

# Guardians and Governors: The Multifaceted Role of the Pakistan Army in National Development and Islamic Ethics

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## Abstract

This comprehensive study explores the multifaceted role of the Pakistan Army in the development of Pakistan, with a particular focus on its integration of Islamic perspectives and ethical considerations. The Pakistan Army, since the country's inception in 1947, has evolved from a traditional military force into a pivotal actor in national affairs, influencing political, economic, and social spheres. This paper delves into the historical background of the Army, tracing its evolution from a segment of the British Indian Army to an independent entity deeply embedded in the fabric of the Pakistani state. It examines the Army's significant yet controversial role in the political arena, where it has intermittently assumed direct control and wielded substantial influence over civilian governance.

In terms of economic contributions, the study investigates the Army's direct involvement in various business ventures and its substantial impact on national economic policies. This includes an analysis of the Army's infrastructure projects and its role as a major employer, highlighting both the benefits and challenges of its pervasive economic presence.

**Keywords:** Multifaceted Role, Pakistan Army, National Development, Islamic Ethics.

## Introduction

The role of the Pakistan Army in the development of the country is a multifaceted and complex subject, deeply intertwined with the nation's history, political landscape, and socio-economic fabric. Since its inception in 1947, Pakistan has navigated a unique journey, balancing its military

dynamics, religious influences, and developmental challenges. The Pakistan Army, established as a guardian of the nation's territorial integrity and sovereignty, has evolved into an entity that significantly influences various aspects of national life beyond its conventional defense role<sup>1</sup>Historically, the Army has been a dominant force in Pakistan's political arena. Its influence has extended from direct military rule, witnessed in various coups d'état, to subtler forms of power exertion within the civil government. This deep entrenchment in politics has shaped the governance landscape of Pakistan, impacting its democratic processes and institutional development. The Army's political engagements have been a subject of extensive analysis, often viewed through the lens of its impact on civil-military relations and democratic governance<sup>2</sup>In the economic sphere, the Pakistan Army's role is multifaceted. It has been actively involved in infrastructure development, often stepping in during national emergencies, such as natural disasters or political instability. This involvement goes beyond mere intervention, as the military has established a substantial presence in various economic sectors, creating a complex interplay between military interests and national economic policies. The Army's economic activities, while contributing to certain developmental aspects, also present challenges and questions regarding their broader impact on the country's economic trajectory

Socially, the Army's influence is evident in its welfare initiatives, particularly in regions where civilian government infrastructure is limited. These initiatives include educational programs, healthcare services, and community development projects. The Army's social engagement, while filling critical gaps, also reflects its pervasive presence in the everyday lives of Pakistani citizens An integral aspect of understanding the Pakistan Army's role is the Islamic perspective. In a country where religion plays a significant role, the Army often aligns its operations and ethos with Islamic principles. This intersection of military conduct and religious values raises important questions about the balance between religious doctrines, military professionalism, and secular governance. The Army's adherence to Islamic principles in its operational and administrative conduct is a crucial dimension in assessing its impact on national development As this article progresses, it will explore these various roles of the Pakistan Army in detail, delving into historical contexts, analyzing current practices, and examining the interplay between military power, religious influence, and developmental goals. This

comprehensive exploration aims to shed light on the complex and dynamic role of the Pakistan Army in shaping the trajectory of Pakistan, a nation of strategic significance on the global stage.

### **Historical Background of the Pakistan Army**

The historical background of the Pakistan Army is integral to understanding its current role in the nation's development and the Islamic perspective it upholds. The origins of the Pakistan Army can be traced back to the British Indian Army. When the Indian subcontinent was partitioned in 1947, leading to the creation of India and Pakistan, the assets of the British Indian Army were divided between the two new states. This division marked the genesis of the Pakistan Army.<sup>3</sup> Initially, the Pakistan Army inherited a portion of the military structure established by the British. This inheritance included not just equipment and infrastructure but also operational and administrative doctrines. However, the fledgling army faced immediate challenges. The tumultuous events of partition, including mass migrations and communal violence, demanded swift action from the newly formed military force. In this early phase, the Army's role was primarily focused on ensuring the security and stability of the nascent nation. The first major military engagement for the Pakistan Army was the first Indo-Pakistan war in 1947-1948 over the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This conflict set the tone for the Army's future engagements and began to shape its identity separate from its British Indian roots. The war also cemented the Army's central role in Pakistan's national security and foreign policy, a theme that has persisted throughout the country's history.<sup>4</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Pakistan Army underwent significant modernization and restructuring. This period saw the establishment of key military institutions and academies, which were crucial in developing the Army's professional capabilities and doctrines. The influence of foreign military assistance, particularly from the United States during the Cold War, played a significant role in this modernization process. These external relationships were pivotal in shaping the Army's strategic orientation and capabilities. The military coups of 1958 and later in 1977 marked turning points in the Army's history, where it assumed direct control over the state's governance. These events signaled the Army's emergence as a dominant political force in Pakistan, a role that it has intermittently played since then. The military regimes during these periods implemented policies that had

long-lasting impacts on Pakistan's political and social fabric. The 1971 war with India, resulting in the creation of Bangladesh (formerly East Pakistan), was a critical juncture for the Pakistan Army. This event not only led to significant territorial and demographic changes for Pakistan but also prompted introspection and reevaluation within the Army. The subsequent years saw efforts to rebuild and reorganize the military structure, along with a renewed focus on national defense and security. In recent decades, the Pakistan Army's role has expanded beyond traditional military duties. It has become a significant actor in areas such as economic development, infrastructure, and social welfare. This expansion reflects the Army's evolving identity and its response to the changing needs and challenges faced by Pakistan.

### **Political and Security Role of the Pakistan Army**

The political and security role of the Pakistan Army is a critical aspect of its historical and contemporary identity, deeply embedded in the fabric of Pakistan's national narrative. Since its inception, the Army has played a pivotal role not only in maintaining national security but also in shaping the political landscape of the country.

### **Military Involvement in Politics**

The political role of the Pakistan Army dates back to its first direct intervention in the national government in 1958. This marked the beginning of a series of military coups and periods of military rule, significantly influencing Pakistan's political trajectory. The Army's rationale for these interventions has often been presented as a necessity to maintain national stability and integrity, especially in times of political turmoil or perceived ineffectiveness of civilian governments<sup>5</sup> During these periods of direct rule, the Army implemented various policies and reforms. These ranged from land and administrative reforms to attempts at modernizing the country's infrastructure and governance systems. However, these interventions have also been critiqued for hindering the development of stable democratic institutions in Pakistan, leading to a complex civil-military relationship that continues to influence the political sphere<sup>6</sup>

### **National Security and Defense**

The Pakistan Army's primary role in national security has been defined by its ongoing conflict and rivalry with neighboring India, with whom it has fought several wars, most notably in 1947, 1965, and 1971. The dispute over

Kashmir remains a central element of this conflict, influencing Pakistan's security policies and military strategies. In addition to conventional military threats, the Pakistan Army has also played a key role in countering non-traditional security challenges. This includes its involvement in the global War on Terror, particularly following the 9/11 attacks in 2001. The Army's operations against militant groups within Pakistan's borders have been a significant aspect of its security role, impacting both internal and regional stability

### **Balancing Civil-Military Relations**

The balance between military and civilian authority in Pakistan has been a subject of ongoing debate and analysis. The Army's influence over key aspects of governance, including foreign policy and national security, continues to shape its role in the political domain. While there have been periods of civilian rule, the Army's presence as a political actor remains evident, often leading to a complex and sometimes contentious civil-military dynamic.

### **Economic Contributions of the Pakistan Army**

The economic contributions of the Pakistan Army are a significant aspect of its role in the country's development. These contributions are multifaceted, encompassing direct involvement in economic activities and indirect influences on the country's economic policy and landscape.

#### **Direct Economic Activities**

The Pakistan Army's direct economic activities are substantial. It owns and operates a range of businesses and industries through its welfare foundations, most notably the Fauji Foundation, Shaheen Foundation, and Bahria Foundation. These entities have stakes in various sectors, including finance, manufacturing, and real estate. The Fauji Foundation, for instance, is one of the largest conglomerates in Pakistan, with interests in fertilizer, cement, food, power generation, gas exploration, and security services<sup>7</sup>The rationale behind these economic ventures is multifaceted. Officially, they are aimed at generating funds for welfare activities, particularly for the welfare of retired personnel and their families. However, these business activities have also raised questions about the military's role in the national economy and its impact on market competition and economic policy

#### **Influence on National Economic Policy**

The Pakistan Army's influence extends beyond direct economic activities. It has a significant say in national economic policy, particularly in areas related

to defense spending and security-related expenditures. The Army's budget and its allocations are substantial components of Pakistan's national budget, which has implications for the country's overall economic direction and priorities<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, the Army's role in national security significantly impacts foreign investment and economic stability. Periods of heightened security concerns or military engagement, both internally and along its borders, have direct implications for the economy, influencing investor confidence and economic growth.

### **Infrastructure Development and Employment**

The Army has been involved in various infrastructure projects across the country. These projects, often undertaken in remote or conflict-affected areas, include road construction, bridge building, and development of communication networks. While these projects serve strategic military purposes, they also contribute to the broader economic development by improving connectivity and access to markets. Additionally, the Army is a major employer in Pakistan. It provides employment opportunities not only for military personnel but also for civilians in its various business ventures and welfare institutions. This employment has socio-economic implications, particularly in areas with limited job opportunities.

### **Challenges and Critiques**

The economic role of the Pakistan Army has not been without challenges and critiques. Concerns have been raised about the transparency of its business operations and the potential for conflicts of interest. Critics argue that the military's involvement in the economy can lead to unfair market practices and distortions. There is also a debate about the balance between defense spending and allocations for other crucial sectors such as education and health.

### **Islamic Perspective and Ethical Considerations in the Pakistan Army**

The Islamic perspective and ethical considerations in the Pakistan Army are crucial elements that shape its policies, operational conduct, and overall ethos. As a predominantly Muslim country, Pakistan embeds Islamic values in various aspects of its governance and societal structures, including its military. This intertwining of religion and military affairs brings unique ethical considerations to the forefront.

### **Integration of Islamic Principles**

The Pakistan Army, recognizing the importance of Islam in the lives of its citizens and soldiers, integrates Islamic principles into its operations and institutional culture. This integration is seen in the provision of religious services, the inclusion of Islamic teachings in military education, and the observance of religious practices within the armed forces. The Army's adoption of Islamic values is not only a reflection of the country's religious identity but also a way to maintain discipline and moral standards among its personnel. This integration, however, extends beyond mere observance of religious practices. It influences the ethical framework within which the Army operates. Decisions and actions, both in peacetime and conflict, are often guided by the principles of Islamic morality. This is particularly relevant in operational contexts, where ethical decision-making is crucial.

#### **Ethical Conduct in Operations**

The Pakistan Army's engagement in various internal and external operations raises important ethical questions. Internally, its role in counterterrorism operations and in regions experiencing sectarian or political strife demands a careful balance between security objectives and the protection of civilian rights. Externally, the longstanding conflict with India over Kashmir, characterized by religious and nationalistic fervor, presents ethical challenges in maintaining a just conduct of war<sup>9</sup> In addressing these challenges, the Army often relies on Islamic teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and the protection of innocent lives. These principles are intended to guide soldiers in their conduct, ensuring that their actions align with both military objectives and religious ethics. However, the practical application of these principles in complex and often volatile situations is a subject of ongoing debate and scrutiny

#### **Challenges in Balancing Military and Religious Duties**

Balancing military responsibilities with religious duties is another dimension of the Islamic perspective within the Pakistan Army. Soldiers are expected to fulfill their military duties while adhering to their religious obligations, a balance that can be challenging in operational environments. The Army's efforts to facilitate this balance are seen as crucial for maintaining morale and ensuring ethical conduct. However, the intertwining of religion and military affairs also raises concerns. Critics argue that excessive emphasis on religious identity might undermine professionalism and secular aspects of military service. There are also concerns about potential sectarian biases influencing

military policies or operations, given the diverse sectarian composition of Pakistan's population <sup>10</sup>

### Conclusion

This detailed exploration of the Pakistan Army's role in the development of Pakistan and its integration of Islamic perspectives provides a nuanced understanding of the complex and multifaceted nature of military involvement in a nation's development. The Pakistan Army, since its inception, has evolved into more than a defense force, embedding itself in the political, economic, social, and religious fabric of the country.

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