

The 1971 Separation and Its Legacy: A Historical Analysis of Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

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The struggle for separate homeland for the Muslims of Subcontinent was fulfilled in 1947 but soon after the independence, the Eastern wing of Pakistan showing dissatisfaction over the Policies of Central government. And finally, after a war of 1971, Pakistan was disintegrated. Bangladesh emerged as sovereign state and after that both the countries, Pakistan and Bangladesh faced bilateral issues in their relations. The memories of 1971 war a major factor to come close and established cordially bilateral relations. The Purpose of this research is to elucidate historical factors that based disintegration of Pakistan and after that how memories haunts/ Sour bilateral relations.

1. Introduction

Bangladesh (Banga, East Bengal & Bengal) was a part of India from the beginning of recorded history. It was incorporated into Pakistan in 1947 under the name East Bengal (which was changed to East Pakistan in October 1955). These two regions of Pakistan were separated by Indian-territory and were more than 1,500 kilometers apart. According to (Ahmar, 2021), these two regions of Pakistan did not share a border and, aside from Islam, were completely distinct from one another in terms of culture and society. There were many grievances because, despite the almost equal population of the two wings, political and stakeholders' power was concentrated in West Pakistan, and there was a general perception that East Pakistan was being exploited politically and economically.

East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) saw profound political and social changes in the framework of its relationship with Pakistan between 1947 and 1971. Bangladesh was once a part of India, but with the 1947 Partition, it became East Pakistan (Rafi, 2022). Even though West Pakistan and the rest of the country had the same religion—Islam—the two areas were culturally and physically different, which resulted in power concentration in the west and economic and political inequality. Conflicts over rights to language gave rise to movements for autonomy and acknowledgment of Bengali culture. East Pakistan, comprising the eastern part of Bengal province and the Sylhet region, differed significantly from West Pakistan in terms of language, culture, and ethnicity. The majority of the population in East Pakistan spoke Bengali, while Urdu was the dominant language in West Pakistan. This linguistic disparity would later become a source of tension, contributing to the demand for greater autonomy and eventually leading to the Bangladesh Liberation War in 1971. The partition also resulted in the mass displacement of populations, particularly along the borders of the newly created nations. Millions of Hindus and Sikhs migrated from West Pakistan to India, while an almost equal number of Muslims moved in the opposite direction (Khalidi, 1998). The influx of refugees placed immense pressure on resources and infrastructure, exacerbating existing socio-economic challenges.

Furthermore, the partition led to the division of assets and resources between India and Pakistan, with East Pakistan often feeling marginalized in terms of economic development and political representation. The central government in West Pakistan prioritized the interests of the western region, neglecting the needs of East Pakistan. The exploitation of East Pakistan's resources, coupled with discriminatory policies, fueled resentment and fostered a sense of alienation among the Bengali population. The disparity in development between East and West Pakistan became increasingly apparent over time. While West Pakistan experienced rapid industrialization and economic growth, East Pakistan lagged behind, remaining predominantly agrarian and impoverished. The socio-economic disparities, coupled with cultural and linguistic differences, deepened the sense of estrangement between the two wings of Pakistan (Maron, 1955).

In 1970, the general elections in Pakistan marked a turning point in the history of the sub-continent. The Awami League, led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, won a landslide victory in East Pakistan, securing an absolute majority in NA. However, the ruling establishment in West Pakistan was reluctant to transfer power to the Awami League, triggering widespread protests

and civil disobedience in East Pakistan. The crackdown by the Pakistani stakeholders on unarmed civilians further inflamed tensions, culminating in the declaration of independence by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on March 26, 1971. The subsequent nine-month-long liberation war, supported by India, resulted in the emergence of Bangladesh as an independent nation on December 16, 1971. The creation of East Pakistan and its eventual transformation into Bangladesh represents a complex chapter in the history of the Indian subcontinent. It underscores the challenges of nation-building in a diverse and pluralistic society and serves as a reminder of the enduring legacy of colonialism and partition. The partition of India and the creation of East Pakistan continue to shape the socio-political dynamics of the region, highlighting the importance of understanding and addressing the root causes of conflict and division (Jahan, 2021).

2. Literature Review and Results

Reviews related about this research are:

“Historical Analysis of Bangladesh War Crimes Trial and its Impact on Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations” by (Mustafa, 2021) claimed that the turbulent historical backdrop that defines the contacts between Pakistan and Bangladesh under Hasina Wajid must be included in any examination of their relationship. Not just a dividing line but a gaping wound that bleeds into the current day, the Liberation War and war crimes of 1971 is a key event. In order to fully grasp the intricacies of their current relationships, it is essential to comprehend the conflicting stories, unfinished complaints, and residual fears that stem from this common history. The horrible crimes committed during the war and the subsequent fight for independence had left lasting wounds on Bangladeshi national identity. There has been no real progress towards reconciliation since the political and emotional power of the unanswered question of who is responsible for war crimes remains high. There is a significant gulf in historical interpretations that makes reconciliation all the more difficult, as Pakistan's official narrative tends to minimize its part in the war and emphasize national security considerations while downplaying the human cost.

“Pakistan’s Reengagement with Bangladesh: Expectations and Challenges” by (Inam, 2020) claimed that under Prime Minister Hasina Wajid, Bangladesh emerged as a thriving democracy, which had a notable impact on the course of the relationship. Her pragmatic approach found areas of mutual advantage, notably in the commerce and energy sectors, while retaining a hard position on historical concerns. It has also been reported that cultural contacts led to increased understanding and bilateral commerce saw a substantial increase as a consequence of this cautious engagement. The future of their partnership depends on how well they can delicately handle past grievances, carefully manage regional difficulties, and prioritize common priorities for a future where both parties benefit.

“Historical, Political and Socio-Cultural Dynamics of Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations” by (Ahmar, 2019) stated that opportunities for readjusting diplomatic tactics also presented themselves as a result of regional and global events, such as shifting geopolitical forces. Opportunities for cooperation beyond bilateral relations emerged as a result of participation in regional forums and international organizations, which gave venues to address shared problems. The diplomatic landscape is unveiled by a critical examination of the

difficulties and possibilities in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations during the Hasina Wajid period. This section helps to provide a more nuanced evaluation of the bilateral relations under Prime Minister Hasina Wajid by shedding light on how both countries dealt with historical sensitivities, security concerns, economic disparities, and chances for collaboration.

In his article "Bangladesh-Pakistan Relations: Hostage to a Traumatic Past", (Zahoor, 2019) examined the tense relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan by concentrating on the historical background of the aftermath of the 1971 Liberation War. With a particular emphasis on the contentious war crimes tribunal in Bangladesh, which has resurrected old grudges, the book examines the historical trauma that still influences the way two countries interact. Zahoor argues that the political ties of the Awami League with India exacerbate hostilities and complicate the prospects of a settlement. Unlike (Khan M. H., 2020), his study emphasizes economic collaboration as a way to improve ties. The study by Zahoor is noteworthy because it looks at how historical complaints continue to impede diplomatic progress, therefore shedding light on the wider ramifications for South Asian regional cooperation. Even if Zahoor's insightful analysis has clarified things, nothing is known about the potential routes to peace between Pakistan and Bangladesh. The book goes into great length on the political and historical factors that lead to current conflicts, but it leaves out the specifics of grassroots projects and interpersonal diplomacy that can help to foster understanding. Moreover, it is critical to carry out more comparative study on post-conflict reconciliation under similar conditions since this might provide Bangladesh and Pakistan with priceless information. Research should be done to see how younger generations might shape future bilateral relations, maybe going beyond the deeply rooted myths of the past.

2.1 Historical Context

Important occasions during this time include the Language Movement in 1952, when Bengalis demonstrated against Urdu being the only official language, and Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's Six Points demand in 1966, which called for more autonomy for East Pakistan. The demand for autonomy grew despite political scheming by West Pakistani leaders, including arrests and crackdowns; this culminated in the Awami League's resounding victory in the 1970 elections (Choudhary, 1972). Despite having significant physical and cultural distinctions from West Pakistan, Bangladesh, which had previously been a part of India, was divided into East Pakistan from 1947 to 1971. As a result of West Pakistan's political and economic exploitation of East Pakistan, tensions increased and the following notable events occurred:

2.2 Language Movement (1948–1956)

Bengali was also made a state language along with Urdu as protests against Urdu's imposition as the exclusive language of the state were ignited. For the Bengali-speaking people of East Pakistan, this ruling was a major win because it recognized their language and cultural history (Alam, 2023). Bangladesh now observes LMD every year to honor the Language Movement of 1948–1956, serving as a reminder of the value of linguistic diversity and the struggle for cultural rights. The people of the region are still proud of this struggle, which laid the groundwork for Bangladesh's eventual independence.

2.3 Political Struggles (1954–1968)

A number of political groups brought attention to the fight for independence and equitable representation in government, such as the United Front's success and eventual demise. The 1968 uprising, which brought together laborers and students to seek political and economic reforms, was the culmination of these (Jahan, 2021). The harsh suppression of demonstrators by the government simply served to fuel the flames, raising tensions and calls for independence. In the end, these years of political conflict laid the groundwork for Bangladesh's eventual independence in 1971.

2.4 Sheikh Mujib's Leadership (1966–1971)

Sheikh Mujib Rahman's Six Points Program, which reflected the growing movement toward independence, called for more autonomy for East Pakistan. This eventually contributed to the Awami League's resounding victory in the general elections of 1970, which fueled calls for independence from West Pakistan even more. The Liberation War began in March 1971, when the Pakistani stakeholders cracked down on East Pakistan amid rising tensions (Solaiman, 2013). The leadership of Sheikh Mujib during this turbulent period inspired the Bangladeshi people to strive for their independence and freedom. His steadfast dedication to the cause and his demands for self-determination cemented his reputation as the Father of the Nation (Cheema, 2013).

2.5 Elections-1970

Tensions increased when Mujib became the uncontested head of the Awami League and won a landslide victory in the 1970 elections, only to have West Pakistan reject his prime-minister-ship. The ensuing impasse ultimately resulted in Sheikh Mujib's proclamation of independence on March 26, 1971, which started Bangladesh Liberation War (BLW) (Bass, 2010). He identified that Bangladesh became an independent nation when the Mukti Bahini, or Bangladeshi independence fighters, won the battle and the Pakistani stakeholders was found to have perpetrated numerous atrocities on December 16, 1971. Sheikh Mujib's role as the founding father of Bangladesh and a representation of the country's fight for autonomy and self-determination was cemented by his leadership during this turbulent time.

2.6 Escalating Tensions (February–March 1971):

Protests and appeals for independence were sparked by West Pakistan's political maneuvers, which included delaying the National Assembly session and rejecting Mujib's demands. Tensions were further escalated by the stakeholder's crackdown in East Pakistan, and on March 26, 1971, Sheikh Mujib Rahman declared Bangladesh's independence. With this proclamation, the Pakistani stakeholders began a ruthless campaign to quell the independence movement, ushering in the deadly Liberation War. Sheikh Mujib's leadership during this turbulent period was essential in inspiring the Bangladeshi people to struggle for their independence and ultimately triumph in December 1971.

2.7 Declaration of Independence (March 7, 1971)

In the fight for autonomy, Sheikh Mujib's historic gathering in Dhaka, where he subtly

declared independence, was a turning point (Rafi, 2022). Tensions between East and West Pakistan escalated further after the country's declaration of independence on March 7, 1971. In an effort to quell the independence movement, the Pakistani stakeholders cracked down on March 25, 1971, but this only served to fan the flames of rebellion in East Pakistan (Rafi, 2022). The Bangladesh Liberation War and the subsequent establishment of Bangladesh as an independent nation were eventually caused by the events that transpired after Mujib's Dhaka rally.

2.8 Operation Searchlight (March 25, 1971)

Some of the Bengali racists accused the stakeholders of Pakistan that they were involved in widespread murders and other crimes against Bengali civilians, which fueled the country's independence movement. They also thought that Operation Searchlight's violence and carnage only strengthened the Bengali people's determination to struggle for their independence (Jahan, 2021). The people of East Pakistan were even more enmity-filled with the central authority of West Pakistan as a result of this operation. Somehow, these incidents laid the groundwork for Bangladesh's independence movement, which resulted in a nine-month war and the country's official proclamation of independence on December 16, 1971. But when tensions increased as a result of West Pakistani officials' unwillingness to give the Awami League authority, the Bangladesh Liberation War officially began in March 1971 with a stakeholder's crackdown on Bengali civilians. Bangladesh's declaration of independence and the nine-month-long war that followed, which concluded with the surrender of Pakistani forces and the establishment of Bangladesh as an independent nation on December 16, 1971.

Bangladesh is one of Pakistan's important trading partners in South Asia, with bilateral trade volumes showing steady growth in recent years. Moreover, initiatives such as the South Asian Free Trade Area (SAFTA) and the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) provide platforms for deeper economic integration between the two nations. Despite efforts to improve relations, challenges persist in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. Historical grievances, territorial disputes, and divergent foreign policy priorities continue to strain bilateral ties at times. Additionally, issues such as water sharing agreements, border security, and regional geopolitics often influence the dynamics of their relationship (Mufti, 2021).

Cultural and people-to-people exchanges serve as a bridge between Pakistan and Bangladesh, fostering understanding and goodwill among their citizens. Shared cultural heritage, including language, cuisine, and traditions, provides a strong foundation for building closer ties between the two nations. Efforts to promote cultural diplomacy, such as exchange programs, cultural festivals, and academic collaborations, contribute to enhancing mutual understanding and appreciation. Pakistan-Bangladesh relations are characterized by a complex interplay of historical legacies, political dynamics, economic interests, and socio-cultural affinities (Ahmar, 2022). While the journey has been marked by challenges and conflicts, both nations share a common desire for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region. By acknowledging the past, addressing outstanding issues, and fostering cooperation in various spheres, Pakistan and Bangladesh can work towards building a more robust and enduring partnership in the years to come.

2.9 The Bangladesh Liberation War and its Aftermath

The Bangladesh Liberation War, which took place in 1971, was a significant event in the history of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. The political landscape of East Pakistan began to shift when an overwhelming majority of East Pakistanis voted for a political party that advocated autonomy for the region. However, the Pakistani army and the existing government blocked this party from governing, leading to mass protests. The conflict resulted in a stakeholder's crackdown by West Pakistan, leading to a massive humanitarian crisis. The war ended with the intervention of India, which supported the liberation of Bangladesh. The aftermath of the war saw the birth of a new nation and a strained relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh. In response to the crisis, India supported East Pakistani guerilla force *Mukti Bahini*, leading to armed conflict between India and Pakistan (Saleem, 2014). The war culminated in the secession of East Pakistan, which emerged as the independent state of Bangladesh. Pakistan, formerly West Pakistan, recognized Bangladesh in 1974, following pressure from the international community (Ahmar, 2005). These events reshaped the geopolitical landscape of the region and had a profound impact on the bilateral relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

The Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971 stands as a significant chapter in the history of South Asia, marked by a struggle for independence and the birth of a new nation. This war, also known as the Bangladesh War of Independence, emerged from deep-rooted political, economic, and cultural disparities between East and West Pakistan, ultimately leading to a bloody conflict and the creation of the sovereign state of Bangladesh.

Historically, the seeds of discontent between East and West Pakistan were sown during the partition of British India in 1947. Despite being geographically separated by over a thousand miles, the regions were unified under a single state based on religious identity – Islam. However, disparities in economic development, political representation, and cultural autonomy gradually fueled resentment among the Bengali population in East Pakistan. The centralization of power and resources in West Pakistan exacerbated these tensions, leading to widespread calls for autonomy in the East. The culmination of these grievances erupted into mass protests and political movements in the late 1960s, with demands for greater autonomy and recognition of the Bengali language. The government heavy-handed response to these peaceful demonstrations only served to escalate tensions further. The situation reached a breaking point when the ruling regime, led by General Yahya Khan, postponed the scheduled inaugural session of the newly elected National Assembly, denying the Bengali-majority Awami League its rightful mandate to form the government (Inam, 2020).

2.10 The Rise of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and the Birth of Bangladesh

Following the Bangladesh Liberation War, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman emerged as a prominent leader and the father of the nation. He played a crucial role in the formation of Bangladesh and became the country's first Prime Minister. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's rise to power marked a new chapter in Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. His leadership brought about a shift in Bangladesh's foreign policy, with a focus on strengthening ties with India and

reducing dependence on Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, popularly known as Bangabandhu (Friend of Bengal), played a pivotal role in the birth of Bangladesh. As the leader of the Awami League, he led the movement for autonomy and eventually became the first President of Bangladesh. His leadership and vision were instrumental in shaping the nascent nation. However, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's tenure as President was short-lived. In 1975, he was assassinated in a stakeholder's coup, which plunged Bangladesh into a period of political turmoil. Despite his untimely demise, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman's legacy continues to shape the political landscape of Bangladesh and its relations with Pakistan (Rashid, 2022).

The story of Bangladesh's independence is intricately woven with the remarkable rise of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, a towering figure in the nation's history. Born on March 17, 1920, in Tungipara, a small village in British India's Bengal province, Mujib's journey from a young activist to the founding father of Bangladesh is a testament to his unwavering commitment to the rights and aspirations of his people (Rashid, 2022). Mujib's political journey began during his student years when he became involved in various social and political movements against British colonial rule and later against the Pakistani regime, which had suppressed the Bengali people for decades. His early activism and leadership skills quickly propelled him into prominence within the political landscape of East Pakistan.

Mujib became the face of Bengali nationalism during the turbulent 1950s and 1960s, fighting for more rights and autonomy for the Bengali people who were repressed and marginalized by West Pakistan's ruling class. His impassioned speeches and tireless efforts to mobilize support among the masses earned him the title of "Bangabandhu," meaning Friend of Bengal, a symbol of his deep connection with his people (Rashid, 2022). The turning point in Mujib's political career came with the 1970 general elections in Pakistan, where his party, the Awami League, secured an overwhelming majority in East Pakistan, winning 167 out of 169 seats allocated to the region. This landslide victory underscored the Bengali people's unequivocal demand for autonomy and self-determination.

2.11 The Ziaur Rahman Era and its Impact on Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

The Ziaur Rahman era (1978-88) had a significant impact on Pakistan-Bangladesh relations. Ziaur Rahman pursued a policy of reconciliation with Pakistan and sought to improve bilateral ties (Ahmar, 2021). Later on, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto led to the signing of the SA (Peace Treaty) on July 02, 1972, which aimed to normalize relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh (Malik, 2023). However, despite these initiatives, the relationship remained strained, with deep-rooted mistrust and unresolved issues from the past. His presidency marked a significant shift in the country's foreign policy, including its relations with Pakistan. Ziaur Rahman sought to rebuild ties with Pakistan, emphasizing the shared cultural and historical bonds between the two nations. During his tenure, steps were taken to address the legacy of the Bangladesh Liberation War, including the repatriation of prisoners of war and the normalization of trade and diplomatic relations. Ziaur Rahman's efforts aimed to foster reconciliation and move towards a more cooperative relationship with Pakistan.

The Ziaur Rahman era marked a significant period in the history of Bangladesh, characterized by political shifts, socio-economic changes, and its implications on the relationship between Bangladesh and Pakistan. Ziaur Rahman, a prominent stakeholder

figure who rose to power through a coup d'état in 1975, governed Bangladesh until his assassination in 1981. His tenure witnessed a complex interplay of domestic policies and international relations, particularly with Pakistan, a country with which Bangladesh shares a tumultuous history.

Ziaur Rahman's ascent to power followed the tumultuous period after the assassination of Bangladesh's founding father, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, in 1975. The political landscape was fragile, and Zia emerged as a stabilizing force, aiming to restore order and steer the nation towards development. His policies focused on economic liberalization and decentralization by fostering a sense of nationalism, which resonated with a significant portion of the populace. In the realm of foreign policy, Ziaur Rahman sought to recalibrate Bangladesh's relations with its neighbors and the global community. Pakistan, having been involved in the events leading to Bangladesh's independence in 1971, held a complex position in Bangladesh's foreign relations. Despite historical animosities, Zia recognized the pragmatic necessity of engaging with Pakistan, particularly in the spheres of trade, defense, and regional stability (Cheema, 2013).

2.12 The Era of (1981-2009) in Bangladesh and Pakistan Relations

According to (Mahmood, 2021), Bangladesh-Pakistan relations had a history of erratic dynamics shaped by socioeconomic conditions, regional geopolitics, and political leaders between 1981 and 2009. Through an examination of the roles played by important personalities, most notably Khalida Zia and General Hussain Muhammad Ershad, this essay seeks to explore the bilateral ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan during this time. This section aims to offer understanding of the complexity of their relationship by looking at the interactions between these countries, their diplomatic maneuvers, and the effects of internal political events. Relations between Bangladesh and Pakistan saw a number of highs and lows between 1981 and 2009. When Bangladesh stressed its sovereignty and independence and Pakistan struggled with domestic issues, diplomatic relations between the two countries were initially icy. Trade deals and diplomatic contacts were tried to resurrect bilateral ties, though.

2.13 The Role of General Hussain Muhammad Ershad

When he was president of Bangladesh from 1981 to 1990, General Hussain Muhammad Ershad made a lasting impact on the country's history. Both good and bad things came of his leadership for the country. Ershad came to power in 1982 when a stakeholder's coup toppled the democratically elected government (Kukreja, 2008). Throughout his rule, he carried out economic policies and started a number of development initiatives meant to modernize Bangladesh (Malik, 2011). Allegations of corruption, authoritarianism, and violations of human rights dogged his reign, though, and this caused massive dissatisfaction and demonstrations.

Regarding Bangladesh's ties to Pakistan, Ershad's administration signaled a time of circumspect engagement. Though there were historical differences resulting from the Bangladesh Liberation War of 1971, Ershad made an effort to keep relations with Pakistan positive (Islam, 2016). Together with common cultural and linguistic roots, economic and

strategic factors also played a part in this. During Ershad's presidency, Bangladesh and Pakistan had bilateral ties marked by a careful balancing act of rivalry and collaboration. Even while attempts were made to improve cultural and economic exchanges, the relationship was frequently strained by underlying mistrust and unsolved past grievances. Representing the complicated legacy of the independence fight, the problem of Bangladeshi nationals stuck in Pakistan since 1971 has remained divisive.

2.14 The Role of Khaleda Zia

During her two terms as prime minister, from 1991 to 1996 and again from 2001 to 2006, Bangladesh's political environment saw a great deal of change (Bari, 2017). Her divisive policies and political decisions were hallmarks of her administration, which had a significant effect on Bangladesh's internal affairs and its ties to Pakistan.

Born in 1945, Khaleda Zia entered politics in 1981 when her husband, President Ziaur Rahman, was assassinated (Alam, 2023). Leading the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), she was elected prime minister three times. Many times at the price of democratic standards and political stability, Khaleda Zia pushed policies meant to strengthen her party's hold on power. High-level visits and initiatives to strengthen economic cooperation were hallmarks of the advances in Bangladesh-Pakistan ties under Khaleda Zia's first tenure as prime minister, which lasted from 1991 to 1996. Both nations aimed to forge ties that would be advantageous to both of them and to get over past conflicts. Disagreements about things like regional security and water sharing continued to be problems, though. But during Khaleda Zia's second administration, which ran from 2001 to 2006, ties between Bangladesh and Pakistan deteriorated. Allegations of cross-border terrorism and worries about Pakistan's assistance of Islamist organizations operating in Bangladesh heightened tensions. Furthermore straining ties with Pakistan, which saw Bangladesh's internal dynamics through the prism of regional security, were Khaleda Zia's affiliations with Islamist groups and her government's alleged inability to combat extremism (Ahmar, 2022).

2.15 The Hasina Wajid era: A new chapter in Pakistan-Bangladesh Relations

Sheikh Hasina Wajid became Prime Minister of Bangladesh in 1996 and has since played a significant role in shaping the bilateral ties between the two countries. Under Sheikh Hasina Wajid's leadership, efforts were made to strengthen economic cooperation, enhance people-to-people exchanges, and address historical grievances. The relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh gradually improved, with both countries expressing a willingness to move forward and forge a mutually beneficial partnership. As the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, her tenure has witnessed a nuanced evolution in the bilateral relationship between the two South Asian nations. This era is characterized by a blend of challenges, opportunities, and a concerted effort towards forging stronger ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Historically, the relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh has been complex, rooted in the tumultuous events surrounding the partition of British India in 1947 and the

subsequent liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. The scars of the past, including the Bangladesh Liberation War, have left lasting imprints on the collective memory of both nations. However, her era has seen a gradual thawing of tensions and a move towards

reconciliation and cooperation (Hassan, 2021). One of the defining features of the Hasina Wajid era is the emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy. Prime Minister Hasina has demonstrated a willingness to engage in constructive dialogue with Pakistani leadership, recognizing the importance of communication in resolving longstanding issues and fostering mutual understanding. Diplomatic channels have been utilized to address bilateral concerns, ranging from trade and economic cooperation to cultural exchanges and people-to-people contacts.

Economic collaboration has emerged as a cornerstone of Pakistan-Bangladesh relations during the Hasina Wajid era. Both countries have recognized the potential benefits of enhancing trade and investment ties, leveraging their respective strengths for mutual growth and development. Efforts have been made to bolster bilateral trade volumes, explore new avenues for investment, and facilitate business partnerships. Additionally, initiatives such as the SAFTA have provided a framework for deeper economic integration within the region (Mufti, 2021). Cultural diplomacy has also played a vital role in strengthening ties between Pakistan and Bangladesh under Prime Minister Hasina's leadership. Cultural exchanges, including music, literature, and art, have served as bridges to foster greater understanding and appreciation of each other's heritage and traditions. Such initiatives have contributed to building people-to-people bonds and nurturing a sense of shared identity across borders.

3. Conclusion

The ties that Pakistan had with Bangladesh flourished for almost two eras (1996- 2001 and 2009-present) which was a fortunate turn of events. The visit of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to Dhaka in 1974 was marked by the showering of flowers upon him. The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985 as a result of efforts made by Bangladesh and Pakistan to enhance regional cooperation and communication. In 2013, it seemed as though Hasina Wajid and Nawaz Sharif continued to have a positive relationship. New Delhi has had a significant amount of influence over Hasina's administration ever when it was first established. In order to provide unwavering support for India, her father founded and ran the Awami League, which is her respective political group. It was the target of Hasina's efforts because she believed that doing so would be detrimental to Khalida Zia, who had won the previous election with the support of the party. By removing It's credibility from Bangladeshi politics, Hasina is able to have more control over the situation. Because fifty percent of the members of the national parliament had already been chosen without any opposition prior to the actual elections that took place in 2014, the procedure was a complete and utter fraud. Through the resolution of long-standing problems on border control and river water sharing, as well as the provision of access to financing for her administration and the encouragement of investment from India in Calcutta, New Delhi has lavishly rewarded her government for the political efforts that it has made. In the history of Bangladesh, the previous governments have never gotten such a substantial amount of political and financial backing from New Delhi. Since her party's victory in the election in 2008, Sheikh Hasina Wajid has adopted a posture that is extremely hostile toward Pakistan. The 25th of March was designated as "Genocide day" by her government this year in order to commemorate the victims of genocide that occurred all over the world. In 2014, she was re-

elected for a third term, despite the fact that the BNP boycotted the election and that foreign observers voiced their disapproval. During the year 2017, Hasina received praise and recognition for her efforts to welcome and aid the approximately one million Rohingya people who had fled the conflict in Myanmar and sought refuge in her country. As a result of the election in 2018, she was able to secure her fourth term in office.

Bangladesh is sometimes considered as a prospective hub for trade and investment in South Asia because of its growing economic might. Global companies are becoming more interested in Bangladesh as a number of international retailers are establishing offices in its Export Processing Zones (EPZs) in order to break into the country. Bangladesh has had tremendous economic growth, which makes it a very desirable place for businesses looking to invest and grow abroad. Working with the Pakistani High Commission in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the Pakistan Business Council recently hosted a webinar to discuss the opportunities for trade and investment under a Pakistan- Bangladesh Free Trade Agreement (FTA). Pakistan's ambitious economic program has as its primary goal making the nation a reliable hub for commerce and investment, linking several Asian sub-regions.

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