



Social Sciences Spectrum

A Double-Blind, Peer-Reviewed, HEC recognized [Y-category](#) Research Journal

E-ISSN: [3006-0427](#) P-ISSN: [3006-0419](#)

Volume 03, Issue 04, 2024

Web link: <https://sss.org.pk/index.php/sss>



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The impact of the India-Pakistan Dispute on Environment Strategies in Afghanistan

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Article Information [YY-MM-DD]

Received 2024-11-25

Accepted 2024-12-27

Citation (APA):

Ali, H. (2025). The impact of the India-Pakistan dispute on environment strategies in Afghanistan. *Social Sciences Spectrum*, 3(4), 493-504. <https://doi.org/10.71085/sss.03.04.205>

Abstract

Indian and Pakistani ongoing rivalry because of historical grievances with territorial disputes creates major effects on how Afghanistan handles environmental policies and sustains regional cooperation structure. Analysis investigates the ramifications of this competitive relationship because of its influence on Afghanistan's ability to handle essential ecological issues including water scarcity and forest destruction and climate modification. According to Realism along with Complex Interdependence Theory the research demonstrates that regional collaboration remains suppressed because security issues along with power-based politics take priority. Strategic competition supersedes collaborative endeavors since the Kabul River Basin demonstrates shared resources create tools for strategic contestation. Indian investments in Afghan infrastructure particularly water and energy infrastructure provoke Pakistani concerns about threats which damage trust and destabilize relations. Foreign aid dependency disempowers Afghanistan from creating independent environmental strategies while simultaneously disempowering its ability to take control of its governance. The study demonstrates how regional nations require political agreements to advance coherent environmental governance through cooperative alliances instead of adversarial relationships. The absence of trust and collaboration will preserve Afghanistan's ecological decline and developmental underdevelopment and restrict sustainable advancement opportunities throughout South Asia.

Keywords: India-Pakistan, Environmental Policies, Ramifications, Afghanistan, South Asia.



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Introduction

The territorial dispute between India and Pakistan is one of the most practice and critical geopolitical tensions in South Asia with potential impact on the entire region. As a result of historical grievances, and territorial issues, more specifically the dispute over the region of Jammu and Kashmir, this conflict has spread beyond the borders of the two countries, impacting the politics, economy, and environment of their neighboring countries. Sitting at the hub of South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East, Afghanistan is in a prime place to be caught in the crossfire of this relationship. Its location as a landlocked country with enormous natural resources and water systems located between India and Pakistan puts it in a rather strategic position. This rivalry not only weakens Afghanistan's internal governance but also significantly hinders the country's capacity to tackle crucial environmental issues.

Currently, Afghanistan faces significant environmental challenges such as water scarcity, deforestation, soil erosion, and climate change. These challenges are not exclusive to it and are experienced in the surrounding countries owing to shared river systems and ecosystems as well as climatic features. Dealing with such intricate environmental challenges calls for collaborative efforts at the regional level with regards to some of the critical aspects such as water and energy and climate adaptation. Nonetheless, Afghanistan's initiatives to adopt effective environmental policies remain challenging due to the emerging conflicts of interest between India and Pakistan where geopolitical stakes overshadow environmental issues.

For instance, the Kabul River Basin holds strategic importance for Afghanistan as it helps in meeting the country's agricultural needs, energy requirement, and water demand. Clowned with Pakistan, the basin is a vital area with vast possibilities as far as regional cooperation in water and flood management is concerned. However, instead of cooperation, it has turned into a problem area and a cause of discord. India's assistance towards dam construction and water infrastructure in Afg is seen as a threat by Pak, which reacts by opposing or sabotaging such projects.

This mistrust between India and Pakistan over Afghanistan's water resources epitomizes how their rivalry fragments the region's approach to environmental governance.

Beyond water, the broader impacts of this geopolitical rivalry are evident in Afghanistan's dependence on foreign aid and infrastructure investments. India's growing involvement in Afghan development, including projects like the Salma Dam and the Zaranj-Delaram highway, is viewed by Pakistan as an attempt to extend its influence in the region. In response, Pakistan actively seeks to counterbalance this perceived encroachment, often through destabilizing actions that further weaken Afghanistan's capacity to address its environmental challenges. This dynamic transforms Afghanistan into a geopolitical battleground, where environmental strategies are subsumed by larger strategic objectives.

Afghanistan is threatened by a number of environmental issues, the worst of which have been aggravated by decades of conflict, inadequate governance, and scarce institutional support. Unfortunately, rather than seeking sustainable solutions on how to address these needs, regional priorities are colored by the murderous antagonism between India and Pakistan. Any organization like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which might facilitate action on environmental problems, is crippled because of distrust between the two giants. Thus, Afghanistan continues to be marginalized and is not able to actively engage regional cooperation process in managing common ecological challenges.

This research considers how the India-Pakistan conflict influences Afghanistan's environmental policies in terms of its participation in regional programs and the execution of effective environmental fiscal policies. Based on the Realism and the CIT paradigms, this study therefore seeks to understand the nuanced link between geopolitics and environmental management in South Asia. This paper supports the notion of realism that power relations and state security directs the international relation by applying the lens of analysis and ascertaining that the strategic rivalry between India and Pakistan hampers Afghanistan's environmental agenda. Accordingly, Complex Interdependence Theory emphasizes interdependence between countries and the opportunities for cooperation and conflict resolution to address common threats and concerns at the same time that it points out to the obstacle that politics represents.

By examining Afghanistan's struggle to navigate the geopolitical pressures of its neighbors, this research sheds light on the broader implications of regional conflicts for sustainable development in politically sensitive areas. It highlights the urgent need for a paradigm shift from conflict-driven policies to cooperative frameworks, where environmental concerns are prioritized as common ground for fostering trust and collaboration. Only by overcoming historical animosities can Afghanistan and the broader South Asian region hope to achieve sustainable development and environmental stability in the face of shared ecological challenges.

This version provides a detailed and comprehensive introduction, establishing the context and significance of the topic while laying the foundation for the study's focus and approach. Let me know if you'd like further refinement!

Research Questions:

1. How does the India-Pakistan rivalry influence Afghanistan's ability to implement sustainable environmental strategies and policies?
2. What role does the India-Pakistan dispute play in shaping Afghanistan's engagement in regional environmental initiatives, such as water resource management and energy projects?

Theoretical Framework

The conceptual approach of this research combines two major approaches in International Relations – Realism and Complex Interdependence Theory to determine how battling between India and Pakistan influences Afghanistan's environmental initiatives and its participation in multiregional collaboration. All the theories have given an outlook into the various geopolitical realities at play as well as how they constrain or enable Afghanistan to solve its Environmental problems. While Realism stresses on use of power, security and conflict in the international system, the Complex interdependence theory states the interaction of states and ignoring chances for cooperation due to political animosity. Altogether the theoretical approaches comprising of geopolitics and environmental governance, provide a sound foundation for consolidating the diverse factual factors characteristic to South Asia.

Realism

Realism, which is one of the oldest theories of International Relations, has assumed that international system has no central authority that can regulate the relationships among actors. As rational players, states consider their own national security and existence the highest priority and see interaction with other states as a process for forming balances of power appearing to be based on zero-sum game. Picking up on the themes of power, competition and self-interest, the antagonistic relations of the India-Pakistan rivalry and its import for Afghanistan's environmental politics gains critical purchase.

Core Assumptions of Realism

1. The international system is anarchical, yet state actors exist in a self-help world.
2. In the States, they hold primacy over their own existence, security and power.
3. Interstate cooperation is a rather exceptional phenomenon combined with weak durability, since mutual trust between states is undermined by rivalry for various benefits.
4. The international system is composed of states, which act rationally according to the principle of highest national utility.

Application to the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan Context

Realism shows how India and Pakistan relations turn Afghanistan into a theatre of their struggle, where even environmental measures are subordinated to the interests. Both nations take advantage of Afghanistan to exercise power and assert influence over a country that is struggling in its attempts to achieve sustainable development and create a climate for cooperation on environmental issues.

1. Water Resource Management as a Strategic Tool:

The critical water source, the Kabul River Basin between Afghanistan and Pakistan, is a perfect example of how realist power politics bring interference with cooperative governance. India's intentions to finance dams and water structures in Afghanistan are to enhance India's relation with Afghanistan and at the same time to minimize Pakistan's control over Afghanistan. However, Pakistan perceives these projects as a threat to its downstream water use rights and therefore relations and politics become tense with barriers. Such dynamics go a long way into illuminating the ways in which environmental resources are used as signs of geopolitical gains than opportunities for mutual synergism.

2. Fragmentation of Foreign Aid:

Another clear area in which Realism is evident is the fact that Afghanistan depends on international donors to fund its infrastructure projects. Foreign aids due to India such as constructions of dams and highways are accompanied by strings because India's long-term strategic aim is to curb Pakistan's dominion in Afghanistan. Consequently, Pakistan usually retaliates through proxies of political and military and denounces initiatives as destabilizing Afghanistan and delaying developmental schemes. The contest for gaining influence over Afghanistan's management of the environment makes its environmental strategies and policies weak, piecemeal, reactive, and dominated by the interests of more capable neighbors.

3. Security Concerns Over Regional Cooperation:

Realism also show that the issues of environment in Afghanistan are overshadowed by security threat of India and Pakistan. For instance, Pakistani sentiments of insecurity from Indian aggression make concession on issues such as transboundary water-resource management or regional environmental PROGRAMS impossible. These zero-sum orientations sustain aggregate distrust and hinder a pursuit of common ecological problems.

In view of Realism, bilateral relation between India and Pakistan is a contest of power where Afghanistan is reduced to a chess piece and environmental management is made hostage to concerns of security and rivalry.

Complex Interdependence Theory

As a theory that is in contrast to the Realism Theory, and gives a competitive perception of the world, CI Theory gives an optimistic perception by embracing the connections that exist between states through economic, environmental and institutional interdependence. Proposed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye this theory shifts the focus of the realist school of thought that emphasizes power politics by pointing out that dependence on other partners for resources, trade and matters such as international problems like global warming may be used to bring about cooperation among rival nations. But it also expects that political antagonisms can interfere with interdependencies such as the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan system.

Assumptions of Complex Interdependence Theory

1. They are economic interdependent through exports and imports, depend on resources, and also have institutional relationships.
2. It is equally important to understand that military capabilities do not dictate state relations: political, economic, social, cultural relations are as important- trade, environment, and many others.
3. Cooperation between states means that no state engages in a conflict, and the fact is that interdependence has a significant positive effect in this sphere.
4. Interconnectedness by political conflict and interpersonal distrust, nevertheless may hamper interdependent networks from achieving their collaborative opportunities.

Application to the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan Context

Complex Interdependence Theory helps explain why Afghanistan's potential partners fail to seize the chance to work together in addressing the environmental issues and why political animosities impact shared resources.

1. Transboundary Resource Management:

The shared environmental endowments like the Kabul River Basin have abundant prospect for joint projects among the countries in the region. The integrated management of water supplies in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh could assist in combating water scarcity problems, uplifted agricultural production as well as lowered energy pressures for all of the three countries. However, India and Pakistan do not trust each other and, as a result, Afghani cannot be a positive factor for the political aspect of regional water cooperation. For example, Pakistan, with Indian backed projects in Afghanistan, shows case on how political enmity hampers co-ordinate in the utilization of cross bound resources.

2. Missed Opportunities for Regional Cooperation:

Mechanisms that might help to address could foster coherent action on governance of the environment within member countries and through inclusion of SAARC or other multilateral institutions. However, due to the long-standing enmity between India and Pakistan, such forums have become insignificant for Afghanistan and the country cannot even play a constructive role on shared ecological problems. For instance, accommodation to global warming, which is a regional activity, has not been made since the three countries do not trust each other.

3. Economic and Environmental Interdependence:

Efforts such as one that has produced the Turkmenistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan-India (TAPI) pipeline and joint hydroelectric power generation could go a long way in eradicating energy and

environmental problems in Afghanistan. These are good starts that suggest the possibility of the economic integration as well as stable relations in the region. Yet political enmities slow them down and Afghanistan never gets an opportunity to tap into interdependence. Complex Interdependence Theory focuses on how the exclusion of Afghanistan from regional frameworks maintains its environmental risks and hinders its abilities for sustainable development. From this viewpoint, Afghanistan's environmental problems can be seen not only within the framework of internal vulnerabilities but also as the result of the lack of cooperation within a closely linked region with many shared characteristics.

Synthesis of Theories

Thus, based on the synthesis of Realism and Complex Interdependence Theory's viewpoint, the present study describes the existence of India-Pakistan rivalry on Afghanistan's environmental management. Realism covers the push and shove over resources, insecurity and adversary frames of reference towards antagonistic policies, whereas CI explains how states depend on each other for cooperation but get blinded due to political enmity. Together, these theories explain the diverse consequences of geopolitics for environment in South Asia, coupled with the fact that Afghan environment approaches are sectoral and the country is geopolitically disadvantaged to engage in regional cooperation due to the interest of its neighbors.

This IIHL dual approach highlights the importance of shifting the regional politics from a security-centered view towards the cooperation based in environmental and development systems. In turn, only breaking mistrust and achieving interdependence the region would be able to address the common ecological threats and advance the sustainable development.

Discussion

The Role of Key Entities in the India-Pakistan-Afghanistan Environmental Dynamics

The hostility between India and Pakistan continued to affect more than just the stability of Afghanistan but also oversaw much of its environmental policies. All the three countries India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan have their own unique but interdependent position in this given so called 'Triangle'. Together with one another and in interaction with other countries, their actions directly influence to what extent Afghanistan can cope with environmental problems and participate in interstate cooperation in the sphere of sustainable development. Information in this discussion focuses on roles, interest and incidences of these entities in detail.

India: A Strategic Ally and Regional Power

India has its stakes in Afghanistan because it is waging a strategic competition with Pakistan and to preserve its influence in South Asian region. India considers Afghanistan as a strategic country for connectivity plan and counterweight against Pakistan. As a result, India has invested in the Afghan infrastructure such as, dams, highways and energy projects, etc. For instance, the Salma Dam Also known as the Afghanistan-India Friendship Dam is India's ambitious project to aiding Afghanistan in Doppler technology and installation of Irrigation and Energy. Although these projects are intended to increase overall capacity and economic growth in Afghanistan, Pakistani authorities believe that all these projects fall under India's plan to encircle Pakistan.

Indo-Afghan relations of water management, especially the Kabul River Basin portrays India as both developmental as well as geopolitical player. Whereas cooperation allows Afghani people to irrigate fields and generate power using the waters, India's assistance causes Pakistan worry about the water quantity flowing downstream. This presents how India's stabilization progress, which is advantageously to Afghanistan, are complicated with its competition with Pakistan. Further,

attention given to Pakistan as a problem for India leaves little room for addressing cooperation opportunities across regional environmental issues. At home, the environmental challenges that affect India are very severe and these are air pollution, water, and forest resources. These challenges should ideally compel India to encourage regional integration, but more often than not, its geopolitics override its pursuit of trilateral communications with Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Pakistan: A Geopolitical Competitor and Security Actor

It further brings out how security concerns with regard to India inform Pakistan's relations with Afghanistan. Afghan end users think Pakistan views all infrastructure investments India makes in Afghanistan – dams, highways, etc. as vicious circles around Pakistan. This perception makes Pakistan try to balance India through political and military power, while creating the Afghanistan problem. For instance, Pakistan resent Indian backed dams in Afghanistan due to their self-interest to access water for agriculture-oriented economy.

Pakistan is one of the lower riparian states based on water resources in the Kabul River Basin, and its water supply is largely dependent on Afghanistan. Due to the perception that any form of enhancement in Afghanistan water resources is inimical to the Pakistan water rights and means neglecting of friendly diplomatic relations and the failure to come up with agreeable water allocation formulas. Moreover, historical enmity and an ongoing geopolitical competition between Pakistan and India for regional hegemony makes Pakistan averse to cooperation with Afghanistan or any collective action over transboundary environmental concerns bearing in mind its security imperatives over ecological reasons.

Internally, Pakistan faces very many environmental problems such as lack of clean water supply, cutting down of trees, and air pollution. However much it is preoccupied with the geopolitical standoff with India it distracts itself and its resources from addressing these problems. This lack of domestic focus also poses major issues for Pakistan to invest into real regional cooperation, making Afghanistan's environmental plans uncoordinated and unfunded.

Afghanistan: A Victim of Rivalry and Fragmented Governance

Afghanistan is sandwiched between two nuclear powers India and Pakistan, where it has become the battleground of the two countries. Its environmental issues such as water crisis, deforestation up to climate change effects are worsened by more than forty years of conflict, ineffective governance and poor institutional setting. Despite the great potential in Asia for environmental governance, Afghanistan is beset with aggressive neighbors' policies.

The Kabul River Basin has many problems similar to other trans-boundary river basins that are shared between Afghanistan and Pakistan as it demonstrates several issues on water resources management in Afghanistan. This source is relatively so crucial in terms of agriculture and energy as well as for domestic uses but the unfortunate thing is that Afghanistan cannot utilize it optimally because the relations with Pakistan are so sour that there is no confidence and cooperation at all. India's favor of Afghan water projects is aggravating the issue as these projects are seen by Pakistan as threats to its downstream rights. This means that Afghanistan currently finds itself in the vicious cycle of forced behavior since whichever strategy the country comes up with in the face of environmental problems, it is forced to come up with it against its will.

Finally, due to the fact of its bail out economy Afghanistan remains a pressure point for the geopolitical vanity of both India and Pakistan. Indian aid is contingent on its political agenda; on the other hand, Pakistan goes out of its way to disrupt such initiatives. These geopolitical pulls and tugs have kept Afghanistan from setting and enacting harmonized and autonomous environmental

policies, let alone, the country is entirely detached from other regional frameworks of cooperation. Some of these problems include the following They environmental problems of Afghanistan exacerbated by its inability to provide for collective regional projects. Depending on such forums as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and other transboundary organizations might be useful in considering joint ecological challenges. Yet, due to the sour relations between India and Pakistan these platforms do not function properly and Afghanistan cannot establish any meaningful cooperation.

Interdependence and Fragmentation

Environment management in South Asia is disjointed because of the triangular relationship that exists between India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. As we have seen earlier, there are opportunities that are inherent in shared resources such as the Kabul River Basin and regional schemes such as TAPI pipeline but those have been mired in suspicion and hostility between India and Pakistan. Being a dependent country with a relatively low level of development, Afghanistan cannot become an actor that actively participates in implementing regional environmental plans and solving the problems it faces.

The South Asian conflict between two rivals India and Pakistan further vitiates Afghanistan's environmentally deficient governance, as does the overall impact of regional hostility on sustainable solutions. Subordination of security threats to environmental risks means that underdevelopment and destructive environmental practices continue to cycle and put Afghanistan at the risk of experiencing the worst impacts of climate change and resource deprivation.

Research Question 1: How does the India-Pakistan rivalry influence Afghanistan's ability to implement sustainable environmental strategies and policies?

From the lens of **Complex Interdependence Theory**, Afghanistan's inability to implement sustainable environmental policies is also a consequence of missed opportunities for regional cooperation. Shared environmental challenges, such as water scarcity, deforestation, and climate change, require collective action. However, the mutual mistrust between India and Pakistan leaves Afghanistan isolated and unable to engage meaningfully in regional frameworks. For instance, platforms like the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), which could provide avenues for collaborative environmental governance, remain ineffective due to the rivalry. This lack of regional cooperation exacerbates Afghanistan's vulnerability to climate change and ecological degradation, as it is unable to address these challenges through collective solutions.

In conclusion, the India-Pakistan rivalry undermines Afghanistan's ability to implement sustainable environmental strategies by fragmenting its policies, disrupting cooperative initiatives, and prioritizing geopolitical objectives over ecological concerns. Without a shift toward regional collaboration, Afghanistan's environmental challenges will remain largely unaddressed.

Research Question 2:

What role does the India-Pakistan dispute play in shaping Afghanistan's engagement in regional environmental initiatives, such as water resource management and energy projects?

India and Pakistan's neighborly competition has a deep impact on Afghanistan's capability in terms of envisioning and executing adequate sustainable environmental processes. This influence arises out of bilateral rivalry between the two countries whereby Afghanistan turns out to be a site of struggle. Unsurprisingly, such rivalry pervades Afghanistan's environmental governance consequentially making its policies reactive, externally imposed and subservient to overarching strategic interests.

This paper argues that from a Realist perspective, the India/Pakistan rivalry is representative of the realism view of the geopolitical landscape of international politics as a 'zero-sum' game, where states' main objective and priority is security in the context of national interest. In this regard, Afghanistan stands in the middle of two warring giants both with raw and unmasked ambitions. India have been investing into Afghan's infrastructure mainly into water resource management in order to increase their leverage over Pakistan. For example, major projects such as Salma Dam, funded by Indian government aims at increasing Afghanistan's irrigation and power infrastructure. The move has been seen by Pakistan as a direct threat to its agricultural economy and water security due to its linkages to the hydro-power projects – thus, its opposition and, sometimes, sabotage of such projects. This mistrust not only sabotages the efforts to manage Afghanisms water resources efficiently but also hinders the formation of cooperative trans boundary frameworks including water sharing treaty with Pakistan.

In addition, the dispersed structure of the foreign aid for Afghanistan demonstrates the political and inter-state fight between India and Pakistan. The support provided by these two countries is based on their interest instead of matching with Afghanistan's environmental needs. For instance, while the Indian government provides finance for projects on Afghanistan's electricity and farming industries, the Pakistani government sabotages these projects as much as possible to maintain its rivals' inability to interfere with Afghanistan's affairs. Affection or this rivalry can still cause Afghanistan not to have a steady and impartial support dealing with important topics such as reforestation, checking soil erosion, and climate change issues.

The nature of relationship between India and Pakistan has significant influence on the Afghan involvement in the regional environment cooperation; it provides restrain for Afghanistan involvement in regional and cooperative activities. In this role, both nations impact Afghanistan's participation in projects including water and energy sectors and overall environmental governance consistent with the strategic interests of the two countries.

As would be expected from a Realist analysis of Afghanistan's relationship with the regional environmental initiatives, the influence of the security policies of India and Pakistan cannot be ignored. For instance, the Kabul River Basin under which Afghanistan and Pakistan share resource is very crucial in the productive sectors such as agriculture and energy. India's backing of the projects for dams and water management in Afghanistan is to further its self-sufficiency as well as to weaken Pakistan's grip on the region. But to Pakistan, these initiatives are seen as threats to Pakistan's downstream water resource, and this results to conflict of interest that does not allow Afghanistan to set appropriate water sharing regimes. This feature underscores the point that Afghanistan has been unable to achieve its environmental goals mainly because of the conflict of interest among its neighbors.

The rivalry also now also explains Afghanistan involvement in regional energy projects such as the TAPI pipeline. Whereas India is keen on such projects for enhancing regional integration, Pakistan hitherto slows down or stops those projects on the pretext of Indian interference. Progress in this rivalry prevents Afghanistan from being able to capitalize on regional energy cooperation a serious hindrance in terms of the country's internal energy deficits and its ability to eschew unsustainable solutions. The foregoing realist analysis therefore shows how Afghanistan's participation in environmental programs is predetermined by rivalry of India and Pakistan, and with virtually no autonomy or the ability to act collaboratively. From the view point of Complex Interdependence Theory, the rivalry also hinders Afghanistan from participating in such ventures that require transboundary relations. Cooperation is necessary for shared environmental issues, which are more likely to involve the Rivers State Government Published in International Journal

of Environmental Science and Development, vol. 7, no. 12, December 2012 67 management and utilization of natural resources like hydro power for electric energy production. However, the everlasting hostile relations between India and Pakistan do not allow Afghanistan act as a mediator or to have a peaceful cooperation with the neighboring state. For example, cooperation in managing the transboundary waters in the Kabul River Basin has the potential to deliver multiple gains for the three countries involved namely; addressing the concern a water shortage and enhanced yields in agricultural activities. However, political opposition divides these initiatives, which prevent Afghanistan from using its geographical location to promote dialogue in the region.

Further, while conceptually organizations such as SAARC exist to potentially foster environmental cooperation, the political rivalry between India and Pakistan does not even allow functional cooperation in SAARC. Exclusion from such frameworks also reduces Afghanistan's capability to response to such challenges that are faced collectively. Another fact in CI Theory is that economic and environmental interdependence and cooperation opportunities- for example, joint construction of hydroelectric power stations. However, the rivalry slows down their introduction, thus depriving Afghanistan of a chance to engage in activities that could reduce its environmental and energy burdens.

Conclusion

The animosity between India and Pakistan is one of the oldest and one of the most acute conflicts in South Asia, which influence greatly the situation in the region. Allying to the above fact, Afghanistan lies in the middle of this rivalry and the high and incessant insecurity the country registers serve the agendas of these two regional powers. Though the main confrontation between the two South Asian rivals has mainly turned political and military, the verbose of Indo-Pak rivalry impacts on Afghan attempts at environmentally sound policies and regional cooperation. This study utilized the Realism and Complex Interdependence Theory in dissecting out how the India-Pakistan conflict impacts on Afghanistan's environmental policies, giving an intricate look at this interplay.

According to Realism, Afghan policies and measures to conserve the environment has been dampened by rivalry between both India and Pakistan. Both countries are highly preoccupied with their own affairs instead of cooperation and turn Afghanistan into the site of projecting their power. India has expanded its investments in Afghan water assets including the construction of dams over the Kabul River in order to reduce Afghan reliance on Pakistan and build the capability of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, for Pakistan, such initiatives pose threats to its downstream water access and security so it has had to undermine or sabotage the undertaking. This renders Afghanistan unable not only to effectively govern its water resources for sustainable purposes but also to build cooperative trans-boundary water agreements. Likewise, likewise the fragmented foreign aid which is provided by India and Pakistan contains their political interests and Afghanistan cannot execute integrated environmental policies. Realism therefore again brings to light that the various factions in power and lack of trust lead to a failed and externally imposed paradigm of environmental management in Afghanistan.

The broader implications of this rivalry extend beyond Afghanistan to the entire South Asian region. The prioritization of security concerns over environmental cooperation perpetuates cycles of underdevelopment, ecological degradation, and resource scarcity. Afghanistan's inability to engage in regional frameworks for climate adaptation, water management, and energy integration reflects a missed opportunity for addressing shared challenges collectively. Without trust and

collaboration among India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, the region's prospects for sustainable development remain bleak.

Based on CI theory, shared resources and environmental problems as a prospect for state regional cooperation in accordance with the interests of the states. The virtual environment of Afghanistan as manifested through water, forest, and climatic conditions call for multinational cooperation in their remedy. Issues such as transboundary water management of the Kabul River Basin or development of energy projects including the TAPI pipeline presents major opportunities to address these matters. Yet unfortunately, due to inherent hostility between India and Pakistan the Afghanistan does not harness these opportunities. For instance, transboundary water management could be useful for both Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan by solving water scarcity an increasing agricultural productivity problems, but the idea is split by India and Pakistan animosity, and Afghanistan cannot meaningfully participate in regional cooperation. Potentially useful mechanisms of regional environmental cooperation, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) are dysfunctional mainly because of hostility between India and Pakistan. The basic intention of CIF is the failure to cooperate and the encumbrance of political enmity on global environmental issues.

Altogether, these theories explain all the aspects of the conflict between India and Pakistan on the environment policy of Afghanistan. Realism describes how security dreadful breed provocative and adversarial conduct that hinders workable cooperation while C.I.T advocates for the possible synergies for neighborhood cooperation which are relinquished the base of suspicion. Thus, both approaches stress that due to the India-Pakistan competition, the institutional framework for environment governance in Afghanistan is still weak, centrally deprived of autonomy, and unable to provide adequate solutions to the Afghan ecology.

To address these issues, there is a need for a change in politics as well as policies as a shift from adversarial politics as well as policies to a mode of actions known as international cooperation with concerns environmentally. India and Pakistan should fully understand the tragedy they are provoking not only in Afghanistan but also in their own future that is consistently pursuing instability and ecological problems in the South Asian region. Projects like the joint framework for water resources management, the cooperative construction of more water supply systems, and regional cooperation in climate change adaptation may well be viewed as steps in the right direction, or positive 'signaling,' that would promote mutual trust to pave the way to more cooperative first steps in South Asia. Consequently, Afghanistan needs to bolster its governance and to aspire to assume the role of a mediator within regional environment projects, since its geographical and strategic location can potentially foster discussion on the issue.

Therefore, the competition between India and Pakistan significantly impacts Afghanistan's environmental politics and puts a great number of critical natural problems impossible to solve and restricts its participation in regional programs. Although present relations represent profound distrust and automotive thinking based on a security dilemma, there are opportunities for collaboration. Thus, focusing on common environmental and development interests rather than rivalries can set up the region as development sustainable and stable. Therefore, this study emphasizes the significance of a cooperative approach to environmental management in South Asia owing to conflict-free cooperation as the major form of regional interaction.

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