

Psychological Impact of Pakistan-India War

Bushra Akram^{1*}**Keywords:** India, Pakistan, Psychological Impact, War^{1*}Principal Clinical Psychologist, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, Nishtar Medical University/Hospital, Multan, Pakistan.***Corresponding Author Email:**

bushra_ch@hotmail.com

War is a state of armed conflict between different countries or different groups within a country. Wars always have a negative impact on the physical and mental well-being of nations. War always destroys communities, families and the socioeconomic structure of any country. The effects of war can be long-term and short-term. According to the most recent United Nations estimates, there are currently almost 70 million people displaced due to war, who have to leave their houses in search of safety. War adversely affects the emotional and physical health of both civilians and those directly involved in combat (Javaid, 2024; Murthy & Lakshminarayana, 2006).

The World Health Organization (WHO) has stated that in situations of armed conflicts, *“10% of individuals who experienced traumatic events will develop serious mental health problems, and another 10% will develop behavior that hinders their ability to function effectively”*. Depression, anxiety, psychosomatic issues like insomnia and physical ailments such as back and stomach aches are common consequences of war (WHO, 2001).

The conflict between Pakistan and India has continued since 1947. It all started before the time of partition when Hindus and Muslim minorities formed a "them" versus "us" mentality and went for partition on religious lines, Hindu majority “India” and

Muslim majority “Pakistan”. Pakistan and India fought major wars in 1965 and 1971, and some other conflicts are Kargil war (1999), Siachen conflict (1984-2003), and Operation Bunyan al-Marsus in 2025 (Tasavvar, 2025).

Pakistan and India are always at the edge of conflict but the psychological impact is always ignored. The psychological well-being of both soldiers and civilians is always adversely affected by war. People who experience war deal with psychologically challenging circumstances and situations, such as being displaced from their homes frequently, experiencing food shortages, and living in continual fear of harm and death. A person's psychological health is unavoidably harmed by this, and it may even make preexisting issues worse (de Jong et al., 2008; Tanveer et al., 2024). The ongoing war threats and attacks always affect severely psychological, social and occupational functioning. The uncertainty of peace and war is the most upsetting human experience (Amsalem et al., 2025). The same situation was between two nuclear-armed nations, Pakistan and India, from 7th to 10th May 2025. The recent brief conflict started on 7th May 2025, after missile strikes from India on Pakistan and targeted civilian areas (Code name: Operation Sindoor). On 10th May, in Operation Bunyan al-Marsus, Pakistan targeted several Indian military bases. Pakistan and India announced a ceasefire after three days of the conflict (Wikipedia, 2025).

Pakistan is a Muslim country and in Islamic ideology or faith, Martyrdom (Shahadat) is considered a high honor and those who die as a martyr are believed to be rewarded with paradise (Freamon, 2003), so in Pakistan, people are emotionally charged and willing

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to sacrifice themselves for their faith. The current conflict or war does not cause immediate trauma but it runs the risk of causing trauma in the future when the psychological effects are communicated to future generations. Children may experience emotional and behavioral problems for the rest of their lives. There was also uncertainty due to the three-day closure of educational institutions, especially for students taking their final examinations

In Pakistan, the major psychological impact was spreading lie propaganda, hate speech regarding political parties or the army, emotionally charged content, funny memes, funny TikTok videos, social media hype, and misinformation escalating tensions. Peaceful resolution is more challenging due to inaccurate and unauthenticated facts or information, sensationalized news and false narratives which exacerbate emotionally charged feelings and increase public fear. Digital platforms have become battlefields for psychological warfare with the rapid spread of fake videos, conspiracy theories, and altered information. People were more stressed, paranoid, and helpless as a result of constantly being exposed to content on social media that is provocative and fear-inducing. Furthermore, misinformation campaigns from Indian news channels, target vulnerable groups or populations, taking advantage of feelings like uncertainty, anger, and grief, which exacerbated emotional instability and triggered violent actions or behaviors. As a result, social trust declined, psychological health and well-being deteriorated in the Pakistani population, and there are now fewer options for communication and conflict resolution (Daily Times, 2025; Masood & Azam, 2020; Tasavvar, 2025). It is concluded that during the conflict between Pakistan and India, people feel more emotional which has an impact on long-term political perspectives and International relations too. War and conflict situations also strengthened nationalism and patriotism in Pakistan. Mindsets are

also important with action plans and online war is now worth more than the use of weapons. It also demonstrated that the brain may now be the real battleground rather than the border.

Ethics Statement

This guest editorial did not require ethics approval and informed consent.

Contribution of Author

Bushra Akram: Conceptualization, Investigation, Writing – Original Draft, Writing - Reviewing & Editing

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