

Student's Name: Javed Alam

Supervisor's Name: Prof. Ajay Darshan Behera

Name of the Topic: The Nuclearisation of India and Pakistan: A Constructivist Analysis

Keywords: Nuclear, India, Pakistan, Strategic Culture, Constructivism, Realism

Findings of the Study:

The present study examines the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan through the analytical frameworks of constructivism, strategic culture, and discourse analysis. The findings demonstrate that the development of nuclear weapons in South Asia cannot be adequately explained through conventional security-centric or realist approaches alone. Instead, nuclearisation emerged through the interaction of strategic culture, political leadership, historical experiences, identity, and domestic political discourse.

One of the most important findings of the study is that security is not an objective or fixed concept. Rather, security is socially constructed through political ideas, historical memories, and strategic narratives. The perception of threats in both India and Pakistan evolved over time and was shaped by the way political leaders and strategic elites interpreted domestic and international developments.

The study finds that constructivism provides a more comprehensive explanation of the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan than realism. While realist theories successfully explain the importance of external threats and the security dilemma, they do not adequately explain why states interpret similar security situations differently or why political choices often vary despite similar structural conditions. Constructivism highlights the importance of identity, norms, beliefs, and discourse in shaping nuclear decision-making.

Another important finding is that strategic culture played a decisive role in influencing the security policies of both countries. India's strategic culture evolved around ideas of civilisation, modernity, peaceful development, and international status, while Pakistan's strategic culture developed around concerns of national survival, Islamic identity, and perceived insecurity vis-à-vis India. These differing strategic cultures produced distinct approaches towards security and nuclear policy.

The research further finds that the role of strategic elites was central to the making of nuclear discourse. Political leaders, scientists, military officials, diplomats, and policy-makers collectively shaped the narratives that justified nuclear development. Nuclear decision-making was therefore not the outcome of a single leader or institution but the result of continuous interaction among multiple actors operating within specific political and historical contexts.

The study also demonstrates that the transition from peaceful nuclear energy programmes to nuclear weapons was gradual rather than inevitable. In both India and Pakistan, the early

emphasis on atomic energy focused primarily on scientific development, economic progress, and national modernisation. Over time, changing political circumstances, strategic debates, and evolving threat perceptions transformed these peaceful programmes into military nuclear capabilities.

A significant finding of the research is that domestic political considerations frequently influenced nuclear decisions alongside external security concerns. Political legitimacy, leadership ambitions, bureaucratic competition, public opinion, and national prestige all contributed to the timing and direction of nuclear policy. This suggests that nuclearisation was not simply a reaction to external threats but also reflected internal political processes.

The study finds that discourse played a critical role in legitimising nuclear weapons. Political speeches, parliamentary debates, official documents, scientific arguments, and media narratives created shared understandings of national security and helped justify nuclear choices. These discourses evolved over time as governments, political leaders, and strategic communities reinterpreted national interests in response to shifting domestic and international conditions.

Another important finding is that India and Pakistan followed different nuclear pathways despite facing many common regional challenges. India's nuclear discourse gradually combined ideas of scientific progress, strategic autonomy, responsible nuclear behaviour, and great-power aspirations. Pakistan's nuclear discourse increasingly emphasised deterrence, strategic balance, national survival, and the need to counter India's conventional military superiority. These differing narratives reflected the distinct historical experiences and strategic cultures of both states.

The research also demonstrates that nuclearisation cannot be understood through material capabilities alone. Historical memory, national identity, ideology, political beliefs, and collective perceptions significantly influenced how both countries interpreted threats and formulated nuclear policies. Material power and military capability became meaningful only after being interpreted through these social and political contexts.

Finally, the study finds that the evolution of nuclear policies in India and Pakistan reflects the broader interaction between identity, discourse, politics, and security. Nuclear weapons became symbols not only of military capability but also of sovereignty, national prestige, technological achievement, and political legitimacy. The process of nuclearisation, therefore, represents both a strategic and a social phenomenon.

In conclusion, the study establishes that the nuclearisation of India and Pakistan is best understood through a multi-variable constructivist framework that integrates strategic culture, discourse, identity, and domestic politics with traditional security considerations. By moving beyond purely realist explanations, the research offers a more comprehensive understanding of how nuclear policies are constructed, justified, and sustained in South Asia.