Soviet policies of newly independent countries of Asia and Africa is largely influenced by the ideological factor which has underscored the basic identity of the anti-imperialist interests of the forces of world socialism and national liberation movements. Yet the geopolitical and strategic factors have also formed an important input in the evolution of Soviet policies towards the South Asian sub-continent in general and Pakistan in particular because of its close geographical proximity with this region. Notwithstanding the clear pro-West orientation of the Pakistani ruling elite, Moscow has shown remarkable consistency in trying to build good neighbourly relations with Pakistan. Pakistan's membership of the West sponsored military alliances, did not deter the USSR in continuing its efforts for improving relations with this southern neighbour. The Soviet policy makers were well aware of the anti-imperialist orientation of the Pakistan masses. The signs of a sharp internal popular struggle in Pakistan students protests, strikes by lawyers and doctors, and political agitation by various democratic opposition parties for the restoration of democratic rights resulted in an increased ideological input in the shaping of Soviet policy towards Pakistan.

The research work had confined itself to the period 1964-82 i.e. the Brezhnev era. The period is rather significant in view of the change of leadership in both the Soviet Union and Pakistan. Though a snort and general investigation of Soviet policy towards Pakistan since its inception had been dealt with in order to have an insight into the historical background of Soviet-Pakistan
relations, however, the focus of the study is on Brezhnev years - which was quite eventful as it saw the change of leadership from Khrushchev to Brezhnev in the Soviet Union and the change of regimes in Pakistan from Ayub, Yahya, Bhutto and Zia.

The research work has highlighted and analysed the Soviet policy towards Pakistan before and after Tashkent agreement - an important milestone on the road towards the normalization of relations between the two countries. The Soviet policy, especially after the Indo-Pakistani conflict of 1965, had been the subject of diverse speculation and controversy. The change of leadership in the Soviet Union and Ayub Khan's visit to Moscow resulted in shift-watching exercises by a host of Indian and Western scholars, who came out with various theories to explain the 'equidistant' posture of the post-Khrushchev Soviet leadership towards India. The persistent Soviet efforts to establish normal good-neighbourly relations with Pakistan from 1949 onwards were largely ignored by a number of scholars engaged in this shift-watching. An attempt has been made to steer clear the controversy created by these scholars.

The present study attempts to make a concise analysis of the role of the Soviet Union in the Indo-Pak wars of 1965 and 1971 and studies its mediating role at Tashkent. It also tries to explain the fact as to why the Soviets, unlike 1965 war, relinquished its neutral posture and took the side of India in the Bangladesh crisis and what precluded them from taking Tashkent type initiative in 1971 war? It also discusses the linkages between the domestic developments in Pakistan and Pakistan's changed response
to Soviet overtures to normalize and improve relations with the Soviet Union.

It also focuses on the repercussions of the Soviet action in Afghanistan on Soviet-Pakistan relations. Soviet action in Afghanistan upset the trend of improvement in Soviet-Pakistan relations which continued in spite of Soviet support to India in 1971 conflict. It is likely that this trend would have continued, had the military junta led by General Zia not seized power in Pakistan from President Bhutto. In its search for legitimizing its rule, the Zia regime resorted to Islamic fundamentalism. The presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan was used by General Zia to procure international support for his authoritarian regime from the United States and Britain.

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However, for all omissions, errors and shortcomings in this study, I hold myself responsible.

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