth that is active on social media get manipulated and proceed to an extremist ideology. Political elites or academics discuss facts about Pakistan, but the majority of these are negative on a global scale. It leaves Pakistan vulnerable because anonymous organizations and media campaigns share information according to their agendas.

Some well-known political liberal figures, such as the former ambassador Hussain Haqqani conveyed assertions that have bolstered Pakistan's reputation as a semi-authoritarian regime and a failed one due to its Islamic ideological inclination (Haqqani, 2018). He further mentions Pakistan as the "Sick man of Asia" in a conference under the South Asian Against Terrorism and for Human rights (SAATH). Many other liberal Pakistani participated in the conference most of them exiles stating facts about enforced disappearance, killing, and atrocities by the army and intelligence agency (Sirohi, 2018; SAATH Forum, 2020).

Some journalists such as Hamid Mir and other journalists have only enhanced the tainted image abroad only to prove the public needs to know everything. Nevertheless, they end up providing Indian channels with propaganda and hashtags to shame Pakistan's Army and the political system for malpractice of journalism rights (India TV, 2021). Therefore, the image turns out to be volatile, establishment-driven, and religion-oriented. Although India itself has used the

sedition laws against many of their journalists and film actors such as Ayesha Sultana who was booked by Lakshadweep police (Unnithan, 2021).

Moreover, NGOs such as African Technical Association (ATA) Zambia-based, and Guinea-based African Technology Development Link (ATDL) offered platforms for activists and politicians. These are to promote their opinion of atrocities conducted against Balochi citizens whereas the latter claimed in the 28th session of HRC Pakistan as a colonial regime preventing Gilgit-Baltistan and Chitral's culture (Shah, 2015). Many other NGOs working internationally conduct their operations inside for intelligence-services, social division, ideological, and socio-economic instability that have been banned (Haider, 2015).

Consequently, Indians use frames such as a humanitarian crisis, civil war, and terrorism have strengthened opinions internationally. While utilizing activists and militants to exert civil unrest that aids nefarious agenda. For example, India uses individuals like Karima Baloch, former head of the Baloch Students' Organization (BSO), and other misguided missiles to turn against their state to strengthen separatist movements. In a video, she pleaded with P.M. Modi to liberate the Baloch community (ANI News, 2016). They have circulated this video in every media outlet. Unfortunately, after she was found dead, India portrayed Pakistan Army as the culprit behind Karima's death. Although the Canadian government found no evidence.

## Incompetent Leadership

The outcome of an incompetent role of government has consequences. The use of media as a political tool in their vested interest to degrade other political parties. Pakistan may be a muddled democracy damaged by corrupt officials, policymakers, NGOs, and think tanks. The government system for running a proper democracy is demeaned by untrained political analysts, leaders, establishment interference, and feudalism.

Pakistan has a dynastic and crisscrossing political pattern that includes several coups and transitional democracy. It also entails the deep network of the military hold of the state. General Zia's era was the beginning of the instrumentalization of religious militancy. To enhance ethnoreligious issues Musharraf era targeted war against Islamic tribalism (Ahmed, 2013). And also caused damage to the image of the army due to the abduction of suspected militants and handing them to the US as in the case of a missing person during the. This created a semi-authoritative system in Pakistan with constant inconsistencies in political leadership and forced military involvement.

Pakistan has an unstable economy with a corrupt government and a democratic system. The military stepped down and began a struggle to maintain a co-equal leadership and deference for the political leadership to transition towards

democracy. However, in the PPP government, the issue due to the memo gate scandal and mishandling enhanced military involvement as a response (Shafqat, 2019).

Unfortunately, the media is utilized for bashing opponent parties for demeaning each other's rules. Political parties that come to power restrict the freedom of others as many journalists are rising with hate remarks. Political violence is rising where no one takes responsibility for the situation. All parties either blame the previous government or worsen the condition of Pakistan. Consequently, impacting the citizens and their security. Therefore, these issues with incompetent governance make it harder for Pakistan to conduct a counterattack or even take matters to the international arena when domestic political propaganda is unsolvable.

## Analysis

Pakistan's institutions and infrastructure are fragile enhancing its vulnerability to psychological, cyber, and information warfare from the outside. The neoclassical realism components systemic along with the domestic threats with the incompetent leadership create higher risks for the state. Furthermore, incidents that occur inside the state catch attention in the international arena that provide evidence for the misinformation to manipulate the minds and generate opinions.

However, States are developing technologies without confrontation in the form of military scuffles as a non-traditional threat. India is developing non-orthodox warfare mechanisms to deal with the threat of China through electronic, cyber, and information operations which are being implemented against Pakistan as a guinea pig, on the other hand, Pakistan is not yet well equipped to counter such strategies.

India may use a massive hybrid attack against Pakistan to carry out web vandalism, create security problems, and compromise counterfeit hardware. Also, it may help militants conduct or infiltrate high-security information, data, and worm release. Especially, with the recent Pandemic outbreak, the world is inclined toward a paperless society and artificial intelligence promoting a higher threat to cyberspace. Unfortunately, Pakistan is lagging to promote a positive image abroad or developing countermeasures to the eminent threat.

Consequently, their cultural presence in South Asian affairs, foreign states believe the Indian version of events and reject Pakistan's details or countermeasures due to its history and weak foreign policy. Pakistan's ability to develop a non-kinetic strategy is important because states profit from less lethal yet cost-effective interventions. Whereas Pakistan lacks the growing globalization and the advancement in technology the world is moving towards the intangible and non-lethal components that have the potential leverage to execute advanced operations using the DIME (Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic)

matrix criterion, India is open to any option to address the challenge with the help of its allies due to its Chinese counterpart (Khokhar, 2012).

Furthermore, since India is the largest and most powerful state in the South Asian region, foreign states prioritize their interests, avoiding any harm to their ties because of geopolitical interests and economic benefits. It is acknowledgeable that India has a self-fulfilling prophecy as a regional hegemon opposing China's influence while Pakistan is in the middle of a crossfire. However, the Indian government has been sloppy and obsessed with a self-fulfilling prophecy to portray a pro-democratic state, while simultaneously promoting anti-Pakistan sentiments and anti-humane treatment against Indian Muslims.

It has become a ferocious and extremist regime that has targeted Indian Muslims and Kashmiris with its Hindutva ideology. There is political-religious extremism against Muslim minorities has turned villages and cities into fear due to the demolition of mosques and brutal conduct. Groups such as the Bhartiya Gau Raksha Dal (BGRD) are affiliated with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and take pride in flaunting weapons, brutality, and barbarianism against the Muslim minorities.

However, the facts are now clear, as to why no unhumanitarian action is taken against India because many UN-accredited NGOs and lobbies have stood alongside India, destroying Pakistan's image. However, they still are humanitarian and diplomatically friendly in the international arena. They have good foreign policy conduct, cultural awareness international, and a better economy compared to Pakistan. There are multiple academic studies conducted on Pakistan by Indians as compared to Pakistani scholars. These inconsistencies will develop an image of Pakistan from a negative perspective. Even Pakistan's education system provides misleading information which changes perception when scholars are handed information provided by international authors. Pakistan is stuck in a security dilemma with a traditional approach while it is being tarnished brutally by non-traditional and human security threats.

## Recommendations

- Pakistan needs to develop institutions to battle cyber warfare and disinformation campaigns to keep checks and balances. Although since 2016, a relaxed code of conduct for social media exists as the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act, it needs to be strengthened and modified. Moreover, the Pakistan National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), Ministry of Information Technology (MoIT), and Defense committee need to initiate a comprehensive National Information Operations Policy and provide guidelines to the public.

- Moreover, prevention of political propaganda from domestic use through social media and journalists. Therefore, the development of new laws is necessary for the digital age by utilizing and guaranteeing media independence with relevant legislation to enhance positive journalism. Restricting the misuse of cyberspace and social media through domestic laws, and ethical awareness. Stakeholders, politicians, security forces, think tanks, and citizens all must be involved in a nationalistic image rather than being fragmented. The use of better narratives should be incorporated into media outlets' policies to comply with certain laws to prevent horrifying images, as well as to use international frameworks to implement a soft image and a true image of Pakistan. Also, enhance the comparison of Hindutva ideology to Nazism and terrorism because any extremist agenda must be treated equally to Islamic fundamentalists. Counterintelligence agencies and response units must develop a plan to respond to India's enormity of authentic information and utilize public or expert opinions against Indian propaganda.

- Improving and incorporating cybersecurity aspects in education is necessary along with allies for technical advancement. The area of intangible elements needs to be focused on because non-kinetic war cannot be prevented but reduced. Furthermore, it prevents political actors, journalists, and propagandists from using the media for personal purposes. Pakistan should utilize smart bots to enhance its activities on social media to create a positive image.

- Think tanks, media, and institutions should be taught to promote a soft image of Pakistan to counter the negative narratives. Use social media to harness a good image and remove corruption by exerting pressure on various areas for good governance. Moreover, the socio-economic issues of communities deprived of their necessary rights should be addressed to prevent terrorist recruitment and social fragmentation. As a result, they are less likely to be manipulated by adversaries and to develop a fragmented mindset of being violated by their rights.

- There is a dire need for media literacy educators, organizations, the business community, technology, and the media industries. Incorporating information related to media awareness through university conferences and programs. To prevent cyberbullying at the grass root level by enhancing steps to show dangerous websites and ads that identity thieves or scammers utilize. There is a need to make society aware of cyber-related crimes and information security that is stolen through opening sites or links shared.

## Conclusion

The article presents the disinformation and propaganda tactics utilized in information warfare by India. In the digital era, these manipulative tools are the best source of hybrid warfare that has evolved from their old definition because

now every state is in a constant warzone. However, it is non-lethal. Domestic and international sentiments either weaken or strengthen the value of nationalism in the state's policies. Therefore, the use of the media is essential to shaping the public mind and adversaries. States find loopholes to incorporate manipulation and fake news in fragmented societies and polarized governments. India has enhanced its role in social media strengthening the stratagem of information warfare.

Unfortunately, this study has not been conducted with quantitative evaluation, It focuses more on a descriptive study, however, further research in these areas is necessary to evaluate the chaos Pakistan can face while only focusing on traditional areas of security. The advancement in technology has created increasing anonymity. Social media is ultimately hijacked by propagandists or manipulators. Organizations and websites are hijacked to continue doing nefarious tasks. Furthermore, fact-checking organizations bring out the evidence for the removal of NGOs and many other connecting factors.

Pakistan needs to reach out to the organization to help develop research and development institutes for this issue. Various groups have destroyed Pakistan's image in the world which impacts its progress. All forms of misleading information and fake pretenses destroy governments, citizens, and their ability to respond to the threat outside. Governments, the media, non-governmental organizations, and corporations use information and communication technologies both offensively and defensively.

However, Pakistan is fortunate in that it has discovered evidence against Indian disinformation and propaganda rather than misusing the concept it needs to develop tactics to prevent these attacks. However, Pakistan needs a stable government, and economy, to strengthen its cybersecurity by incorporating awareness and technology to improve its defense. The leadership should be concerned about spreading the soft image of Pakistan to attract more business and tourist opportunities.

Pakistan is mostly considered a semi-authoritative state in the international arena due to the interference of the establishment that exists to defend against external threat. The issue at hand should be the security of citizens rather than the irrational agenda of who gets what.

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