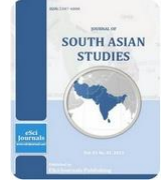




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PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: PROSPECTS AND LIMITATIONS

Hadia Rahman*

Department of International Relations and Media Studies, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, University of Management and Technology, Lahore, Punjab, Pakistan.

ABSTRACT

The contemporary world is shifting its focus from hard power to soft power. This new approach is really influential in bringing stability in the present times. It is largely used in international affairs for progress at national and global level. All developed countries are now particularly paying attention towards building their soft power. Britain, United States of America, China, Russia and India; all big states are concentrating towards soft power since long along with hard power. Pakistan needs to spot on its soft power seriously. Unfortunately terrorism, feeble tourism industry and corruption have already tarnished the soft image of the country worldwide. Pakistan needs to promote its soft image through media, tourism, literature, art and painting, information technology, music and theatre. Pakistan has unlimited things which can be used to offset the dark shadow of the country. The lacking object is the focus on soft power which should be initiated because only it can help to portray Pakistan in a positive way on the global level.

Keywords: China, Hard power, Pakistan, Soft power, Terrorism, United States.

INTRODUCTION

It is a general connotation that political power is hard and that is why it demolishes but when it becomes soft, it somewhat delays the solution. We live in a perplexed world which is overruled by power politics and we all get affected by it even if we don't want to. Even the famous war on terror led by the super power USA and operated by hard power politics couldn't bring peace to the whole world rather it worsened the situation. This raises questions against the credibility of the hard power and it intensifies our worries and anxieties relating global peace and harmony. This whole research paper would use the word "Soft Power" so it is important to define this very term and as Joseph Nye is the one who coined the term so his definition shall be focused upon. The purpose of this paper is to give an idea of soft power's importance in the contemporary times and how badly Pakistan needs to develop and improve its soft image. The paper would explore how major powers are enhancing their soft power and Pakistan is lagging behind. Pakistan desperately needs to focus upon its soft power especially

at a time when terrorism and other conflicts are tarnishing its image.

The term soft power was introduced by Joseph Nye in 1990 in his book *Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power* (Nye Jr., 1991). According to Joseph Nye of Harvard University, soft power is the indirect way of exercising power and influence (Nye Jr., 2002). It is a significant and influential tool for success in the political world. Joseph Nye claims that it is a significant reality of modern world (Nye Jr., 1991). In contemporary times, it is widely used in international affairs for development and economic success at national and international level. It ensures that coercion and hard power can hardly bring peace to the world but only soft power approach i.e. diplomacy and compromises can work out to bring stability in the present times.

Soft power should reflect in the culture, political values and foreign policies of developing countries. Besides that soft power should be visible in the economic policies and educational strategies of the country. It helps to make the country's political and cultural policies attractive.

History is witness to the fact that reliance over hard power remained the most significant tool for the protection of national independence whereas soft power

* Corresponding Author:

Email ID: hadia.rahman9@gmail.com

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was given negligible attention and that too was limited to intellectual and academic debate only. Sun Tzu, the famous Chinese strategist, said the supreme art of war is to subdue the enemy without fighting (Guangrao and Huimin, 2011). Soft power is probably the only effective art of doing that.

The emerging trend of shift from hard to soft power in the developing world is growing faster than anyone has ever expected. All developed nations are particularly especially focusing towards their soft power image that characterizes its significance. Europe, USA, China and India are all concentrating their focus on soft power and change in their foreign policies, culture and politics are a glowing indicator of that. Hard power politics has just aggravated the current world problems and global issues. This situation is posing a big challenge to world leaders and international scholars to decipher the best practical way forward. Soft power politics is gradually turning out

Table 01. Leading States and Their Power Resources (1500-2000)

Period	State	Major Resources
Sixteenth Century	Spain	Gold bullion, colonial trade, mercenary armies, dynastic ties
Seventeenth Century	Netherlands	Trade, capital markets, navy
Eighteenth Century	France	Population, rural industry, public administration, army, culture (soft power)
Nineteenth century	Britain	Industry, political cohesion, finance and credit, navy, liberal norms (soft power), island location (easy to defend)
Twentieth century	United States	Economic scales, scientific and technical leadership, location, military forces and alliances, universalistic culture and liberal international regimes (soft power)
Twenty-first century	United States	Technological leadership, military and economic scale, soft power, hub of transnational communications

Source: Joseph S. Nye Jr., (2002-2003, Winter). Limits of American Power. *Political Sciences Quarterly*, 117 (04), 555.

According to the survey of Monocle magazine's 'soft power' ranking, Britain ousts the U.S. as the world's most influential nation. A successful hosting of the Olympics and Paralympics, the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and continuing success in the arts can be credited for the Britain's top position. The list counted in everything from diplomatic strength to Olympic gold medals. United States demoted to second position, with Germany falling in third. In all, fifty factors were used to assess soft power, ranging from the number of cultural missions,

to be the best possible solution and answer to the issues at hand.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

It is a descriptive study with little tinge of comparison. The sources include books, journals and newspapers mainly. It also focuses upon the loopholes and recommendations for improving the soft image of the Pakistan. Authentic secondary sources like books and journals have been consulted to preserve the quality standard.

Soft power in practice – Big Powers: By having a look at the world, one can realize well that currently by and large those countries are progressing rapidly who are ahead in the field of soft power. The transition from hard to soft power depicts that power is now less tangible and less coercive. The following table shows the gradual transition of power resources of leading states in different periods of time.

Olympic medals and foreign students to the quality of a country's cuisine, architecture and businesses. It shows how soft power is gradually overtaking hard power (Kelly, 2012).

The Bush administration kept keen on focusing hard power since 9/11. Their military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan made them concentrate towards hard power only. The Obama administration also failed to focus on soft power image initially. Now it is turning its focus towards soft power as it already witnessed China's

progress in this field (Nye Jr., 2003).

Mighty China has always been an important power both in ancient times and today's global era. This country has gradually settled out all its issues both at the national and international level. China's economic success and entry onto the world stage has firmly established the country as a force to be reckoned with, most certainly in economic terms. China overtook Japan to become the world's second largest economy in 2010 and some scholars predicted that it could overtake even the United States (US) within a few years to become the world's largest economy. But, despite its economic prowess, China has yet to match the soft power influence of the US (Morrison, 2013; Hamlin and Li, 2010). China too realizes the significance of soft power and is working hard to build up its soft power rapidly. Although USA so far outshines China in soft power, China is diligently making giant leaps in this area (Chuck, 2013). China's global media expansion started in earnest in 2009. It forms part of China's 'Going out' strategy, one of the focal points of the Chinese Communist Party's (CCP) twelfth five-year-plan, from 2011 to 2015, to accelerate economic and political development, and to improve China's image as a global player (Yu and Li, 2009).

By having a glance at US Foreign policy and EU Foreign policy, it seems obvious that majority of their leaders are embracing the reality that it is only the soft power that can be used to convince and persuade other countries to adopt EU and US's life styles, political framework and traditions.

Russian soft power remained absent during the last decade but since Vladimir Putin emphasized on its importance by referring to it as a matrix of tools and methods to accomplish goals of foreign policy without using arms, Russia is working hard on its soft power image (Shakirov, 2013). As the concept of soft power is becoming more and more renowned in Russia so its authorities are trying their best to support and uphold a direct control and power over it. Russia is fully focusing on its foreign policy to make it more effective. It would definitely improve overall image of Russia, expand its foreign policy and organize Russia's soft power resource base (Shakirov, 2013).

India, the immediate neighboring country of Pakistan has been focusing on its soft power since long along with hard power. One of the strongest forms of their soft power is their film industry called bollywood. Other

forms include their rich multi dynamic culture, technology, education etc.

It is a complex world where three sources of power; military, economic and soft remain significant but if contemporary economic and social trends prevail, leadership in this information revolution and soft power will become more important in the mix (Nye Jr., 2002).

PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: BRIEF ACCOUNT

Since 9/11, Pakistan's image has badly ruptured despite having many positive things to its credit. Pakistan is trying its best to shed off the image of terrorism and other negative connotations clinged to its name. The unfortunate part though is the western portrayal of Pakistan on the international level which is negative and very discouraging. Neglecting the importance of soft power can be viewed as a major reason for such notorious depiction of the country's image. Pakistan is in dire need to promote its soft power in order to alter its tarnished image internationally.

A recent poll by Lowey Institute for International Policy on Indian public perceptions about their future in the world declared that almost 94 percent Indians consider Pakistan a threat (Saleem, 2013). It is quiet sad but one has to admit the harsh fact that reliance on hard power can be counted as a major factor in the list.

The dynamics of power have changed since the advancement in information technology. Smart phones, social media and media channels have made every ordinary person much more informed and special. It eventually turned public opinion into something more influential and significant. The public of the world is now having play cards at their table. Coercion and hard power make it difficult to achieve desired results in contemporary times when public is so informed and aware of everything.

The socio-political values, policies and cultural appeal of a country are very influential tools to narrate any story through available communication means and the ruling authority has very little control over the tale produced by these tools. It brings foreign policy of a country in into the lime light. Unfortunately Pakistan has been generating very negative stories in this regard. It includes terrorism, a poor education system, negligible tourism, corruption at all levels, hounded minorities and depriving girls of their basic rights (Saleem, 2013).

There are positive images about Pakistan as well but unfortunately they don't cover the narrative well and

even if they do, controversial narratives conceal any remaining positivity.

The winning of Oscar by Shermeen Obaid Chinoy for "Saving Face" has made Pakistan proud and helped in building a positive image of the country in front of the whole world (Qureshi, 2012). It was definitely a proud moment for the country. The exalted award was won at the most appropriate time because that was the time when the country was being blamed for all wrong deeds. At least this award did a little to change the image. In addition to it, it was won by a lady, something which really helped to negate the misperception that women are not allowed to work in Pakistan. The recent story of Malala Yousafzai became so popular but unfortunately it carried a negative image about the education of girls at terrorist's hands in Pakistan. It had an echo of education so it became a big hit and Malala got nominated for Nobel Peace Prize (Saleem, 2013).

Successive Pakistani governments focused on promoting soft image of the country from time to time but it has never been one of their top priorities. Nawaz Sharif launched The Islamabad Institute of Policy Research in June 1999 so that anti Pakistan propaganda could be tackled effectively at national and international level. One of the review documents of this think tank reads: "The western media has been highlighting only those things where the image of Pakistan could be tarnished and has been vociferous in demanding more, the 'doing more syndrome'. This is partly due to the fact that governments in Pakistan have seldom given importance to soft power and image building process of the nation. Pakistan needs to promote its domestic and international performance to alter its image in the eyes of foreign media (Saleem, 2013).

Strength is traditionally the most important factor for counting any country as powerful. In contemporary times, this traditional definition of power is losing its meaning with reference to military strength and force. The factors of technology, economy and education are dominating the scenario whereas geography and population are getting less significance (Nye Jr., 1990).

The foreign countries are altering their focus from hard to soft power and it is becoming their top concern. USA is worried as China is beating it in economic grounds. Japan is also dominating in the field of technology. Russia is also making soft power its top priority. In other words, a race to win in the field of soft power has already begun in the world.

Pakistan too needs to create a balance between soft power and hard power in such a way that it doesn't have to depend on hard power alone. Softer techniques should be adopted in order to solve out different internal and external issues.

Minister for Information and Broadcasting Pervaiz Rashid is also focusing on need to improve the soft power of the country. Addressing a function of famous poets and writers, he said that government is playing a crucial role in supporting the artists and intellectuals of the country so that they can play their due role for the state. He declared them as asset of the society (Minister for Information and Broadcasting Pervaiz Rashid address, 2013).

He also focused on the arrangement of sports festival. He asserted that information ministry is always active and engaged in activities which are helpful in promoting the soft image of the country (Minister for Information and Broadcasting Pervaiz Rashid address, 2013).

Pakistan's soft power should also reflect in its cultural, political and foreign policies. Besides that, education and tourism are also very important tools to promote the soft image in front of the whole world. Pakistan is a multi cultural and pluralistic country and it can project its culture in a very diverse and effective way. It should use its media to promote its culture and tourism worldwide.

The cruel killings of nine foreign tourists and their guide in Nanga Parbat last year was itself a heinous crime attempted to disrupt the growing relations of Pakistan with other friendly countries (Sherazi, 2013). It definitely reestablished and furthered the notion of terrorism hampering the soft image of the country. Pakistani film star and director Reema asserted on an occasion that terrorism shouldn't be linked with religion or state. She further declared that all Pakistanis should try their best to promote the soft image of the country which Pakistan is in real need of. She also emphasized upon the significance of foreign ministry role to present a better soft image of the state. She linked the peace with the renewal of national institutes (Reema, 2013).

Prime Minister Raja Pervez Ashraf during his tenure asked the Foreign Office to project a soft image of Pakistan abroad through public diplomacy, cultural exchange, and trade and people-to-people contacts. Unfortunately the request was sandwiched between news of attack against Shia pilgrims in Balochistan and Mumbai attacks. In a BBC World Service poll published

in May 2012, the country ranked second, after Iran, in a list of the most negatively rated countries (Yusaf, 2013). Pakistan is in immediate need to create a soft image worldwide. Unfortunately Pakistan has already dried up its immense resources that could have told a positive story. Any country needs to use its theater, dance, film and music to promote itself. Not forgetting the literature, art and painting, there are unlimited ways which can be used to counter the negative image of the country. Owing to terrorism, corruption, religious extremism and ethnic conflicts, Pakistan is one of the most ill perceived countries of the world. Although Pakistan has fought as a front line state against terrorism, it is still not in the good books of western media. The major fault lies within the wrong and weak strategies of the state's government and the unstable fluctuating foreign policy. There is an immediate need to get the priorities right and staying in line with the rising global realities. It is an inevitable nationwide responsibility and must not be allowed to become a victim of the moves aimed at frugality (Ashraf, 2013).

PAKISTAN'S SOFT POWER: LOOPHOLES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Pakistan has abundant talent in every field. The soft power of Pakistan can flourish immensely provided a little more attention is directed towards it. Not so long ago, Pakistan's soft power was rising. The positive trends kept on emerging in Pakistan like the liberated vibrant media, the newly independent judiciary, the breathtaking landscapes of the country, the increasing participation of Pakistani women from politics to fashion and of course the highly appreciated pop music of the country especially the Coke Studio as an insignia of the opulence and rich diversity of Pakistan culture.

In current times, all these positive attributes have turned to negative. The media and judiciary stand exposed. Pakistan's beautiful landscapes have been targeted to strike terror and discourage tourism. Devastating climatic changes, destructive floods, earthquakes and government's inefficient ways of dealing with these disasters have proved enough to show the world the soft power of the country in a frayed way.

The horrendous abuses like gang rape cases and honor killings dominating the major headlines of the current newspapers can't be neglected. The irony is that Shermeen Ubaid Chinoy's Oscar-winning documentary was also based) on highlighting the atrocious handling

meted out to disenfranchised women.

- Terrorism is one of the major reasons for overshadowing the soft image of Pakistan at all levels. With this root cause, every positive attribute of the country is slowly getting eroded. Killings of minorities and inter provincial conflicts also negatively affect the image of the country. Icing on the cake is the negative and aggressive portrayal of every negative act of the country in the media in a hostile manner. Media is without any doubt a major tool to depict and show, convince and help to form a particular point of view and public consensus about any incident. Unfortunately, Pakistani media is using this opportunity in a wrong way and promoting country's image in a horrified manner. Miscreants and terrorists have created a total negative image of our country so there should be zero tolerance with respect to our government's way of dealing with them.
- Education especially of Science and technology are not given so much importance. To get students from abroad, it is needed that the education sector of the country is worked upon and steps should be taken to enhance its quality. Social sciences and literature must be promoted as they are the breeding ground for the academia and intellectuals. It can definitely help to create an improved soft image of the country.
- Foreign Policy of a country plays a major role in promoting the soft image of the country. Soft power in the field of foreign policy relates to areas like bilateral and multilateral diplomacy and moral authority. It should be modified and altered in a way that it promotes the soft image of the country. The ministers and ambassadors of the country should also work hard to promote the soft image of the country.
- Media is another effective tool which can help promote the better soft image of the country. Instead of showing events which discourage the soft image of the country, focus should be on content which uphold a positive bright illustration of the homeland. More English channels should be launched to grab the attention of international audience. Advertising companies should also work and put in efforts to establish a better image of the country abroad.

- Foreign investment should be encouraged and for attracting foreign investors, law and order situation should be worked upon. Foreign delegations should be invited to visit the country and should be assured about the peace and stability of the state. In this regard the soft image of the country really helps to attract the foreigners into the country. Unless and until the soft image of the country won't be worked upon, very little foreign investment would be possible.
- Unstable economy is another factor which is affecting the soft image of the country. It provides chance to other countries to create a negative and misleading propaganda against the country. Unstable economy is the root cause of all other destabilizing sectors so economy of the country should be focused upon.
- The weakened tourism industry of the country is also upsetting the soft image of the country. The tourism sector of the country should be propelled and developed in a more effective way. Tourism is one of the major ways to promote a better soft image of the country. The recent government has been trying to promote tourism worldwide. SWAT summer festival was one of those efforts but of course it needs much more attention and energy than provided. Pakistan is very blessed in terms of its beautiful landscapes and sceneries. What lacks is the skill and art of promoting that.
- Scholarships should be offered to the students worldwide especially for students from third world countries so that more and more international students get enrolled in the country. It definitely helps to promote a positive image.
- Cultural exchange programs should be encouraged. It really helps to wipe out the misunderstandings and it creates better people to people contacts. More literary festivals should be arranged particularly with the Western intelligentsia to change the general perceptions about Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

In contemporary times, great powers rely less on their traditional military strength to achieve their purposes than in the past. Non state actors and small states have become more dominant. This diffusion of power is contributed by the following five factors: economic interdependence, transnational actors, nationalism in

weak states, changing political scenario and emerging power of technology (Nye, Jr. 1991).

Soft power is not a substitute of course but it can be seen as a complementary strategy to the otherwise dominant hard power. The challenge is to find the right mix between both strategies in order to achieve smart power (Wagner, 2010). To apply soft power effectively states must communicate to an intended target in a functioning marketplace of ideas, persuade the target to change its attitude on a relevant political issue, and ensure that the target's newly held attitude influences international political outcomes (Kroenig, 2010). All the major powers of the world are trying their best to achieve better soft image as it apparently seems the only effective way to rule others.

In order to keep up with the global trend and to gain its soft image back, Pakistan seriously needs to focus on its soft power. The way Pakistan's image has been tarnished by terrorism and corruption, implementing soft power techniques effectively can work wonders. This is the only way to project the softer image of the country towards international community.

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