

**INDIA'S 5TH GENERATION WARFARE AGAINST PAKISTAN AND
ITS IMPLICATIONS ON THE CHINA-PAKISTAN ECONOMIC
CORRIDOR (CPEC)**



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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the cherished memory of my late father, **Ghulam Mustafa Pitafi**, and my late mother, **Zubaida Mustafa Pitafi**. Their unwavering love, guidance, and sacrifices have been the foundation of my life and academic journey. Though they are no longer with me, their presence continues to inspire and guide me every day.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates India's use of fifth-generation warfare (5GW) tactics against Pakistan and analyzes their strategic and economic implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Utilizing Chankya's theory of Undeclared Warfare (Gudha Yuddha) and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model as theoretical frameworks, the research examines how non-kinetic warfare—characterized by cyber operations, disinformation campaigns, narrative manipulation, and proxy conflicts—has become India's preferred strategy following the establishment of nuclear deterrence. The study identifies the Belt and Road Initiative's flagship CPEC project as a focal point of these operations due to its potential to enhance Pakistan's geostrategic position and economic viability. Through a qualitative methodology incorporating elite interviews, surveys and content analysis, the research reveals a multifaceted campaign—encompassing diplomatic isolation, economic subversion, and the exploitation of identity fault lines—evidenced by initiatives like "Indian Chronicles," exposed by EU Disinfo Lab, and the "Doval Doctrine." Findings demonstrate that while these operations have not halted the CPEC development, they have significantly disrupted investment flows, increased security costs, and complicated regional integration efforts. The research concludes that India's 5GW against CPEC reflects broader geopolitical realignments, particularly the US-India strategic convergence aimed at counterbalancing China's regional influence. It contributes to academic discourse by applying critical and Asian theoretical perspectives to South Asian security dynamics and offers substantive policy recommendations for Pakistan to enhance resilience against information warfare, address internal vulnerabilities, and strengthen institutional responses to emerging security challenges.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

4GW	Fourth Generation Warfare
5GW	Fifth Generation Warfare
ANI	Asian News International
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BRICS	Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa
CPEC	China-Pakistan Economic Corridor
IRB	Institutional Ethics Review Board
ISIS	Institute for Science and International Security
ISPR	Inter-Services Public Relations
IWT	Indus Water Treaty
MAD	Mutually Assured Destruction
NSA	Indian National Security Advisor
PMT	Propaganda Model Theory
RAW	Research and Analysis Wing
SCO	Shanghai Cooperation Organization
SIP	Stability-Instability Paradox
TTP	Tehrik- e- Taliban Pakistan
UNO	United Nations Organization
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Pakistan and India have been at loggerheads since their inception due to multiple reasons, which include Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek issues, and water resources. Both countries have gone through three full- fledged wars and a couple of limited conflicts as well. These tensions led to the establishment of nuclear deterrence, first in 1974 and later in 1998, a status that is still growing exponentially.

This presumed hostility has various structural, historical, and individual causes, with its intensity rising alongside modern technological advancements. Furthermore, the concept of warfare between these two arch-rival nations has also evolved from kinetic to non- kinetic means. A renown political science John Arquilla defines non-kineticism as “the use of informational, psychological, diplomatic, economic, social and technological tools of the statecraft to achieve national interests and objectives by either consenting or impairing national will of the adversary.” (Arquilla 2001)

The history of India’s presumed fifth- generation warfare against Pakistan can be traced back to the 1970s when India initiated propaganda against Pakistan in East Pakistan and trained the Mukti Bahini—an East Pakistani armed militia—successfully achieving its goals while contributing to the disintegration of East Pakistan into Bangladesh.

Moreover, the establishment of Asian News International (ANI) with state support from India further intensified disinformation tactics against Pakistan, which India continues to use to fulfill its non-kinetic strategic objectives in the region (Menon 2020). However, the post-1998 era saw the emergence of new warfare techniques by India against Pakistan, particularly after Pakistan successfully developed its nuclear arsenal, establishing nuclear deterrence in the region.

Consequently, the nature of warfare changed dramatically, leading India to adopt non-kinetic alongside kinetic strategies against Pakistan, including misinformation, exploiting identity fault lines, propaganda, and fake news. After 2001, India devised a new strategy against Pakistan that incorporated both conventional and unconventional means. Conventionally, nuclear deterrence was further bolstered, and military modernization remained a top priority. In addition, to kinetic efforts, India also focused on establishing think tanks, research institutions, television channels, and now social media accounts.

The intensity of Indian misinformation became so severe that the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) expressed concerns about Pakistan's nuclear weapons, with a similar reaction from the European Union (David Albright 2017).

Indian fifth generation warfare against Pakistan can mainly be divided into the following areas;

1. Kashmir issue
2. Gilgit Baltistan
3. Baluchistan
4. China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

India has remained steadfast on Kashmir and formulated every strategy to malign the issue in regional and international forums through disinformation and claims against Pakistan, including

Pakistan's alleged support for Mujahedeen and religious terrorists. It is argued that India is also engaged in spreading disinformation regarding Gilgit Baltistan, deliberately portraying selective anti-Pakistan information and rising issues in this region, as fault lines can be drawn between the people of Gilgit and the rest of Pakistan. Similarly, India also seems engaged in spreading disinformation about Baluchistan by promoting its secessionist movements, highlighting its issues, and depicting this territory as being beyond the control of the Pakistani state (M. S. Khetran 2017).

In this way, damaging, harming, or sabotaging the CPEC also appears to be a top priority for India, using various non-kinetic tactics alongside kinetic strategies, which include military modernization, political propaganda, exploitation of ethnic fault lines, and the dissemination of disinformation. The sources of this fifth-generation warfare include spreading disinformation and propaganda against CPEC through electronic media, print media, and especially social media platforms, such as YouTube, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and various sponsored internet websites (Gichki 2022).

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The nature of relations between Pakistan and India seems to be transforming mainly for three reasons. First, the rise of China through its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in Pakistan. Secondly, the emerging regional cooperation between India and the USA, which Pakistan perceives as a threat to its security. Lastly, the domestic policies of leadership, particularly after the arrival of Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2014, have been hostile against Pakistan. Similarly, the conduct of warfare has also evolved to include both non-kinetic and kinetic approaches, with fifth-generation warfare playing a crucial role. India is actively waging this fifth-generation warfare against

Pakistan, particularly aimed at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Furthermore, India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan may have strategic and economic implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, it is pertinent to explore the changing nature of warfare, with a special focus on fifth-generation warfare, how it is being waged by India against Pakistan, and the potential implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

1.3. Research Question

1. What is 5th Generation Warfare and how it manufactures propaganda to undermine the targeted state's strategic and economic interests?
2. How and why is India waging 5th Generation Warfare against Pakistan?
3. What are the strategic and economic implications of Indian 5th Generation Warfare for the CPEC?

1.4. Objectives

1. To explain how fifth-generation warfare is used by states against their adversaries.
2. To analyze what tools India does use to delay, damage, and undermine CPEC.
3. To explore the volume of this war's impact on the CEPC,

1.5. Significance of the study

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) holds significant strategic and economic importance for Pakistan. As an arch-rival, India seeks to prevent its full realization and employs various tactics to undermine this initiative. This study aims to elucidate the evolving nature of

warfare between India and Pakistan, highlighting India's strategies to sabotage the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and their broader strategic and economic implications for Pakistan. Additionally, the research examines the tools utilized in India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan, with a particular focus on CPEC, assessing their effectiveness in achieving strategic objectives. Furthermore, this study offers valuable insights for other researchers interested in the shifting dynamics of Pakistan-India relations following the inception of CPEC. Finally, it presents substantive and procedural recommendations for Pakistani policymakers to comprehend and counter India's fifth-generation warfare tactics concerning the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), enabling them to develop informed policies in response.

1.6 Theoretical gap in research

Much of the research on Pakistan and India has been analyzed through mainstream international relations theories, namely, realist or liberal perspectives, including their neo-neo variants. Asian perspectives on international relations have been largely less addressed in the study of Pakistan-India relations, particularly concerning fifth-generation warfare and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, this study utilizes Chankya's Undeclared War theory in his Arthashastra and further develops it by examining Indian strategies related to narrative building, propaganda formulation, cyber warfare strategies and the role of soft power against the CPEC (Chankya 1951). Moreover, critical perspectives have been largely absent in the study of Pakistan-India relations, particularly concerning fifth-generation warfare. Therefore, this study utilizes Noam Chomsky's work on propaganda, "Manufacturing Consent," and further develops it by examining Indian strategies related to narrative building, propaganda formulation, and the role of soft power (Herman 2008). The application of Chanakya's Undeclared warfare and Noam Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent models to India-Pakistan relations generally and the CPEC specifically may help to decode how

narratives are built, constructed, utilized and weaponized by both states in perusing their geopolitical goals.

1.7 Research gap

Pakistan and India relations have been a significant part of academic discourse. Much research has been conducted on their foreign policies, domestic systems, and other areas. Similarly, researchers have attempted to explore the evolving nature of the conflict between them and its implications for both nations. There is ample data on hybrid warfare and fifth-generation warfare concerning Pakistan, primarily focusing on Pakistan as a whole or the region of Baluchistan. However, much of this research and literature overlooks India's fifth-generation warfare against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its strategic, economic, and political implications for Pakistan.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW/ THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

War and security have remained an important concern of humans throughout history. Humans have fought many wars and strived to be secure for their survival for many centuries. After centuries, humans, due to their rationality, were able to achieve order and hierarchy in domestic affairs in the 17th century owing to political developments.

The Treaty of Westphalia in 1648 paved the way for the nation-state system and ultimately the establishment of the international system, bringing sovereignty, boundary demarcation, diplomacy, and secularism, which are the core features of the contemporary international system (K. a. Mingst 2017). The nature of the international system has remained anarchical due to the absence of any single authority that could regulate and maintain order in the international system, where every state is sovereign and strives to attain its national interest.

However, after the experience of many wars and conflicts, the concept of hegemony surfaced, which is still relevant. Hegemon is a super power state which can single-handedly regulate international affairs due to its enormous military, economic, and soft power (Robert Jackson 2013). Treaty of Westphalia 1648 had many implications, but one of those was its creation of a balance of power in Europe, which led to the second wave of colonialism and imperialism in Africa and Asia, where European powers, generally, and Great Britain, particularly, established their colonies. Of many explanations, the most important one is that World War I and World War

It were mainly caused by the expansion of colonies by colonial masters (Charles and Blanton 2017).

After two world wars, the international system experienced the Cold War (1946-1990) between the USA and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republic (USSR) on ideological basis to expand liberalism, capitalism, and communism. The triumph of the USA in the Cold War transformed the international system into a unipolar system where America became the sole superpower in the world (Heywood 2011).

However, the advent of the twenty-first century has brought new trends in global politics, where new actors have emerged, and the role of American hegemony is transforming due to the emergence of China and Russia, although this is debatable. Still, this changing world order is considered the most important development in contemporary society (Allison 2017).

2.1 Conceptualizing war

The definition of war is a contested in social sciences and strategic studies due to its changing nature, meaning and definition. International relations theorists generally define war as a large-scale organized violence among political units. However, due to its nature, different thinkers have given different meanings to the concept of war.

According to classical military strategist Karl Von Clausewitz, war is nothing but a continuation of politics by other means. He further defined that, ‘*an act of violence intended to compel our opponents to fulfill our will.*’ (Clausewitz 1984). According to Mao Zedong, politics is war without bloodshed and war is politics with bloodshed (Zedong 1940).

According to realist thinkers, war is organized violence between political organizations (states), i.e., war between states, civil wars, and terrorist groups (Levy 1998). Combining all these

definitions, one of the possible definitions of war can be: A contest between nations or states (international war) or between parties in the same state (civil war), carried on by force of arms for various purposes, as to settle disputes about territorial possessions, to maintain rights that have been interfered with, to resist oppression, to avenge injuries, to conquer territory, to extend dominion etc.

2.2 Types of War

Theoretically, literature has been divided into different types according to the nature of weapons, the space used, and the timeline. As per available literature, the types of war are classified into the following types (K. A. Mingst 2017);

1. Interstate wars;

It is a type of war in which conflict is carried out between or among states. Its basic features include the legitimacy of sovereign government and a formal military presence. Therefore, interstate wars are characterized by speedy loss of lives and massive destruction, i.e., World War I and II (Tilly 2003).

2. Intrastate wars;

This type of war is also sometimes called civil war, which is fought within a state between two or more than two factions to control over a specific territory, resources, or establishment of government. It is mainly waged among the government to control an area, ethnic movements for secession or religious groups to control over the government, i.e., Yemen, Syrian, or Somali civil wars (Gray 2001).

3. Total wars;

Total wars include the massive destruction of human life, and these are fought between two or more than two major powers. These are waged to annex more territory or to implement different ideologies. In these wars, the participant states utilize maximum national resources, i.e., military, economy, and manpower. Total wars do not differ between civilians and military forces and believe in equal and more damage, i.e., Thirty Years War (1618-1648), World War I, and World War II (Biddle 2013).

4. Limited wars;

Limited wars are contrary to total wars in which states use limited resources. States use modest means to achieve their desired objectives. Limited conventional weapons are reused in these wars, including tanks, troops, and artillery in a specific area. It is a better example include: Korean War (1950-53) and Arab-Israel disputes from 1973 onwards (Bakich 2014).

2.3 Generations of warfare

Dr. Robert J. Bunker, an American applied theorist and expert of national security studies, has divided the generations of war into five generations based on technology, weapons, and timeline (Bunker 1990). He has categorized generations of war into the following five generations.

1. First generation of war (1648-1860)

This generation of warfare developed post the Treaty of Westphalia 1648 in which muskets were used and armies fought while standing in line or columns. It included small professional armies and minimum training skills. It was mainly fought on land and maritime domains. It is also known as post-classical or Napoleonic warfare. E.g., Thirty Years War (1618-1648).

2. Second generation warfare (1870-1920)

It is sometimes called early modern or trench warfare. It included massive firepower, including early automatic weapons, and specially artillery fire. It was aimed at slowing the destruction of the enemy lines. It was primarily fought on land, maritime, and air domains. E.g., American Civil War and World War I.

3. Third generation warfare (1930-2000)

It is referred to as late modern warfare or maneuver warfare. It encompassed weapons of mass destruction (WMD), particularly focusing on the development of nuclear technology—the atomic bomb. It also incorporated stealth technology and long-range weaponry to target enemy positions. Its domains included land, maritime, air, and space. For example, World War II and the Korean War.

4. Fourth generation warfare (2000-2007)

Due to its nature, it is known as postmodern or hybrid warfare. It is called so because there are clear boundaries between conventional and nonconventional means used by the states. It includes politics, the military, and society, fighting with the help of modern means. It mainly focuses on the coercion of popular support. The domains include land, maritime, air, space, and cyberspace. For example, Russian tactics against Ukraine.

2.4 Fifth-generation Generation Warfare (5GW)

The academicians, war theorists, and practitioners have defined fifth generation war in various ways. There are also academic debates over the existence of fifth generation warfare, i.e., some experts believe that the world is still witnessing fourth generation warfare (4GW) and it has not entered fifth generation warfare and it must yet be materialized (W. S. Lind 2014).

On the contrary, Daniel Abbot in his textbook on fifth generation warfare ‘‘A Handbook on Fifth Generation Warfare’’ defines fifth generation warfare as the ‘*war of information and perception*’’ (Abot 2010). Abbot further gives an interesting definition of fifth-generation warfare, arguing that it is very difficult to realize that it is happening. It means its nature mainly includes the use of non-kinetic means to defeat one’s enemy (Abot 2010).

According to Center for 5th Generation Warfare, the USA, fifth generation warfare is a data-driven, non-kinetic military design that attempts to take advantage of existing mental images by introducing new cognitive biases (Lind 2016). Abbot further distinguishes 4GW by providing main features, saying that it focuses on individuals, social engineering, clandestine nature of attack, difficulty to recognize, and excessive use of propaganda and misinformation (Abot 2010).

Furthermore, Frank Hoffman, expert from the US Marine Center of Emerging Threats and Opportunities, explains fifth generation warfare, ‘‘ a form of conflict in which state and non-state actors simultaneously exploit all modes: conventional, regular, terrorists, disruptive or criminal to destabilize an existing order’’ (Hoffman 2007).

Differences between Conventional Warfare (CW) and Fifth-generation Warfare (5GW)

Sr#	Aspect	Conventional Warfare	Fifth-Generation Warfare (5GW)
1.	Nature of Conflict	Kinetic, physical, and military engagement between armed forces	Non-kinetic, psychological, informational, and cognitive operations
2.	Actors	State militaries primarily	Both state and non-state actors including individuals, hackers, influencers and proxies

3.	Battlespace	Physical domains: land, air, sea	Cognitive domain: information space, cyberspace, public perception
4.	Targets	Military infrastructure, enemy forces	Civil society, political institutions, national will, information systems
5.	Visibility	Open and visible engagement	Covert and often deniable operations
6.	Objectives	Physical defeat of enemy forces	Manipulation of perceptions, disruption of social cohesion, political destabilization
7.	Duration	Short to medium term, aiming for decisive outcomes	Long-term engagement with evolving strategies

Source: by author

2.4.1 Origin of Fifth Generation Warfare

Fifth generation warfare threats are not new in the world. Its footprints, at least in an unorganized way, can be traced back from centuries. History witnesses many events where a weaker adversary used asymmetric or unconventional tactics against its stronger enemy to defeat in battle grounds or home grounds.

In the classical era, the works of Chinese military theorist and classical realist Sun Tzu's work clearly depict the use of fifth generation warfare traits compared to the contemporary definition of 5GW. In his famous "Art of War", Sun Tzu said that *"to fight and conquer in all battles is not supreme excellence; supreme excellence consists in breaking one's resistance without fighting"* (Giles 2000).

Similarly, Indian classical realist Chanakya, in his renowned treatise Arthashastra, also discussed important concepts of "concealed war" and "silent war," which bear resemblance to the current features of fifth generation warfare. According to Chanakya, there are three types of warfare: "open warfare, concealed warfare, and silent warfare." While the concept of open warfare is self-evident, Chanakya referred to guerrilla warfare when speaking of concealed warfare.

His original contribution, however, was the concept of silent war. According to him, "silent war" is a type of conflict with another state in which the ruler and his ministers- and unknowingly, the people-act as if they are at peace with the opposing state, while secret agents and spies assassinate key leaders in the other state, create divisions among important ministers and classes, and spread propaganda and disinformation with the goal of undermining and enslaving it.

India and Pakistan, both nuclear states, cannot engage each other directly through conventional means. Instead, they utilize unconventional methods such as asymmetrical and irregular warfare, which generally involve covert operations aimed at achieving political objectives.

Furthermore, it can be traced back to an asymmetric warfare in the Middle East where Lawrence of Arabia also used propaganda models against the Ottomans and even Chingiz Khan utilized irregular means to win the war against their adversaries. Meanwhile, when it comes to 20th century war strategies, World War I and World War II also witnessed excessive propaganda against adversaries. The prime example of 20th-century propaganda includes Hitler's strategies. He specially established a separate ministry, which was called the Ministry of Propaganda, under the headship of Joseph Goebbels, which was tasked to spread misinformation and different perceptions far from reality (Rutherford 1970).

Moreover, the same pattern of disinformation was also used in post-WWII during the Cold War (1946-1991) between the then USSR and the United States to defeat each other. The USA excessively used the media industry and propagated against the USSR in different films, dramas, documentaries, and literature, and the same was attempted by the USSR against the USA (Osgood 2006).

The origins of fifth-generation warfare in the 21st century are primarily associated with Russia, which initiated this approach by introducing new cyber technologies against its adversaries, namely Ukraine and the USA. In 2013, the Russian military unveiled a special strategy to initiate and counter fifth-generation warfare after the approval of Russian President Vladimir Putin, a former KGB spy who was well-versed in propaganda techniques (Karber 2015).

Similarly, the Cambridge and Oxford Analytica scandals in the USA and the UK caused a global uproar, as the data of millions of social media users were analyzed without their consent and then employed in shaping perceptions, particularly during the USA elections between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump (Alvin 2018).

Robert Jervis in his book “*Logic of Images in International Relations (1970)*” argues states seek to shape the beliefs of others through the strategic use of signals and symbols rather than overt coercion (R. Jervis 1989). In the same way, the manipulation of perceptions, psychological operations, and media-driven narratives are central to India’s non-kinetic strategy to undermine Pakistan’s international image and weaken confidence in the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Robert Jervis also offered a more generalized and yet squashed formula in his work “*The Illogic of Nuclear Strategy*” (1984) on the role of states’ non-kinetic measures against nuclear

rivals. According to Jervis to the extent that the military balance is stable at the level of all-out nuclear war, it will become less stable at lower levels of violence (R. A. Jervis 1984). This also relates to the two nuclear states Pakistan and India in which India seems focusing on unconventional strategies along with conventional means to halt, disrupt and discredit the CPEC.

In the same way, David Culbert in his comprehensive book on the propaganda *‘Propaganda and Mass Persuasion: A Historical Encyclopedia, 1500 to the Present’* has mapped the techniques, actors, technologies, and historical cases of propaganda across five centuries from classical state techniques to modern information operations. He highlighted three returnable elements especially relevant for contemporary analysis namely: first, the toolbox of techniques including framing, rumor, repetition, visual symbolism. Secondly, institutional actors including state media, think-tanks, intelligence-linked proxies. Lastly, channels and amplification dynamics including print, broadcast and currently social media (David Culbert 2003). Following the Cull et al’s framework presents three important pathways in India’s 5GW strategies against Pakistan with special reference to the CPEC. These strategies include: first, repeated narratives on the security risks in Pakistan causing investors’ confidence erosion in the CPEC. Secondly, diplomatic isolation efforts for Pakistan by portraying the CPEC as an illegitimate and controversial project crossing through disputed areas, according to Indian claim. Lastly, efforts to discredit the CPEC project through media campaigns which might impacted the project’s legitimacy locally, domestically and regionally.

In their book *‘Media and Propaganda in an Age of Disinformation’* authors Ribeiro and Zelizer argue that in twenty-first century propaganda has no longer a state controlled only but also a tool of disinformation order. According to them, global media is also a way of strategic propaganda and disinformation in modern geopolitics (Nelson Ribeiro 2025). This framework also

helps in the understanding of India's 5GW tactics against Pakistan with special reference to the CPEC as India strives coordinated propaganda techniques through media at non-kinetic level which may cause disinformation order with Pakistan that is causing hampering and disrupting of the CPEC.

2.5 Historical background of Indian fifth generation warfare against Pakistan

Pakistan and India have been at loggerheads since their inception due to multiple reasons, including Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek issues, and water resources. Both states have experienced three full- fledged wars and a couple of limited conflicts as well. Moreover, both nations view each other as existential threats in the region. These factors led to the establishment of nuclear deterrence by both states, first in 1974 and then in 1998, which continues to grow exponentially.

This presumed hostility has various structural, historical, and individual causes, and its intensity is increasing with the advent of modern technology. Similarly, alongside other strategies, the concept of warfare has shifted between these two arche-rival states from kinetic to non- kinetic approaches. The history of India's fifth- generation warfare against Pakistan, in its earliest form, can be traced back to the 1970 s when India initiated propaganda against Pakistan in East Pakistan and trained the Mukti Bahini—an East Pakistani armed militia- successfully achieving its objectives while disintegrating East Pakistan into Bangladesh.

Furthermore, the establishment of Asian News International (ANI) with state support from India further intensified disinformation techniques against Pakistan, which are still employed by India to achieve its non- kinetic strategic objectives in the region (Menon 2020). However, the post- 1998 era witnessed new warfare techniques adopted by India against Pakistan following Pakistan' s success in its nuclear program, which established nuclear deterrence in the region.

Consequently, the nature of warfare underwent significant changes, with India resorting to non- kinetic methods against Pakistan, such as misinformation, exploiting identity fault lines, propaganda, and fake news. After 2001, India devised a new strategy against Pakistan employing both conventional and non- conventional means. Conventionally, nuclear deterrence was further strengthened, and military modernization was prioritized.

In addition to kinetic approaches, India also focused on establishing think tanks, research institutions, television channels, and now social media accounts. The intensity of Indian misinformation was so severe that the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS) expressed concerns about Pakistan' s nuclear weapons, and even the European Union reacted similarly.

Indian fifth generation warfare against Pakistan can mainly be divided into following areas;

1. Kashmir issue
2. Gilgit Baltistan
3. Baluchistan

India has remained adamant on Kashmir and started her every strategy to malign the issue in regional and international forums through disinformation and claims against Pakistan, i.e., Pakistan's alleged support to Mujahedeen and religious terrorists. It is also argued that India is engaged in spreading disinformation regarding Gilgit Baltistan, portraying anti-Pakistan selective information and rising issues of this region deliberately, as fault lines can be drawn between the people of Gilgit and the rest of Pakistan. Similarly, some facts show that India is also engaged in waging disinformation regarding Baluchistan by propagating its secessionist movements,

highlighting its issues, portraying this territory as out of control of the Pakistani state, etc. (MOFA 2017).

2.6 India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan: empirical evidences

1. Indian chronicles

In 2019, the EU Disinfo Lab exposed numerous fake online sources in Brussels, which were working against Pakistan and spreading false information. Their modus operandi aimed solely to defame Pakistan in the European Parliament and among various human rights organizations (A. A. Gary Machado 2020). Approximately 265 fake online media outlets were identified across 65 countries targeting Pakistan. The role of ANI was pivotal and received further support from the Indian Shrivastava Group in financial matters.

2. Doval Doctrine

Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has devised and openly announced his doctrine to distort Pakistan. According to his doctrine, Pakistan should be isolated from the international arena through misinformation and human rights issues. The Doval Doctrine includes four main components: diplomatic isolation of Pakistan, expansion of misinformation, economic warfare, and intensification of covert operations against Pakistan (Asad 2022).

3. Indian Special Cell

Pakistan’s former foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) claimed in a detailed presentation that India is running a Special Cell under the direct guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which solely aims to disrupt, undermine and delay CPEC. They further said that it is under the PM, there is the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) Chief who is added by the joint secretary 1,2, and 3. They also claimed that it was established in 2015 and it has been allocated 500 million dollars (Haider 2016). Although the official authenticity from India is yet to be confirmed in negation or accepting of the Cell.

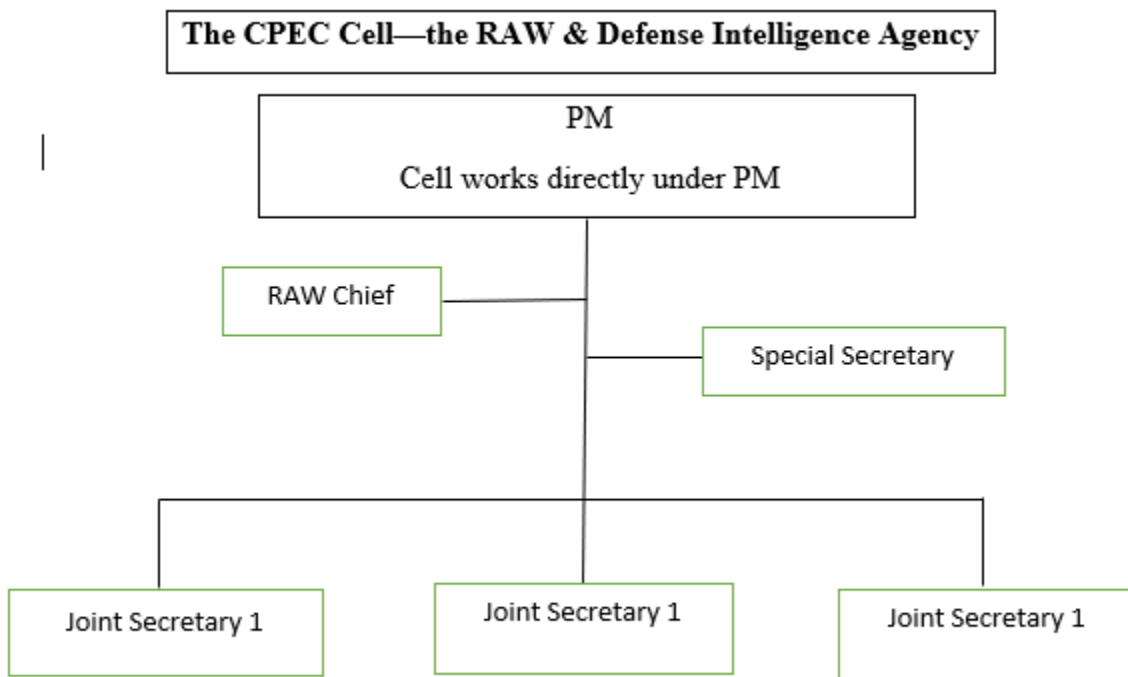


Figure 1. The Hierarchy of the CPEC Cell

Source: <https://www.brecorder.com/news/40032835/indian-pm-directly-monitors-a-raw-cell-responsible-for-cpec-sabotage-ops-reveals-dg-ispr>

2.7 China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and India's fifth-generation warfare

The revisited rivalry between India and Pakistan can be understood within a global context—specifically, the changing world order and the perceived cold war rivalry between the USA and China. Since the 2008 economic crisis in the USA, China has been surging in economic power, highlighted by its announcement of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project, the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), in 2014.

According to Graham Allison, the world order is changing rapidly, with the USA acting as a status quo power—satisfied with the current distribution of power and intent on maintaining its hegemony. In contrast, China aims to challenge America's power as a revisionist force—dissatisfied with the status quo and eager to replace American dominance globally. In this context, the Chinese BRI and its flagship project, CPEC, are viewed as threats to the USA, which could lead, according to Allison, to a Thucydides Trap (Allison 2017).

Given its geo-strategic significance and vision, CPEC also appears threatening and unacceptable to India. India perceives CPEC as a challenge to its regional ambitions, which it is trying to pursue alongside the USA. India is employing various tools of fifth-generation warfare against CPEC, which include the following;

- CPEC is a debt trap by China for Pakistan
- CPEC is unachievable and cannot be materialized
- CPEC is crossing through the disputed territories, i.e. Gilgit and Kashmir
- The people of Pakistan, Baluchis, Sindhis, and Pashtuns, are against the establishment of CPEC.
- Political leadership is non-serious in the accomplishment of CPEC

- The work on CPEC is halted and it is dormant now

Moreover, EU Disinfo Lab, a prominent independent and non-profit organization from Europe, conducted an operation and explored a vast network of Indian fake online websites in 2019, which were engaged in spreading disinformation against Pakistan. According to EU Disinfo Lab, those fake websites were resourced by the Indian financial groups and media outlets, which were involved in propaganda against Pakistan since 2005. The details of those fake websites known as Indian Chronicles are given as under (A. A. Gary Machado 2019).

Table 1. Fake accredited NGOs directly linked to Shirivastava Group, an Indian media group. (A. A. Gary Machado 2019)

Sr.	NGO Name	Website
1	Ankit Education	ankit.edu
2	US International	usinternational.net
3	Foreign Affairs Times	foreignaffairstimes.com
4	Friends of Kashmir	friendsofkashmir.eu
5	Friends of Pakistan	friednsofpakistan.eu
6	International Herald Times	internationalheraldtimes.com
7	Baluchistan House	baluchistanhouse.net

Table 2. NGOs outside of the United Nations Fake linked to Shirivastava Group (A. A. Gary Machado 2019)

Sr.	NGO Name	Website
1	Baluchistan House	https://web.archive.org/web/20171209190832/http://baluchistanhouse.com/about-us/
2	South Asia Democratic Forum (SADF)	https://www.sadf.eu/
3	The Women's Economic and Social Think Tank (WESTT)	https://westt.eu/#:~:text=The%20Women's%20Eco%2DNomic%20and,but%20never%20for%20commercial%20gain.
4	The International Council for Inter-religious Cooperation (ICIRC)	https://connect2dialogue.org/dkh_organisation/international-council-for-inter-religious-cooperation/
5	The European Organization of Pakistani Minorities (EOPM)	https://uia.org/s/or/en/1122274855

Table 3. Indian You Tube channels and online websites and social media accounts that share anti-Pakistan and CPEC content (Gichki 2022)

Sr.#	You Tube Channel and website name and Link	Subscribers
1	WION https://www.youtube.com/@WION	7.43 Million
2	Study IQ IAS https://www.youtube.com/@studyiqofficial	14.2 Million
3	Defensive Offence https://www.youtube.com/@DefensiveOffence	1.7 Million
4	ANI https://www.youtube.com/@ANINewsIndia	2.05 Million
5	Hindustan Times https://www.youtube.com/@HT-Videos	5.4 Million

Among the numerous subcategories that comprise fifth generation warfare are the following: political, environmental, informational, cyber, conventional, and infrastructure. There are differing views on fifth generation warfare, and there isn't even agreement on what constitutes this fifth generation of warfare. Various elements arise within these categories, which may include misinformation, terrorism, and staged riots.

These factors have the potential to ignite conflicts within a society, undermining a broader range of political goals and state interests. The capabilities are determined by the opponent's vulnerabilities. India's attacks are more likely to target the weak areas of Pakistan. In addition to conventional warfare and tactics, India has been employing non-conventional methods against Pakistan. India recognizes Pakistan's focus on security. Following their strategic interaction, decisions are interdependent.

Thus, this strategic exchange clarified to India that Pakistan is primarily concerned about its security, necessitating focus on the pillars of its security structure to erode that concern. There are various elements within this structure, such as the economy and development. Pakistan's fragile economy represents a significant weakness that can be exploited to undermine Indian military effectiveness. The expectations and actions of the opponent shape strategic interaction. A stronger economy fosters development, which in turn enhances security.

The vulnerability of a state and its sense of security heighten when its economy struggles; this is particularly true for Pakistan, which shares a border with a large and hostile neighbor to the east. Utilizing the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) to its benefit exemplifies hybrid warfare. Beijing and Islamabad are mistrustful of one another in business dealings due to their utilization of terrorism and informational attacks, such as anti-business rumors, threatening Pakistan's internal stability.

Furthermore, India's support of terrorism in Pakistan tarnishes the country's reputation and deters business and tourism, exacerbating the already critical economic situation. The second non-traditional threat is environmental issues, which again leave Pakistan vulnerable and provide the adversary with an opportunity to exploit the situation. The flow of water from the Himalayan Karakoram range into the Indus Valley falls under India's jurisdiction.

PM Modi declared that "blood and water cannot flow together" following the attack in Uri. In the aftermath of the Uri attacks, new disputes arose concerning the Indus Water Treaty. Moreover, Indian policymakers are engaging in discussions regarding the construction of the Kishenganga Dam. The eventual reduction in water flow from this dam may threaten Pakistan's water security and impact the ecosystems of the Jhelum and Neelum rivers, as Pakistan is already severely water-stressed in the region.

Pakistan argues that India is intrusive in Baluchistan and supportive to local insurgencies there. It also believes that India is directly involved in the ethnic divide in Pakistan, the violence in Karachi, and other sectarian conflicts within the country. Some time ago, an Indian spying network was exposed in Pakistan, leading to the expulsion of eight members of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad in November 2016. They were found to be involved in creating trouble and unrest through their intelligence bureau.

Pakistan's Foreign Office claimed that they had contacts with the Tehrik- e- Taliban Pakistan (TTP)—a terrorist organization in Pakistan. This issue was elevated in nearly every meeting between Indian and Pakistani leadership. They have also been prompted of their support for Baloch separatists and the TTP to destabilize Pakistan through India's prolonged presence in Afghanistan. Furthermore, Afghanistan is also considered a strategic architect and facilitator for the Baloch insurgents. It is believed that training camps, weapons, and funding are all being provided to them through Afghanistan (Dawn 2009).

Additionally, Kulbhushan Jadhav, an Indian naval spy, was captured by Pakistani intelligence agencies and revealed his assigned duties by the Indian government. He admitted that he was tasked with creating chaos and supporting insurgents in Baluchistan, as the China- Pakistan Economic Corridor could be sabotaged or influenced (DAWN 2017). This indicates that India is

strategically waging an insurgency war against Pakistan, employing tactics that can affect Pakistan at a non- conventional level while avoiding direct conflict at the conventional level.

Since Prime Minister Modi' s BJP government took office, India has been actively exploiting these fault lines in Pakistan. Such conflicts arise from a combination of natural and synthetic causes, pre- existing in almost every country, albeit with varying intensity. However, these conflicts do not instigate political change unless they are supported or exacerbated by external actors, and India is persistently working to create such divisions against Pakistan (Bilal 2020).

Moreover, some time ago a network of 265 fake local news sites with names after invalid newspapers and media outlets across 65 countries which were being used to publish anti-Pakistan content and coverage and serve Indian governmental interests was exposed. Such websites were captured by the EU Disinfo Lab—an EU-based NGO—exposed on researching sophisticated disinformation campaigns, the operations were traced back to a group of Indian companies, NGOs, and think tanks. Various websites, i. e., 4newsagency.com, eptoday.com, and timesofgeneva.com, etc., were operated by Indian government members. However, the exposers expressed that those websites had many articles and op-eds related to minorities in Pakistan as well as other India-related topics (Hindu 2019). In addition, X (erstwhile Twitter) is also used as cyber warfare against each other, where diverse trends are run on various issues.

In the same way, this study has taken the CPEC as the main unit of analysis owing to its strategic, economic and political significance in the South Asian region specially and the world largely.

2.8 Justification for Exclusive Focus on the CPEC

1. Strategic and economic significance of the CPEC

The CPEC is not only a development initiative but a strategic linchpin of Pakistan's economic future and China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Given its role in transforming regional trade, energy connectivity, and infrastructure, it holds far greater geostrategic weight than other bilateral disputes like Kashmir.

2. Major target of India's fifth-generation warfare (5GW)

The CPEC has increasingly become the epicenter of India's fifth-generation warfare (5GW) tactics, such as:

- Disinformation campaigns about its feasibility and security
- Claims of debt diplomacy
- Cyber-attacks targeting infrastructure
- Support for insurgent narratives in Baluchistan to destabilize the corridor's progress

These indirect and unconventional tactics characterize 5GW, making the CPEC an important case to examine these evolving methods.

3. The CPEC as a proxy arena for great power competition

Unlike Kashmir, which remains a bilateral territorial dispute, the CPEC represents a triangular strategic zone involving Pakistan, China, and India, thus attracting broader geopolitical implications. India's opposition to the CPEC stems not only from its passage through Gilgit-Baltistan but also from its challenge to India's regional hegemonic designs and aspirations.

4. Focused research for depth over breadth

Covering numerous India–Pakistan disputes would dilute analytical depth and confuse the 5GW framework. Focusing solely on the CPEC allows the study to:

- Investigate deeply into psychological and cyber dimensions
- Examine media discourse, policy reactions, and strategic communication
- Analyze propaganda and narrative building trends

5. Less explored academic area

Kashmir has been widely researched in the context of traditional and hybrid warfare, the CPEC remains less explored in the 5GW literature. This research thus seeks to redress a very crucial research gap by applying the fifth-generation warfare lens to a instantaneous and current geostrategic development.

THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

The way India and Pakistan interact is now mainly controlled by unusual types of conflict such as Fifth-Generation Warfare (5GW). This thesis uses a combination of indigenous and global theories to discuss India's approach to security, showing how its behaviors are related to Indian history (ancient statecraft of Chankya's Artha Shastra), and modern media theories of Noam Chomsky. They help to explain in detail the ways non-kinetic strategies are shaping the state within Pakistan and the future of the CPEC.

2.9 Chankya's theory of Undeclared Warfare in the Arthshastra and India's Fifth Generation Warfare against Pakistan

1. Contextualizing Chankya's Arthshastra

Chankya or Kautilya or Vishnugupta (c. 350-283 B.C.E) was a well-known professor at Taxila University nearby Islamabad in modern day Pakistan. He is also known as the teacher of the Indian emperor Chandragupta who founded the great Indian Mauryan Empire in 322 B.C.E. and he ruled till 301 B.C.E. (Mulraj 2005). He authored a famous treatise namely Arthshastra on statecraft and suggestions to the king on how to achieve, preserve, exercise and maintain power in a state.

Many scholars of the international relations, political science, strategic studies and war and peace consider Chankya's philosophy, Arthshastra, in the same league of very eminent classic, medieval and modern strategists i.e. Chinese Sun-Tzu, Greek Thucydides, Italian Machiavelli and

Prussian Clausewitz (Breena Coates 2010). Chankya's Arthshastra analyses the statecraft, strategies of warfare, issues of diplomacy, war, peace, foreign policy, economy, politics and intelligence.

This treatise is considered one of the basics in warfare theory in realist paradigm of international relations. Chankya's Arthshastra offers prescriptive advises for king, modern states, the strategies of achieving, preserving and exercising of power in war and peace times. Some scholars believe that Chankya's Arthshastra is an echo of the ancient Indian strategic culture and strategic thought (Lynn 2008).

2.10 Understanding the Strategic Thought of the Chankya's Arthshastra

Arthshastra is a Sanskrit word which comes from Artha means "the Science of Polty", which attempts to explore the means and ways to acquire, preserve and maintain state's wealth and power. (Shastri 2022). One of the major themes of the Chankya's Arthshastra discusses the suggestions and prescriptions to the ruler or king which is currently akin to major power or regional power whom he termed as "Vijigishu" or "the would-be conqueror". However, as the major purpose of his treatise was to suggest Chandargupta and the expansion of his empire, he limited the territories of the empire between Himalayas and sea in modern say Indian subcontinent (Kangle 2022).

2.10.1 Types of War in Chankya's Arthshastra

Chankya in his treatise paid special attention on the concept and strategies of warfare. He divided the types of war into following four types.

1. War by Counsel (Mantra Yuddha);

According to Chankya, this type of war is suitable for a state which considers itself vulnerable and weaker compared to its rival state. In this case, he suggests, the weaker state must persuade the rival state through strong, rational and cajoling diplomacy. He advises that the weaker state should follow this strategy if it feels that waging war would not be prudent or beneficial. In this type of war, the role of states' diplomats or counsels becomes very crucial as it is carried out through diplomacy. He believes that all ambassadors are spies holding diplomatic immunity.

2. Open War (Prakasha Yuddha);

This type of war is conventional or regular war between two rivals. In open war, the time and space are already decided between two states and the rivals are acquainted with each other's positions. In this war the tactical and combat operations and formations are mutually decided through formal guidelines between the rival states. So, in this war it is very important for a king to devise such strategies in which it can win over the enemy state.

3. Concealed War (Kuta Yuddha);

This kind of war resembles with guerrilla warfare tactics in which hit and hide strategy is applied on rival states in war. He suggests that it is important to not reveal the true identity in combat and psychologically defeat enemy through ambushes, raids and attacks in rival's area. He suggests that surprise must be taken into serious account while conducting concealed war. Moreover, according to him, the main focus of the state in this war should be to demoralize, deceit and mislead the enemy.

4. Undeclared/ Clandestine/ Silent War (Gudha Yuddha);

According to Chankya, this war is completely opposite to open or conventional warfare because this war involves attacking and striking the enemy in silent and stealth. The major focus

of this war must be to reduce, diminish and limit the power of enemy. In this war, the direct military action is minimal compared to Kuta Yuddha, however more focus is given on: disinformation, propaganda, false narratives and espionage activities in enemy's territory. He suggests that understanding the psyche and psychological traits of the enemy are very crucial in this war, which can help to create internal divisions within the ranks of enemy to get victory in war. (Boesche 2003).

2.11 Features of Chankya's Undeclared War (Gudha Yuddha) in Arthshastra

Chankya in his Arthshastra explains following fourfold strategies (upayas) to defeat, control, harm and sabotage enemy in undeclared warfare.;

1. Conciliation (Sama);

This method involves various techniques to win over an opponent without coercion. It includes: praising the target's qualities—real or exaggerated—to soften resistance; emphasizing common backgrounds such as kinship, ethnicity, or education to build rapport. It also includes persuading the counterpart that cooperation serves mutual interests. Similarly, it also highlighted tangible benefits the opponent may gain from cooperation and promising concessions or honors, whether or not they are ultimately fulfilled.

2. Economic Domain (Dana);

If conciliation fails, offering gifts or making concessions becomes the next step. This may involve monetary payments, valuables, territorial compromises, or even offering hostages. A modest favor may generate a sense of obligation in the counterpart. While Dana does imply a cost to achieve strategic goals, this cost should be minimized. Often, it is most effective when used

alongside Sama. Forms of Dana may include bribery, which can be a practical tool to prevent rebellion or secure favorable outcomes in foreign relations.

3. Division (Bheda);

This tactic involves creating divisions among adversaries through discrimination, propaganda, false narratives, selective alliances, or psychological manipulation. The objective is to prevent or disrupt enemy alliances and internal unity, particularly those that could harm and threaten the national security of the enemy state. While Bheda does not directly involve force, it can include the implicit use of power in the form of supporting insurgency, terrorism, extremism, espionage and paid assassinations within the enemy state. It aims to weaken unity among opposing actors, making them less capable of resisting and responding to the state.

4. Force (Danda);

The final and most extreme measure involves the use of force, including warfare. Given its high cost and risk, Chankya advocated for silent or covert warfare (Tusnim-Yuddha), as a preferable option. Such operations might include sabotage or assassination of rival leaders, as they offer strategic gains at lower costs. However, Chankya stressed that warfare and covert actions should only be pursued for political unification and not for plunder or indiscriminate violence, which he considered morally unacceptable.

Given its high cost and risk, Chankya advocated for tusnim-yuddha, silent or covert warfare, as a preferable option. Such operations might include sabotage or assassination of rival leaders, as they offer strategic gains at lower costs. However, Chankya stressed that warfare and covert actions should only be pursued for political unification and not for plunder or indiscriminate violence, which he considered morally unacceptable.

2.12 Chankya's Undeclared Warfare in Arthashastra and India's Fifth-Generation Warfare against Pakistan

India's practice of undeclared warfare aligns with the modern concept of fifth-generation warfare (5GW), particularly in its covert actions against Pakistan. A prime example is the 1971 breakup of Pakistan, orchestrated by India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), which waged a shadow war involving disinformation, training and funding of 150,000 Mukti Bahini fighters, and exploitation of Pakistan's internal weaknesses (Islam 2019).

Similar strategies were later employed in Baluchistan during the 1970s in supporting insurgency and exploiting internal political and social issues. The apprehension of several Indian spies in Pakistan in subsequent years further affirms that such covert tactics are a persistent feature in Indo-Pak dynamics (Khetran 2017).

The upcoming section delves into how post-2008 hybrid warfare strategies differ from earlier ones and their impact on Pakistan's internal security generally and the CPEC especially.

1. The Technical Support Division (TSD): Secret Cell

Former Indian Army Chief Gen. (Retd.) V.K. Singh established a covert unit within the army known as the Technical Services Division (TSD), aimed at manipulating political dynamics in Kashmir and launching terrorist operations within Pakistan. The unit reportedly had the backing of high-ranking military officials.

TSD was tasked with three classified missions. The first, Operation Seven Sisters, addressed the Naxalite insurgency in India's eastern region. The second, Operations Rehber-I and Rehber-II, focused on winning over Kashmiri leaders in Indian-held Kashmir. The third, Operation Deep Strike, targeted Pakistan, particularly the leadership of Lashkar-e-Taiba, including Hafiz Saeed.

Allegedly, Indian agents abducted and killed Hafiz Saeed's security chief in 2013 to extract intelligence (Khattak, Khan and Qumber 2019).

A senior Indian Navy officer, Kulbhushan Yadav, operating under civilian cover from Chabahar, Iran, admitted to sponsoring the BLA militants, destabilizing Karachi, and targeting the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). His activities hinted at plans for maritime sabotage against Pakistan, potentially masked under the name of local insurgent groups like the BLA.

India's aggressive post-2014 posture, especially under the BJP-led government and NSA Ajit Doval, expanded its covert footprint into Pakistan's neighboring states, tribal areas, Baluchistan and specially against the CPEC.

2. Aggressive Defensive-Offense Doctrine: Covert Operations in the Enemy Territory

India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, reappointed twice by PM Narendra Modi, is known for advocating a hardline approach towards Pakistan. In a notable address, Doval outlined three strategic options: Offensive-Offensive – engaging in total warfare, which is no longer feasible due to nuclear deterrence; Defensive-Defense – focusing on domestic security with limited gains; and Defensive-Offense – targeting threats at their source through covert actions.

Doval favored the third option, urging India to exploit Pakistan's internal divisions—political, ethnic, economic, and social—as part of a broader strategy. The following segment will explore India's covert activities under this framework.

3. Offensive Diplomacy under Modi Regime: Diplomatic Isolation

Under Prime Minister Modi, India launched a policy of diplomatic isolation against Pakistan. The government sought to globally depict Pakistan as a state sponsor of terrorism. This

stance was articulated clearly when a former Indian Foreign Minister stated India's intent to isolate Pakistan. India boycotted the SAARC summit hosted by Pakistan, influencing other regional nations like Afghanistan and Bangladesh to follow suit (Fatima, Khattak and Al-Saba 2023).

Additionally, India leveraged its ties with global powers—the US, EU, and Russia—to propagate an anti-Pakistan narrative. Following military incidents, Modi reiterated this agenda with statements like “We will isolate you.” In 2016, Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj accused Pakistan of orchestrating attacks in Pathankot and Uri, urging international action to isolate it (George, 2016).

4. Media Warfare / Propaganda / Fake News: Psychological Warfare

Media, being a powerful tool of influence, has been strategically used by India for psychological operations. Through initiatives like the Srivastava Group, India has conducted widespread disinformation campaigns targeting Pakistan and China.

Domestically, these operations aimed to fuel nationalist and anti-Pakistan sentiments. Internationally, the objective was to enhance India's image, tarnish that of its rivals, and secure favorable positions within global institutions like the EU and UN.

Tactics included promoting front NGOs and think tanks, mobilizing Members of the European Parliament to manufacture apparent institutional support, and advancing Indian narratives under the guise of defending minority rights.

Concepts of Chankya’s Undeclared Warfare in Arthashastra and India’s Fifth-Generation Warfare strategies against Pakistan

Concept	Description	India’s Strategies against Pakistan
Secret Warfare (Gudha Yuddha)	Use of covert methods to achieve military objectives	Information manipulation, cyberattacks
Playing One Against Another (Dvaidhibhava)	Disguising in peace while utilizing covert actions for secret advantage	Openly and publicly denying involvement while using manipulating information
Spreading Dissonance (Bheda)	Generating misperception and distrust within enemy state	Exploiting ethnic, sectarian and religious faultlines
Force (Danda)	Developing conventional weapons and modernizing military	Creating tensions along the LOC, modernizing air defense, navy and army reforms
Deceptive Warfare (Kuta Yuddha)	Utilizing psychological warfare tactics to create internal divisions and molding cognitive biases	Spreading disinformation and propaganda on mass media and social media against Pakistan’s internal issues
Economic Exploitation and Coercion (Lobhavijayin)	Exploiting, capitalizing and taking advantage of the economic vulnerability and dependence of the enemy state	India’s diplomatic lobbying with the IMF, WB and FATF against Pakistan and open statements for diplomatic isolation

Source: by author

2.13 Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model Theory

Noam Chomsky's propaganda model is a theory that explains how the mass media in capitalist societies serve the interests of the powerful elite rather than the needs of the general public. According to Chomsky, the media is heavily influenced by five filters that shape the news presented to the public (Chomsky and Herman 2002). These filters include the following:

1. Ownership: The first filter relates to media ownership. Chomsky argues that mass media is owned and controlled by a small number of wealthy individuals and corporations who safeguard their own interests. These owners often use media outlets to promote their agendas and suppress opposing viewpoints. This is particularly evident in India, where the government supports larger media outlets, such as Republican TV, ANI, and Door Darshan, to disseminate propaganda against Pakistan (Leads 2018).

2. Advertising: The second filter addresses the role of advertising in the media. Chomsky argues that media organizations depend heavily on advertising revenue for survival, which creates a conflict of interest. To attract advertisers, the media must cater to a specific audience and avoid content that may offend either advertisers or their audience. India heavily relies on these techniques to generate propaganda and disinformation against Pakistan. Indian sponsors disseminate false information to portray Pakistan as a terrorist, extremist, and human rights-violating state in the world. This is evident from the advertisements regarding the Baluchistan issue on European streets and jets, where slogans urging to "free Baluchistan " were prominently displayed (Kathju 2025).

3. Sourcing: The third filter concerns the sources of information used by the media. Chomsky argues that the media relies heavily on official sources, such as government officials and corporate spokespeople, rather than independent sources. As a result, news is frequently presented from the

perspective of those in power instead of the general public. This is evident in India's propaganda techniques against Pakistan, where Indian channels only provide information that is filtered and approved by the Indian government. They deliberately shape the facts and limit independent sources to propagate a biased narrative against Pakistan with the desired information.

4. Flak: The fourth filter concerns the consequences of presenting information critical to the powerful elite. Chomsky argues that the media is often subject to intense criticism and attacks from influential individuals and organizations when it reports on issues that go against their interests. This can lead to a reluctance to report on specific topics or to self-censorship. India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan is censorship. India intends to wage every source to stop any news that goes against her policies and attempt to allow specific news that is in her favor.

5. Ideology (Anti-Communism): The fifth filter concerns the dominant ideology of the society in which the media operates. Chomsky argues that the media reflects and reinforces the dominant ideology, which supports the interests of the powerful elite. This means that the media often marginalizes or ignores alternative perspectives and viewpoints (HRW 2021). This also seems applicable to this research in that Indian propaganda is mainly led by the dominant powerful elite media and business groups, i.e., the Shirvastav Group and Republic TV (A. A. Gary Machado 2019). It is also evident that most of India's independent or critical voices, whether intellectuals or journalists, are being marginalized and censored (Karan Thapar 2022), (RSF 2024).

2.14 Filters of Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model Theory

1st Filter: Size Ownership and profit ownership of the Mass Media:

Noam Chomsky's first filter, "Size Ownership and Profit Ownership of the Mass Media," highlights the impact of media ownership on the scope of news in the United States. Chomsky argues that the concentration of media ownership in the hands of a few dominant elites has adversely affected the diversity and quality of news. He begins by examining the history of media consolidation in the US and asserts that the elite uses media for personal gain rather than for the public interest. He further explains that a small number of large corporations also acquire new media outlets. In this context, the rise of cable television and the internet has yet to significantly enhance media diversity (Rai 2011).

2nd Filter: The Advertising License to Do Business

Noam Chomsky highlights the role of advertising in shaping consumer culture and societal values. He argues that advertising serves as a means for businesses to promote their products and acts as a powerful tool to influence public opinion and behavior. Additionally, Chomsky emphasizes the historical context of advertising, pointing out the connection between the dominant elite and government, who use propaganda to sway public opinion. In this context, media outlets face trust issues as they rely on advertising revenue for survival. Furthermore, the media may hesitate to present accurate reports that could alienate their advertisers or audience. Thus, the media system necessitates more critical reporting and tends to prioritize entertainment and sensationalism over serious news analysis (Mir 2020).

3rd Filter: Sourcing Mass-Media News

Noam Chomsky's 3rd filter of "A Propaganda Model", "Sourcing Mass-Media News," explores the role of official sources in shaping news coverage and the limitations this place on media objectivity and critical analysis. Moreover, the media is misleading the masses of society by shaping biased reporting and failing to provide alternative perspectives. Chomsky further starts by stressing the significance of references in news reporting, argues that they play a critical role in shaping the content and interpretation of news stories. Chomsky declared that media outlets worked under the umbrella of the dominant elite and government officials to portray their motives and biasedness. On the other hand, he presented an example from the Vietnam War; then, military establishments-controlled media houses as per their own will and intention (Chomsky and Herman 2002)

4th Filter: FLAK and the Enforcers

Noam Chomsky's article "Flak and the Enforcers" portrays the strategies used by powerful institutions to control public opinion and silence dissenting voices. Often, these voices are used to curtail the extent of critical analysis of significant issues and to maintain the existing power system. Chomsky begins by discussing "Flak," which he defines as when individuals accelerate the extreme criticism of the policy-making of the country's powerful institutions. Chomsky goes on to discuss the role of "enforcers" in maintaining the power of these institutions. Chomsky argues that flak and enforcers work together to create a climate of fear and intimidation that discourages dissent and critical analysis. He argues that the media often self-censors to avoid flak and maintain access to powerful institutions, leading to a narrow range of perspectives being presented in the news (Alvarez and Kraig 2003)

5th Filter: Anti-ideology as a control mechanism

Noam Chomsky argues that the reason for using anti-ideology propaganda has been to control public opinion and suppress dissenting voices. Chomsky further clarifies that communism has often been used to undermine freedom of speech and press. These policies have justified an authoritarian framework and suppressed those who challenge the existing elite or power structure. Noam Chomsky discusses the historical perspectives of anti-communist propaganda; it emerged in the early 20th century as a response to the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia. Such propaganda serves to stifle dissent by fostering a climate of fear and intimidation. He notes that during the Cold War, anyone perceived as sympathetic to communist ideals was considered a threat to national security and was often targeted by government agencies and private organizations (Chomsky and Herman 2002).

Propaganda Model Filter	Application in India's 5GW against CPEC	Examples
1. Ownership of the Media	Indian media is largely owned by corporate conglomerates (e.g., Reliance, Times Group) with strong links to the ruling elite and nationalist policies. These owners ensure	Times Now, Republic TV, and Zee News consistently broadcast negative views on CPEC and Pakistan-China ties.

	alignment with the state's anti-CPEC stance.	
2. Advertising	Media channels dependent on government and private corporate advertising avoid publishing pro-CPEC stories that may contradict the government's geopolitical stance.	Channels receiving major advertising from Indian govt rarely publish Chinese investment success stories in Pakistan.
3. Sourcing of News	Indian media heavily depends on official statements from MEA, Defence Ministry, and Indian think tanks. These sources frame CPEC as a threat to Indian sovereignty (especially in Gilgit-Baltistan).	ORF, IDSA, and MEA statements claim CPEC violates India's territorial integrity through PoJK.
4. Flak and Disciplining	Critics of anti-CPEC narratives (including Indian academics and journalists)	Indian journalist Barkha Dutt was labeled "anti-national"

	face discrediting, online trolling, and threats, discouraging open debate.	for nuanced views on Pakistan-China cooperation.
5. Anti-Ideology / Enemy Image	CPEC is framed as part of a “China-Pakistan axis” that challenges India’s strategic interests. This aligns with anti-China and anti-Pakistan sentiment in national discourse.	CPEC is often portrayed as a tool for “Chinese debt-trap diplomacy” and “Pakistani military expansion.”

Source: composed by author

2.15 Theoretical gap

Much of the research on Pakistan and India has been analyzed through mainstream western international relations theories. Asian perspectives on international relations have been largely less addressed in the study of Pakistan-India relations, particularly concerning fifth-generation warfare and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Therefore, this study utilizes Chankya’s Undeclared War theory in his Arthashastra and further develops it by examining Indian strategies related to narrative building, propaganda formulation, cyber warfare strategies and the role of soft power against the CPEC.

Justification

- Chankya's the Undeclared Warfare theory involves non-kinetic, psychological, cyber and disinformation elements which are the core of fifth-generation warfare strategy. India seems involved in utilizing most of these elements covertly to undermine and exploit Pakistan's internal stability.
- Chankya's the Undeclared Warfare framework originated from the Indian subcontinent region. This theoretical framework makes it regionally relevant because it offers insights into Indian strategic thought and long-term planning which can be useful to contextualize Indian fifth-generation tactics and operations.
- Similarly, Chomsky's propaganda model (Manufacturing Consent) to analyze India's non-kinetic warfare is also less addressed in the literature of Pakistan and India relations. Eastern and Western ideas are brought together in this research to produce a unique and contextual view of South Asian strategic studies with special reference to India, Pakistan and the CPEC.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the comprehensive methodological framework used to investigate India's fifth-generation warfare (5GW) against Pakistan and its implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The research methodology is the structural foundation for academic inquiry, providing systematic procedures and philosophical principles that guide the investigative process. The methodological choices in this study are purposely aligned with the complex, multidimensional nature of 5GW and its various manifestations in regional geopolitics.

The chapter lays the philosophical groundwork for the research and clarifies the ontological and epistemological stances that shape the investigative approach. The study embraces the critical realism ontology, acknowledging the objective existence of social phenomena independent of human perception, while our knowledge of it is guided by different cultural, historical and political factors. Moreover, this study has utilized an interpretivist epistemology to explore causal relationships within the research domain. These philosophical orientations offer the conceptual framework for subsequent methodological choices.

Central to this research is adopting a qualitative method approach which enables analytical depth, empirical breadth and creating a synergistic framework. The chapter elaborates on the

specific qualitative techniques employed, including survey, content analysis and elite interviews, while providing a robust justification in addressing the research questions.

The research strategy, design, techniques and data collection methods are detailed, emphasizing the case study approach and triangulating multiple data sources to enhance validity and reliability. Special attention has been paid to the ethical considerations that guided the research process, including informed consent, confidentiality, harm avoidance, and research integrity. These moral imperatives are not merely procedural formalities but essential principles that safeguard participant welfare and uphold research credibility.

By outlining these methodological elements, the chapter establishes a clear research framework that enables a systematic examination of India's 5GW strategies and their effects on CPEC. The robust methodological framework presented here ensures that the subsequent findings are grounded in a solid scholarly rigor and ethical practice foundation.

3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Foundations

1. Critical Realism as Ontological base of this study

Critical realism has been used an ontology in this research. Critical realism postulates that reality exists independently of our understanding of it but our knowledge of reality is always interceded by cultural, historical and social contexts (Bhaskar 2008). By using critical realism, the study assumes reality is independent of our views, while our knowledge of it is guided by different cultural, historical and political factors. Because fifth-generation warfare relies on concealment and image, critical realism is the right ontological viewpoint to adopt. It demonstrates that India's

strategic actions are real, although how they are understood may change among Pakistan, India, China and the rest of the world.

Justification:

1. The topic of this research, ‘’ India’s fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan and its implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)’’ deals with multifaceted and often covert strategic behaviors like ‘’fifth-generation warfare (5GW)’’, which includes disinformation, cyber operations, propaganda, false narratives and psychological operations. These phenomena exist objectively but are understood subjectively.
2. Critical realism consents for acknowledging that India's actions and their effects on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are real phenomena, but our access to understanding them is mediated through geopolitical narratives, media, culture and political ideologies.
3. It balances the objectivity of conflict tactics and strategies and the subjectivity of their interpretation by various involved stakeholders i.e. Pakistan and India.

2. Interpretivism as an Epistemological base of this study

Interpretivism epistemology has been used in this research. Interpretivism holds that knowledge is gained through understanding socially constructed meanings and subjective experiences. Interpretivism allows to understand the various ways which different actors understand and react to 5GW using disinformation, narrative warfare, psychological operations and cyber tactics. It allows for detailed consideration of how people in different regions view the CPEC as both a strategic and economic path.

Justification:

1. The concept of 5GW is not only military or strategic but it also deeply involves psychological, informational, and societal dimensions. Interpretivism supports understanding how diverse actors perceive and respond to such warfare.
2. Interpretivism is suitable for analyzing discourse, media narratives, strategic communications, and policy documents, all of which are central to understanding non-kinetic conflict strategies.
3. This research examines implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which is a geo-economic and geostrategic project whose impacts are perceived differently by Pakistan, India and China. Therefore, interpretivism helps in analyzing these varied perceptions and experiences.

3.2 Research Approach

The selection and justification of an appropriate research approach is a critical methodological decision that fundamentally shapes the investigative process and ultimately determines the validity and comprehensiveness of research findings. This section explains the selected research approach, its underlying rationale for examining Fifth Generation Warfare (5GW), and its implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

3.2.1 Deductive Research Approach

The research employs a deductive approach that develops hypotheses based on existing theoretical frameworks, followed by systematic empirical testing. This approach is particularly suitable for investigating the causes of India's fifth-generation warfare and its implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It utilizes Chankya's (or Chanakya) Undeclared

Warfare and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model as conceptual foundations. The central hypothesis posits that India's fifth-generation warfare (5GW) against Pakistan has significant strategic and economic implications for CPEC.

In contrast to the inductive approach, which moves from observations to theoretical inferences, the deductive methodology adopted in this research starts with theoretical premises. It systematically gathers empirical data to test these propositions. This approach facilitates a focused examination of the relationship between India's 5GW strategies and their consequential impacts on the CPEC initiative, offering a structured framework for analysis and deriving conclusions.

3.3. Research Strategy

Research strategy is crucial for social science research. It provides a comprehensive and systematic plan for achieving the study's goal.

3.3.1 Case study

In light of this, a case-study research strategy has been employed. The rationale for utilizing this strategy is that researching the phenomena of India's fifth-generation warfare and its implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) necessitates a detailed, comprehensive, and in-depth analysis.

3.3.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

Content analysis is a primary qualitative method in this research, focusing on systematically examining textual data from multiple sources. These sources encompass policy documents, official speeches, diplomatic communications, news articles, scholarly publications, and social media

content. The analysis involves manifest content (explicitly stated information) and latent content (implied meanings and subtexts).

This analytical method employs a coding framework to identify patterns, themes, and Discursive strategies related to 5GW. The coding process categorizes content into several categories. dimensions, including:

- Tactical categories (cyber operations, information manipulation, economic coercion)
- Target domains (infrastructure, public opinion, economic stability)
- Narrative constructions (threat framing, opportunity framing, development narratives)
- Attribution patterns (explicit, implicit, and contested attributions)
- Temporal elements (evolutionary patterns of discourse over time)

Justification: Content analysis is particularly appropriate for this research for several methodological reasons. First, it enables the systematic examination of documentary evidence that chronicles both the manifestation of 5GW tactics and their intended effects on CPEC. Through rigorous analytical procedures, content analysis reveals recurring patterns and thematic consistencies across diverse textual sources.

Second, this method facilitates the identification of strategic narratives deployed by various actors about both 5GW and CPEC. The research gains insight into the discursive dimensions of fifth-generation conflict and its implications for regional development initiatives by examining how these narratives are constructed, disseminated, and contested.

Third, content analysis allows for examining temporal evolution in both 5GW strategies and responses to them. It provides a longitudinal perspective that captures the dynamic nature of this

form of warfare and its effects on CPEC over time. This diachronic dimension is crucial for understanding how 5GW tactics adapt and evolve in response to countermeasures and changing contextual factors.

The implementation of content analysis in this research involves multiple stages: preliminary source identification, systematic sampling of texts, development of a coding framework, iterative coding processes, inter-coder reliability testing, and thematic synthesis. This methodical approach ensures analytical rigor and enhances the reliability of the qualitative findings.

3.3.3 Elite Interviews

Elite interviews as research strategy have been used in this study. The elites in this research include: experts, elite in this research topic, practitioners, academicians, military elites, and security decision-makers from whom their expert insights have been used in this research. The elite interviews were conducted through emails, face to face and telephone calls. The elite interviews consisted of semi-structured and open-ended questions in order to gain in-depth and response from the experts.

Criteria to choose elites:

Elites were selected from Pakistan, India and China to ensure a triangular analytical framework, allowing the study to capture diverse strategic perceptions and minimize single-state or narrative bias. An elite in this study, is included one who has direct involvement in policy formulation, strategic analysis, or implementation related to security, information warfare, foreign policy, or CPEC. Moreover, who also possesses recognized authority, institutional affiliation, or intellectual influence in relevant domains. In the same way, purposive sampling has been used in

this study in the selection of elites from Pakistan, India and China. The detailed criterion is given as under:

Criterion	Description
Professional Experience	Minimum 10–15 years of experience in strategic, policy, security, or academic fields.
Decision-Making Role	Direct or advisory role in policy-making, security planning, or strategic communication.
Filed Relevance	Demonstrated expertise in 5GW, hybrid warfare, information warfare, regional security, or CPEC/BRI.
Institutional Affiliation	Affiliation with government bodies, armed forces, intelligence-linked think tanks, universities, or international organizations.
Credibility & Recognition	Recognition through publications, policy briefs, leadership positions, or advisory roles.
Willingness to Participate	Informed consent and willingness to provide expert insights under ethical guidelines.
Sampling Technique	Purposive sampling has been used in this study in the selection of elites from Pakistan, India and China who demonstrated expertise in 5GW, hybrid warfare, information warfare, regional security, or CPEC/BRI

3.3.4 Survey

The survey has also been used to explore the firsthand views of local people in areas where the CPEC projects intersect and passes. It has been conducted in Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab, KPK provinces and Gilgit Baltistan. Data was collected through a questionnaire and survey instrument, which comprised a carefully scripted and structured set of questions administered face-to-face, by telephone, by mail, and via the Internet. The survey included purposive sampling with cross-tabulation in which Likert-type scale has been used to assess perceptions regarding India's 5GW against Pakistan and its implication on the CPEC.

3.4 Research Method

1. Qualitative Research Method

Qualitative research method has been utilized in this research. This method analyzes non-numerical data and gathers in-depth information on various phenomena, such as opinions, content, concepts, and ideas. Qualitative research method examines Indian propaganda content across print, electronic, and social media platforms, including Twitter handles, YouTube channels, and Facebook accounts.

Qualitative research method strategically establishes exploratory depth and empirical validation—two essential dimensions for comprehensively addressing the research questions. Qualitative method provides contextual richness, systematic measurement and interpretive insights into the nuanced dimensions of 5GW strategies. Moreover, qualitative methods capture diverse stakeholder perspectives, primarily interviews and case studies, including policymakers, security experts, and local communities.

Summary of ontology, epistemology and methodological alignment

Component	Description	Justification
Ontology	Critical Realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Critical realism posits that reality exists independently of our understanding, but knowledge is socially and historically mediated.• It allows for recognizing India's strategic actions as real while acknowledging our understanding is shaped by geopolitical narratives, media, and ideologies.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It balances objective conflict tactics with subjective interpretations.
Epistemology	Interpretivism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretivism is appropriate for studying socially constructed meanings. • It aids in understanding psychological and informational dimensions of 5GW. • Given the varying perceptions of CPEC and India-Pakistan dynamics, interpretivism enables an analysis of differing narratives, experiences, and discourses.
Methodological Approach	Qualitative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A qualitative method supports deep interpretation of actions and narratives. • The research uses survey, content analysis, and case studies to interpret complex socio-political phenomena. • Nvivo12
Data Sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy statements • Media narratives • Elite interviews • Academic commentary • Surveys 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These sources provide rich, contextual insights into how different actors perceive and engage in fifth-generation warfare, offering depth rather than quantification.

3.5 Research Techniques

Three research techniques have been used in this study, namely descriptive, exploratory, and prescriptive. Descriptive research technique entails attempting, describing, exploring, and explaining while providing additional information about the topic. It has been used to answer questions like fifth-generation warfare and how India is waging fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan. And what its impacts are on the CPEC.

Secondly, exploratory research technique has also been used, which refers to the initial research into a hypothetical or theoretical idea. It has been used because very few studies have been done on the given topic, and it will attempt to explore answers to these relatively novel questions.

Similarly, the prescriptive technique has been utilized, and efforts have been made to offer prescriptions or recommendations for its incorporation into the practical policymaking process.

3.6 Data Collection and Data Analysis

Both primary and secondary data have been utilized in this study. Primary data sources comprise of elite interviews with experts in relevant subjects, including practitioners, academicians, military elites, and security decision-makers, to gain insights from these experts. Whereas secondary data include books, journals, and newspaper articles. Moreover, a special focus has been placed on media content, including television talk shows, X- handles (formerly Twitter handles), YouTube channels, Facebook accounts, and more. Moreover, NVivo as a data analysis tools have been used in this study.

3.7 Research Ethics

Adhering to strict research ethics is crucial. Ethical considerations ensure the integrity of the research process while safeguarding the rights and well-being of participants and other stakeholders.

Key Ethical Considerations

1. Informed Consent

The principle of informed consent constitutes a fundamental ethical pillar of this research endeavor. Participants were provided comprehensive information regarding the nature, purpose, scope, and potential risks of the research before their engagement. This ethical imperative recognizes the autonomy of research subjects and their right to make informed decisions about their participation.

The implementation of informed consent within this study was methodical and thorough. All interviewees and survey participants received detailed information sheets that articulated the research objectives, methodological procedures, time commitments, and potential study implications. The consent forms were designed with clarity and accessibility, avoiding technical jargon that might impede understanding. Participants were explicitly informed about how their data would be utilized, stored, and potentially disseminated within academic and policy contexts.

Furthermore, the voluntary nature of participation was emphasized, with participants being clearly advised of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without adverse consequences or the need to justify. This approach ensured that consent was not merely a procedural formality but a meaningful exercise of participant agency throughout the research process.

2. Confidentiality and Anonymity

The protection of participant identity and personal information was rigorously maintained throughout all phases of the research. Given the potentially sensitive nature of discussions around Fifth Generation Warfare and its geopolitical implications, confidentiality safeguards were paramount to both protect participants and facilitate candid discourse.

A robust system of pseudonymization was implemented, assigning each participant a unique alphanumeric code to disassociate their responses from their identities. For interviews with high-profile individuals whose perspectives might be identifiable due to their distinctive positions, additional layers of protection were established, including omitting specific institutional affiliations and generalizing certain identifying characteristics.

All gathered data underwent thorough anonymization before analysis. Digital records were encrypted and stored in password-protected systems with restricted access. Physical documents containing identifiable information were secured in locked facilities and were accessible only to authorized research personnel. Data transmission among research team members followed secure communication protocols, ensuring confidentiality was preserved throughout the research lifecycle.

3. Avoiding Harm

The ethical imperative to minimize potential harm to participants guided numerous methodological decisions throughout the research process. This consideration was particularly salient given the politically charged nature of the research topic and the volatile security situation in some geographical regions relevant to the study.

A comprehensive risk assessment was conducted before fieldwork to identify potential sources of physical, psychological, social, or political harm that might arise from participation. Interview protocols and survey instruments were designed with sensitivity to local cultural contexts and political realities. Questions that might elicit traumatic recollections or place participants in compromising positions vis-à-vis governmental or non-governmental power structures were carefully avoided or reformulated.

In areas marked by political instability or security issues, extra precautions were taken, including choosing secure, neutral meeting places for interviews and offering options for remote participation. The research team received specialized training on conflict sensitivity and trauma-informed research practices to ensure they could navigate ethically challenging situations that may arise during data collection.

4. Integrity and Honesty

Research integrity and intellectual honesty were paramount values that informed every aspect of the study, from conceptualization to dissemination. This commitment extended beyond compliance with academic norms to encompass a more profound ethical responsibility toward knowledge production and scholarly communication.

Rigorous methodological protocols were established to prevent data fabrication, falsification, or selective reporting. All research procedures were meticulously documented to create an audit trail that substantiates the integrity of the findings—the analytical process employed triangulation techniques to verify conclusions across various data sources and methodological approaches.

Citation practices followed the highest standards of academic integrity, ensuring careful attribution of all intellectual sources that informed the research. This encompassed scholarly literature, policy documents, media reports, and participant insights. The presentation of findings was marked by transparency about the research's strengths and limitations, including acknowledging methodological constraints and potential biases.

5. Ethical Review and Approval

Before starting any research activities, the study underwent a thorough review by the Institutional Ethics Review Board (IRB). This formal ethical oversight process ensured that the research design and methodology adhered to established ethical standards and that appropriate safeguards were implemented to protect all stakeholders involved.

The ethics application submitted to the IRB detailed the research objectives, methodological procedures, participant recruitment strategies, data management protocols, and potential ethical challenges specific to the research context. The application also included draft versions of all research instruments, information sheets, and consent forms that would be utilized throughout the study.

The IRB evaluation process involved several rounds of review and refinement, with the research team addressing concerns and incorporating suggested modifications to enhance the ethical dimensions of the study. Final approval was granted only after the IRB was confident that all ethical considerations had been sufficiently addressed and that the research would be conducted with the utmost regard for participant welfare and scholarly integrity.

This rigorous ethical review process ensured compliance with institutional and disciplinary ethical standards. It enhanced the overall quality and credibility of the research by subjecting it to independent scrutiny and refinement.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH ANALYSIS/ FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of various experts and practitioners both in academia and policymakers regarding fifth generation warfare with special reference to Pakistan, India and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). War is a contested term in social sciences and strategic studies due to its multidimensional meanings. International relations theorists generally define war as a large-scale organized violence among political units. However, due to its nature different thinkers have given different meanings to the concept of war. Similarly, two South Asian states have been at loggerhead since their independence in 1947. It has been witnessed that gradually the nature of this rivalry, owing to various geopolitical reasons, has changed and modernized with different strategies and tactics. In the same way, to damage, harm or sabotage the CPEC also seems at the top priority of India by using different non-kinetic tactics along with kinetic strategies which include military modernization, political propaganda, exploitation of ethnic fault lines and dissemination of disinformation etc. The sources of this fifth-generation warfare include disseminating disinformation and propaganda against the CPEC through electronic media, print media and especially social media i.e. You Tube, X erstwhile Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and various sponsored internet website.

Justification: This study carried regional triangulation as a criterion for selecting elites for interview Having their expertise in strategic studies, IR, Journalism with focus on the CPEC and politicians who worked on the CPEC from Pakistan, India and China. It is also important owing to following reasons:

1. Pakistan seems the primary target of India's 5GW efforts.
2. India seems the initiator of the 5GW.
3. China is a strategic stakeholder owing to its involvement in the CPEC.

Therefore, an attempt has been made to include experts from all three states in order to gain a balanced, multi-perspective understanding regarding the CPEC.

In order to explore the correlation of the India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan and its strategic, political and economic implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), semi-structured and open-ended elite interviews were taken through email, audio call, video call, email and in person from the following academicians and practitioners varying from Pakistan, India and China:

1. Prof. Dr. Rabia Akhtar, Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Lahore.
As an esteemed academic and policy advisor, Dr. Akhtar's insights reflect her extensive experience in international relations and security strategy.
2. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Khan, Professor and former Head of Department of Politics and International Relations in International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI).
3. Khalid Taimur Akram, Executive Director Pakistan Research Center for a Community with Shred Future (PRCCSF) and specialist on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

4. Mushahid Hussain Syed, politicians, journalist and policy analyst with special reference to China-Pakistan relations
5. Tianshu Liu, Executive director Cuihu International Research Institute elaborated Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), China
6. Liu Zongyi, Senior fellow and Director of the Center of South Asian Studies, Shanghai, China
7. Dr. Ashok Behuria, Coordinator of the South Asia Centre and Senior Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (MP-IDSA), New Delhi, India.
8. Brig. (retd.) Narender Kumar, Contributor of the Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi, India

4.1 Insights and analysis of the distinguished academics in response to elite interview questions

Theme 1: Definition of Fifth-Generation Warfare:

All experts agree on the existence of fifth generation warfare; however, they slightly differ on the nature and definition of the fifth-generation warfare. From Pakistan perspective fifth-generation warfare means war of information, (mis)disinformation and perceptions while using cutting-edge technology and psychological tactics to reach strategic goals without resorting to traditional military actions. Their focus remains on the extensive use of technology in this war whereas traditional military means remain secondary priority in order to achieve strategic objectives by rival states. They further argue that 5GW also existed earlier in the form of narrative building against rival states.

According to the one of the Pakistani experts, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Khan, the USA used these techniques after 9/11 attacks when it started War against Terror by creating false narrative of Iraq's holding weapons of mass destruction (WMD) which later proved false, he added. Whereas Chinese experts slightly differ on the definition while emphasizing on the excessive focus on narrative building. They believe that 5GW mainly includes techniques of propaganda and false narratives building against the rival states. One of the Chinese experts argued that fifth generation warfare is now also taking the shape of kinetic roots where states intend to achieve their objectives.

Meanwhile, Indian perspective on the definition seems in the middle way of Pakistanis and Chinese perspectives. According to them, fifth generation warfare involves wars that are fought to capture the minds of the people against or in favor of a particular narrative spawned by a particular country. According to an Indian expert, Dr. Ashok Behuria, this is nothing new in the sense that nations have been doing it since ages to both propagate their points of view and counter negative propaganda against them. They also often indulge in spreading negative news and views about countries that peddle misinformation about them. With the advent of the social media, thanks to the information revolution in the world, such strategies adopted by states are being termed as fifth generation warfare.

Theme 2: Manifestations of Fifth-Generation Warfare between Pakistan and India:

Regarding manifestations of fifth generation warfare between Pakistan and India, elites mostly differ on various grounds:

According to Pakistani elites in the context of India-Pakistan relations, 5GW includes cyber-attacks, spreading false information, economic disruption, and efforts to sway public opinion and destabilize the political landscape in Pakistan, argued by Prof. Dr. Rabia Akhter. They

argue that India is waging 5GW against Pakistan and its prime target includes political and economic domains generally and the CPEC specially. They further believe that such India's tactics against Pakistan are constant and these further fosters when there is a special diplomatic leverage of Pakistan i.e., any international event or conference etc. Many of Pakistani experts give a specific global and regional geostrategic environment responsible for this development.

According to them, with changing nature of world order, the economy and global politics drifting away from Europe to Aisa and the Atlantic to the Pacific region with the rise of China and it's the BRI. Therefore, in order to counter China's influence in the region, the USA needs a stronger power against China where India fits into the frame. They argue that India has regional hegemonic designs in the South Asian region where China and Pakistan pose a serious challenge to her specially after the advent the CPEC. So, in this context, they argue, India is and will be trying her best to subjugate Pakistan in the region by using 5GW techniques. They also held view that India's 5GW against the CPEC hold an official sanction behind it as Modi government has specially established the CPEC Cell in order to sabotage the development of the CPEC.

However, on the other side Chinese experts view on the India's 5GW against Pakistan seems similar on many grounds with a slight difference. They argue that India's 5GW proceedings cannot be denied owing to some empirical evidences as it has been engaged in such activities against Pakistan i.e., EU Disinfo Lab report. However, their view remains balanced on India's 5GW tactics specially against the CPEC. They believe that India's anxiety against the rise of China in the region is traceable from the old Sino-India geopolitical rival which is also evident from the CPEC in the Pakistan. They believe that India is involved in some 5GW activities through false narratives, supporting separatist movements, cyber surveillance, economic and diplomatic pressures. Chinese experts collectively agreed that India's military modernization and official

statements signify that India openly intends to wage fifth generation warfare against Pakistan and China specially regarding the CPEC.

On the contrary, India experts completely differ and argue that it is not merely India but Pakistan is also engaged in waging 5GW with each other owing to their historical rivalry and structural reasons in international system. They argue that it should not surprise anybody in either India or Pakistan if constituencies in both the countries, given the intense adversarial relationship between the two countries, indulge in propagation of negative sentiments about either of these to soil the image of the target country in the mediascape. There were unsubstantiated reports about some private Indian allegedly targeting Pakistan in different countries of the world. It is also certain that unreported examples of Pakistani concerns doing the same vis-à-vis India. This is a normal information warfare that characterizes such an enduring hostile relationship. It is however not certain whether there was any official sanction behind this.

Theme 3: Strategic Objectives:

On the strategic objectives behind India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan, there seems a wider contrast between Pakistani, Chinese and Indian experts.

According to Pakistani experts, India's main goals in its fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan are to destabilize Pakistan politically, hinder its economic growth, and weaken its alliances. These aims directly affect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a major economic and strategic project designed to boost regional connectivity and development. By disrupting CPEC, India aims to slow down Pakistan's economic progress and strain its strategic partnership with China. According to a Pakistani expert Prof. Dr. Rabia Akhter, India's 5GW against Pakistan as a strategic vulnerability in two ways: first, to hinder economic growth of

Pakistan and; second, putting maximum constraints on Pakistan in regional connectivity generally and with China specifically.

Some Pakistani experts also argue that in a changing global and regional security environment specially the USA-India strategic alliance/ closeness, India views itself as the most powerful state in the South Asian region where China and Pakistan are its only competitors which can hinder its regional hegemonic designs. Meanwhile, Chinese experts on the India's strategic objectives through 5GW against Pakistan argue that India sees the CPEC as a challenge and threat to its regional ambitions in the form of China-Pakistan alliance.

They further argue that India has following strategic objectives: to hinder the progress of the CPEC through misinformation and false narratives, creating diplomatic hurdles between Pakistan and China and pressuring Pakistan from the insecure borders. Whereas, Indian experts on the contrary take very different line in arguing the strategic objectives of India's 5GW against Pakistan. According to them, in a fifth-generation warfare the main strategic objective of a country or its people is to lower the image of the adversary and make popular opinion favorable towards it in the long run. They believe that as far as the CPEC is concerned, India has been quite consistent in its argument that the CPEC passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, which is an inalienable part of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir which is again an inalienable part of India after the Maharaja of Kashmir signed the instrument of accession with India on 26 October 1947.

Therefore, they argue, India considers this territory disputed and Chinese effort to reach Pakistan through this territory as an illegitimate venture. India has been vocal about it and this has been the official line in Indian communications ever since the CPEC was announced. They further argue that, to say that the CPEC has been taken up as a major theme in fifth generation warfare, may not be true.

Theme 4: Economic Impact:

On the economic impacts of the India's 5GW against Pakistan and its implication on the CPEC, experts pose a very different view. From Pakistani perspective, India's primary objective includes the disruption of the CPEC economic projects which are directly related to the economic growth of Pakistan. Chinese experts argue that it directly has economic implications on the CPEC if it gets slowed. Whereas according to India perspective, despite many claims the CPEC has progressed in a good pace.

Regarding the economic impact of India's 5GW against Pakistan and its economic implications for the CPEC, Pakistani experts believe that India's main objective may include to delay economic projects of the CPEC. According to them, India's fifth-generation warfare tactics could cause delays in the CPEC projects, raise security expenses, and reduce investor confidence. These tactics can create an unstable business environment, discourage foreign investment and slow down essential economic activities for the CPEC's progress. Over time, this could impact Pakistan's economic growth and its strategic economic partnership with China. They further believe that the CPEC has still not reached up to the desired deadline owing to India's 5GW tactics and India's narratives against the CPEC and China as a debt trap and New East India Company has considerable impacts on the economic progress of Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially.

Moreover, Chinese expert view India's 5GW tactics against the CPEC and its economic implication in the form of trade disruption and integration disruption, enhanced security concerns and costs, negative perception regarding foreign investment and regional supply chains dysconnectivity and undermining Pakistan's economic stability. According to one Chinese expert, India is facing economic security dilemma with the proper implementation and materialization of the CPEC between China and Pakistan because this project has potential to bring Pakistan from

economic chaos and help her to be regional economic hub. According to Chinese expert, India's fifth generation warfare may sabotage the economic credibility of the CPEC win which foreign investors may feel anxiety to invest in Pakistan owing to Indian propaganda and misinformation.

However, Indian experts slightly differ on the economic impacts on the CPEC. They argue that despite Indian opposition, the CPEC has had a good run. India has made ritual statements against the CPEC especially because the corridor uses Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan. At another level, open opposition by India might have acted as an incentive for both Pakistan and China, known for their common antipathy towards India, to be even more serious about its implementation/execution, they argued.

Theme 5: Political Implications:

Political implications for the CPEC due to India's 5GW against Pakistan seemed very crucial and experts heavily deviated on their opinions. Pakistani experts believed that India's 5GW against Pakistan has ethnic, sectarian and propaganda ramifications. Similarly, Chinese experts focused on the internal political instability Pakistan which is exploited by India through propaganda. Whereas Indian experts argued that rival states mostly engage in such activities, however if India is waging fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan then it can strengthen internal solidarity and strategic cooperation between Pakistan and China against India.

Pakistani experts argued that India's fifth-generation warfare can lead to more political instability within Pakistan, increase ethnic and sectarian tensions, and make it harder for the government to function effectively. This type of warfare also puts a strain on Pakistan's relationship with China by creating doubts about the successful completion of the CPEC projects. Ongoing security threats and political instability can damage the trust and strategic cooperation

between Pakistan and China. Moreover, India is successfully exploiting Pakistan's internal political instability as Pakistan is unable to complete the CPEC and there lie internal differences between the political elites and society against China and the CPEC.

According to Chinese experts, political implications of the India's 5GW against the CPEC are visible in many forms. They argue that it is taking part in the erosion of regional influence of China through the CPEC as the failed and impractical project, destabilizing Pakistan's domestic political environment through political polarization and China's global political leadership. One of the Chinese experts seemed satisfy that Pakistan can manage its internal political issues having the great impact of India's propaganda. According to him, Pakistani political elites as well as the people are agreed and on the importance of the CPEC therefore they can find ways to tackle political issues which can harm the CPEC.

On the other hand, Indian experts argued that hypothetically speaking, if the three countries would be engaged in a fifth-generation warfare among themselves, it would only reinforce the sense of hostility in both China and Pakistan vis-à-vis India and would bring China and Pakistan together in a stronger strategic embrace. India waging a pronounced fifth generation war may also strengthen domestic solidarity, contribute to internal integration, and generate stronger anti-India sentiments within Pakistan, further intensifying the hostility between the two countries. It would also make anti-State forces within Pakistan to veer towards India in the hope of garnering help from India for their activities. They further stated that it would also cement ties between China and Pakistan and steel their resolve to take the project forward by all means.

Theme 6: Security Challenges:

Experts held different views on the security implications of the India's fifth generation warfare against the CPEC. Pakistani experts argued that it has serious security challenges for the Pakistan owing to its vulnerable infrastructure and constant threat of cyber-attacks etc. Chinese experts also held the same Pakistani view. On the contrary, Indian experts believed that there is no officially sanctioned propaganda campaign against Pakistan and the CPEC from the Indian side.

According to Pakistani experts, the biggest security challenges as cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure, sabotage of the CPEC projects, and misinformation campaigns designed to cause social unrest. Protecting the CPEC requires strong cybersecurity measures, better intelligence capabilities, and close collaboration between Pakistan and China. These efforts are essential to effectively counter such unconventional threats and ensure the security and success of the corridor.

According to Chinese experts, India's 5GW tactics against Pakistan have serious ramifications for the CPEC in many ways. They impact on many grounds ranging from the targeting the CPEC's infrastructure security, encouragement of the insurgency and separatism in the Baluchistan, Sindh and KPK provinces, constant threats and killing of the Chinese officials, workers and nationals in Pakistan, militarization of the region and cyber security threats for important strategic assets within Pakistan.

On the contrary, Indian experts believed that as regards the CPEC, there is no visible major campaign by India against it, although there has been an utterly expected official response to it that China must avoid investing in disputed territories. Similarly, they discarded any official campaign by the Indian government and argued that there is no security challenge flowing from fifth generation warfare war on this theme to that extent.

Theme 7: Diplomatic Channels and International Mediation:

Mostly Pakistan experts negated the role of international mediation and the role of international organizations in the mitigation of this phenomenon. They argue that as the world is moving towards multipolarity, the role of international institutions is fading away and losing their significance and influence. Throughout the history, they argued, the UNO as the main body has failed to resolve the conflict of Kashmir between Pakistan and India. However, they insisted that international mediation and diplomatic avenues must be opened for an open discussion from both states.

Meanwhile, Chinese experts emphasized the role of international institutions and regional organizations very crucial in the overall regional peace and Pakistan and India. They held the view that there is a need of new world and regional orders to resolve such complex issues as older institutions are being used by the western majors for further exploitation and self-interests in the South Asian region.

The India experts, on the other hand, held view that this tension can be reduced and mitigated through Indian private sector investment in the Gilgit-Baltistan. According to an Indian expert Dr. Ashok Behuria, China and Pakistan needed to invite Indian private sector to invest in projects outside Gilgit-Baltistan. That would have led to interlocking of interests and served as a building block for positive change in the relations.

Theme 8: Evolving Strategic Landscape:

Regarding evolving strategic landscape, India's 5GW against Pakistan and the CPEC, Pakistani and Chinese versus Indian experts seemed opposite in their views. Pakistani and Chinese

experts argued that owing to India's 5GW tactics South Asian region is becoming insecure and contentious. Whereas, Indian strategic experts totally declined the argument that India is not waging any 5GW against Pakistan.

According to Pakistan experts, the strategic landscape in South Asia is becoming increasingly complex and contentious. India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan could result in greater regional polarization and heightened security competition. This evolving situation may drive Pakistan and China to strengthen their strategic partnership even further, while other countries in the region might take more cautious and nuanced stances. For the CPEC, this could mean a more militarized approach to ensure its security and a greater emphasis on building and maintaining regional alliances.

Similarly, Chinese experts mainly held the same view as Pakistani experts with slight difference on the point of Chinese the BRI and the CPEC as an integrated platform the betterment of the South Asian region. They argued that it is creating visible opportunities for even stronger Pakistan-China strategic partnership and India's positive role in the region can further strengthen the overall regional stability and development. Meanwhile, Chinese experts showed their serious concerns on the negative implications on the regional evolving strategic environment.

In opposite to the above, Indian experts opposed that officially there is no such fifth-generation warfare taking place on the CPEC at the moment. But Pakistani fear of it is likely to lead to paranoia and come in the way of or interfere with otherwise eminently possible reconciliation process between the two countries which could bring peace and prosperity to the extended region spanning from Central Asia till South Asia. They further added that Bajwa doctrine seemed to endorse such reconciliation post-2019. Moreover, they were reluctant to

believe that such warfare is a new one and it has a historical baggage behind it. Mutual distrust and antipathies drive the course of India-Pakistan bilateral relations.

Therefore, it is but natural that they would try to prove each other wrong at the international level on issues both are entangled in. This has marred the prospects of regional economic integration and harmed Pakistan's economic interests more than that of India. For example, the gains to Pakistan from motor-vehicle agreement would have been much greater and it would have given a boost to regional prosperity and moderated the sense of hostility between the two big neighbors in the region.

Theme 9: Policy Recommendations/ Future Strategies:

All experts from Pakistan, China and India believed in mutual cooperation and peace in the region and provided some tangible recommendations for the mitigation any risk evolving from the 5GW between Pakistan and India.

Pakistani experts provided following future strategies;

1. Pakistan and its allies should prioritize boosting cybersecurity, improving intelligence-sharing, and creating strong counter-narratives to combat misinformation campaigns.
2. Pakistan should focus on building more resilient infrastructure and diversifying economic partnerships that can help reduce economic risks.
3. On the diplomatic front, Pakistan should focus on fostering regional cooperation and engaging with international stakeholders to emphasize the benefits of the CPEC for regional development which can effectively counter India's strategic aims.
4. Pakistan should keep persuading China to work in the CPEC.

5. Pakistan should resolve the internal problems on priority basis i.e., religious, subnational and political polarization.
6. Pakistan needs to formulate a well-structured security policy internally and externally.

Chinese experts provided following future strategies;

1. Pakistan and China need to enhance cyber security intelligence cooperation.
2. Pakistan should enhance security of Chinese personnel and projects within country.
3. Pakistan must resolve its internal political leadership crisis.
4. Pakistan needs a very comprehensive policy framework to counter India's misinformation and propaganda.

Indian experts provided following future strategies;

1. The first thing that Pakistan and its friends should do is to clamber down from the wrong notion that India's so-called fifth generation warfare has hurt its interests much. In fact, if there is such a war going on, then its net effect has been zero.
2. At the same time, Pakistan should launch a peace offensive and rather than making Kashmir as the core issue, it must give peace a chance and discuss all pending issues like it did through the dialogue format that was there during Musharraf's time.
3. Pakistan should aim at making the relationship interdependent by emphasizing on trade and commerce, by allowing its land to be made use of as a transit corridor for countries in South and South East Asia to access Eurasia and West Asia.

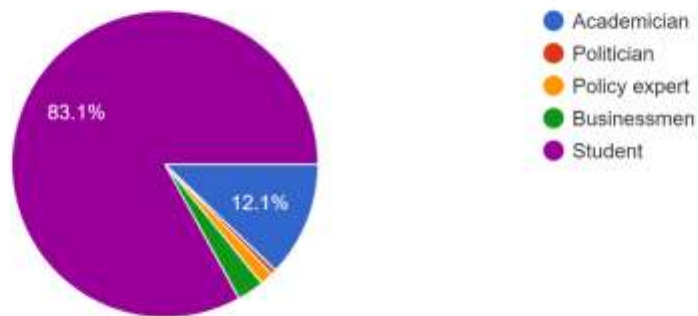
4.2 Survey Analysis

An Overview of Respondent Demographics

Survey has also been used to explore the first-hand views of local people where the CPEC projects cross. The survey has been conducted from Sindh, Baluchistan, Punjab, KPK and Gilgit Baltistan provinces. The survey response has been collected through questionnaire in which carefully scripted and structured set of questions have been administered through face to face, by telephone, by mail and by internet from academicians, politicians, students, businessmen and policy experts.

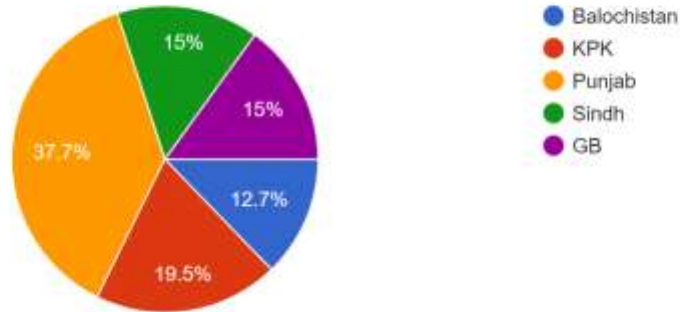
Qualification/ Profession

354 responses



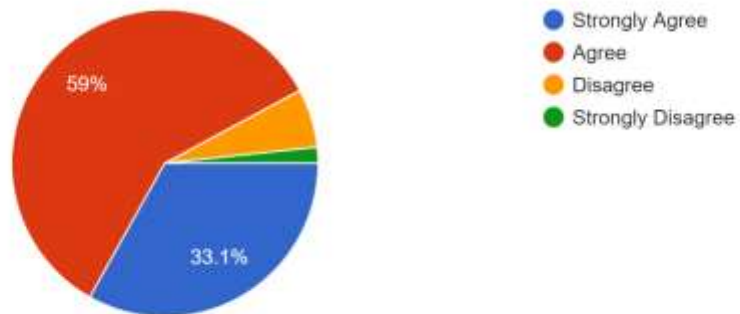
Area

353 responses



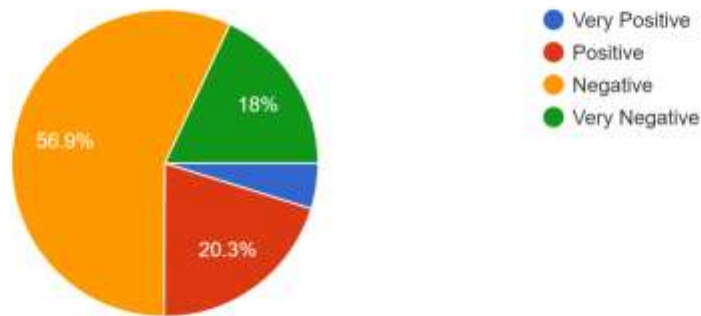
1. Do you believe India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan have intensified in recent years?

356 responses



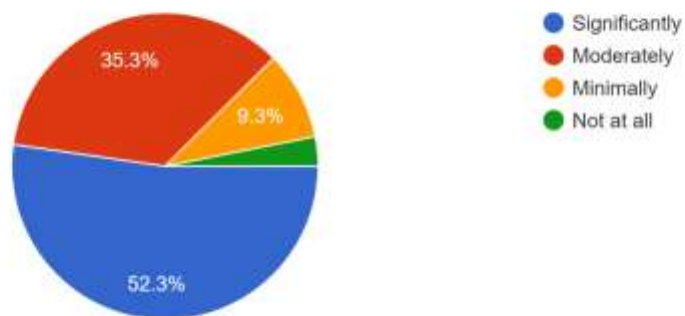
2. How do you perceive the strategic implications of India's fifth-generation warfare on Pakistan?

355 responses



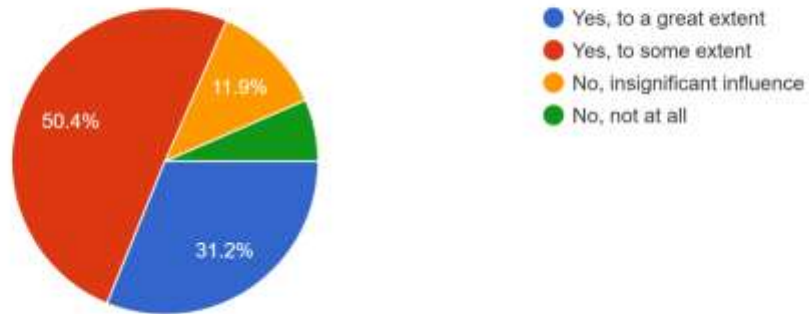
3. To what extent do you think India's fifth-generation warfare impacts Pakistan's economy?

354 responses



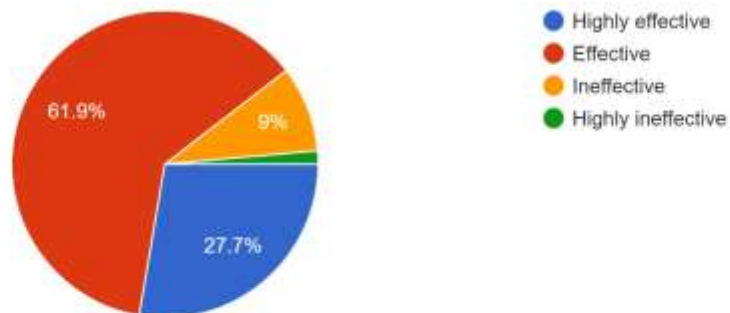
4. In your opinion, has India's fifth-generation warfare influenced the political stability of Pakistan?

353 responses



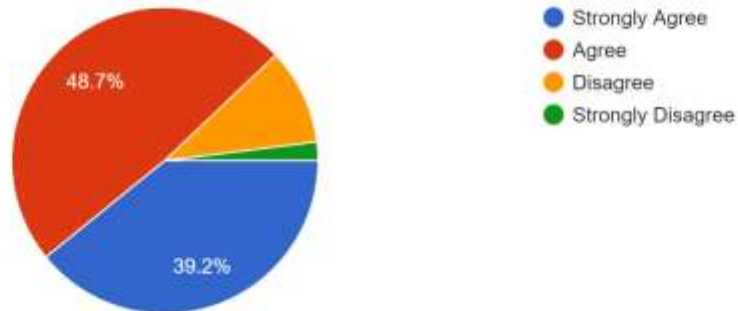
5. How do you assess the effectiveness of India's fifth-generation warfare in weakening Pakistan's influence in the region?

354 responses



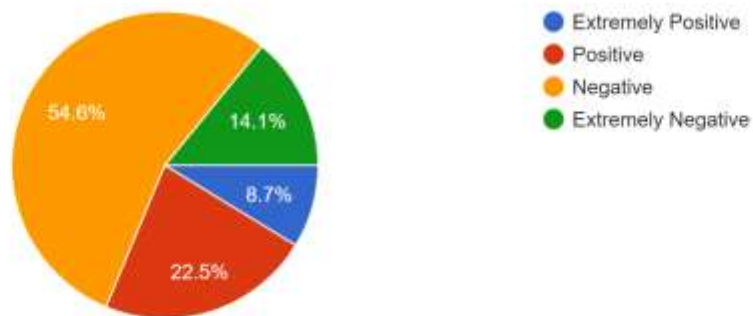
6. Do you think India's fifth-generation warfare strategies have impacted the security situation for the CPEC?

355 responses



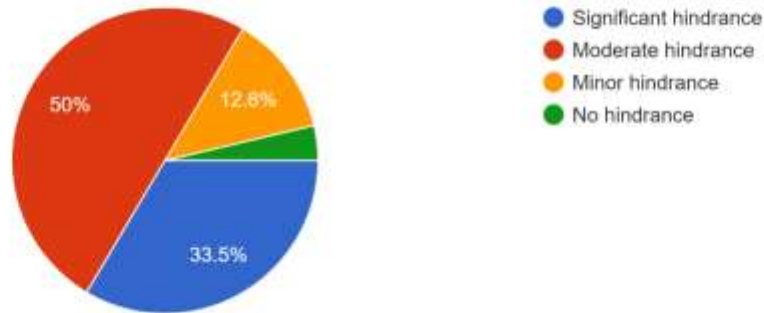
7. What is your perspective on the economic implications of India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC?

355 responses



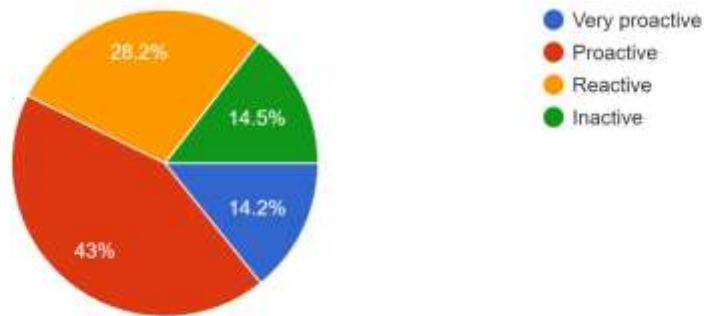
8. To what extent do you think India's fifth generation warfare actions have hindered the progress of the CPEC project?

352 responses



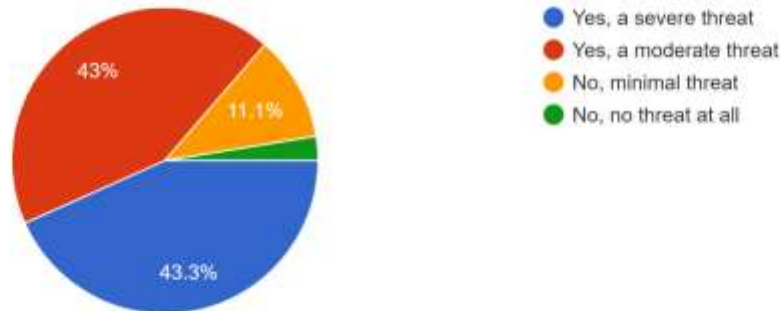
9. How do you perceive China's response to India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan and its impact on the CPEC?

351 responses



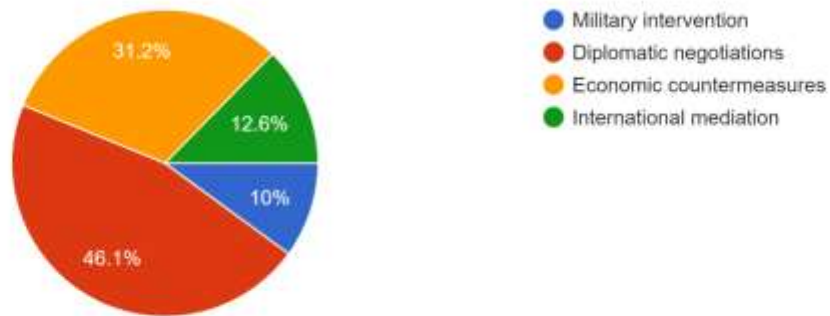
10. Do you believe India's fifth-generation warfare poses a threat to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the long term?

351 responses



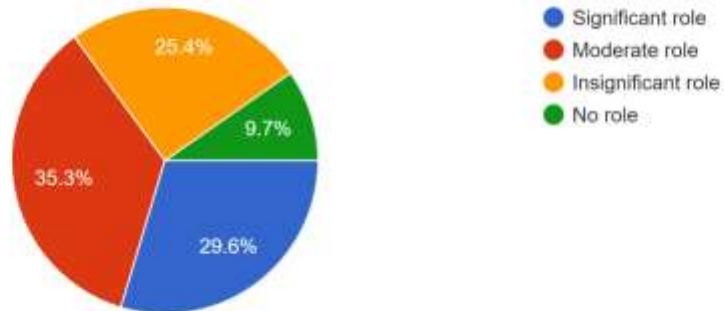
11. In your opinion, how should Pakistan respond to India's fifth-generation warfare tactics concerning the CPEC?

349 responses



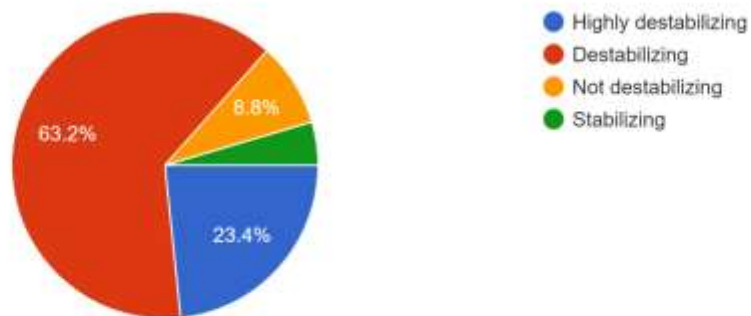
12. What role do you think international actors play in mitigating the effects of India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC?

351 responses



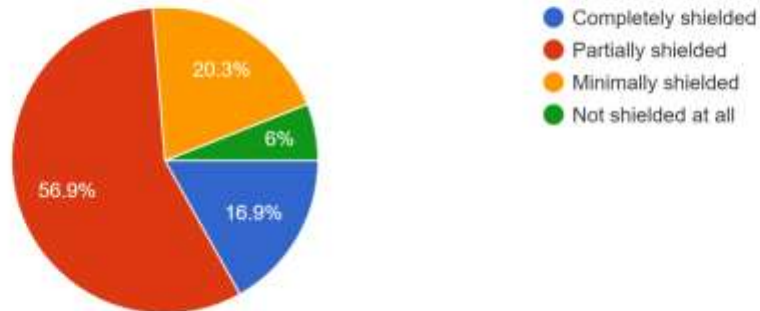
13. How do you perceive the influence of India's fifth-generation warfare on the overall stability of the region?

351 responses



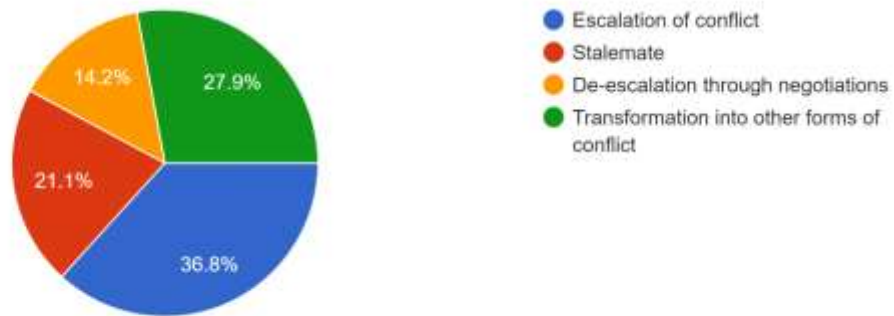
14. To what extent do you think Pakistan's alliances, particularly with China, have shielded it from the effects of India's fifth-generation warfare against the CPEC?

350 responses



15. How do you predict the future trajectory of India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan and its impact on the CPEC?

351 responses



4.3 Key Findings of the survey

1. Intensification of India's Fifth-Generation Warfare

According to the survey results 77 percent respondents believed that India's 5GW has increased against Pakistan. Interestingly, none of the respondent believed that 5GW is not happening rather all believed that it is happening and even has been intensified.

2. Economic Impact on Pakistan

Majority of the respondents believed that India's 5GW against Pakistan is badly impacting the economy of Pakistan. This view is easily visible from the all participants including academicians, students, politicians and businessmen.

3. Strategic Implications on Pakistan

Majority of the respondents agreed that India's 5GW against Pakistan has strategic implications for Pakistan and the CPEC. This view was seen prevalent in the majority of academicians, students and businessman.

4. Political Stability

Majority of the responses showed that India's 5GW against Pakistan is creating political instability in Pakistan to some extent. Whereas about 24 percent respondents believed that it is not creating significant influence on the political spectrum of Pakistan. In the same way around 13 percent responses showed that India's 5GW against Pakistan has not at all influence on the political stability of Pakistan.

5. Impact on CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor)

Majority of the respondents believed that India's 5GW has significantly impacting on the progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Meanwhile only 18 percent people believed that India's 5GW is not impacting the CPEC.

6. Economic implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

An overwhelming majority of 77 percent believed that India's 5GW has negative economic impacts for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Similarly, about 9 percent respondents were in the view that it is impacting extremely negative for the CEPC.

7. Progress of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Respondents seemed were divided on this point. Simple majority of 50 percent were of the view that India's 5GW has moderately hindered the progress of the CPEC. Meanwhile 27 percent respondents believed that it is significantly hindering the progress of the CPEC.

8. China's Response and Regional Stability

Respondents had mixed views on China's response. A slight majority believed that China's response to India's 5GW is mostly reactive, whereas some also were of the view that China's response proactive.

9. Threat to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) on long term

Majority of the respondents believed that India's 5GW against Pakistan has long term threats to Pakistan with significant view on the severe threats to the CPEC on long term.

10. Pakistan's Response against Indian's 5GW tactics regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

On this question, majority of the respondents with 63 percent believed that Pakistan should utilize diplomatic means to respond India's 5GW tactics against the CPEC. Meanwhile 27 percent were of the views that Pakistan should respond it with enhancing her economy.

11. The Role of International Actors and Mitigation

A significant majority of the respondents believed that international actors can play a major role in the mitigation of India's 5GW against the CPEC. They believe that Pakistan can take benefit from the diplomatic measures as potential strategies to counter these strategies.

12. Future Trajectory

Respondents see escalation in in India’s 5GW tactics against Pakistan and its implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). Respondents were of the view that India’s tactics will evolve in future and it may also take new forms.

13. More survey responses from students

The respondents of the survey were seemed more students compared to other group of respondents. It might be owing to following reasons;

- The university students of social sciences specially in political science, international relations and strategic studies are relatively more informed and highly engaging in geopolitical and national security issues.
- This survey was mainly conducted in higher educational institutions owing to easy access and desirable sampling results where students ration more than other groups.

Table 4. An Overview of the Survey Analysis

Sr.#	Question	Response
1	Intensification and Perception of the India’s 5GW against Pakistan	Strong agreement
2	Economic and Strategic Impacts	Significant hindrance
3	CPEC Security and Progress	Moderate to Severe Threat
4	Political and Regional Stability	Highly Destabilizing
5	China's Role and International Mitigation	Diplomatic and Economic Measures

4.4 Qualitative Content Analysis

4.4.1 Qualitative Content Analysis of X- (formerly Twitter)

Qualitative Content Analysis of X- (formerly Twitter) accounts related to India's Fifth-Generation Warfare against Pakistan and its Implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was carried out. The objective is to examine how fifth-generation warfare tactics evident through Indian-linked or India-aligned X-accounts by spreading disinformation, hostile narratives, perception management, and cyber influence campaigns against Pakistan and the CPEC.

1. Methodology

Aspect	Detail
Platform	X (formerly Twitter)
Sampling Strategy	Purposeful and snowball sampling: accounts with repeated tweets on the CPEC, Baluchistan, Pakistan, China-Pakistan ties, Indian foreign policy
Sample Size	300 X-accounts (both verified and unverified; individual, institutional, and bot-like)
Time Frame	2021–2025
Tools Used	Manual coding, digital tools for pattern detection (TweetDeck, Meltwater, Twitter Search API)
Analytical Method	Inductive Thematic Analysis; Open and Axial Coding

2. Coding Scheme

Code	Description
D1: Delegitimizing CPEC	CPEC framed as illegitimate due to sovereignty or legal issues
D2: Economic Fear	Posts portraying CPEC as a financial burden or debt trap
D3: Security Destabilization	Highlighting terrorist activity, Baloch unrest, or "unsafe" routes
D4: Anti-China Sentiment	Posts combining Sinophobia with anti-CPEC rhetoric
D5: Baluchistan Narratives	Support for separatism or protest amplification
D6: Information Intensification	Coordinated trending of anti-CPEC or anti-Pakistan hashtags
D7: Human Rights Discourse	Framing CPEC as violating rights of locals (especially in Baluchistan)
D8: Mockery & Psychological War	Memes, sarcasm, and demoralizing narratives aimed at Pakistan or CPEC
D9: Diplomatic Undermining	Posts citing UN, US, EU, or think tanks to discredit CPEC

3. Thematic Results

Distribution of Themes (Frequency Table)

Theme / Code	Accounts (%) Engaging	Sample Tweet Example
D1: Delegitimizing CPEC	68%	"CPEC violates Indian sovereignty. #IndiaFirst #StopCPEC"
D2: Economic Fear	52%	"Pakistan will become China's next Sri Lanka. #DebtTrapDiplomacy"
D3: Security Destabilization	61%	"Chinese workers aren't safe in Baluchistan. No peace, no progress. #FreeBalochistan"
D4: Anti-China Sentiment	47%	"Chinese colonists disguised as investors. Wake up, Pakistan!"

D5: Baluchistan Narratives	44%	“We stand with the Baloch people resisting Chinese occupation. #VoiceOfBalochistan”
D6: Info Intensification	39%	Bot-like trends such as #NoToCPEC, #CPECFails, peaking during protests or Chinese visits
D7: Human Rights Framing	31%	“Locals in Gwadar lack clean water, but CPEC rolls on for Chinese elites.”
D8: Psychological Warfare	57%	Meme of Pakistan as a pawn between China and IMF; sarcastic posts during CPEC MOUs
D9: Diplomatic Undermining	28%	Quoting Western media: “Even ForeignPolicy doubts CPEC’s sustainability. #WakeUpPakistan”

Representative Content Table

Account Type	Content Style	Main Theme	Typical Hashtags
Individual, Pro-India	Analytical/Opinion Threads	Sovereignty, debt trap	#StopCPEC #ChinaDebtTrap #IndiaFirst
Bots & Amplifiers	Repetitive, high-frequency posts	Trend manipulation	#CPECFails #GwadarProtests
Diaspora Voices	Human rights, protest narratives	Baluchistan, rights framing	#FreeBalochistan #HumanRights
Strategic Analysts	Policy-based critiques	Economic and strategic risk	#Geopolitics #SouthAsia
Meme Accounts	Sarcastic images, edited videos	Psychological warfare	#CPECBubble #PakChinaJoke

4. Strategic analysis related to India’s 5GW, Pakistan and the CPEC

5GW Component	How it Manifests on X Platform
Information War	Overload of conflicting messages on CPEC's viability, often misleading or exaggerated

Psychological War	Use of memes and sarcasm to ridicule Pakistan’s dependence on China
Narrative Domination	Framing Pakistan as economically colonized or unstable through repeated strategic storytelling
Cyber Mobilization	Use of bots and coordinated activity to trend anti-CPEC hashtags
Diplomatic Delegitimization	Citation of Western think tanks and media to create doubt about Pakistan’s strategic choices

The analysis of 300 X-accounts reveals a careful and sophisticated campaign aligning with fifth-generation warfare principles. These accounts strengthen disinformation, exploit civil grievances, manipulate social perceptions, and strengthen geopolitical anxieties related to the CPEC. The conjunction of narrative warfare, cyber intensification, and psychological targeting suggests a non-kinetic battlefield that complements India’s broader strategic goals without engaging in direct and open conflict.

4.4.2 Qualitative Content Analysis of Facebook Accounts

The objective of the Facebook accounts content analysis was to critically examine how Facebook is used as a medium of fifth-generation warfare (5GW) against Pakistan, chiefly targeting the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), through disinformation, perception manipulation, and digital psychological operations. The analysis explores user behavior, content patterns, and strategic narratives aligned with India's geopolitical objectives against the CPEC.

1. Methodology

Aspects	Details
Platform	Facebook
Sample Size	300 accounts/pages/groups (individual users, political activists, fake profiles, public groups)

Sampling Criteria	Activity on CPEC, Baluchistan, Gwadar, China-Pakistan ties, Indian foreign policy
Time Frame	2015–2025
Method of Collection	Digital ethnography, keyword tracking (e.g., “CPEC”, “Baluchistan”, “China colonizing Pakistan”)
Analytical Method	Thematic qualitative content analysis (manual coding and digital trend comparison)

2. Coding Framework

Code	Theme Description
F1	Sovereignty Violation Framing
F2	Economic Collapse & Debt Narrative
F3	Human Rights Discourse (esp. in Baluchistan/Gwadar)
F4	Anti-China/Anti-CPEC Rhetoric
F5	Protest & Resistance Intensification (real or fabricated)
F6	Fake News & Fabricated Events
F7	Religious/Ethnic Polarization (e.g., targeting Shia vs Sunni to destabilize CPEC areas)
F8	Psychological Demoralization (memes, mockery, ridicule of Pakistani leadership)
F9	Strategic Promotion of Indian Policy Positions

3. Themes and Content Examples

Code/Theme	Content Pattern	Post Example (Paraphrased)
F1: Sovereignty Framing	CPEC framed as violation of Indian territory (Gilgit-Baltistan)	“India will not tolerate corridor projects through Indian land – CPEC must stop.”

F2: Debt Trap Narrative	Posts labeling CPEC as economic suicide for Pakistan	“CPEC = China’s neo-colonial strategy. Pakistan will become another Sri Lanka.”
F3: Rights Violations	Sharing reports (real or manipulated) of Chinese abuse of Baluchistan locals	“Baloch youth are missing daily under the name of development. This is not progress.”
F4: Anti-China Posts	Combining anti-China sentiment with Pakistani political criticism	“Chinese are building forts, not roads – wake up Pakistan.”
F5: Protest Amplification	Sharing or faking images/videos of protests, exaggerating turnout or impact	“Gwadar is rising. The people reject CPEC completely.”
F6: Fake News	Posting digitally altered images or made-up news headlines	“China pulls out from CPEC – another project failure.” (fake headline shared widely)
F7: Sectarian Spin	Using religion to create division in CPEC zones (Baluchistan, Gilgit)	“Why are only Shia areas getting roads under CPEC?”
F8: Psychological War	Memes, satire, and sarcastic content mocking Pakistan-China alliance	Meme: “Pakistan – now proudly a Chinese province!”
F9: Indian Policy Push	Posts quoting Indian officials or think tanks to support opposition to CPEC	“Even Indian defence analysts call CPEC a threat to regional balance – Pakistan is blind.”

4. Thematic Engagement

Theme	% of Accounts Posting	Notable Trends
Sovereignty Framing (F1)	62%	Most frequent in groups with India-based admins
Economic Critique (F2)	54%	Often shared via infographics and edited video reports

Rights Abuse Claims (F3)	43%	Used to attract Western sympathy and NGO engagement
Anti-China Sentiment (F4)	57%	Interlinked with COVID-19, Uyghur, and Hong Kong narratives
Protest Content (F5)	48%	High usage of fabricated images or repurposed protest scenes
Fake News (F6)	34%	Mostly unverified headlines shared without sources
Sectarian Framing (F7)	22%	Shared within religious Facebook groups
Psychological Memes (F8)	51%	Shared by meme pages with high following
Indian Policy Push (F9)	29%	Heavy quoting of Indian media outlets like The Print and Times of India

5. Strategic application to Fifth-Generation Warfare, India Pakistan and the CPEC

5GW Component	Facebook Manifestation
Disinformation	Fake news articles, forged images, and recycled protest photos
Perception Warfare	Framing Pakistan as subservient to China through memes, infographics, and sarcasm
Narrative Control	Repetition of sovereignty, debt-trap, and repression narratives to weaken CPEC's credibility
Cyber-Psychological Ops	Campaigns that create fear, doubt, and shame among Pakistan’s youth and civil society
Ethno-Sectarian Agitation	Injecting religious divisions in strategic regions like Baluchistan and Gilgit

The analysis of these Facebook accounts reflects a highly organized and assorted campaign that supports India’s fifth-generation warfare objectives against generally Pakistan and especially by targeting the CPEC. The results suggest that these accounts used a mix of ethno-political

narratives, fictitious content, strategic memes, and cyber stimulus operations, these accounts aim to delegitimize CPEC, deteriorate national unity, and interrupt Pakistan’s diplomatic stance on various platforms. Moreover, it further shows that Facebook’s approachability and emotive influence make it a powerful vector for this cognitive and narrative-based warfare.

4.4.3 Qualitative Content Analysis of YouTube Channels

To analyze the role of YouTube content in India’s 5GW strategy aiming Pakistan and CPEC, including how disinformation, cognitive framing, and cinematic manipulation are utilized to form global and domestic perceptions.

1. Methodology

Aspect	Details
Platform	YouTube
Sample Size	300 channels (Indian-origin, pro-India diaspora, anonymous info-channels, political influencers)
Sampling Method	Purposive + Snowball sampling (searching videos with “CPEC failure,” “Balochistan unrest,” “China Pakistan corridor,” “Debt trap,” etc.)
Timeframe	2016–2025
Data Type	Video titles, descriptions, thumbnails, viewer comments, content tone and visual style
Tools Used	YouTube Analytics, NVivo (manual coding), keyword tracking, visual content analysis
Analysis Method	Inductive Thematic Content Analysis

2. Coding Framework

Code	Theme
Y1	Delegitimization of CPEC: Legal, strategic, or political critiques
Y2	Debt Trap & Economic Alarmism
Y3	Security & Instability Focus
Y4	Promotion of Baloch Separatism or Dissent
Y5	Psychological Warfare (Memes, Mockery, Sarcasm)
Y6	Anti-China Sentiment Merged with Anti-Pakistan Rhetoric
Y7	Fake or Misleading Visual Content (edited clips, staged news)
Y8	Emotional Triggering (music, dramatic narration, visual intensity)
Y9	Quoting Think Tanks & Foreign Media to Legitimize Narratives

3. Content typology of analyzed channels

Channel Type	Percentage of Sample	Content Focus
News-style Political Channels	28%	Commentary, interviews, ‘expert’ opinion pieces
Anonymous Info Channels	25%	No host; use voice-over, dramatic BGM, stock visuals
Satirical/Parody Channels	15%	Humor, memes, ridicule of Pakistan/CPEC
Academic-Like Explainer Pages	12%	Referencing think tanks, foreign publications
Pro-Diaspora Political Voices	10%	Anti-Pakistan, pro-India strategic messaging

Bot-style Dumps	Video	10%	Repetitive, low-quality videos with trending tags
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4. Thematic Results (With Examples)

Theme / Code	% of Channels	Representative Titles / Comments
Y1: Delegitimizing CPEC	69%	<i>“CPEC is illegal: Proof India never wanted you to see”</i>
Y2: Debt Trap Narrative	55%	<i>“Pakistan already bankrupt – CPEC is final nail in coffin”</i>
Y3: Security & Instability	62%	<i>“Baloch fighters attack Chinese convoy – CPEC in danger again!”</i>
Y4: Baloch Dissent	43%	<i>“Voice of the oppressed: Baluchistan vs China”</i>
Y5: Psychological Warfare	58%	Memos mocking Pakistani military or PM; “satirical” newscasts mocking CPEC events
Y6: Anti-China & Anti-Pakistan Fusion	52%	<i>“Two failed regimes, one fake friendship: The CPEC joke”</i>
Y7: Fake Visual Content	31%	Misused images/videos (e.g., Hong Kong protests passed off as Baluchistan rallies)
Y8: Emotional Framing	49%	Dramatic music, red/black visuals, hyperbolic narration (“end of Pakistan!” tone)
Y9: Quoting Foreign Media	28%	<i>“Even The Economist says CPEC is doomed”</i> (often misquoted or context twisted)

5. Visual framing and psychological techniques

Technique	Example	Purpose
Color Theory	Use of red, black, and glitch effects during CPEC segments	Evoke threat, chaos, fear

Thumbnail Manipulation	Explosions, sad Pakistani flags, Chinese dragon over maps	Psychological pre-framing
Dramatic Soundtracks	Intense music for videos about protests or failures	Heighten viewer anxiety or anger
Fast Cuts & Alarming Edits	Rapid transitions and exaggerated expressions by hosts	Disorient and emotionally charge the viewer
“Expert Labeling”	Labeling presenters as “Strategic Analyst” without real credentials	Appear authoritative and trustworthy

6. Strategic implications related with 5GW, India, Pakistan and the CPEC

5GW Tool	YouTube Manifestation
Narrative Warfare	Repetition of anti-CPEC messaging, especially around legality and debt
Perception Engineering	Combining audio-visual techniques to shape how audiences "feel" about Pakistan/CPEC
Digital Psychological Ops	Humorous/sarcastic portrayals to mock and demoralize the Pakistani public
Information Weaponization	Twisting Western sources to validate anti-CPEC agendas
Proxy Messaging	Diaspora-hosted content “speaking for” Baloch voices and quoting unverifiable sources

This content analysis of these YouTube accounts reinforces the argument of this study that video content has become an effective weapon in India’s 5GW playbook against Pakistan generally and the CPEC specifically. These accounts use strategic messages, cyber techniques, cognitive communication, and propaganda to discredit the CPEC, mockery of Pakistan’s leadership, and generate public distrust and internal dissonance. The immersive nature of YouTube videos,

combined with emotional handling and social influence, makes them a powerful instrument of fifth-generation warfare.

4.5 Analysis of the Qualitative Content Analysis

In the evolving sphere of modern conflict, the warfare has dominantly provided path to well structured, non-kinetic, and sophisticated strategies to manipulate cognitive biases and erode sovereignty through propaganda and false narrative manipulation. These techniques, called Fifth-Generation Warfare (5GW), include anonymity, psychological biases, and strategic utilization of disinformation technologies.

In this context, the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) appears as the main target of India’s clandestine and undeclared strategic operations against Pakistan. This section devolves into a comprehensive reflection on the qualitative content analysis (QCA) of 900 social media handles including, X (formerly Twitter), Facebook, and YouTube. It analyses and evaluates how India is strategically utilizing her 5GW techniques including propaganda, cyber warfare, psychological images and false narratives against Pakistan with special reference to the China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The Rationale for Studying Digital Narratives

The reason to examine and evaluate social media content is significant to understand 5GW because it is mainly fought in the information fields where truths are manipulated, false narratives are devised and propaganda is weaponized to achieve the desired objectives of the states. So, the platforms i.e. X, Facebook, and YouTube, are very crucial to influence operations as they;

- Provide unregulated communication space

- Allow cross-border psychological engagement
- Enable anonymity and mass replication
- Shape public perception both domestically and internationally

India’s strategic elites recognize that delegitimizing CPEC is not only a tactical concern related to its dispute over Gilgit-Baltistan, but also a geopolitical requirement in countering China-Pakistani conjunction. The findings of this study imply that Fifth-Generation war is not being carried out with conventional weapons but rather is fought with vides, tweets, hashtags, trends, and digital disinformation.

4.4.1 Thematic Overview of Analyzed Platforms

Nine dominant themes were observed repeatedly and each were properly coded and examined to analyze its relation with 5GW domains.

Code	Common Theme	Target of Attack
D1/F1/Y1	Delegitimization of CPEC	Legal status, sovereignty
D2/F2/Y2	Economic Alarmism	Financial instability narrative
D3/F3/Y3	Security Destabilization	Baluchistan, Chinese workers
D4/F4/Y6	Anti-China Sentiment	China as colonizer, manipulator
D5/F5/Y4	Separatist / Protest Narratives	Baloch and Gwadar movements
D6/F6/Y7	Disinformation & Fabricated Content	False news, fake visuals
D7/F3/Y9	Human Rights Discourse	Repression, water shortages
D8/F8/Y5	Psychological Demoralization	Satire, memes, national mockery
D9/F9/Y9	Diplomatic Undermining	Quoting Western sources
D1/F1/Y1	Delegitimization of CPEC	Legal status, sovereignty

1. X (formerly Twitter): A Prompt Psychological and Narrative War

The analysis of the social media accounts explored various influencers, fake analyses and bots synergized to portray the CPEC as an illegitimate, infeasible and risky project. Moreover, the data also reflects that various hashtags i.e.; #stopCPEC, #freeBalochistan, and #CPECfails, #CPECdebtttrap, were constantly trended, frequently in management with some real events i.e., protests in Gwadar or attacks on Chinese nationals.

Identified strategic methods:

Hashtag Projection	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Used to flood timelines during diplomatic engagements or Chinese visits.
Bot Networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accounts with no history but high posting frequency boosted divisive narratives.
Geopolitical Mimicry	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pseudo-strategic language mimicking Western think tanks to fabricate authority.

Implications:

This behavior aligns with cyber-mobilization and narrative warfare, wherein adversaries project their agenda not through open confrontation but through algorithmic distortion of digital discourse.

2. Facebook: Propaganda and false identity Manipulation,

The assessment of Facebook pages and accounts exemplified a synchronized digital revelation in which the rational and strategic utilization of information was used to intensify dissent. Numerous accounts posted various internal issues, locals in Gwadar protesting news, which accounts were seen operated from Indian based IPs addresses.

Dominant Content Styles:

- Infographics on Debt-Trap Diplomacy
- Fabricated Protest Photos with Recycled Captions
- Targeted Religious Polarization Posts (e.g., “CPEC benefits Shia only”)

5. YouTube: Video Propaganda, Emotional Engineering, and Visual Warfare

Perhaps the most psychologically impactful content came from YouTube, where narratives are reinforced with sound, visuals, music, and pseudo-authoritative delivery. The analysis revealed:

- Use of red-and-black color theory, intense soundtracks, and apocalyptic language
- "Analysts" with no verifiable credentials giving doom predictions about CPEC
- Memes, satire, and humorous edits mocking Pakistan's geopolitical moves

Key Tactics:

- **Framing:** Using fear-inducing thumbnails and emotionally manipulative editing
- **False Credibility:** Labeling videos as “based on RAND/IISS analysis” without source verification
- **Comment Coordination:** Immediate and repetitive engagement from supportive accounts

Strategic Outcome:

YouTube content sustains emotional contagion—a 5GW tactic whereby repetition of images, sounds, and storytelling reinforces ideological preconceptions and lowers resistance to manipulation.

Cross-Platform Synthesis: A Coordinated Fifth-Generation Offensive

Across X, Facebook, and YouTube, thematic and stylistic consistency was observed, indicating an orchestrated information **campaign** rather than random digital criticism. The narratives were synchronized across:

- **Temporal dimensions** (timed with political or economic developments),
- **Geographic scopes** (targeting Baluchistan, Gwadar, and China),
- **Psychological levels** (ridicule, fear, anger, shame).

Observed 5GW Components Across All Three Platforms

5GW Strategy	Manifestation
Narrative Domination	Repeated delegitimization of CPEC through sovereignty and economic critiques
Psychological Warfare	Sarcasm, memes, and demoralizing portrayals of Pakistani state institutions
Cyber Mobilization	Use of bots and coordinated posts to manipulate trends and viral content
Perception Engineering	Emotional videos and posts shaping internal and international outlooks
Proxy Messaging	Diaspora or fake-local voices narrating resistance from within Pakistan

This strategic use of hybrid digital influence reflects India's deployment of 5GW tools, operating in legally ambiguous, deniable formats that produce asymmetric informational damage.

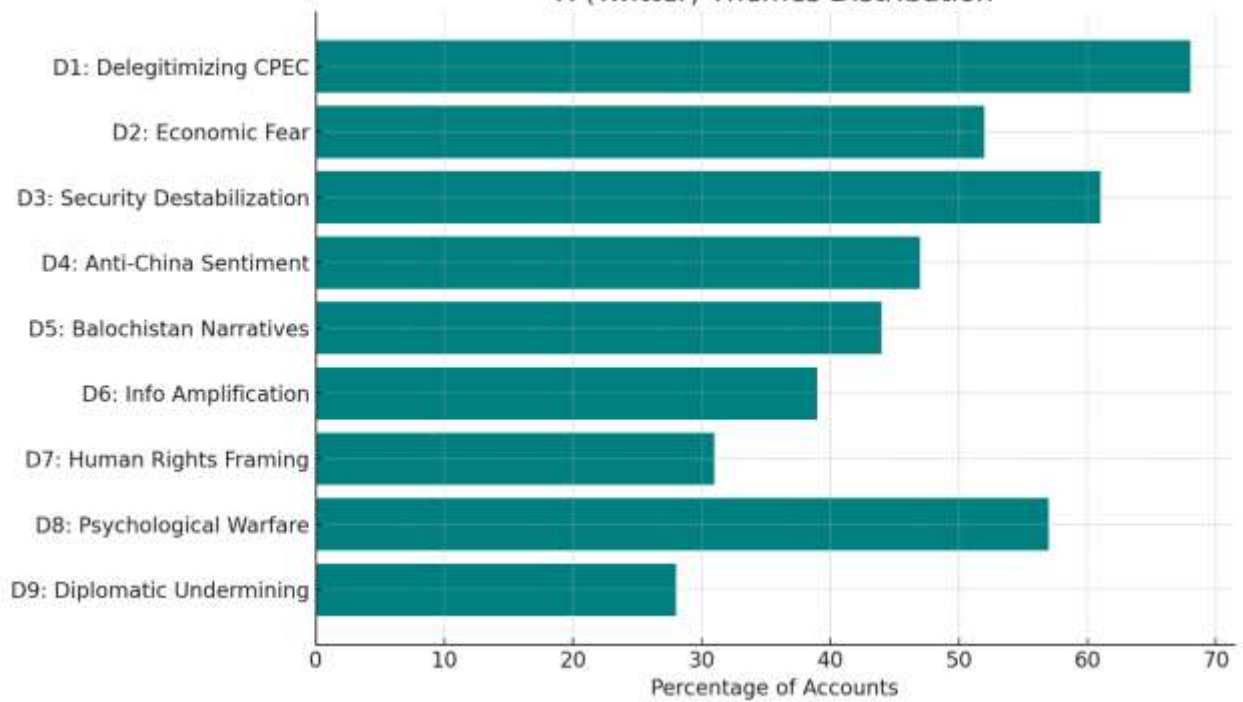
Ethical, Legal, and Strategic Implications

India's digital strategies, as evidenced in this analysis, blur the lines between free speech and weaponized information. The use of fake identities, doctored visuals, and manipulated algorithms challenges both international norms and digital platform policies. For Pakistan, this form of warfare:

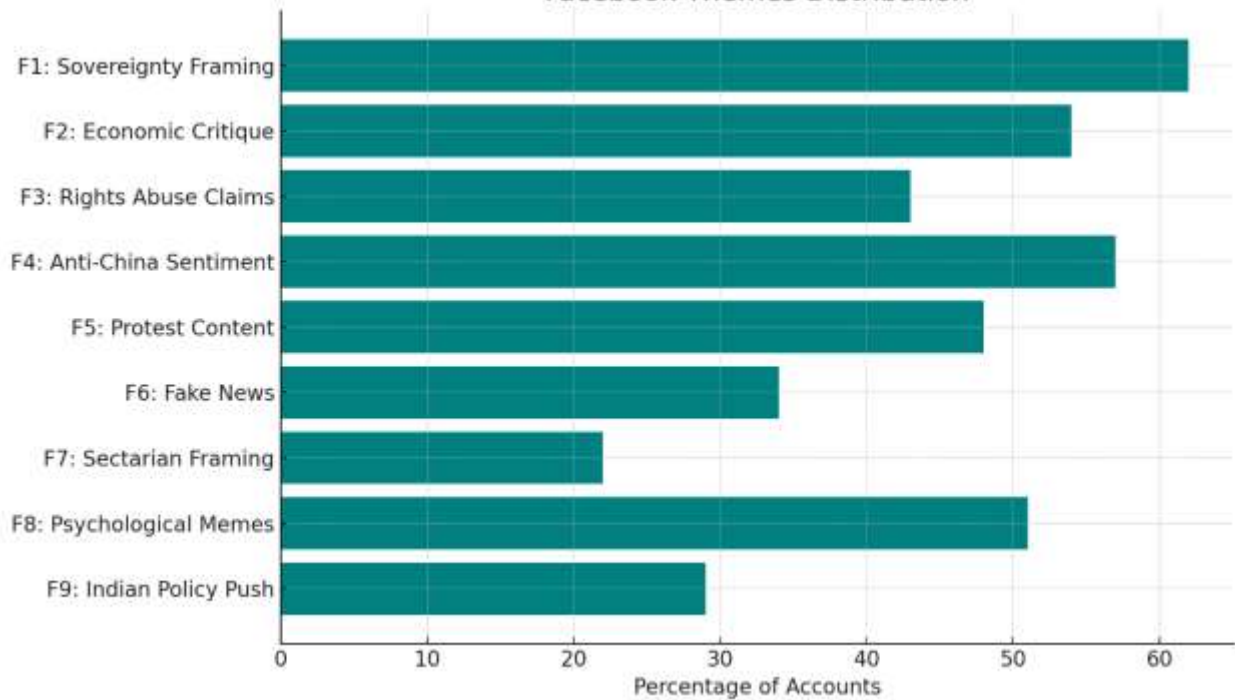
- Weakens internal cohesion,
- Undermines trust in foreign partnerships (especially with China),
- And pressures policymakers through digitally manufactured consent.

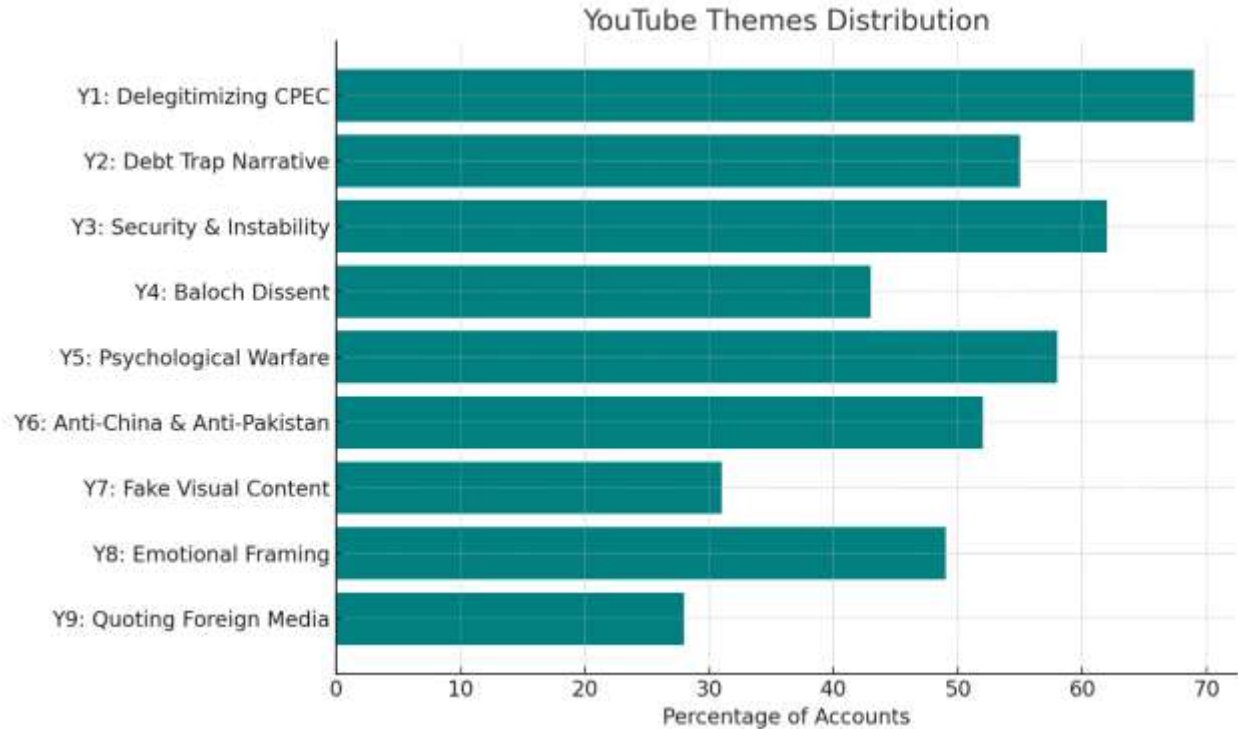
The lack of a global regulatory framework on cross-border digital interference allows 5GW actors to operate with impunity. This makes digital diplomacy, cyber-counterstrategy, and platform governance critical elements of national security going forward.

X (Twitter) Themes Distribution



Facebook Themes Distribution





The visual representations for your qualitative content analysis across platforms

1. **Twitter (X) Themes Distribution:** Shows high activity around delegitimizing CPEC (68%), psychological warfare (57%), and security destabilization (61%).
2. **Facebook Themes Distribution:** Highlights strong focus on sovereignty (62%), anti-China rhetoric (57%), and economic narratives (54%).
3. **YouTube Themes Distribution:** Emphasizes delegitimization of CPEC (69%), psychological warfare (58%), and security instability (62%)

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND ANALYSIS

This chapter discusses the results of the research questions raised in this study. After discussing the three key research questions, this chapter proceeds to theoretical, methodological and literature implications with an addition to practical implications of the study. Similarly, this chapter also discusses the literature, theoretical and methodological limitations of this study along with analyzing the possible future research directions regarding this study. In the last section of this chapter, some practical, substantiative and procedural recommendations have also been given for the policy experts, strategists and research scholars along with a conclusion.

5.1 What is 5th Generation Warfare and how it is used as manufacturing propaganda to undermine targeted states' strategic and economic interests?

There is less scholarly agreement on the exact definition of the 5th Generation Warfare as most experts take it in one or another way. After going through the literature and elite interviews, this research also finds that there is no consensus on the single definition of fifth generation warfare.

1. Definition of 5th Generation Warfare

- Fifth Generation Warfare involves different elements, which may include false information, terrorism, and staged riots. and these factors have the potential to spark a conflict within a society that harms a wider range of political goals and state interests.

- Fifth Generation Warfare is the war of information and perception.
- Fifth Generation Warfare mainly includes using of non-kinetic means to defeat one's enemy.
- Fifth Generation Warfare can be defined as data driven, non-kinetic military design which attempts to take advantage of existing mental images by introducing new cognitive biases.
- 5th GW focuses on: individuals, social engineering, nature of attack is clandestine, difficult to recognize and excessive use of propaganda and misinformation.
- 5th GW is a form of conflict in which state and non-state actors simultaneously exploit all modes: conventional, regular, terrorists, disruptive or criminal to destabilize an existing order.
- 5th GW involves wars that are fought to capture the minds of the people against or in favour of a particular narrative spawned by a particular country.
- 5GW mainly includes techniques of propaganda and false narratives building against the rival states.
- 5GW means war of information, (mis)disinformation and perceptions while using cutting-edge technology and psychological tactics to reach strategic goals without resorting to traditional military actions.

This study found that mostly literature on the definition of 5th GW seemed quite optimistic on the existence of 5th GW as mostly experts agree on its existence in various forms. However, the findings on the single definition of 5th GW varied owing to its complex nature. Meanwhile, few similarities can be found in the definition of 5th GW, which make it different from other forms of warfare that are given below;

2. Existence of the 5th Generation Warfare

This study found that the 5GW threats are not new in the world. Its footprints, at least in an unorganized way, can be traced back from centuries. History witnesses many events where a weaker adversary used asymmetric or unconventional tactics against its stronger enemy to defeat in battle grounds or in home grounds.

In classical era, Sun Tzu, a Chinese classical realist theorist in his work ‘‘the Art of War’’ depicted the use of fifth generation warfare traits when compared to contemporary definition of fifth generation warfare famously said the real victory against enemy is without waging direct war. Similarly, Indian classical realist Chanakya in his famous treatise Arthashastra also discussed an important concept of ‘‘concealed war’’ and ‘‘ silent war’’ which also resembled with current features of fifth generation warfare. According to Chanakya, there are three kinds of warfare: "open warfare, concealed warfare, and silent warfare"—he supported concealed warfare to achieve desired objectives.

Furthermore, it can also be traced back from the Middle East where Lawrence of Arabia also used propaganda techniques against Ottomans to win war against their adversaries. Similarly, in 20th century, war strategies in World War I and World War II also witnessed excessive propaganda against adversaries. The prime example in 20th century propaganda includes Hitler’s strategies. He specially established a separate ministry, Ministry of Propaganda, under the headship of Joseph Goebbels who was tasked to spread misinformation and different perceptions far from reality against allies.

Moreover, same pattern of disinformation was also used in post WWII during Cold War (1946-1991) between the then USSR and the United States to defeat each other. The USA excessively used media industry and propagated against the USSR in different films, dramas, documentaries, and literature and same was attempted by USSR against the USA.

5.2 Propaganda in 5th Generation Warfare and its usage to undermine states' strategic, political and economic interests

The findings in this study showed propaganda as a main and special tool of 5th GW, which is used by states to achieve their strategic, political and economic interests against their rivals. The functioning and usage of propaganda as an important tool in 5th GW is given as under;

- 5th GW includes non-kinetic means to influence the psyche of rival states' society.
- 5th GW involves the expansion, spreading and supporting of misinformation, disinformation and false facts to harm rivals.
- Propaganda in 5th GW is used through three main types and each type has its own characteristics;

1. White propaganda

In this type of propaganda, the origin (propagandist) is known and the shared information is also considered truth. Such propaganda is mostly carried out by the governments and private corporates. This type of propaganda is visible in 5th GW as states, sometimes, are involved in spreading the news relevant to their benefits. In the context of India's white propaganda, its news channels and print media are involved in creating cognitive biases against Pakistan within its citizens. It is carried out through various TV talk shows, documentaries and movies in which anti-

Pakistan narratives are shaped portraying Pakistan as terrorist, extremist, weak and unsafe state in the region.

2. Black propaganda

In this type of propaganda, the authenticity of the information is fake and the spreader (propagandist) of the information is also unknown. This type of propaganda is mostly used by states in war strategies to subdue their rival states. This type of propaganda is said to be used by the USA invasion on Iraq in 2003 where the USA propaganda machinery inflicted enough false information within the USA populace to legitimize her invasion in Iraq. In this type of propaganda, false information takes an important place in which covert and incorrect information is passed to individuals, groups, institutions and societies. Similarly, India is also involved in spreading such propaganda through social media in which fake and anonymous accounts have been created and these are involved in spreading fake news, panic and unrest against Pakistan. Its range include Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), TikTok, YouTube and Instagram etc. The focus of these accounts remains mainly against the CPEC in which its viability, security and credibility is targeted.

3. Grey propaganda

In such kind of propaganda, the source of information, information itself, and propagandist itself, is also suspected and doubtful. This type of propaganda is considered desirable for the states to harm other states as this source has full leverage to deny the allegations owing to the secret and hidden nature of propaganda. India has been involved in grey propaganda through using fake media houses. It was discovered in 2020 through EU Disinfo Lab in which India assisted a disinformation network of over 750 fake media outlets which operated across 119 countries. These

fake media houses were involved in misleading content about the CPEC failures, security concerns, debt trap and internal instability in Pakistan.

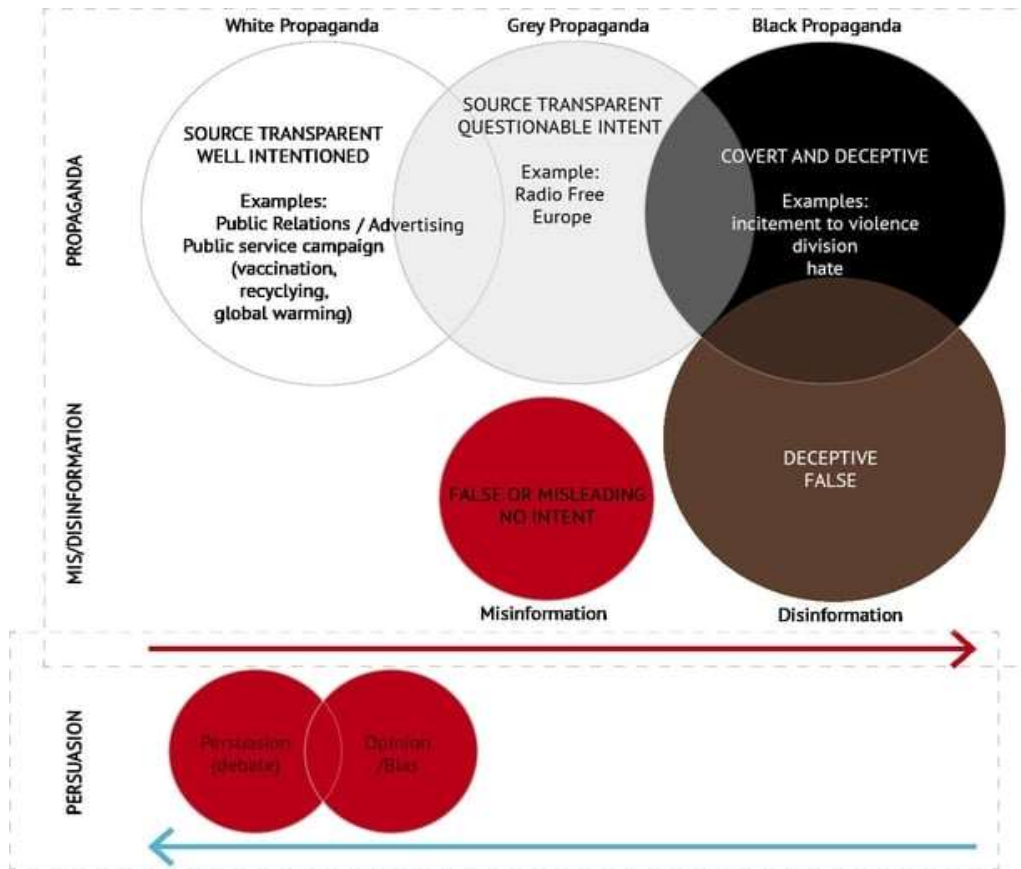


Figure 2. Types of Propaganda

Source: <https://www.rte.ie/brainstorm/2024/0430/1446518-propaganda-techniques-white-black-grey-text/>

Techniques of propaganda used in 5th Generation Warfare

Following techniques are used in 5th GW by various states

1. **Name calling:** in this technique the target state, personality or institution is given bad label in order to remember easily. In this technique the purpose of propagandist is to make or

reject someone to get condemned that target without examining what really means the label means i.e., ‘Nazi’, ‘terrorist’, ‘extremist’.

2. **Glittering generality:** in this technique the propagandist states use strong slogans and loaded words against the target which shade heavy impact.
3. **Bandwagon:** in this technique, the propagandist states attempt to accept their point of view, or else the target state/ populace will miss out on something significant.
4. **Plain folks:** in this technique of propaganda the states try to persuade the population of target states that these (fake) ideas are according to the wish and will of the majority.
5. **Diversion:** in this technique the propagandist states attempt to divert or any important or threatening issue which is not in their favor.

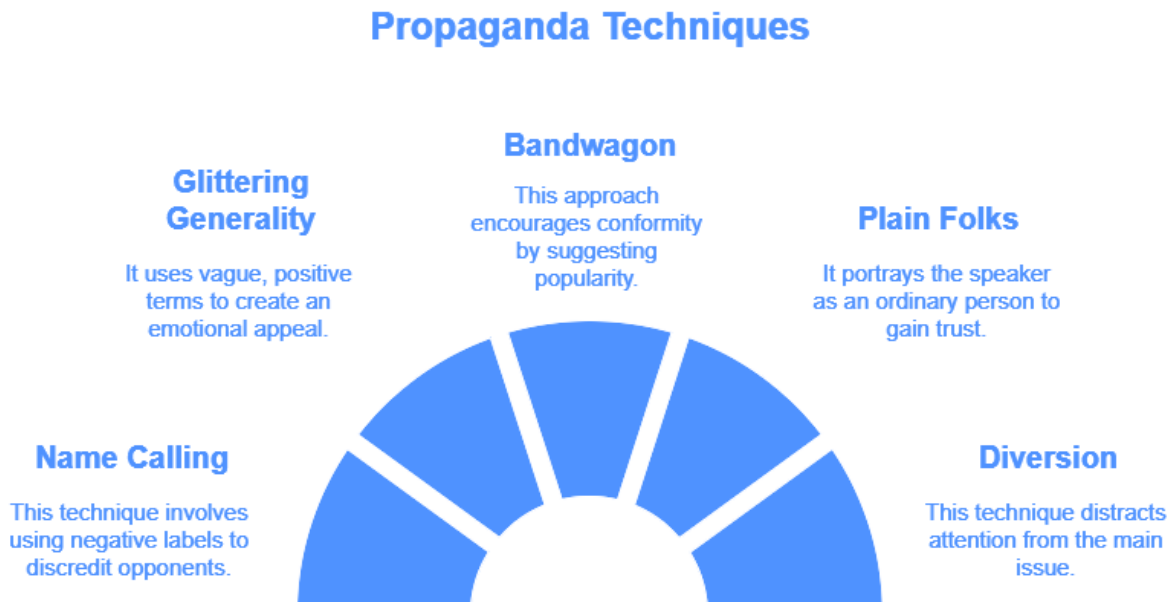


Figure 3. Techniques of Propaganda

Source: Composed by the researcher

Moreover, some of the important subcategories that comprise fifth generation warfare: political, environmental, informational, cyber, conventional, and infrastructure which are used by states to harm the political, economic and strategic fault lines of the targeted states. Different elements are bred within the categories, which may include false information, terrorism, and staged riots. and these factors have the potential to spark a conflict within a society that harms a wider range of political goals and state interests. The opponent's vulnerabilities determine the capabilities in terms of strategy, politics and economy.

5.3 Reasons and Techniques of India's 5th Generation Warfare against Pakistan with special reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)

Empirical examples of the India's 5GW against Pakistan include;

1. Indian chronicles

In 2019, EU Dis Info lab exposed many fake online sources in Brussels which were engaged against Pakistan and propagated false information. Their monads operandi were only to defame Pakistan in European Parliament and other human rights organization. About 265 fake online media outlets were exposed in 65 countries working against Pakistan. The role of ANI was pivotal in it which was further supported by Indian Shrivastava Group in terms of finances.

2. Doval Doctrine

Indian National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval has devised and openly announced his doctrine to distort Pakistan. According to his doctrine, Pakistan should be isolated from international arena through misinformation and highlight human rights issues. The Doval Doctrine includes mainly four components i.e., diplomatic isolation of Pakistan, expansion of misinformation, economic warfare, and intensification of covert operations against Pakistan.

3. Indian Special Cell

Pakistan's former foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi and Director General ISPR claimed in a detailed presentation that India is running Special Cell under the direct guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi which solely aims to disrupt, undermine and delay CPEC. They further said that it under PM there is RAW Chief who is added by joint secretary 1,2 and 3. They also claimed that it was established in 2015 and it has been allocated 500 million dollars.

Further Indian 5th GW tactics against Pakistan with special reference to the CPEC can be summarized as under;

1. Pakistan-India rivalry has been changed since the advent of the CPEC
2. India is perceiving the materialization of the CPEC as a threat to its regional hegemonic designs owing to China-Pakistan strategic partnership through the CPEC.
3. India is using both kinetic strategies to subvert Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially, which include, military modernization in all domains i.e., army, air force, navy and strengthening nuclear posture.
4. India is also equally utilizing non-kinetic strategies as well, which mainly include: cybersecurity, disinformation, propaganda, false narrative building, supporting proxies and diplomatic isolation of Pakistan.

5.4 The success ratio of India's 5th GW against the CPEC

1. **Cyber warfare and disruption of the CPEC:** India has been involved in hacking the key government websites, strategic and financial institutions which are high risk for the economic potential of the CPEC owing to foreign investments trust. It has been openly conveyed by Chinese officials to Pakistani officials that militants attack on Chinese

workers was perceived as a the most important hurdle in the further enhancement of the CPEC (Syed 2024).

2. **Information warfare and public opinion:** India has to some extent successfully persuade the international forums and institutions through false narratives that the CPEC has security risks and domestic disagreements, which has significantly impacted the trust of international investors.
3. **Proxy conflicts and provincialism:** India is involved in covert and overt support to the various insurgents and terrorist groups in the specific parts of Pakistan which are located near the CPEC. These insurgents and terrorists have been involved in different terrorist activities on the CPEC related routes and Chinese officials in the form of suicide bombing, attacks and other terrorist actions. These attacks have gained the substantial concerns from the investors and even Chinese officials regarding the safety of the CPEC.
4. **Diplomatic posturing:** India is engaged diplomatically to prevent international community for the global recognition of the CPEC and forwarding its claim that the CPEC route crosses through a disputed territories of Jamu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.
5. **Economic subversion:** India is engaged in influencing multilateral financial institutions and global stakeholders to investigate, censor and even restraint investment in the CPEC related projects owing to high security risk and economic chaos in Pakistan.



Figure 4. India's 5GW Techniques against the CPEC

Source: Composed by researcher



Figure 5. India's 5GW Techniques against the CPEC

Source: Composed by the researcher

5.5 Strategic and economic and implications of India's 5th Generation Warfare for the CPEC

1. Strategic implications

- The CPEC, owing to its geo-strategic significance, seems threatening and unacceptable for India as India perceives the CPEC a threat for its regional hegemonic ambitions.
- India has been employing non-conventional methods against Pakistan in addition to conventional warfare.

- India is intrusive in Baluchistan and supportive to local ethno-nationalist insurgency there.
- India is providing covert support to Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP) with special reference to the CPEC.
- India seems directly involved in creating ethnic division, violence in Karachi, exacerbating sectarian conflicts, and sourcing espionage activities within Pakistan through propaganda.
- India is involved in espionage activities in the sensitive areas of Pakistan in which arrest of Indian Naval spy Kalbushan Yadav is irrefutable evidence in this regard (Gichki 2022).
- A network of 265 fake local news websites, which named after invalid newspapers and various media outlets across 65 countries which were involved in publishing and spreading anti-Pakistan coverage and content and supporting Indian government interests and narratives, were exposed and uncovered. Such websites were exposed by the European Union based NGO namely EU Disinfo Lab. According to EU Disinfo Lab these fake accounts were involved and engaged in sophisticated disinformation campaigns and various operations, which supported by a group of Indian companies, NGOs, and think tanks. Numerous websites i.e. 4newsagency.com, eptoday.com, and timesofgeneva.com etc. were operated and supported by Indian government officials, the EU Disinfo Lab report explained (A. A. Gary Machado 2019).
- India's main goals in its fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan are to destabilize Pakistan politically and weaken its alliances. These aims directly affect the China-

Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a major strategic project designed to boost regional connectivity and development.

- In current changing global and regional security environment specially the USA-India strategic alliance/ closeness, India views itself as the most powerful state in the South Asian region where China and Pakistan are its only competitors which can hinder its regional hegemonic designs and India sees the CPEC as a challenge and threat to its regional ambitions in the form of China-Pakistan alliance.

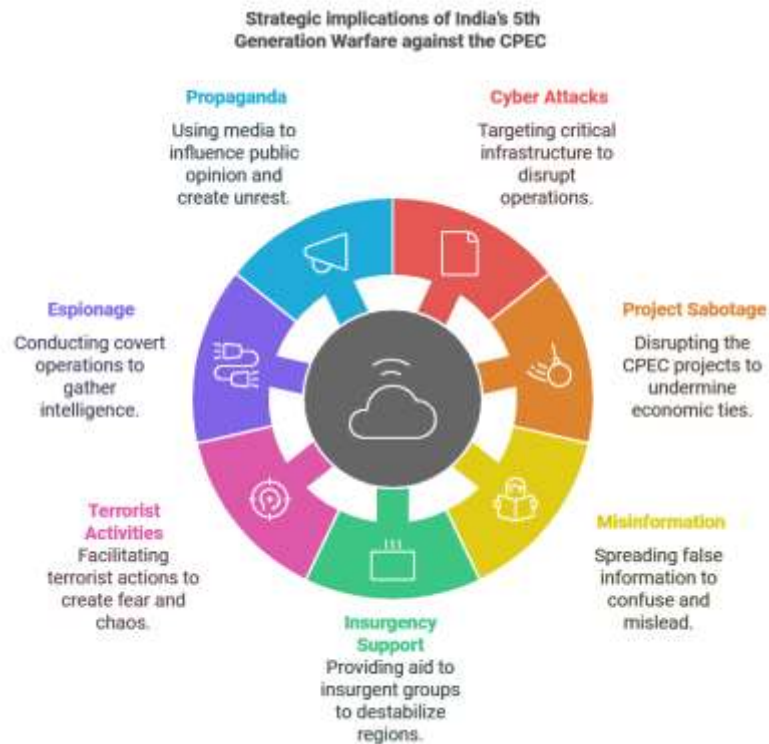


Figure 6. Strategic implications of India's 5GW against the CPEC

Source: Composed by researcher

2. Economic implications

- India is fully aware regarding the weak economy of Pakistan, which is very important for the security of Pakistan.

- India's main goals in its fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan are to destabilize Pakistan politically and hinder its economic growth. These aims directly affect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a major economic and strategic project designed to boost regional connectivity and development. By disrupting CPEC, India aims to slow down Pakistan's economic progress and strain its strategic partnership with China.
- India's 5GW against Pakistan is an economic vulnerability in two ways: first, to hinder economic growth of Pakistan and; second, putting maximum constraints on Pakistan in regional connectivity generally and with China specifically.
- India's primary objective includes the disruption of the CPEC economic projects which are directly related to the economic growth of Pakistan.
- India's fifth-generation warfare tactics could cause delays in the CPEC projects, raise security expenses, and reduce investor confidence. These tactics can create an unstable business environment, discourage foreign investment and slow down essential economic activities for the CPEC's progress.
- India's narratives against the CPEC and China as a debt trap and New East India Company has considerable impacts on the economic progress of Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially.
- India's sponsorship of terrorism in Pakistan damages the country's reputation and deters business and tourism, which worsens the already dire economic situation.
- India's 5GW tactics against the CPEC and its economic implication in the form of trade disruption and integration disruption, have enhanced security concerns and

costs, negative perception regarding foreign investment and regional supply chains dysconnectivity and undermining Pakistan's economic stability.

- The water flow from the Himalaya and Karakorum range into the Indus valley is under the jurisdiction of India. PM Modi declared that "blood and water cannot flow together" following the attack in Uri. In the wake of the Uri attacks, a fresh round of disputes arose concerning the Indus Water Treaty and India is lobbying internationally to revoke the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).
- Indian policymakers are in the process of holding discussions regarding the construction of Kishenganga Dam. Pakistan's water security may be affected by this dam's eventual reduction in water flow and impact on the ecosystems of the Jhelum and Neelum rivers as Pakistan is already severely water-starved country in the region.



Figure 7. Economic implications of India's 5GW against the CPEC

Source: Composed by researcher

5.6 Theoretical Implications

This research attempted to explore and analyzed India's 5th generation warfare against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its strategic and economic impacts through the theoretical the lens of Chankya's Undisclosed Warfare, referred to as Gudha Yuddha and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model (PM). An attempt has been made in this study to highlight the complex interaction of media, geopolitics and hybrid warfare exploring the multifaceted intersections between information control, propaganda, public opinion and security. This section provides a comprehensive discussion on the theoretical implications of the study within the framework of Chankya's Undisclosed Warfare and Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model (PM) focusing on their application, relevance and current geopolitics surrounding of the CPEC.

Noam Chomsky's propaganda model is a theory that explains how the mass media in capitalist societies serve the interests of the powerful elite rather than the needs of the general public. According to Chomsky, the media is heavily influenced by five filters that shape the news presented to the public.

The first filter concerns the ownership of the media. Chomsky argues that the mass media is owned and controlled by a few wealthy individuals and corporations with their own interests to protect. These owners often use media outlets to promote their agendas and suppress opposing viewpoints. It is mostly observed in the case of India where larger media outlets are being supported by the Indian government to disseminate propaganda against Pakistan i.e., Republican TV, ANI and Dordarshan etc.

The second filter concerns the role of advertising in the media. Chomsky argues that the media relies heavily on advertising revenue to survive, which creates a conflict of interest.

To attract advertisers, the media must appeal to a specific audience and avoid content that may offend their advertisers or their audience. India is heavily relying on these techniques while generating propaganda and disinformation against Pakistan. Indian sponsors fake information in order to portray Pakistan as a terrorist, extremist and human rights violator state in the world. It is evident from the advertisement of Baluchistan issue in European streets and jets where slogans were written to ‘‘free Baluchistan’’.

The third filter concerns the sources of information used by the media. Chomsky argues that the media relies heavily on official sources, such as government officials and corporate spokespeople, rather than independent sources. This means that the news is often presented from the perspective of those in power rather than the general public's perspective. This is also in the case of India's propaganda techniques against Pakistan where Indian channels provide only that information which is filtered and allowed by the Indian government. It deliberately molds the facts and independent sources of information in order to propagate against Pakistan with desired information.

The fourth filter concerns the consequences of presenting information critical to the powerful elite. Chomsky argues that the media is often subject to intense criticism and attacks from influential individuals and organizations when they report on issues that go against their interests. This can lead to a reluctance to report on specific topics or to self-censorship. India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan is censorship. India intends to wage every source to stop any news which goes against her policies and attempts to allow specific news which is in her favor.

The fifth filter concerns the dominant ideology of the society in which the media operates. Chomsky argues that the media reflects and reinforces the dominant ideology, which supports the

interests of the powerful elite. This means that the media often marginalizes or ignores alternative perspectives and viewpoints. This seems also applicable to this research in a way that Indian propaganda is mainly led by the dominant powerful elite media and business groups i.e., Shrivastava Group and Republic TV. It is also evident that most of the independent or critical voices in India, whether intellectuals or journalists, are being marginalized and censored.

5.6.1 Key Theoretical Implications

- 1. Corporate Interests and Government Influence:** In the context of India's stance on Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), media outlets are involved in supporting the interests of corporate entities with vested interests in maintaining a certain narrative against the CPEC on strategic and economic levels. e.g., Indian companies might fear economic competition from the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and thus, are influencing media coverage to portray it negatively.
- 2. Elite Sources and Official Narratives:** Indian media is heavily relied on government sources and elite think tanks that support Indian government's stance on Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This is ultimately leading to a one-sided portrayal of events, focusing solely on threats posed by these entities while ignoring potential benefits or alternative viewpoints regarding the strategic and economic of the CPEC.
- 3. Advertiser Preferences:** Indian media outlets are reliant on advertising revenue which are shaping their content to appease advertisers who have business interests aligned with the Indian government's agenda to discredit the CPEC. Advertisers opposed to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) or invested in industries threatened by it and they are

involved in pressuring media to frame coverage in a negative news of the CEPC and Pakistan related matters and policies.

4. **Limited Scope of Debate:** Chomsky's model suggests that mainstream media often restricts the range of debate to topics that are not acceptable to corporate and government interests. In the case of India's approach towards Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), alternative perspectives, such as the potential for regional cooperation or the economic benefits of connectivity, are being either marginalized or excluded from the mainstream media and other important platforms.
5. **Manufacturing Consent:** Chomsky's Propaganda Model argues that media, consciously or not, serve to manufacture consent for government policies and corporate interests. In the context of India's stance on Pakistan and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), media coverage contributes to shaping public opinion in favor of aggressive measures against perceived threats, reinforcing nationalist narratives, and justifying government actions.
6. **The Role of social media:** Meanwhile Noam Chomsky's model primarily focused on traditional media, however with the advent of social media, the intensity and reach of the propaganda has increased. This study has explored an increasing role of social media other than traditional media, shaping narratives for desired objectives by states. Similarly, India is also using social media for spreading false narratives, disinformation, propaganda to encourage public dissent and diplomatic pressure against Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially.

Chankya's Undeclared War Theory

Undeclared/ Silent Warfare theory is described by Chankya in the Arthashastra as Gudha Yuddha. This idea is much like the fifth-generation warfare, as wars these days may be started with no declaration and are often brought on by disinformation, tricking minds and hidden efforts. This framework takes its foundation from the intellectual traditions of the Indian subcontinent and is both relevant to the region and to history.

Chankya in his Arthshastra explains following fourfold strategies (upayas) to defeat, control, harm and sabotage enemy in undeclared warfare;

1. Conciliation (Sama);

This method involves various techniques to win over an opponent without coercion. It includes: praising the target's qualities—real or exaggerated—to soften resistance; emphasizing common backgrounds such as kinship, ethnicity, or education to build rapport. It also includes persuading the counterpart that cooperation serves mutual interests. Similarly, it also highlighted tangible benefits the opponent may gain from cooperation and promising concessions or honors, whether or not they are ultimately fulfilled.

2. Economic Domain (Dana);

If conciliation fails, offering gifts or making concessions becomes the next step. This may involve monetary payments, valuables, territorial compromises, or even offering hostages. A modest favor may generate a sense of obligation in the counterpart. While Dana does imply a cost to achieve strategic goals, this cost should be minimized. Often, it is most effective when used alongside Sama. Forms of Dana may include bribery, which can be a practical tool to prevent rebellion or secure favorable outcomes in foreign relations.

3. Division (Bheda);

This tactic involves creating divisions among adversaries through discrimination, propaganda, false narratives, selective alliances, or psychological manipulation. The objective is to prevent or disrupt enemy alliances and internal unity, particularly those that could harm and threaten the national security of the enemy state. While Bheda does not directly involve force, it can include the implicit use of power in the form of supporting insurgency, terrorism, extremism, espionage and paid assassinations within the enemy state. It aims to weaken unity among opposing actors, making them less capable of resisting and responding to the state.

4. Force (Danda);

The final and most extreme measure involves the use of force, including warfare. Given its high cost and risk, Chanakya advocated for silent or covert warfare (Tusnim-Yuddha), as a preferable option. Such operations might include sabotage or assassination of rival leaders, as they offer strategic gains at lower costs. However, Chanakya stressed that warfare and covert actions should only be pursued for political unification and not for plunder or indiscriminate violence, which he considered morally unacceptable.

Given its high cost and risk, Chanakya advocated for tusnim-yuddha, silent or covert warfare, as a preferable option. Such operations might include sabotage or assassination of rival leaders, as they offer strategic gains at lower costs. However, Chanakya stressed that warfare and covert actions should only be pursued for political unification and not for plunder or indiscriminate violence, which he considered morally unacceptable.

India's practice of undeclared warfare aligns with the modern concept of fifth-generation warfare (5GW), particularly in its covert actions against Pakistan. A prime example is the 1971 breakup of Pakistan, orchestrated by India's Research and Analysis Wing (R&AW), which waged

a shadow war involving disinformation, training and funding of 150,000 Mukti Bahini fighters, and exploitation of Pakistan's internal weaknesses.

Similar strategies were later employed in Baluchistan during the 1970s in supporting insurgency and exploiting internal political and social issues. The apprehension of several Indian spies in Pakistan in subsequent years further affirms that such covert tactics are a persistent feature in Indo-Pak dynamics.

5.7 Practical Implications

India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially is very complex and therefore need a very nuanced approach to counter these. India's interests in waging 5th GW against the CPEC can be understood from four important levels: global, regional, domestic and individual. Globally, as the tectonic plates of world power are changing due to the rising of China against the USA, shift of economy from the Atlantic world to the Pacific, rise of the Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) and Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) and the economic competition between the USA and China. In this transformation, global alliances are also realigning in which various states are taking their sides whether in status-quo bloc led by the USA and the revisionist bloc led by China.

Similarly, India, in this global transformation, sides with the USA owing to its geopolitical and geoeconomic interests which mainly include to counter China in the region and to rise a regional power, some say regional hegemon, against China's rise in the region. In the same way, China's core interest in the South Asian region includes the CPEC which is seen challenge as well a threat to India's interests in the region and therefore India is using maximum sophisticated means, which mainly include the fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan to hinder, destabilize or

discredit the CPEC which is considered significant geostrategic and economic venture of China as well Pakistan.

India's covert and overt involvement in the fifth-generation warfare against the destabilization of the CPEC pose very significant strategic and economic challenges for the interests of Pakistan. In its fifth-generation warfare against the CPEC, India is using various tactics i.e., cybersecurity, propaganda, disinformation, propaganda, diplomatic maneuvering and supporting proxies in order destabilize the CPEC's strategic and economic potential in the region. These tactics are not only halting the strategic and economic potentials of the CPEC but also disturbing overall balance of power in the South Asian region.

For Pakistan, countering and responding the India's 5th GW needs a very comprehensive and nuanced approach which may include strengthening its cybersecurity and information war capabilities, diplomatic outreach, redressing internal security issues i.e., Baluchistan issue, and recovering from economic crisis. Moreover, to counter India's strategies, Pakistan has to invest in both offensive and defensive capabilities in order to secure its internal vulnerabilities to secure the CPEC and external diplomatic relations in order to avoid diplomatic isolation.



Figure 8. Practical implications of the study

Source: Composed by researcher

5.8 Limitations of the study

The following section deals with the limitations of study which the researcher faced while conducting this research. These limitations include in the definition of fifth-generation warfare and its evolving nature, limitations regarding access and availability in empirical data collection, complex nature of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects, theoretical limitations, language barriers and time constraints. The details of the study limitations are as under;

1. Limitations regarding the literature review

3. Scope and nature of nature of the fifth-generation warfare

The 5th GW is relatively a new concept in international relations and strategic studies and its scope and nature is also evolving and expanding. Therefore, it was a bit difficult to discuss all dimensions and facades of the 5th GW accurately and to apply on the dynamic relationship between

Pakistan and India with special reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). It became even difficult as most of India's tactics in the 5th GW were covert, psychological, espionage and cyber based which were either sensitive or not observable.

2. Exclusion of other political actors

This research mainly focused three actors namely Pakistan, India and China in its literature review and attempted to analyze their perspectives in the context of the CPEC. However, other global actors, the USA and Russia, were not discussed in detailed which may influence the CPEC in broader security concern. Similarly, some regional actors, Afghanistan and Iran, were also not discussed in detail owing to the scope of the study as these may also play an important role in the regional strategic environment which has directly or indirectly impact on the economic and strategic domains of the CPEC.

4. Methodological limitations: an access to reliable data

1. Data collection

It refers to the access of the reliable data in this research. Owing to the covert nature of 5th GW, it was difficult to collect direct information, data and evidence on specific issues i.e., India's involvement and patronage in supporting insurgency in Baluchistan. Therefore, this research also relied on the declassified documents, reports and academic research which might be biased or incomplete.

2. Primary sources

Direct access to the primary sources both in India and Pakistan were likely not possible due to their sensitive geopolitical reasons, as a result this research relied on some secondary sources and incorporation of primary sources remained very difficult.

3. Elite interviews

Elite interviews were the most important part of this research and an attempt has been made to involve more voices from all three states i.e., Pakistani elite, Chinese elites and Indian elites. Owing to the recent emergence of this field, elites were too difficult to find and those who were contacted, most of them refused to give an interview because of the sensitive nature of the topic. So, to persuade the elites was also a laborious task in this research. Those elites who agreed to give an interview, most of them requested not to reveal their names, however some permitted to show their names in research.

4. Measuring the data

Survey was an important part of this research which intended to measure/ quantify the rate or intensity of the India's fifth-generation warfare and its economic and strategic implications on the CPEC. As the most of the surveys were conducted online, the correct responses were difficult to measure as the sampling size varied from all across the Pakistan in four provinces including Gilgit-Baltistan. Moreover, as the nature of India's 5th GW against the CPEC is covert and it is mostly carried out by cybersecurity attacks, intelligence tactics, narratives and propaganda, therefore measuring its impacts on the infrastructure of the CPEC was difficult to quantify.

Similarly, this study also found it difficult to analyze the nature of bots' detection in social media i.e. Facebook, YouTube and X (Twitter) accounts due to the technical complexities.

5. Limitations regarding theoretical framework

1. Manufacturing consent and non-media technologies

Noam Chomsky's theoretical perspective was used in this research in order to analyze the role of propaganda and narratives. This framework was sufficient to examine India's state

propaganda tactics against the Pakistan generally and the CPEC specially through traditional media like TV, Print and radio, but it had a few limitations in its applications. Chomsky's model lacked the role of newly emerged social media in the hands of common people instead of state and other non-media tactics like cybersecurity, intelligence warfare, law warfare, digital warfare, diplomatic overreach and economic coercion in India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan and its implications on the CPEC.

2. Overlooking regional cultural dynamics

Noam Chomsky's Manufacturing Consent is western oriented and encompass western political systems. It was examined in this study, this frameworks did not fully capture the distinct political, cultural and historical features of the South Asian region. The colonial legacies and historical deep-rooted conflicts in the form of Kashmir and then the advent of the CPEC might not be well addressed through these theories.

5.9 Future Research Directions

This section discusses the future research directions for the upcoming researchers regarding Pakistan-India relations with special reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and fifth-generation warfare. These research directions are as following;

1. Expanding the concept of the fifth-generation warfare

The future research can be conducted to further expand and specification of the definition, nature and tactics of the fifth-generation warfare as it still lacks the comprehensive framework to study it. This can be in the form of cyber warfare, psychological tactics, economic coercion, diplomatic overreach, narratives and information manipulation with special reference to Pakistan, India and the CPEC.

2. Comparative study of the fifth-generation warfare across regions

This study has attempted to explore India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan with special reference to the CPEC. In the same way, future research could further explore comparative studies of various states employing fifth-generation warfare tactics in different regions. It can further improve the understanding of 5th GW adopted in different geopolitical contexts.

3. Role of cyber warfare in fifth-generation warfare

Future research can further investigate in-depth that how cyber warfare i.e., hacking, misinformation and intelligence tactics are specifically used against the CPEC infrastructure.

4. Geopolitical shift and emergence of new alliances

This study has attempted to analyze the rising multipolarity and changing alliances in the South Asian region in the form of India-the USA alliance and China-Pakistan cooperation. The future research can further explore how shifting geopolitical alliances affect the dynamics and tactics of the 5th GW with respect to Pakistan, India and its impacts on the CPEC in the South Asian region.

5. The role of non-state actors in fifth-generation warfare

This study has discussed the role of states i.e., India and Pakistan as actors and the dynamics of fifth-generation warfare with special reference to the CPEC. An avenue for future research can be the role of non-state actors i.e., militant groups, terrorist groups or insurgent groups operating in the region, in the exacerbation of fifth-generation warfare. It can include the role of India in supporting those non-state actors against Pakistan generally and the CPEC's specially.

5.10 Recommendations

This section deals with the actionable recommendations in the findings of this study to guide the policy makers, security analysts and scholars regarding India's fifth-generation warfare and its implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Short-term Recommendations (1-3 years)

1. Pakistan should formally establish a centralized **National Counter-5GW framework** for countering Fifth Generation Warfare by integrating civilian, military, and informational domains. A centralized mechanism would enable fast detection, attribution, and response to hostile narrative campaigns while maintaining escalation control.
2. A devoted **Strategic Communication and Narrative Management Cell** focused entirely on the CPEC should be established. This unit should proactively counter disinformation by disseminating fact-based narratives, engaging international media, and leveraging digital diplomacy.
3. Pakistan should enhance **Real-time Monitoring Capabilities** for digital platforms, think-tank publications, and international media to identify emerging hostile narratives related to CPEC. Early detection would allow pre-emptive diplomatic and informational responses, reducing the effectiveness of psychological operations before they gain international traction.
4. Bilateral coordination mechanisms between Pakistan and China should be expanded beyond physical security to include **Joint Assessment of Information and Cognitive Warfare Threats**. Intelligence sharing on disinformation trends targeting BRI/CPEC

would strengthen collective resilience and prevent strategic surprise in the non-kinetic domain.

Long-term Recommendations (5 to 15 Years)

1. Pakistan should formulate and institutionalize a **Comprehensive Fifth Generation Warfare doctrine** that integrates information warfare, cyber resilience, psychological defense, economic security, and legal warfare. Such a doctrine would enable long-term strategic coherence and prevent reactive, ad-hoc responses to India's evolving 5GW posture.
2. Long-term resilience against Fifth Generation Warfare requires sustained investment in **Human Capital**. Pakistan should develop specialized academic programs, research centers, and training institutions focused on cognitive warfare, strategic communication, and digital security. This would reduce dependence on short-term technical fixes and enhance indigenous analytical capacity.
3. Pakistan should integrate Fifth Generation Warfare threat assessments into **Long-term National Security, Economic Planning, and Foreign Policy Frameworks**. Treating 5GW as a permanent strategic condition rather than a temporary challenge will allow policy continuity across political cycles.
4. Pakistan needs to address issues such as rights of minorities, ethnic conflicts and sectarian conflicts other such vulnerabilities which can be exploited by India against the strategic and economic security of the CPEC.
5. Pakistan should work on addressing and correcting the structural flaws in governance systems on priority basis.

6. Pakistan needs a considerable resources and efforts to build capacity of Pakistani media and sensitize them about the negative propaganda being spread by India in light of the emerging challenges.
7. Pakistan should work developing a special curriculum based on a special course/subject regarding dissecting and exposing misinformation/fake news and that must be studies in university level as a compulsory course.
8. Pakistan should involve indigenous stakeholders in the CPEC projects.
9. Pakistan should devise consensus-based policies regarding the CPEC projects in which local people must be given due attention.
10. Pakistan should focus on fostering regional cooperation and engaging with international stakeholders to emphasize the benefits of the CPEC for regional development which can effectively counter India's strategic aims.
11. Pakistan should resolve he internal problems on priority basis i.e., religious, subnational and political polarization.
12. Pakistan should enhance security of Chinese personnel and projects within country.

5.11 Conclusion

This research aimed at exploring and analyzing the nature of the 5th Generation Warfare and how it manufactures propaganda to undermine targeted states' strategic and economic interests and its 5th generation warfare objectives and tactics against Pakistan and its strategic and economic implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The main objective of this study included to explain the key objectives of the states generally and India specifically to use 5th generation warfare and to measure the impact of India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan with special reference to strategic and economic

implication on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). An attempt has been made in this study to fill three gaps respectively i.e., first, at literature level India's fifth generation warfare against Pakistan and its strategic and economic implications were not well explored; secondly, at theoretical level mostly studies to analyze Pakistan-India relations used traditional frameworks and critical perspectives were rarely used specially with reference to India's 5th GW and strategic and economic implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC); lastly, methodologically mixed method was needed to further explore the volume of India's 5th GW against Pakistan and its strategic and economic implications on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

The results of this research have revealed that the origin of fifth generation warfare is traceable from ancient times. Its footprints are evident in the works of Sun Tzu, Chanakya and Clausewitz whereas there is still academic debate over the proper definition of the fifth-generation warfare owing to its complex nature. Meanwhile, mostly academic discourse on the fifth-generation warfare defines it as a type of war which consist of kinetic and non-kinetic means including cyber-attacks, spreading false information, economic disruption, diplomatic overreach and efforts to sway public opinion and destabilize the political and social landscape of the rival state.

Moreover, the key elements of 5th GW include: military, political, economic, social, information in which states attempt to invest and exploit against each other. In the same way, Pakistan and India have been on logger heads since their inception due to multiple reasons which include: Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek issues and water resources etc., and both states presume each other as an existential threat in the South Asian region. The history of India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan, in the earliest raw form, can be traced back from the 1970s when India

initiated propaganda against Pakistan in east Pakistan and trained Mukti Bahini, the establishment Asian News International (ANI) by the state support of India which further intensified disinformation techniques against Pakistan.

Similarly, after 1998, when both states achieved nuclear capability, the nature of war was thoroughly changed in which India started non-kinetic means against Pakistan i.e., misinformation, exploiting identity fault lines, propaganda, and fake news. India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan can mainly be divided into following areas: Kashmir issue, Gilgit Baltistan, and Baluchistan. Moreover, the revisited rivalry between India and Pakistan can be explained in the context of Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and its flagship project the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in 2014. The CPEC, owing to its geo-strategic, geo-economic significance and vision, seems threatening and therefore it is unacceptable for India.

India perceives the CPEC a threat for its regional ambitions which she is attempting to accomplish as a major ally of the USA against China in the region. Therefore, India is using different tools of fifth-generation warfare against the CPEC which include: kinetic means in military modernization, cyber-attacks, spreading misinformation, establishing anti-Pakistan narratives, supporting propaganda, diplomatic overreach against Pakistan and exploiting ethnic and social fault lines of Pakistan.

India is doing so through various narratives i.e.; the CPEC is debt trap by China for Pakistan, the CPEC is unachievable and cannot be materialized, the CPEC is crossing through disputed territories like Gilgit and Kashmir, the people of Pakistan specially Baluchis, Sindhis and Pashtuns are against the establishment of the CPEC, political leadership is non-serious in the accomplishment of the CPEC, the work on the CPEC is halted and it is dormant now and the routes of the CPEC are insecure. India's fifth-generation warfare against the CPEC is empirically evident

from the revelation of Indian Chronicles through EU Disinfo Lab in 2019, Doval Doctrine under the official sanction of Indian government in Prime Minister Modi regime, and the establishment of Indian Special Cell against the CPEC under the direct control of India's PM Narendra Modi which solely aims to sabotage the CPEC.

Furthermore, this research attempted to explore and analyzed India's 5th generation warfare against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and its strategic and economic impacts through the theoretical lens of Noam Chomsky's Propaganda Model (PM) and Chankya's Undeclared War (Gudha Yuddha). An attempt has been made in this study to highlight the complex interaction of media, geopolitics and 5th generation warfare exploring the multifaceted intersections between information control, propaganda, public opinion and security.

Noam Chomsky's propaganda model is a theory that explains how the mass media in capitalist societies serve the interests of the powerful elite rather than the needs of the general public. According to Chomsky, the media is heavily influenced by five filters that shape the news presented to the public. According to Chankya's Undeclared War (Gudha Yuddha), war is completely opposite to open or conventional warfare because this war involves attacking and striking the enemy in silent and stealth.

The major focus of this war must be to reduce, diminish and limit the power of enemy. In this war, the direct military action is minimal compared to Kuta Yuddha, however more focus is given on: disinformation, propaganda, false narratives and espionage activities in enemy's territory. He suggests that understanding the psyche and psychological traits of the enemy are very crucial in this war, which can help to create internal divisions within the ranks of enemy to get victory in war.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has added another important dimension to this dynamic phenomenon between Pakistan and India. The project, which involves significant Chinese investment in infrastructure development in Pakistan, is perceived by India as infringing upon its territorial sovereignty, particularly in the disputed region of Gilgit-Baltistan. This perception is increasing tensions between India and Pakistan, potentially leading to proxy conflicts or military skirmishes.

This study also faced some limitations in reviewing literature, collecting, analyzing data, theorizing the complex phenomena of the 5th GW. The 5th GW is comparatively a novel concept in international relations and strategic studies and its scope and nature is also evolving and expanding. Therefore, it was a bit difficult to discuss all dimensions and facades of the 5th GW accurately and to apply on the dynamic relationship between Pakistan and India with special reference to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The focus of research on three major actors, Pakistan, India and China significantly excluded the role of other major and regional powers. Methodologically limitations on the difficult access to the reliable data, primary sources and sensitivity of the topic also put many limitations on this study.

Regarding future research directions, this study has shown that there is still a space for future research on many grounds including: the further expansion and specification of the definition and features of the fifth-generation warfare, the comparative study of the different regions with special reference to the states waging 5th GW, the role of global geopolitical shifts on the nature and strategy of the 5th GW in the world and the role of non-state actors in fifth-generation warfare.

In the last, this research has provided some actionable recommendations in the findings of this study to guide the policy makers, security analysts and scholars regarding India's fifth-

generation warfare and its strategic and economic implications for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

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Annexures

Elite Interview Questions

1. As an expert in military strategy, how would you define fifth-generation warfare and its manifestations in the context of India-Pakistan relations?
2. From your perspective, what are the primary strategic objectives of India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan, and how do they intersect with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?
3. As a *scholar specializing in economics, how do you assess the economic impact of India's fifth-generation warfare tactics on the stability and progress of the CPEC project? (*if any, otherwise you can skip this)
4. Given your expertise in political science, how would you evaluate the political ramifications of India's fifth-generation warfare on Pakistan's internal dynamics and its relationship with China vis-à-vis the CPEC?
5. As a security analyst, what do you see as the most significant security challenges posed by India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan, particularly concerning the CPEC's security infrastructure and operations?
6. As a *diplomat with experience in South Asian affairs, how do you perceive the role of diplomatic channels and international mediation in mitigating the tensions arising from India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC? (*if any, otherwise you can skip this)

7. Drawing from your expertise in regional geopolitics, how do you foresee the evolving strategic landscape in South Asia as a result of India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan and its implications on the CPEC?

8. As a historian specializing in conflicts in the region, how would you contextualize India's fifth-generation warfare within the historical context of India-Pakistan relations and its impact on regional stability, specifically concerning the CPEC?

9. From your experience as a policy analyst, what policy measures do you believe Pakistan and its allies should undertake to counteract the strategic, economic, and political implications of India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC?

Survey Questionnaires

Sampling population: Businessmen, academician, politicians, policy experts

Qualification/ Profession:

Age:

Area:

Gender:

1. Do you believe India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan have intensified in recent years?
 - a) Strongly Agree
 - b) Agree
 - c) Disagree
 - d) Strongly Disagree

2. How do you perceive the strategic implications of India's fifth-generation warfare on Pakistan?
 - a) Very Positive
 - b) Positive
 - c) Negative
 - d) Very Negative

3. To what extent do you think India's fifth-generation warfare impacts Pakistan's economy?
 - a) Significantly
 - b) Moderately
 - c) Minimally
 - d) Not at all

4. In your opinion, has India's fifth-generation warfare influenced the political stability of Pakistan?
 - a) Yes, to a great extent
 - b) Yes, to some extent

- c) No, insignificant influence
- d) No, not at all

5. How do you assess the effectiveness of India's fifth-generation warfare in weakening Pakistan's influence in the region?

- a) Highly effective
- b) Effective
- c) Ineffective
- d) Highly ineffective

6. Do you think India's fifth-generation warfare strategies have impacted the security situation for the CPEC?

- a) Strongly Agree
- b) Agree
- c) Disagree
- d) Strongly Disagree

7. What is your perspective on the economic implications of India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC?

- a) Extremely Positive
- b) Positive
- c) Negative
- d) Extremely Negative

8. To what extent do you think India's fifth generation warfare actions have hindered the progress of the CPEC project?

- a) Significant hindrance
- b) Moderate hindrance
- c) Minor hindrance
- d) No hindrance

9. How do you perceive China's response to India's fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan and its impact on the CPEC?

- a) Very proactive

- b) Proactive
- c) Reactive
- d) Inactive

10. Do you believe India's fifth-generation warfare poses a threat to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in the long term?

- a) Yes, a severe threat
- b) Yes, a moderate threat
- c) No, minimal threat
- d) No, no threat at all

11. In your opinion, how should Pakistan respond to India's fifth-generation warfare tactics concerning the CPEC?

- a) Military intervention
- b) Diplomatic negotiations
- c) Economic countermeasures
- d) International mediation

12. What role do you think international actors play in mitigating the effects of India's fifth-generation warfare on the CPEC?

- a) Significant role
- b) Moderate role
- c) Insignificant role
- d) No role

13. How do you perceive the influence of India's fifth-generation warfare on the overall stability of the region?

- a) Highly destabilizing
- b) Destabilizing
- c) Not destabilizing
- d) Stabilizing

14. To what extent do you think Pakistan's alliances, particularly with China, have shielded it from the effects of India's fifth-generation warfare against the CPEC?

- a) Completely shielded
- b) Partially shielded
- c) Minimally shielded
- d) Not shielded at all

15. How do you predict the future trajectory of India's fifth-generation warfare tactics against Pakistan and its impact on the CPEC?

- a) Escalation of conflict
- b) Stalemate
- c) De-escalation through negotiations
- d) Transformation into other forms of conflict

Strategic Implications

1. Do you believe India is actively engaged in fifth-generation warfare against Pakistan?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

2. How significant do you think the threat of fifth-generation warfare is to Pakistan's security?

Very Low

Low

High

Very High

3. To what extent do you agree that India's fifth-generation warfare tactics primarily target the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)?

Strongly Disagree

Disagree

Agree

Strongly Agree

4. How vulnerable do you perceive the CPEC to sabotage or disruption due to fifth-generation warfare tactics?

Not Vulnerable S
lightly Vulnerable
Moderately Vulnerable
Highly Vulnerable

5. Do you think Pakistan needs to enhance its cybersecurity measures to effectively counter fifth-generation warfare threats?
 - Not Necessary
 - Somewhat Necessary
 - Necessary
 - Very Necessary
6. Do you agree that India's fifth-generation warfare tactics are primarily aimed at destabilizing Pakistan?
 - Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
7. How significant do you believe propaganda and disinformation campaigns are in fifth-generation warfare?
 - Not Significant
 - Somewhat Significant
 - Significant
 - Very Significant
8. Should Pakistan collaborate with international partners to address fifth-generation warfare threats effectively?
 - Not Required
 - Somewhat Required
 - Required
 - Highly Required
9. Do you consider economic sanctions as effective measures to deter fifth-generation warfare tactics?
 - Not Effective
 - Somewhat Effective
 - Effective Highly
 - Effective
10. How important do you think technological advancements are for Pakistan to counter fifth-generation warfare tactics?
 - Not Important
 - Somewhat Important
 - Important
 - Very Important

11. Do you believe fifth-generation warfare poses a greater challenge for Pakistan compared to conventional warfare
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
12. Should Pakistan engage in diplomatic efforts to address fifth-generation warfare concerns with India?
- Not Necessary
 - Somewhat Necessary
 - Necessary
 - Very Necessary
13. To what extent do you agree that the international community should play a role in mitigating fifth-generation warfare threats in South Asia?
- Strongly Disagree
 - Disagree
 - Agree
 - Strongly Agree
14. Do you think Pakistan's response to fifth-generation warfare should include a combination of defensive and offensive measures?
- Not Necessary
 - Somewhat Necessary
 - Necessary
 - Very Necessary
15. Should Pakistan allocate more resources to develop counter-strategies specifically tailored for fifth-generation warfare tactics?
- Not Necessary
 - Somewhat Necessary
 - Necessary
 - Very Necessary