

Global Image of Pakistan: Significance of Public Diplomacy

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ABSTRACT

This paper is an attempt to examine how is soft power and public diplomacy imperative conditions for Pakistan's international stature by examining the effective utilization of public diplomacy of the states like USA, Russia, China and India, public diplomacy of which have got a very significant position at the international stage. Based on an understanding of their Public diplomacy, the author seeks to explore what lessons and strategies should Pakistan take into consideration for the promotion of Pakistan's good image at the international front, and how Pakistan can be successful in achieving the positive results. The author has highlighted some serious recommendations as well.

Key Words: **Public Diplomacy, Pakistan International Image, Major Powers**

Introduction

In this anarchical world, the states continuously collide with each other in one way or another. Power is considered as the life's blood in international politics but in this globalized and highly intact world, the concept and nature of power are in transition. As per Joseph S Nye, the use of power today has shifted from an emphasis on hard power to a focus on soft power. Nowadays the hard and soft power is going hand in hand; U.S. foreign policy is commonly quoted as hard power in the sphere of International Relations. US foreign policy is mainly designed to support the military use or economic compulsion to get hold of a required result. On the contrary, the EU believes in soft power policies which help in enticing new partners and allies with the help of European norms. EU soft policies are also facilitating the formation of a mutual European identity (Centre for European Studies, n.d).

Soft power refers to the capability of a state to influence people in order to modify the minds and acuity of the foreign community with no intimidation and military force. Joseph Nye introduced this expression in the 1980s who emphasized on the necessity of hard as well as the soft power of a country if it has been desirous of having an efficient and long-standing foreign policy. Soft power phenomenon has various aspects but public diplomacy is the apex which executes the true requisites of soft power (nye.jr, 2004). Nye furthermore avows that "Attraction is always effectual than coercion, and many values like democracy,

human rights, and individual opportunities are deeply attractive.” Subsequently, we must contain some attractive power as well.

Public diplomacy

Public diplomacy, also known as people’s diplomacy means a range of government-sponsored and non-government endeavours which aim at corresponding unwaveringly with the overseas public with the intention of convincing them and building a soft image for their own country (Joseph S. Nye, 2008). To shore up or endure the government’s strategic purposes, public diplomacy encompasses the entire executive attempts to motivate the targeted zones of foreign views. Means of foreign policy take account of proclamations by decision makers, attempts to convince foreign media to depict official policies positively to the international viewers and all the focused campaigns carried out by state organizations dedicated to public diplomacy. Mainly the government administers the prime attributes of soft power in addition to the society, its important bodies and diverse strategies adopted to accomplish states aspirations, goals and purposes (Gill, Huang, 2006).

Pakistan’s image

Aiming to maintain amicable relations with rest of the world, the countries need to have a superior image in the senses of the global community. The term “image” gained recognition in the 1950s and can be defined as, “The opinion or concept of something which is held by the public, or a mental representation of something; a mental picture or impression, an idea, concept.” Now the question arises; can it be totally improved? The “Image Repair Theory” of Professor William Benoit entails that an image can be enhanced but cannot be restored absolutely (Shabbir, 2012). This reveals that we cannot boost our image but as a minimum, we could improve our image by adopting many approaches such as psychological warfare and public diplomacy.

Talking about the image of Pakistan, it is in dire need of developing it exceedingly since Pakistan is immeasurably manipulated on account of terrorism in the past couple of decades. Still, it is known as a state sponsoring terrorism and providing a safe haven to national and international terrorists. Being the frontline state in the war on terror, Pakistan has paid a huge price for it by loosing around 80,000 lives (50,000 civilians, 6,000 security personnel and 27,000 militants). The enormous number of causalities came about during the US-led ‘war on terror’ between 2004 and 2013. West still perceives Pakistan as an unfaithful collaborator by forgetting all her huge sacrifices. This callous and prejudiced behaviour of the West towards Pakistan; an Islamic state blatantly endorses Islamic radicalism, racist and religious biases. Pakistan is still surrounded by massive challenges of terrorism, unstable economy, shaky law and order situation and frail governance. Still, it can be conveniently being claimed that above all these gigantic challenges,

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the biggest and the most vital one is the restoration of its image in the eyes of the world.

Through image, people build their perception of a particular entity (Shabir, 2012). Unluckily, Pakistan does not enjoy the status of a soft power state. The foreign media, international think tanks, the overseas academic world and even the government spokespersons are undivided in painting Pakistan as a 'problematic' state. For instance, a foreign movie titled, 'Syriana' (2005) revolves around a young Pakistani oil worker residing in UAE, which endorses the typecast that even ordinary Pakistanis are thought to become suicide bombers conveniently. In a nutshell, it can be said that Pakistan has become an easy target of international media war. The alarming thing is that Pakistan appears to be losing this war. Almost all noteworthy global and national news channels and analytical opinions about Pakistan are pessimistic or intimidating.

On the other hand, Pakistan is failing in using even a single world-scale media tool to defy the assault and respond to this callous battering. In the words of former Information Minister Javed Jabbar, "While not being physically destructive, the media war, in one sense, is worse. It erodes and diminishes the contours of our true identity in the minds of billions of people exposed to overseas media." Without any doubt, this disapproval is a grave obstruction in Pakistan's relations with the rest of the countries, particularly the U.S. Although public views and global relations can transform rapidly but the policy-makers, academia, and think tanks remain consistent in their influence by the media. Employing of print media positively can guarantee peace and facilitate to listen to each other's standpoints in the issue of disagreements too (Syed, 2016). Consequently, the solution to revamp and rebuild Pakistan's global image is the effective media management and apt deployment of public diplomacy.

Lessons from others

Numerous countries are employing public diplomacy in a befitting manner and even win battles with the help of public diplomacy. It is said that the U.S successfully won the cold war by the appropriate use of soft power and public diplomacy. Japan and China are also glaring examples. Let's dig into how public diplomacy was used as a dynamic tool by various successful states.

U.S.A

If we talk about the USA, it has a long history of public diplomacy and still using it effectively to gain their national interests. The United States of America is the champion of democracy and exercising public diplomacy very effectively. In 1917 after the 1st world war, American president Woodrow Wilson established a propaganda organization known as public information to sway the American public's opinion about the war by promoting propaganda through films,

newspapers, radio programs, posters, press releases, and public speakers.(Harper, n.d.).

It was in the 1940s that the US has gone through a period of transition by adopting diverse programs including, During *Cultural Exchanges Program* with Latin America, the establishment of the Voice of America (VOA) and the formation of the *United States Information*, starting of the *Fulbright Exchange Program* (U.D diplomacy,2018). In the Cold War, the US along with its allies utilized its public diplomacy to influence Western Europe and to contain USSR by adopting a multipurpose objective (Britannica, 2017). Additionally, the US also kept its soft power in hand by using social media through all the educational, sports activities and cultural programs by presenting a soft image to the rest of the world. Militarily speaking, the US also brought its means to present and push for power (Dolan, Courtney, 2014).

China

CNP which is Comprehensive National Power of China is alike to Nye's adaptation of soft power. CNP refers to the total economic, armed forces, scientific and technology might of a nation in terms of sources and impact. It is an amalgamation of hard, soft and synchronizing power which encloses political infrastructure, administration headship and management and restructuring ability. China has gained a peaceful and steady rise in order to diminish the fears of others and ensure them that its newborn vigour is harmless. Having known the distress caused by its dramatic rise and the advantages of the soft image, China has successfully accessed almost all the territories worldwide, predominantly the Middle East and progressing American, African, and South Asian realms. China has initiated "Dollar Diplomacy" or making friends through non-interference and has been able to deviate the world's attention from the concerns such as non-democracy, inattentiveness to Chinese Diaspora and piracy and territorial disputes (Pillsbury, 2000).

China has remained actively involved in peacekeeping and health diplomacy as impactful SP projection. Since 1964, its main focus revolves around the academic, cultural and language exchange programmes in addition to numerous medical doctors who were sent off to various African countries. The number of international students in Chinese universities has increased noticeably over the years owing to the academic and exchange programs. China has also employed diplomacy as an effective instrument of soft power. Chinese leaders recurrently visit the important states and vice versa which echoes the global affairs and the key role China can potentially play to resolve them. To convey the image of a responsible state, in addition to partaking in the old multilateral organisations, China has commenced new ones such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) (Kroenig, Mcasam, Weber, 2010).

Russia

The Russian government has recently begun to make use of soft power for achieving state purposes. For Russia, the notion of SP and PD are quite dissimilar from the West and she has diverse objectives to achieve which makes the case of Russia really interesting. Russian President Vladimir Putin considers soft power an assortment of intricate techniques and devices used instead of weapons to accomplish foreign policy objectives through information and other levels of manipulation (Meister, Puglierin 2015). Russia believes in creating an informational alliance with the adjacent states rather than developing a pleasant image (Burlino, 2015). In this context, the Russian national TV RT is aiming at presenting an unusual source of information to its Western audience. In an effort to improve relations with the European Union, Russia has initiated a colossal propaganda operation subsequent to a meagre global image. Nonetheless, its past image is proving a major hindrance in its efforts of portraying a soft image.

India

India has ably developed the illusion of “shining India” and “Make in India” through dexterous manoeuvring and smart policies, by soft power and public diplomacy. India through its “liberal democratic regime” has superiority over China in terms of global magnetism and power. Since the 1990s, India has been focusing on soft power tactics and all her efforts were reaped in the form of developing an amicable bond with Afghanistan. Afghan government under the leadership of President Hamid Karzai had installed more friendly relationship with New Delhi rather its own immediate neighbour Islamabad. India pushing its soft power image in Afghanistan by building schools, colleges, roads, infrastructure and other welfare activities to counter Pakistan influence and to reduce tensions to the Indian Army in Occupied Kashmir.

India is also one of the world’s most attractive destinations for the IT industry and its success has not only fortified the country’s economic but also showing its soft power all over the globe. Cultural diversity and various ethnic communities in India is the most effective play card for its soft power. Indian Diaspora is the massive support for the Indian Government in exercising power, presenting a soft image and implementing its policies. Furthermore, the spread of Islam and Buddhism from India helped it portray herself absolutely secular. Jews also consider India a soft power since Israel has been acknowledged by India since a long time back. In addition to this, in Britain, big Indian restaurants offer more employment opportunities than the rest of the industries combined. Despite having the soft image worldwide, however, there are certain factors that do not let India fully take advantage of its soft power potential.

Recommendations for Pakistan

- Pakistan is in dire need of improvement as far as the use of electronic media is concerned. We are in terrible need to employ media to build a better image in the mind of foreign public, (Fine arts, literature, national heritage and culture, best mediums to project positive image of Pakistan, 2017). India is using the media through its films, movies and dramas to influence their culture and to create a negative perception about Pakistan and its military etc. Through their movies they are propagating about Pakistan's brutality and even presenting Indian extremist heroically. For instance, in 2016 Bollywood made a film 'Sirbjit'; an Indian spy involved in many terrorist attacks in Pakistan. The film presented him as a hero of the nation and released it worldwide to show the world that he was an Indian hero who was announced death penalty by cruel Pakistan. To eradicate this kind of propaganda is the need of the hour for Pakistan and she needs to make such type of movies to counter Indian misinformation against Pakistan. The short documentary can also play a significant role in depicting the positive image at the International stage.
- Undoubtedly, Pakistan is having a countless hero in the past and present as well to which we can take inspiration; we need to make movies on our national heroes.
- There need to make movies on Sapahai Maqbool Hussain and such type of other true-life heroes that how they sacrifice their lives for their country and need to propagate a positive message to the rest of the world like India and others. Gov. of Pakistan should do agreements with the foreign cinemas to show their movies in their countries as well (Saunders, 2017).
- Living in age of globalization, public diplomacy can play its role more effectively after the social media came into existence (Gurskas, 2016). Pakistan can use it to propagate its message to the rest of the world; it can connect people of one country to the people of other countries (Bruck, n.d).
- So here comes the responsible role of Pakistan's natives on social media. They have to depict their traditions, their customs, and their beliefs in a very optimistic means to attract the foreigners towards Pakistan and through this approach they can play a vital role in securing the national interests of their nation.
- Gov. also needs to make such type of platforms on the social media, For instance the government should make groups, Facebook pages but there should be various over insight or the admin (government sponsored) existed on this platform with the intention that not a soul might engage in unconstructive actions on those platforms and only they could change the minds and perceptions of the people which came in Pakistan's objectives or interest.
- Triplomacy, is another phenomenon which means the use of Twitter in public diplomacy, that positive use of Twitter but the government officials and the people of a nation to build a better image of Pakistan on the globe

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(Dumčiuvienė, 2016) Pakistan is working on it and we can see now that the new government is using Twitter very effectively but the need is to be more efficient and effective in this regard as well.

- Pakistan is rich in the natural attractiveness and is blessed with captivating views, beautiful mountains, lakes, cascades and many more things. Pakistan is also rich in its heritage, culture and history. But unfortunately, we are unable to show this to the rest of the world (Fakhar, 2008). Therefore, Pakistan needs a lot of programs to promote tourism and to show its soft power to the world. (Lemma, 2014). Better visa policies, as well as the best security situation, can open the doors for tourists. The government should spend more on tourism to make it more appealing and attractive to the foreign public. Print, electronic and social media can be used as a tool to explore the beauty of Pakistan.
- Investing in foreign public can also be one of the beneficial elements for effective public diplomacy in Pakistan (K.henrikson, n.d).
- Since Pakistan is not an economically strong country, but to build a better image in the minds of others and to use the public diplomacy, Pakistan needs to invest in the foreign youth and for that Pakistan's economy should be strong, Pakistan need to give educational aid to the youth of other countries, there should be more semester exchange programs to showcase their culture within that 6 months semester program.
- No doubt that Pakistan has somehow political instability, but most of the states could be unstable and they are, but it does not mean that we portray the international community that we are surely very uneven, we need to unite together to show the world in any case that Pakistan is not politically unstable, so that it could have positive perceptions in their minds. Political parties should behave properly and should show respect to each other in international forums at any rate (Saleem, Need to build soft power, 2013).
- Pakistani community living in other countries have very strong responsibilities on their shoulders to display a better image in those areas of the world where they live (Barlas, 2018). Pakistani citizens living at abroad must expand their social circle or more participation in social activities can strengthen the image of Pakistan.
- Pakistani Scholars need to write in international forums to respond to those enemies of Pakistan who are spreading false assumptions against Pakistan (Chandio, 2018).
- For building a good image in the hearts and minds of the foreign public, Pakistan needs to invest in the field of soft power as it is investing in hard power (Qasim Mustafa, 2016). It can invest more of educational and sports activities. PSL is a very good example in recent times which promotes a soft and positive image throughout the globe. There is a need to continue these types of events. Educational conferences and seminars must be arranged for the students as well as student exchange programs must be arranged for the Pakistani students through which they can portray the positive image of Pakistan all over the world.

Conclusion

Pakistan is a country with high geopolitical importance. It plays a crucial role in the world political scene. But unfortunately Pakistan is a state which is suffering from a lot of internal and external problems and propaganda due to which it is unable to achieve a positive image and perception in the mind of the outer world, and if we want to achieve this, then Pakistan is in a dire need to use the soft power and public diplomacy to change the hearts, minds and views of outsiders. It is a necessity to make some strategies and management of those strategies to counter propaganda against it whether it could be through media or through different programs but it is as much essential as hard power is important for us if Pakistan has to achieve its objectives. The government of Pakistan must put an eye on making effective public diplomacy to improve the image of Pakistan at the international arena. Pakistani youth should play its due role in enhancing the image of Pakistan because history reveals that the youth had changed the fate of the nations. Active participation and true spirit of patriotism can bring positive changes.

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