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Students, Emerging Writers, & CSS Aspirants

China's Economic  
Slowdown: Can Beijing  
Maintain Its Global Lead?

*Zayan Khan*

The Foreign Policy Vision  
of Jinnah: Leadership  
Through Strength

*Syed Hammad Ali*

A Guide to Fort Munro  
Hill Station, Pakistan

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The Expiry of  
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Causes, Consequences,  
and Cure

*Yaseen Khan*

**Educated & Jobless: The Paradox of  
Youth Unemployment in Pakistan**

*Shahmir Khan*

# Table Of Contents

Foreword	3
Opinion: Educated & Jobless - The Paradox of Youth Unemployment in Pakistan	4
Article: China's Economic Slowdown - Can Beijing Maintain Its Global Lead?	10
Article: The Foreign Policy Vision of Jinnah - Leadership Through Strength	16
CSS & PMS: The Changing CSS Exam Paper Pattern	25
Article: The Expiry of START - Deterrence in a Tripolar World	30
Infographic of the Month!	35
Opinion: The Silent Erasure - Understanding the Housewife Syndrome in Pakistan	36
Article: Gender Disparity In Pakistan - A Disease: Causes, Consequences & Cure	41
Pakistan Unveiled: A Guide to Fort Munro Hill Station, Pakistan	57
Book Review: Strategic Reckoning - Perspectives on Deterrence and Escalation Post-Pahalgam	63
Article: The Art Of War In Islam - Top Military Strategists in Islam	69



# Table Of Contents



Check Out Our Community Forum!

76

Advertise With Us

77

Become Part of the Paradigm Shift Team

78

Our Social Media Platforms

79



# Foreword

Welcome to the seventeenth edition of the Paradigm Shift e-magazine. Since starting Paradigm Shift ([www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)) on **August 14th, 2020**, we have come a long way.

With **350,000 followers** on social media and unique traffic on our website, we are now able to serve a wider percentage of the Pakistani youth. All our pieces are sent in by brilliant writers and researchers, and our gifted editors constantly ensure the quality of our content.

We aim for, and work towards three major goals:

1. To become a comprehensive library with high-quality content on **international relations, current affairs, global politics, and Pakistan**.
2. To provide a **free medium** where individuals can access research from across the globe - and can send in their own work to share their voice with the world.
3. To **showcase Pakistan** in a **positive and factual manner** through our 'Pakistan Unveiled' section.

We have handpicked **10 special pieces** from our website for this edition, and we hope that you gain some insights from them. For more content on a variety of topics from across the world, please visit [www.ParadigmShift.com.pk](http://www.ParadigmShift.com.pk)

We hope that you consider sharing our website and social media with your friends and family so that we can effectively increase our reach. Thank you again for all your support through the years.



# Educated & Jobless: The Paradox of Youth Unemployment in Pakistan

About the Author



Shahmir Khan is an accounting and finance graduate who is preparing for the CSS exam. He also works remotely for an international company.

# A Systemic Failure

Building roads and bridges does not build the nation. This line is not just to be heard, but it needs to be understood. Pakistan is one of the countries with the youngest population in the world, with nearly 26% of young people falling under the age bracket of 15 to 29 years, often described as a “demographic dividend” that propels the economy. Pakistan produces thousands of young graduates every year, and despite this, most employers feel the scarcity of “job-ready” talent. Adding to this dilemma, young people, particularly Gen Z, despite being educated and digitally aware, are far from opportunities and struggle to find employment.



According to the Labor Force survey, Pakistan's unemployment rate is 7.1%, the highest since 2004, raising important questions about the underlying causes of this persistently high figure. The question that arises here is whether young people are not working hard enough. Young people are often criticized for their career choices as they are clustered into a narrow set of conventional fields despite the availability of over 700 academic and professional fields in Pakistan. This is not the fault of young people; in fact, it is a failure of the system. Our education system rarely provides structured guidance and exposure to new emerging fields. However, education at the university level is structured on cramming-based learning rather than critical thinking and adaptability, and it holds back young people in the job market.

## The State's Responsibility vs. Gen Z Realities

This reality was exposed in Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's recent assertion, while addressing a seminar on population growth, that the government is not responsible for creating jobs. It is not suitable for a minister of finance to make such a comment. However, the government does not directly employ everyone; nevertheless, governments are unquestionably in charge of determining the circumstances that lead to job creation. The state controls whether companies grow or shrink through fiscal policies, regulations, and incentives. Adding to this critique, Dr. S. Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director of IBA Karachi, stated that the government needs to upskill young people since our demographic dividend has turned into a demographic nightmare with 3.5 million individuals joining the workforce each year in search of jobs. Zaidi's argument recognized reskilling as a necessary feature that increases productivity and boosts employability. In this way, young people will pay more attention to skills to boost their long-term stability.

It is very politically convenient to blame Gen Z while the state remains reluctant to take responsibility. Today, it is a Gen Z issue, but tomorrow, it will be a state issue. I frequently hear people claim that young people are spoiled, which prevents them from working hard and taking advantage of opportunities.

However, the reality is that they are rejecting opportunities that are disguised forms of exploitation, such as unpaid internships, contract-based work that stunts personal development, and salaries that fail to keep pace with rising inflation. Young people are increasingly turning to call centers and freelancing as an escape from low earnings and a lack of professional counseling.

## Bridging the Gap

Ending the paradox of an educated yet unemployed generation will require a twofold approach. The government can't be held accountable solely for this crisis, as every problem has many facets. Even in the face of many structural flaws and governmental failures, the importance of individual agency cannot be ignored. The state should work to expand opportunities for the new generation so that young people are encouraged enough to make better decisions about their careers and to work hard for them.



Such policies and reforms should be introduced to remove the so-called “class system” in society and provide equal access for people with different backgrounds, aligning with SDG-04 (quality education). Universities should focus on teaching practical skills rather than admitting students only to boost enrollment and revenue in the name of business. Instead of leaving students with degrees that are worthless in the marketplace, education should educate them for real careers. Students should be encouraged to participate in hybrid programs that will allow them to develop their skills and gain knowledge.

Paid internships should be introduced, especially for practical fields. They should spend at least a year working with startups that will help develop their skills and boost their careers. Universities should focus on R&D to publish and use the work and findings of students in the marketplace. Universities can become engines of useful solutions rather than merely degree factories by offering incentives and incubator support, which can spur innovation and help transform ideas into jobs.

It's high time to stop idealizing civil service careers that keep students in training for a few public service positions each year. Instead of taking advantage of opportunities to gain experience and abilities, students wind up pursuing status. Young people should transform education into productive labor. A fresh graduate enters the job market with irrational expectations and is unaware of the ground realities of the job market. Youth must realize that starting from zero is crucial in creating an empire. Waiting for a dream job only increases the gap between education and employment.

Addressing unemployment requires efforts and policies by the state that hopes for the future growth of young people. Neither Gen Z is in shortage of degrees nor is the state in shortage of programs, but a culture of economic engagement is missing at both ends. It is the need of the hour to understand that information acquisition and holding degrees are not accomplishments; true success is found in the capacity to use that knowledge in a meaningful way.

In the market, which is changing rapidly, the focus must move from gaining knowledge to using it in real-world situations. Without this change, education runs the risk of becoming an end in itself rather than a means of advancing both the youth and the national progress.

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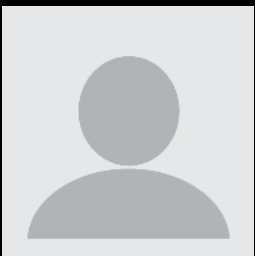
Also related: [Tax Evasion: Poison for Agriculture](#)

A composite image featuring Xi Jinping on the left, wearing a dark suit and tie, with his hands clasped. To his right is a stylized graphic of a globe with the Chinese flag's stars, held in a pair of hands. The background is a gradient of red and blue. A green rectangular box in the upper right corner contains the word "Article" in white text.

Article

# China's Economic Slowdown: Can Beijing Maintain Its Global Lead?

## About the Author



Zayan Khan is a student writer with a deep interest in international relations, geopolitics, and global economics. His work analyzes how economic trends and power dynamics connect. Zayan usually likes to write about current events.

China was once growing at 10% GDP growth annually, but its growth has now slowed significantly. Investors and global powers are all closely watching Beijing's economic engine slowly run out of gas. China has risen to become a major global power. Its economic strength has strengthened its global influence and what it provides to the world. It has also led the world in exports for nearly a decade (World Trade Organization Statistics), and it seems to remain there for good.

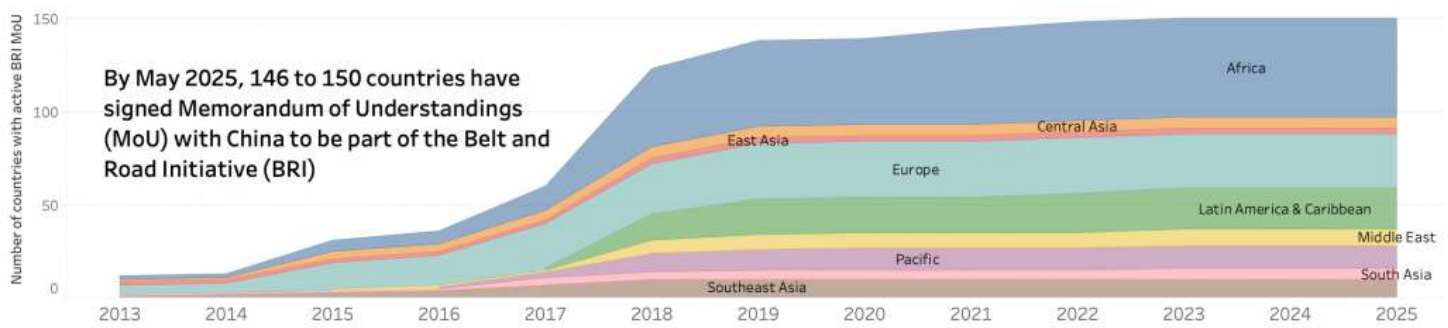
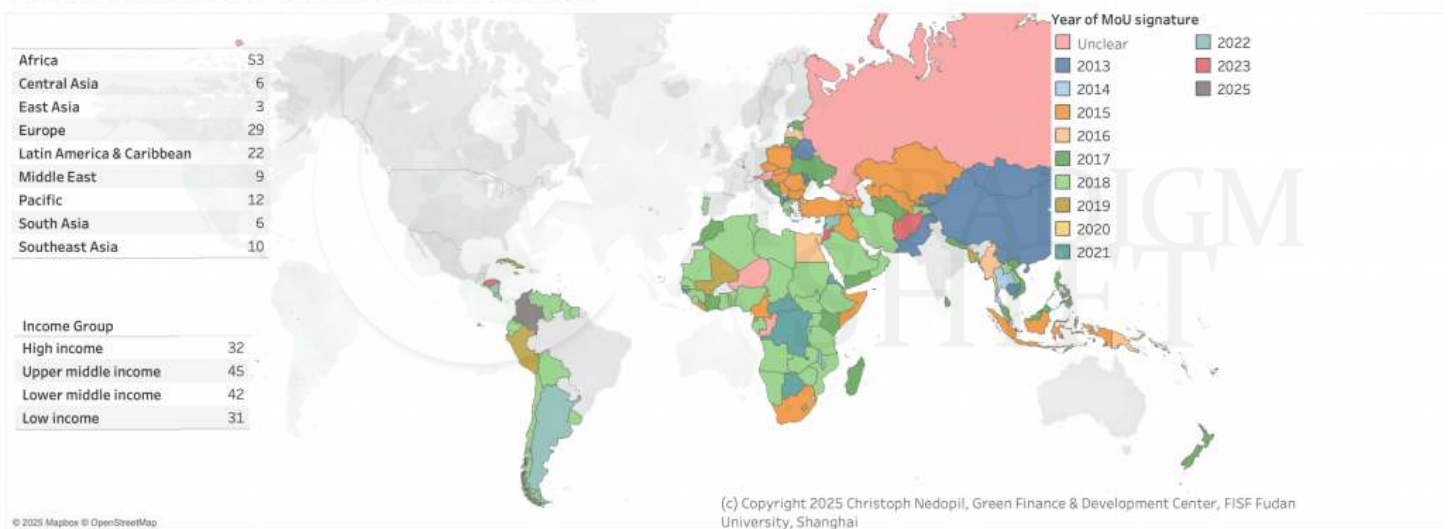
China accounts for around 20% of all exports globally of industrial goods. Furthermore, owing to frameworks such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China has developed solid partnerships with numerous countries. In addition to this, Beijing recorded a trade surplus of 1.2 trillion dollars in 2025, which was the highest ever in history. Exports of valuable and industrial goods once again pushed this forward. As of late, China's economy has been slowing down, which could mean that its influence around the world is also going down. This is especially true because foreign investments have dropped sharply (UNCTAD Investment Trends Monitor), trade has fallen, and strategic competition with other global powers has grown.



# The Future of BRI and Declining Foreign Investment

The decline of China's economy has resulted in a decline in foreign investment. For a long time, Beijing funded large projects internationally through infrastructure initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative. The main goal of the BRI was to provide infrastructure to its investors; the target for this initiative was mainly developing, low- to middle-income nations. The BRI was doing very well in many countries, providing key infrastructure and helping these smaller nations become more developed.

Current countries of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)



However, increased local economic pressure and rising levels of debt have forced investors to become more cautious about funding overseas projects. The BRI, at its strongest, once had more than 140 countries (Green Finance & Development Center BRI Data) and billions of dollars in infrastructure funding. As local economic pressures increase, reduced investment from abroad could limit China's influence on many developing regions that rely heavily on Chinese investment.

The BRI has built substantial infrastructure around the world, such as ports in Pakistan, railroads in East Africa, and energy projects in Southeast Asia. This has made Beijing's economic power known around the world and made its political ties with other countries stronger.

## Slowing of Trade and Its Impact on the Chinese Economy

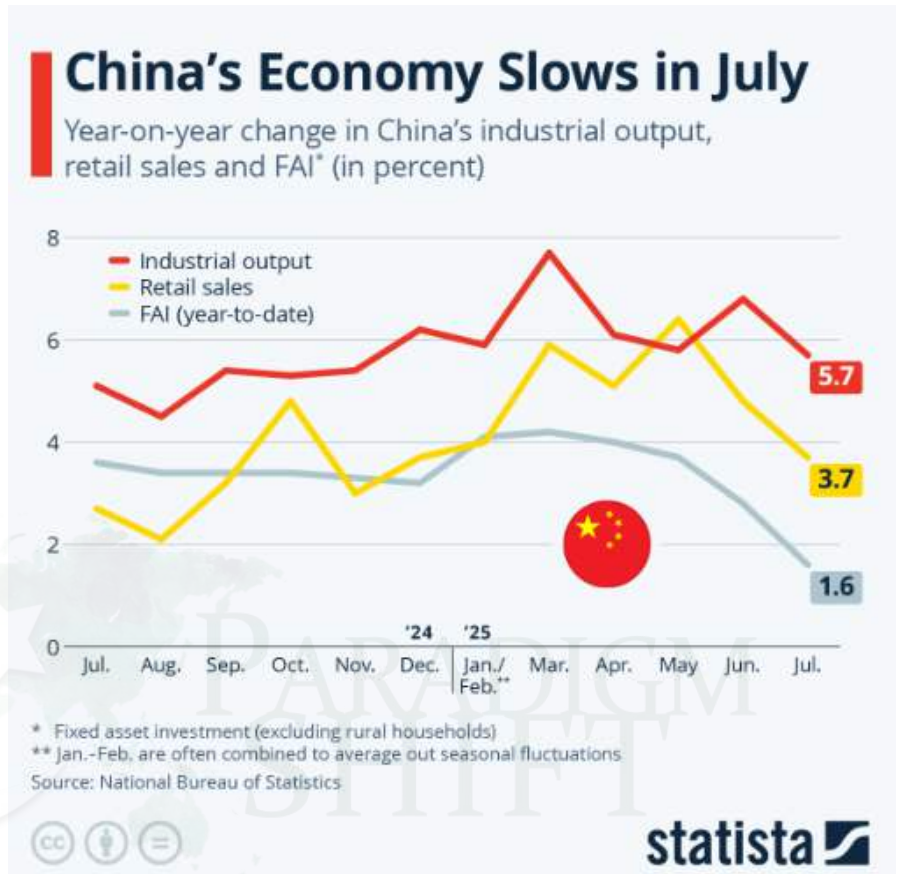
Another huge consequence of China's economic slowdown is the deceleration of trade. Trade has played a massive role in China's global influence. With trade slowing down, so does China's global influence. For many years, China has relied on trade and other exports to push its economic growth and strengthen its influence on the world. It leads the world in manufacturing valuable goods (UNIDO Industrial Development Report), which has allowed it to rule over global markets and be able to keep strong trade partnerships globally.

China produces high-value goods locally, allowing it to export low-cost products easily and quickly, a key factor behind its global influence. In recent years, China has still been in control of global exports, but its own trade is falling due to economic pressure. Trade had pushed China very far, and now, with trade slowing down, so does the entire Chinese economy. Although in 2025, China saw a decline in trade, it still [controlled 20% of the entire world's exports](#), showcasing its previous economic dominance.

## Global Competition and the Risk China Faces

Slower economic growth and smaller global influence also make the world less competitive towards China. Global powers are used to China dominating global markets, but that does not mean they enjoy it. If powers like the US, India, or the EU see China faltering in performing economically, they will seize the opportunity. The US and China have been long-lasting rivals in terms of technology and trade. The two countries have even competed over military presence in the Asia-Pacific region.

A slowing economy makes it difficult for Beijing to be able to influence nations around the world and also could lead to falling behind its rivals. For China, the economy slowing down is not acceptable. Currently, due to its stronger economy, China is able to produce military weapons and continue its initiatives in the world. A slowdown in the economy could limit defense spending and other military budgets, which will give powers like the US leeway in Chinese influence and power in the Asian region. China will also experience a dip in relations if it is unable to provide the infrastructure promised as part of its projects.



Developing nations around the world that benefit from Chinese investment will find it difficult to further develop their infrastructure. This could lead to a decline in the global economy as developing economies provide 60% of global growth. If they are unable to grow more, then it will reduce the expansion of the global market.

## Global Impact of the Chinese Economic Slowdown

China's economic slowdown is indicative that its challenges extend internationally, notably with a decline in foreign investment and trade. Given China's significant role in global supply chains, manufacturing, and finance, its dominance is unlikely to wane in the near future. In the future, the global system will likely witness a diversification of trade partnerships.

This is because rival powers and developing economies want to find other ways to reduce their reliance on Chinese investment. In the end, China's economy will not only affect its own future, but it will also affect the speed of global development and the balance of power in a world that is becoming more competitive.

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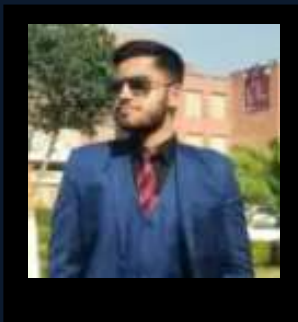
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# The Foreign Policy Vision of Jinnah: Leadership Through Strength

## About the Author



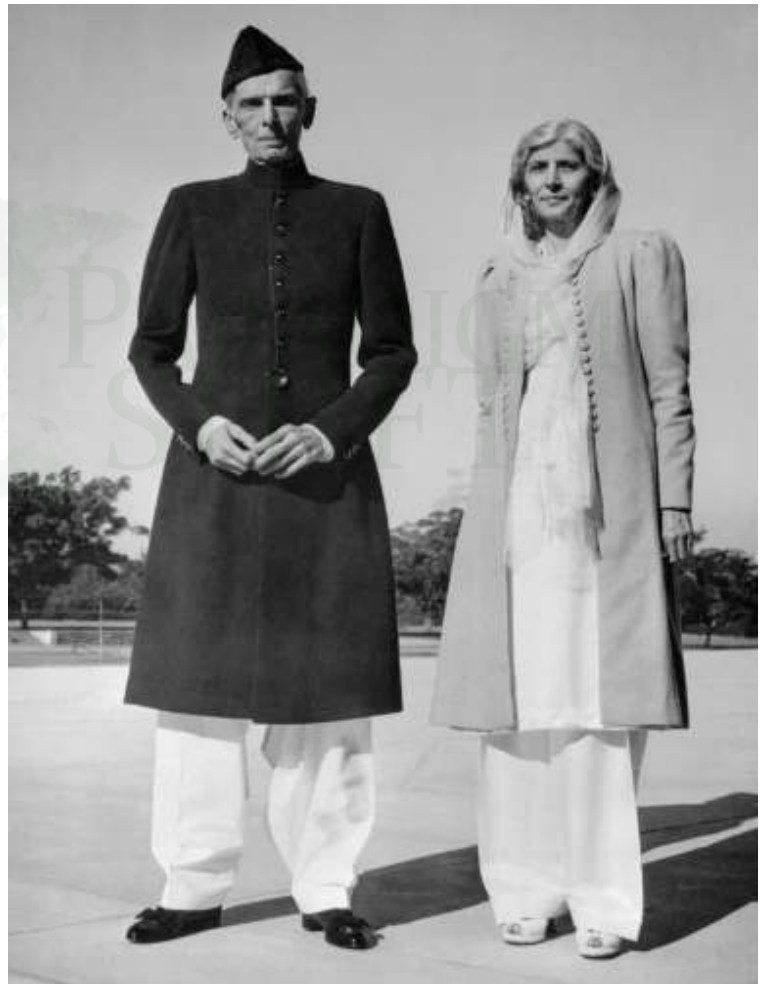
Syed Hammad Ali is pursuing a BS in International Relations programme from International Islamic University, Islamabad and has a keen interest in research works, policy analysis, defence and strategic studies and conflict resolution.

*“I do not believe in taking the right decision; I take a decision and make it right.”*

– *Muhammad Ali Jinnah*

Pakistan’s foundational foreign policy goals and state attributes were already decided before it appeared on the world map. The freedom [movement](#) that led to its creation set the very goal of what a future state for Muslims should look like. No doubt, the Muslim cause was supported and promoted by various leaders, but the entire Muslim movement became indebted to the efforts and far-sightedness of one man – Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

The pioneer of the Pakistan movement and, later, the founder of the Pakistani nation, Jinnah, acted as a one-man army against a number of obstacles in his way. His major trait was leadership through strength, no matter whether the resources were scarce or the possibilities felt narrow. Jinnah knew the fact that the newly born state would require visionary and policy-oriented goals to withstand future storms. Therefore, he not only provided an impetus to the Pakistan movement but also prepared his people for the post-independence situation.



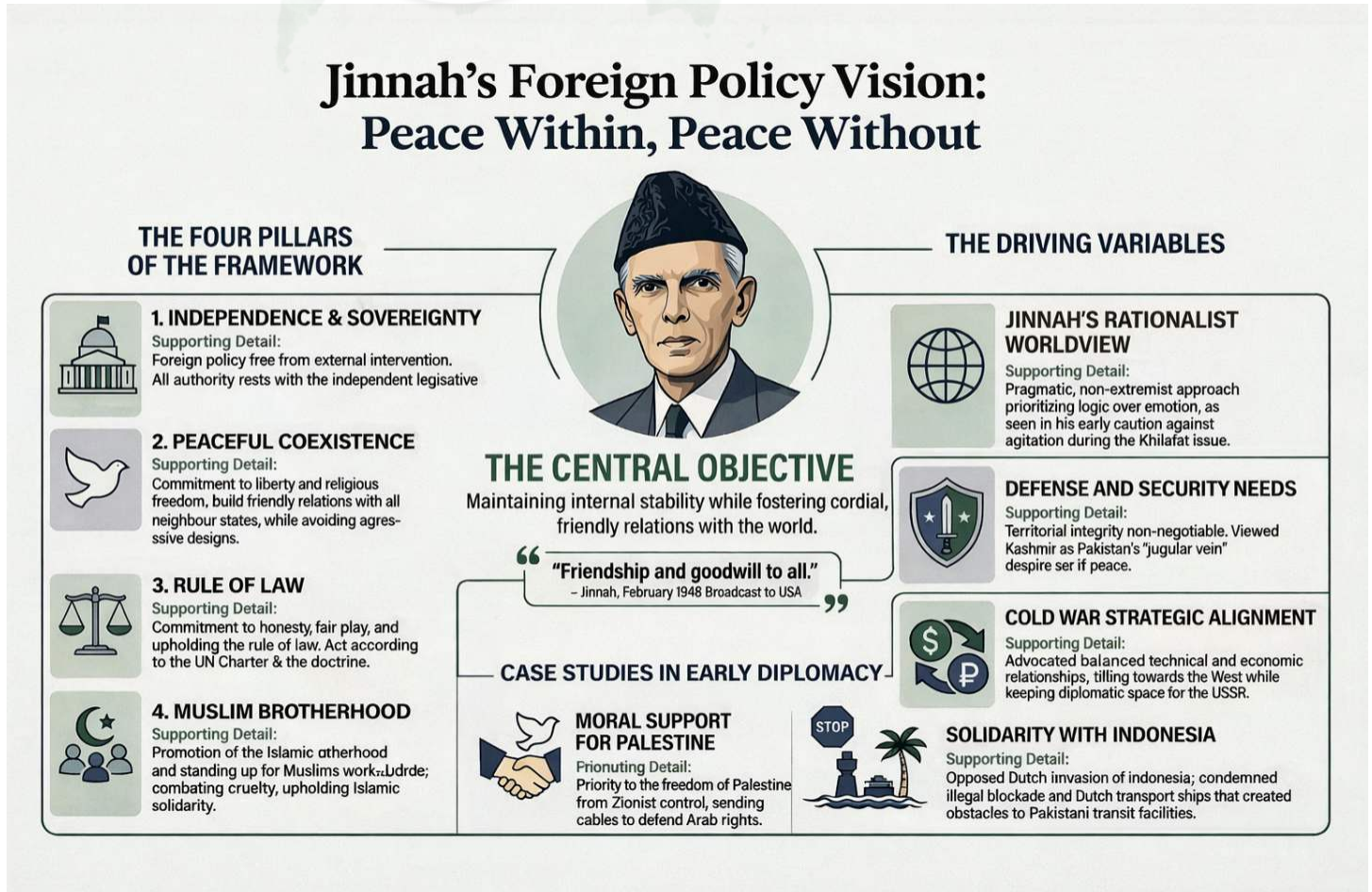
# Guiding Principles of Jinnah's Foreign Policy Approach

Through untiring tours and direct contacts with locals during the movement, Jinnah has already articulated his very principles of forming a new sovereign state for the Muslims of the subcontinent.

Soon after the emergence of Pakistan, Jinnah became the Governor-General of the country. During his thirteen months of life after the creation of Pakistan, he delivered various speeches at national and international platforms that clearly identified the overarching principles of the foreign policy of Pakistan.

On that note, Jinnah had a very clear vision, which could be measured by one of his broadcast talks to people of the United States in February 1948:

“Our foreign policy is that of friendship and goodwill to all the nations of the world.”



## 1. Independence

Pakistan was created during the era of colonial emancipation. Empires were dismembering, and the world map was bestowed with a large number of sovereign entities. However, it was also the fact that the newly established states were becoming protectorates of the colonizers, whereby the empires retained control of foreign policy decisions of the newborn country. Jinnah was against this notion. He believed in the right of a state to formulate its foreign policy without any external intervention or dictation.

Addressing the first constituent assembly on 11 August 1947, Jinnah [stated](#), *"The most important point I want to make is this: keep in mind that you now possess all authority as an independent legislative body. As a result, the weight of your decision-making rests heavily upon you."* This statement clearly shows that, as per Quaid, serving the country's national interest should be the foremost responsibility of its officials.

## 2. Peaceful Coexistence

Jinnah held the viewpoint that Pakistan should present itself to the world as a peaceful country, both in its internal and external affairs. No doubt, Pakistan was established based on Islamic ideology, but people belonging to any other religion will have the right to live and practice their rituals. The reality of the Pakistan movement basically hides in the fact that it was not a religious movement only meant for Muslims; rather, it aimed at establishing a homeland where every person can live in liberty with respect to his/her religious, political, or social inclinations. While addressing the constituent assembly, Jinnah explicitly mentioned, *"You are free; you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion, caste, or creed – that has nothing to do with the business of the state."*

Likewise, Jinnah wanted to make the world realize that Pakistan does not seek to create animosity toward other states. Even he was of the view that India should be considered a peaceful neighbor that can coexist with Pakistan, setting a precedent for others to follow suit. In 1948, addressing the people of the US, he stated, *"We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation."*

### 3. Rule of Law

Jinnah strongly adhered to the principles of justice, law, and order in every situation. He is often known as the 'man of rules.' It is evident in history that Jinnah explicitly negated the idea of the civil disobedience movement of Mahatma Gandhi. During the [Kashmir](#) crisis (1947-48), Jinnah advised both sides to uphold the rule of law and resolve the issue through peaceful negotiations.

Highlighting Pakistan's point of view regarding the rule of law, he stated, *"We are committed to the principles of honesty and fair play in domestic and international relations and are willing to do everything we can to advance peace and prosperity among the nations of the world."*

### 4. Muslim Brotherhood

Jinnah was a prominent contender of the Muslim Brotherhood and laid the very principles of Pakistan's foreign policy under this pillar. In a 1948 broadcast, Jinnah [declared](#), *"The vast majority of us are Muslims. We adhere to the teachings of the Prophet Mohammed (P.B.U.H). As members of the Islamic Brotherhood, we believe that everyone is equal in terms of rights, dignity, and self-respect."* Through this, he meant to provide the people of Pakistan a room to practice their religious affairs, not to establish a caliphate system.

He famously stated, *"But make no mistake: Pakistan is not a theocracy or anything like it."* According to him, Pakistan should provide moral and diplomatic support to every Muslim nation, in particular those in the Middle East and Africa, while simultaneously maintaining a non-offensive stance towards other states. Talking to the BBC about the Palestine issue, Jinnah expressed that the decision was 'unjust and cruel' and pledged to support the cause of the Arabs in Palestine in every possible way.

# Variables of Jinnah's Foreign Policy Approach

As symbolized by Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Pakistan's foreign policy is the product of three factors: the Quaid's worldview or cosmology, Pakistan's security needs, and the new Cold War international system.

Despite his deteriorating health, the Quaid was able to establish the strategic parameters in line with his own intellect due to the Muslim League's overall lack of a foreign affairs focus. Before December 1947, Pakistan had no permanent Foreign Minister, and all papers



were submitted to Quaid-i-Azam for guidance or judgment.

## 1. Worldview

One could describe the Quaid-i-Azam's perspective as rationalistic. Jinnah had never been extreme in his religious views. As an example, in 1920, Jinnah specifically cautioned Hindus and Muslims in Turkey against being emotional and agitated about the Khilafat issue, and thus, his commitment to religious non-extremism was clear. But Jinnah **opposed** both the division of Palestine and the creation of Israel.

To evade the direst effects and ramifications, he sent a cable to President Truman requesting him to defend the rights of the Arabs. Additionally, he deemed the Dutch invasion of Indonesia to be unlawful and denied Dutch ships and planes access to transit facilities, transporting war supplies to Indonesia.

## 2. Defense and Security

Jinnah has never viewed India as a rival nation; on the contrary, he has consistently preached the notion of peace and reconciliation, founded on justice and equity. However, from the very first day, Indian officials had refuted Pakistan's existence. The Indian government had significant reservations about the Partition Plan, as evidenced by Jawaharlal Nehru's statement, "*The proposal to allow certain parts to secede if they so will be painful for any one of us to contemplate.*"

The Indian invasion of Kashmir was vehemently opposed by Jinnah. He viewed Kashmir as Pakistan's 'jugular vein.' The [Durand Line](#) problem in Afghanistan was another challenge Pakistan had to confront. With the backing of the Indian National Congress, the Khudai Khidmatgar movement had already made the term "Pakhtunistan" famous in 1946. Even though Jinnah viewed Afghanistan as a friendly Muslim country, he also made it clear that the territorial integrity and security of Pakistan could not be doubted.

## 3. Cold War

Jinnah's cold war policies reflected strategic alignment rather than ideological inclination towards the major powers. Being a former colony of Great Britain, Pakistan's inclination towards the West was justified. However, Jinnah maintained close contacts with the Soviet Union also. Although Pakistan accepted the invitation of the West after Jinnah's death, the call from the USSR also reflected the diplomatic space that Jinnah had created.

As Pakistan was facing economic and security challenges, Jinnah sought technical and financial assistance from the West. In addition, Jinnah was a staunch supporter of the UN Charter and always emphasized the importance of international laws and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. Thus, Jinnah's policies towards the international community were characterized by engagement and restraint.

## Where Did We Go Wrong?

The entire foreign policy approach of M. Ali Jinnah **revolved** around one central concept – *"Our object should be 'peace within, and peace without.' We want to live peacefully and maintain cordial, friendly relations with our immediate neighbors and with the world at large."* Jinnah laid the foundation of Pakistan's foreign policy on this principle, which contends that while preserving



the national interest, the government of Pakistan should maintain a strong social contract and peaceful relations with the entire international community. However, it has often been unsuccessful on multiple fronts as well. For instance, instead of being known as a peace-loving country, Pakistan is labeled as a 'terror state.' Its placement on the Financial Action Task Force's grey list has further destroyed its credibility globally.

***"Politics is too serious a matter to be left to the politicians"***

*-Charles de Gaulle*

In addition, the nation's silence about issues like the treatment of the Uyghur Muslims in the Chinese Xinjiang province sparked widespread public outrage. In the same vein, Pakistan made a complete U-turn after the 9/11 attacks by breaking all ties with the Taliban in Afghanistan and becoming devastated by terrorism as a result of its policy of complete collaboration with the United States. Thus, it can be concluded that throughout history and even in the modern era, Pakistan has been [playing](#) on both sides of the field, whereby sometimes the Quaid's vision is strictly upheld, while on some occasions it is completely sidelined. Today, Pakistani politicians, elites, and the bureaucracy have been interpreting Quaid's statements as per their biases. This is exactly where we have been going wrong.

## Conclusion

Jinnah's foreign policy approach is a benchmark for Pakistan in every era. His adherence to international laws and human rights provides us with a clear path to follow and stand out in the international arena. How Jinnah dealt with both internal and external [challenges](#) through diplomacy is a beacon of light for the current leadership of our country. No doubt, major developments have occurred since 1947, but Jinnah's core principle of 'peace within and peace without' will always be the crown jewel of our foreign policy.

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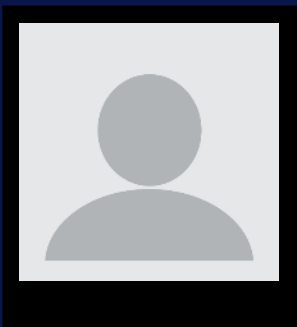
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You may also like: [Quaid-e-Azam, Allama Iqbal, and Pakistan's Historical Opposition to Israel](#)



# The Changing CSS Exam Paper Pattern

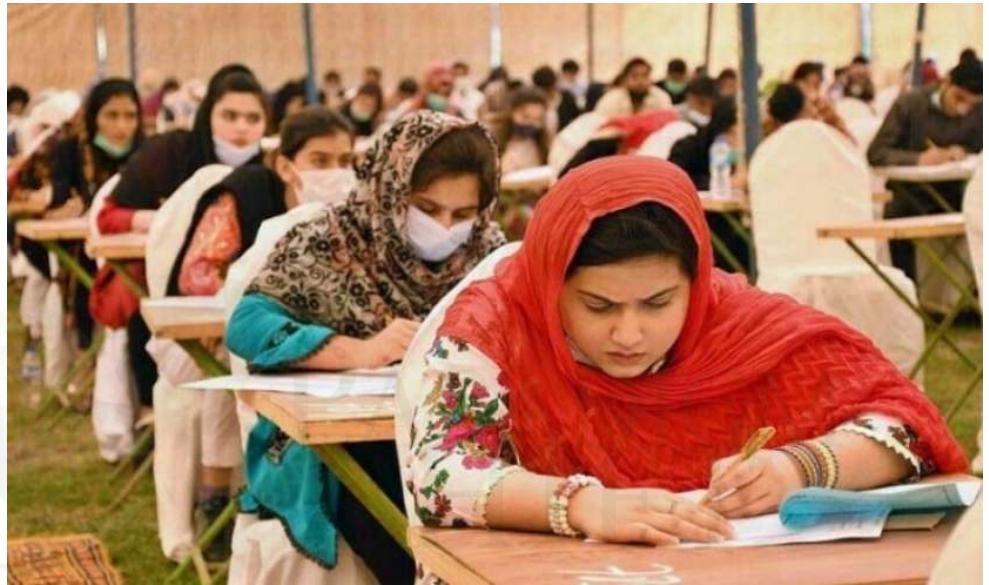
## About the Author



Abdullah Nisar holds a degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from International Islamic University Islamabad. He is currently working as a freelance journalist.

# Why the CSS Exam Remains a Popular Career Choice in Pakistan

The Central Superior Service (CSS) exam is one of the most challenging examinations in Pakistan. The CSS exam is conducted in February every year by the Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) nationwide to [recruit bureaucrats](#). Thousands of aspirants appear in the CSS examination every year due to low job opportunities and the increasing hype of the services created by some CSS officers and CSS academies. In a time when Pakistani youth face the challenges of [unemployment](#) and inflation, they consider CSS a safe way and a shortcut to achieve their ambitions and financial stability.



## How Changing the CSS Written Exam Paper Pattern is Causing Difficulty and a Low Success Rate

However, the CSS exam has always been highly challenging for aspirants. Most CSS aspirants prepare for the exam for the whole year, as the syllabus of the compulsory and optional subjects is lengthy. Out of thousands of CSS aspirants who appeared in the written part of the CSS exams, only 2.5 to 3 percent of candidates pass the exam. The past aspirants then have to pass an interview to get allocated to the Civil Services. Over the past 4 to 5 years, the CSS has been glamorized by some CSPs. Their focus on [social media](#) has made them celebrities. Some CSPs have been observed promoting different products in their PR campaigns on social media forums.

# Impact of Social Media and Rising Unemployment in Pakistan on CSS Aspirants

The growing social media presence of CSPs, coupled with the surging unemployment rate in Pakistan, has shifted the focus of many young people from joining the private sector to aspiring to become a bureaucrat. However, it has been observed that the CSS exam is becoming more challenging every year due to the changing exam pattern and lengthy CSS syllabus. The FPSC has changed the pattern of the CSS exams in the past few years. The evolution of technology and easy access to the internet have further increased the challenge for the CSS aspirants.

## Changing the CSS Written Exam Paper Pattern: From Predictable to Analytical

In the past, the FPSC's CSS exams for many subjects revolved around some specific domains. For instance, the English essay exam mostly included topics related to education, terrorism, tourism, gender issues, technology, and the environment. Similarly, the [Pakistan Affairs](#) paper also had a set pattern, as at least one or two questions related to the pre-independence era were asked. This made the CSS papers predictable to some extent. However, in the past few years, the pattern of the CSS exams has totally changed, making it difficult for CSS aspirants to pass the written exam.

Now the CSS exams have become highly unpredictable. Moreover, the nature of the CSS examinations has also changed for both compulsory and optional papers. In the past, most of the questions asked in the CSS exams were descriptive in nature. However, in the past few years, it has been observed that the FPSC examiners like to gauge the analytical skills of the CSS aspirants. Therefore, they mostly ask analytical questions to the aspirants. This changing nature of the CSS exams has been especially observed in the English essay exam. Unlike the past, the English essay paper now mostly comprises analytical topics. Similarly, the Pakistan Affairs and Current Affairs papers also do not consist of the previously predictable pattern. Now, most of the time, the FPSC examiner asks questions related to the current engagements of Pakistan. However, this change of pattern is not limited to compulsory subjects only.

# How to Prepare for CSS Compulsory and Optional Subjects in the Modern Era

In addition, the FPSC has changed the nature of the questions asked in different compulsory and optional subjects: political science, public administration, sociology, criminology, and international relations. Most of the questions asked in these exams are of an analytical nature. This makes the exam much harder for aspirants who rely on merely cramming facts and figures. The CSS aspirants now need to analyze different topics from different aspects. For this, they need to consult books and opinions written by intellectual philosophers and scientists. They also need to learn the technique of writing unbiased. Therefore, aspirants must:



- Develop critical thinking skills
- Study diverse perspectives
- Read journals and expert opinions

They also need to consult different opinions written by people from diverse fields on forums like the *Paradigm Shift*. This would broaden the vision of the CSS aspirants. Moreover, they should consult magazines such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *The Economist* to enhance their vocabulary, improve sentence structure, and broaden their understanding of various issues and topics. However, this does not mean that cramming facts and figures is not important for CSS exams. It provides leverage to the students over the others, as it is a competitive exam, and also helps them analyze a topic effectively.

Aspirants also need to consult past papers, particularly from 2020 to 2026. Moreover, they need to bear in mind that CSS compulsory papers and optional papers carry equal importance. Therefore, they must allocate proper time to all the subjects during CSS preparation. Attempting past CSS question papers is essential to outshine others in the final written exam. Moreover, aspirants also need to give appropriate time to MCQs for the CSS MPT exam. Although the changing paper format has made the written exam more challenging, the aspirants must remember that attempting past papers is still helpful to effectively tackle the new CSS exam paper pattern. Moreover, the aspirants need to consult the recommended books available on the official website of the FPSC.

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# The Expiry of START: Deterrence in a Tripolar World

## About the Author



Haseeb Ahmed is a student of National Defence University Islamabad. He is pursuing his bachelors in Strategic Studies from NDU.

Strategic stability was a two-variable equation for more than 50 years. The Cold War and its prolonged aftermath were marked by a two-way nuclear game between Washington and Moscow, a structure of “Mutual Assured Destruction (MAD) supervised by strict treaties and foreseeable signalling. However, the time has ended as of 6th February, 2026. As the [New START treaty](#) lapsed, and China continued to achieve its break-even in nuclear weapons, we have moved into a tripolar nuclear reality. The previous principles of deterrence are no longer simple; they have become outdated.

## The Expiry of the Arms Control Architecture

The termination of the New START in early this month is a watershed in the security of the world. The world has not had legally binding upper and lower limits on the strategic nuclear warheads of the two biggest possessors of such weapons since 1972. More to the point, the extremely invasive verification practises on site inspections, and nearly daily data exchanges have died out. In their absence, the condition of transparency that supported the stability has been substituted by the condition of strategic ambiguity. Unverified, worst-case-scenario planning is the default mode of defence ministries. This is a change, particularly between Deterrence by Punishment (threat of retaliation) and a more anarchic Deterrence by Denial, with the powers scrambling to implement expensive systems of gold-dome missile defences and hypersonic interceptors to make the attack of an opponent useless.

## The Tripolar Issue

When a dyad (two powers) becomes a triad (three powers), it is not a 50 percent complex jump; it is an exponential jump. The math of deterrence is inherently unstable in a tripolar world, which is made up of the U.S., Russia, and a fast-modernising China.



In the event the United States constructs sufficient forces to deter both Russia and China, both Moscow and Beijing will view this as an act of first strike, and as a result, they will increase their stockpiles further. On the contrary, when the parity between Washington and one is preserved, it will be prone to the other. The permanent incentive to an arms race has been put in place by this Three-Body Problem of nuclear physics. The claimed course of China towards 1,000 warheads on operational missiles in 2030, coupled with the efforts of Russia to establish new, so-called exotic, delivery systems such as the [Poseidon nuclear torpedo](#), translates into the fact that the quantitative boundaries of the past are giving way to a qualitative arms race of un-interceptable weapons.

## Effusion of Deterrence: New Strategic Implements

As analysts, we have to know the transition to integrated deterrence in order to make ourselves more valuable. The conventional nuclear strategy can no longer be considered a silo system; it has become integrated into a multi-Domain system. By 2026, deterrence will be attained by integrating:

- Cyber Resilience: The capability of safeguarding NC3 (Nuclear Command, Control, and Communications) against being decapitated.
- Space Wars: Protection of the orbital sensors that give early warning and proper guidance.
- Economic Coercion: It is an application of global supply chain reliance as a non-kinetic first tier of deterrence.

As per the U.S. 2026 National Defence Strategy, deterrence is not only a matter of the length of the big stick anymore. It concerns the plausibility of the whole ecosystem of a state to work under fire. This implies that as a strategist, we cannot keep on looking at warheads in a vacuum, but at escalation ladders, which come out of the server room and reach all the way to the silo.

## The Return of Strategic Risk

The most perilous consequence of the existing tripolar shift, perhaps, is the loss of the signalling. With the Cold War, there was a series of back channels in diplomacy that saw to it that a normal skirmish would not slip the nuclear wire accidentally. Nowadays, those channels are congested with ideological aggression and technological clatter.

Opponents are now testing with sub-strategic or tactical nuclear signalling, demonstrative tests, or deployments that are aimed at trying to force an opponent but not provoke a full-scale exchange. But, in a three-way contest, a sign that is given to one opponent could be misunderstood by the other, and a process of escalation will occur, which no single force will be able to manage.



## The Future of the New Generation

We, as the students of Strategic Studies, cannot expect to simply lament over the passing of the arms control of the 20th century. A new Trilateral Crisis Management framework needs to be promoted by us. This involves:

- Creation of Data Firewalls: The U.S., Russia, and China need to agree on sharing basic notifications on launches to avoid flash wars that are occasioned by sensor malfunction.
- The definition of Red Lines in Cyber and Space: Determining what does and does not count as an act of war in the non-kinetic realm to ensure non-escalation of nuclear war.
- Bringing the dead back to life. Track II Diplomacy: Scheduling some casual, expert-level negotiations in an effort to recreate the vocabulary of stability that has been lost.

New deterrence is not concerned with a balance of terror, but with a dynamic, high-speed, and multi-domain contest. The nuclear dyad era was one era of perilous naivete. The world we currently live in is a phase of complex instability, which is tri-polar. The lesson we can take as the future generation of strategists is that we need to come up with a kind of Security Architecture 2.0, a model that acknowledges that the technology of war has evolved, but the human need to predict is the only sure thing against disaster.

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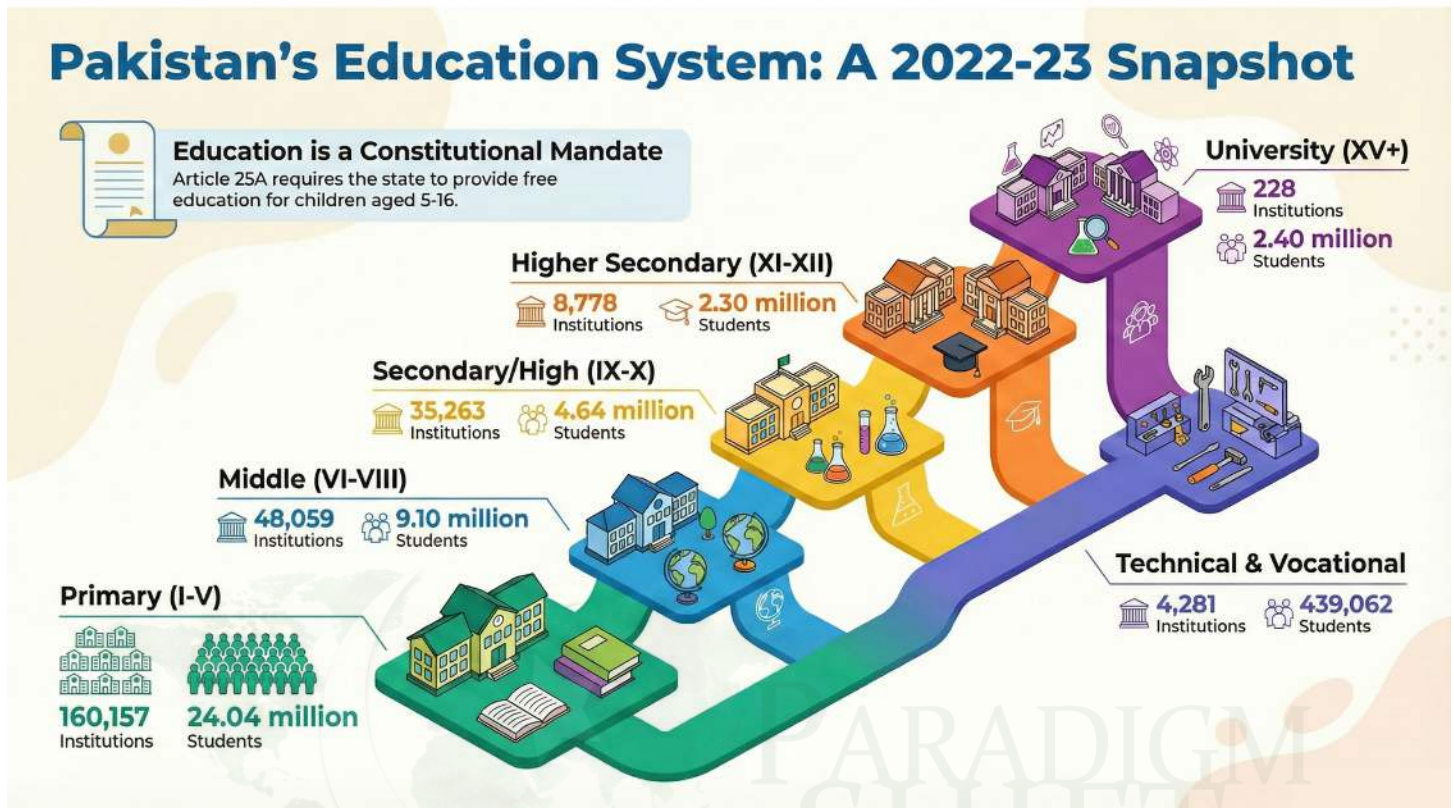
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# Infographic of the Month!

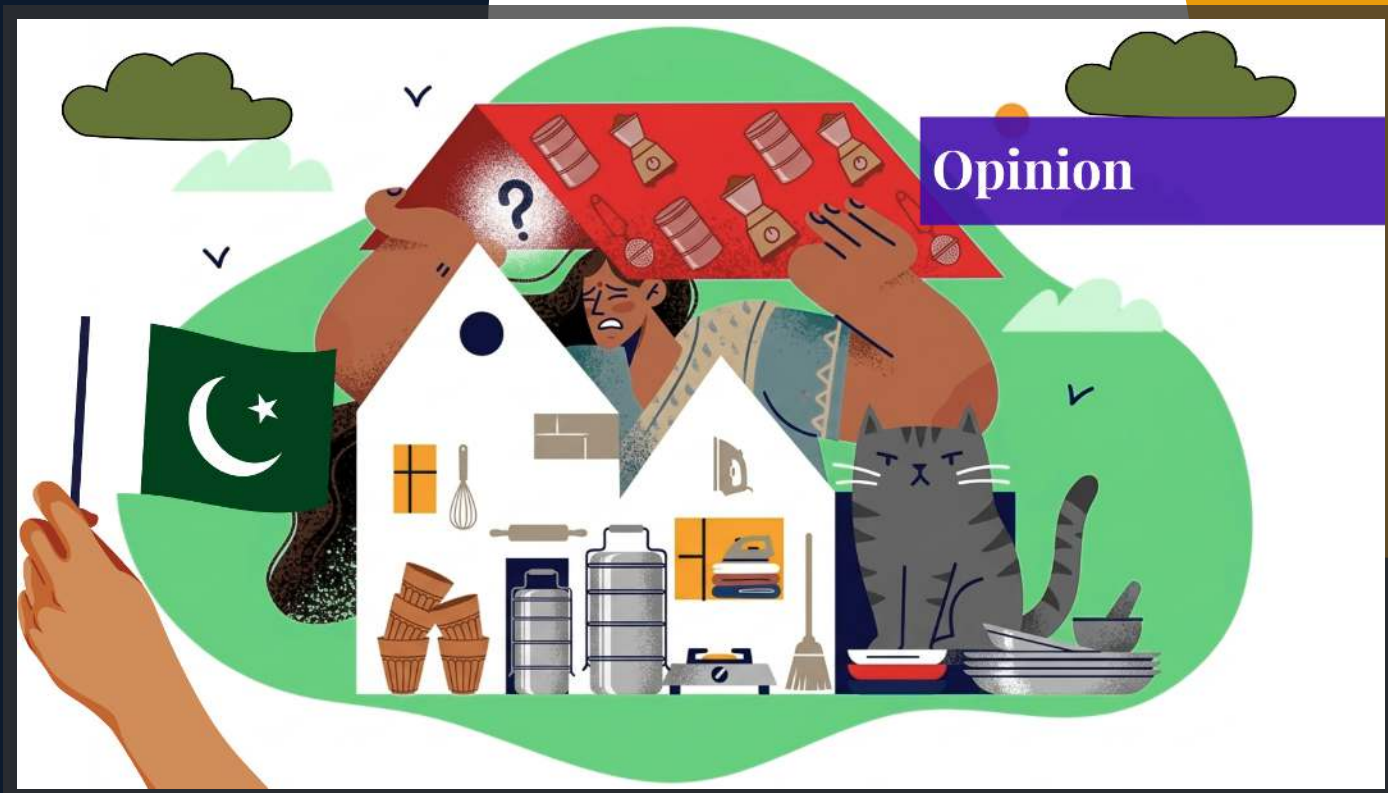


The education system in Pakistan is grounded in the **1973 Constitution**, which mandates free and compulsory education for children aged five to sixteen.

According to **2022-23 statistics (PBS)**, the system spans multiple levels, with the foundational primary stage being the largest, enrolling over **24 million students across 160,157 schools**.

As students progress through middle and secondary education, enrollment gradually decreases, eventually leading to higher education where **2.4 million students attend 228 universities**.

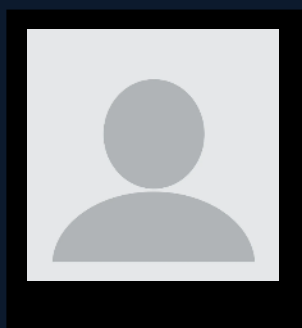
The educational framework also supports specialized skill development through **4,281 technical and vocational institutes** that cater to over **439,000 students**.



Opinion

# The Silent Erasure: Understanding the Housewife Syndrome in Pakistan

## About the Author



Manhal Zaka Khan is a writer currently interning at Paradigm Shift. She is pursuing a bachelor's degree in social sciences at SZABIST Karachi, majoring in international relations. Her writing interests encompass all areas of the social sciences, as she explores and examines the world through a critical and analytical perspective.

# The Mismatch of Global Feminism

There are various ongoing debates about the origins of feminism and its intended audience within Pakistan. Some think feminism is a Western import, while others push the narrative of it being Pakistan's favorite enemy, Israel's agenda. From the religious aspect, some state that Islam has already given women rights. On the other hand, many are of the strong belief that the British are the only reason we stopped burning our widows. Most conversations surrounding gender equality tend to push the individualistic narrative that women ought to earn and climb the career ladder to be liberated. This narrative fits adequately into Western societies, but it has not been revolutionary in South Asia.

One way or another, most interpretations of feminism in Pakistan stem from either liberal or radical feminism. And those two are the forbidden fruits, such that neither of those branches of mainstream feminism is a fit for Pakistani society. So when most of the country associates feminism only with bra-burning protests, it becomes quite difficult to bring that conversation home, into Pakistani kitchens where the housewife lies.



## The Erasure of Identity: From Person to Provider

I once recall a teacher in school asking me what my parents did for work. Naturally, I told her my father was in corporate, and my mother was a housewife. It did not occur to me at the time, but I later realized that I did not know my mother beyond her role as a caretaker. I did not even consider anything to be wrong for years because it was just the norm.

This is an unfortunate yet common truth for many women across the subcontinent. When you ask their husbands or kids who they are, you hear something along the lines of, “She is someone, I assume.” “She has a degree. Wait, she does? A master’s in education, wow!” “She must’ve had friends at some point, but I’d say her sister is her friend.” “Her hobbies? Cooking? Doing laundry? Oh, wait! I know! It’s sewing; she said she used to make dresses for us when we were little.”



This little conversation sums up exactly how a majority of housewives are unfortunately known. I kept observing the women around me who existed merely as entities, not as women. I thought to myself, there must be a word for this phenomenon. And there was an ignorant and outdated explanation when someone tried to understand.

## Psychological Toll of the Housewife Syndrome

The housewife syndrome is now neither a professional diagnosis nor formal terminology; rather, it refers to the psychological and emotional turmoil that housewives experience due to their confinement to a domestic space. They experience symptoms including anxiety, depression, which can be high functioning, self-alienation, and a loss of self.

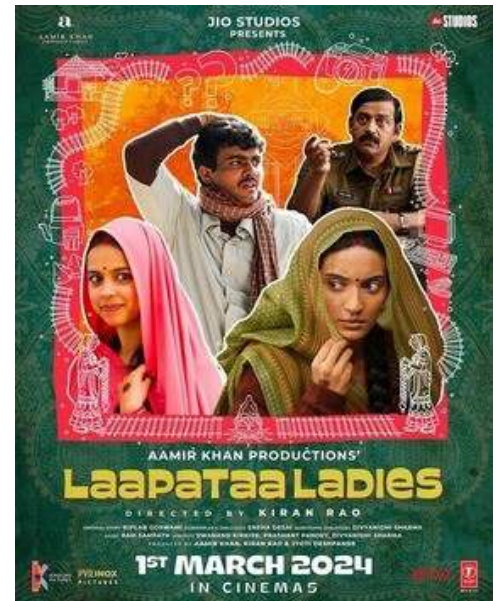
The term itself was originally coined by American doctors to describe the distress experienced by housewives in the 1940s and 1960s. These doctors believed unhappy women were a result of lost femininity or madness. After all, a house, a husband, a couple of beautiful children, and a lifetime of free labor are just what women needed to be happy, right? It wasn't until the 70s that women themselves rejected the understanding of the housewife syndrome and protested that the true cause of women's unhappiness was rooted in their cultural and societal oppression.

In the 2023 Bollywood film *Laapataa Ladies*, one scene perfectly encapsulates this issue. In a moment shared between Jaya and Deepak's mom, Jaya compliments the latter on her cooking and asks why she doesn't make her favorite dish from childhood. The mom replies, "Now women's likes are supposed to count or something?" She then talks about how, after cooking for everyone else for such a long time, she's forgotten what she likes.

Recently, the 2025 film *Mrs.* similarly brought the issue to light. Protagonist Richa cooked and cleaned, but that was not what made her unhappy. It was the eradication of her identity and self-worth that pushed her over the edge. The difference is that she got out. Her mother-in-law, however, was not awarded the luxury, as countless others are not either.

Whenever any debate takes place about the state of homemakers in Pakistan, it is almost always met with one of two sentiments: "Well, my mother is not oppressed," and "So you want all women to work, eliminating the role of housewives?" But it's important to note that the purpose of bringing up this topic is not to constantly argue about these issues, but rather, to liberate the very women they affect.

The psychological and emotional suffering that homemakers endure is severe. As the unsung heroes of society, their labor is the foundation that allows the world to function, yet their struggles go unrecognized and unaddressed, with their work undervalued.



Though liberation itself looks different for every woman in every society, if one wants the homemaker in their life to not live in despair, they should start by learning about who they are or were in the first place. People in Pakistan are always at odds with labeling themselves as feminists, but I always found my reason at home.

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You may also like: [A 1400-Year Legacy: The Rights of Women in Islam](#)



Article

# Gender Disparity In Pakistan – A Disease: Causes, Consequences And Cure

About the Author



Yaseen Khan, is a graduate of National University of Modern Languages (Peshawar) in English Literature and Linguistics. He is keenly interested in exploring and writing on social issues and global affairs.

# Introduction

Men and women, being the building blocks of society, play an equally important role in the thriving of human civilization. Keeping in view the equal importance of both, it is valid to claim that a balanced relationship between the two and gender parity in society is an essential component of social, political, and economic prosperity.

The more a region respects the status of women, the more it is balanced and harmonious. The ground reality of the developing countries, however, presents a capsized picture where the social, political, and economic rights of the opposite gender

are usually brushed aside. Being a developing country, Pakistan is unfortunately not an exception to this grim reality. In fact, the national and international indexes have put Pakistan in the lowest ebbs of gender-based rankings.

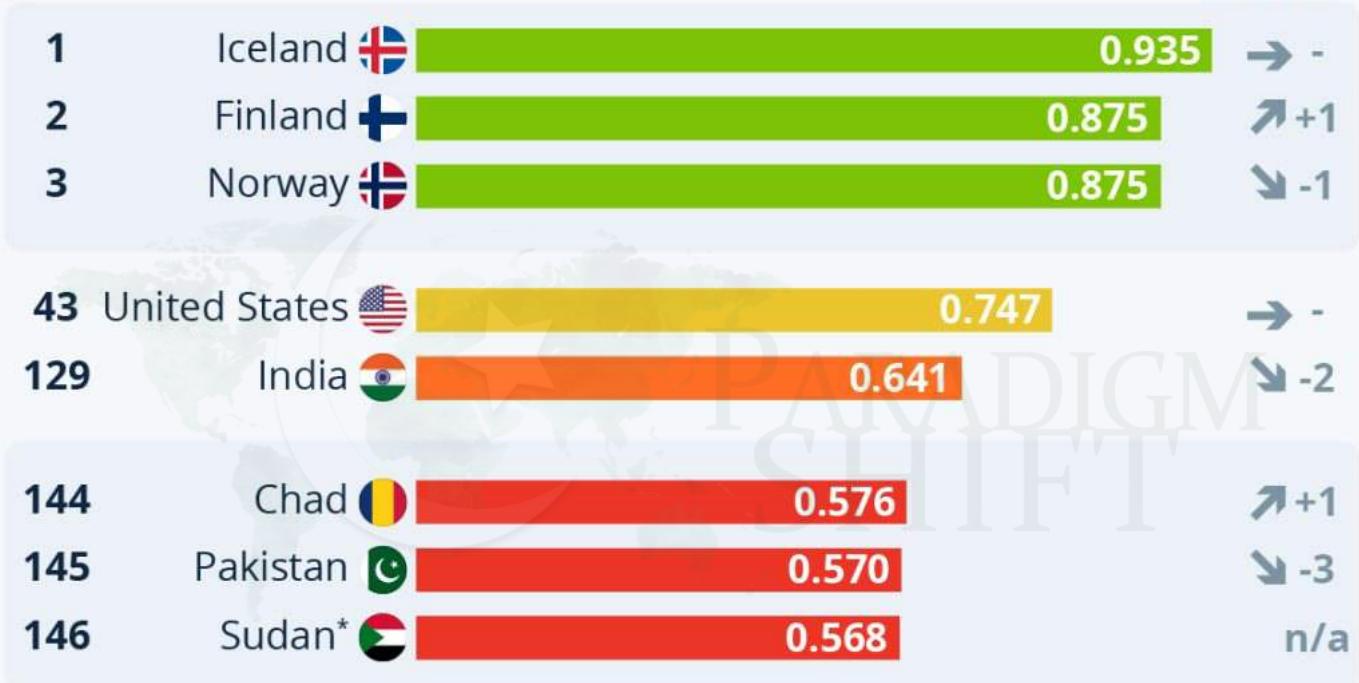
For instance, the [World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2025](#) ranks Pakistan 148th out of 148 countries in the world. This ranking is indeed alarming because it not only exposes the suppression of almost half of the country's population, but it also reveals one of the key obstacles to the prosperity of the country. Hence, this injustice could be labelled as a social ailment.



# Best and Worst Countries for Gender Equality

Global Gender Gap Index 2024 rankings  
(1 = full gender parity)

Rank change  
from 2023



\* New to index in 2024

Based on the following indicators: Economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, health and survival, political empowerment

Source: World Economic Forum



statista

Best and Worst Countries for Gender Equality by Anna Fleck licensed by Statista under CC BY-ND

The causes of this ailment are diverse, with the patriarchal structures being the leading factor. In the same way, the prejudiced mentality, linguistic bias, irresponsible media representation, and lack of access to education add further layers of immunity to the social pathology. Consequently, the sickness manifests itself in the form of detrimental symptoms such as gender-based violence, economic stagnation, literacy deficit, political turmoil, and social chaos. Therefore, keeping in view the importance of women's empowerment and the lethal impacts of gender disparity, it is crucial to pay solemn and sincere attention to the issue and formulate certain pragmatic policies in order to cure the malady. In this regard, linking the parameters of the National Finance Commission (NFC) Award with women's empowerment is the need of the hour.

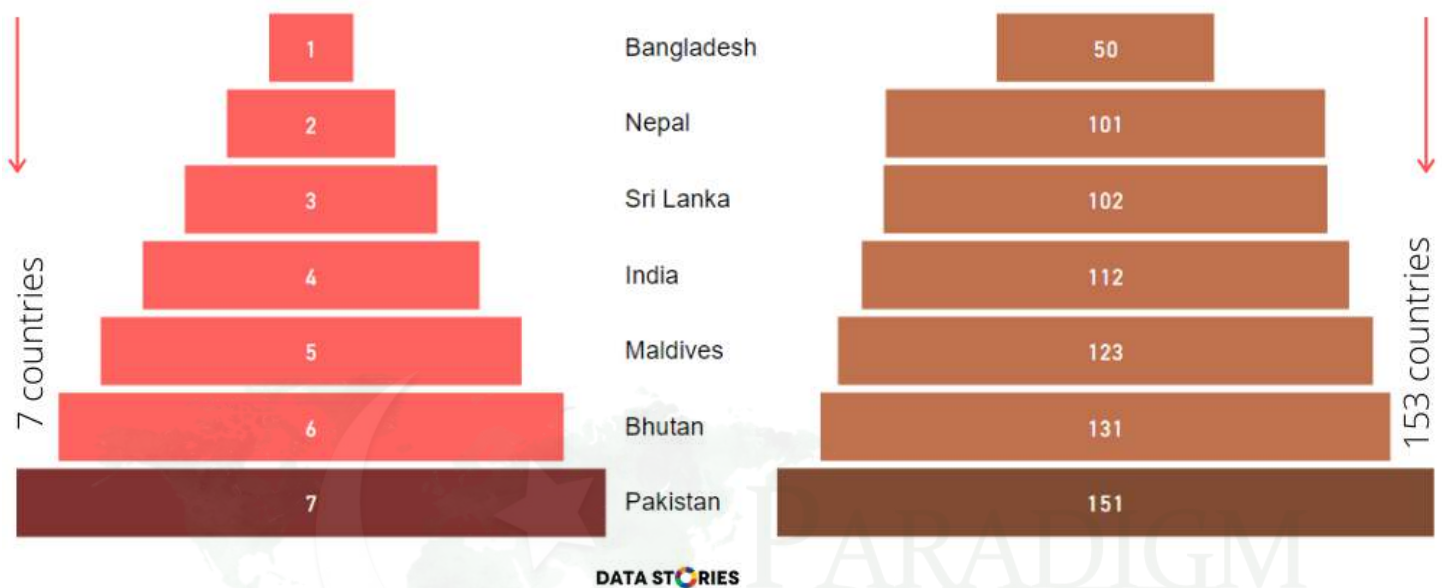
Alongside, investing in women's literacy through [incentivised education](#), and encouraging women's participation in the economic sector through flexible and women-friendly policies can substantially address the menace of gender inequality in the country. For this initiative, the implementation of the legal system, which has been codified in the 1973 constitution, is of utmost importance. Last but not least, the constructive utilization of media with respect to women's empowerment can yield certain laudable outcomes, such as an enhancement in women's participation and national awareness regarding the rights of women.

There are numerous factors responsible for gender disparity in the country. However, it would not be misleading to claim that the very root of the issue is the patriarchal social system, characterized by the dominance of male members in every sphere of society. Moving ahead, the patriarchal structures breed the subsequent factors responsible for gender discrimination, such as lack of access to education, restricted participation in the economic domains, prejudiced, misconstrued linguistic patterns, irresponsible media representation, and so on. These factors collectively reduce the role and competence of women to certain limited tasks, particularly domestic chores and reproduction.

# Global Gender Gap Index 2020

## South Asia ranking

## South Asia in world ranking



## Patriarchal Society: The Root Cause of Women's Subjugation

Patriarchal society, which is characterized by the hegemony of male members over the social, political, and economic domains, is the leading cause of gender disparity. The men monopolizing the power corridors eventually cast aside the role of their female counterparts. Consequently, roles are divided based on gender, and a clear binarism is established between the two equally important building blocks of society. However, the binary is allocated unjust attributions in the form of stereotypical labels, and the importance of one is compromised by the over-importance of the other. Subsequently, the role of the male members is expanded to decision-making and power exercise, while the role of the females is limited to domestic chores and reproduction. Therefore, patriarchy, in all its forms, could be labelled as the very root of the injustice that substantially cherishes the subsequent causes of gender disparity. For example, the [UN Women Pakistan's 2023](#) report sums up that the Pakistani society is highly patriarchal and repressive, due to which the country is subjected to an incessant discrimination and violence against women.

## Lack of Access to Education: A Catalysing Factor in Gender Discrimination

The deficit of literacy is another leading cause behind the gender gap. Despite Article 25 (A) of the 1973 constitution, the ratio of literacy in the country does not really present an encouraging picture. According to the UNICEF estimates, around 25.1 million Pakistani children are out of school, with the female children being more than half of the total assessments. Similarly, the [Pakistan Bureau of Statistics' \(PBS\) 2026](#) report reveals that the current literacy rate of Pakistan is around 63%, which in itself is not an encouraging figure, while the tragedy is further aggravated by the fact that there is a huge gap between male and female literacy in the country. As per the same report, the male literacy rate is 70% while the female literacy rate is just 55%. This gap is verily shocking because it clearly indicates that nearly half of the Pakistani women are illiterate. Now, this is concerning because the illiterate women, being unaware of their legal rights, cannot even resist the injustice done to them in any form. Consequently, child marriages are on the peak, particularly in the rural areas of the country.

## Restricted Participation in the Economic Sector: A Triggering Element in Gender Disparity

Economic stability is believed to be the soul of individual and national prosperity as it directs the human capital of the country constructively, and ultimately leads to a laudable human development. Having said this, it is also imperative to mention the current economic profile of the country. Despite being a nuclear power, Pakistan is unfortunately the only country among the atomic states with less than half a trillion economy. The current GDP of Pakistan, as per the [Economic Survey](#), is around \$411 billion. It is, however, worth mentioning that out of the 49.28% female population of the country, only 22.8% women are engaged in the labour force. Regrettably, the [International Labour Organization \(ILO\) 2025](#) reveals that this chunk receives comparatively 30% less wages per month than their male counterparts. Now, this disparity is again startling, because on the one hand, it discourages the participation of women in the economic field, and on the other hand, it further intensifies the financial dependency of women. As a result, an economically dependent woman cannot make independent decisions, whether that be about her personal life or social life.

## Biased Linguistic Patterns: Dividing the Gender into Partial Binaries

Language, being the tool for social interaction and personal expression, plays a key role in shaping an individual's and social behaviour. In patriarchal society, the language is often stereotypical and prejudiced, in which linguistic items for the male members are glamorized, whereas for female members, they are generally demonized. This practice has been in vogue for centuries. For instance, the icon of English literature, William Shakespeare, equates women with "frailty," while the founder of modern political science, Niccolò Machiavelli, personifies "fortuna" with femininity, which could be captivated while being harsh, decisive, and aggressive.



The same patterns could be observed in almost every patriarchal language. For example, in the Urdu language, the woman's identity i.e. bangles is analogized with weakness, as is often said,

*"main ne choorya nahe pehni"* (i have not put on bangles), while in Pashto language, the women role is staunchly restricted to the four walls of the house, as it is usually said, *"khazi la ya kor di ya gor di"* (for a woman, either home or grave).

This is the reason that Pamela Fishman came up with the Linguistic Freedom theory, which posits that, due to the patriarchal society, women generally lack linguistic autonomy. Hence, language plays a key role in enshrining gender inequality with the help of numerous sexist linguistic items and structures.

## Irresponsible Media Representation: A Triggering Component in Gender Inequality

It would not be an exaggeration to argue that the contemporary era is shaped by media, whether that be in the form of printed media or social media, but comparatively, the latter is a key influencing tool in the current times. Though the productive role of media in exposing gender-based discrimination cannot be denied, the implicit destructive role of media, particularly social media, also deserves a critical gaze. By delayering its negative face, it is evident that social media plays a notorious role in embedding women's objectification.

For instance, through advertisements such as *Tapal Danedar* tea or the *Brite* detergent, it is internalized that a woman is an integral member of the kitchen. Similarly, by promoting children's products such as diapers, only through women, indirectly indicates that the sole purpose of a female is to look after the children.

Moreover, the promotion of toxic Alpha male psyche through movies such as "*Kabir*



*Singh*" and "*Anima*" is potentially disastrous for a sane and harmonious society. Such a representation through media deserves question marks because it either directly or indirectly shapes the mentality and behavior of the viewers in a biased manner.

# Consequences of Gender Discrimination

Like a disease, gender discrimination manifests itself in the form of excruciating symptoms. Therefore, to label gender discrimination as one of the root causes of economic stagnation would not be merely a titanic claim. In the same way, gender discrimination paves a feasible way to gender-based violence, which, indeed, is one of the pressing issues of the motherland. Likewise, the ailment also leads to diplomatic doldrums and a literacy deficit. All in all, these symptoms haunt the country both in the short term and long-term consequences, and eventually exacerbate the miseries of the Pakistani citizens.

## Economic Stagnation: A Direct Outcome of the Disease

As is obvious from the national and international calculations, the economic performance of the country is not up to the mark. Plenty of factors are indeed responsible for aggravating such derailment, but among them, gender disparity occupies the top hierarchy. Women make up almost half of the national population. However, with grave concern, only a negligible chunk of the total population is engaged in the economic sector.

The [International Labour Organization](#) estimates that only 22.8% of the total female population is involved in the labour force. This is concerning because a large number of social members are not even performing in one of the very crucial sectors of the country.

Again, the situation in the outskirts of the country is much more discouraging, where a female is allowed to labor in other houses but not in soft entrepreneurial ventures or even governmental services. This exclusion of women from the economic sector drastically perpetuates poverty, which, according to the [Express Tribune](#), stands at 44.7% as of 2025. Hence, it would not be complex to draw a parallel between the economic fragility of the country and gender discrimination.

## Gender Based Violence: An Immediate Impact of the Disparity

Defined by the United Nations, gender-based violence is any act of aggression against the opposite gender that results in physical or psychological harm. Further expanding the domain of GBV, the United Nations argues that the violence could either be in the form of direct aggression or structural violence.



As per this definition, Pakistan presents an unwelcoming picture because both forms of violence are in constant practice in the country. According to the [United Nations Population Fund \(UNFP\)](#), 28% of women aged 15-49 have experienced physical violence, and 6% have experienced sexual violence. 34% of ever-married women have experienced spousal physical, sexual, or emotional violence in Pakistan.

Similarly, the [Human Rights Commission of Pakistan \(HRCP\)](#) reported the cases of 405 femicides in 2024 alone, while the Smile Again Foundation claims that nearly 200 females face acid attacks per annum. This is indeed distressing because it not only depicts the pathetic conditions of women in the country, but also gives a solid justification to the external forces to capitalize on this unfortunate reality of Pakistan in their own favour.

## Literacy Challenges: A By-product of Gender Discrimination

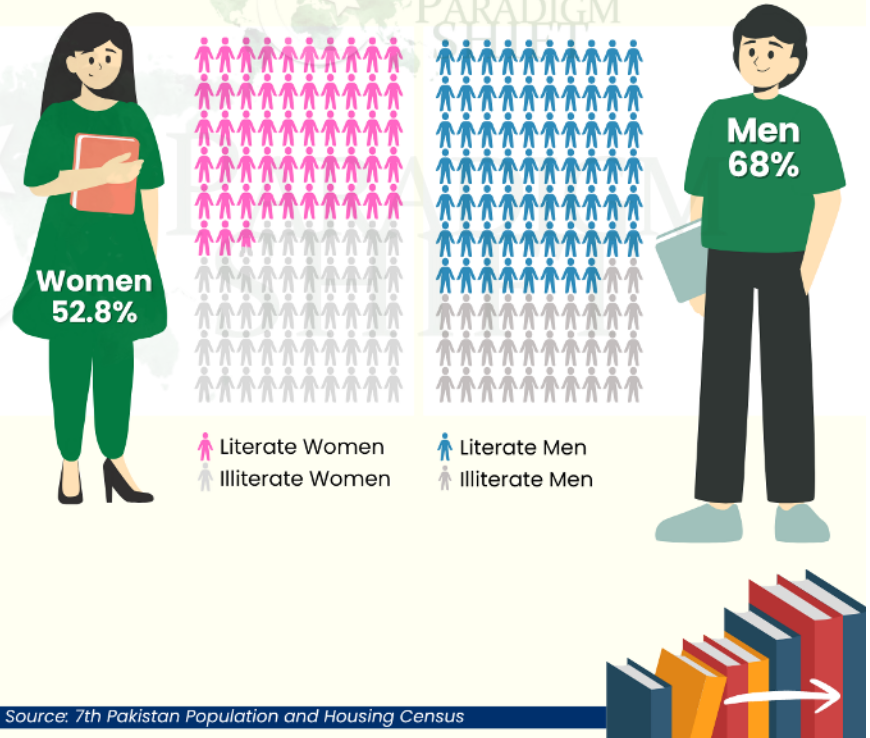
Nevertheless, Pakistan is endowed with around 63% youth of the total population under the age of 30, but instead of an asset, it remains a liability for the society because this huge chunk goes either illiterate or unskilled or even both. Further, the icing on the cake is that there is a substantial gap between male and female literacy. As has already been mentioned, the literacy of males stands at 70% while that of females is around 55% as per the [Pakistan Bureau of Statistics \(PBS\) 2026](#).

Undoubtedly, in the contemporary world, those societies can flourish that have the capabilities to cash in on the potential of their younger population, either in the form of skills or in the form of intellectual enlightenment.

# Pakistan's Literacy Rate



Literacy rate by **gender (%)**:



For instance, China, Japan, and Germany. However, in Pakistan, this opportunity unfortunately remains unexplored, in which the younger females are comparatively more sidelined. Thus, the result is obvious in the form of collective ignorance, petty crimes, hyper-impulsivity, and social, mental, political, and financial violence against women.

## Diplomatic Doldrums: An Aftermath of the Disparity

A strong diplomatic engagement is an indicator of healthy relations in global politics. The health and strength of diplomacy is ensured by multiple factors such as economic stability, political maturity, gender parity, and human rights protection. The antonyms of all the aforementioned factors exist in the country, due to which the diplomatic leverage of Pakistan remains in the lower hierarchies as compared to the regional competitors. Among these factors, the scarcity of gender parity could be given a potential weightage, because in civilized states, this factor is given utmost importance. Those states where the role and responsibilities of women are restricted are looked down upon by the global community. Hence, there is a lack of this noble quality of gender equality; therefore, the diplomatic health of the country is also in limbo.

## Cure of the Disease

With a sane mind, it could be claimed that gender discrimination in the world generally and the developing countries particularly is behaving like a deadly disease that has impaired the social, political, and economic potential of human civilization, and Pakistan is obviously not an exception. In fact, Pakistan is one of the key victims of the disorder, being constantly haunted by the infection in the form of femicides and other relevant heinous crimes.

Therefore, a rational counter-approach needs to be in the form of a pragmatic treatment which comprises both preventive measures as well as a comprehensive therapy framework. Having said this, reshaping the parameters of the NFC Award, investing in national literacy, ensuring responsible utilization of media, and accumulating the models of the developed countries as per the national needs are of utmost importance.

## Reshaping the Parameters of the NFC Award

The [National Finance Commission](#), dealt under article 160 of the 1973 constitution, administers the distribution of the national divisible pool among the four provinces of Pakistan. As per Article 160 of the Constitution, 57.5% of net federal tax revenues are allocated to the provinces based on population ratio, revenue generation, backwardness, and inverse population density, while 42.5% is retained by the centre. In order to make the division productive and female-friendly, the state needs to add a parameter by earmarking a specific amount for women's empowerment in the distribution. Through this way, the provinces will be encouraged to invest in women's agency. Therefore, the disparity will be bridged to a remarkable extent.

## Investing in National Literacy

As is frequently said, "education is the key to change" because it not only equips the younger generation for future challenges, but also reforms their individual and social psyche in a profound way. Once the women are equipped with education, they will be able to defend their social and legal rights. Therefore, it is imperative to uplift the educational standards of the country. In such upliftment, educational quality and equality, as has been ensured by Article 25(A) of the Constitution, need to be prioritized.



This policy would be comparatively more productive for the rural areas where the early marriages of the female children are preferred, while their right to education is turned a deaf ear and a blind eye. To make this policy more outcome-oriented, the government needs to incentivize women's education. Furthermore, the future generation, both male and female, equally need to be familiarized with digital literacy, which is going to shape the future. **For this whole framework, however, the educational budget needs to be increased, which is currently just 0.8% of the total budget.**

## Ensuring a Responsible Use of Media

The media, without any doubt, is a leading tool in shaping and influencing the contemporary human society, which indeed is subject to both merits and demerits. Nevertheless, the constructive utilization of media can ensure significant and promising outcomes. For instance, Discover Pakistan is a social media platform that shares the stories of inspiring women on their social media outlets that boosts the confidence and motivation of the viewers. Therefore, such initiatives of social media need to be encouraged and expanded in order to yield maximum outcomes from the positive face of the opportunity. Similarly, through social media, the traditional notions and binaries, which assign certain stereotypical and misinformed notions to the identity of women, could be potentially countered. Last but not least, social media could be used as a feasible platform for raising national and international awareness regarding the rights of women.

## Adopting the Examples of Other Countries

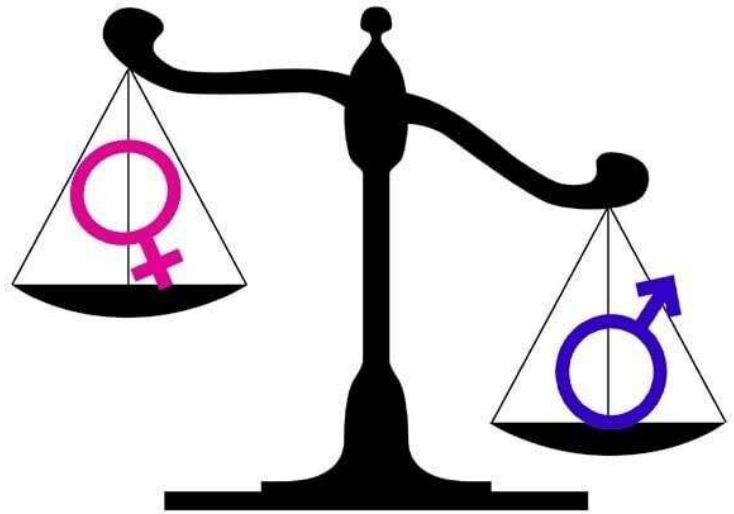
As argued by the modernization theory, gender parity and women's empowerment could be ensured through economic stability and industrialization because with such transformation, the traditional gender roles are waived, and women are allowed to participate in the economic sector of the country, which subsequently expands their choices in other spheres as well. This model is in vogue in almost all the developed and, to some extent, the developing countries. For instance, the western countries, as well as some of the eastern countries like India and Bangladesh. Interestingly, the Indian government is now promoting the slogan of "Beti Parhao, Beti Bachao" (Educate the Daughter, Save the Daughter), which is verily a laudable step with respect to women's empowerment. Similarly, Bangladesh uplifted the status of women by encouraging women's entrepreneurship through feasible loans. In the same way, Community Policing, adopted by the developed countries, which is relatively a new model in criminology, needs to be incorporated in Pakistan to address gender-based violence, domestic violence, and other heinous crimes, such as femicide and acid attacks. In addition, the integration of digital tools in preventing gender-based crimes can also facilitate positive outcomes, as the Zainab Alert Response and Recovery Act (ZARRA) app has been implemented by Pakistan on the framework of the US Amber Alert- America's Missing: Broadcast Emergency Response.

## Implementing the Constitutional Rights of Women

The 1973 constitution of Pakistan has vividly codified the rights of women through multiple articles. For instance, Article 25 of the Constitution ensures equality of all citizens before the law and the prevention of discrimination based on sex. Article 25 (A) declares free and compulsory education as the fundamental right of all children of the country. Similarly, Article 32 ensures the participation of women in the local political system of the country. Likewise, article 34 claims equal participation of women in all spheres of national life, while article 35 guarantees the protection of marriage, mother, and child. These are some of the articles that proclaim the equality and special protection of women. If these articles are implemented sincerely, multiple issues could be resolved substantially.

## Conclusion

To wrap up, gender disparity is one of the key ills that has disrupted the social, political, and economic fabric of Pakistan. Like an ailment, the evil has multi-fold risk factors, ranging from the patriarchal structure of the country and expanding to a substantial level of illiteracy, negligible performance in the economic sector, lower representation in the political system, stereotypical linguistic forms, and irresponsible media depiction. Consequently, the disease makes itself conspicuous in the form of social disruption, characterized by femicides, domestic clashes, and gender-based violence, and poor economic participation marked by the exclusion of a large number of individuals from the economic sector.



Similarly, this social evil also leads to poor educational status, a degraded international image, and weak diplomatic standing. However, as Mohsin Hamid puts it, “**the pessimists may be right, but we have reasons for optimism too**”; therefore, if society paid serious attention to the issue, it could be substantially addressed. In this regard, reshaping the parameters of the NFC Award, investing in national literacy, and ensuring responsible and constructive use of media can prove fruitful. Last but not least, implementing the legal obligations of the constitution in letter and spirit, and adopting the developmental models of other countries, can ensure a significant social balance and gender harmony in the country.

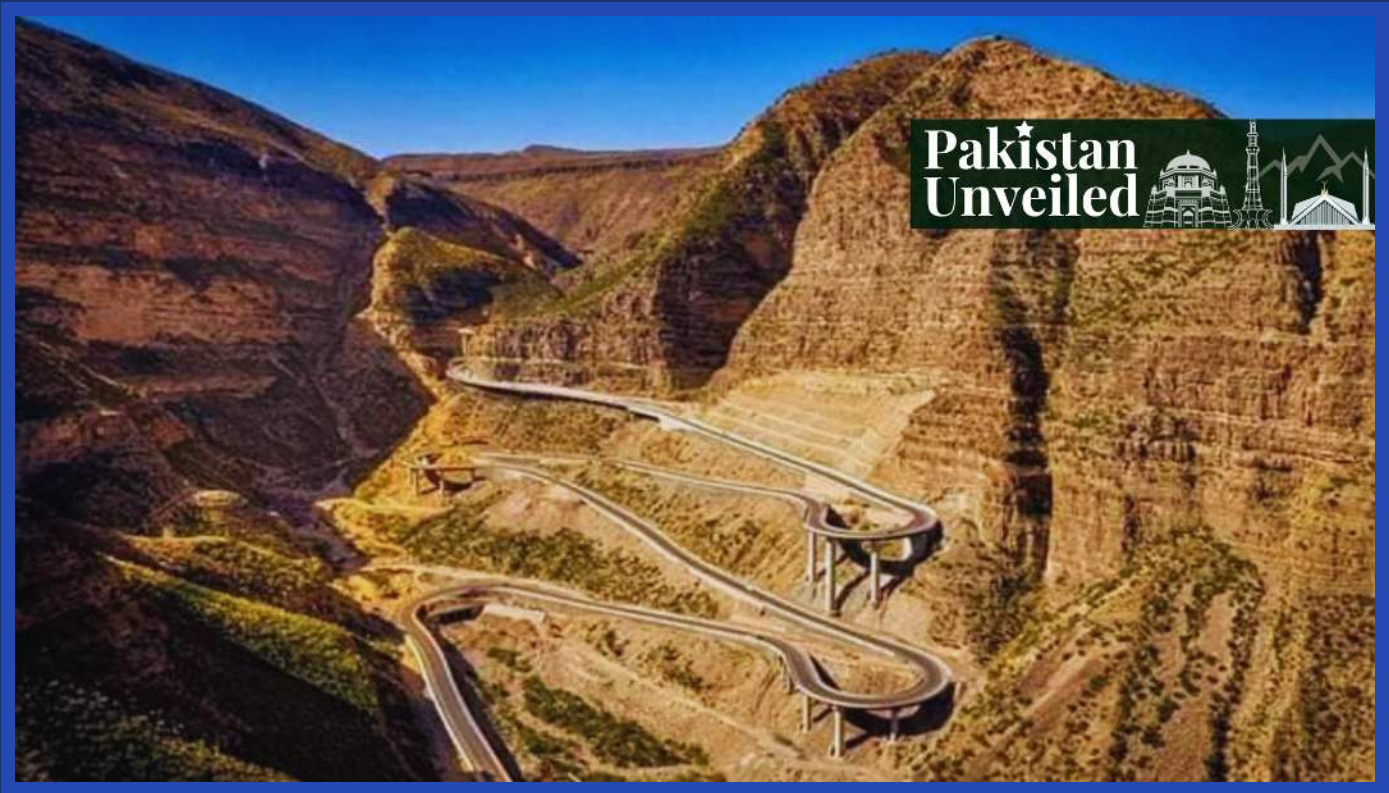
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# A Guide to Fort Munro Hill Station, Pakistan

## About the Author



M. Hamza Tanveer is a political analyst specialising in South Asian and Middle Eastern affairs. His work focuses on religious nationalism, regional security, and minority rights. He has been featured in *Stratheia*, *Pakistan Today*, *Pakistan Observer*, and the *Asian Mirror*. He is also working as a research analyst and political commentator for *Paradigm Shift* and contributes to the monthly magazine of *Nearpeer*.

## Fort Munro's Location

Pakistan is blessed with one of the most beautiful landscapes. Its terrain is highly diverse, ranging from some of the world's highest mountains and the largest number of glaciers to vast deserts and fertile plains. Pakistan is abundant with hill stations. Most of the popular hill stations are in the north of the country. However, there are many hill stations in Balochistan and South Punjab. Among them is one of the most scenic and beautiful hill stations, located in the west of the Dera Ghazi Khan District of Punjab, called Fort Munro. It is part of the Sulaiman mountain range near the junction of South Punjab and Balochistan.



**“Fort Munro hills view” by Leghari is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).**

# Fort Munro Hill Station's Colonial History

Fort Munro is one of the ancient regions of South Asia. Its history dates back to ancient times. According to some accounts, a giant asteroid struck the region more than 60 million years ago, leading to the extinction of the dinosaurs. The thin grey-brown line on the rocks of Fort Munro serves as critical geological evidence of this event. The region was discovered by Sir Robert Groves Sandeman, who named it after a British administrator of the region, Colonel Andrew Munro, a Scottish officer in the British army who later became commissioner and superintendent of the Derajat and Multan during the colonial period.



**“Fort Munro Circa 1896 – panoramio” by Mir Khan is licensed under [CC BY 3.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/).**

## Deputy Commissioner House and Sandeman Lodge

During the British colonial era, Fort Munro served as a summer headquarters for the commissioner of Multan. Several buildings, including the Sandeman Lodge, the District Commissioner's Office, and the Commissioner's House, were constructed in the area during that period. Even today, a small Christian cemetery near the Deputy Commissioner's House serves as a reminder of the colonial era for tourists.

## Fort Munro Height

Fort Munro hill station is located at a height of 6,450 feet above sea level. Due to its massive height, the area is often referred to as the "Jewel of South Punjab."

## Fort Munro Weather

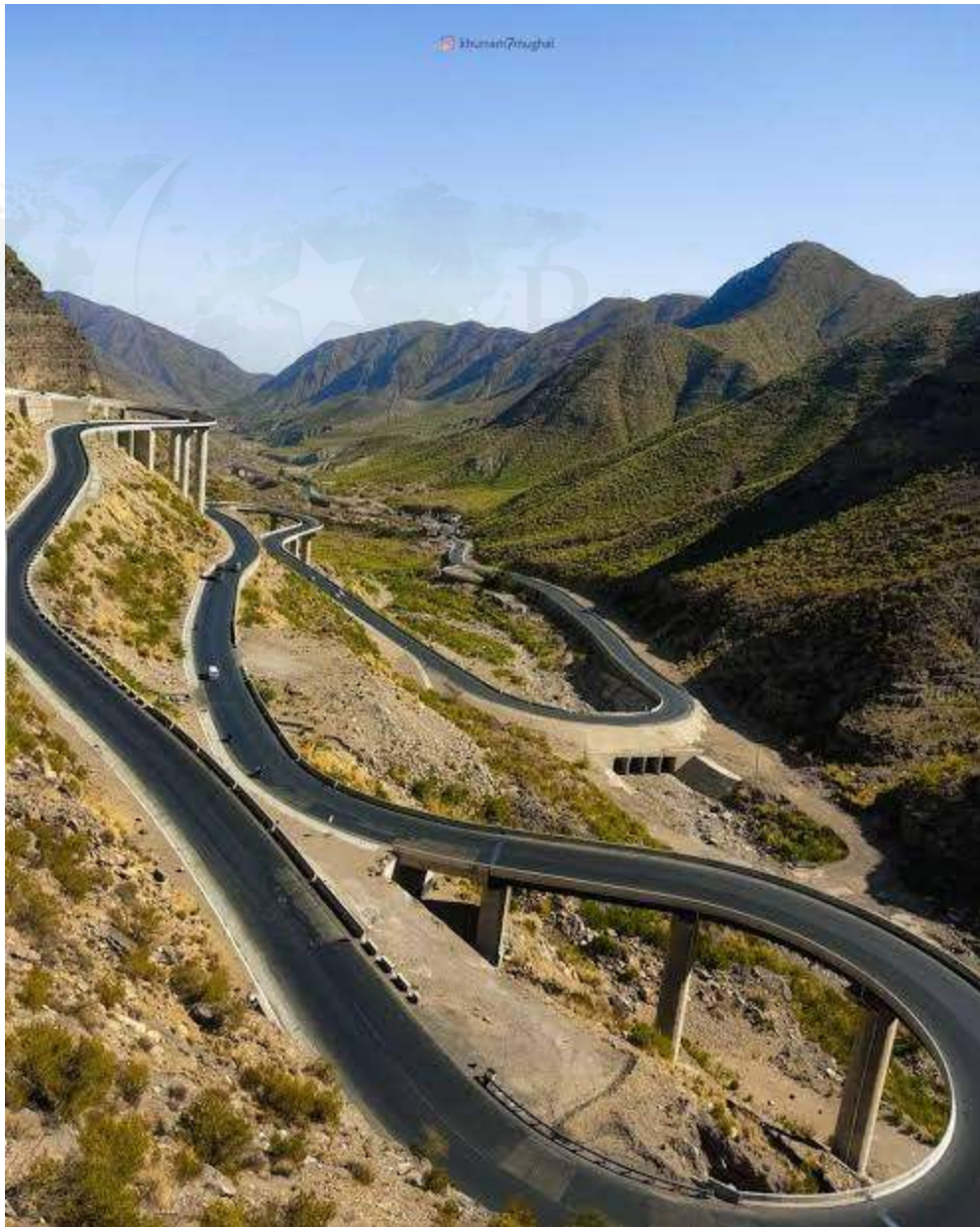
The Fort Munro hill station in South Punjab has a temperate climate compared with the surrounding plains, cool in summer and chilly in winter. Due to its cold weather, the hill station is also called the "Murree of the South Punjab." Its climate was the key reason that the British colonizers made the region their summer headquarters. However, Fort Munro's temperature can drop to the freezing point during winter. It is one of the few places in the Punjab province that receives occasional snowfall in winter. Therefore, tourists are advised to take warm clothes with them during their visit to the area, especially in winter. Tourists are advised to visit the area during summer, from May to August, due to its mild weather, and the landscape is lush green during this period.

## Fort Munro Distance

Due to its scenic views, historical architecture, and temperate climate, many local and foreign tourists visit this destination each year. It is easily accessible for tourists from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab. The hill station of Fort Munro is located 85 kilometers from Dera Ghazi Khan city and around 185 kilometers from Multan. The distance from the hill station to Loralai, Balochistan, via N2, is about 202 km. For tourists from Islamabad, the travel time from the capital city to the Fort Munro hill station is about 10 hours. Its distance from Lahore is about 520 km.

## Nearby Tourism Destinations and Accommodation in Fort Munro

Fort Munro hill station is a safe tourist destination. Tourists find the colonial-era architecture in the region very fascinating. The construction of Asia's second-largest steel bridge has further enhanced the beauty of the hill station. Tourists can also visit the Taunsa Barrage, the Musa Khel Dam, the Fort Munro Steel Bridge, the Shrine of Hazrat Shah Muhammad Suleman Taunsaavi, and the 800-year-old Sakhi Sarwar Shrine.



**“Fort Munro Steel Bridges” by Leghari is licensed under [CC BY 4.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).**

Moreover, hillside paths around Fort Munro are ideal for trekking, hiking, and exploring the surrounding landscape. Tourists can easily find accommodation in the area at a comparatively low price. The TDCP resort in the area offers reasonable accommodation at a very cheap price. Tourists, especially from Central and Southern Punjab, Sindh, and Balochistan, must visit Fort Munro hill station to enjoy its scenic views and explore the region.

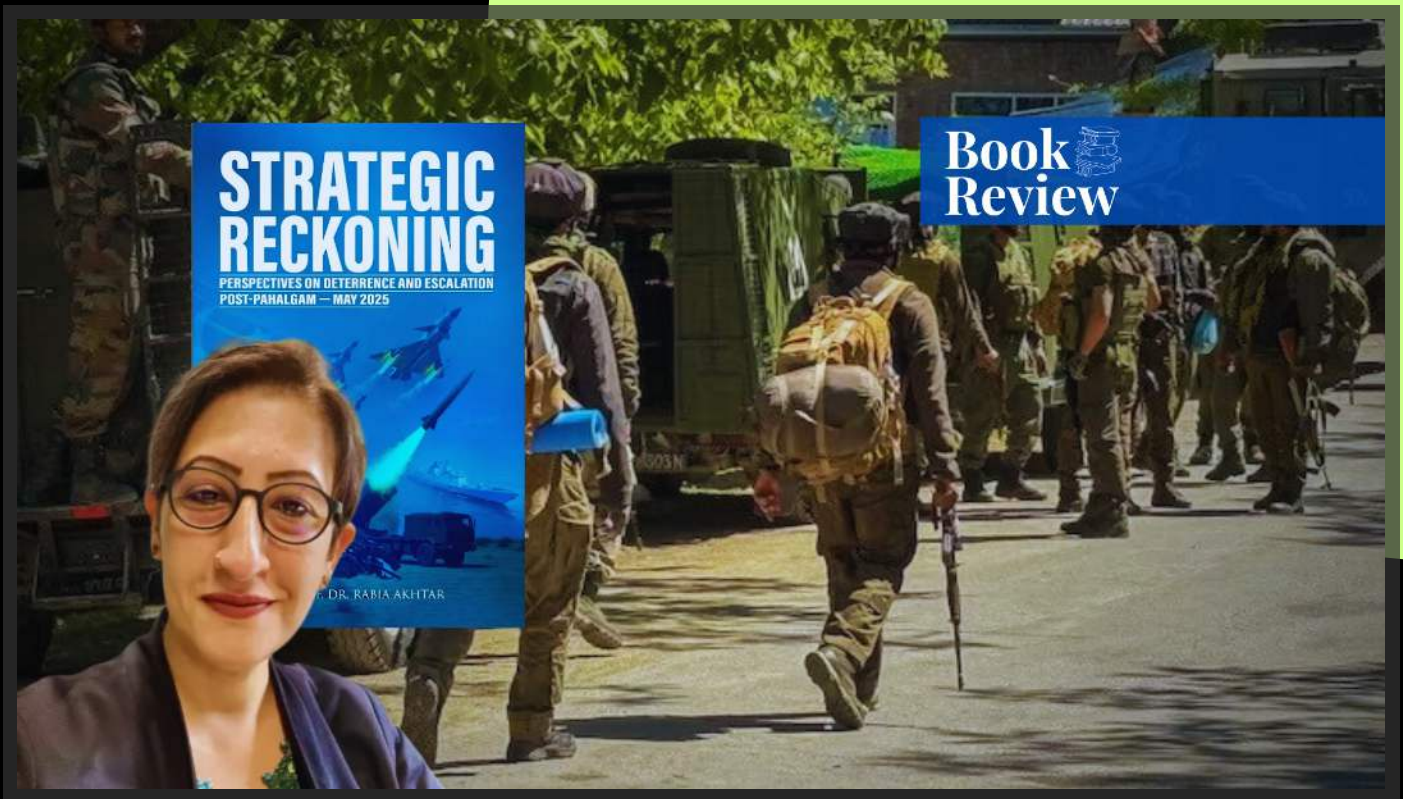
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# Strategic Reckoning: Perspectives on Deterrence and Escalation Post- Pahalgam

## About the Author



Syed Hamza Mahroof is an international relations graduate from the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad. He is a research intern at the Centre for International Strategic Studies (AJK). He has practical experience in research encompassing the evolving geo-economic and political dynamics of South Asia, with a particular emphasis on climate resilience and climate change.

*Strategic Reckoning: Perspectives on Deterrence and Escalation Post-Pahalgam – May 2025*

provides a thorough examination of one of the most disastrous military confrontations in South Asia's history. While highlighting the fallout of the [2025 Pahalgam crisis in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir](#), the book elaborates on the crisis in the broader domain of India-Pakistan rivalry, nuclear deterrence posture, domestic political measures, and shifting international partnerships. It provides a multi-tiered account that is as much about South Asia's strategic instability as it is about a single flashpoint event.

## The Stability-Instability Paradox and Doctrinal Shifts

The central strength of the book lies in the analysis of deterrence under a pressure posture. The book describes the long-standing India-Pakistan dyad as a case of the "stability-instability" paradox. It explains the [Cold Start Doctrine](#) of India and its impact on the traditional deterrence

framework. The book argues that technological advancements, such as information warfare, cyber operations, and precision strike capabilities in recent times, have compressed the timelines for decision-making, and the long-term impact of



these measures on South Asia's political posture will be drastic. Further, the thresholds of escalation have faded. *Strategic Reckoning* highlights that the Pahalgam crisis has given a reality check that sub-conventional violence keeps on going under the nuclear shadow. However, the presence of [nuclear deterrence forbids full-scale war](#).

Military posturing during the time of crisis is particularly discussed. India's post-2019 doctrinal shift, especially after the abrogation of Article 370, has been mentioned, and Pakistan's emphasis on [credible minimum deterrence](#) and full-spectrum deterrence is analyzed not just as a declaratory policy but as a part of a signaling framework to deter limited war measures. By comparing the doctrinal shifts of both countries, the author argues that one side's attempt to enhance the deterrence capability at the same time fuels the other's threat perceptions. It elaborates on how contemporary conflicts are being shaped by changing warfare domains. The warfare between India and Pakistan is taken as an example, highlighting the changing domain of warfare from conventional to information warfare.

## Domestic Pressures and the Kashmir Flashpoint

Attention towards the impact of domestic politics on decision-making is one of its important contributions. It argues that nationalist movements, disinformation, and political polarization close the gap for de-escalatory diplomacy measures. It explains the impacts of internal political pressure in shaping foreign policy measures. Resultantly, the local incidents become internationalized for the sake of domestic legitimacy battles.

It discusses the long-standing [Kashmir issue](#) and highlights its political as well as normative dimensions. Kashmir is described as a nuclear flashpoint in the region and [a major driver for confrontation](#). The historical evolution of the dispute is highlighted while referring to the United Nations resolutions calling for a plebiscite.

While examining the aftermath of the 2019 constitutional changes in IIOJK, *Strategic Reckoning* argues that these developments have changed the political landscape in such a way that they complicate conflict management. It suggests that the role of regional organizations such as SAARC should be redefined with the implementation of new risk reduction mechanisms.

The book argues about the limits of the external actor's role in the [May conflict of 2025](#). It states that mediation portrayed a great symbolic gesture rather than a preventive measure. Competing global interests and contradicting geopolitical interests have limited the mediation from international actors. Thus, it suggests that collective measures inside the region are more important than depending on outside actors to gain stability.

## Grey Zone Warfare and the Search for a New Equilibrium

*Strategic Reckoning* examines the use of hybrid techniques and grey zone strategies in warfare. Political and military objectives are achieved by using these tools. It argues that these strategies, including the proxy engagements and information warfare, blur the line between peace and conflict. Further, it points out that grey zone strategies in the South Asian region are increasing the risk of miscalculation. Low-intensity conflicts are normalized, and the already weak deterrence posture is strained further.

It explains that these escalations at rapid instances are not related to the attainment of capabilities. These escalations are engraved from historical perspectives, past rivalries, and unresolved disputes. It further shapes the political posture, and the resulting military doctrines are formed on its basis. Particularly, historical mistrust shapes the mindset, and ultimately, these inherited perceptions narrow the space for diplomatic measures.



It states that the old equilibrium posture has not been able to maintain stability in the region. Thus, it should be replaced with a new equilibrium of deterrence. South Asia may deal with several military standoffs in the coming decade if the situation remains the same. A renewed appreciation for strategic clarity and restraint should be adopted. The arms race between two nuclear neighbors in terms of capabilities guarantees no one's victory; it elongates the degree of loss.

While analyzing the volume, it can be extracted that the major strength of the book lies in its multidimensional approach. It covers the strategic and analytical depth and also talks about the historical approaches. It is suitable for both policymakers and academic audiences.

It works as a descriptive set of pieces for critical thinkers and analysts who are keen on studying the changing dynamics of South Asia's politics. The book elaborates on different dimensions of crisis, and the argumentation is structured logically, moving from narrative rebuilding to policy implications.

*Strategic Reckoning* situates the Pahalgam crisis within the lineage of earlier crises like the Mumbai attacks of 2008 and the 2019 Pulwama-Balakot event. Some critics may argue that Pakistan's internal security challenges should have been given more space, but the author has focused on illustrating the impact of reactive policy-making on crisis cycles rather than assigning unilateral blame to a single party. Most importantly, the book argues that the strategic environment of South Asia has qualitatively changed. With respect to past decades, the environment has become more volatile following the interplay between rapid mobilization forces and information warfare. It highlights erosion in South Asia's regional strategic stability and suggests different reliable measures for crisis management and risk reduction.

Ultimately, *Strategic Reckoning* is a remarkable contribution to South Asia's security discourse. It reflects the fragility of deterrence in the era of rapid technological advancements. The volume calls for the fact that the end of the old equilibrium doesn't mean everything is over, and nothing can be done; rather, new equilibrium measures should be introduced before any major crisis.

The international system is already strained with regional conflicts, and South Asia remains a nuclear flashpoint with global implications.

Considering the rift in doctrinal shifts, South Asia's next decade is considered to be a dark threshold if the restraint measures are not implemented. Rather than prescribing idealistic solutions, it advocates for the introduction of new confidence-building measures, preventive diplomacy, and crisis management mechanisms. The book is a remarkable contribution to contemporary strategic studies. It works as a reminder that deeper strategic tensions most often lead to a crisis. The message remains sobering yet constructive: if the situation is not controlled by the region's leaders and stakeholders, then the equilibrium will just be remembered as a lost stability that is buried under the weight of strategic misadventure.

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# The Art Of War In Islam: Top Military Strategists in Islam

## About the Author



Syed Hammad Ali is pursuing a BS in International Relations programme from International Islamic University, Islamabad and has a keen interest in research works, policy analysis, defence and strategic studies and conflict resolution.

Islam is considered a complete code of life. From birth to death, it provides **guidance** to its followers in every aspect of life. And war, also known as 'Jihad,' is one of the prominent concepts in Islam. Although war has always been denounced in Islam, if imposed, then it becomes imperative for all Muslims to fight in the way of Allah Almighty. Our beloved Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H) and His (P.B.U.H.) companions have always preferred negotiations over conflict. Nearly every war fought in the history of Islam had been thrust upon them, either through direct challenge or covert means.

In the Quran, Allah Almighty says, *"Be prepared to defend yourself against them, regardless of your capacity for force and warhorses" (8:60)*. Nevertheless, Allah declared, *"And if they desire peace, then grant them the same choice and have faith in Allah..." (8:61)*. This clearly proves the fact that Islam is against **expansionism** and war-mongering; rather, it allows its followers to develop the intent and capability in a defensive mode. This article delves into the strategies developed by major Islamic personalities that resonated with modern-day warfare tactics.

### **The Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)**

The introducer and flag bearer of the religion of Allah Almighty was our Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H). Being a Messenger of God (P.B.U.H.), He represented the highest level of intellect and wisdom. History is evident that through His (P.B.U.H.) deal-making and expert negotiation strategy, He (P.B.U.H.) had always convinced His rivals. **As per the Quran, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) was sent as a mercy to the worlds (21:107).**

As a result, His (P.B.U.H) approach has never been to destroy the adversary or fight wars. No doubt, many battles have been fought during His (P.B.U.H) period, but all were accomplished by His companions. He (P.B.U.H.) himself had never killed a human, be it the enemy or friend. In the battle of Uhud, He (P.B.U.H) placed his soldiers at strategic locations as reserve forces, knowing the fact that the enemy might come from the back to create chaos in His (P.B.U.H.) forces.

One of the most significant events during His (P.B.U.H) reign was the 'Treaty of Hdaybiyyah.' Sources such as Sirah Ibn e Hisham and the Life of the Prophet (P.B.U.H) mentioned that He (P.B.U.H) concluded a pact with Quraysh at a place called Hdaybiyyah, when His (P.B.U.H.) entire caravan was blocked by infidels from performing pilgrimage in Makkah. Instead of waging war against them, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) concluded a deal that favored His (P.B.U.H.) enemies rather than Himself (P.B.U.H.).

Thus, He (P.B.U.H.) preferred persuasion and alliance-making to avoid any bloodshed. However, when Quraysh broke the agreement, He (P.B.U.H.) conquered Makkah without any loss of life through isolating and psychologically pressuring the enemy. Thus, He (P.B.U.H.) became the first Islamic military strategist to introduce the concept of 'non-kinetic warfare,' whereby **tactics** like psychological warfare, alliance making, and patience are used as primary instruments against the adversary.

### **Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (R.A)**

After the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.), His (P.B.U.H.) cousin-brother, Hazrat Ali bin Abi Talib (R.A), is considered to be the most decisive and powerful fighter. History and Islamic literature are evident that whenever Muslims failed to fight the adversary, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) had sent Hazrat Ali (R.A.) to the battlefield to defeat the enemy alone. It would not be exaggerated to say that Hazrat Ali (R.A.) was the best manifestation of the the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H)'s majesty. Hazrat Ali (R.A.) became the first Islamic military strategist to introduce the concept of shock leadership and morale-centric warfare.



Throughout his life, Hazrat Ali (R.A.) entered the battlefield when either the companions failed to control the situation or their morale loosened, creating a sudden shock for the enemy and motivating his forces. The Battle of Khyber is its best manifestation. For almost 39 days, Muslims were failing to control the fortress of Qamus, which was controlled by tyrannical [Jews](#).

Amongst them, the most powerful one was Marhab. Viewing the situation, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.), on the night of the 39th day, said to His (P.B.U.H.) companions, "Tomorrow, I'll hand over the banner to a man who loves Allah and His Messenger (P.B.U.H) and is loved by Allah and His Messenger (P.B.U.H); Allah will grant victory at his hands." On the very next day, he provided a flag to Hazrat Ali (R.A.) and commanded him to fight Marhab.

The appearance of Hazrat Ali (R.A.) on the battlefield came as a shock to all Jews, which created a sense of fear amongst them. Resultantly, he not only killed Marhab but also lifted the heavy door of the fortress, raising the morale of companions to enter and take control of it. In modern-day warfare, this strategy is known as 'forward leadership at a decisive point,' introduced by Clausewitz in his seminal work 'On War.'

### **Hazrat Amr ibn al-As (R.A)**

Another prominent military strategist in the history of Islam was Hazrat Amr bin al-As (R.A.). Being an Egyptian strategist and diplomat, he became the first Muslim fighter to introduce the concept of "Mobile Maneuver Conquest" in the vast deserts of Egypt. His strategy revolves around indirect warfare through intelligence and covert missions. He believed that in order to destroy your enemy, it is highly significant to hurt the [enemy](#) at its weakest point. Thus, his best military campaign was the Siege of the Babylon fort, or the Conquest of Egypt.

Tarikh al-Tabari stated that Hazrat Amr (R.A.) applied the art of tactical movements as opposed to an open military attack on the fortress. Instead, he decided to surround it, block the supplies, and force the Byzantines to give up. Instead of assaulting the mighty Byzantine strongholds, he quickly cut through the desert, cutting off their communication systems, and convinced the citizens to join him or remain neutral.

In this way, he could conquer Egypt with minimal losses. This strategy is reflected in modern-day 'maneuver warfare' introduced by J.F.C. Fuller, a British Officer and Theorist.

### **Hazrat Khalid ibn al-Walid (R.A)**

Hazrat Khalid bin Walid (R.A) is considered one of the top military commanders and strategists in Islamic history. He became the first to introduce the doctrine of "encirclement warfare," whereby focus is not laid on the numeric strength of the forces; rather, mobility, integration, and strategic retreat are utilized to destroy massive rival forces. Hazrat Khalid bin Walid (R.A.) was popular amongst other companions as a man who could fight a massive army with just a very small number of troops.

Therefore, during his lifetime, whenever Muslims faced difficulty in fighting a large number of enemy forces, he was formally invited to lead the military campaign. The Battle of Yarmouk has been documented in historical texts, such as Tarikh ibn Kathir, as the greatest military victory of Hazrat Khalid bin Walid (R.A.) over the Byzantine forces. Muslims were limited to 25,000 soldiers only, and the opposing forces were almost 100,000.

Hazrat Khalid (R.A.) could inflict tremendous blows on the enemy army with a few soldiers using his masterful military tactics. He separated his army into small but tactical mobile units and positioned them at strategic positions. Through the integration of these units, Muslims successfully launched rapid counterattacks, shocking the enemy forces.

He compelled the rival forces to fight in tactical platoons by distorting their lines of force. In modern times, this strategy is known as 'blitzkrieg operations,' introduced by German military strategist Heinz Guderian.

## Hazrat Sa'd ibn Abi Waqqas (R.A)

Known for his expert military campaign, Hazrat Sa'd bin Abi Waqas (R.A.) is considered one of the top military strategists in Islam. His most famous and successful military venture was against the Persian empire, known as al-Qadisiya. He was appointed as the commander of Iraqi forces by Caliph Umar bin Khattab (R.A.). The Persian forces were comprised of a large number of horses, elephants, and soldiers. Instead of engaging with them directly, Hazrat Sa'd (R.A.) introduced the strategy of 'attrition warfare,' whereby the enemy is compelled to fight for a prolonged period of time with the gradually decreasing strength and morale of the rival.

He placed his soldiers in defensive positions and allowed the enemy forces to strike back again and again. By exploiting this opportunity whereby enemy forces loosened their strength, they killed their commander, which resulted in chaos and confusion amongst the rival forces.

Resultantly, Hazrat Sa'd (R.A.) ordered to launch a counteroffensive, which broke the Persian forces completely. In modern times, Russia is pursuing this same strategy against the NATO countries in Ukraine, which has resulted in a complete failure of [Europe](#) to defend its member state.

## Conclusion

Every sacred personality in Islamic history has come up with their expert military strategies in their respective time periods. One can wonder that without having technological advancements, they have defeated their enemies in nearly every battle.

Through intellect, wisdom, and the rulings of the Quran, the Holy Prophet (P.B.U.H.) and His (P.B.U.H.) companions not only won every battle but also provided a blueprint for the upcoming generation to learn and understand how military strategies are executed.

All those modern concepts of warfare that the current academic discourse has dedicated to Westerners were introduced and developed by our Islamic ideals.

From diplomacy to war, Islamic history comprises numerous strategists who are a beacon of light for the modern [Muslim world](#). Instead of learning from outsiders, Muslims should focus on what their forefathers have accomplished and strive to bring up the new generation on their path.

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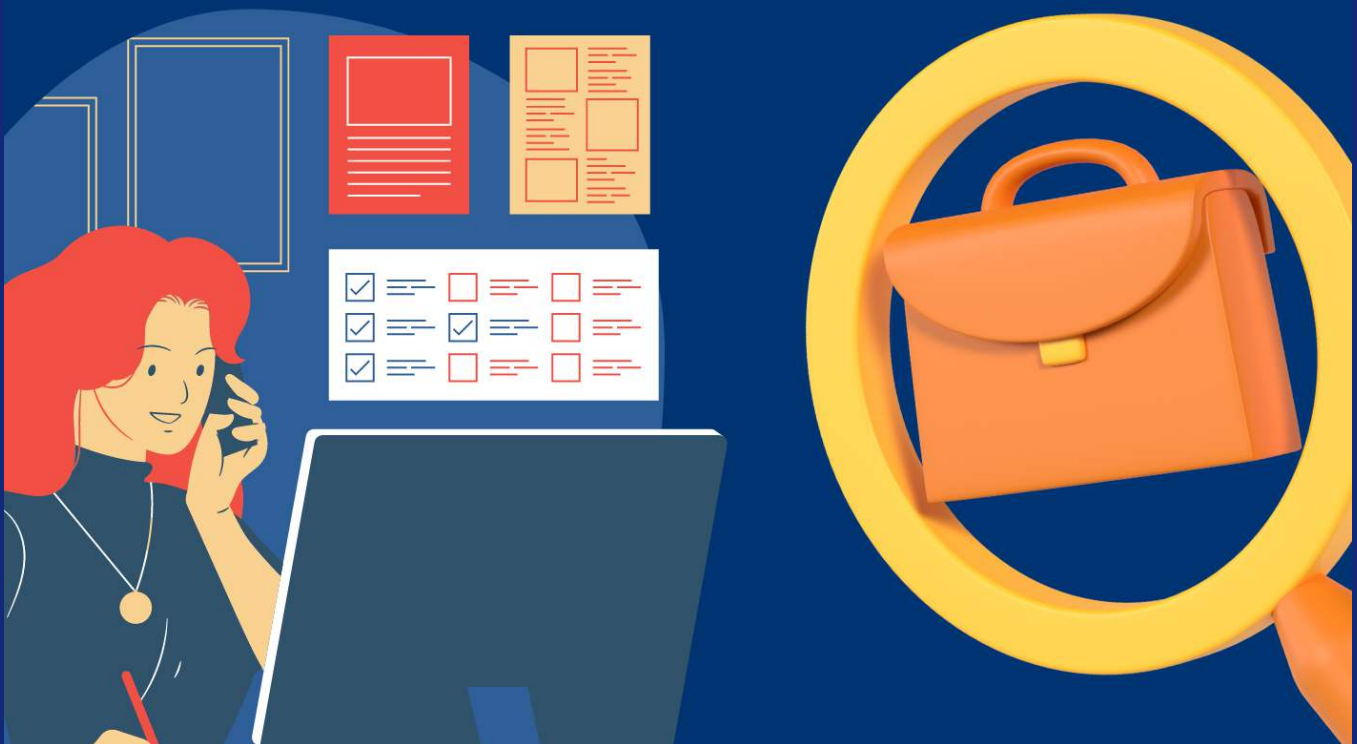


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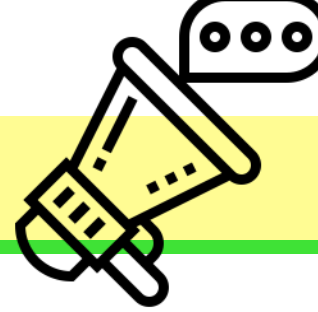
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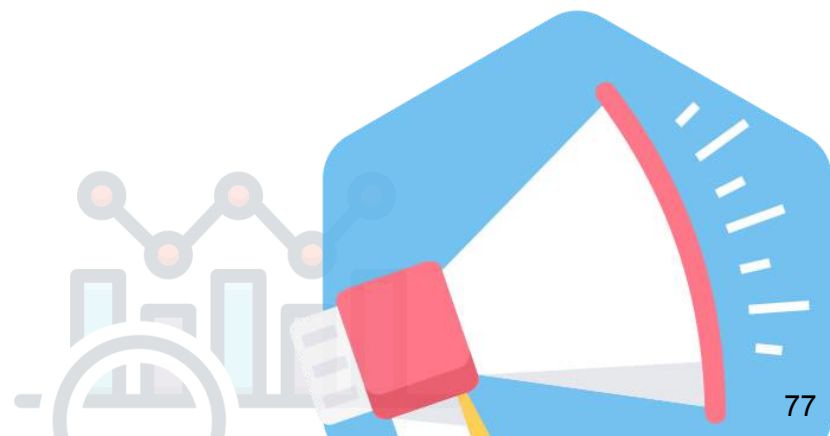


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