

THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND STRATEGIC STUDIES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL SCIENCES: A CASE STUDY OF PAKISTAN

Nazir Hussain^{*}

Abstract

Since the establishment of International Relations as an academic discipline in 1918, it has undergone great transformations. The end of World War-II with devastated nuclear technology brought forth national security perspectives impacting the study of IR and giving birth to strategic and security studies as specialized sub-disciplines. Presently the discipline of IR has very distinct and specialized sub-disciplines such as Strategic Studies, Security Studies, Peace and Conflict Resolution and Area Studies. In Pakistan, the first institute dealing with international affairs was established in 1947 and the first teaching department at Karachi University was formed in 1958. However, it suffered due to general apathy by the governments and public alike. In 1970s, Pakistan's security matrix compelled to create Area Study Centers and Strategic Studies departments. Later, in early 2000s, electronic media played an important role in popularizing these disciplines. Lately, the HEC has established a Consortium of Social Sciences Universities in Pakistan to elevate the status of Social Sciences and launched various scholarship schemes to meet the challenge of qualified human resource. However, there is a need to establish an Academy of Social Sciences and a National Society of International Relations to promote these disciplines on strong financial and institutional footings.

Keywords: international relations, strategic studies, academic discipline, social sciences

Introduction

The world as we know today is the bi-product of a stretched out history, much of which has been marked with wars between kings and empires, with greater political goals which led to expansion of land, systems, structures and economies. This was the crude form of global relations and strategy. But this changed rapidly and continued to change with time and expansion of knowledge, science and technology and perhaps the emergence of geopolitics, and political economy. Above all, it changed due to the drive for power and most of the Western Civilizations acknowledged the fact that education is a primary means of power, if not the only means.

From a crude form emerged International Relations (IR) as a subject matter and ever since the establishment of International Relations as an academic discipline in 1918, it has undergone great transformations. The advancement in human and material

^{*} Nazir Hussain, Ph.D. Professor, School of Politics and International Relations (SPIR), Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan

development along with global political/security environment became instrumental for rapid growth and progress in this field. The idea attached to the in-depth study of this discipline began to take a firm ground. From Europe, this travelled to the United States and from there it began to travel, although steadily, around the world. Pakistan is no exception when it comes to the idea of International Relations as a discipline. Yet there is still a long way forward in order to establish itself with the rest of the world in this discipline.

Recognition of International Relations and Strategic Studies in the Global Arena

IR and Strategic Studies (SS) existed in the realm of history in a way which made it less of a discipline. It was the end of World War-II with devastated nuclear technology, which brought forth national security perspectives impacting the study of IR and giving birth to strategic and security studies as specialized sub-disciplines. Incidents like these and the need for actual ground to conduct such studies which would give way and meaning to war and its contexts led to the recognition of these fields no less than any science. These would help in modeling state building structures and recognizing the models and themes on which interactions would take place (Reus-Smit and Snidal; 2008).

To think of the entire international system divided into camps at the same time having intense conflicts among them leads to states ultimately coming at a standstill with wars. This only led to a mutual recognition among states that war must be prevented in future as it massively destroys resources. Here they conceived a supra structure like the UN, but along with it, there also emerged a dire need to philosophize and learn about wars and conflicts. This could only be done by analyzing the war and making policies which would lead to something of a 'peaceful' world. And for that, the best tool had to be the recognition of IR and SS as disciplines.

The larger focus had not only been on studying the inter-state relations and strategy but this expanded into other sub-divisions of the two disciplines very soon with the swift change in world politics. With the Cold War on the brink, new dimensions were given to world politics which called for analysis specific to these details. For instance, the sturdy actions taken by both the US and the USSR over alliance formations called for area specific details. This helped the future discourse and research that led to perhaps sound policy formation studies and sound policies. The proxy wars fought between the two blocs, spread Capitalism and the effects of Communism; the fear of the spread of Communism, and de-colonization enhanced this field into something which was much greater than any ordinary subject. For these matters, many theories were put forth which explained the dynamics of that era and made future predictions about states and the system. Most of these theories are to this day, not only valid but also applicable (Jackson, 2013).

Moreover, the realization of 'futility of war' mainly by the Scandinavian countries led to initiate peace studies and conflict resolution, resulting into the creation of 'Copenhagen School of Thought.' Therefore, presently the discipline of IR has very distinct and specialized sub-disciplines such as Strategic Studies, Security Studies, Peace and Conflict Resolution and Area Studies. These have now become well-established

academic, research and policy-oriented discourses at the universities, think-tanks and policy-making organizations. War on Terror, followed by the rapid spread of extremism and terrorism, especially in many parts of the world, rise of militants and non-state actors have managed to grip the academia more which has helped IR turn into a specific science of its own. The mere recognition of these disciplines by the global community did not just enhance its importance but turned it into something which has now become an essential feature of states, governments and how they interlink all of these. Massive amount of globally recognized research takes place by academics and from there sound policies emerge which integrate themselves into the state systems. Also with the evolution and proliferation of nuclear technology, Nuclear Studies has taken shape into a dominion of its own, which is, of course, a very commanding dominion.

In the 21st century, IR and Strategic Studies have evolved to great extent. Security Studies, Cyber Security and Conflict Studies are the roots which these two have given off and now even these new sub-fields have become of paramount importance. But with all the available technology and the rise of science, most developed states are now infusing Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics, Biological Science and Computer Science with IR, SS and other sub disciplines making it not only more interesting but taking the course of action to a whole new level. All the explains state behaviour, future course of action, and economic as well as environmental aspects of International Relations correlated with strategy, as it is being done so in a multi-dimensional way. Had there been no recognition of these two as independent disciplines, perhaps the entire discourse that exists today would have been missing and all the dynamics which now have explanations due to theoretical frameworks would still be unrequited.

Emergence of International Relations and Strategic Studies in Pakistan

In Pakistan, the first institute dealing with international affairs was established in 1948 and the first teaching department at Karachi University which was formed in 1958. But the progress and development of IR as an academic discipline in Pakistan suffered due to general apathy to the discipline at the state and societal levels, lack of qualified human resource and scope/market in the country as there seemed to be a general lack of ideas towards this particular field (UNESCO, 2010: 80). Every era is dictated by certain fields, and this particular time in Pakistan was the time when Natural Science, Engineering and Medical Sciences were flourishing and gaining popularity. However, with the fast connectivity through the availability of World Wide Web and media along with its importance in the competitive exams within Pakistan, IR attained a certain edge as well as popularity over other subjects at the public level (Hashmi, 2001).

It was not until the security issues/hostility with India began to grow more and more, during the war of 1965 when disciplines like Political Science began to be seen as subjects which carried weight. The traumatic 1971 war with India and the creation of Bangladesh initiated serious soul-searching by the government resulting in the establishment of IR departments and Area Study Centres all over the country along with independent research institutes. Even then, most students preferred to study these subjects for the sake of appearing in the competitive exams and overall a general lack of research was observed. In fact that is how there came into being a serious lack of

Pakistani perspective. This was the ripe time when the West imposed its own perspectives into the thoughts and ideology of the academia from which the Pakistani academia could never recover, as it was deeply embedded within their entire academic fabric and was thoroughly exercised without question. Since then it has been an arduous task to shun the ideas which are no less borrowed or to breed new ideas like these for their own selves for the Pakistani academics (Rais, 2005).

Presently, the discipline is taught at scores of public and private sector universities with six specialized Area Study Centers. Subsequently, Strategic Studies was also introduced as a specialized academic discipline at the universities and research organizations; it is taught at three universities and as an optional subject at all Political Science and IR departments.

IR as an Academic Discipline

IR is being currently taught in all major institutions of Pakistan. It began with the Master's Degree, but gradually expanded to M.Phil. and Ph.D. It was only in the later period that many private sector as well as public sector universities began to teach this discipline from the grass root level; that would be the Bachelors level, so as to have a better grip and understanding in this field. Now more Pakistani universities have Ph.D. scholars as faculty members who have been engaged in teaching this subject at the Master's level. Moreover, the foreign qualified faculty is also something quite common. At present Quaid-i-Azam University stands on the top with respect to the number of Ph.D. faculty (11 out of 17) which is and has produced a considerable number of scholars. This is followed by other major universities like Peshawar University, NDU and Karachi University who have set longstanding performance of IR as they are undertaking more rigorous research in Pakistan. Out of the 20 universities which teach IR, 10 have effective Ph.D. programs. However, seen from the present enrolment of PhD scholars, it is unlikely that Pakistan could produce more than 200 PhDs in the next five years.

It is much through the efforts of these particular institutions that the scope of IR has expanded. Overall since 1947 out of 2,801 total Ph.D. scholars produced in Social Sciences, Political Science has 132 and IR has only 63 (Personal, 2015). However, it is going to take a while that IR fully emerges as an important discipline that has the public empathy towards it and is not merely frowned upon. Of course it also adds to the importance of this discipline that outstanding leadership has emerged in Pakistan who has studied this particular field. Yet there exists some gaps as well, for instance it so happens that even after so many years have passed since IR and SS have been disciplines which are renowned yet no key idea or key theory has come forth from the Pakistani side. However, a respectable book which explains the aspects of IR from a Pakistani perspective is still not available anywhere on the surface. This puts major questions on the quality as well as quantity of the academia which prevails in Pakistan (Zaidi, 2002).

Strategic Studies as a an Academic Discipline

SS is a subject which is equally important yet it is not taught everywhere in Pakistan; Islamabad is practically the only city where this is being taught. Most key strategists and officials of the armed forces take interest in this field or those having a large interest in the field of Nuclear Studies. At the moment only 3 universities teach this subject; Quaid-i-Azam University, National Defense University and Fatima Jinnah Women University. The fact that it is only confined to these universities increases the importance of these universities and the discipline as well.

It is considered a very refined subject having a curriculum carrying the core concepts of warfare, strategy and armament. It is important for the armed forces officials as most of them have to get a specialized degree in this discipline as well. Since Pakistan is a nuclear state, this discipline gets more and more magnitude. The aggrandizement of wars, weapons, arms race and the growing influence of civil-military relations in day to day politics in line with the changing geopolitical dynamics makes this subject hold many keys to whatever may or may not happen (Siddiqi, 2005).

Thus the research in this field is also much vital for not only the academia but for the national perspectives as well. Many key scholars and academics of SS have produced a fair amount of research explaining wars, especially since different military operations started. In fact this has opened up many job opportunities for the academics of this field as well. But this growing significance calls for action that more universities must be established so as this discipline spreads to other parts of the country as well.

Importance of IR and SS in Contemporary Arena in Pakistan

Pakistan's importance grew multi-fold during the 9/11 attacks, which were followed by the War on Terror. This was the time when Pakistan had become somewhat the center of all the focus of international actors. And this was not only in the realm of diplomacy but also strategy. There was a rise in terrorism and sectarianism in Pakistan, resulting in more shaky relations with its neighbors and other states. This seemed to be a phenomenon which needed an in depth analysis and a need to be studied for future predictions. Moreover, the nuclear age dictated that swift research be done, not only because it was and is the need of the hour. Being left behind in this very perspective can never be something which Pakistan can afford.

The changing global arena and all the complexities it brought forth called for active participation in analysis of the situation especially when the rest of the world had moved way ahead. More importantly because Pakistan had somehow become a stakeholder in some of the political realities; it had also become the focus of the world order due to the significance it suddenly held, since everything would be attributed to terrorism and militants which were seen to be due to the prevailing war on terror in Pakistan. This was and is still the ground breaking security perspective for Pakistan and something only IR coupled with SS could explain. It was seen that many academics and students began

taking more and more interest in these dynamics as they wanted answers which they could only get by understanding the core issues through research. No longer was the layman approach acceptable and to answer the queries of the Western academics, Pakistani side had and must come up with genuine answers which carry weight (Inayatullah et.al. 2005).

Even though the importance of IR and SS has been enhanced in Pakistan due to the contemporary dynamics and research began to flourish in fields like nuclear studies, security studies, conflict resolution, sadly it was seen that no new perspective from the Pakistani side developed. This in fact had been and still is the need of the hour. Whatever had been going on in Pakistan or its surrounding states in the region, factors which directly or indirectly affected Pakistan called for a Pakistani perspective on those issues. This failed to either be developed or recognized which is the core reason why the discipline is somehow still being questioned as valid and important (Zaidi, 2002).

In the contemporary dynamics, we see that Security Studies, Conflict Resolution and Nuclear Studies have become more significant and this can be easily seen in Pakistan as well. More importantly, these have become directly relevant to Pakistan as it is placed directly in the theatre of instability. These are the areas where perhaps Pakistani perspectives will soon develop since these are the hot topics which students take interest in.

Proliferation of Research Institutions

Specialized research institutes, both at public and private sectors, have proliferated in the country offering policy-oriented research and providing alternate national discourses. These have helped in engaging students, academics with quality research and are working day and night to drive out different answers, perspectives and analyses from all the underlying dynamics of international and national level. At present more than 20 think-tanks and research institutions are working in Pakistan, engaged in IR and SS and all their sub-disciplines. Two of them are internationally acclaimed since they have been ranked in the top 20 international think-tanks.

The proliferation of these institutions is a gain for the disciplines of IR and SS since the mere existence promises not only job opportunities to academics but also asserts that the general population has an increased interest in these fields. Such think-tanks had existed since 1948 with Pakistan Institute of International Affairs in Karachi, Institute of Strategic Studies in 1973, Institute of Regional Studies in 1982 and Islamabad Policy Research Institute in 1999 but the rapid proliferation of research institutions occurred after 2001. Although these institutions may sometimes be subservient to different motives and serve the interests of some particular institutions yet their mere existence proves that social science as a subject matter has matured and now is excelling. More and more regional think-tanks covering south Asia, Middle East and Gulf have surfaced. Moreover, strategic and nuclear studies along with conflict management think-tanks have sprung up in Pakistan (Malik, 2014).

It cannot be denied that it is somewhere due to these think-tanks that the quality of research is improving. One of the reasons is that most of the research which is being published is for international audience. This guarantees quality of the research being conducted as well as being published. This is also a means to connect with other international think-tanks and collaborate with them. The proliferation of think-tanks has not only ensured the acceptance of IR and SS but has also provided inter-connectivity. This has led to other major international institutes accepting Pakistan as a state which is not on the back foot of the disciplines and recognizing their stance if not accepting it. However, these research institutes have become the lucrative postings of retired people, military, bureaucrats and academics. There is a need to incorporate young and qualified people into these institutes to produce quality research for policy-makers and national perspectives in diverse fields (Siddiqi, 2005).

Role of Media

The proliferation of media in Pakistan since 2002 has revolutionized the scope and importance of IR and Strategic Studies making it popular at the public level and contributory in academics and research. It has become an important source of debate about national discourse on security, economy and society. In fact more than the research institutions, it is the media which has given IR and SS a new scope and market value in Pakistan.

It was during the Musharraf era that media houses began to grow because of his policy of enlightenment of society and media. This added to one other aspect, that in the past, the governments either civilian or military were not very open or keen to the idea of free media or for that matter proliferation of media outlets. In this case, news channels were on the top of the list to be frowned upon which served as a major way of distancing the general public from social and international issues. Since there was a deep gap between them, the value and importance of social science was greatly undermined. Particularly that of IR, Political Science and SS, which were then seen as subjects only chosen by the elite class who had a guarantee destination in politics as successors of their ancestors.

With media and the competition among media outlets, there is a race of better journalists, better information and better international acclaim. This means that people will get more and more information not only about national issues but international issues as well. This will serve a way to generate more interest in these fields and the public; especially the youth will be more inclined towards these fields (Hussain, 2012).

Another context is that whenever any international crisis occurs, to prove their own legitimacy media channels seek academics that excel in fields like IR and SS. This helps put these disciplines right in the middle of the focus, enhancing their importance. Here the credibility comes into play, as the only way to find out about a certain academic's credibility would be via his/her research work and publications. This is more or less like a chain reaction where one thing leads to another and it is all interconnected. In this particular case, news, credibility and academic research are all interconnected. These are at best, dependent on each other for the same cause.

There are at least more than 90 media channels working in Pakistan at the moment and to say that this has not even slightly added to the importance of news and politics in a much larger scope would be wrong. Considering that even 20 out of these would be working towards progress would mean that at least some part of the population will be affected by their work and that will inspire research within academics, to-be academics and students. One can attribute some of the success to media that in the past 5 or so years, a general interest was noted among young students about politics and international events, especially on social media and more in time of the General Elections in 2013.

Role of Higher Education Commission (HEC)

Throughout the development of IR and SS as disciplines the role of HEC has been steady. It goes without saying that this acceptance would not have been possible without HEC playing its part in culminating the need for research in Social Sciences. The Higher Education Commission has established a Consortium of Social Sciences Universities in Pakistan to elevate the status of Social Sciences, trying to bring it at par with Natural Sciences. It has been done in collaboration with American Institute for Pakistan Studies (AIPS). This will not only promote IR and SS but also enable the academia to conduct top class research in collaboration with other US institutions.

HEC has launched various scholarship schemes, indigenous and foreign, to meet the challenge of qualified human resource; it has also started research grants in Social Sciences, including in IR and Strategic Studies up to ten million rupees to promote these disciplines. But it needs to keep its pace up in this regard. Because every day the international arena keeps changing and students as well as academia need to keep at par with it. The HEC being a major structure for this very purpose has to play a decisive role in providing latest facilities, platforms and a place where the young scholars can easily convey their ideas through validated research.

Pakistani universities need to keep up with all the research that is being undertaken in Europe, the US and other developed regions. The HEC can provide a solid platform where the researchers are comfortable in being acknowledged and published. It must acknowledge that problems exist and after doing so it must address them. It should also fall in the jurisdiction of educational institutions as to how to keep the research plagiarism-free and a means by which students can develop fresh and new ideas regarding IR and SS.

The Way Forward

The way forward in this regard seems to be divided into two categories; long-term planning and short-term planning. This will help focus and bring in perspective the desired results as well as broaden the scope of the subject matter in a way that a clear cut path will be chalked out of blue-prints. In this regard the role of institutions is not enough; there is a need from the government as well as bureaucracy to participate. Otherwise, these fields will never truly emerge or shape the educational association. The government needs to establish an Academy of Social Sciences, at par with the Academy of Sciences, and also facilitate to create a National Society of International Relations to

promote these disciplines in the country on strong financial and institutional footings. IR and SS are the disciplines which are very important for states especially the likes of Pakistan which is still lagging behind if compared to other states in this regard. This is because mostly in developed states, policy formulation and analyses come from academics that help build and point out the common indicators of national interest. Pakistan needs to create such academics that can produce sound and long lasting, steady policies.

Most importantly, any such initiative through which a strong and sound Pakistani perspective is developed must be brought to surface. This is where fore-mentioned academics can come into play. The duty falls on educational and research institutions as well as on HEC to sit together and bring forth theorists and authors from this side of the world. This is the need of the hour since it is an essential aspect of state survival. In the contemporary arena, Pakistani researchers and academics need to make endeavors and start doing multi-dimensional research by incorporating all aspects of sciences. This is indispensable for advancement in this field as well as keeping up with the developed states without heavily relying on their ideas. If Pakistan develops a context of its own then it will not only be placed among states of importance but this will guarantee that it is not a state to be underestimated. Moreover, major issues will have more than one way of being looked at and one of those ways would be the Pakistani way which would be a driving force for the academics and students in the field of education.

Moreover, HEC should organize workshops that deal solely with research methods of social sciences for the academics and teaching skills along with inculcating the ethics of the social sciences for researchers and students alike. In this matter, the way forward is to combine both long term planning of developing a perspective and short term planning of workshops and training for securing the future of IR and SS in Pakistan.

Conclusion

What began as a minor subject has now become an important discipline in Pakistan. Previously, there was a lack of general interest towards it, now more and more research is being produced which helps Pakistan in the international standing. IR and SS are two such fields which have become valid for the contemporary age given all the swift changes that have taken place or those which may take place. Again, such analysis would only be given due to the presence of viable knowledge gained through these very disciplines. This discipline has emerged as a great opportunity for the academics specializing in this field as they get the opportunities to showcase their research and credentials. Besides, the media and research institutions as well as think-tanks have also helped in promoting the cause of these disciplines by giving them a standing they have today. Despite all these endeavors, there are some setbacks which these disciplines face for which HEC needs to take some swift measures if it wants to see quality education for the betterment of Pakistan.

Data on the Status of IR and SS in Pakistani Universities (2015)

	University	Department	Total Faculty	PhD Faculty	PhD Enrolled	PhD Produced
1.	AWKU Mardan	IR	3	2	-	-
2.	BZU Multan	IR	2	2	-	-
3.	COMSTEC Ibd	IR	8	3	-	-
4.	GCU Faislabad	PSIR	7	2	10	-
5.	IU Islamabad	PIR	16	8	-	-
6.	Iqra	IR	5	-	-	-
7.	IU Bahawalpur	IR	6	1	-	-
8.	Kinnaird Lahore	IRPS	7	-	-	-
9.	KIU Gilgit	IR	7	1	-	-
10.	NDU Islamabad	IR	8	3	42	-
11.	NUML Islamabad	IR	10	1	3	-
12.	Preston	IR	7	2	10	-
13.	QAU Islamabad	SPIR	17	11	50	10
14.	SALU Khairpur	IR	9	2	3	-
15.	UO Baluchistan	IR	11	3	1	2
16.	UO Gujrat	PSIR	15	3	-	-
17.	UO Karachi	IR	11	6	10	20
18.	UO Peshawar	IR	10	5	30	18
19.	UO Sargodah	IR	7	4	14	-
20.	UOS Jamshoro	IR	9	1	1	4
	Strategic Studies					
1.	FJWU, Rawalpindi	DDS	8	2	-	-
2.	NDU, Islamabad	NSS	5	4	22	2
3.	QAU, Islamabad	DSS	11	4	9	6

Source: The data is collected through personal contacts with Universities and HEC

References

Hashmi, S.M., ed., (2001). *The State of Social Sciences in Pakistan*, Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan.

Hussain, Nazir, (2012). 'The Role of Media in Pakistan' *Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies*, 35:4, Summer.

Inayatullah, Robina Siagol and Pervez Tahir, ed., (2005). *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile*, Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan.

Jackson, Robert H., (2013). *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Malik, Ahmed Rashid, (2014). *Directory of Think-Tanks in Pakistan: A Guide to Research Organizations in Social Sciences in Pakistan*, Islamabad: Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies.

Personal Information, (2015). gained from the Higher Education Commission officials.

Rais, Rasul Bakhsh, (2005). 'Teaching of International Relations in Pakistani Universities' in Inayatullah, Robina Siagol and Pervez Tahir, ed., *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile*, Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan.

Reus-Smit, Christian and Snidal, Duncan, ed., (2008). *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Siddiq, Agha, (2005). 'The Development of Strategic Studies in Pakistan' in Inayatullah, Robina Siagol and Pervez Tahir, ed., *Social Sciences in Pakistan: A Profile*, Islamabad: Council of Social Sciences Pakistan.

UNESCO, (2010). *World Social Sciences Report 2010: Knowledge Divides*, Paris: UNESCO.

Zaidi, Akbar S., (2002). 'Dismal State of Social Sciences in Pakistan' *Economic and Political Weekly*, 37:35, Aug 31-Sep 6.