The present study on "Conflict and Cooperation in the Indian sub-continent: A Case Study of India-Pakistan Relations, 1972-1978", is a theoretical-cum-empirical research within the broader parameters of Peace Research, Conflict Resolution and inter-disciplinary research. The methodology adopted in this study is based within the framework of the modern concepts of functionalism, and behaviouralism. It has been undertaken to analyse and pin-point the major conflictual and cooperative formats in India-Pakistan relations, especially in the immediate post-Bangladesh crisis phase.

The main focus in this study is on the urgent need for applying the general theory of conflict resolution, confidence and trust-building and reinterpretation of existing data within the framework of inter-disciplinary research and peace-building ethos, and the application of its various concepts to the specific political, socio-cultural, economic, military, diplomatic-strategic environment in the Indian sub-continent, more especially to the changing geopolitical scenario of India-Pakistan relations.

Often, studies on the subject tend to over-emphasize the features of conflict situations, like, the concept of parity theory, controversy over the concept of two-nation theory, secularism versus pan-Islamism, non-alignment vs. alliance system, military competition, concept of identity crisis, Kashmir dispute,
minority problems, and others, which have characterised India-Pakistan relations. And they tend to ignore or underplay such factors as rank-disequilibrium, reality testing, cognitive dissonance, pathological and psychological learning process, confidence and trust-building and their impact on India-Pakistan relations. This study is an effort in the direction of rectifying this imbalance.

An analysis of India-Pakistan relations from 1947 onwards indicates that the elements of consensus and compromise have often been lacking in their policy formulation and its implementation. Till the Simla Agreement of 2 July 1972 there was no reexamination of the existing assumptions and hypotheses which could result in modifying the policy priorities and diplomatic-strategic attitudes of India and Pakistan. However, it seems after the December 1971, Bangladesh crisis and the Simla Agreement of July 1972, this trend had been shifted towards bilateral consensus and bridge-building, confidence-building, peace-building and mutual understanding.

The Bangladesh crisis had altered the basic power structure in the Indian subcontinent and the overall geopolitical scenario in this region. It seems both New Delhi and Islamabad realized that confrontational and conflictual postures in their mutual relationships could not resolve outstanding disputes or other crises. They realized that a favourable or peaceful atmosphere could be built only through the evolution
and application of a broad-based policy or the policy of
give-and-take within the framework of a bilateral consulta-
tion and negotiation.

To achieve these objectives the Simla Agreement was
concluded in July 1972; and it became the starting point for
a new operational framework, for India-Pakistan relations.
Both the neighbours realised the necessity of peaceful co-
existence for their economic, commercial, scientific and tech-
nological developments and took necessary steps to overcome
the old legacy of confrontational trends. This agreement dif-
fers with the rest of the agreements concluded between India
and Pakistan since their independence, in the sense that it
was signed after Pakistan's decisive defeat, and after the
shattering of the old myth of Pakistani army's superiority
over the Indian army and Pakistan's posture of power parity
with India. Also, the post-1971 Pakistan, cut to size, emerged
as much more homogeneous and geographically compact and united
entity. Hence, it was in a better position to live in peace
and harmony with its principal adversary -- India. Another
major plus point of the Simla Agreement was that through this
treaty both the parties to the agreement for the first time
agreed, in their history of twenty-five years of separate
existence, to resolve their outstanding and future disputes
through 'bilateral negotiation and mutual consensus', whereas
in the past Pakistan sought the mediation of either of the two
super powers or the UN.
Till now no full-length study has been attempted on this subject from the conflict resolution or peace research point of view. This, however, constitutes the main focus or framework of the present study. Accordingly, in the present study an endeavour has been made to highlight and appraise the need to create equitable and symmetrical interdependence between New Delhi and Islamabad within the parameters of conflict resolution or peace research approach; to do much beyond demonstrating that it is a creative and productive field of enquiry; it has been optimistically evaluated the possible opportunities for the establishment of long-term and enduring peace and the required spirit of co-operative coexistence within the operational framework of the Simla Agreement. The thrust of this study is that the socio-economic system must be recognised as a part of the analytical framework for understanding the Indo-Pakistan relationship and as such, priorities should be shifted towards the issues which are common, less controversial and conflictual and easily resoluable and which could assist in the construction of peace-oriented environment in the Indian subcontinent, e.g., the revival of cultural and sports activities, exchange in the fields of cinematography, fine arts, music and literature, free and fair flow of communication, free travel facilities to the nationals on both the sides, pilgrimage, cooperation in the fields of eradication
of common problems, such as, poverty, illiteracy and disease, greater interaction in the fields of trade and commerce, greater facilities for interaction among research scholars, academicians, intellectuals, diplomats, policy-makers, military personnel, bureaucrats, establishment of joint programmes in the fields of education, science and technology, medicine, agriculture, and veterinary sciences, promotion of joint enterprises, cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and other joint projects so as to enrich cooperation and reduce distance or alienation.

In this study all the relevant material available on this subject in India and Pakistan in the form of parliamentary debates, memoirs of political leaders, policy-makers, diplomats, academicians; plus treaties, agreements, conventions have been utilised to the utmost extent possible and the secondary material available both on the theoretical aspects of international relations and India-Pakistan relations in the form of books, articles, newspaper clippings, monographs, available in India and Pakistan have been widely consulted or used in the wider perspective of inter-disciplinary research. Also, all possible efforts were made to interact and to exchange views with a wide cross-section of people in India and Pakistan, such as, reputed academicians, political elites, rulers, diplomats, policy-makers, journalists, bureaucrats, military personnel, industrialists, and other interested
people in this study. A study trip to Pakistan (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and Peshawar) was undertaken so as to be able to use further material available there and to acquire empirical knowledge through the exchange of views and interaction. During my visit to Pakistan, I was able to meet and compare notes with large number of knowledgeable people at the following institutions: Pakistan Institute of Strategic Studies, Pakistan Institute of Regional Studies, Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan Institute of Atomic Energy, Pakistan Institute of Foreign Service, Islamic University, Pakistan Institute of Administration, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Research Wing (Islamabad); Centre for South Asian Studies, Punjab University (Lahore); Pakistan Institute of International Affairs, Karachi University; and Peshawar University. I also had the rare opportunity and privilege of having interviews with the President/Mohammed Zia-ul-Haq and his close military and civilian colleagues. Needless to say that I have immensely benefitted from these contacts and interactions. I must record my thanks to the Committee for Advanced Studies and Research of the School of International Studies for sanctioning to me a two-month short field-trip to Pakistan, and to the Government of Pakistan for granting me the required visa and the facilities to visit the above mentioned places in Pakistan.
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