South Asia in a Changing World

What Citizens in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh think 75 years post-Partition

August 2024

CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

CVOTER FOUNDATION

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ABOUT

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR)

The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) has been one of India's leading public policy think tanks since 1973. The Centre is a non-profit, non-partisan independent institution dedicated to ethical and high-quality scholarship on all aspects and processes that shape life in India. CPR fosters a community of distinguished academics and practitioners committed to its values of robust public discussion. The researchers at CPR regularly collaborate with the central and state governments, civil society organizations and other think tanks on research projects. The Politics Initiative is a new addition to the Centre which aims to examine questions of political economy in a rapidly changing India. The team that worked on this report included Rahul Verma, Praskanva Sinharay, Nishant Ranjan, Satyam Shukla, Melvin Kunjumon, and Shamik Vatsa.

The C-Voter Foundation

The Centre for Voting Opinion & Trends in Election Research (CVoter) is a pre-eminent polling organisation with presence in multiple countries. In India, the organisation has an experience of conducting social and political research for almost 30 years. The CVoter Foundation is a CSR initiative that supports academic and institutional research activities. It also conducts training modules and workshops for researchers and journalists interested in understanding opinion polling data. The team that worked on this report included Yashwant Deshmukh, Sutanu Guru, Gaura Shukla, and Aakansha Bariar.

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Executive Summary

The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 changed the sub-continent permanently, and eventually led to the birth of three sovereign countries. Each country has travelled its own unique trajectory, crafted its own political institutions, sought economic prosperity, and pursued external relations with other countries. Citizens in all three countries have adopted their own norms of political and social discourse. Do people in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh still share old cultural and civilisational ties? Have they been able to bury the past and move ahead? The Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and the CVoter Foundation launched an extensive project to mark 75 years of Partition involving a comprehensive survey of citizens of all three countries that was carried out between May and October 2022.

- By and large, a majority of people in all the three countries are of the opinion that the Partition was the right decision. The proportion of Indians who share that view is lower than that of citizens of Pakistan and Bangladesh. The survey reveals another interesting difference in attitudes and perceptions. A significant proportion of Indians favour a roll back of the partition. In Pakistan, a big majority is opposed to it. Similarly, a significant proportion of Pakistanis are in favour of Bangladesh "coming back". A big majority in Bangladesh opposes it.
- When it comes to achievements in key areas, citizens of India and Bangladesh appear sanguine while those in Pakistan display a considerable degree of dissatisfaction. For instance, two thirds of the respondents in India, and about seventy percent in Bangladesh, think that development of infrastructure in their country has been better than expected. In contrast, a near majority (47 percent) in Pakistan thinks it is worse than expected. About 55 percent of people in Bangladesh, and more than two thirds of Indians, seem to be of the opinion that their countries have made significant progress in the fields of health and education. About 44 percent of people in Pakistan are dissatisfied with progress made in health and education.
- Similarly, citizens of Bangladesh and India are more satisfied with economic progress achieved by their countries. In Bangladesh, 53 percent of the respondents were of the opinion that their country has made significant economic progress while 57 percent of Indians shared the same view. In contrast, the proportion of Pakistanis who feel the same is a dismal 27 percent. It is perhaps because of the economic crisis plaguing the two countries that citizens of Pakistan (69 percent) and Bangladesh (66 percent) expect a better economic future for their families. About 56 percent of Indians share the same view.
- The difference persists even when it comes to basic infrastructure and facilities. For instance, 42 percent of Indians and 38 percent of Bangladeshis think the condition of roads in their country is better than expected. Just about 17 percent of Pakistanis feel the same. In fact, more than half the citizens of Pakistan feel the condition of roads is worse than expected. Similarly, more than half the respondents in India and Bangladesh report they have access to clean drinking water. The corresponding figure for Pakistan is 30 percent.
- More Bangladeshis (47 percent) prefer a government job than their counterparts in Pakistan (39 percent) and India (26 percent). A near majority in Pakistan and India prefer to run their own business. The proportion of people who want to leave the country is the highest among the three countries in Pakistan (12 percent).

- There are significant differences in the manner citizens of the three countries perceive each other. In Bangladesh, about two thirds think the progress made by their country is better than expected. About half think the same about India while a substantially lower 29 percent share the same view about Pakistan. In India, close to seventy percent think the progress made by their country is better than expected. The corresponding figures for Bangladesh and Pakistan are 28 percent and 15 percent. In Pakistan (reflecting their sense of gloom), just one third feel the progress made by their country is better than expected while close to a majority think it is worse than expected. About 62 percent think India has performed better than expected and similar numbers think Bangladesh has performed better than expected.
- Trusting neighbours is difficult in South Asia for historical reasons. People in Bangladesh seem more comfortable with both India and Pakistan. About two thirds of the respondents in Bangladesh trust India a lot or a little while 63 percent have the same views on Pakistan. In India, just three percent trust Pakistan a lot while 78 percent do not trust it at all. The corresponding figures for Bangladesh are 10 percent and 37 percent. In Pakistan, about ten percent trust India a lot while sixty percent do not trust India at all, and the corresponding figures for Bangladesh are 21 percent and 23 percent.
- Many have wondered if friendly relations between India and Pakistan are ever possible. Six out of every ten Indians, more than half Pakistanis and more than forty percent Bangladeshis are of the opinion that friendly relations between India and Pakistan are not possible.
- There are sharp differences in perceptions of major global powers in the three countries. Citizens of Bangladesh seem most comfortable with major powers. More than two thirds trust the US and China while more than four-fifths trust Russia. However, the survey was conducted in 2022 and relations between Bangladesh and the US have considerably worsened since then. In India about two-thirds trust the US and Russia with a higher proportion trusting Russia. In contrast, less than twenty percent trust China. In Pakistan, 84 percent trust China, two thirds trust Russia and less than half trust the US.
- Given the trust reposed by people of Pakistan and Bangladesh, it is surprising how big majorities in both countries are concerned about Chinese interference. More than two thirds of citizens in both countries expressed high levels of concern about interference from China. In contrast, less than half the respondents in India share the same view.
- There are significant differences between the three countries in terms of citizens experiencing democracy. Close to half of respondents in India think democracy has deepened in the last 10 years while about 44 percent in Bangladesh think the same. In contrast, just about 15 percent of Pakistanis feel democracy has deepened in their country while approximately forty percent think it has weakened.
- In India, about sixty percent respondents say they have voted in most elections and less than ten percent say they have never voted. In Bangladesh, less than one fourth say they have voted in most elections while about 28 percent have never voted. In Pakistan, about forty percent say they have voted in most elections and one fourth have never voted. While more Indians go to the polling booth, they are less enthusiastic about non-electoral political activities.
- Interestingly, people in Bangladesh and Pakistan seem more concerned with the state of Indian democracy than Indians. When asked if India is taking an autocratic turn, forty percent Indians agreed. The corresponding numbers for Bangladesh and Pakistan are 58 percent and 52 percent respectively.
- For obvious reasons again, the perceived influence of the armed forces on politics is significantly higher in Bangladesh and Pakistan. When asked if the army influences electoral outcomes, 27 percent of Indians say it is likely. About 56 percent of Bangladeshis and seventy percent Pakistanis share the same view.

- About half the people of Bangladesh are opposed to dynastic politics and the proportions are two thirds for the people of India and Pakistan. While 56 percent of Indians think dynasty is a big issue, more than two thirds in Pakistan feel the same. In contrast, a little more than one fourth in Bangladesh think dynasty is a serious issue.
- Trust in institutions is a key element in analysing the success of a democracy. The numbers coming from Pakistan are quite dismal. Levels of trust in the Election Commission in Pakistan is less than half of that in India. Even the judiciary in Pakistan doesn't inspire trust among a majority.
- A majority of citizens in all three countries feel that big business has an influence over politics in their counties. A majority in all three countries are of the opinion that traditional elites and bureaucrats are hampering progress in their countries. The situation is acute in Pakistan where three fourths have that view about traditional elites and two thirds about bureaucrats.
- Poverty and corruption are considered very serious issues and indicate institutional failure for a majority of people in India and Bangladesh, with poverty considered a serious failure (68 percent) in Pakistan. In sharp contrast, just 27 percent in Bangladesh think poverty is a serious issue and 27 percent think the same about corruption.
- There are significant differences in perceptions about countries becoming more religious. In India, one third feel the country is becoming more religious while it's over forty percent in Pakistan and sixty percent in Bangladesh. More than sixty percent respondents in India and Pakistan feel that there is growing influence of religious leaders. About 45 percent of people in Bangladesh share the view.
- A majority of people in India (56 percent) and Bangladesh (52 percent) feel that minorities are safe in their countries. In contrast, 35 percent in Pakistan feel minorities are safe while 37 percent feel they are unsafe.
- When it comes to banning sensitive books and films, three fourths of people in Pakistan and India support a ban. In Bangladesh, the corresponding number is 57 percent.
- We see some positive shifts in terms of preference for the girl child (with a trend indicating almost equal preference with that of the male child) and a culture of dining together. However, there are some notable variations among the three countries.
- Women in South Asian countries are less likely to turnout to vote, but again, there is a noticeable trend in decline in this gender gap in turnout. Women's political participation in the non-electoral realm seems to be at par with men, and they show equal levels of ambition to join politics.

METHOD NOTE

This collaborative study, conducted by the Centre for Policy Research (CPR) and the CVoter Foundation, aims to explore citizens' perspective in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The study attempts to provide a comprehensive picture of how citizens in these now-independent nations perceive their country's past, present, and future.

The survey employed a structured and closed-ended questionnaire that focused on various themes, such as progress since independence, institutional trust, views on Partition, economic prospects, socio-economic impediments, political and gender norms, religious tolerance, and leader popularity, among others. The questionnaire was administered to the respondents in three waves in Bangladesh and India, with each respondent answering 75 items or questions. There were 45 items, including 15 demographic indicators, that were common across all three waves, and each wave also had 30 additional items. In Pakistan, the questionnaire was administered in a single wave, and respondents were given 135 items or questions, including the 15 demographic indicators.

In Bangladesh, the survey was conducted in Bangla. The survey in India was administered in 12 languages including Hindi, Punjabi, Gujarati, Marathi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Bangla, Assamese and English. In Pakistan, the survey was administered in Urdu. Keeping in mind the ease of the respondents with specific languages, on average, it took 20 minutes to complete.

CVoter undertook a national representative survey on computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) using a probability-based random digit dialling sampling framework. The CATI framework was used because it ensures better outreach to the population in a more cost-effective way in comparison to in-person surveys. For Pakistan, a non-probability web-based panel was used for online data collection.

The initial phase of the study (March–April 2022) comprised the finalisation of the questionnaire and translation into the required languages followed by standard training in the CATI framework. The pilot of the survey instrument was conducted in May 2022 and necessary changes were then made to the final questionnaire. The data collection process for India began on 3rd June 2022 and ended on 11th July 2022, a period of 30 working days with approximately 200 calls daily. For Bangladesh, the data collection period was between 10th June and 10th August 2022. And for Pakistan, it was between 22nd August and 4th September 2022.

The sample universe for the CATI studies comprised all the respondents with mobile phones using all the service providers in a given area. Further, the predictive dialler randomly picked the number to be dialled. The respondents were randomly selected through a batch of numbers from all telecom circles in each area. Each number in the selected batch was called, even if the target sample was achieved. If the number of completed responses was lower than the required sample, a smaller batch of newer numbers was selected. The data presented in Table 1 indicates the distribution of attempted calls in each wave of this study along with the number of completed interviews.

Extreme care was taken to achieve a demographically representative sample. Table 2, 3 and 4 compares the sample proportions with census estimates across key demographics for each country. It has been noted in previous research that female respondents are less likely to participate in such sample surveys. To overcome the gender skewness in our final sample, we not only included more female researchers on the team but also provided special training to these researchers. Further, afternoon slots were picked to conduct the survey as women are more likely to respond during this time of the day.

Survey Wave	Total Valid Connects	Refusals	Incomplete Responses	Completed Responses	Response Rate
Bangladesh					
Wave 1	12490	10879	160	1,451	11.62
Wave 2	13217	11538	191	1,488	11.26
Wave 3	11751	10110	250	1,391	11.84
Total	37458	32527	601	4330	
India					
Wave 1	17,155	14,748	373	2,034	11.86
Wave 2	18,530	16,138	385	2,007	10.83
Wave 3	15,339	13,239	326	1,774	11.57
Total	51,024	44,125	1,084	5,815	
Pakistan					
Total	10696	8251	332	2,113	19.76

In addition, to ensure a fair representation of the females in our survey, a booster sample was created based on a similar random probability design, and statistical weights were used to correct for any remaining skewness in the final data. A multi-dimensional weighting method was followed and created statistical weights using six variables (gender, age group, education, income, social group and location).

To calculate the weights in India, we used information from the Census of India 2011, National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) 2012 to estimate the OBC population, and the Electoral Rolls for an updated number of the adult population (above 18). With limited access to such data in case of Bangladesh and Pakistan, we used the latest Census data for these countries. The quality checks conducted subsequently found the weight quality to be robust in both the raw data file as well the weighted data file.

	All India	***100***	***4500***	***5815***	***1315***
	Gender	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***Final Samples***	***Over Sampling***
	Male	52	2340	3249	909
	Female	48	2160	2566	406
	Age group	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***Final Samples***	***Over Sampling***
	18-24 years	21.7	977	1237	261
	25-34 years	26.1	1175	1382	208
	35-44 years	20.9	941	1368	428
	45-54 years	13.9	626	1051	426
	55+ years	17.3	779	777	-2
	Education	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***Final Samples***	***Over Sampling***
	Lower Education	55	2475	2958	483
	Middle Education	37	1665	2087	422
	Higher Education	8	360	770	410
	Income	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***Final Samples***	***Over Sampling***
	Low Income Group	50	2250	3152	902
	Middle Income Group	35	1575	2257	682
	High Income Group	15	675	406	-269
	Social_group	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***212***	***Over Sampling***
	Others	1.9	86	212	127
	SC (Scheduled Caste/Dalits)	16.2	729	864	135
	ST (Scheduled Tribes)	8.2	369	293	-76
	OBC (Other Backward Classes)	32	1440	1960	520
	UCH (Upper Caste Hindus)	23.7	1067	1614	548
	Muslim	13.7	617	670	54
	Christians	2.3	104	95	-9
	Sikhs	1.9	86	107	22
	Location	***Census %***	***Target Sample Size***	***Final Samples***	***Over Sampling***
	Urban	30	1350	1924	574
	Rural	70	3150	3891	741
	All India	***100***	***4500***	***5815***	***1315***

All Bangladesh	100	3600	4330	730
Gender	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Male	49.9	1796	2326	530
Female	50.1	1804	2004	200
Age_Group	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
18-24 years	28.2	1015	1324	309
25-34 years	23.4	842	1160	318
35-44 years	17.7	637	907	270
45-54 years	12.6	454	467	13
55+ years	18.1	652	472	-180
Social_group	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Muslims	90.4	3254	3853	599
Hinduism	8.3	299	384	85
Others	1.3	47	93	46
Location	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Urban	39	1404	1517	113
Rural	61	2196	2813	617
All Bangladesh	100	3600	4330	730

All Pakistan	100	2000	2113	116
Gender	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Male	51.0	1021	1184	163
Female	48.8	976	929	-47
Age_Group	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
18-24 years	32.2	645	788	143
25-34 years	24.7	494	765	271
35-44 years	17.5	349	354	5
45-54 years	11.9	238	120	-118
55+ years	13.7	274	86	-188
Social_group	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Muslims	96.47	1929	2025	96
Christians	1.27	25	29	4
Hinduism	1.73	35	25	-10
Others	0.5	10	34	24
Education	Census %			
Less than Primary	40.0	800	535	-265
Primary to Higher Secondary	45.0	900	1112	212
College +	15.0	300	466	166
Location	Census %	Target Sample Size	Final Samples	Over Sampling
Urban	36.4	728	806	78
Rural	63.6	1272	1307	35
Vote 2018	Census2018			
Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf	**31.85**	637	801	164
Pakistan Muslim League (N)	**24.35**	487	397	-90
Pakistan Peoples Party	**13.03**	261	190	-71
Muttahida Qaumi Movement – Pakistan	**1.38**	28	35	7
Muttahida Majlis-e-Amal	**4.85**	97	63	-34
Pakistan Muslim League (Q)	**0.97**	19	40	21
Others	**23.57**	471	587	116
All Pakistan	100	2000	2113	113

Finally, given the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of social distancing and the spread of the disease, serious precautions were taken to ensure the safety of the researchers engaged in this study. As most researchers were conducting the calls from home, there was a need to make modifications in the workflow and develop a decentralized CATI process, which involved a few additional layers.

We are extremely thankful for all the hard work put in by these researchers at CVoter and all the respondents who graciously shared their time and opinion, to ensure the timely completion of the data collection process.

Revisiting Partition: Current Perspectives

Introduction

The Partition of British India in August 1947 gave birth to two nation-states, India and Pakistan. This event is widely acknowledged as a watershed moment in the modern history of South Asia. There was unprecedented communal violence, between 2.3 and 3.2 million deaths (Hill et.al 2008]), and mass migration resulting in population transfer of approximately 14.5-18 million people across the newly formed borders (Bharadwaj et.al 2008). The territorial reorganization of the region happened twice, with the Partition and later the formation of Bangladesh in 1971. The formation of three sovereign nation-states – Bangladesh, India and Pakistan – has had a lasting impact on the social fabric, politics and governance, as well as the developmental journey of this region. These countries followed different trajectories of state-formation, institution-building and development, contestations over identities of social groups, and divergent strands of political discourses.

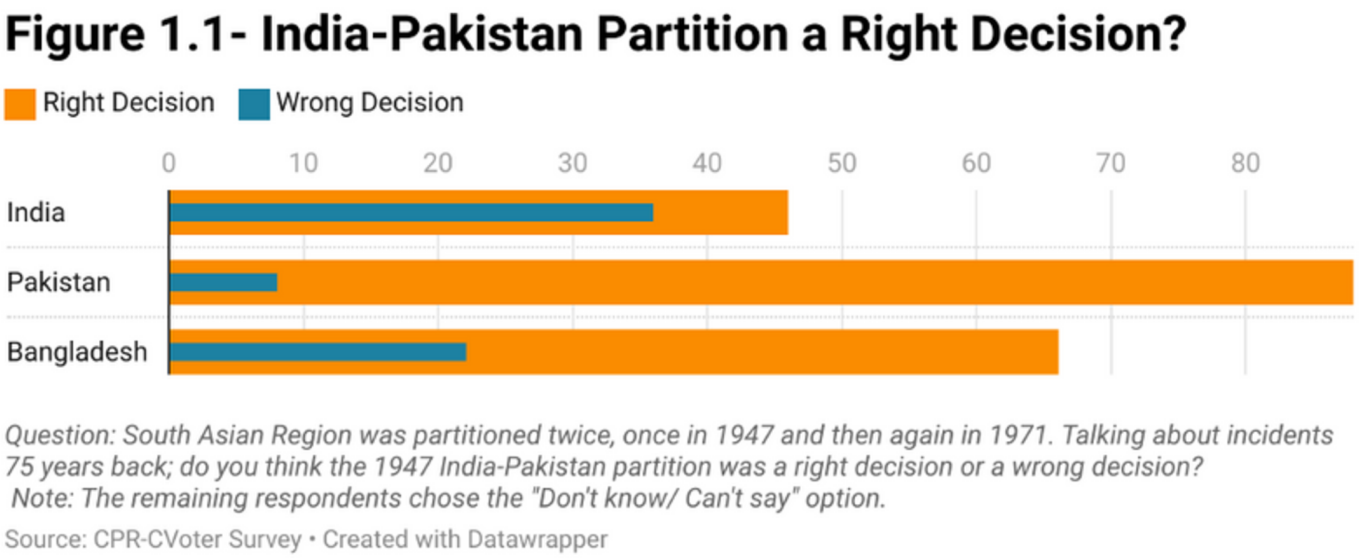
Scholarship on the Partition, broadly termed 'Partition Studies', presents us with a vast body of literature on multiple aspects of the event. This includes research on the political developments preceding the Partition (Jalal 1985, Chatterji 1994, Gilmartin 1998, Bose 2014), history and memory (Pandey 2001), oral narratives of the victims (The 1947 Partition Archive), questions of gender and caste (Butalia 1998, Bagchi and Dasgupta 2003), migration, refugeehood and citizenship (Chakrabarti 1999, Kudaisya and Yong Tan 2000, Zamindar 2007), state formations (Samaddar et.al 2005), historical fictions (Ghosh 1988, Manto 1997) and cinematic texts (Ghatak 1965, Sathyu 1974).

To complement the historical, anthropological and artistic approaches to studying Partition, scholars have also tried to investigate the impact of Partition on the demography and development of the three countries through quantitative analyses (Vakil 1958, Hill et.al 2008, Bharadwaj et.al 2008). In the 75th year of the Partition, this report aims to contribute to the existing body of scholarship. Based on an analysis of the current perspectives of the citizens of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, we intend to revisit the Partition in this chapter to understand: (a) what the people in these three countries think about the Partition, and if given an option, its reversal, at present, and (b) their opinion on the division of Pakistan in 1971. In the next chapter, we look at how much trust the people in this region have in each other as neighbours as well as other countries.

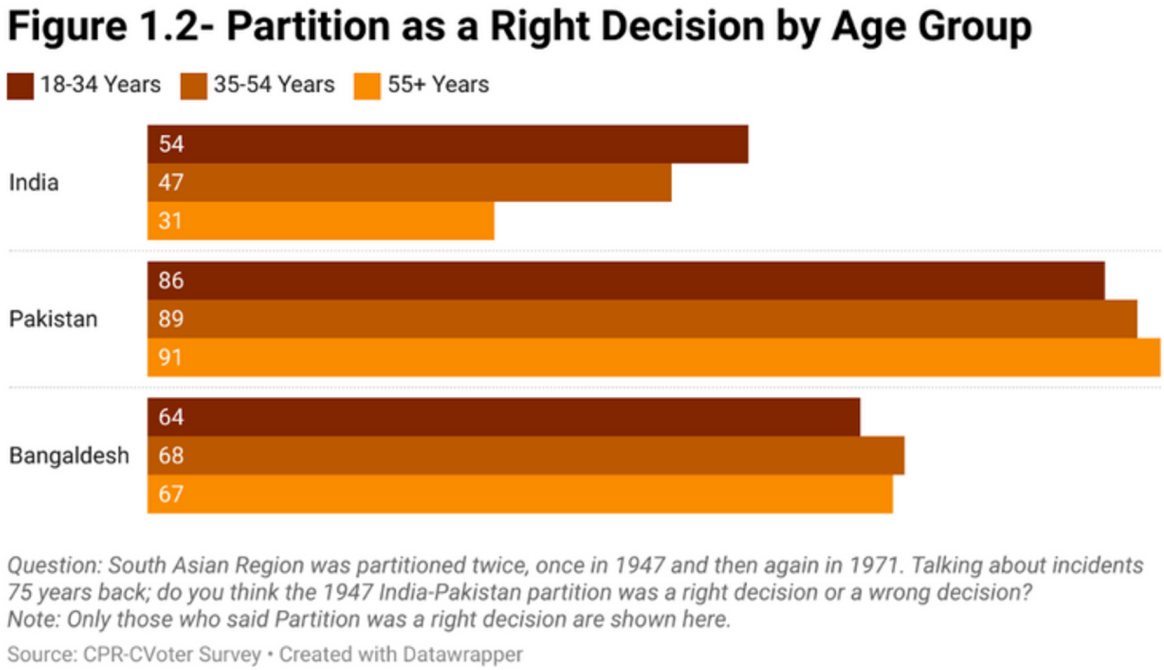
Our survey shows that the majority of people in all three countries currently think that the 1947 Partition was the right decision. However, in case of a hypothetical reversal of partition happens, the popular opinion differs. While the majority of Indian respondents showed support towards such a proposal, the people in Bangladesh and Pakistan largely opposed it. On the question of the disintegration of Pakistan in 1971, most of the respondents from Bangladesh and India called it a right decision, whereas the majority of Pakistani respondents think that it was wrong. When the question on the reversal of the 1971 episode was proposed, most of the respondents from Bangladesh declined it. Interestingly, the majority of our respondents from India and Pakistan stood in support of such a proposition. Further, our analysis infers that while Bangladesh is currently the most trusted nation among these three countries, there exists a lack of trust between India and Pakistan.

The 1947 Partition

The decision to partition British India continues to be a matter of great political debate. It is not uncommon to hear about the appropriateness of Partition, or speculate about all sorts of possibilities. To ascertain peoples' opinions on this issue, we asked the respondents whether the decision to divide India and Pakistan into two separate nations in 1947 was right or wrong. While the popular opinion in all three countries is that the 1947 Partition decision was the right one (Figure 1.1), a deeper look at the data, particularly from India, provides us with interesting insights. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, 66 and 88 percent of the respondents respectively think that the 1947 Partition was the right decision, whereas the popular opinion in India is mixed. A little less than half (46 percent) of the Indian respondents called it the right decision and 36 percent of them disagreed.



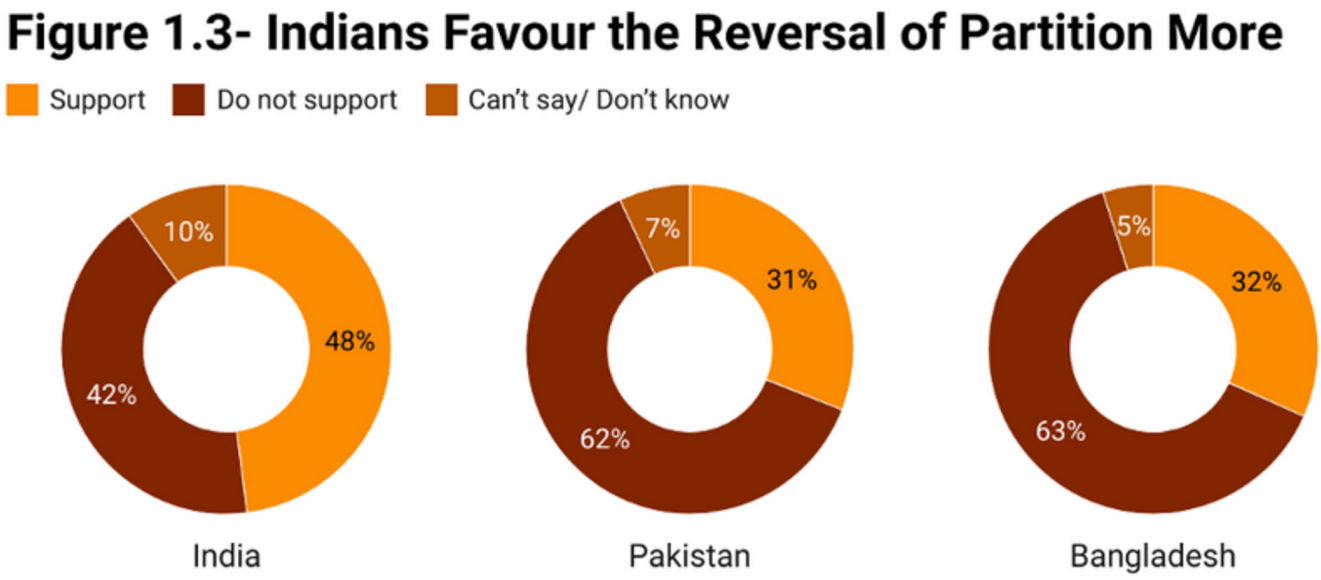
It is pertinent to add that the majority of the respondents in Bangladesh and Pakistan across age groups, income and educational levels, social groups, and country's regions supported the decision of the Partition. In India, on the other hand, the responses vary across groups. The younger population, as well as those in the middle ages, in all three countries supported the Partition. The elderly respondents (55+) in Bangladesh and Pakistan supported the Partition, while their counterparts in India were less likely to support it (Figure 1.2).



Furthermore, there were sharp variations in responses among different social groups in India. For example, while 57 percent of higher income group respondents said it was a wrong decision, only 29 percent from lower income groups felt so. There is a large regional divide with western Indian respondents differing from the rest of the country – with half of the respondents from western India suggesting that the partition was a wrong decision, whereas the proportions in the other parts of the country were only one-third.

Reversal of the 1947 Partition

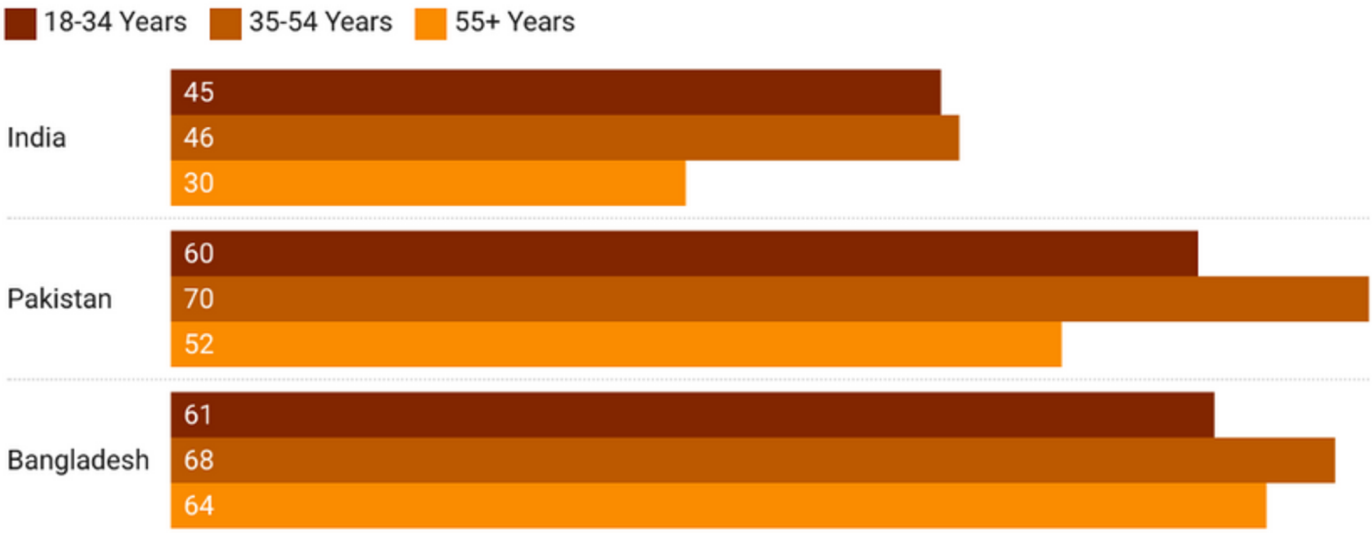
We also asked respondents whether they would support a proposal to reverse the decision to divide India and Pakistan . In Bangladesh and Pakistan, nearly two-thirds of the respondents did not support such a proposal. Responses from India, on the other hand, show a sharp contrast. In India, while 48 percent of the respondents supported a reversal of the Partition, 42 percent opposed reversal, and the remaining expressed no opinion on this question.



The responses also differ across various categories. For instance, in India, the views of the male respondents were equally divided on this proposal. Among females, nearly every second respondents supported the proposal, whereas 40 percent respondents opposed the same and the remaining expressed no position. In the case of Pakistan and Bangladesh, the proportions of male and female respondents who opposed the proposal were at par with their respective national averages. Further, roughly two-thirds of respondents in India above the age of 55 were in favour of reversal, whereas the differences between those who supported and opposed the proposal were marginal among young and middle-aged respondents. Such differences by age of the respondents were not present in case of Pakistan and Bangladesh.

In Bangladesh, among those who called the 1947 Partition a right decision, one-fourth of the respondents supported a reversal proposal whereas roughly the remaining three-fourths did not show such support. Quite expectedly, the majority of those who called the 1947 Partition a wrong decision showed their support for a reversal of the event. In India, more than half (55 percent) of those, who thought the 1947 Partition was right, did not support a reversal. Correspondingly, those Indian respondents who decried the partition as a wrong decision showed overwhelming support (68 percent) for its reversal. Finally, the opinion is largely similar in Pakistan, i.e., those who thought Partition was right did not support a reversal and vice-versa.

Figure 1.4- No Support for Partition Reversal by Age Group



Question: If a reversal of partition is proposed, would you support it?
Note: The responses only include those who oppose the reversal of the Partition.

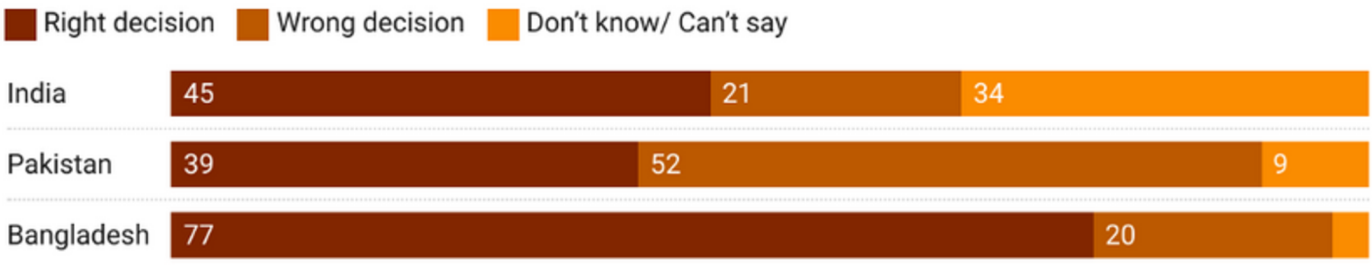
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Bifurcation of Pakistan and Bangladesh

The 1947 Partition culminated in a peculiar map of the South Asian region. Pakistan had two territories – West and East – separated by India. The political geography of the region changed once again in 1971 following the war for liberation and East Pakistan officially became Bangladesh. India, it is said, played an instrumental role in the creation of Bangladesh as a sovereign nation-state. To understand the contemporary perspectives on this watershed episode in the history of South Asia, we asked our respondents whether the division of Pakistan in 1971 was the right or the wrong decision.

Bangladeshi respondents overwhelmingly supported the division of Pakistan and Bangladesh. This decisive support is seen across categories of respondents. A contrasting image emerges from Pakistan with one in two respondents opposing the bifurcation; two in five respondents supporting it and the remaining holding no opinion. In India, 45 percent of the respondents supported the bifurcation whereas, one-fifth of the respondents opposed it, leaving the remaining 34 percent taking no position on the question (Figure 1.5).

Figure 1.5- Pakistan-Bangladesh Partition a Right Decision?



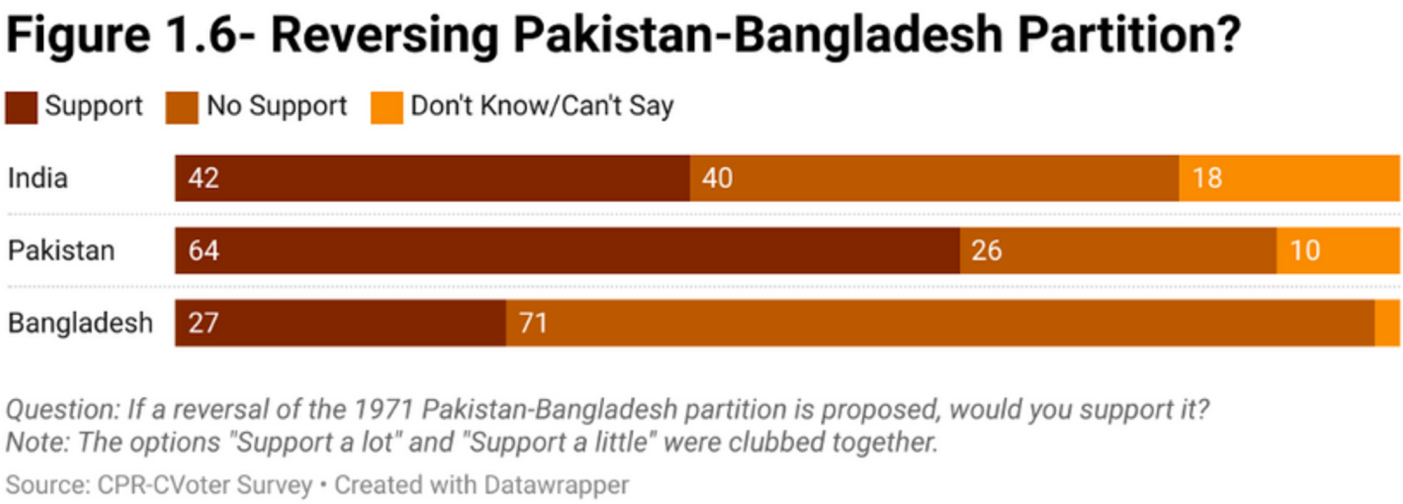
Question: Now talking about incidents 50 years back; do you think the 1971 Pakistan-Bangladesh partition was a right decision or a wrong decision?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

On this question, we also specifically tried to capture the views of the people as per their voting behaviour in the last national elections in the three countries. In Bangladesh, irrespective of their partisan leanings, the respondents supported the 1971 event. This trend is conspicuous among respondents from India as well, as overwhelming support for the bifurcation emerges irrespective of their political identification. Regardless of their voting preferences, most Pakistanis called the 1971 division of their country a wrong decision.

Reversal of Pakistan-Bangladesh Bifurcation

In this case, we asked a hypothetical question on reversal of the 1971 episode. In Bangladesh, 71 percent of the respondents did not support such a proposal, whereas the majority of the responses from the other two countries echoed the opposite sentiment. In Pakistan, 64 percent of the respondents supported the re-unification of Pakistan and Bangladesh. Even the majority of the non-Muslim respondents in Pakistan, who otherwise remarked that the division of Pakistan in 1971 was the right decision, did not support a present-day reversal. The responses from India are also noteworthy. In spite of the fact that India supported the national liberation movement of Bangladesh in 1971, the current view in India is rather mixed. While 42 percent support for a reversal, another 40 percent respondents from India opposed it.



We further tried to map the responses as the voting behaviour of the people. In Bangladesh, around three-fourths of the respondents who voted for the Awami League and two-thirds of the respondents who voted for opposition parties were not in favour of a reversal of the 1971 division. The views of Indian respondents, however, are mixed in this regard; one in two respondents who voted for the BJP did not support a reversal whereas among those who voted for the INC, the opinions were equally split. In Pakistan, the majority of the respondents irrespective of their voting behaviour supported the reversal proposal.

Regarding the questions on the bifurcation of Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971 and its reversal proposal. We find that in Bangladesh, the majority of those who supported the 1971 decision did not support a reversal of the event. In Pakistan, the opinion is thought-provoking. Among the Pakistani respondents, the majority of those who supported the 1971 division, also supported a reversal of the event. Moreover, those who thought that the division was wrong, quite expectedly, supported the reversal proposal. Among the Indian respondents, the majority of those who called the 1971 event a right decision did not support its reversal. Further, those who thought of the 1971 division as a wrong decision wanted a reversal of it.

Conclusion

The 75th year of the Partition and the consequent independence of India and Pakistan provide us with an opportunity to revisit this historic event and understand the contemporary perspectives of the citizens of these countries on the same. In the three countries, popular opinion holds that the Partition of British India was the right decision. As detailed above, there are differences in opinion when we look at the responses of various categories of respondents based on their age, level of education and income, social identity, location and region, and voting behaviour. On bi-furcation of Pakistan and the creation of Bangladesh, the popular opinion varies as the majority opinion in Bangladesh and India are similar, i.e., in support of the 1971 episode, as against that in Pakistan. Here as well, we found noticeable variations in opinion across segments of respondents as mentioned above.

In the next chapter, we look at the overall economic progress that these countries have made and how they perceive each other. We find that there is a major distrust between India and Pakistan even after seventy-five years of Partition, whereas Bangladesh is currently acknowledged as a trustworthy neighbour in the region.

Mapping Economic Development and Aspirations

Introduction

In the last seventy-five years, India and Pakistan have embarked on a developmental journey that reaped different outcomes. Bangladesh, too, charted its own trajectory of development in the last fifty years. India has emerged as one of the fastest-growing economies with an average annual growth rate of 6-7 percent. Similarly, Bangladesh has also progressed economically, owing to its in textile production and exports. On the other hand, Pakistan has underperformed economically, unlike its two neighbours, and is currently grappling with one of the worst macroeconomic crises in the country's history (Sharma 2022). In terms of human development, Bangladesh fares much better with a Human Development Index (HDI) score of 0.66, followed by India with an HDI score of 0.63, whereas Pakistan trails behind its two neighbours with an HDI score of 0.54 (UNDP 2022). While these official assessments of economic and social development in the three countries provide us with a picture of their development and progress, the objective of our study is to understand how the citizens of the respective countries perceive the same. We focus on the citizens' perception on progress made since independence in the three countries, popular views on infrastructure, people's expectations vis-à-vis delivery of goods, the question of poverty, and the future prospects of the economy.

Biggest Success and Failure

We asked our respondents what the biggest achievements and failures of their respective countries have been since their independence. It is important to mention that these questions were open-ended to capture a wide variety of personal opinions. On the question of biggest achievement since independence, 6 percent of respondents identified the progress made in education as an achievement in India, which was followed by better relationships with foreign countries, improved national security (5 percent each); and control of corruption and reduction of poverty (4 percent each). In Pakistan, 14 percent of respondents identified the better relationship their country has achieved with foreign countries as their biggest achievement which was followed by control over ethnic and religious conflicts (12 percent); control of corruption and reduction of unemployment (7 percent each); and better health facilities (6 percent) as their biggest achievements. Finally, in the case of Bangladesh, 16 percent of the respondents identified better educational facilities as their biggest achievement which was followed by the progress made in basic infrastructure (12 percent); better economic status (9 percent); and better transportation facilities and resolution of agricultural and farmer related issues (3 percent each) as their other biggest achievements. The top five biggest failures identified in India were - poor state of employment (14 percent), lack of control over corruption (10 percent), lack of control over inflation (9 percent), low household income or poverty (6 percent), and lack of control on ethnic and religious violence (5 percent). In the case of Pakistan, the top arenas where the nation has failed have been identified were lack of control on corruption (21 percent), poor state of employment (19 percent), lack of control over inflation (12 percent), and poor relationships with foreign countries (4 percent). Finally, in Bangladesh, lack of control over corruption (17 percent) emerged as the biggest failure since their independence, followed by the poor state of employment (12 percent), low household income or prevalence of poverty (5 percent), the inefficiency of legal or judicial system (5 percent) and poor economic status (4 percent).

Despite these failures, respondents continue to take great pride in their national citizenship. This strong sense of belonging is also self-reflective and they were also critical of aspects that they felt their countries were not doing right. Strong sentiments of pride were registered by respondents from Bangladesh and India with 92 and 90 percent of respondents agreeing that they would rather be citizens of their own country than any other country in the world whereas the proportion of respondents who felt the same in Pakistan stood at 79 percent. When asked about any contemporary aspects associated with their countries that made them feel ashamed, roughly three in five respondents from these countries expressed signs of self-criticism regarding their nations.

Progress Made Since Independence

First, the respondents were asked to share their views on the progress made by their countries in terms of five indicators, viz. infrastructure, education and health facilities, economic growth, national security, and science and technology. Table 2.1 depicts the popular views on the same. Infrastructure such as roads, railways, airports, public transport and communication are important markers of progress. Data shows that Bangladesh has performed better than India and Pakistan in road density, measured in terms of the number of roads per 100 sq. km. of area (World Bank, 2018). How do the citizens of the three countries look at the overall development of infrastructure? Our survey shows that the majority of the respondents in Bangladesh (70 percent) and India (66 percent) opined that the progress in infrastructure has been better than expected. In Pakistan, 36 percent of the respondents seemed satisfied with the progress in infrastructure, but the majority opinion (47 percent) shows that the country has performed worse than expected in this regard.In addition to infrastructure, equal and easy access of citizens to education and healthcare are intrinsic to their development. Among the three countries, Bangladesh has the highest life expectancy of 72 years, followed by India which has a life expectancy of 70 years, and Pakistan with a life expectancy of 66 years (World Bank 2022). Our survey indicates a large majority of respondents in Bangladesh (57 percent) and India (67 percent) felt that their countries have made progress in the areas of education and health facilities. The responses from Pakistan present an opposite picture. The majority opinion (44 percent) reveals that education and health facilities in Pakistan are worse than expected, and only 36 percent are satisfied with the progress in these two areas.

In terms of economic growth, one of the fundamental macroeconomic variables that capture development, the three countries present different levels of success. Our survey shows that while 57 percent of the respondents from India and 53 percent of the respondents in Bangladesh felt that their countries have progressed economically, only 27 percent of the respondents in Pakistan felt the same. On the question of national security, our survey presents an interesting insights. Although the majority opinion in all three countries shows that they have performed better than expected, there are considerable variations. While 73 percent of the Indian respondents feel that the country has performed better than expected, the same for Bangladesh and Pakistan is 47 percent and 44 percent respectively. We also mapped people's perceptions on the issue of progress in areas of science and technology .We found that 76 percent of the Indian respondents felt that the country has made progress in the arena of science and technology, whereas 63 percent of the people in Bangladesh felt the same. The opinion in Pakistan is somewhat mixed as 41 percent of the Pakistani respondents felt that the country has made advancements in the field of science and technology whereas 36 percent of them said that the progress is worse than expected.

Accessibility to Basic Infrastructure

For more in-depth understanding of infrastructural progress, particularly the availability of basic infrastructure at the grassroots, we asked our respondents, the end-users, about the conditions of roads, and the availability and accessibility of electricity and water in their respective countries. A good assessment of whether the citizens of a country can benefit from its existing infrastructure is contingent on the accessibility that people have to these facilities. Accessibility is dependent on a citizen's geographical location, and economic and social hierarchies. Needless to say, the greater the availability and accessibility of these facilities at the grassroots in a country, the better the condition of life.

Roads can be called the arteries for economic and social development. Public perception in terms of the quality of roads varies greatly in the South Asian region. As per the findings of the survey, 42 percent of the respondents in India felt that the condition of roads is good in their country, and 38 percent of the respondents in Bangladesh felt the same. In Pakistan, only 17 percent of the respondents felt that the condition of roads was good as the majority opinion (53 percent) holds a contrary opinion. It also needs to be mentioned that 28 percent of the Indian respondents and 29 percent of those from Bangladesh, both significant proportions, said that the condition of roads is bad in their respective countries.

Table 2.1- Progress Made Since Partition

Domains	Country	Better than Expected	Same as Expected	Worse than Expected
Infrastructure	India	66	7	25
	Pakistan	36	12	47
	Bangladesh	71	14	15
Health and Education	India	67	6	25
	Pakistan	36	16	44
	Bangladesh	57	15	26
Economic Growth	India	57	8	31
	Pakistan	27	17	46
	Bangladesh	53	18	26
National Security	India	73	7	15
	Pakistan	43	17	31
	Bangladesh	47	18	32
Science and Technology	India	76	6	11
	Pakistan	40	16	35
	Bangladesh	63	16	18

Question: As per your own expectations; how do you rate the progress of "Country" in last 75 years on the following parameters (In case of Bangladesh; please ask for last 50 years)?
Note: The options "Way better than expectations" and "Somewhat better than expectations"; "Way lower than expectations" and "Somewhat lower than expectations" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Table 2.2- Quality of Basic Infrastructure

Service	Country	Good	Average	Bad
Condition of Road	India	42	29	28
	Pakistan	17	23	53
	Bangladesh	38	32	29
Availability of Drinking Water	India	54	21	25
	Pakistan	30	22	40
	Bangladesh	51	29	20

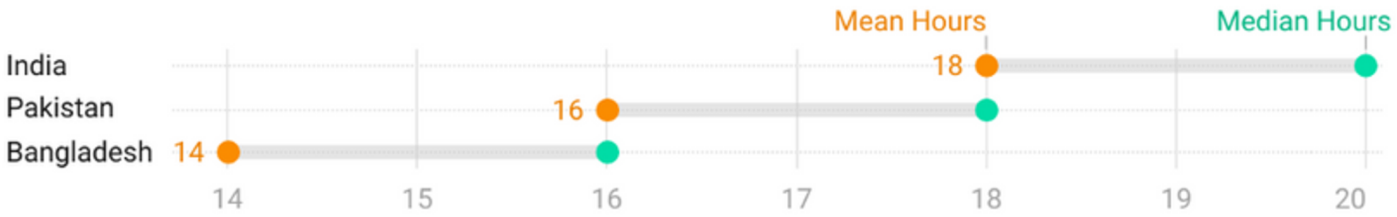
Question: Think and tell us about the following in your district.
Note: The options "Very Bad" and "Bad"; "Very Good" and "Good" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

The availability of water, particularly for drinking and other household needs, is essential for daily sustenance. Even though the South Asian region has abundant natural water resources, the availability of water for drinking and household purposes continues to remain a challenge for people in the South Asian region. According to UNICEF (2023), universal access to safe drinking water is a fundamental need and human right and, 844 million people across the globe still lack access to drinking water. Contamination of natural water resources makes the availability of safe drinking water a challenge. Do the people of the three countries of our study have access to safe drinking water? In India, 54 percent of the respondents said that they have good access to water and 52 percent of the respondents in Bangladesh felt the same. However, a substantially lower proportion of the respondents (30 percent) in Pakistan said that they have access to drinking water.

A large number of research has used availability of electricity measured in terms of luminosity is cited as a proxy measure for the economic development. In the South Asian region, according to the World Bank, countries like India have 99 percent of their population which has access to electricity, In Bangladesh, 96.2 percent of the population has access to electricity and lastly, in Pakistan, 75.4 percent of the population has access to electricity (World Bank n.d.). However, these official statistics can account for the actual duration of electricity respondents receive which can make a meaningful difference in their lives. As per the findings of the survey, the respondents in India revealed that they receive, on average, 18 hours of electricity per day. The respondents in Bangladesh said that they receive 14 hours of electricity per day, and those in Pakistan revealed they received 16 hours of electricity per day on average.

Figure 2.1- Electricity Supply in South Asia



Question: How many hours of electricity do you get in your house every day? __ (in 24 hour clock)

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Who should deliver public goods?

Although it is expected that the delivery of public goods such as education, healthcare, public transport and should be a primary responsibility of the government, private sector organisations are increasingly becoming key actors in these sectors. While a large number of respondents in these countries believe that these should be primarily provided by the government, there are a significant number who would want the involvement of private players either alone or in collaboration with the government.

The survey findings reveal that 61 percent of the respondents in India think that education should be provided only by the government, and just 11 percent think that the private sector should be responsible for this. In Bangladesh, 57 percent of the respondents felt that the government is responsible for the delivery of education, while 23 percent of them held the private sector responsible. In Pakistan too, a near majority (48 percent) held the government responsible in this regard. However, 38 percent of the Pakistani respondents opined that the delivery of education is the responsibility of both the government as well as the private sector.

Table 2.3- Responsibility for Delivery of Basic Goods

Sector	Country	Only Government	Only Private	Both
Education	India	61	11	19
	Pakistan	48	9	38
	Bangladesh	57	23	15
Healthcare	India	58	15	18
	Pakistan	43	13	38
	Bangladesh	55	29	13
Public Transport	India	56	17	17
	Pakistan	40	12	37
	Bangladesh	47	36	12

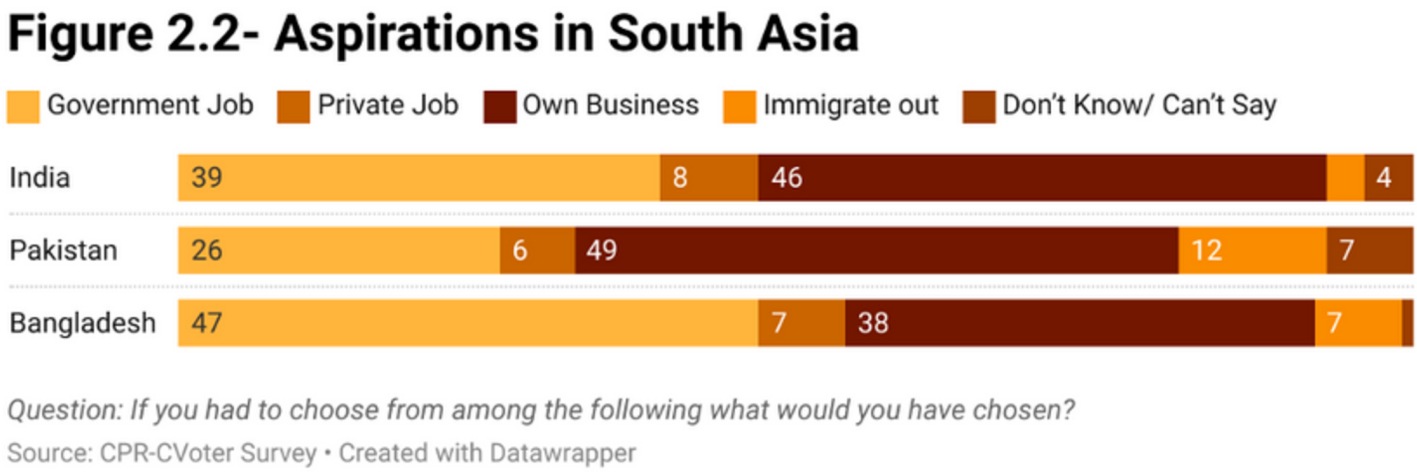
Question: Who should be responsible for providing the following?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

On the question of providing healthcare services, a predominant proportion of the respondents in India (58 percent) claimed that healthcare should be the responsibility of the state, and only 15 percent rely on the private sector in this area. In Bangladesh, the picture is similar as 57 percent of the people think that the state should provide healthcare. However, a considerable 29 percent of them showed faith in private healthcare. The respondents in Pakistan gave a mixed opinion as 43 percent believe that healthcare is the state's responsibility while 38 percent said that it is a combined task of the government and the private sector. We observed a similar pattern in the responses, that is, reliance on the state, on the issue of providing public transport. As per the findings of the study, 56 percent of the respondents in India use public transport and hold the state responsible for providing it. In Bangladesh, although the majority of the people (47 percent) hold the state responsible in this regard, a significant 36 percent of the people rely on the private sector for public transport. In Pakistan, on the other hand, the opinion is mixed – 40 percent of the people held the state responsible whereas 37 percent of them believe that providing public transport is a function of the both government and the private sector.

Job Preference

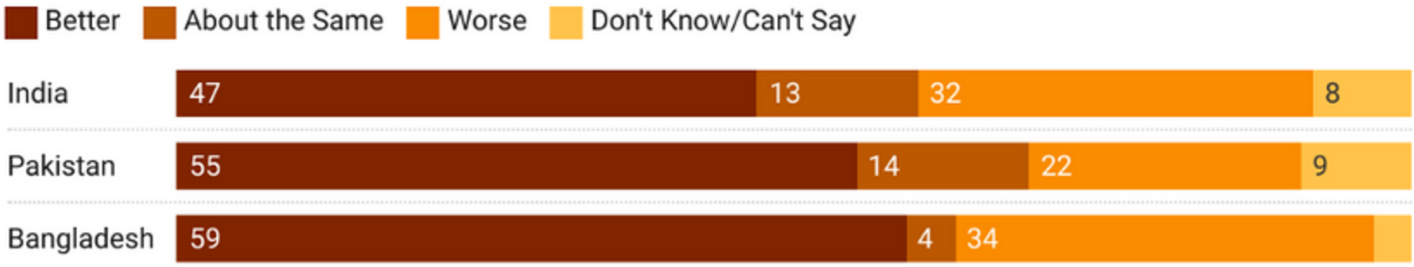
The preference of employment type is often indicative of the level of development and socio-economic contours that shape such choices. In India, 39 percent of the respondents preferred government jobs, while 46 percent preferred to be self-employed. In Pakistan 26 percent preferred government jobs and 49 percent preferred to be self-employed. Finally, in Bangladesh, 47 percent preferred government jobs, higher than those in India and Pakistan, and 38 percent preferred to be self-employed. The preference for private jobs is lower, and very few want to immigrate out. Gendered differences are notably more pronounced in Bangladesh where 43 percent of the former preferred a government job compared to 51 percent of the latter. In India, 49 percent of the male respondents preferred to be self-employed compared to 43 percent of female respondents.



South Asia's Economic Prospects

The global economic order has changed drastically changed in the past few radically since the formation of these countries. In the current scenario, the major concerns in this region are tackling the impact of international politics (for example, the Russia-Ukraine war), the energy crisis, global health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, climate change, and so forth. At this juncture, it is important to understand what people think about the economic prospects of their respective countries.
Our survey shows that the people in all three countries are very hopeful about their economic prospects. In Bangladesh, 59 percent of the respondents believe that the economic situation of their country will be better in the near future. Similarly, 55 percent of the respondents from Pakistan felt the same. Most of the Indian respondents, although comparatively sceptical, believe that the economic prospects of their country are going to be better in the coming years. What is noteworthy is that more than one-third of the respondents from Bangladesh and India think that the economy of their countries will become worse in the future, whereas one-fifth of the Pakistanis share a similar opinion.

Figure 2.3- Economic Prospects of your Country



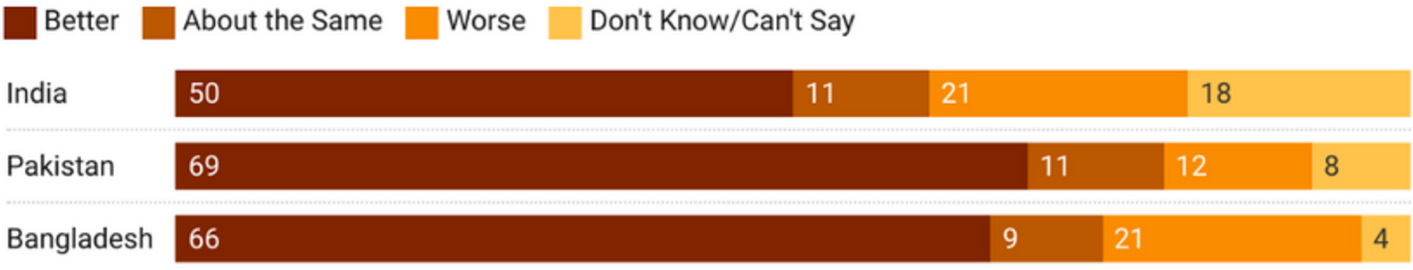
Question: What do you think will be the state of your country's economic condition a few years now? Will it be better, about the same or worse?
Note: The options "Much Better" and "A Little Better"; "Much Worse" and "A Little Worse" were clubbed togther.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We also gathered responses on what the people think about the future economic prospects of their individual families. The majority view in all three cases shows sheer optimism. In India, 50 percent of the respondents think that the family-level economic prospect is going to improve, whereas the same opinion is shared by 66 percent of the Bangladeshi respondents and 69 percent of the Pakistanis. One-fifth of the respondents from Bangladesh and India, however, held a contrary opinion.

Further, we asked our respondents whether churning in the world economy determine the policy in their countries rather than the government in power (Table 2.4). Roughly sixty percent respondents from Bangladesh were of the view that the policies in their country were shaped by the government in power. Whereas, in both India and Pakistan, every second respondents felt that the policies were moulded by their national governments. The view that the national policies are shaped by their national governments is stronger among higher income groups, followed by middle and then lower income groups in both India and Pakistan, whereas this trend does not hold for Bangladesh.

Figure 2.4- Economic Prospects of your Family



Question: What do you think will be the state of your family's economic condition a few years now? Will it be better, about the same or worse?
Note: The options "Much Better" and "A Little Better"; "Much Worse" and "A Little Worse" were clubbed togther.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Table 2.4 - Drivers of National Policies

Income Group	Country	World Economy Shapes National Policies	National Government Shapes National Policies	Don't Know/ Can't Say
Higher Income	India	40	57	3
	Pakistan	27	65	8
	Bangladesh	38	56	6
Middle Income	India	39	49	12
	Pakistan	32	55	13
	Bangladesh	38	58	4
Lower Income	India	35	45	20
	Pakistan	36	44	20
	Bangladesh	32	60	8

Question: Here are two opinions about what affects policies in your country. Which of them comes closest to your view?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

To sum up, the survey suggests that the people of Bangladesh and India seem considerably satisfied vis-à-vis economic progress and infrastructural development, both at the national level and at the level of their households. Responses from Pakistan, however, are comparatively different as citizens seem less satisfied with economic development in comparison to India and Bangladesh. Also, a majority of people in these countries think that the government should be responsible for providing public goods such as education, healthcare and public transport.

How Citizens Perceive Other Nations

Introduction

The political and territorial reorganisation of the South Asian region, which happened twice (first in 1947 and later in 1971), led to India, Pakistan and Bangladesh chart distinct political and economic trajectories. The people of these countries experienced different types of political regimes and developed their own perceptions vis-à-vis their regional neighbours and other global powers who advanced diplomatic interests in the region. For example, Bangladesh and Pakistan have witnessed successive military rule and democratic instability; whereas India has emerged as a successful electoral democracy with the periodic and peaceful transfer of power since its independence, except for twenty-one months of national emergency in between 1977-79. Further, factors such as geographical proximity, politico-historical legacy, strategic and security goals, and shifting alliances with global powers such as the US, Russia, and China have determined and changed the outlook of these three countries towards each other and the world over the decades.

For instance, the foreign policy of India, in spite of being rooted in some basic principles such as anti-colonialism, non-alignment and non-aggression, has shifted to a more realist standpoint in the age of globalization (Ganguly and Pardesi 2009). Similar shifts have taken place in the case of Pakistan in terms of changes in its India-centrism diplomacy and relationships with the US, China, and others (Khalid 2021, Kugelman 2021). In its fifty years of journey as a sovereign nation-state, Bangladesh also revised its views on India, Pakistan and other global powers based on their national interests in shifting temporal contexts (Bharadwaj 2008). In this chapter, we, therefore, ask: how do the people of the three countries, who are connected by their shared histories of Partition, geopolitical significance and postcolonial developmental ambitions, look at each other today?

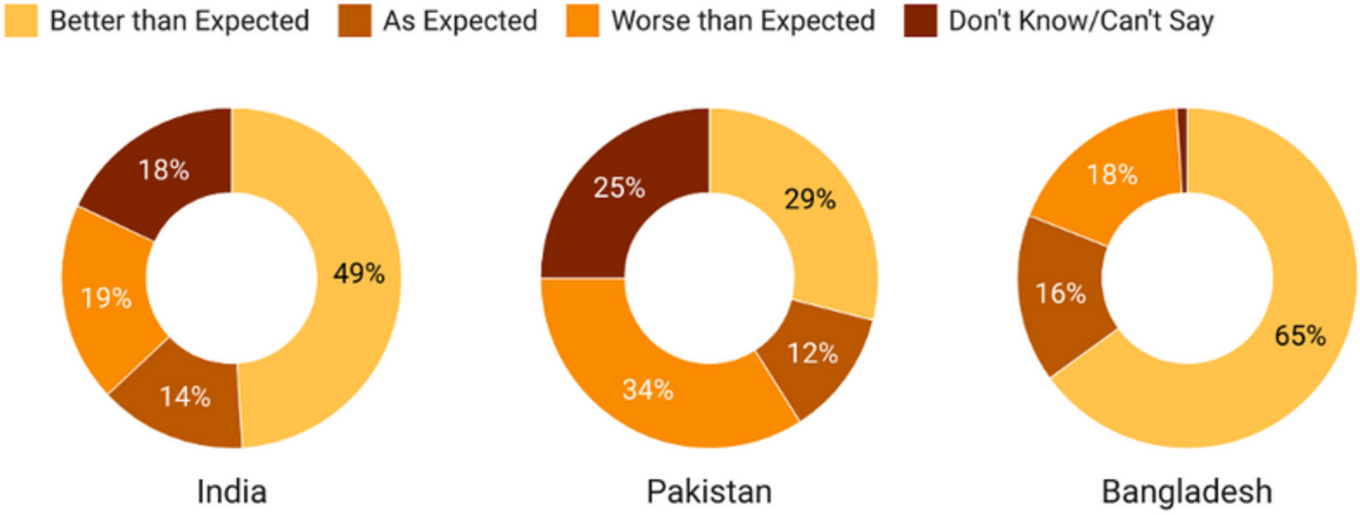
The chapter is divided into three sections. First, we map how the people of these countries view each other's overall progress. Our survey shows that the dominant view in Bangladesh on India is that the latter has performed better than expected, whereas Pakistan's progress has been below expectation. In India, the majority of respondents did not have a view on the progress of Bangladesh, but they claimed Pakistan had fared worse than expected. However, most respondents from Pakistan think that both Bangladesh and India have progressed better than expected.The second section looks at the popular opinion on a set of questions pertaining to the trust these countries have of each other. And, the third section captures people's perception of relations with the three apparent global powers- the US, China, and Russia- who have had a longstanding strategic interests in the region. In Bangladesh, we found that the majority of the respondents have significant levels of trust in the US, China, and Russia. Most Indian respondents, on the other hand, have put fair degree of trust in the US and Russia, but no trust in China. In Pakistan, the dominant view reflects that China is extremely trusted, Russia is somewhat trustworthy, and the US is not at all trustworthy. The majority opinion in Pakistan echoes the country's increasing closeness with China and the widening gap in its relations with the US. Moreover, most respondents from Bangladesh and Pakistan considered China as the most influential power in Asia at the moment. In contrast, the majority of Indian respondents think that India has the maximum influence on the continent.

How do India, Pakistan and Bangladesh Assess Each Other

In this section we make an attempt to understand the people's perspectives on the overall progress that India and Pakistan have achieved in seventy-five years and Bangladesh in the last fifty years. In Bangladesh, every second respondent was of the view that India has performed better than their expectations whereas the proportion of respondents who felt the same about Pakistan's progress was merely one-third. Among the Indian respondents, approximately one-third evaluated the progress of Bangladesh as

surpassing their expectations whereas it was around one-sixth in the case of Pakistan. Interestingly, around 40 percent of Indian respondents decided to take no position in evaluating the progress achieved by Pakistan and Bangladesh. Finally, in the case of Pakistan, around 60 percent of the respondents evaluated the progress achieved by both India and Bangladesh in a positive manner.

Figure 3.1- Bangladeshis on Progress of each Country



Question: Now asking for the other two countries, how do you rate them> How do you rate the OVERALL progess of these countries in the last 75 years (In the case of Bangladesh, please ask for the last 50 years)?
Note: The options "Way better than expectations" and "Somewhat better than expectations"; "Way lower than expectations" and "Somewhat lower than expectations" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3.2- Indians on Progress of each Country

Question: Now asking for the other two countries, how do you rate them> How do you rate the OVERALL progess of these countries in the last 75 years (In the case of Bangladesh, please ask for the last 50 years)?
Note: The options "Way better than expectations" and "Somewhat better than expectations"; "Way lower than expectations" and "Somewhat lower than expectations" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3.3- Pakistanis on Progress of each Country

Question: Now asking for the other two countries, how do you rate them> How do you rate the OVERALL progess of these countries in the last 75 years (In the case of Bangladesh, please ask for the last 50 years)?
Note: The options "Way better than expectations" and "Somewhat better than expectations"; "Way lower than expectations" and "Somewhat lower than expectations" were clubbed together.

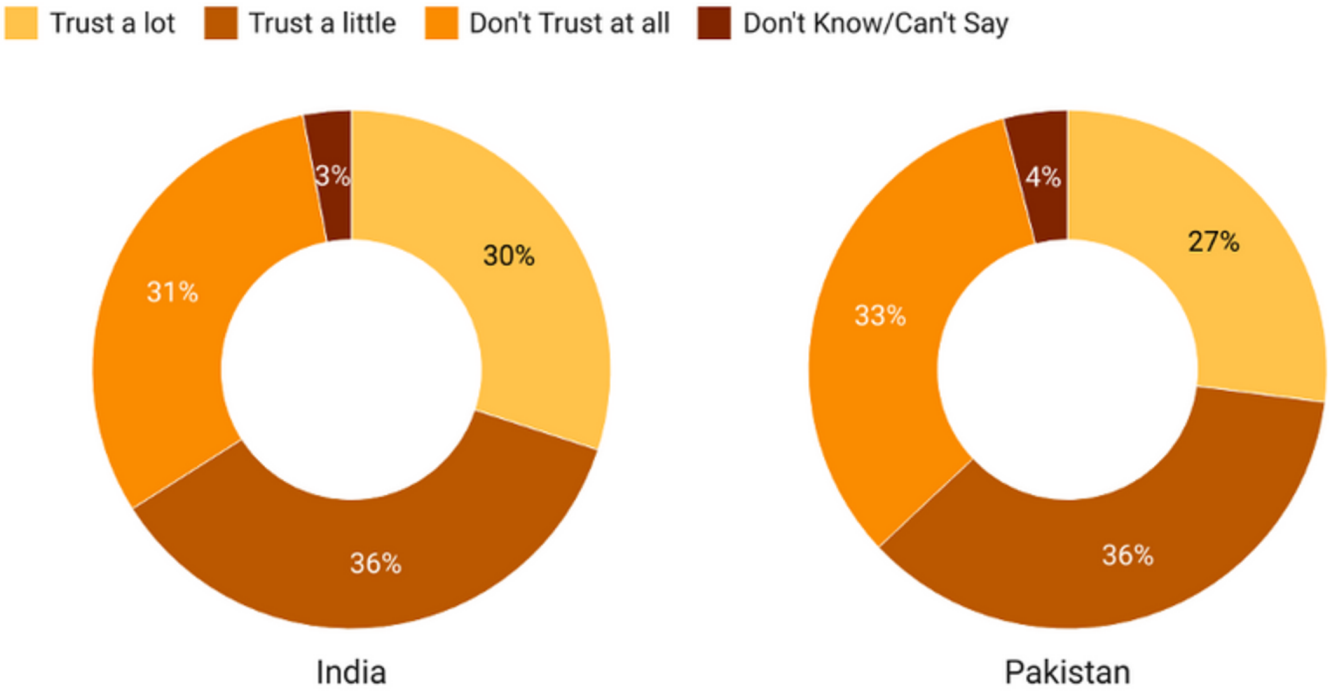
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Moreover, the majority of the Indian respondents who belong to the middle education group, upper caste Hindus, and those from the eastern parts of the country feel that Bangladesh's overall progress has been better than expected. However, a significant majority of Indians across various categories did not express an opinion on progress in Pakistan. These include the majority of the female respondents, those above 55 years of age, the low-education group, the high-income group, the Scheduled Castes and the Muslims, those from rural areas, and those from the western parts of the country. In Pakistan, the opinion on progress in Bangladesh and India is consistent across groups as most respondents think that both countries have performed better than expected. Our survey shows that 60 percent of the Pakistani respondents think that Bangladesh has done better than expected and 62 percent of them feel the same for India.

Trust thy neighbour?

Multiple political events in the last 75 years have profoundly impacted the relationship between Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. This brings us to the question of trust, a cornerstone of diplomatic relations, between these regional neighbours who have survived a rather difficult political history. Therefore, we tried to map how much trust the people of these countries have in each other at present. In Bangladesh, the popular opinion shows that both India (66 percent) and Pakistan (63 percent) are considered trustworthy neighbours. Still, the Hindus in Bangladesh (52 percent) do not trust Pakistan at all. In India, the majority opinion is starkly different. While 50 percent of Indian respondents felt that Bangladesh is a trustworthy nation, 77 percent of them did not trust Pakistan at all. The respondents from Pakistan had different opinions on Bangladesh and India. Our survey shows that 63 percent of Pakistani respondents looked at Bangladesh as a trustworthy nation, whereas 60 percent of them did not trust India at all. In short, our analysis shows that Bangladesh is considered as a more trustworthy country in the region. The relationship between India and Pakistan, however, remains frayed as they fail to trust each other even after seventy-five years of Partition.

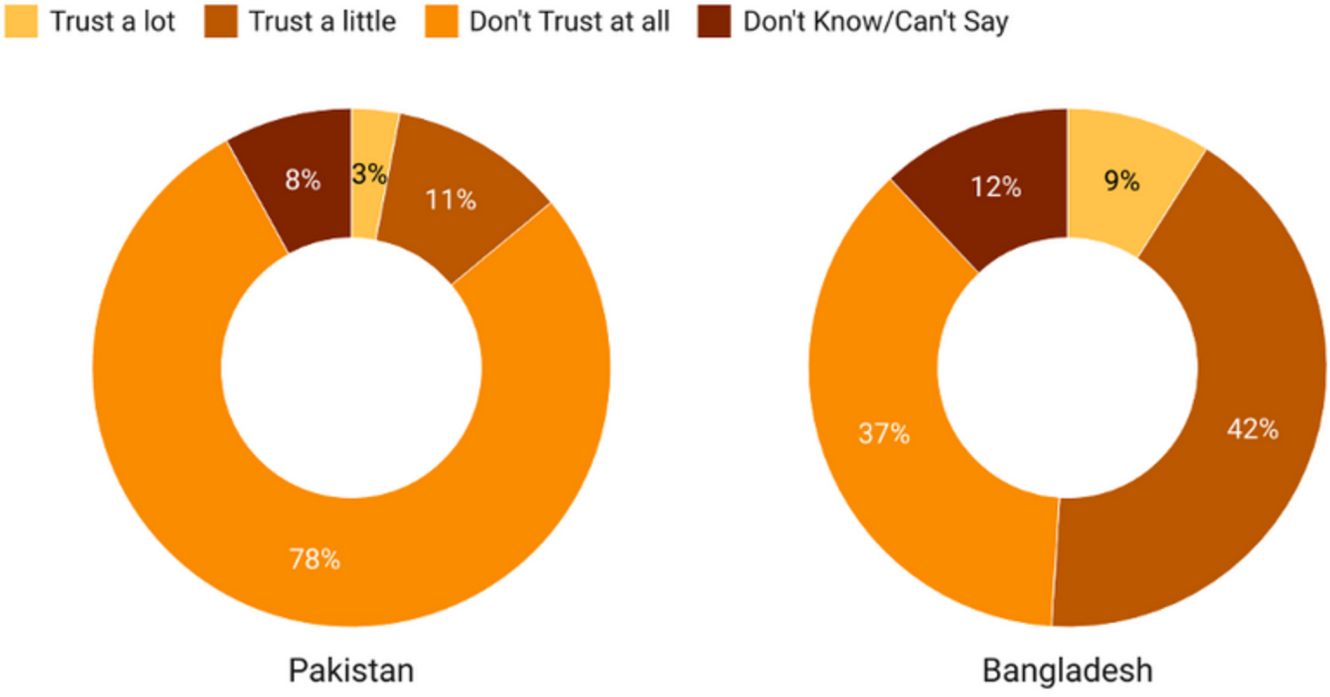
Figure 3.4- Do Bangladeshis Trust India and Pakistan?



Question: How much do you trust the following countries - trust a lot, trust a little, don't trust at all?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

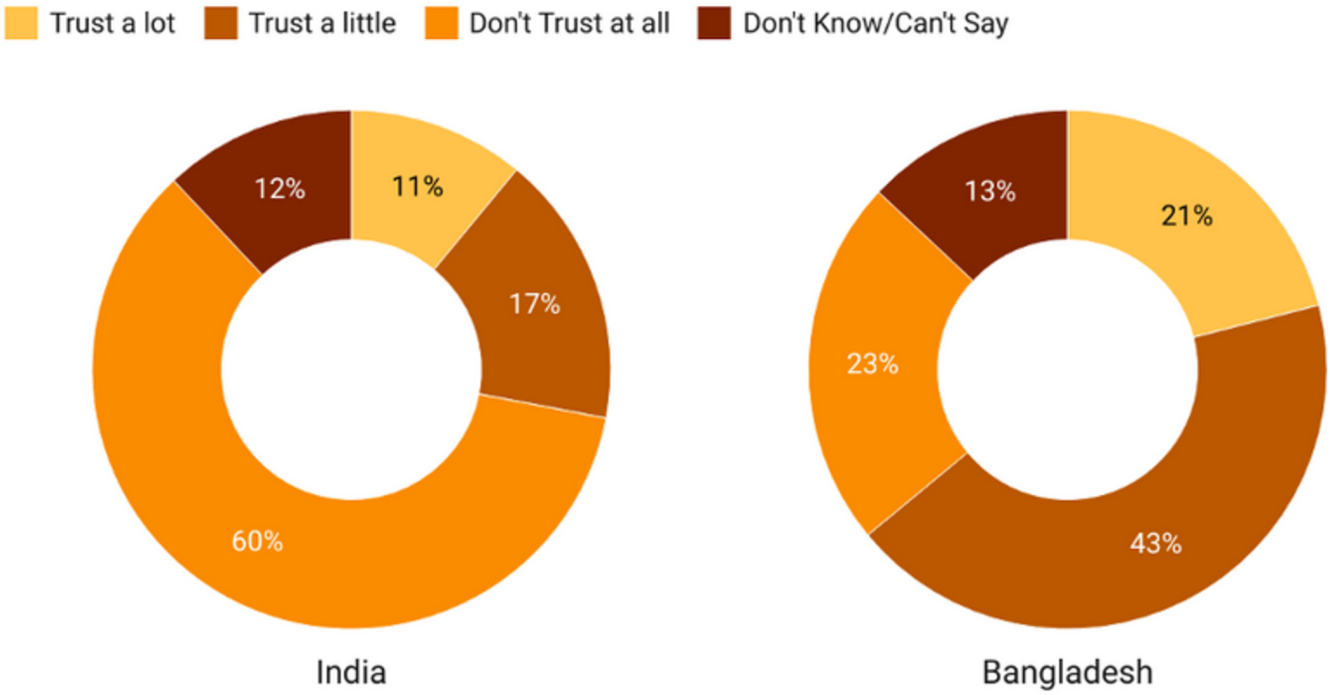
Figure 3.5- Do Indians Trust Bangladesh and Pakistan?



Question: How much do you trust the following countries - trust a lot, trust a little, don't trust at all?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 3.6- Do Pakistanis Trust India and Bangladesh?

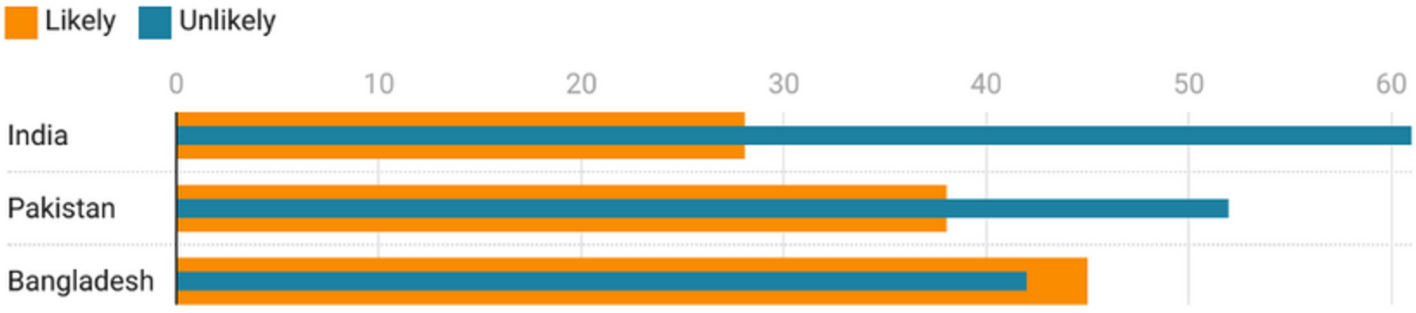


Question: How much do you trust the following countries - trust a lot, trust a little, don't trust at all?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

When asked about the prospect of India and Pakistan foregoing their animosity and developing a friendly relationship in this decade, almost three-in-ten respondents from India and less than half of the respondents from each Bangladesh and Pakistan held a affirmative view. While, approximately two-thirds in India and almost half in Pakistan think otherwise. Given this overwhelming sentiment against Pakistan in India, and vice-versa, there is very little hope of both countries pursuing friendly relations in near future.

Figure 3.7- Can India and Pakistan Become Friendly?



Question: Can India and Pakistan become friendly nations in this decade?
Note: The options "Very Likely" and "Somewhat Likely"; "Not at all Likely" and "Somewhat Unlikely" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

Outlook towards the World

Global powers such as the US, Russia, and now China have shown strategic interest in the South Asian region. For the US, Pakistan had been a long-term strategic partner during the Cold War period because of its geopolitical significance. The country has in fact been described as the "most allied ally" of the USA at one point in time (Ahsan 2004: 68). In the 1960s, after the Indo-China war, the mutual trust between Pakistan and China deepened. Pakistan became the first non-communist country to start flights to China in 1964. Needless to say, this may have adversely impacted US-Pakistan relations. In the aftermath of the 9/11 tragedy, US-Pakistan relations deteriorated further and Pakistan started building strategic relations with other big powers like Russia. It is important to mention here that Pakistan and the former Soviet Union had a tense relationship for a long time as the latter had been closer to India. The Soviet Union mediated between India and Pakistan after the 1965 war that culminated in the Tashkent Agreement. Later, the USSR backed India's position toward the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971. India continued to maintain a friendly relations with Russia in the post-Cold War period although it also developed closer ties with the US. Indo-Chinese relations, on the other hand, have been full of upheavals . Bangladesh, too, has increasingly drawn international attention, particularly from the US, Russia, and China. For instance, Bangladesh is the third highest receiver of US assistance in Asia after Afghanistan and Pakistan (Dietrich et al. 2018). Therefore, it is crucial to understand how the complex and competitive strategic interests of the big powers in South Asia have shaped and changed the perceptions of the people of the region towards them over the years.

We asked our respondents to identify the levels of trust they have in the three big powers – the US, Russia, and China. We found that most of the respondents in Bangladesh have more trust in all three big powers compared to respondents from India and Pakistan . The majority opinion in India shows that China is not trustworthy at all, whereas the US and Russia enjoy significant trust. The popular opinion in Pakistan is different in each case. They trust China a lot and USA the least.

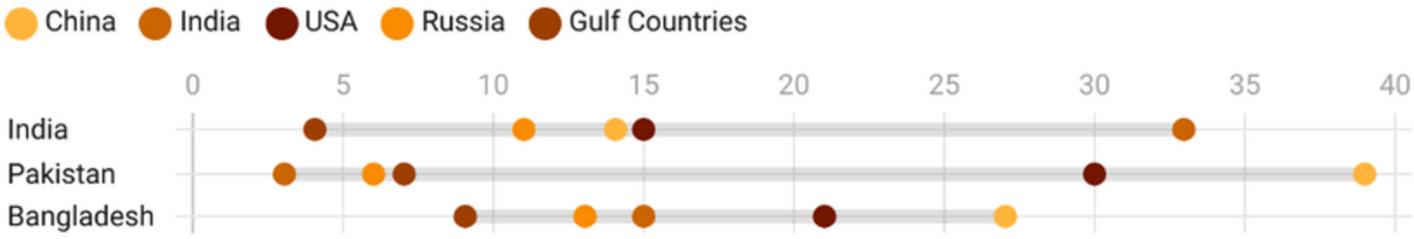
Figure 3.8- Level of Trust in Major Global Powers

Question: How much do you trust USA/China/Russia - trust a lot, trust a little, don't trust at all?
Note: The options "Trust a lot" and "Trust a little" were clubbed together. Only affirmative responses are shown here.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Furthermore, given that a large number of citizens from these countries migrate to the Gulf , we also tried to gauge the influence of the Gulf Countries in the region. We asked our respondents who they think has the most influence in Asia and gave them options as detailed in Figure 3.9. While 33 percent of the Indian respondents think that India has the most influence, the majority of the Bangladeshis (27 percent) and Pakistanis (39 percent) think it is China.

Figure 3.9- Which Country has Most Influence in Asia?

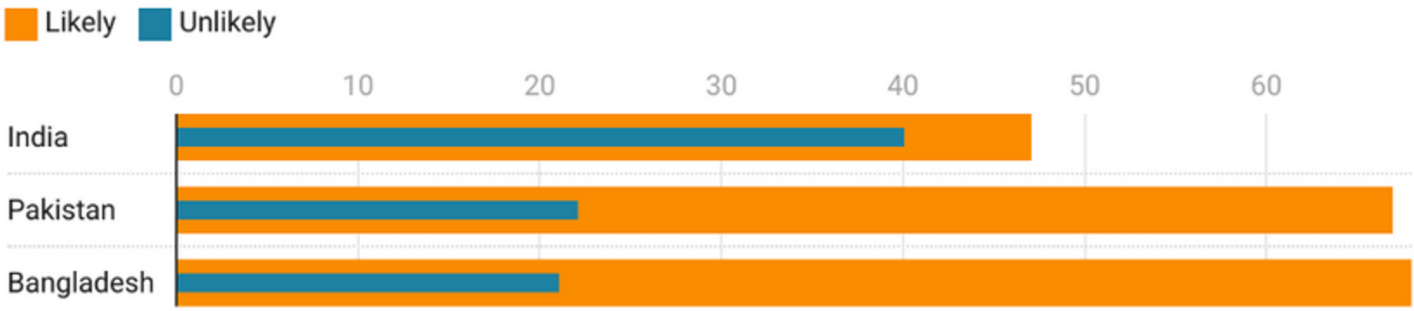


Question: In your opinion, which country has the most influence in Asia - China, India, USA, Russia and Gulf/Arab Countries?

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

As China has become an influential player across the globe, we asked whether the interference of China will increase in their respective countries. Around 70 percent of respondents from both Bangladesh and Pakistan were of the view that the interference of China will increase in the future, whereas 47 percent of respondents from India were of the same view. In a nutshell, there is a significant concern about increasing interference of China in their respective countries, even when it is trusted by a large number of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis.

Figure 3.10- High Concern about China's Interference



Question: WIll the interference of China in your country only increase in future?
Note: The options "Very Likely" and "Somewhat Likely"; "Not at all Likely" and "Somewhat Unlikely" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

Our survey shows that the overall progress of Bangladesh and India has been found satisfactory by their regional neighbours. Pakistan's performance, however, has been perceived as being below expectations. With regard to future prospects of the region, Bangladesh enjoys the confidence of the other two countries. Regarding people's perception on relations with the three apparent global powers- the US, China, and Russia- we found significant variations. In Bangladesh, we found that the majority of the respondents have a lot of trust in global powers. Most Indian respondents, on the other hand, have put fair degree of trust in the US and Russia, but not in China. In Pakistan, the dominant view reflects that China is extremely trusted, Russia is somewhat trustworthy, and the US is not at all trustworthy. Moreover, most respondents from Bangladesh and Pakistan considered China as the most influential power in Asia at the moment. In contrast, the majority of Indian respondents think that India has the maximum influence on the continent. Furthermore, the responses on India and Pakistan becoming friendly do not reflect much hope.

Political Participation and Democratic Outlook

Introduction

The partition of India in 1947, and later the division of Pakistan in 1971, necessitated that these countries chalk out their paths of state formation and political journey independent of each other. Some of the biggest challenges before all of them were institution-building, putting checks and balances in place to avoid concentration of power, and ensuring the smooth functioning of a democratic political order. India, as scholars have pointed out, performed exceptionally well in terms of building the major institutions of democracy such as the legislature, the judiciary, the bureaucracy, the army, and the election commission, among others (Jayal and Mehta 2010). Pakistan's postcolonial journey has been full of instabilities and democratic deficits that became evident through the formation of a centralized state, supremacy of the military, and weak democratic institutions (Jaffrelot 2015). In Bangladesh too, the democratic journey has not been smooth as the country has witnessed military coups, violence and religious majoritarianism (Brass 2010). In a nutshell, the three countries developed and progressed since their independence in very different ways.

This chapter looks at levels of political participation both in the electoral and non-electoral realms, and their perspectives on the state of democracy in their countries in the last ten years. Our survey shows that the levels of electoral participation is lowest in Bangladesh, high in India and moderate in Pakistan. In contrast, the level of participation in the non-electoral realms of political activities is high in Bangladesh and Pakistan, whereas the same in the case of India is comparatively low. Greater participation implies that the people have a greater say in the affairs of the government and higher involvement in political processes such as voting, running for public office, civic engagement, protests and movements, and expressing views on matters concerning the public (van Deth 2014).

The Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) in 2022, created on the basis of five parameters (viz. electoral process and pluralism, the functioning of government, political participation, democratic political culture, and civil liberties), has categorised Bangladesh and Pakistan as hybrid regimes, and India as a flawed democracy. The survey findings suggests that citizens' perception regarding the state of democracy in last ten years varies in these countries. Citizens in Bangladesh and India opine that over all the state of affairs on democracy question has improved in last ten years, whereas the same has declined in Pakistan. It would be important to point out that these preferences amongst the respondents seem to be considerably influenced by their partisan leanings.

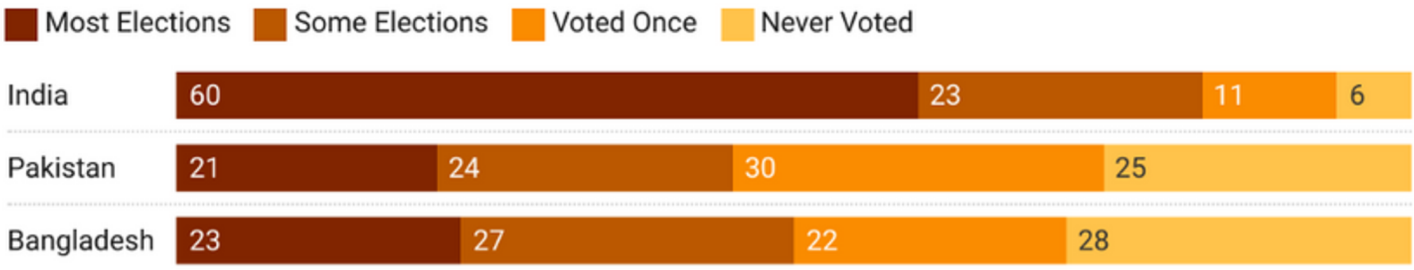
Electoral Participation

The regular conduct of free and fair elections and peaceful transition between civilian governments are key markers of electoral democracy. We asked the respondents about the level of electoral integrity in their respective countries, i.e., how free, fair and transparent the elections in their countries.In Bangladesh the opinion was divided- while 35 percent felt the elections were free and fair, 31 percent held the contrarian position. In India, the majority opinion indicated that the election process was free and fair with 44 percent of the respondents called the election process completely free and fair and 34 percent of them said it was 'somewhat' free and fair. In Pakistan, 38 percent think that the election process is not at all free and fair, although 25 percent of the respondents described it as completely free and fair.

A good indicator of a free and fair election is the voter turnout (i.e., the level or rate of participation of the voters in polls) as it shows the people's trust in the electoral process. In Bangladesh, the voter turnout in the national elections has increased from 51 percent in 2014 to 80 percent in 2018; in Indian parliamentary elections, it has increased from 66 percent in 2014 to 67 percent in 2019; and in Pakistan, the turnout in the national elections has decreased from 54 percent in 2013 to 50 percent in 2018 (International IDEA).

In our survey, we tried to find out whether respondents have voted in most elections, some elections and those who never voted. Our findings show that the level of electoral participation in Bangladesh is mixed as 28 percent of the respondents have never voted in any election, followed by those who have voted in some elections (27 percent), and then by those who have voted in most elections (23 percent). In contrast, the level of electoral participation in India is considerably high as 60 percent of the respondents have voted in most elections. In Pakistan too, the level of electoral participation is low. The majority of the Pakistani respondents (24 percent) said that they have voted in some elections, followed by those who have voted in most elections (21 percent), and then by those who have never voted (19 percent).

Figure 4.1- How often do South Asians Vote?



Question: Think carefully and tell me how often have you voted in national or state elections since you become eligible to vote.
Note: The options "Only one election" and "Just the last election" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Even here there are differences in opinion among various categories of respondents. In Pakistan, for example, there is a significant gender gap as the men vote in higher numbers compared to women. Further, respondents with higher education have voted in most elections (33 percent), while those with lower education have voted in only one election (23 percent). When divided by income, the majority of those with higher income have voted in most elections (27 percent), and those in the lower income group have voted in only one election (25 percent). In terms of location, the majority of the urban respondents have voted in some elections (28 percent), whereas the rural respondents have mostly voted in only one election (24 percent). When analysed by voting behaviour in the last national election, the majority of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) voters have voted in most elections (29 percent), most voters of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) have voted in some elections (30 percent), and those of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) voters have voted in only one election (29 percent).

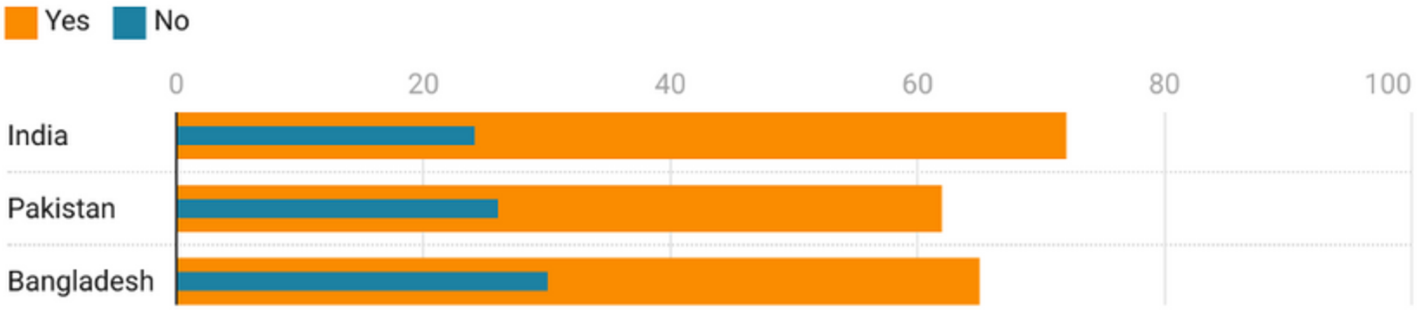
In India, while 63 percent of men have voted in most elections, for women it is 55 percent. The survey indicates that voters from higher social strata are more likely to have voted in most elections. For example, upper caste Hindus have voted in most elections (65 percent) compared to respondents from other social groups. Further, a large proportion of the NDA voters (69 percent) showed a higher level of electoral participation compared to those who voted for the opposition parties (53 percent).

Furthermore, while the data published by International IDEA shows that voter turnout in Bangladesh has progressively increased (except in the national election in 2014), our survey shows that the overall level of electoral participation is low. We noticed a gender gap vis-à-vis electoral participation as a large number of female respondents have never voted (30 percent).

Moreover, there is a significant gap between urban and rural voters as the former shows a lower level of electoral participation. Interestingly, religious minorities in Bangladesh are more likely to say they have voted in most elections.

We also tried to measure the level of voter efficacy, that is, whether the voter feels that her action can impact political processes (Clarke and Acock, 1989). Therefore, we asked if the respondents think that their vote can make a difference in the functioning of their country. We found that voter efficacy is quite high in all three countries. In Bangladesh, it is 65 percent; in India, it is 71 percent; and in Pakistan, it is 62 percent. Given that there exist high levels of vote efficacy across three countries, we looked at the intersection of the views on vote efficacy and electoral participation. We find that greater participation in elections is associated with higher levels of vote efficacy. And, this trend is more pronounced in Indian and Pakistan, but not in Bangladesh.

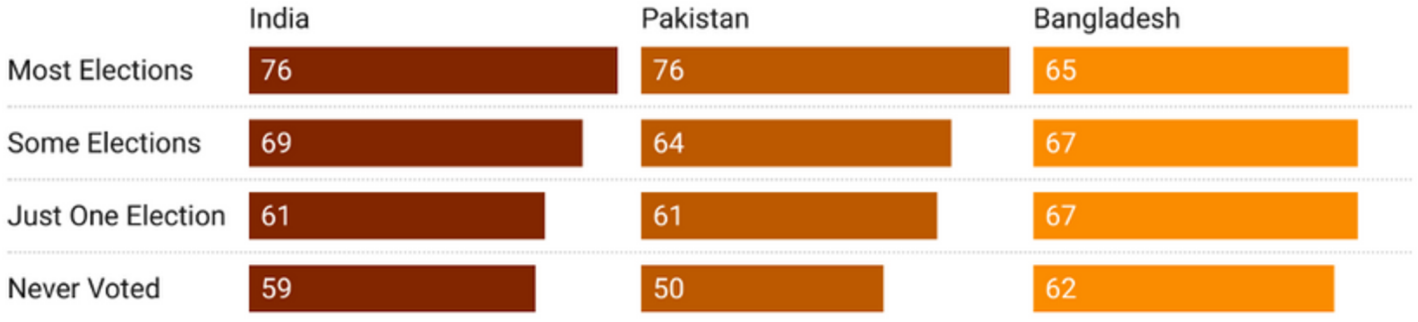
Figure 4.2- High Vote Efficacy Among South Asians



Question: Do you think your vote has an effect on how things are in your country or do you think your vote makes no difference>
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 4.3- Vote Efficacy by Electoral Participation



Note: Only affirmative responses to the vote efficacy question are included here.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Non-Electoral Participation

In addition to voting in elections, we tried to understand the level of political participation of the people in the three areas viz. political rallies and campaigns, civil society protests, and social media campaigns. We clubbed together the responses of those who participated in these activities multiple times a few times or just once. Table 4.1 shows that Bangladesh has the highest levels of participation followed by Pakistan. India, on the other hand, has a lower level of participation in the non-electoral domains of political activities. There are of course variations in the levels of participation among different categories of respondents. In Bangladesh, for example, those who participated comparatively less in political rallies were more likely to be

poor, females, living in urban areas, and those who voted for the opposition parties. A similar variation could be seen in Pakistan as well. Especially, non-Muslim respondents in Pakistan have a higher level of participation in non-electoral political activities compared to the other social groups. It would be important to note here that despite having a high level of electoral participation, most respondents in India have never participated in non-electoral political activities.

To sum up, what we observed is that India has the highest level of electoral participation. Compared to its two neighbours, political efficacy and electoral integrity are higher in India. In contrast, the level of non-electoral participation in India is lower in comparison to Bangladesh and Pakistan. The findings thus provoke us to think about whether the level of non-electoral participation is inversely proportional to the level of trust in political institutions.

Table 4.1- Participation in Non-Electoral Political Activities

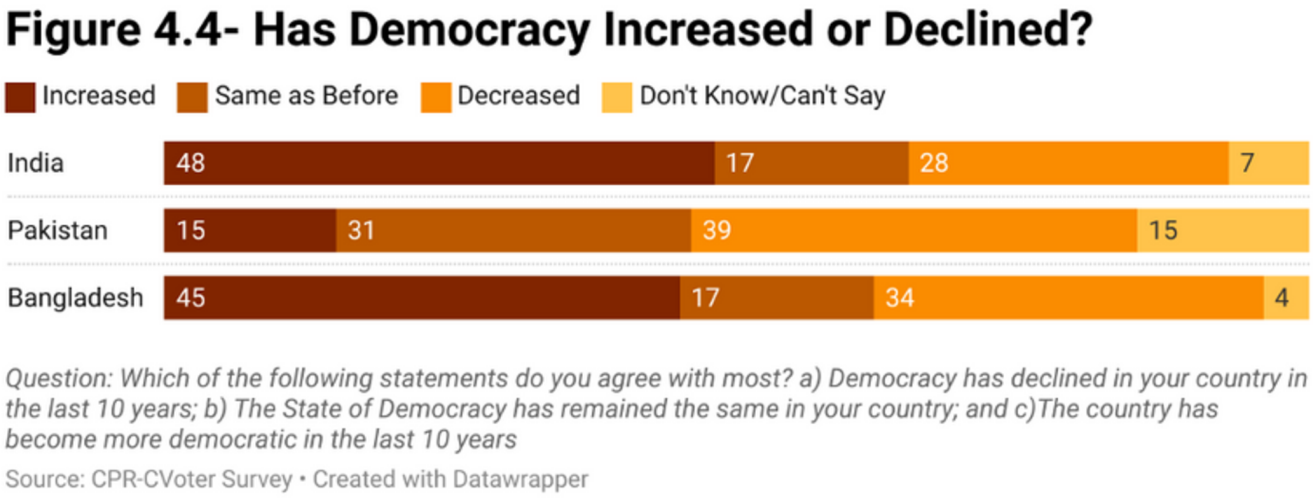
Non-Electoral Activity	Country	Multiple Times	Just Few Occasions	Only Once	Never
Political Rallies	India	19	12	7	61
	Pakistan	26	20	10	40
	Bangladesh	51	8	16	25
Civil Society Protests	India	11	12	8	68
	Pakistan	14	24	12	44
	Bangladesh	27	25	19	18
Online Campaigns	India	11	9	6	72
	Pakistan	22	22	12	37
	Bangladesh	14	29	15	40

Question: In the last two years, have you ever taken part in the following?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the option "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

State of Democracy in South Asia

We asked respondents about whether their countries have become more democratic in last ten years or the state of democracy has decline. In Bangladesh, 45 percent of the respondents opined that their country has become more democratic, 18 percent said that it is the same as before, whereas 34 percent of them believed that the state of democracy has declined. In India, 48 percent respondents said that democracy has increased in the last ten years. However, 28 percent of the Indian respondents indicated a decline in democracy in India while 17 percent of them said that it is the same as before. The popular opinion in Pakistan is opposite compared to the other two countries as most of the respondents (39 percent) think that democracy has declined in Pakistan while 31 percent believe that it is the same as before.



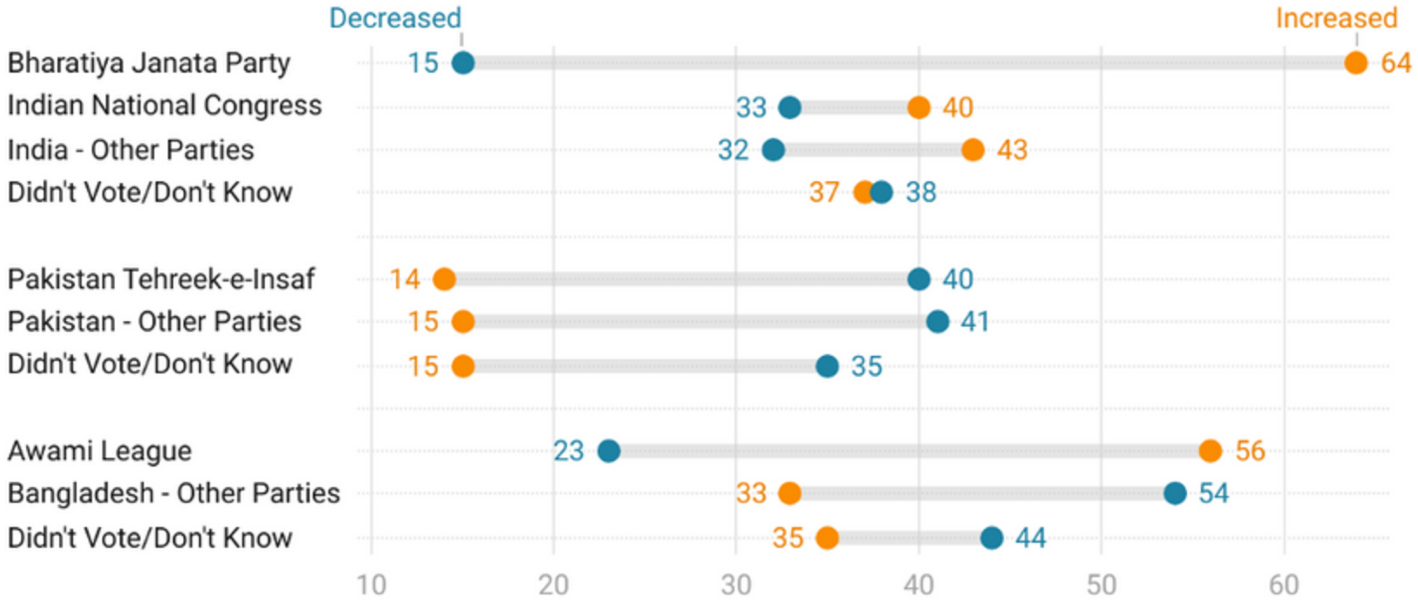
It is important to note that there are considerable variations on the state of democracy when we look at different sections of respondents. In Bangladesh, for example, those who expressed a contrarian view include the majority of the respondents from the middle and high education segments (41 and 45 percent respectively), the high-income group (43 percent), Sunni Muslims (41 percent) and those who did not vote for the ruling Awami League in the last national election in 2018. There are variations in opinion in India as well. Those who do not share the majority opinion that democracy has increased in India over the last decade include the majority of the respondents who are above 55 years of age (47 percent), the high-income group (49 percent), the Scheduled Castes (48 percent) and those from the western parts of the country (40 percent). In Pakistan, the popular opinion on this question is rather consistent across categories of respondents except in one case. Only non-Muslim Pakistani respondents (35 percent) opined that the state of democracy in the country has remained the same in the last decade.

Partisanship and Evaluation of Democracy

Measuring partisanship and its influence on society and politics itself helps us understand nature of party politics and how it is shaping view points on various issues. We asked our respondents if they felt close to any political party; two in three respondents from Pakistan said they felt close to a political party hinting at high political mobilisation whereas the proportions for the same were 36 and 30 percent respectively for India and Bangladesh . To construct a partisan index we asked our respondents a series of questions to ascertain whether they shared affinity towards a party and the extent of the said affinity. Partisanship is found to be strongest in Pakistan with 28 percent of the respondents falling under the Strong Partisan category whereas 49 percent fell under the Weak Partisan category. In India and Bangladesh, weak partisanship dominated the political spectrum garnering 75 and 81 percent respondents respectively. The supporters of the ruling parties were found to be slightly more partisan than their opposition counterparts.

We looked at how respondents who identified with major political parties expressed their opinions about the state of democracy in their countries. In India, respondents of the ruling regime BJP are far more likely in number to hold the view that the state of democracy has indeed improved than their opposition counterparts. The opposition voters, even though they express concerns, exhibit moderate confidence in the state of Indian democracy. In Pakistan, the overwhelming view irrespective of political affiliation is that democracy has indeed declined. Whereas, in Bangladesh, one in two of the respondents who supported the Awami League was of the view that democracy strengthened while a contrary view is held by others.

Figure 4.5- Partisan Evaluation of the State of Democracy



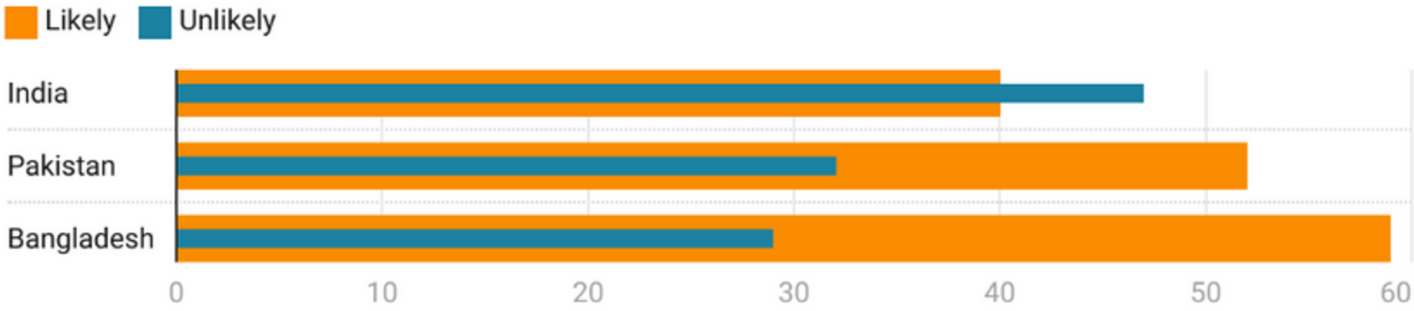
Question: Which of the statements do you agree with most? a) Democracy has declined in your country in the last 10 years, b) The State of Democracy has remained the same in your country, and c) The country has become more democratic in the last 10 years.
Note: The options "Did not vote", "Don't Know/Can't Say", "Independent" and "NOTA" were merged to form the option "Didn't Vote/Don't Know."

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

The decline in number of countries as democracies in the past few decades has been a serious cause of concern. In many countries, scholars have noted that democratic backsliding has coincided with the rise of populist leaders and their parties at the national centre-stage. The survey data presented in this report does indicate to significant levels of populist sentiments and preference for strongman leaders across the three countries.

Can India take an autocratic turn? Many scholars and activists have raised concerns about the state of democracy in India for the past few years. Some have also cited the rise of BJP since 2014 and its politics as one of the main reasons for downgrading of India's status as a democracy. When asked about the likelihood of India sliding into an autocratic rule, 59 percent of respondents from Bangladesh mulled the possibility compared to 51 percent in the case of Pakistan and a mere 40 percent in the case of India. There is indeed a partisan reflection on this question in India with opposition party voters are more likely to be concerned with the health of Indian democracy.

Figure 4.6- India Taking an Autocratic Turn?



Question: Is India sliding into autocratic rule?
Note: The options "Very Likely" and "Somewhat Likely"; "Not at all Likely" and "Somewhat Unlikely" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

When probed about the possibility of the Pakistani army coming under the political leadership similar to Bangladesh or India, 46 percent of Pakistanis expressed optimism compared to 55 percent in Bangladesh and 33 percent from India . And on the question of the role played by Pakistan's military in which party wins national elections in Pakistan, around seventy percent in Pakistan were of the opinion that their military is likely to play a crucial role in determining their democratic trajectory, whereas 56 percent Bangladeshis and 27 percent Indians shared a similar view. Not surprisingly, the Indian respondents were more likely to express no opinion on both these questions.

Table 4.2- Pakistani Military and its Domestic Politics

Country	Opinion	Army Functioning under Political Leadership	Army Influencing Election Results
India	Likely	33	27
	Unlikely	45	54
Pakistan	Likely	46	69
	Unlikely	38	21
Bangladesh	Likely	56	56
	Unlikely	35	28

Question: For each statement tell me the likelihood of it happening. a) Pakistan Army coming under the political leadership just like India or Bangladesh, and b) Pakistan's military acquires a greater role in which party wins national elections.
Note: The options "Very Likely" and "Somewhat Likely"; "Somewhat Unlikely" and "Not at all Likely" were clubbed together. The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

Political parties play a pivotal role in shaping the political landscape of South Asia, reflecting the complex dynamics of this region. The historical contexts have left a lasting imprint on the subcontinent's politics. The level of electoral participation is high in India whereas political participation in in the non-electoral realms are higher in Bangladesh and Pakistan. The evaluation of democracy in South Asian countries also reveals divergent perspectives. Respondents in India, particularly those aligned with the ruling BJP, are more likely to view democracy positively, whereas in Pakistan, there is a widespread belief in the decline of democracy. Bangladesh presents a mixed picture, with supporters of the Awami League expressing confidence in democratic strengthening. Concerns about democratic backsliding, autocratic tendencies and military involvement in shaping the nation's democratic trajectory are prevalent in the region. The survey findings captures the different democratic experiences that the three countries had in the aftermath of Partition.

Political Ambition Amidst Patronage and Dynasticism

Introduction

Political participation is an essential element of any democratic system. It is a fundamental right of citizens to participate in the decision making process that affect their lives. The nature of politics, attitudes towards democracy, and the functioning of democratic institutions are critical factors that determine the level of political participation in a country. This chapter aims to provide an overview on levels of political ambition amidst prevalence of vote buying and dynasticism across all levels in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

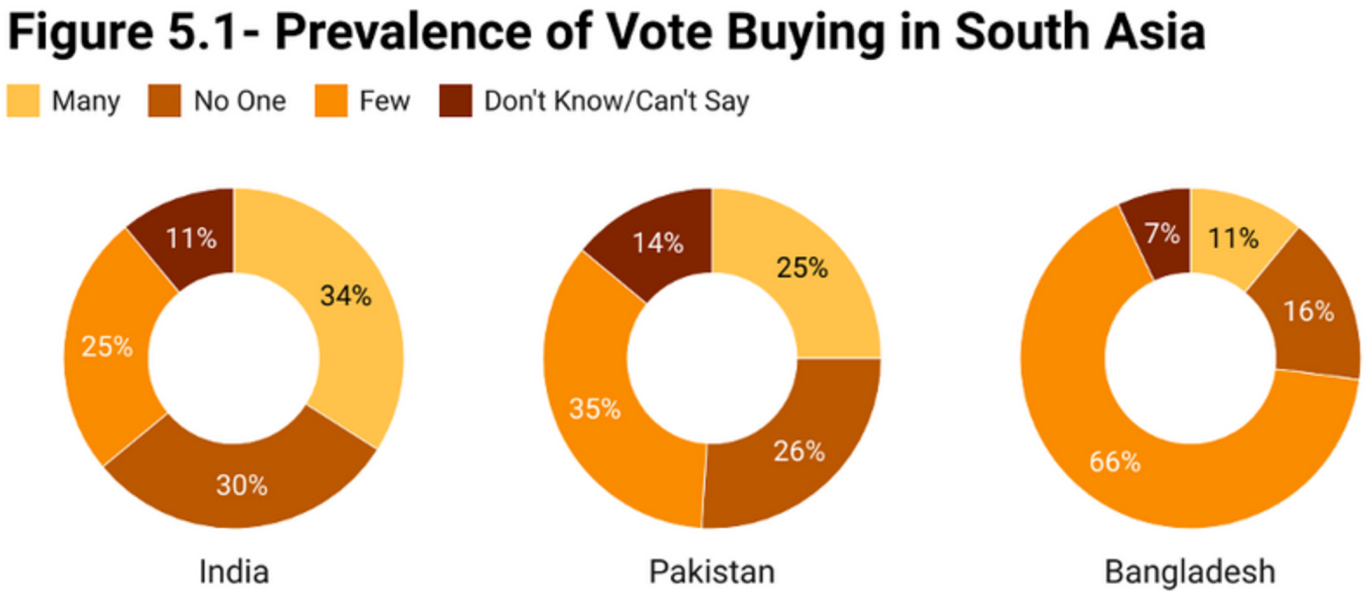
While these countries share a common history, the political and economic systems that have developed in the past seventy five years are very divergent. Despite this, they share common challenges in terms of political participation, democratic practices, and the functioning of democratic institutions. For example, the dominant role of political dynasties in these countries is an area of deep concern for many. In India, the Nehru-Gandhi family has been at the forefront of its politics. In Pakistan, the Bhutto- Zardari family has dominated the Pakistan People's Party, while in Bangladesh, the Hasina family has been in power for a long time. Another concerning phenomenon in these countries is the practice of politicians giving gifts to voters before elections. This practice is prevalent in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, and it is an attempt by politicians to buy votes. In India, for example, politicians have been known to give out cash, alcohol, and other such goodies to voters at the time of elections. This practice not only undermines the democratic process but also creates a culture of corruption by undermining electoral integrity.

Finally, we will examine whether the citizens of these countries want to enter politics or not. The levels of political ambition in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India remains similar - approximately one-third respondents were willing to join politics given a chance. A large number of respondents in all three countries declined to join politics, and “no interest” was cited as the top-most reason.

Vote Buying

Elections are an integral part of the democratic process, providing individuals with the opportunity to elect representatives that they believe will best serve their interests. However, the process can be influenced by several factors, including bribery, corruption, and vote-buying. Personal gifts, such as money, food, or clothes, are one way that some political parties or candidates attempt to sway voters. In this section we analyse data from respondents in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh to determine the prevalence of personal gift-giving during elections across various demographic groups. Regarding the question of receiving gifts at the time of elections, ten percent respondents from Bangladesh, and almost one-third from India and Pakistan respectively responded to knowing many who have received such gifts. One in five respondents from Bangladesh and one-third respondents from India and Pakistan respectively responded that they knew no one who had received personal gifts.

Two-thirds respondents irrespective of income levels were of the view that they knew some people who have received personal gifts hinting at the large-scale prevalence of personal gifts in electoral politics in Bangladesh. In India, as the levels of income increase, the proportion of respondents who are of the view that they know many people who have received personal gifts also increases. In Pakistan, an interesting pattern that emerges is that the proportion of respondents who claim that no one has received personal gifts rises vis-a-vis income levels.



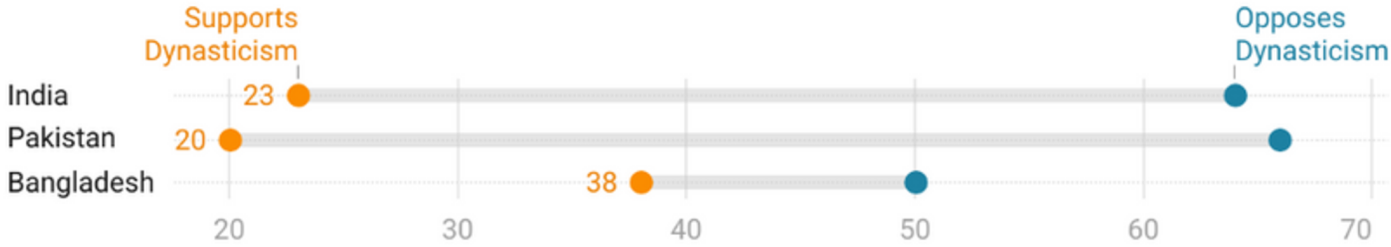
Dynasticism

Dynasticism, or the tendency for political power to remain concentrated within a particular family or lineage, has been a long-standing feature of politics in many countries around the world. IThe prevalence of dynasticism in the politics of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh remains a contentious issue. While it has played an important role in shaping the political landscape of these nations, it also raises important questions about the role of family connections in democratic processes and the potential for abuse of power. The prevalence of dynasticism in these countries has led to a political culture that places a high value on family connections and lineage, which has in turn influenced the way in which political power is distributed.

In India, for example, dynastic politics can be traced back to the Nehru-Gandhi family, which has produced three Prime Ministers since the country gained independence from British colonial rule in 1947. Similarly, in Pakistan, the Bhutto family has played a dominant role in politics since the 1970s, with two family members serving as Prime Minister and one as President. In Bangladesh, the Sheikh family has also been a dominant political force, with two family members serving as Prime Minister. The prevalence of dynasticism in these countries has raised concerns about the concentration of political power within a few families, and the potential for corruption and nepotism. Critics argue that this can lead to a lack of diversity in political leadership and a stifling of democratic processes. However, proponents of dynastic politics argue that family connections can provide a valuable source of political continuity and stability.

Respondents in our survey were asked to choose between two statements regarding dynastic politics. The statement in support of dynasticism read as if the children of doctors and actors can take their professions then it is okay for a politician's child to become politician. The opposite statement read that if politician's children are given nominations than more desrving candidates get sidelined in the political process. In Pakistan, 66 percent of respondents disapproved of dynastic politics, while in India and Bangladesh, the disapproval rate was 64 percent and 50 percent, respectively. The remaining respondents either approved of dynastic politics or did not express an opinion.

Figure 5.2- Low Support for Dynastic Politics

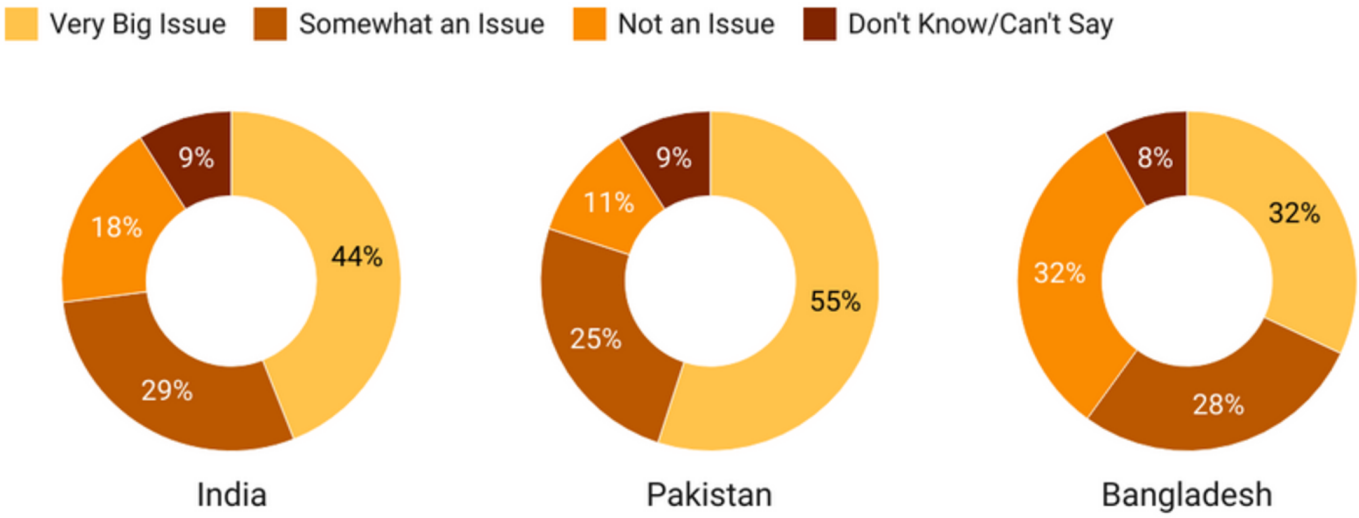


Question: Which of the statements do you agree with - a) Doctor's child becomes doctor & actor's child becomes actor, so it's okay if politician's child becomes a politician (Supports Dynasitcism) or b) If politicians' children are given tickets to contest, more deserving candidates are left out (Opposes Dynasticism)
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Next, we asked our respondents about whether the level of dynastic politics in their country is a big issue. The data presented in Figure 5.3 indicates, Pakistanis most concerned, Indians with moderate levels of concern, and Bangladeshis with lower levels of concern on this question. More than fifty percent respondents in Pakistan were of the view that dynastic politics posed a serious issue in their nation followed by 44 percent of respondents in India and 32 percent in Bangladesh respectively.

Figure 5.3- Dynastic Politics is a Big Issue



Question: How big of an issue dynastic politics is in your country today?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Why do dynastic politicians more likely to get elected? It has ben often argued that dynastic politicians, who are often born into political families, may have inherited some qualities, making them stand out from their non-dynastic counterparts. It is possible that dynastic politicians may have been exposed to the nuances of politics from a young age, which could explain their natural political acumen and their ability to connect with voters.We asked our respondents to think about a dynastic and non-dynastic politician in their districts, and rate which one of them come out as a better politician on several indicators. Dynastic politicians are perceived in Bangladesh (44 percent) and India (41 percent) to be more politically savvy than their non-dynastic counterparts, whereas in Pakistan the perceived difference in political savviness is marginal between dynastic (31 percent) and non-dynastic (32 percent) politicians. Similarly, dynastic politicians are considered to be better in delivering speeches in Bangladesh (38 percent), India (41 percent), and Pakistan (36 percent) than their non-dynastic counterparts.

Table 5.1- Who has more Inherited Qualities?

Skills	Country	Dynastic	Same/Equal	Non-Dynastic
Politically Savvy	India	41	9	38
	Pakistan	31	21	32
	Bangladesh	45	15	33
Oratory Skills	India	41	13	34
	Pakistan	36	22	26
	Bangladesh	38	11	33

Question: Thinking about the prominent dynasitc and non-dynastic politicians in your district, who is better on the following statement.
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

When asked who among the politicians in their district - dynastic or non-dynastic - were good at getting difficult work done, a similar pattern was observed with respondents from Bangladesh (37 percent) and Pakistan (30 percent) rating dynastic politicians better than their non-dynastic counterparts. Whereas, in India, dynastic and non-dynastic are at par with each other in the evaluation with each at 36 percent. One-in-two respondents from India and Pakistan are of the opinion that dynastic politicians are more likely to engage in vote buying during elections whereas the opposite emerges as a popular opinion among respondents from Bangladesh.

Table 5.2- Who provides more Patronage and Clientelism?

Skills	Country	Dynastic	Same/Equal	Non-Dynastic
Gets Difficult Work Done	India	36	12	36
	Pakistan	30	20	24
	Bangladesh	37	9	20
Vote Buying	India	47	13	24
	Pakistan	45	18	18
	Bangladesh	26	20	29

Question: Thinking about the prominent dynasitc and non-dynastic politicians in your district, who is better on the following statement.
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Politicians try to maintain their position through various means including relationships (or collusions) with civil society actors, trade unions, co-operatives, business houses, and bureaucracy to name a few. The nature of these relationships often moulds the practices of democracy, representation, and welfare at the local level.

When asked to gauge the relationship between politicians and businesses/contractors in their districts, respondents from India (53 percent) and Pakistan (40 percent) place dynastic politicians over their non-dynastic counterparts; whereas, respondents from Bangladesh are of the view that non-dynastic politicians (36 percent) in their district had stronger connections than their dynastic (32 percent) counterparts. Similarly, to the question of influence over district government offices, almost one-in-two respondents from India and Pakistan consider dynastic politicians to have an edge over their non-dynastic counterparts; whereas, a contrary pattern emerges from Bangladesh.

Table 5.3- Who has more Connections and Networks?

Skills	Country	Dynastic	Same/Equal	Non-Dynastic
Links with Busineses	India	53	8	24
	Pakistan	40	22	20
	Bangladesh	32	15	36
Influence over Govt Offices	India	55	9	22
	Pakistan	47	19	17
	Bangladesh	27	10	45

Question: Thinking about the prominent dynasitc and non-dynastic politicians in your district, who is better on the following statement.
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Regular elections enables citizens to hold their leaders accountable and that puts the onus on politicians to reach out to their voters in various ways. That requires politicians to be on-ground in order to meet with their constituents and attend to their needs. And, it has become imperative for politicians and their to maintain a public persona that is acceptable to a larger segment of their electorates. Almost two in five respondents from Bangladesh, India and Pakistan are of the opinion that non-dynastic politicians visit their constituents more regularly than dynastic politicians. Coming to the question of who provides better development, 40 percent of the respondents pointed at dynastic politicians whereas in the case of India and Pakistan 49 percent and 33 percent respectively are of the opinion that non-dynastic were better at providing development. Responding to the question of whose family is more helpful, the popular opinion favoured non-dynastic politicians in Bangladesh (42 percent), India (41 percent) and Pakistan (29 percent). The popular opinion on the question of who is more respectful similarly favoured non-dynastic politicians - 45 percent from Bangladesh, 43 percent from India and 33 percent from Pakistan.

Table 5.4- Who provides better Consituency Service?

Skills	Country	Dynastic	Same/Equal	Non-Dynastic
Meeting Constituents	India	31	15	41
	Pakistan	23	16	36
	Bangladesh	22	9	44
Development Work	India	30	9	49
	Pakistan	29	23	33
	Bangladesh	40	12	34
Helpful Family Members	India	31	13	41
	Pakistan	22	20	29
	Bangladesh	15	17	42
Respectful to People Like Me	India	29	14	43
	Pakistan	19	25	33
	Bangladesh	29	11	45

Question: Thinking about the prominent dynasitc and non-dynastic politicians in your district, who is better on the following statement.
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

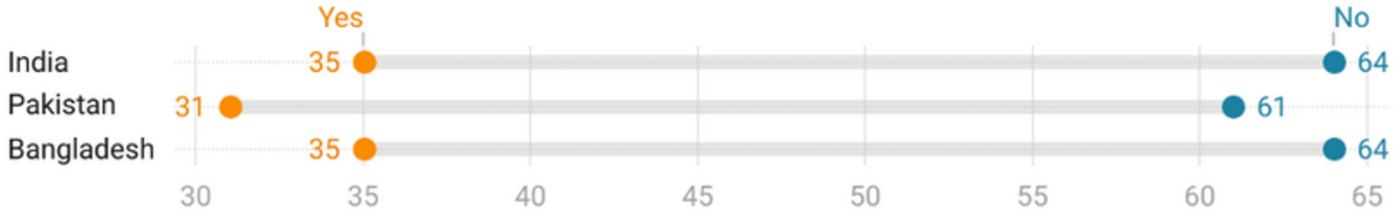
Political Ambition

The data from the three countries indicates that there is a significant difference in the willingness (or unwillingness) of people to join politics. In India, 55 percent of respondents said no, while 45 percent said yes. In Pakistan, 71 percent of respondents said no, while 29 percent said yes. In Bangladesh, 67 percent of respondents said no, while 33 percent said yes.

What explains this variation in levels of interest to join politics? Research has shown that people are less likely to participate in politics when they perceive that the political system is corrupt or dominated by criminal elements (Almond and Verba, 1963; Dalton, 2008). Another possible explanation is the perception of the role of women in politics. Research has shown that women are less likely to participate in politics than men, and this may be due to the belief that politics is a male-dominated field (Dovi, 2011; Fox and Lawless, 2004). Similarly, education and income level may also play a role in the willingness of people to join politics. Research has shown that higher levels of education and income are associated with higher levels of political participation (Verba and Nie, 1972; Wolfinger and Rosenstone, 1980).

What is interesting is that in India, 42 percent of those who condone dynasticism in politics expressed willingness to join politics, while only 26 percent of those who disapproved of dynasticism expressed interest in joining politics. Similarly in Pakistan, 39 percent of those who condoned dynasticism expressed interest in politics while only 29 per of those who disapproved of dynasticism expressed interest. A contrary reality emerges from Bangladesh where 35 percent of those who condone dynasticism expressed interest whereas 37 percent of those with a contrary view expressed political ambitions.

Figure 5.4- Level of Nascent Political Ambition



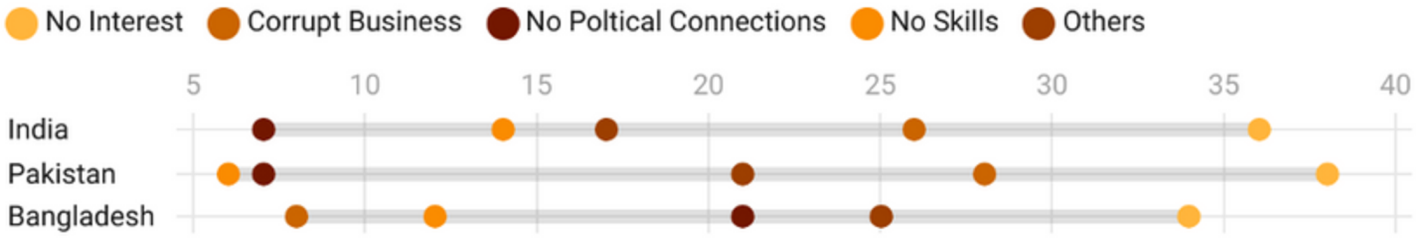
Question: Given an opportunity, will you make politics your career?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Created with Datawrapper

We also asked respondents their reasons for not joining politics. The survey conducted in India showed that the top reason for people not joining politics was "no interest" (36 percent). This was followed by "no connection" (21 percent), "corrupt business" (12 percent) and "other career options" (8 percent). The data also showed that the level of education, income, and age had an impact on the reasons for not joining politics. For instance, people with higher education and income were less likely to cite "no interest" and "other career options" as reasons for not joining politics. While in Pakistan, the top reason for people not joining politics was "no interest" (38 percent). This was followed by "corrupt business" (28 percent), "other career options" (16 percent) and "no connection" (7 percent). The data from Bangladesh showed that the top reason for people not joining politics was "no interest" (21 percent), followed by "corrupt business" (26 percent), "other career options" (9 percent), and "no connection" (7 percent).

While the data indicates that "no interest" is the top reason for people not joining politics in all three countries, but the reasons that followed "no interest" differed in each country. For instance, in India, "no connection" is the second most cited reason, while in Pakistan and Bangladesh, "other career options" is the second most cited reason.

Figure 5.5- Top Reasons for Not Joining Politics



Question: (If No) What is the main reason for you not making politics a career?
Note: Others include those who have other options and those who chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

The disturbing prevalence of vote-buying practices raises serious concerns about the integrity of elections and the erosion of democratic principles in these countries. Dynasticism, a striking feature of politics in South Asia, reveals a complex tapestry of factors influencing the democratic politics in these countries. The majority of respondents in all three countries disapprove of dynastic politics, underscoring the need for more diverse political leadership and democratic governance. The survey also notes that while one-third of respondents in these countries were willing to join politics, a large number of respondents also indicated that they no interest in politics.

Institutional Trust and Populist Sentiments

Introduction

Political institutions and the trust of the citizens in them constitute the foundations of a thriving democracy. As mentioned at the outset, the three countries had different experiences vis-à-vis the functioning of political institutions. While the Indian experience with the functioning of institutions has been relatively more successful, Bangladesh and Pakistan have had multiple setbacks. Both Bangladesh and Pakistan have witnessed multiple military coups that disrupted the democratic transfer of power between civilian governments. In India, given a series of checks and balances and division of power between a range of institutions, the functioning of institutions has been quite satisfactory as they played a crucial role, despite having internal challenges, in upholding and maintaining a democratic state (Jayal and Mehta 2010). The case of Pakistan, in this regard, has been challenging as the country continues to encounter democratic deficits (Jaffrelot 2015). There have been repeated alterations of power between civilian and military regimes, and the bureaucracy and other institutions have continued to maintain close ties with the army, but there is also a persistent popular quest for establishing democratic stability (Brass 2010).

Trust in Institutions

To understand the legitimacy and performance of institutions in the three countries, we asked our respondents to express the level of trust they have in seven institutions, namely, the parliament, the judiciary, the army, the police, the bureaucracy, the media, and the Election Commission.

- In Bangladesh and India, the parliament emerged as a trustworthy institution according to popular opinion (64 percent in both Bangladesh and India). The majority of the Pakistani respondents (56 percent), however, do not have trust in their parliament. What is noteworthy is that one-third of the respondents in Bangladesh and Pakistan called the parliament of their respective countries less trustworthy.
- The majority opinion in Bangladesh (61 percent) and India (70 percent) shows trust in judiciary. The opinion in Pakistan on judiciary is mixed. While 47 percent of the Pakistani respondents have said that the judiciary is less trustworthy, 45 percent of them trust it. The army enjoys overwhelming trust in all three countries. While 90 percent and 94 percent of the respondents in Bangladesh and India respectively trust the army, the same in Pakistan is 73 percent and comparatively lower.
- Trust in the police is comparatively lower in all three countries. The popular opinion in Bangladesh (57 percent) shows that the police are not a trustworthy institution. In India and Pakistan, the majority of the respondents (55 percent and 58 percent respectively) trust the police. However, it needs to be mentioned that 44 percent of the Indian respondents and 32 percent of the Pakistani respondents called the police less trustworthy.
- On bureaucracy, 55 percent of the respondents in Bangladesh showed trust in it whereas 43 percent of them called it less trustworthy. In India, 56 percent of the respondents trust the bureaucracy while 38 percent of them do not trust it. The majority opinion in Pakistan (63 percent) is that the bureaucracy in the country is less trustworthy. Only one-fifth of the respondents in Pakistan showed trust in bureaucracy.
- The media enjoys the trust of the majority in both Bangladesh (65 percent) and India (62 percent). Nonetheless, a little more than one-third of the respondents in both countries have questioned the trustworthiness of the media. In Pakistan, the popular opinion (54 percent) shows that the media does not enjoy the trust of the majority, although 35 percent of the Pakistani respondents have trust in the media.
- Finally, the election management bodies of Bangladesh and India are trustworthy institutions (54 percent in Bangladesh and 71 percent in India). However, 43 percent of the Bangladeshi respondents do not trust their election commission while one-fourth of the Indian respondents shared similar views. In Pakistan, the majority view (54 percent) shows that the election commission is not a trusted institution.

Table 6.1- Trust in Institutions

Insititution	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh
Parliament	64	38	64
Judiciary	70	45	61
Army	94	73	90
Police	55	58	42
Bureaucracy	56	24	55
News and Media	62	35	65
Election Commission	71	34	54

Question: How much do you trust the following institutions?
Note: The options "A lot" and "Somewhat"; "A little", "Very little", and "Do not trust at all" were clubbed together. Only affirmative responses are included.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Trust in Political Leadership

The levels of trust in political leadership at the time of this survey reveals an interesting picture. The political turmoil in Pakistan then, and the unbridled electoral dominance of BJP in India and Awami League in Bangladesh can be read in these findings.

Figure 6.1- Prime Ministers of India and Bangladesh Enjoy High Approval

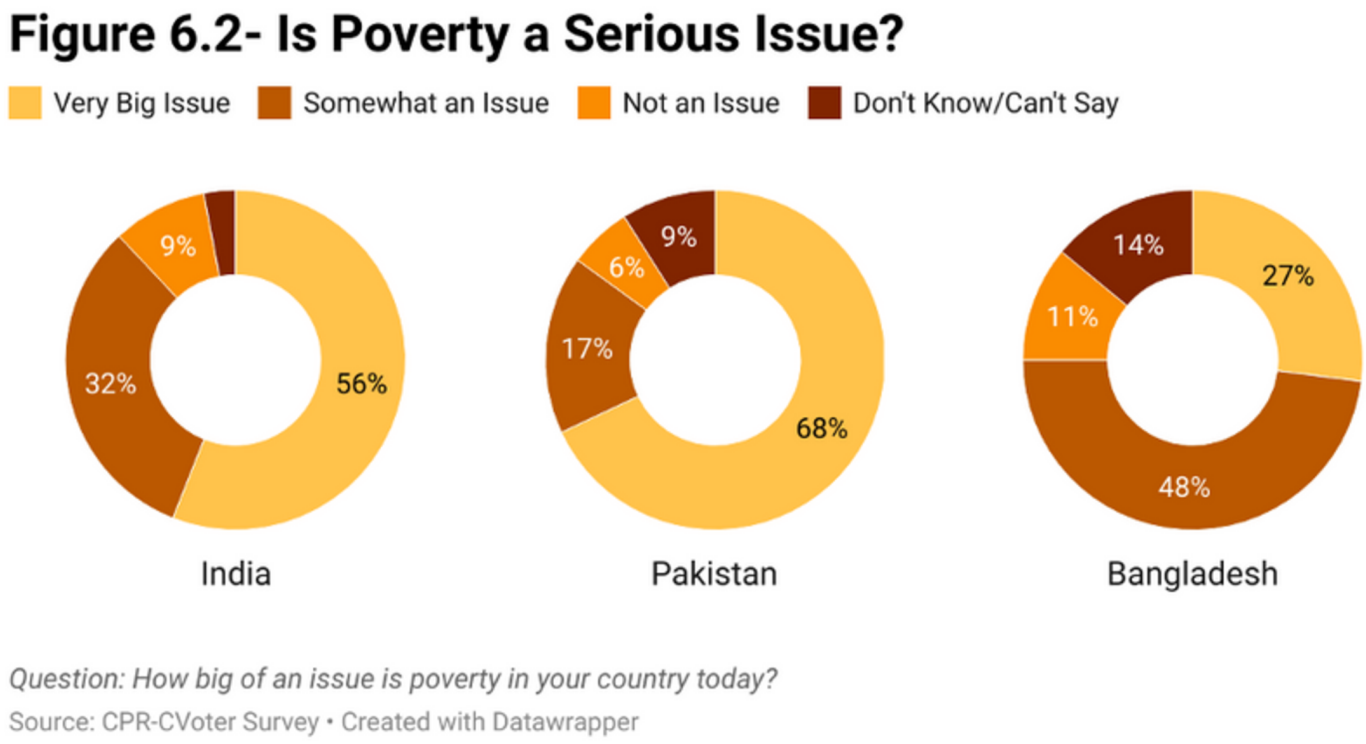
Question: How satisfied are you with the leadership of your current Prime Minister?
Note: The options "Very satisfied" and "Somewhat satisfied"; "Somewhat dissatisfied" and "Very dissatisfied" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We also asked respondents to rate their all prime ministers. In India, Narendra Modi emerged as the most popular prime minister garnering 47 percent of the support, followed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Indira Gandhi both secured 14 percent each in support. No other prime minister garnered support exceeding 10 percent. In the case of Bangladesh, Sheikh Hasina stood as the frontrunner with 43 percent of approval followed by Sheikh Mujibur Rehman with 33 percent approval hinting at the shared legacy. Finally in Pakistan, Imran Khan with 47 percent of approval lead over Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (13 percent) and Nawaz Sharif (12 percent); the rest of the options did not garner more than 10 percent of approval from the respondents.

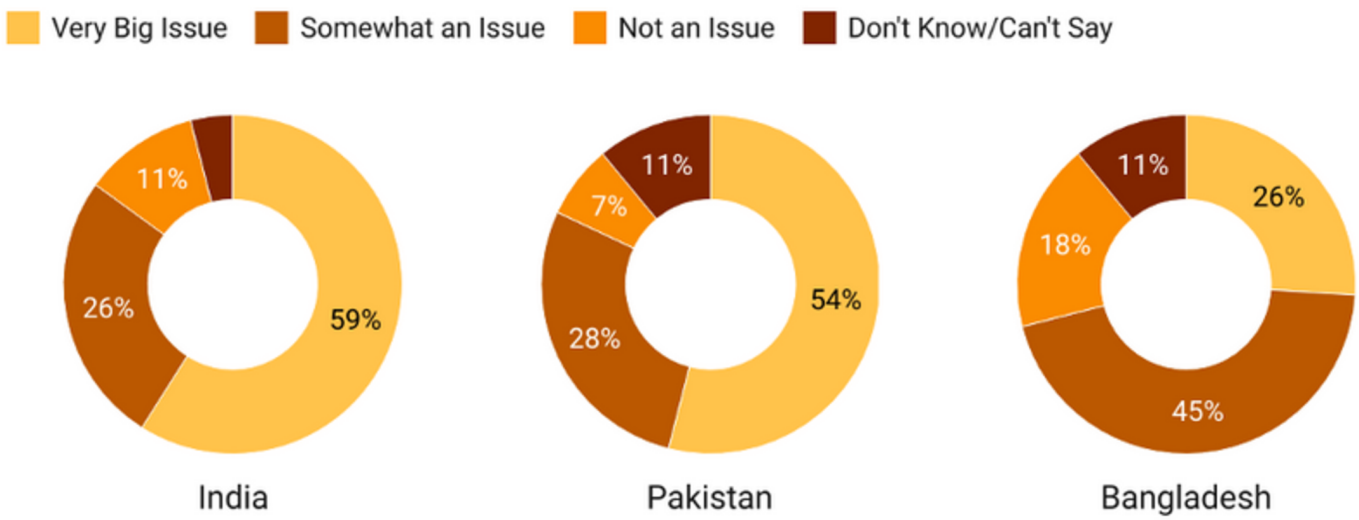
Failure of Our Politics: Poverty and Corruption as an Issue

It is fairly evident to any observer of the politics of South Asia that unemployment and poverty are key issues in the three countries. To corroborate this dominant view, we asked the respondents how big an issue is poverty in the three countries. Although the people showed high optimism on the questions related to economic progress and infrastructure, they were also quite concerned with the levels of poverty in their respective countries. While the people in India and Pakistan considered poverty a very serious issue, the respondents in Bangladesh had rather muted response on this question.



Similarly, we asked our respondents how big of an issue corruption is in their respective countries. Corruption is often deeply entrenched in state institutions and it erodes the popular trust in these institutions which can lead to the rise of actors who can undermine state sovereignty. Roughly one-third respondents from India, every second respondents in Pakistan, and one-fourth in Bangladesh were of the view that corruption is a very big issue in their countries. Around 25 percent each in both India and Pakistan held the view that corruption is somewhat an issue while that number stood at 45 percent in Bangladesh. The proportion of those who considered corruption to be not an issue was 11 percent, 7 percent and 18 percent respectively in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Figure 6.3- How big of an Issue is Corruption?



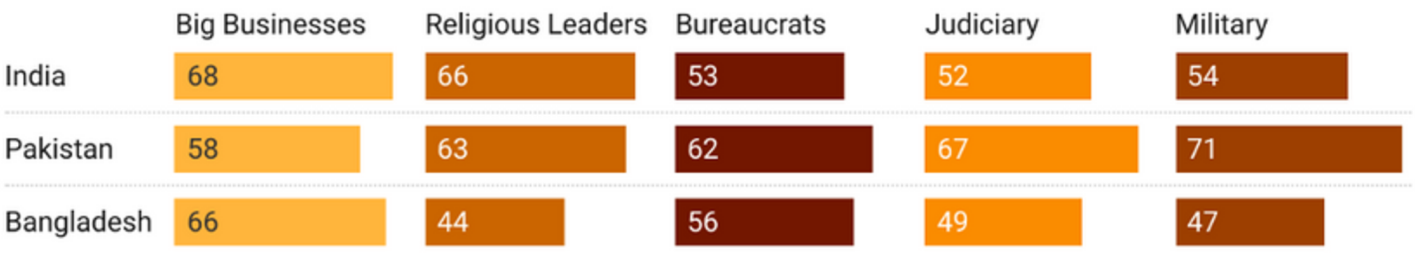
Question: How big of an issue is corruption in your country today?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Increasing Influence of Various Actors in the Political Arena

In our attempt to understand the state of democracy and the functioning of institutions, we asked the respondents to share their views on the level of interference of military, judiciary, bureaucracy, religious leaders and big businesses in the public affairs of their countries in the past few years. Our survey shows that the interference of these actors has increased in the three countries but at varying levels. In Bangladesh, the big businesses (66 percent) followed by the bureaucrats (56 percent) are perceived to have a lot of influence. In India too, the popular opinion indicates that big businesses have interfered the most in public affairs (68 percent). Moreover, 66 percent of the Indian respondents said that the interference of religious leaders have increased. In Pakistan, the army is perceived to interfere the most in the affairs of the country (71 percent, followed by the judiciary (67 percent). The religious leaders and bureaucrats have an almost similar level of interference in Pakistan. Interestingly, the big businesses are perceived to have the least interference in Pakistan compared to other institutions.

Figure 6.4- Increasing Influence in Politics



Question: Thinking about the past few years, do you think the interference by the following in the politics of your country has increased or decreased.
Note: The options "Increased a lot" and "Increased Somewhat" were clubbed together. Only assertive responses are included.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

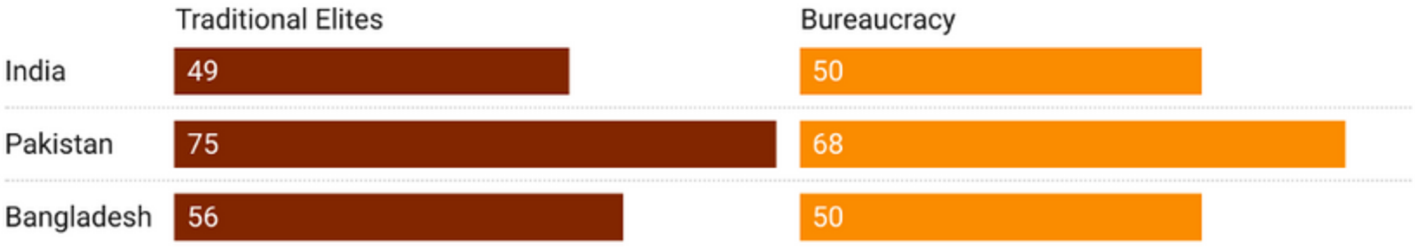
Populist Sentiments in South Asia

We asked several questions to respondents what they perceived to be major hinderance in their economic and social progress. We were particularly interested in their responses on traditional elites and bureaucrats, as these seem to be major mobilising platforms of populist leaders across the globe.

Existing research shows that traditional elites continue to be a hindrance to the effective delivery of development goals and the implementation of welfare programs in the country (Matias et al 2022). They impede the autonomous functioning of the local state and the ability of bureaucrats to work effectively. The survey indicates that 75 percent of the respondents in Pakistan felt that traditional elites are a major roadblock to their country's progress. On the other hand, the responses from Bangladesh and India are mixed. In Bangladesh, for instance, 56 percent of the respondents agreed that the traditional elites are a roadblock to progress, whereas 41 percent of them disagreed. In India, similarly, 49 percent of the people considered traditional elites as roadblocks to progress whereas 41 percent of them did not share the same view.

We also asked a question on bureaucracy since all three countries inherited the colonial bureaucratic system. Government officers and bureaucrats are the key actors in designing, implementing and assessing the blueprint of economic and social progress in all three cases. However, bureaucracy can be a hindrance to development as it is bound by formal rules, gives rise to red-tapism, and can be less accountable to the citizens and society (Mangla 2015). In all three countries, we found that bureaucracy is considered a major roadblock to progress. 50 percent of the respondents from Bangladesh and India and 68 percent of them in Pakistan share this view.

Figure 6.5- Majority Frowns upon Elites and Bureaucracy



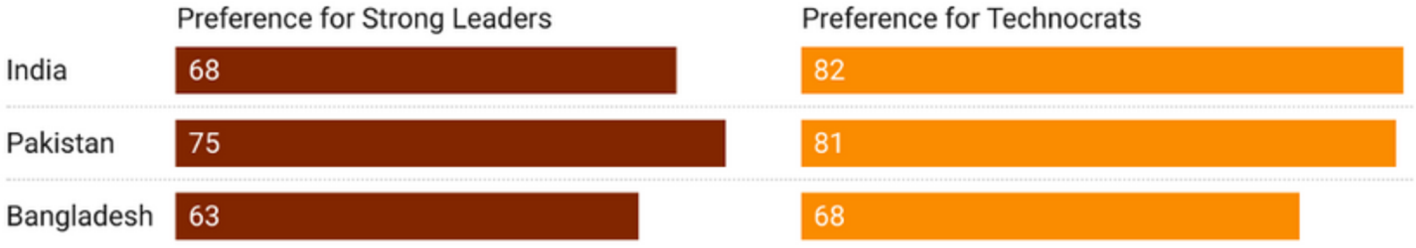
Question: For each of the statements, tell us whether you agree or disagree with them. a) Traditional elites are blocking the progress of people like you, b) Country's bureaucrats are blocking the progress of people like you. Note: The options "Fully Agree" and "Somewhat Agree" were clubbed together. Only affirmative responses are included.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

The data presented in Figures 6.5 and 6.6 indicates that there support for populist tendencies among the respondents. The preferences for a strong leader who does not have to bother with the parliament and the judiciary, and preferences for technocratic experts over politicians. In Bangladesh, 63 percent of respondents preferred a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and judiciary, whereas, in India and Pakistan, this percentage increased to 68 percent and 75 percent, respectively. These results are in line with the existing literature on the rise of populism in South Asia, which highlights the growing preference for strongman politicians who can provide quick and effective solutions to complex problems.

Moreover, the data also indicates that the respondents prefer having experts, rather than politicians, make decisions according to what they think is right. In Bangladesh, 68 percent of respondents preferred having experts make decisions, whereas in India and Pakistan, this percentage increased to 82 percent and 81 percent, respectively. This preference for strongman politicians and experts can be seen as a response to the perceived failures of quotidian politicians and political institutions in South Asia. In this context, the respondents' preference can be seen as an attempt to bypass the rule-based democratic procedures.

Figure 6.6- Populist Sentiments in South Asia



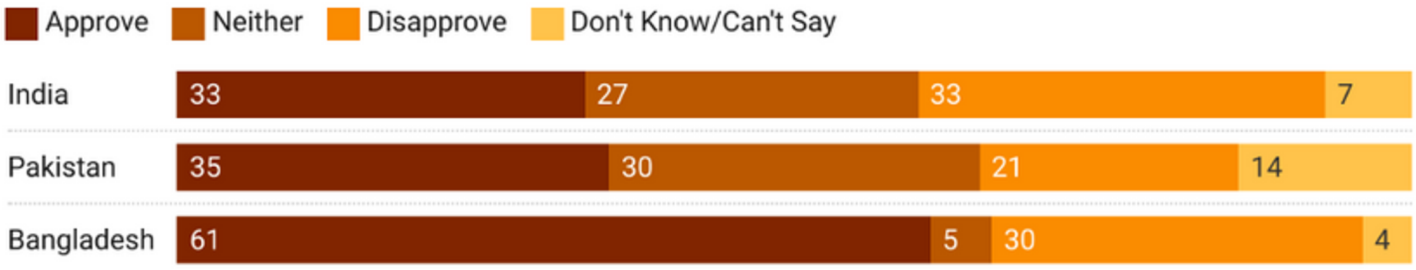
Question: I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask whether this is a good or bad idea. a) Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and judiciary, and b) Having experts, not politicians, make decisions according to what they think is right.
Note: The options "Very Good" and "Good" were clubbed together. Only affirmative responses are included.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Demand for Greater Role of the Army

When we compare the data on populist tendencies with the data on support for higher spending on national security, and whether citizens can take critical view of the army, a very complex picture emerges across three countries. In our survey, as discussed above, we found that the most trusted institution in all three countries is the army. Moreover, the army has played a pivotal role in the politics of Pakistan and Bangladesh as these two countries have witnessed multiple military coups. In India, on the other hand, the army has functioned under the control and superintendence of successive civilian governments. In the last section, we, therefore, reflect on the popular opinion on some questions related to the army and national security. We asked if the government should spend more on national security. In Bangladesh, 60 percent of the respondents want their government to spend more on national security. The Indian and Pakistani respondents expressed a mixed view- While 33 percent respondents in India disapproved of increasing expenditure on national security, 32 percent approved.

Figure 6.7- Support for Higher National Security Spending

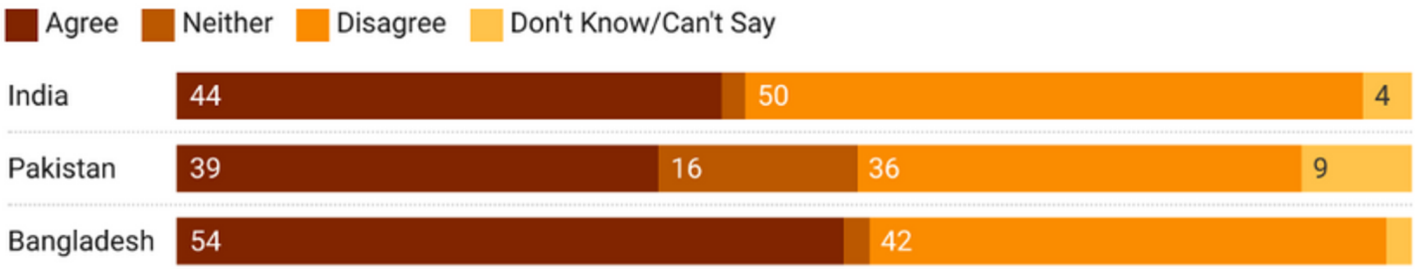


Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the following statement - The government should be spending more on national security.
Note: The options "Fully approve" and "Somewhat approve"; "Fully disapprove" and "Somewhat disapprove" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We asked the respondents whether it is fine to be critical of the army, and the opinion in all three countries are rather mixed. In Bangladesh, most of the respondents (54 percent) said that there is nothing wrong in being critical of the army whereas 42 percent of them think that the army cannot be criticised. While 50 percent of Indian respondents said that one cannot be critical of the army, 44 percent disagreed. Interestingly, the popular opinion (39 percent) in Pakistan is that there is nothing wrong in being critical of the army, 36 percent of the respondents shared the opposite view.

Figure 6.8- Divided Opinion on Criticism of Armed Forces



Question: Please tell me how much you agree with the following statements - There is nothing wrong with being critical of the country's armed forces.
Note: The options "Fully agree" and "Somewhat agree"; "Fully disagree" and "Somewhat disagree" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

The survey data presented in this chapter indicates that while there is a significant level of trust in political institutions in India and Bangladesh, it remains lower in Pakistan. The overall view in all three countries is that traditional elites, and bureaucrats present major roadblocks to development. Corruption, dynastic politics and poverty remains a serious concern in all of them. A large number of respondents also believe that non-state actors such as big businesses and religious leaders are increasingly interfering in the public affairs of these countries. These tendencies have created ample room for the rise of populist sentiments and preference for strongman leadership. The data on support for higher spending on national security, and whether citizens can take critical view of the army, presents an interesting insight into how nationalistic appeals can be combined with populist sentiments for political mobilisation.

Political Tolerance

Introduction

The concept of political tolerance , like that of equality, is considered a necessary but not sufficient condition for democracy. And the process of secularisation is closely tied to the processes of democracy. In the South Asian context, political tolerance among various groups was mainly associated with the anti-colonial national struggle against the British and ideas of liberal democracy that urged for a middle ground between conflicting 'nationalities' and 'nationalisms'. Post-independence, India emerged as a secular state that interpreted the political doctrine of secularism as "Sarva Dharma Sambhava" i.e., the equal treatment of all religions. The Indian state eschewed the Western model of secularism that completely separated religion from the ambit of the state and instead followed a contextual doctrine of secularism wherein the state kept a principled distance from the religious sphere while making use of state apparatuses to procedurally reorient societal relations governed by religious norms and mores. Despite enshrining secularism as a constitutional value, criticisms have been meted out to the Indian state for its lackadaisical efforts to maintain state secularity (Singh, 2005) and for its complacency in anti-secular activities (Verma and Mandar, 2020). Many Indian states have passed laws prohibiting proselytisation and consumption of cow meat to ensure the Hindu majority sentiments are unhurt (Kapoor, 2018). Furthermore, violence against religious minorities with state impunity has been on the rise with communal majoritarian forces gaining popularity (Sarkar and Sarkar, 2016).

With the adoption of the Objectives Resolution in 1949, Pakistan emerged as a state where tenets of democracy were defined within the confines of Islam (Talbot, 2010). Interestingly, Pakistan is not a theocratic state owing to the majority Sunni population where any hierarchy within the clergy does not exist unlike in Iran which is a theocracy because of its majority Shia population (Patel, 2022). Persecution and harassment of religious and sectarian minorities are not just widespread in Pakistan but also legalised (Uddin, 2017). There exist provisions within the legal framework to undermine the beliefs of sects like Ahmedias. Though Bangladesh espoused to emerge as a secular democracy after its liberation, following a series of military coups and political turmoil, Islam was declared as the state religion. This was later rescinded by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh in 2010. Nonetheless, the prominence of Bengali Muslim nationalism remains an anathema to the ethos of secularism. The presence of various ethno-religious political outfits in Bangladesh have been a cause of concern among minorities for a very long time.

This chapter explores questions pertaining to the salience of religion and its influence on various facets of the South Asian public sphere, as well as perceptions regarding safety and security of various groups.

Language or Religion

Linguistic and religious identities are two of the most prominent ascriptive or descent-based attributes that have played a crucial role in the imagination of political communities in South Asia. The creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh points out the power these ethnic identities hold in shaping the future of the subcontinent. The decline in the importance of ethnic identities is often characterised as a salient feature of modernity where new non-ascriptive identities like class and status take precedence. But as the data presented in this chapter indicates, these notions of modernity do not hold true to their conventional understanding. Ethnic identities such as religion and language continue to remain very important.

We asked our respondents whether they felt closer to those who spoke their language or belonged to their religion - 35 percent respondents from Bangladesh identified language as a determinant in fostering personal relationships, while the proportion of those who identified the same from India and Pakistan stood at 41 and 24 percent respectively. While the proportion of those who identified shared religious identity as a binding factor stood at 31, 29, and 22 percent respectively for Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan. The proportion of those for whom neither religion nor language mattered stood at 19, 25, and 41 percent in Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan respectively.

A discernible pattern emerges once we look at the data using respondents' location (rural and urban) and region. In India, the urban population is more likely to say that neither the religion nor the language is the basis of them feeling close to a person. The same is true for Pakistan, but in Bangladesh these differences do not matter. Interestingly, in India, 44 percent of respondents from non-Hindi speaking states are of the belief that language plays a central role in forging personal relationships whereas 23 percent from these states viewed religion as playing a key role and 27 percent felt none of these ethnic categories held any role. Whereas amongst those from Hindi-speaking states, 22 percent were of the view that neither religious nor linguistic identities played any significant role whereas the proportion of those who pointed out the significance of either religion or language was at par with 37 percent. Such regional variations were not observed in Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Table 7.1- What Binds People: Language or Religion?

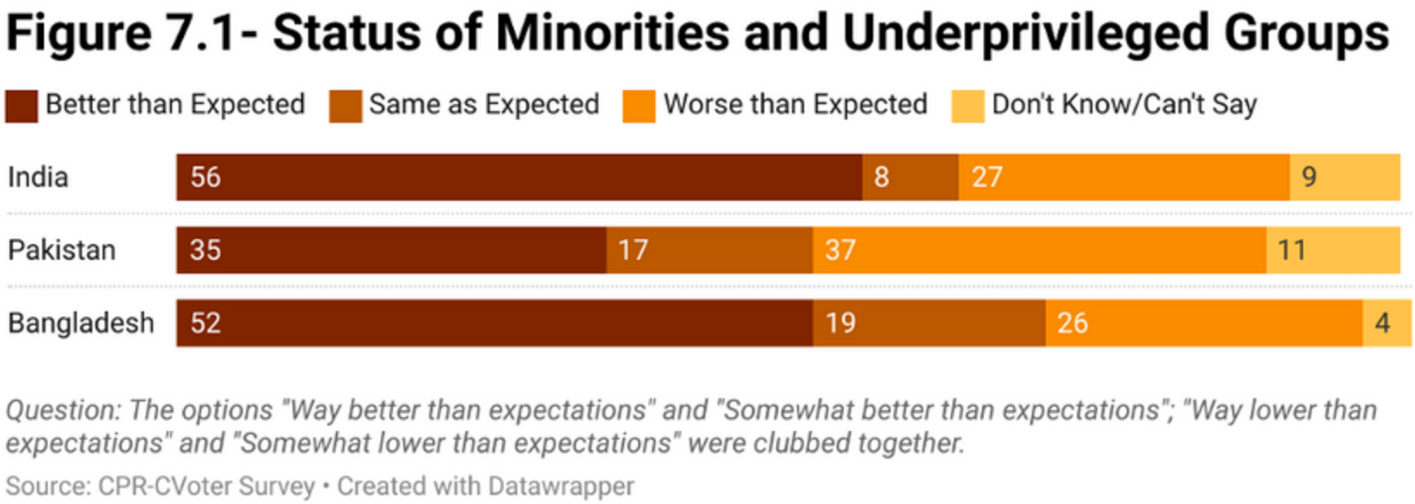
Country	Location	Language	Neither	Religion
India	Overall	41	25	29
	Urban	36	32	24
	Rural	43	22	32
Pakistan	Overall	24	41	22
	Urban	25	46	18
	Rural	24	38	25
Bangladesh	Overall	35	19	31
	Urban	39	18	29
	Rural	33	20	32

Question: Some people feel closer to a person who speaks the same language and others to a person who belongs to their religion. Who do you feel closer to?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

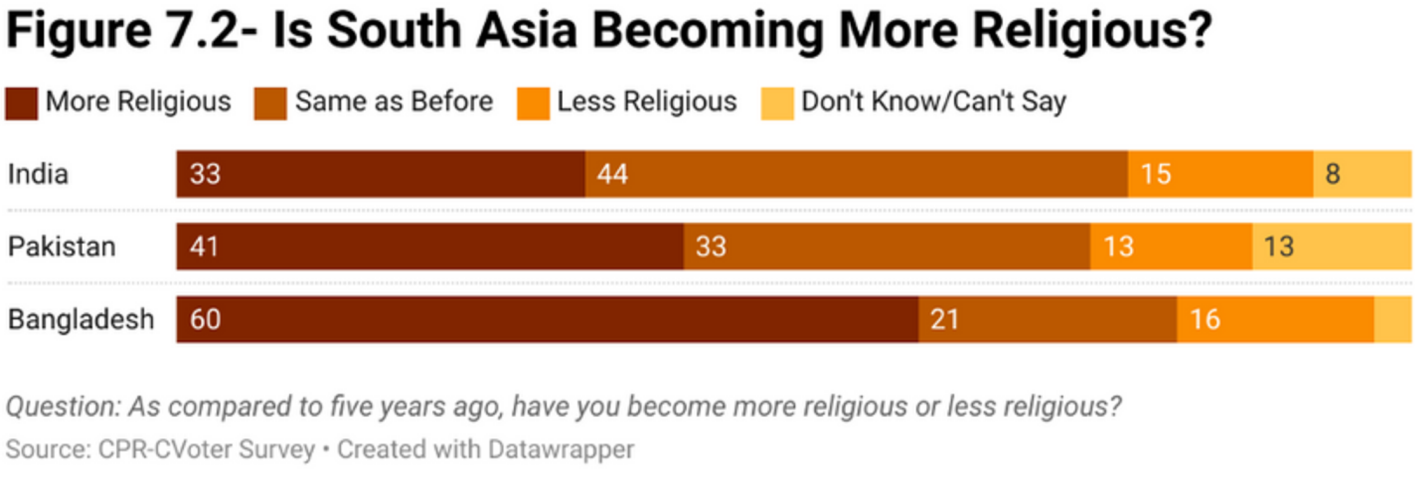
Status of Minorities and Underprivileged Groups Since Independence

Burdened with a long history of violence along the ethnic fault lines, the status of minorities has always been a serious issue in South Asia. We asked our respondents to evaluate the status of minorities and underprivileged groups in their countries. In India and Bangladesh with almost slightly more than half of the respondents view that the conditions of such groups as better than expected. Whereas in Pakistan, only 35 percent of the respondents felt that the status of minorities was better than their expectations. However, in all three countries more than one in every four respondents said that the status of these groups is worse than expected. Not surprisingly, respondents from these underprivileged groups were more likely to have negative opinion about their situation. Similarly, respondents who had previously shared the view that the status of democracy has deteriorated in their countries, a significant number of respondents (43 percent in Pakistan, 37 percent in India, and 32 percent in Bangladesh) were of the opinion that the status of minorities and underprivileged groups was worse than their expectations.



Increasing Religiosity

Next, we asked our respondents how religious they have become in the past ten years. Bangladesh stands out with sixty percent respondents saying they have become more religious and another twenty percent saying same as before. In Pakistan while 41 percent became more religious, another 33 percent remained at the same level. The trend was opposite in case of India where only 33 percent became religious and 44 percent at the same level of religiosity. The proportion of those who claim to have become less religious (or did not express their opinion) were roughly the same in all three countries.



Religious Intolerance

Religious intolerance has been widely considered as a threat to democracy and several studies have identified rising levels of intolerance against religious minorities in South Asia (The South Asia Collective, 2020). We asked our respondents how serious the issue of religious intolerance was in their countries. And, not surprisingly, most respondents agreed it to be a serious issue. We further looked at the perception of both the majority and minority communities in these countries and an almost equal proportion of respondents from both communities found religious intolerance to be a serious issue.

Among those who said that the state of democracy has declined in their nations, 43 percent of respondents from Pakistan found religious intolerance to be a very serious issue whereas, in the case of India and Bangladesh, the proportions were 36 and 24 percent, respectively.

Table 7.2- Level of Religious Intolerace

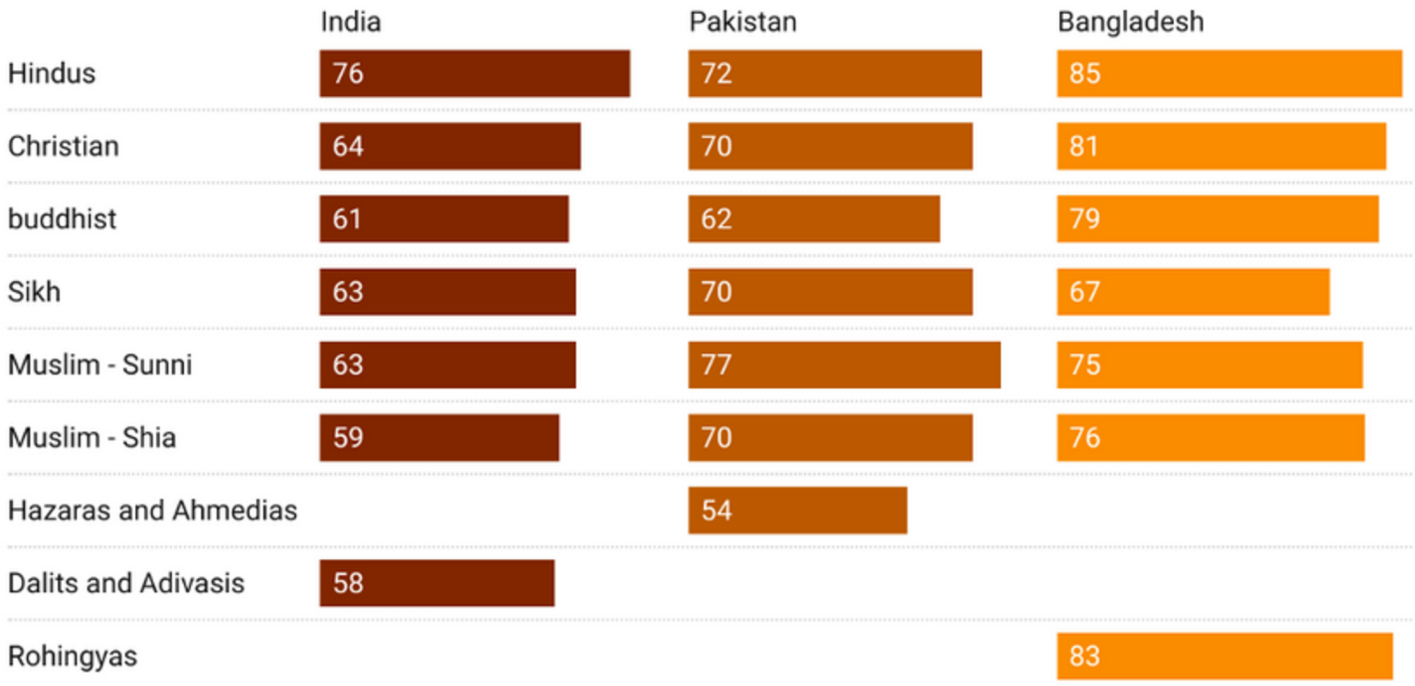
Country	Location	A Very Big Issue	Somewhat an Issue	Not an Issue
India	Hindus	34	34	23
	Others	36	38	21
Pakistan	Muslims	39	31	17
	Others	33	30	17
Bangladesh	Muslims	26	27	39
	Others	25	28	37

Question: How big of an issue religious intolerance is in your country today?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

We also asked our respondents if specific social groups in their respective countries feel safe compared to ten years ago. There is a consensus in India and Pakistan that religious minorities and groups that have historically faced discrimination and violence are perceived to be less safe than in comparison to dominant groups. The data from Bangladesh doesn't follow this pattern. In India, a lower number of respondents were likely to say that Dalits and Adivasis feel safer compared to ten years ago. The same is true for religious minorities such as Muslims, Christians and Sikhs, in comparison to Hindus. In Pakistan, a lower number of respondents were likely to say that Hazaras and Ahmedias feel safer today. This was true for religious minorities such as Hindus, Sikhs and Christians in Pakistan. In Bangladesh, on the other hand, religious minorities such as Hindus and Christians, and historically marginalised groups such as Rohingyas, were considered to fee safer today in comparison to majority community.

Figure 7.3- Perceived Safety of Social Groups



Question: Compared to the situation 10 years ago, how safe do you think the following groups feel in your country today?
Note: The options "Much Safer Today" and "Somewhat Safer Today" were clubbed together. Only affirmative responses are included.

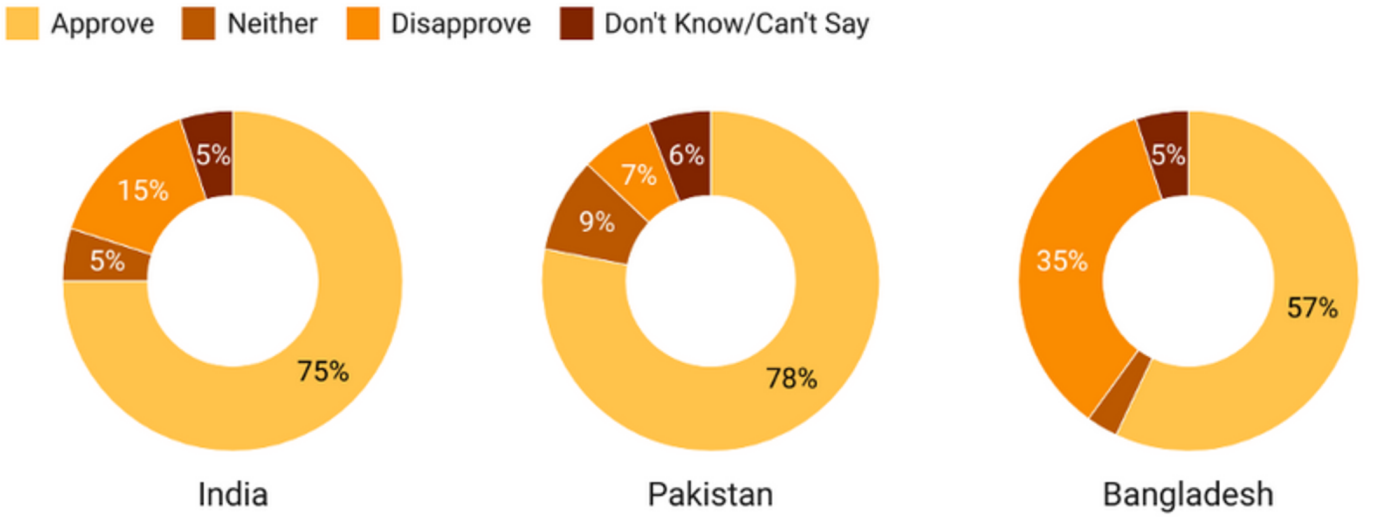
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Ban Books or Films that Hurt Religious Sentiments

South Asians view religious intolerance as a serious issue notwithstanding the degrees of severity they attach to the same. Contrary to this view, South Asians believe that books and films that hurt the religious sentiments of any community must be banned. The agreement is greater in the case of Pakistan (78 percent) followed by India (74 percent) and the least in Bangladesh (57 percent). It may be expected that with the increase in education levels, the consensus on the banning of books and films would decline. Meera Nanda (2011) has argued that contrary to the modernist theories about the interaction between class and religiosity, the upper and middle class of South Asia has embraced religious exhibitionism. Evidence from our survey reinforces Nanda's arguments.

Similarly, the higher and middle-income groups either is greater or the same agreement with banning such books and films. This relationship is more pronounced in case of Pakistan and rather muted in case of Bangladesh and India.

Figure 7.4- Approval for Banning Sensitive Books and Films



Question: Do you approve or disapprove of the following statement - Filsm/books that hurt the religious sentiments of any community should be banned.
Note: The options "Fully approve" and "Somewhat approve"; "Somewhat disapprove" and "Fully disapprove" were clubbed together.

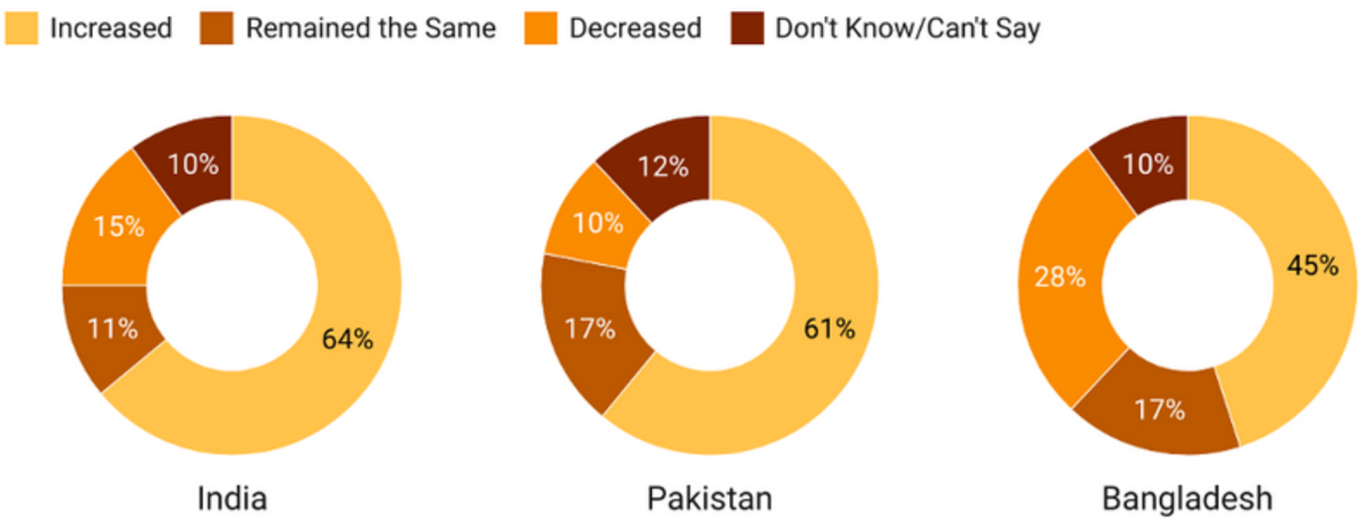
Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Influence of Religious Leaders in National Matters

Further, we asked our respondents if the interference of religious leaders has increased in politics in their countries. In India, 65 percent of respondents were of the view that the interference of religious leaders has increased ; whereas for Pakistan and Bangladesh, the proportions of those who felt the same were 61 and 45 percent respectively. When we analysed the data on increasing interference of religious leaders in politics and respondents' level of education, we find that respondents with higher the levels of education in both India and Pakistan were more likely to say that the interference of religious leaders have increased. Whereas in Bangladesh a contrary pattern emerges. In Pakistan, 57 percent of those from the lower education group were of the view that the interference has increased while the proportion of their middle and higher education counterparts who felt the same were 63 and 67 percent respectively. The proportion of those of felt the same in India stood at 69 percent for higher, 67 percent for middle and 61 percent for lower education groups. Finally, in Bangladesh, the lower (47 percent) education group were higher in proportion with respect to the opinion of increasing interference of religious leaders in national affairs, than their middle (42 percent) and higher (26 percent) education groups.

A puzzling picture emerges when we looked at the responses to the question on the need to involve religious leaders in matters of national importance. It seems that there is an increasing tendencies of fusing the religious sphere with the political in South Asia.While in India 60 percent respondents answered in affirmative, this proportion increased to seventy percent in Bangladesh, and approximately 80 percent in Pakistan. Interestingly, younger generations from all three countries were slightly more in agreement on this question. And, this tendency poses a serious threat to the prospects of secularism and democracy in these countries.

Figure 7.5- Increasing Influence of Religous Leaders



Question: Thinking about the past few years, do you think the interference by religious leaders in the politics of your country has increased or decreased?
Note: The options "Increased a lot" and "Somewhat increased"; "Decreased somewhat" and "Decreased a lot" were clubbed together.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

Ethnic identities such as religion and language play a central role in the lives of those in the subcontinent. Language and religion are important markers and plays a significant role in fostering personal relationships. In the last few years, citizens in these countries have become more religious. While instances of religious intolerance and interference of religious leaders in politics are perceived by South Asians to have increased in their countries, there also exists a puzzling behaviour among the respondents urging for greater involvement of religious leaders in matters of national importance and banning of books and films that would hurt religious sentiments. This fusion of religion and politics in these countries poses a grave risk to the prospect of secularism and democracy in the region.

Women in South Asia

Introduction

While the challenges faced by women in the South Asia, like lower literacy rate, female foeticide, and various forms of social discrimination, among others have witnessed some improvement , but they continue be subject to the deep-rooted institution of patriarchal value sets . According to a recent gender inequality index developed by the UNDP, there is a wide gap between men and women in these countries in terms of secondary education, labour force participation, and political representation (UNDP 2022).

In this chapter, we focus on drawing out women's experiences of living in these countries including preference for the girl child, intra-house dining patterns, freedom of choice and electoral and non-electoral participation of women in the political space. We find that though there is attitudinal change with respect to the preference given to a male child and the domestic space has become somewhat inclusive, women's agency to make choices is still largely restrained.

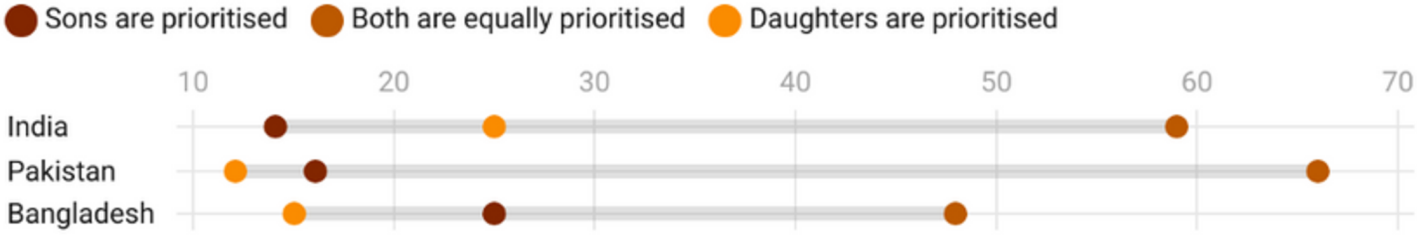
Gender Preference in South Asia

Culturally, the South Asian region has been more preferential towards the male child, the reason for the same is historically embedded in the socio-economic structures of this society. The study of prevalent patriarchal structures within the region has suggested the systemic differential treatment of women, resulting in higher mortality, poorer food intake, and inaccessibility to medical facilities (Guilmoto 2007). The three South Asian countries surveyed have some form of a legal framework to protect women's rights and stop discrimination, but in practice, they are still far behind most other regions of the world.

In the past few decades, serious attempts by governments and civil society have shown some positive results in terms of improvement in the child-sex ratio in South Asia but there is wide disparity among the regions within each country. For instance, if we consider the latest round of NFHS (National Family Health Survey) data in India we see a wide gap between states like Kerala and West Bengal which have a higher child sex ratio of 992 and 967 respectively to other states like Haryana, Bihar, and Telangana, which fall far below the national average. Though the overall sex ratio per population in the past two decades has improved, child-sex ratio continues to be a cause of concern(Kabeer et al. 2014). Even after birth, the care received by girl children is poorer than male child. Studies show that two girls within a household have more likelihood of being severely stunted and poorly immunised in comparison to two boys, however, the situation improves for the girl child if the elder sibling is a boy (Pande and Malhotra 2006).

A large number of respondents across Bangladesh, India, and Pakistan equally prefer having both sons and daughters. In India and Pakistan, the figures were quite encouraging in comparison to Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, one in four respondents said they prefer sons over daughters. On the contrary, 25 percent of the respondents in India believed daughters are now preferred over sons. However, there are some variations in these responses if the data is parsed using rural-urban, income categories and educational levels. For example, In India and Bangladesh, a higher number of women in urban areas preferred having a male child.

Figure 8.1- Daughters over Sons are Prioritised?



Question: Generally, do family and friends around you still have a preference for a male child over a female child OR the female is considered good?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

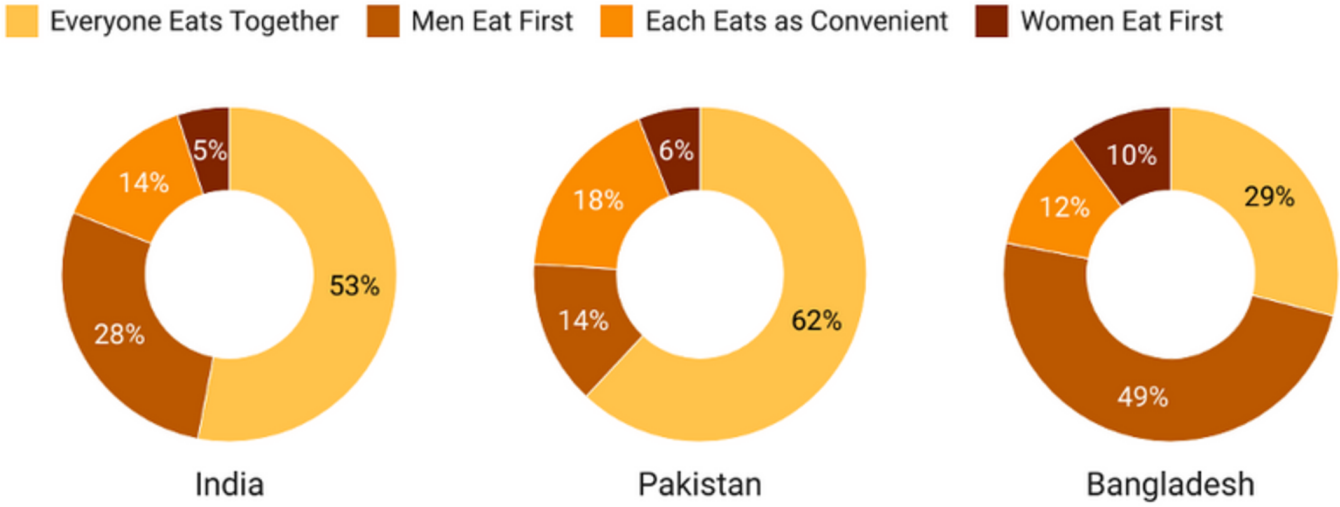
Source: CPR-CVoter • Created with Datawrapper

Intra-household Eating Pattern

The sexual division of labour at the household level plays an important role in determining the position women hold not just in their households but also at the levels of the community, market, and state (Agarwal, 1997). Women bargain with these existing conditions at different levels and take part in activities that provide them with a livelihood and shelter. One of its main implications can be observed in the sharing of household responsibilities and their presence is at the dining table. For example, daughters-in-law, often newly married women tend to serve themselves last (Kabeer, 1988). A 2019 United Nations World Food Programme study on intra-household eating orders in the Indian cities of Lucknow and Fatehpur, also shows us that there is an attitude change with respect to the intra-household eating patterns (WFP, 2019). It found that now women either eat with a family member or after them, however, eating before others is still considered disrespectful for women.

In our survey, we found that in India and Pakistan, there is a positive trend in families eating together with around 50 percent and 60 percent of respondents from India and Pakistan respectively confirming the same. In contrast, in the case of Bangladesh, almost one-in-two respondents were of the opinion that men eat first in their household hinting at the entrenched parochial practices of the sexual division of labour in households.

Figure 8.2- Intrahousehold Eating Patterns



Question: Generally, do women in your household eat before or after men or do all members of the household eat together?

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

When we look at these responses using urban-rural lens, we find that the female respondents from rural areas are more likely to admit that the gendered intrahousehold eating patterns disadvantage them. The impact of urbanisation and economic progress on eating habits can be perceived as a possible explanation with more female respondents admitting the slightly greater prevalence of household members eating at each other's convenience in urban areas. In Bangladesh, 42 percent of female respondents from urban areas admit that men eat first in their households compared to 50 percent of their rural counterparts. Meanwhile in India, 16 percent of female respondents from urban areas admit the prevalence of men eating first in contrast to 31 percent of their rural counterparts. Finally in Pakistan, the proportion of women who admit the prevalence of men eating first in urban areas stood at 11 percent against 14 percent in rural areas.

Table 8.1- Urban-Rural Differences in Eating Patterns

Country	Location	Eat Together	Men Eat First	Women Eat First	Each Eats at Convenience
India	Urban Female	47	16	9	18
	Rural Female	49	31	4	14
Pakistan	Urban Female	64	11	4	18
	Rural Female	56	14	6	18
Bangladesh	Urban Female	25	42	10	13
	Rural Female	25	50	8	10

Question: Generally, do women in your household eat before or after men or do all members of the household eat together?
Note: The remaining respondents chose the "Don't Know/Can't Say" option.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

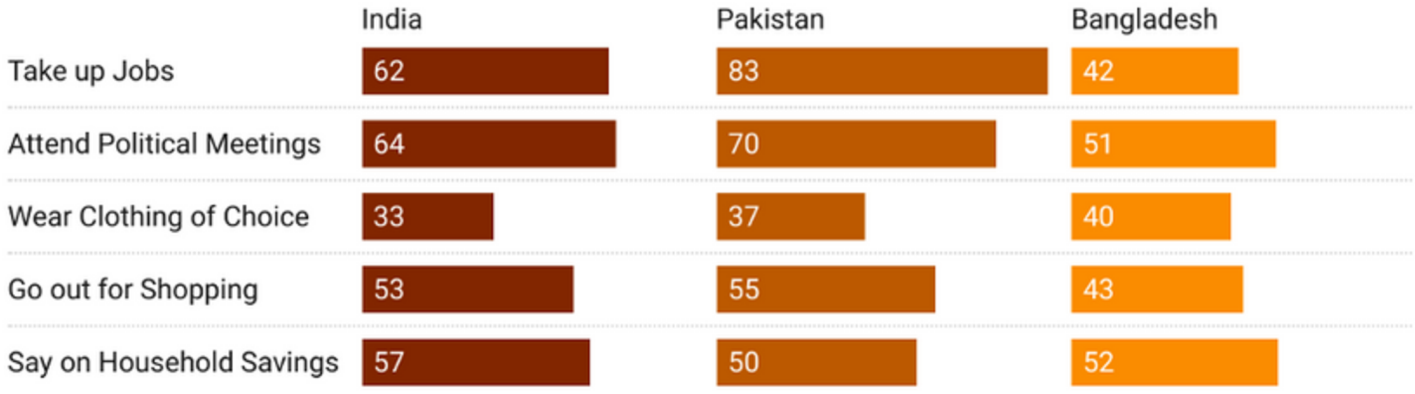
Freedom and Obedience

The normative expectation from women in these countries is often limiting them to taking care of domestic responsibilities, making them secondary actors to the men in the family. In every facet, from the choice of clothing to choosing an employer, women often seek permission from their elders or family members. Despite the discrimination and restriction, an equally compelling picture of women exists in the region where they have been part of the independence movement, caste/class-based struggles, and more.This section focuses on drawing the picture of women in their personal and social lives and highlighting how

much agency women have to make their own choices. We asked questions about a host of decisions related to one's personal life and whether women need to seek permission for these from their spouses or other family members. These include taking jobs, dressing as per their choice, participating in political meetings, shopping, and saving money.

Almost 80 percent of respondents from Pakistan are of the view that women require permission to take up jobs in contrast the proportion for the same in Bangladesh and India at 42 percent and 62 percent respectively. Similarly, a large proportion of respondents admit that women require permission to attend political meetings in Bangladesh (51 percent), India (64 percent), and Pakistan (70 percent). On the choice of clothings, 40 percent Bangladeshis, 33 percent Indians, and 37 percent Pakistanis are of the view that women require permission. In tandem with these patterns, the proportion of respondents who admit that women require permission for shopping and taking decisions on household savings were 43 percent and 52 percent respectively in the case of Bangladesh; 53 percent and 57 percent respectively in India; and 55 percent and 50 percent in Pakistan.

Figure 8.3- Do Women Need Permission?



Question: Please tell me whether women in your family have to seek permission from their husbands or a senior family member to do the following.
Note: Only affirmative responses are included.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

When we look at the responses using gender and income levels, we find there is a decline in the proportion of women who admit they require permission with an increase in levels of income in India; a different pattern is observed in Bangladesh and Pakistan. When asked if women should obey their husbands, almost seventy percent respondents across three countries were of the view that women should obey their husbands. Interestingly, there exists a marginal difference between men and women respondents on this question. This indicates either the internalisation of gendered customs or the bargain that women have to engage in, with the existing structure of patriarchy.However, the notion that women should obey their husbands declines as the levels of education increase for both male and female respondents in India. A somewhat similar decline is observed among female respondents in Bangladesh but a contrary view emerges from Pakistan indicating no correlation between education and the perception of the need for women to obey their husbands.

Marriages in South Asian countries are often arranged by families and relatives, which adds a disproportionate burden of expectations and responsibilities in the lives of women. Responsibilities mostly include care work revolving around looking after households, bringing up children, and taking care of the elderly, among others. The amount of unpaid care work women have to do within the household also puts them in a disadvantaged position when finding meaningful formal employment. According to an estimate by the report from the International Labour Organization (ILO), women in India alone spent around 5 hours of daily time doing housework, in contrast to 30 minutes per day for men (ILO 2018). Looking at the responses on whether women should work after marriage if they want to, there is an overall support for women to work after marriage in both India and Pakistan. And, the support for women to work is lower in Bangladesh.

When we look at the responses from the vantage points of gender and education levels, the impact education has on the perception becomes evident in the case of India and Pakistan whereas in Bangladesh no discernible pattern is observed. There is an increase in the proportion of female respondents with higher educational levels who believe that women should be able to work after marriage. as their education levels of their education and such a pattern is observed among their male counterparts notwithstanding marginal differences between them.

Political Participation

Despite several advances in gender equality globally, political participation of women continues to be low. A large body of literature in political science highlights lower political participation in regions where gender bias exists (Teele 2018, Brule 2020). While women in South Asian countries were accorded voting rights, their turnout at polling booths remained abysmally low for a very long time. For instance, even in the 2018 national election in Pakistan, there was a 9.1 percent gap in the male and female voter turnout. In India, it is only in the recent 2019 national election that for the first time, women voter turnout was at par with the male turnout. Our survey shows a similar trend of lower electoral participation of women in all three countries in comparison to men. In India, interestingly women from rural India were more likely to vote in comparison to urban women, however, we do see a somewhat similar trend in Pakistan and Bangladesh where the percentage of urban women who never voted is highest in Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Table 8.2- Gender Differnces in Turnout

Country	Location	Male	Female
India	Urban	58	51
	Rural	66	58
Pakistan	Urban	26	16
	Rural	24	18
Bangladesh	Urban	19	21
	Rural	29	21

Question: Think carefully and tell me how often have you voted in national or state elections since you became eligible to vote.
Note: Only responses for those who voted in most elections are presented here.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

As discussed earlier, a large number of women in these countries seek permission from their husbands before participating in political activities like protests. In Bangladesh, a higher percentage of women (around 73 percent participating in political rallies and 70 percent in civil society protests) have participated at least once in any form of non-electoral political participation.

Table 8.3- Female Participation in Non-Electoral Activities

Non-Electoral Activity	Location	Female	Male
Political Rallies	India	18	21
	Pakistan	23	29
	Bangladesh	51	51
Civil Society Protests	India	11	11
	Pakistan	10	18
	Bangladesh	26	27
Online Campaigns	India	11	11
	Pakistan	20	24
	Bangladesh	15	13

Question: In the last two years, have you ever taken part in the following activities?
Note: Only the option "Multiple Times" is included here.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

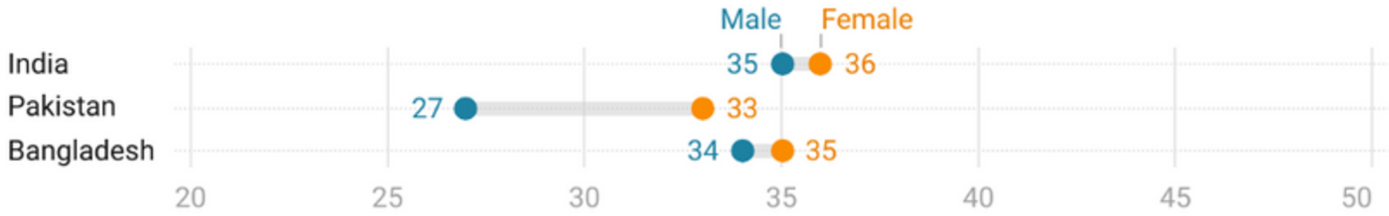
With respect to attending meetings by political rallies, all three countries report high levels of participation by women, highlighting the important role political parties have to play in increasing the participation of women in politics. However, women do not find it easy to gain candidacy within the political parties, especially in regions entrenched with greater gender biases and male-headed parties (Bhalotra et al 2018). Social media and online mediums have also brought forth new avenues for women to register their protest or support for a cause. Though social media reduces the direct threat of physical security to some extent, women have reported facing a high incidence of trolling for their political opinions (Pillai and Ghosh 2022). Around 27 percent of women in India and almost twice in Pakistan and Bangladesh say they have at least once participated politically on social media.

Political Ambition Among Women

The political representation of women in India and Pakistan is skewed. Lower participation of women in party activism, and the ability of men to dictate terms of participation largely shape women's presence in politics in the region (Cheema et al 2022) .

Our survey shows approximately one in three women from all three countries, if given the opportunity would be willing to join politics. There are no gendered differences on this question as well as on the most important reason for not willing to join politics. In India, female respondents identified not being interested, seeing politics as a corrupt business and lacking the necessary skills as the prime reasons for not joining politics. In Pakistan and Bangladesh apart from not being interested, women identified a lack of necessary connections as the second most important reason for not joining politics.

Figure 8.4- No Difference in Political Amititon



Question: Given an opportunity, will you make politics your career?
Note: Only affirmative responses are shown.

Source: CPR-CVoter Survey • Created with Datawrapper

Conclusion

In this chapter, we attempted to draw on the lives of women in the . We see some positive attitude shifts in terms of preference for the girl child (with a trend indicating almost equal preference with that of the male child) and culture of dining together, among others. However, variations exist among the three countries. Women still prefer seeking permission before making choices in private and public spheres. Education does play an important role in enabling attitudinal change, but we do not see its uniform impact. Political participation among women while have improved in the past few years, continues to remain low. One positive sign on politics that women now show equal ambition in their willingness to join politics.

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Appendix-I

	Optimism about future- around economics/ prospects		
Q1	**Consent Question**		
1	Yes ; but some other time (schedule the interview and terminate)		
2	Yes ; free right now (Proceed to Q2)		
3	No (Terminate the interview)		
Q2	**Location Details**		
Q2_1	**Country_ .....**		
Q2_2	**State_ .....**		
Q2_3	**District_ .....**		
Q3	**What do you think will be the state of your country's economic condition a few years from now? Will it be it better, about the same or worse. (In case of Better or Worse; probe further whether Much or Little)**		
1	Much better	4	A little worse
2	A little better	5	Much worse
3	About the Same	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q4	**Now talking about your own family, what do you think the economic situation of your family will be a few years from now? Will it be it better, about the same or worse. (In case of Better or Worse; probe further whether Much or Little)**		
1	Much better	4	A little worse
2	A little better	5	Much worse
3	About the Same	0	Don't know/ Can't say
	How much do you trust the following institutions?		
Q5a	The Parliament	**1**	A lot
Q5b	Judiciary	**2**	Somewhat
Q5c	Army	**3**	A little
Q5d	Police	**4**	Very little
Q5e	Bureaucracy	**5**	Do not trust at all
Q5f	News and media outlets	**0**	Don't know/ Can't say
Q5g	Election Commission		
	As per your own expectations; how do you rate the progress of "COUNTRY" in last 75 years (In case of Bangladesh; please ask for last 50 years)? Please tell on each parameter, if on this particular parameter; "COUNTRY" has progressed way better than your expectation, somewhat better than your expectations, almost as per your expectations, somewhat lower than your expectations OR way lower than your expectations.		
Q6a	Infrastructure (Electricity, Water, Roads, Health,Transport etc)	1	Way better than my expectations
Q6b	Education and Health Facilities	2	Somewhat better than my expectations
Q6c	Economic Growth	3	Almost as per my expectations
Q6d	National Security	4	Somewhat lower than my expectations
Q6e	Science & Technology	5	Way lower than my expectations
Q6f	Status of minorities & underpriviledged	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q7	***Keeping all your answers in mind that you just mentioned, how do you rate the OVERALL progress of our COUNTRY in last 75 years (In case of Bangladesh; please ask for last 50 years)? Do you thing taking all things into account, OVERALL our country has progressed way better than your expectation, somewhat better than your expectations, almost as per your expectations, somewhat lower than your expectations OR way lower than your expectations.***		
		1	Way better than my expectations
		2	Somewhat better than my expectations
		3	Almost as per my expectations
		4	Somewhat lower than my expectations
		5	Way lower than my expectations
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
	Now asking for the other two Countries, how do you rate them? How do you rate the OVERALL progress of these two countries in last 75 years (In case of Bangladesh; please ask for last 50 years)?		
Q8	India / Pakistan / Bangladesh	1	Way better than my expectations
Q9	India / Pakistan / Bangladesh	2	Somewhat better than my expectations
		3	Almost as per my expectations
		4	Somewhat lower than my expectations
		5	Way lower than my expectations
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q10	**Which of the following statement do you agree with most?**		
1	Democracy has declined in your country in the last 10 years	3	The country has become more democratic in the last 10 years
2	The State of Democracy has remained the same in your country	0	Don't know/ Can't say
	Compared to the situation 10 years ago, how safe do you think following groups feel in your country today?		
Q11a	Hindus	1	Much safer today
Q11b	Christians	2	Somewhat safer today
Q11c	Buddhists	3	Same as before, no change
Q11d	Sikhs	4	Somewhat unsafe today
Q11e	Sunni Muslims	5	Much unsafe today
Q11f	Shia Muslims	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q11g	Hazaras and Ahmediyas(only Pakistan)		
Q11h	Dalits and Adivasis (only India)		
Q11i	Rohingyas (only Bangladesh)		

Q12	South Asian Region was partitioned twice, once in 1947 and then again in 1971. Talking about incidents 75 years back; do you think the 1947 India-Pakistan partition was a right decision or a wrong decision?		
1	Right decision	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	Wrong decision		
Q13	**If a reversal of 1947 India-Pakistan partition is proposed, would you support it?**		
1	Support a lot	3	Not support at all
2	Support a little	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q14	**Now talking about incidents 50 years back; do you think the 1971 Pakistan-Bangladesh partition was a right decision or a wrong decision?**		
1	Right decision	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	Wrong decision		
Q15	**If a reversal of 1971 Pakistan-Bangladesh partition is proposed, would you support it?**		
1	Support a lot	3	Not support at all
2	Support a little	0	Don't know/ Can't say

Q16a	Which is the biggest achievement of your country since independence?		
	_____ (open ended) Check the pre-coded categories.		
	India		Pakistan
1	Green Revolution	1	Nuclear power
2	White Revolution	2	First weather rocket
3	1971 Liberation of Bangladesh	3	Cricket World cup
4	Nuclear power	4	Weather rocket
5	Operation Blue Star	5	Olympics Hockey gold medal
6	First Indian to travel to space	6	Gwadar port
7	1999 Kargil war	7	China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)
8	Righ to Information	8	Benazir Bhutto sworn in as Pakistan's first woman Prime Minister
9	Chandrayaan	9	Dr. Abdus Salam awarded Physics Nobel Prize
10	Polio Eradication	10	Malala Yousafzai gets Nobel Prize
11	GST	11	State of minorities
12	Triple Talaq Ban	98	Others _____ specify
13	Article 370 abolition in J & K	99	Don't know/ Can't say
14	Indigenous vaccine for Covid-19		
15	Mangalyaan mission		
16	State of minorities		
98	Others _____ specify		
99	Don't know/ Can't say		
	Bangladesh		
1	Economic growth		
2	Female education		
3	Control on poverty		
4	Industrialization		
5	State of minorities		
98	Others _____ specify		
99	Don't know/ Can't say		

Q16b	Which is the biggest failure of your country since independence?		
	_____ (open ended) Check the pre-coded categories.		
	India		Pakistan
1	1962 Sino-India war	1	Political instability
2	Emergency	2	Condition of minorities
3	Anti-Sikh riots	3	State of economy
4	Bhopal gas tragedy	4	Assassination of Benazir Bhutto
5	Rajiv Gandhi assassination	5	Kargil war
6	Babri Masjid demolition	6	Corruption
7	Mumbai blasts	7	Condition of minorities
8	Flight hijack	8	Education
9	Gujarat riots	9	Mother mortality rate
10	Demonetization	10	Child marriage
11	Education	11	Female foeticide
12	Mother mortality rate	12	Poverty/economic growth
13	Child marriage	13	Crime/Law & Order
14	Female foeticide	14	State of minorities
15	Poverty/economic growth	98	Others _____ specify
16	Condition of minorities	99	Don't know/ Can't say
17	Crime/Law & Order		
18	State of minorities		
98	Others _____ specify		
99	Don't know/ Can't say		
	Bangladesh		
1	Population control		
2	Natural calamities		
3	Corruption		
4	Condition of minorities		
5	Education		
6	Mother mortality rate		
7	Child marriage		
8	Female foeticide		
9	Poverty/economic growth		
10	Crime/Law & Order		
11	State of minorities		
98	Others _____ specify		
99	Don't know/ Can't say		

	Now I will read out some statements regarding the region's future. For each, tell me the likelihood of it happening according to you- very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely or not at all likely		
Q17a	Bangladesh emerging as the region's most prosperous country		
A17b	India sliding into autocratic rule		
A17c	Pakistan's military acquires greater role in which party wins national elections	1	Very likely
Q17d	Pakistan and India become friendly nations in this decade	2	Somewhat likely
Q17e	The chance of your country's following the path of Sri Lanka's economic crisis	3	Somewhat unlikely
Q17f	The interference of China in your country will only increase in future	4	Not at all likely
Q17g	Bangladesh becoming a more secular democracy as compared to India & Pakistan	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q17h	Pakistan Army coming under the political leadership just like India or Bangladesh		
	How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Please choose one option)		
Q18a	I would rather be a citizen of my country than of any other country in the world	1	Agree strongly
Q18b	Strong patriotic feelings are needed for our country to remain united.	2	Agree
Q18c	People like me don't have any say about what the government does	3	Neither agree nor disagree
Q18d	There are some things about my country today that make me feel ashamed of	4	Disagree
		5	Disagree strongly
		99	Can't choose
Q19	**Here are two opinions about what affects policies in our country. Which of them comes closest to your view? (Please choose one**		
	<"in government" as in who is executive office/power.>		
1	Policies in our country depend more on what is happening in the world economy, rather than who is in government	0	Can´t choose
2	Policies in our country depend more on who is in government, rather than what is happening in the world economy		
	How big of an issue the following problems are in your country today?		
Q20a	Threat of military dictatorship	1	Very big issue
Q20b	Corruption	2	Somewhat big issue
Q20c	Dynastic politics	3	Not an issue at all
Q20d	Religious intolerance	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q20e	Poverty		
Q21	**If you had to choose from among the following what would you have chosen – a government job, a private job, own**		
1	Government	4	Immigrate out of the country
2	Private	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Own business/profession		
	Opinions on democracy - institutions - judiciary, parliament		
	I'm going to describe various types of political systems and ask whether this is a good or bad idea.		
Q22a	Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and	1	Very good
Q22b	Having experts, not politicians, make decisions according to what they think is best for the country	2	Good
		3	Bad
		4	Very bad
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q23	**Some people feel closer to a person who speaks the same language and others to a person who belongs to their religion. Who**		
1	A person who speaks your language	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	A person from your religion		
	Opinions on religious/social harmony (minority rights etc)		
	Do you approve or disapprove of the following statements?		
Q24a	Religious leaders should be involved in all major decisions of the country	1	Fully approve
Q24b	Women should always obey their husbands	2	Somewhat approve
Q24c	Films/books that hurt the religious sentiments of any community should be banned	3	Neither Approve nor Disapprove
Q24d	The government should be spending more on national security	4	Somewhat disapprove
Q24e	Women should be able to work after marriage if they want	5	Fully disapprove
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q25	**As compared to five years ago, have you become more religious or less religious?**		
1	More religious	4	I am not religious
2	Less religious	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Same as before		
	Role of government/ Populism		
	For each of the statements, tell us whether you agree or disagree with them.		
Q26a	Traditional elites are blocking the progress of people like you	1	Fully agree
Q26b	Too much government subsidy to the poor is blocking the progress of people like you	2	Somewhat agree
Q26c	Country's bureaucrats are blocking the progress of people like you	3	Neither Agree/ Nor disagree
		4	Somewhat disagree
		5	Fully disagree
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
	Who should be responsible for providing the following?		
Q27a	Education	1	Only government
Q27b	Healthcare	2	Only private
Q27c	Public transport	3	Both (silent option, don't read)
		0	Don't know/ Can't say

	Politics - relation between citizens and parties		
Q28	**Given an opportunity, will you make politics your career?**		
1	Yes	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	No		
Q29	**(If No) What is the main reason for you not making politics a career?**		
1	Not interested in politics	4	Politics is corrupt business
2	Don't have any family/ personal connection to succeed in politics	5	Other Specify_____
3	I have other career options/interests	0	Don't know/ Can't say
	In the last two years, have you ever taken part in the following activities?		
Q30a	Participated in a political rally/campaign	1	Multiple times
Q30b	Took part in a civil society protest	2	Just few Occasions
Q30c	Registered protest/ support on social media/ email campaign	3	Only Once
		4	Never
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q31	**Some people vote for a party or candidate because they receive personal gifts such as money/food/clothesfrom them. How many people in your locality/area do you know of who received such gifts in the last election?**		
1	Many	4	No one
2	Some	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Very few		
	Political dynasties		
Q32	**Which statement do you agree with – Statement 1 or Statement 2?**		
1	Just as a doctor's child becomes a doctor and an actor's child becomes an actor, it is alright for a politician's child to become a politician.	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	If politicians' children are given tickets to contest, more deserving candidates are left out		
	Now I'm going to ask you few questions about dynastic politics. Thinking about most prominent dynastic and non-dynastic politicians in your		
Q33a	Who is better at providing development work in constituency?		
Q33b	Who is more politically savvy/ sharp?		
Q33c	Who has more connections with district's businessmen/contractors?	1	Dynastic politician
Q33d	Who gives better speeches?	2	Non-dynastic
Q33e	Whovisit and meets constituents more regularly?	3	Same/ Equally (silent option)
Q33f	Who has more influence over district government officers?	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q33g	Who can get your difficult work done?		
Q33h	Whois more likely to distribute cash and gifts during elections?		
Q33i	Who is more respectful to people like you?		
Q33j	Whose family members are more active to help people like you?		
	Please tell me whether women in your family have to seek permission from their husbands or a senior family member to …		
Q34a	To take up a job		
Q34b	To go to a political meeting	1	Yes
Q34c	To wear clothes of your choice	2	No
Q34d	To go out for shopping	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q34e	To make decisions on household savings		
Q35	**Generally, do women in your household eat before men, after men or all members of the household eat together?**		
1	Women eat first	4	Each eats according to convenience (silent option)
2	Men eat first	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Everyone eats together		
Q36	**Generally, family and friends around you still have preference for male chaild over female child OR the female child is now considered good**		
		1	Having a Male child is still preferred over having a female child
		2	Having a Female child is now considered equal to having a male child
		3	Having a Female child is now preferred over having a male child
		0	Don't know/ Can't say

	International politics		
	How much do you trust [country]- trust a lot, trust a little, don't trust at all?		
Q37a	USA		
Q37b	China	1	Trust a lot
Q37c	Russia	2	Trust a little
Q37d	Pakistan (for India and Bangladesh)	3	Don't trust at all
Q37e	Bangladesh (for India and Pakistan)	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q37f	India (for Pakistan and Bangladesh)		
Q38	**In your opinion, which country has the most influence in Asia - China, India, United States, Russia, and Gulf/Arab countries?**		
1	China	5	Gulf/Arab countries
2	India	8	Any Other Country
3	United States	0	Don't know/ Can't say
4	Russia		
	Entertainment, cricket, films		
Q39	**Who is your favorite cricketer?**		
	Please specify _____		
Q40	**Who is your favorite movie star (both actor/actresses)?**		
	Please specify _____		
Q41	**Who is your favorite singer?**		
	Please specify _____		

	Leadership (Country Specific Questions)		
Q42	**How satisfied are you with the leadership of your current Prime Minister? (ALL 3 countries)**		
1	Very satisfied	4	Very dissatisfied
2	Somewhat satisfied	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Somewhat dissatisfied		
Q43	**Who according to you has been the best prime minister of your country?**		
	India:		Bangladesh
1	Narendra Modi	1	Sheikh Hasina
2	Manmohan Singh	2	Khaleda Zia
3	Atal Bihari Vajpayee	3	Sheikh Mujibur Rehman
4	Indira Gandhi	4	General Irshad
5	Jawarharlal Nehru	8	Any Others
6	VP Singh	0	Don't know/ Can't say
8	Any other		
0	Don't know/ Can't say		
	Pakistan		
1	Imran Khan		
2	Asif Ali Zardari		
3	Benazir Bhutto		
4	Nawaz Sharif		
5	Shehbaz Sharif		
6	Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto		
7	Any other		
0	Don't know/ Can't say		
	Please tell me how much you agree with the following statements (for India, Pakistan & Bangladesh)		
Q44a	There is nothing wrong in being critical of country's armed forces	1	Fully agree
Q44b	Mahatma Gandhi was the greatest person to live in south Asia in the last century	2	Somewhat agree
		3	Neither Agree/ Nor disagree
		4	Somewhat disagree
		5	Fully disagree
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
	Thinking about the past few years, do you think the interference by the following in the politics of our Country has increased or decreased		
Q45	Military	1	Increased a lot
Q46	Religious leaders	2	Increased somewhat
Q47	Judiciary	3	Has remained the same
Q48	Big businesses	4	Decreased somewhat
Q49	Bureaucrats	5	Decreased a lot
		0	Don't know/ Can't say

	Welfare in South Asia		
Q50	**How many hours of electricity do you get in your house every day? ___ (in 24 hour clock)**		
	_____ (in 24 hour clock)		
Q51	**How far is the nearest hospital/ clinic/ health centres from your house? ___ (in kms)**		
	_____ (in kms)		
Q52	**What is the language of teaching in the schools in which children of the family are studying or recently completed schooling?**		
	_____		
99	Don't have kids.		
	Think about the following and tell us ….		
Q53a	The condition of roads in your district	1	Very bad
Q53b	The availability of drinking water in your district	2	Bad
		3	Average
		4	Good
		5	Very good
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q54	**Is there a political party you feel close to? If yes, which party? _____ (List of country- specific major parties including regional parties)**		
1	Yes _____ (specify)	2	No
	You said you identify the most with _____party mentioned on the above question. What is your opinion on each of the following statements below?		
Q55	When people criticize this party, it feels like a personal insult	1	Always
Q56	When I meet someone who supports this party, I feel connected with this person.	2	Often
Q57	I have stopped talking to friends and family members who criticise my party	3	Sometimes
		4	Never
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q58	**Think carefully and tell me how often have you voted in national or state elections since you became eligible to vote?**		
1	Most elections	4	Just the Last Election
2	Some elections	5	Never voted
3	Only one election	0	Don't know/ Can't say
Q59	**Do you think your vote has an effect on how things are run in our country or do you think your vote makes no difference?**		
1	Has effect	0	Don't know/ Can't say
2	Makes no difference		
Q60	**On the whole, how free and fair would you say the last national election in your country was? (Read answer categories)**		
1	Completely free and fair	3	Not free and fair at all
2	Somewhat free and fair	0	Don't know/ Can't say

C1	**Gender**		
1	Male	2	Female
C2	**Actual Age**		
	Please write here.....		
C3	**Education**		
1	Non-formal education (can read and write)	5	Up to Graduation
2	Up to primary level	6	Up to Post-graduate
3	Up to High school	7	Professional
4	Higher Secondary	0	Illiterate (can't read or write)
C4	**Occupation**		
1	Student/Unemployed	6	Government Service
2	Housewife	7	Private Sector Service
3	Land owning farmer	8	Business/self employed
4	Landless agricultural labor	9	General Labor
5	Semi government/Contractual government jobs	0	Others
C5	**Monthly Family Income**		
1	Less than Rs 3000	5	20,000-50,000
2	Rs 3000-6000	6	50,000-1,00,000
3	Rs 6000-10,000	7	More than 1,00,000
4	Rs 10,000-20,000	0	Can't Say
C6	**Social Group**		
1	SC (Scheduled Caste/Dalits)	6	Christians
2	ST (Scheduled Tribes)	7	Sikhs
3	OBC (Other Backward Classes)	9	Refusal / No answer
4	UCH (Upper Caste Hindus)	0	Others
5	Muslim		
C9	**Which party did you vote for in last Parliamentary Elections?**		
	Code from the party list.		
		0	Did not vote
		98	Not listed in voter list
		99	Don't know / Can't say
		999	NOTA
C18	**Are you still in connection with village life or Rural India ?**		
1	**Yes, I am currently living in a village or rural area**	3	**I now live in city and have no connections with Village / Rural life**
2	**I live in a city but I still have a house/family/relatives in village or rural area**	0	**Can't say**
C19	**Were you born and brought up in the same City or Village where you live at present?**		
1	**Born and brought up here only**	4	**Neither born nor brought up where I live now**
2	**Born here but brought up somewhere else**	0	**Can't say**
3	**Brought up here but born somewhere else**		
	How often do you do the following?		
C20	Read a newspaper	1	Daily
		2	weekly
C21	Watch news on TV/online	3	rarely
		4	never
		0	Don't know/ Can't say
C22	**How much time do you spend on the following on social media such as Facebook, YouTube, WhatsApp?**		
1	More than 3 hours in a day	4	Rarely or never
2	Less than 1 hour a day	0	Don't know/ Can't say
3	Few times a week		
C23	**Does your family have any personal connection with partition? Was any of your parents OR grandparents born in other two parts before partition happened?**		
1	Yes, one or more were born in areas which are now part of India		
2	Yes, one or more were born in areas which are now part of Pakistan		
3	Yes, one or more were born in areas which are now part of Bangladesh		
4	No, all of them were born here only		
0	Can't say		
C24	**Does your family still have any personal connection in other two countries? Do you still have relatives living in the other two countries?**		
1	Yes, I still have relatives living in India		
2	Yes, I still have relatives living in Pakistan		
3	Yes, I still have relatives living in Bangladesh		
4	No, I have no relatives in other two countries (skip next question)		
0	Can't say (skip next question)		
C25	**If Yes; are you still in active touch/contact with your extended family over there? By "active" we mean if you still talk to them or write to them or personally visit them?**		
1	Yes, we are in active touch/contact with them		
2	No, we have lost touch/contact with them		
0	Can't say		

Notes

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