



## THE RISE OF POPULIST PHENOMENON IN INDIA: IMPLICATIONS FOR INDIA'S RELATION WITH PAKISTAN AND CHINA

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### ABSTRACT

*This study endeavors to qualitatively analyze the surge of populism in India through an interpretative paradigm in order to contextualize the phenomenon with respect to non-western settings. It is imperative to operationalize the western originated concept of populism in India to analytical understand its causes and effects. The trans-continental phenomenon of populism manifest itself in India due to the economic and political factors that are played at discursive level by the political leaders. The preferred medium used by the populists is digital media as compared to the mainstream media due to the former's less constraints on content moderation and control. The populist government in India derive legitimacy of their legislative actions based on self-other dialect. Therefore, populism in India would have implications for Pakistan and China. The contentious and Hobbesian nature of anarchy based on constructed binary identities, grounded on nationalism and civilizational perspective, makes the region prone to intractable instability. The undecided territorial and border disputes of India with Pakistan and China, along with the Kashmir issue, would makes it difficult to develop a pragmatic policy options to achieve regional stability and peace.*

**Keywords:** Populism, India, Pakistan, China.

### Introduction

Around the world, the contemporary trends in global politics is experiencing the rise of populism (Destradi & Plagemann, 2019). The debate on populism gain prominence after the ascendance of Donald Trump, the former US president, and UK's exit from the European Union in 2016 (Gardels & Bergguen, 2020). The conceivable factors responsible for the populist tendencies is a response to the political eventualities that resulted in the construction of identity crises among communities and individuals. Furthermore, the established institutions don't pay heed to the socio-economic apprehensions of the general population. The unequivocal support for populist parties from both right and left wing have gained transaction by primarily pitting the "economic insecurity" and



cultural backlash as broad (Margalit, 2019).

India is a multicultural and multi-religious society with 22 official languages and have eight national political parties. According to the constitution of India, there is no state religion and India is the only country that is home to major religions (Acharya, 2021). Since independence, the first two decades of Indian political landscape at the national and state level was dominated by Congress, based on principles of secularism and non-alignment, until the arrival of BJP as main opposition party. The one-part system has once again made ingress into Indian politics which unlike the Congress party is based on cadre-based and ideologically inclined formation (Chandhoke, 2014). The era of Congress-led government is episodically mired with policies such as Operation Blue Star and Shah Bano Case, which provided the basis for communally divisive discourse to Hindu Nationalists to demand for their ethno-nationalists demands. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), an important alliance partner in National Democratic Alliance (NDA), gained more electoral support in the Indian lower house of Parliament - *Lok Sabha* – in the 2019 general elections. Preceding to incumbency of BJP in Indian political landscape, the incidents of violence particularly against the religious minorities were augmented (Zain, 2021). In 2019 general elections, BJP employed dominant political frames of Hindutva, mediated through social media, with historical and mythological references (Ibid). The term Hindutva was coined by V.R. Savarkar which constructed the India based on “Hindu-ness shared by all Hindus.” Drawing on the orientalist discourse situated in post-Independent India, the Hindu nationalist construct the binary identities grounded on racial uniqueness and claim the Muslim as responsible for tarnishing the Vedic age (Veer, 1999) (Thapar, 1996). In power, the BJP government's legislative actions like Citizenship Amendment ACT (CAA) and National Register of Citizenship (NRC) violated the human rights of religious minorities that would impact the democratic credentials of Indian democracy (Khan & Lutful, 2021).

The foreign policy of Narendra Modi shows the lack of coherent policy to establish cordial relations with Pakistan and have deteriorated the India's relation with China, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka (Tharoor, 2020). The unilaterally revocation of special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) have impacted the relations between India and Pakistan. Since, Kashmir is the only Muslim majority state, India demands the bilateral solution of issues as undertaken during the Simla Accord (Malik, 2023). In return, the Pakistani state downgraded the diplomatic relations with India and banned the broadcasting of Indian channels in Pakistan (Al Jazeera, 2019). The border dispute in the Himalayan region between India and China has been a pivotal determinant in military stand-off between the two states since the 1996 agreement that prohibited the use of military weapons near the border. India insists that the relation between two states would not improve until the respective countries resolve the border dispute. Scholars have pointed out the need of “external rebalancing” for India in order to stand up to China (Singh, 2022).

The aim of this article is to make twofold contributions to the contemporary debate on populism. First, article endeavors to describe the contextual and salient factors responsible for the



rise of populism in India. Secondly, the implications for Pakistan and China will be assessed due to the undecided territorial and political disputes.

## Explanation of Populism

Populism is defined as an “ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, the ‘pure people’ versus ‘the corrupt elite’, and which argues that politics should be an expression of the general will of the people” (Mudde, 2004). The most cited work on populism is conducted by Pippa Norris (Harvard University) and Ronald Inglehart (University of Michigan). The scholars develop their empirical investigation following the Cas Mudde and gave three elements of the rise of populism; 1) ‘*anti-establishment*, 2) *authoritarianism* and 3) *nativism*’. The heuristic model developed by Norris and Inglehart geared their explanation of populism to ‘economic insecurity’ and ‘cultural backlash’. (Norris & Inglehart, 2016). Populism is intellectually does not possess the conceptual consistency as socialism and liberalism. Consequently, populism is taken as ‘thin-centered ideology’ which can be juxtaposed with socialism in order to metamorphize the populism into ‘thick-centered ideology’ (Schroeder, 2020). In the 1960s and 1970s, the first generation of populist discourse focusses on the support for populist leaders on the basis of socio-economic factors using modernization and structural Marxism approach. The second generation of populist discourse emerged in 1970s and 1980s, which employed the interpretive approach to analyze the populist discourse grounded on ideas and subjectivity. Finally, the third generation, emerged in the 1990s, focused on decoupling the economic aspect from populist politics and emphasize the weak democratic processes (Jansen, 2011).

Populism can also be defined using ideational approach by placing the political arena under the good and bad forces. In contrast, the scholars who adhere to the ideational framework have identified two polarizations; ‘Elitism’ and ‘Pluralism’. Elitist placed the distinction among the people on the basis of moral and intellectual superiority, which gave the elite the legitimacy to rule over the masses. Pluralism is direct opposite to elitism and adopt the ideas or belief with universalist view of human nature (Hawkins, 2009; Mudde, 2004; Plattner, 2010).

Populism is a global phenomenon which directs the scholarly debate to critically evaluate the operationalization of populism. The ascendance of Narendra Modi in India and Tayyip Erdogan in Türkiye shows that the wave of populism is not confined to global north or developed states. Rather it also impacts the political culture of global south. According to Samir Ganesha, populist have apprehension for parliamentary democracy which they claim for undermining the interest of the people. This shows that the populism is not a distinct type of political front, rather shows the ‘crisis of parliamentary democracy’ as aptly argued by Schmitt (Ganesha, 2018).

The scholars pointed out the charismatic leadership and mode of communication between leader and the people to facilitate the success of populist leaders (Beyme, 1992). Moreover,



Benjamin Mofitt as aptly argued that role of mass media be taken into deliberation in order to evaluate the rise of political figures like Donald Trump and Silvio Berlusconi (Moffitt, 2016).

Populism is a normative concept which represent the *Manichean* worldview by creating the binary identities into pure and evil people. The corrupt or evil people would corrupt the pure which makes the compromise impossible to take place. The vagueness and contestation over the definition of 'the people' led the intellectual debate to critically analyze the term. Some scholars have given a class interpretation, and other called for it 'the heartland' which signifies the people as 'imagined communities' and mythological subset of the whole population (Laclau, 1977) (Anderson, 1983).

### **Salient features of Indian Populism**

This section deals with the salient features responsible for the rise of populism in India. It is imperative to analyze the contextual factors behind the surge of populist phenomenon in India. The rise of BJP as major political power can be attributed to number of factors like role of leadership, economic factors and rise of the digital media which makes the BJP as significant political force in Indian politics.

### **Role of Political Leadership and Organizational Structure**

The role of political leadership plays a pivotal force to draw on political vacuum and to form a connection with the voters. In the liberal democracies, the party leaders play an influential role (Bean & Mughan, 1989). The L.K Advani is considered as main proponent of BJP's rise based on its organizational skills. The rise of Narendra Modi also led the rise of Amit Shah as BJP president. Shah developed contemporary administrative style by introducing the vertical heads for programmes (Mishra, 2018). He developed close relations with the RSS, resultantly, its leadership plays a pivotal role in running the organization.

The BJP's strategy is to give ticket to the prospective dissident of the political leader from the Congress party. In the run-up to the 2014 general elections, many Congress party members opted for BJP and were important factor for BJP's win in national and state elections (Singh A. , 2017). The rhetoric employed by the BJP party members were shifted from 'party with a difference' to 'Congress-*mukt* Bharat'. The rhetorical structure put the Congress party at distance from the political landscape due to its inability to address the concerns of the general people (Ibid). Party also gave party tickets to sub-caste members, economically weaker and backwards members of the society. Since, the result of 1989 and 1991 changed the face of Indian politics by ending the dominance of one-party system by the BJP. The pivotal issues and demands in the 1989 general elections, as Balraj Puri wrote, were "(a) a concern for the stability and the integrity of the country; (b) consciousness of the community, caste, and ethnic identities; (c) resentment against the corruption and scandals; and (d) an urge for socio-economic equality" (Malik & Singh, 1992). The issues and the corresponding organizational strategy to give tickets to the respective members can be attributed to the rise of BJP (Vaishnav, 2017).



Study shows the voters choice is also related to the political leader put forwards as future prime minister. One-thirds of the voter's respondent that their voting preference would have been different if BJP didn't nominate Modi as candidate for the Prime Minister (Shastri, 2019). Likewise, the Modi's appeal to the electorate resonate equally at all strata's of society, as the party's strategist immaculately studied the caste equation to formulate a caste-based strategy (Jaffrelot, 2019). Since in 1995, the BJP declared that its appeal to voters is not against any minority community (Shah, 1996). One of the key characteristics of Modi's leadership is the inclusion of vote mobilizers, driven by ideology and authenticity, in its political campaign in rural area (Chhibber & Ostermann, 2014). This shows that the role of leadership is pivotal to make a mass appeal to electorate based on underlying fault lines.

### **Economic Factors**

The scholars have argued about the economic distress and unfairness felt by the society which not primarily because of economic hardships but rather also shaped by populist attitudes using the ideational frameworks (Benczés & Szabó, 2022). The rejection of the UPA by the voters in 2014 general elections is not only based on corruption allegation and narrative of 'dynastic politics' of the Congress party, the party's policies also crystallize the dismal economic outcomes without any sustainable policies, in spite of the Mammohanomics (Jaffrelot C. , 2015). The BJP's manifesto regarding the economic prospects were eloquent as it stated "Economic freedom implies that government will not get in the way of the freedom of individuals to start and operate legitimate business" (BJP's Election Manifesto, 2014). The massive appeal by Modi, who also belongs to humble socio-economic background, to all strata's of society is in contrast to the argument advocated by Ghanshyam Shah, that stronghold of BJP by upper and middle class would come in the way to promote the cause of downtrodden (Shah, 1996). Modi claimed that the difference between Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress government is the work culture and intentions. Modi claimed that the initiatives taken under the previous UPA government regarding the welfare measures lacked in proper implementation (Business Standard, 2017). The comparison between the UPA and BJP government shows that the during the second term of UPA, the government faces high level of inflation and policy paralysis. During the second tenure of the UPA, under the Manmohan Singh government, the inflation remained in double digits. In contrast, the BJP government after 2016 showed similar dismal economic indicators i.e. income inequalities and unemployment (Mohan, 2022).

### **Mediated Populism**

The statistics shows that India is the second largest online market. Due to the ease in the access to internet in both urban and rural areas, India would have over 1.5 billion users by 2040 (Majumder, 2022). The techno-cultural features of online spaces i.e. affordance and functionality, provided the pivotal social networking platforms to propagate the discourse of Hindu nationalism. The quotidian discourse practices generated on online networking sites by users have the potential to



translate into religion-based violence. Many right-wing political actors employ the social media platform *X* (formerly known as *Twitter*) to propagate their majoritarian perspective of Hindutva ideology as exclusionary approach which consider the religion, caste and racial minorities as outsiders (Bhatia, 2022).

After the end of Cold War, the proliferation of globalized political processes has led the re-evaluation of the role of online communities to analyze the link between nationalism and cyber space. The modernist and universalist streak of Hindutva prompt the scholars to examine the phenomenon of transnational practices. Hindu nationalist organizations, in addition to morphological discrepancies, have transferred their activities online (to the USA) (Therwath, 2012). The scholarly literature grounded on empirical study argued that the discourse on Hindu nationalism is being practiced by users which might shape their cultural and social orientation, in addition to planned media campaign (Ibid). Rao called the Modi presence on social media as “selfie nationalism” having salient characteristics; personification of Modi, nationalism driven by technological advancements, ephemeral nature of major policies with short life of their optics, and emphasis on the use of digital media (Rao, 2018). Modi employs the latest technologies such as hologram to interact with people by circumventing the traditional media, a populist strategy. which leads the Modi’s team to “adapted high-tech tools to a variety of low-tech outlets.” (Jaffrelot, 2015; Price, 2015).

### **Implications for Pakistan and China**

This section seeks to explicate the implications for Pakistan and China after the ascendance of populist government in India. India has border and territorial disputes with both its neighboring states i.e., Pakistan and China. The narrative of cross-border terrorism and actualization of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are a pivotal aspect in the bilateral relations between Pakistan and India. The construction of these issues in the contemporary political landscape of southern Asia would impact the prospects of peace processes and cooperation. The conflictual nature of bilateral relations would disempower the pragmatic institutionalization of regional imperatives for sustainable integrations.

### **India and Pakistan**

Pakistan is a multi-ethnic country which gained independence on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947. Indian subcontinent was partitioned on the basis of Muslim majority areas that would constitute Pakistan (Hussain, 1998). Since independence, there were multifaceted fault lines which impacted the India-Pakistan relations i.e. domestic variables, geography, historical factors, role of leadership, ideology, role of colonial power, major powers (during and post-Cold war), and geo-economics (Ijaz, 2017). After partition, Pakistan differentiate its identity from southeastern neighbor based on predominance of Muslim population (Burki, 2022). The India-Pakistan remained adversarial and antagonistic as they fought three wars and face situations like military standoff along the





international border (Ashraf, 2015). Due to the rise of populism in India after the 2014 general elections and enactment of legislations like Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizenship (NRC) have impacted the India's relation with its neighboring countries (Ranjan, 2020; Gupta, 2020).

Before the ascendance of Modi in the Indian political landscape, he adopted the manifesto of BJP that is based on historical political dimensions to adopt anti-Pakistani agenda, revocation of special status of Kashmir (BJP's Election Manifesto, 2014). Modi places the neighborhood foreign policy as its main priority. In the swearing-in ceremony in 2014, Modi invited the leaders of South Asian Association of Regional Countries (SAARC). Later on, he visited all immediate neighboring states except Pakistan and Maldives. Modi is considered as pragmatist leader on the basis of his realization that in order to accelerate investment and business for domestic growth, he needs to facilitate the regional stability (Choudhury, 2015). Prior to Modi, the former politicians had given importance to the narrative of regional stability for country's prosperity (Kumar, 2017).

The bilateral relations between India and Pakistan remained tense due to the security situations on the border. The leaders of the two countries met in 2015 when PM Modi called former PM Nawaz Sharif during the cricket World cup. Two leaders again met in the sidelines of Ufa summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) in 2015. The leaders agree to talk on "all-outstanding issues" (Banerji, 2016). But the incidence of Pathankot have put the progressive relations between Pakistan and India on the backburner. Since then, India insist that the relations between two countries would not improve unless Pakistan take action to punish the preparators of cross border terrorism (Ibid). The relations between the two states deteriorated further because of Uri attack in the Uri sector of Jammu and Kashmir (Bokhari, 2016). After the attack, India undertook two initiatives which lessen the prospects of peace between Pakistan and India; it review the Indus water treaty which favor the Pakistan, and withdraw the status of Most favorite Nation (MFN) granted to Pakistan in 1996 (India Today, 2019). Subsequently, Modi government surprised the world by conducting surgical strikes in Azad Kashmir on 29 September 2016 (Joshi, 2016). The post-Pulwama political campaigns shows the rhetorical structure mired with anti-Pakistan statements in which Modi declared that India is not afraid of Pakistan's nuclear threat. After winning the 2019 general elections, the then-Prime Minister of Pakistan Imran Khan congratulated him and Modi reiterated suggestions on further cooperation (Pti, 2019).

There are instances where the BJP leaders have aired anti-Muslim rhetoric which is in conjunction with populist iterations regarding the construction of the binary identities based on certain signifiers. The content analysis of speeches of BJP leaders shows that the Muslim are ostracized and labelled as terrorist and rioters. Some BJP leaders also called for the Muslim to vote for them by stoking communal narratives (Barton, 2022). The constructivist framework focuses on the ideational and normative patterns to apprise the actions, and populist leaders drive legitimacy by pitting the 'the people' as vulnerable against the oppressor. Leaders from the BJP call for ethnic cleansing of minorities would impact the India's democratic credentials and a threat



to its liberal democratic order (*DAWN*, 2022).

After the 2019 general elections, PM Modi was able to actualize the facets of Hindutva in its legislations and policies (Acharya, 2021). It revoked the special status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K), under the narrative of development, and prosperity that fulfilled the obligation of BJP manifesto. The construction of Kashmir issue as domestic matter by India is in contrast with Pakistan's claim on the basis of Muslim population (Behera, 2016). The bilateral animosity between the states will have political implications which would impact the regional integration and intra-regional trade. The UNSC resolutions regarding the Kashmir dispute become irrelevant after the Simla agreement and Lahore Declaration 1999 (Ahlawat & Thaakar, 2021). The annulment of the special status can be ascribed to the qualm about the special status given to only Muslim majority state in India, the step deviated from the India's insistence that any dialogue on the issue will be bilateral as per the 1972 Simla Agreement (Shah & Dalton, 2019). Moreover, the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and National Register of Citizens (NRC) are a pathway to Indian citizenship having a discriminatory policy against the Indian Muslims which might accentuate the communal incidences, since the CAA provide a path to citizenship to non-Muslims from Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh (Acharya, 2021; Zakaria, 2020).

The policies undertaken by the populist leader will have implications for the Pakistan and India. India's economy is growing and country is enhancing its capabilities of armed forces through indigenous production and import of defense equipment (Dutta, 2016; Paracha, 2017). With respect to geo-economic, Pakistan needs internal balancing by enhancing its economic outlook to lessen the circular debt and focus more on human development programs. The adversarial nature of bilateral relations between Pakistan and India would impact the successful manifestation of China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) for regional integration and stability, because India feels threatened of the cementing of Pak-China relations (Ahmad, 2016). During the third meeting of CPEC Working Group of International Cooperation and Coordination (JWG-ICC) on July 21, 2022, Chinese Foreign Minister reported said that "China hopes to push the alignment of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) with the development strategies of Afghanistan, support the extension of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to Afghanistan, and share China's development opportunities" (Rajagopalan, 2022). India's spokesperson for Ministry of External Affairs responded by saying that "India firmly and consistently opposes projects in the so called CPEC, which are in Indian territory that has been illegally occupied by Pakistan" (Ibid). These claims from Indian side will hamper the progress on CPEC, and the security situation between Pakistan and India remain volatile.

The onus of responsibility for the peace and resolution lies between Pakistan and India to resolve the issues of contention like cross-border terrorism, regulating of tariff barriers and initiations of the programs of cultural exchange. The military buildup along the LOC needs to be demilitarized gradually to start the composite dialogue to solve the Kashmir dispute. In order to start the confidence building measures in social, cultural and economic aspects (Ijaz, Pakistan-





India relations under Prime Minister Modi's Government (2014-2016), 2017), Indian political actors need to downplay the anti-Pakistan and anti-Muslim rhetoric and revisit the discriminatory legislations which disenfranchised the religious minorities (Acharya, 2021). After the Uri attack, India suspended the talks on Indus Water commission on which Pakistan is pursuing the neutral experts to resolve the issue (Tanoli, 2015; *DAWN*, 2016). There are primarily four areas where Pakistan and India needs to develop more collaborative approach i.e. Afghanistan, water, cross-border terrorism and Kashmir dispute.

## India and China

China and India tend to construct their respective narrative based on civilizational prerogatives (Rachman, 2019). In terms of populism, the contour of nationalism takes the majoritarian view to legitimize their placement of rules over the minority groups (Bajpai, 2020). There are certain implications while drawing the cultural meaning of nationalism rooting in mythological and historical perspective by placing restrictions on the 'other' based on cultural, racial and cultural minorities (Ibid).

Due to the proximity and common border, the debate in the Indian foreign policy circle regarding China dates back to 1940 between Jawaharlal Nehru and Vallabhai Patel. According to an influential strategy paper, *Nonalignment 2.0*, China "is the one major power which impinges directly on India's geopolitical space" and calling the China "a single most important challenge for Indian strategy in the years ahead" (Khilani, et al., 2012). Indian analysts have argued that the reasons for the India's deterioration of relation with China and Pakistan is due to the India's closeness to the US (Joshi M. , 2018). Other commentators argued that the attempted containment by India is another part of the problem (Singh Z. D., 2017). The construction of shared experienced based on negative perception of external power which subjugated the both sides resulted into weak politico-social infrastructure which derive their contrasting relation having the both cooperating and conflicting positions (Ogden, 2022). India shares 3488 km of border with China that runs along the Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Indian Occupied Kashmir. The 1962 Sino-India war and contemporary Galwan Valley skirmishes in 2020, based on border disputes, have bedeviled the bilateral relations between India and China (Gettleman, Kumar, & Yasir, 2020).

Along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) there are still 60000 troops stationed on each side (Negi, 2022). In the sideline meeting between Indian Minister for External Affairs Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi of the G20 foreign ministers meeting, Indian side iterated about the border issue and "called for an early resolution of all the outstanding issues along the LAC in Eastern Ladakh" (Rajagopalan R. P., 2022). Statement from the Chinese Foreign Ministry states that India and China "should take concrete actions to follow through on the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries that China and India are partners, and are not threats to each other but opportunities for each other's development" (Ibid). The boundary dispute between



India and China is major point of contention. The dispute border divided into western (Ladakh), eastern (boundary of Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh with Tibet) and middle sectors (Arunachal Pradesh). Due to the cold war and their respective domestic problems, neither the two countries strive to effectively resolve the border disputes. China and India are the rising powers whose position in the bilateral conflict stems from domestic politics and great power relations (Rajagopalan R. , 2017).

Scholars argued the rise of nationalism in both the countries might play a decisive role in their conflict of interests (Raghavan, 2019). There can be political implications for bilateral engagement which might hamper the regional peace and security. The interaction between India and China are premised on CPEC and role of US engagement. India has been consistent on its position of illegitimacy of BRI projects i.e., CPEC, as it passes through Kashmir, even though the commentators are of view that there would be any serious backlash from New Delhi in case of third-party countries involvement in CPEC (Rajagopalan R. P., 2022).

The conflicting interests on both states for attainment of regional power derive the mutual animosity (Bala, 2023). Scholars pointed out the points of convergence between the two states without off-setting their mutual desire to outpace each other seems difficult. The era of competition has lost transaction by both states to focus on global issues like environment, trading system and humanitarian aspects. The nationalist fueled tensions have potential to derail the prospective engagements. The regional dynamics between the increasing cooperation between Pakistan-China, and India's increase of multilateral cooperation with US further create implications for the region (Ogden, 2022).

## **Conclusion**

The study seeks to analyze the contributing factors behind the rise of populism in India and its implications for the Pakistan and China. The phenomenon of populism is gaining transaction in the IR scholarship due to its impact on bilateral and regional relations. The multi-faceted political landscape around the world experiencing the phenomenon of populism, however, the contextual understanding of Indian populism illustrates the role of political leadership, economic insecurities and digital media as significant causes that enables the manifestation of populism in India. The analysis shows that the implications for Pakistan and China after the rise of populism in India would impact the prospects of bilateral security and regional stability. The unresolved Kashmir dispute and criticism of India over the CPEC due to the concerns regarding the territorial integrity would impact the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The border dispute of India with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and rise of nationalism in both the countries would alter the dynamics of regional stability, since the regional integration in South Asia depends on the cooperative relations among India, Pakistan and China. Moreover, states need to undertake the pragmatic policy options to resolve the outstanding disputes.



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