Democratisation and Civil-Military Relations in South Asia

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ABSTRACT

Beginning in the middle of the twentieth century, the global spread of democracy changed the international political scene dramatically, shifting which democracies were the norms.Democratisation refers to the process of moving towards a more democratic political development which transitions from authoritarian, tyrannical, and autocracy to a responsible executive government and democratic political system. The factors like economic prosperity, human rights, civil society, and security in various concerns all play role in the process of democratisation.Civil-Military Relations (CMR) is the relationship between civilians as politicians, and bureaucratswith the military of a nation-state at every level. The field of CMR is a prime concern with how civilian governments direct or control the military system of a democratic country. In South Asia, the shape of democratisation and civil-military relations is ups and down which are very dynamic. The region became a more democratic shape after WWII which leads to civilian control existing when the responsible government democratic political system hold ultimate control over the military.That is to say, civilians should have the final matters of national security and military policy and operations.The major challenges face like corrupt political leadership, inefficient democratic institutions, the rule of law, and growing military control over civilians as all aspects affect the development of this region. In this study, the paper understands the theoretical overview of CMR and analyses the democratic development and crisis in South Asia. This paper also examined the nature of civil-military relations in South Asia particularly in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. This paper uses the qualitative method to examine the democratisation and civil-military relations in South Asia.

Keywords: *Democratisation; Civil-Military Relations; South Asia; Politics; Security.*

INTRODUCTION

Democratisation refers to the process of moving towards a more democratic political development that transitions from authoritarian, totalitarian, and autocracy to a responsible democratic political system. It has transitioned from a dictatorship to a fully democratic system, from a ruling political system to an answerable government. The various factors affect economic prosperity, human rights, civil society, and security in various concerns as all play role in the process of democratisation. Samuel P. Huntington in his book, *'The Third Wave: Democratisation in the Late Twentieth Century'* define the three major wave in democratisation process as the first wave began from the American and French revolutions. It starts from 1882 to 1926 as the long wave of democratisation which abolition of property, and universal suffrage and gradually established the responsible executive. From 1922 to

1942 the first reverse wave of democratisation collapse many European democracies. The second wave began from 1943 to 1962 which the emergence of newly independent British colonies to established democratic institutions and democratic spared in Latin America. The revise second wave from 1958 to 1975 the shift toward an authoritarian system due to revise military rule. Finally, the Third Wave of democratisation started in 1974 when military rule was replaced by the democratic regime and later democracy replaced the authoritarian regime in around thirty countries in Europe, Asia, and Latin America(Huntington, 2012, pp. 16–21). Moreover, democratisation is a process towards democratic political systems from authoritarian or totalitarian regimes.

In the post-colonial states in South Asia, some countries like India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka took the initiative for the development model after independence and progressed towards democratic transformation. The holding of elections and the peaceful transition of power are unquestionably crunch moments in the political histories of several states in South Asia. Consequently, the picture of democracy in South Asia is quite complex because of the weak political leadership, military dominance, internal disruption, irregular free and fair elections, etc. While instances of actual martial law are infrequent in South Asian countries, the military is still a major impediment to democratisation in many of the region's states.

This paper tries to analyze the three important questions, First, what is the theoretical relevance in the field of civil-military relations in South Asia? The broad understanding or theories of civil-military relations given by Samuel P. Huntington, Moris Janowitz, Peter D. Fever, and Rissa Brooks defined the core argument of civilian control with the effective use of forces in democratic states. Second, How is the democratic development and crisis happening in the region? The Democratic Development and Crisis in South Asia discussed an effective and smoothly transformed of power, civil liberties, free and fair elections, responsible executive, economic prosperity, and security. last but not least, what are the nature and shape of civil-military relations in South Asia particularly India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka? The nature of civil-military relations in South Asia examined the control or dominance of civilian and military states and the Democratic Control of Armed Forces. The methodology used in this paper is qualitative which interprets the existing to analyses democratisation and CMR in South Asia.

Relevance of Civil-Military Relations in Democracy: Theoretical Overview

Civil-military relations (CMR) are the relationship between civilians without any arms like politicians, bureaucrats, and the military which arms forces of a country. There are three important actors in the field of CMR such as the State, society, and the Military. It means for the very survival of a polity and finding out what makes for good and bad relationships. Civil-military ties are always changing, and they are different in each state. Dissatisfaction is one of the biggest problems with civilian and military leadership when it comes to the right role of the military in making policies and making decisions. In the field of CMR, Samuel P. Huntington in his book, *'The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-military Relations'* defined two kinds of control in CMR. First, Subjective Control integrates the military with politics and society. In other words, it succeeds in its purpose by civilizing the military and turning it into a reflection of the state. On the other is Objective Control improves military efficiency and civilian oversight while remaining politically impartial. Here, the efforts of military professionals and political leaders are separated into their fields of specialization (Huntington, 1981). In addition, Huntington favors the objective control model which it counters by critics. Huntington defined objective control as the military autonomy which enhances civilian control and national security (Huntington, 1981). Huntington's theory says that there will always be conflicts between the military and the rest of society. These tensions are the functional imperatives that the military must be able to handle well to do its job of defending the state and protecting national interests and threats from the outside. In his societal imperatives, the national ideals, national character, and state ideology affect the pursuit of national security.

Another scholar in the field of CMR, Moris Janowitz in his book, *'The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait'* criticizes the Huntington theory of objective control model that said tautological type of the professional solder. He argued that professional soldiers remain under civilian control based on self-conceptions and willingness. Janowitz interacts with military leaders and he defined, as they go about their daily lives, they operate following the belief that they are public servants and the view that "there is no question about who is in control" in terms of civil-military relations (Janowitz, 1960). He also defined the constabulary model in the field of CMR illustrating that

professional soldiers in a democratic state to performance of modern weapons while conserving the civilian order (Burk, 2005).

Peter D Feaver, another important scholar in this field conceptualizes the theory of CMR given by Huntington and Janowitz. He states that Huntington and Janowitz do not have solutions about that field but both are analyses different perspectives Huntington defined the political or institutional and Janowitz defined the sociological perspectives. He argued CMR was problematic that he states, it was important for a government to strike a balance between two major concerns "It must create a military establishment strong enough to protect the state on the other it must somehow ensure that this same military establishment does not turn on the state that established it"(Feaver, 1996). In addition, other scholars that discussed the theory of CMR according to Rebeca Schiff argued that the concordance theory which is known as 'separation theory'described the three patterns such as the (1) Military, (2) Political Elite and (3) Citizenry (Schiff, 2008). Rissa Brooks and other scholars define the distributional approach which CMR in strategic assessment(Brooks, 2018). These are the argument defined by the authorsin a democratic state, civilians properly manage the military.

Above mentioned argument about CMR is defined by authors from Western perspectives. However, in South Asia, various scholars described CMR in this region.Surendra Chopra said that there are three ways for the government and the military to work together in growing countries. First, the Western liberal model is defined by three things: the institution of competitive elections as the base of political power, the rise of the idea of the welfare state, and the solidification of the validity of the civilian political order. Huntington has thought of it as a skilled objective type of CMR. The second model is used in communist countries and shows how the party and the army work well together. The third model is about the praetorian, which has a weak and unstable government, bad leadership, and no tools or frameworks to channel political support(Chopra, 1992, pp. 109–113).VeenaKukreja has provided a detailed description of three countries in South Asia as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh, from their history and culture to the extent to which the military is involved in politics. It also emphasizes the role of ideological, political, cultural, and economic issues in shaping CMR patterns(Kukreja, 1991). South Asia provides a leading

example of the interaction between different patterns of CMR and National Stability (Rizvi, 1989, pp. 47–78).

Together, the civilian and military sectors can foster stability and maintain a certain pattern of civil-military relations by addressing issues like consensus formation, political partition, legitimacy, and the connection of the public to the polity. Changes in the CMR pattern are inevitable, nevertheless, because the ruling class can never hope to solve them(Rizvi, 1989, pp. 47–78). Two and a half models of CMR have developed in South Asia, India (civilian supremacy), Pakistan (Military dominance), and Bangladesh (1/2 factionalism and dissension) (Rizvi, 1989, pp. 47–78). It claims that civilian control exists when government officials have final authority over military activities and that control is maximized when soldiers are limited to war preparation. Only when rulers have the power o force military officers to accept civilian oversight will civilian controls develop. Democracy and military-civilian domination will only emerge when civilian rule is institutionalized.

Democratic Development And Crisis In South Asia

South Asia is an important military organization in the world today, India is the fourth largest military strength and Pakistan is the seventh largest military strength(Global Fire Power, 2023), both have nuclear power countries in this region. Paul Brass argued that the political trajectory and weak democracy in South Asia may be traced back to the British colonial rule of the region. In South Asia, the three most prominent states to achieve independence from the British were India, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka. After a bloody civil war, Bangladesh achieved independence in 1971. While Bhutan was a protectorate of India, Nepal was never under direct British control. (Brass, 2010, p. 1).

The Asian peninsula has had the poorest effects from the worldwide flood of democratisation. The Maldives scored highly on Freedom House's annual assessment of civil liberties and the protection of political rights. In 1974, a new wave of democratisation got underway. South Asian societies are nonetheless semi-imperial, semi-urban, and semi-industrial while adopting Western-style democratic government (H. M. S. Kumar, 2008, pp. 124–155). After the end of WWII, in particular, many national leaders understood the value of democracy and implemented it in their nations. Nonetheless, the concept of democracy is ubiquitous in contemporary national and international politics.

Democracy emphasizes how important it is for people to vote and have civil freedoms. In the world of politics today, it is clear that democracies do better or more suitable government than many dictatorships when it comes to economic growth, political freedom, human rights, gender, welfare, etc. In South Asia, there are many different kinds of states, such as democratic, socialist, military, and monarchical ones. India is one of the largest democracies in the world and also Indian Prime minister addressed the seventy-six United Nations General Assembly, "India is not just the oldest democracy but also the mother of democracy" (*Shri Dharmendra Pradhan Launches the Book 'India,* 2022) However, some nation as military dominance exists in democratic government. Still, every country in South Asia now knows how important freedom is. Even though South Asia is becoming more open, talk about the following.

Democratic Development in South Asia
Political Liberties and Participation

In India, the constitution says that people have the right to peacefully gather together, and in most cases, they also have the right to protest. India's political participation rate is still high, even though there are big differences in income, learning, and the way men and women are treated. The charismatic leadership of India's Prime Minister has spread around the world. Since independence India's strong political liberties and participation have increased. In Bangladesh, the law gives people the right to meet together and join groups. It also gives people the right to take part in public meetings and marches. Later, the country has a long history of having a lot of people vote(Wolf, 2017). In Pakistan, political turmoil, temporary military violence, shady elections, a short-lived government, accusations of corruption, and institutional consumerism affect not only the results of the general election but also how Pakistani citizens take part in politics.

Civil Rights

In South Asia, twenty-three percent of the world's people live there. The Human Development Index says that it is the poorest part of the world, and all of the SAARC countries wrote the constitution based on human rights and the constitutionality of basic freedoms (*South Asia Regional Overview,* 2020).To make sure that pro-people and pro-democracy policies are put into place in South Asia, there needs to be a stronger policy of an independent court and a bigger role for it. In South Asia, the civil rights movement is a collection of rules and policies about how to talk about people, government, democracy, 'rights, equality, and so on in the right way.

ELECTORAL REGIME

All of the South Asian countries say they are democracies, but this only shows that nine of them make the same choice. The way democracy is used varies a lot, but it depends on the voting method that is used in the first election. The voting rules in each country lead to a different type of representative politics. The rules of democracy often make it hard to see how different they are, like when leaders say things that take people's attention away from the process of getting into power. In South Asia, most of the state has independent elections bodies to promote free and fair elections. Some countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh have irregular conduct of elections after three decades of Independence.

Democratic Crisis in South Asia

South Asia is going through a bad time in terms of growth. Most South Asian countries depend more on the world market for their finances. Regional growth is affected by international political and economic processes, as well as by corrupt political leadership, ineffective state institutions, and a growing military presence. As government communities become interested in modernization projects, local communities slowly lose their value and the elites enjoy their high positions.Problems plaguing democracies include a lack of executive or financial representation, as well as a disregard for the rule of law and ethics in public life. Capability for organizations operating on a regional scale (R. Kumar, 2009, p. 6).

But every country in South Asia knows how important it is to follow democratic rules. The question that often comes up is whether any of these countries follow democracy. Even if there are elections every five or six years, democracy is not guaranteed if the courts are not independent, there is no law and order, and human and political rights have nothonored. Most South Asian countries now accept corruption, intolerance, and political systems that don't work well. For example, India was number 80 on the Corruption Perceptions Index in 2019. Sri Lanka was number 93, Pakistan was number 120, Nepal was number 113, and Bangladesh was number 146(*Corruption Perceptions Index 2019,* n.d.).

Civil-Military Relations In South Asia

The relationship between civilian and military are common in many South Asian countries. India is an old

democracy where civilians have full power over the armed forces. The CMR in Pakistan is in the opposite direction of India. In Pakistan's seventy years of history, the military has directly or indirectly ruled for twenty-five years. Even when the army was not directly in charge, it still played a very important and influential part in Pakistan's policy. Recently, the civilian governments which as the political leaders of Bangladesh took control over the military. But in the past, there have been times when the military hadcontrolled the government.However, the differences between these three cases make them an interesting starting point for a comparison study that aims to look at CMR in South Asia. People think that democratic control of the armed forces is that the military leaders obey the government's orders and that there is no armed rebellion (Trinkunas, 1999, pp. 14–18).

Harold Trinkunas has argued that the Government authorities exercising discretion over military operations, structure, and use constitutes civilian control. He also said that a further condition of civilian rule is the absence of military influence over domestic policymaking(Trinkunas, 1999, p. 4).In South Asia, India has already become a democracy and put civilians in charge of the military. In Pakistan, civilian governments are often unstable, and the military is separate and runs on its own. Even though direct military rule is less common in South Asia, military forces still make it hard for many countries to move toward democracy. Here, we'll talk about South Asia's civilian rule in a general way.

Civil-military Relations in India: Supremacy of Civilian

In India, civilians have taken decisions and control over the armed forces since independence shows that there is a good relationship between the two. The parliamentary form of government and the idea that civilians are more important than the troops are both things that the British gave to India(Chari, 1977, pp. 3–4). After India got its freedom, it became clear that civilian institutions were more important than the military. This was partly because the central government was strong and stable, and also because most Indians were loyal to civilian institutions. India's CMR structure has been robust enough to handle the numerousuncertain situation that has knockout out the nation in both the domestic and international sphere. Although, the nature or shape of CMR will change over time, the fact that civilian government has control over the armed forces.

After India got its freedom in 1947, Indian politicians were suspicious of the Indian Army because it was the last group still supporting the British Raj. As needed, they worked hard to keep the military from making policy or having much influence. CMR in India after it was no longer a colony has been a kind of model for the rest of the Third World. The military's power has grown a lot without posing a big threat to civilian rule. The Indian military is going through political and technological changes that could lead to a new phase in terms of both its abilities and its role. Since the war with Pakistan in 1971, the Indian military has been in charge in South Asia, but recent events could have effects that go beyond the area(Wood & Vaagenes, 1984, pp. 721–735). Stephen P. Cohen, explores the history of the Indian army, from its initial exploitative function to its achievements in the face of formidable political and military difficulties during WWII(Cohen, 2001).

Furthermore, a vibrant functional democracy, institutionalization of the electoral process, and smooth and constitutional transfer of power in India created a delicate balance among the social, political, and economic forces and strengthened the management capacity of the political system. HasanAskariRizvi noted that "it is possible to sustain the existing pattern of CMR characterized by the primacy of the civil leadership"(Rizvi, 1998, pp. 96–113). P. R. Chari stated that Civil-military interactions, non-military roles, public perception, social stratification, outside influences, crisis response, technological advancement, and modernization are all major concerns in this field.(Chari, 1977). Therefore, Idia's CMR is expected to retain the essential features of civilians which political leaders and bureaucrats control over the military machinery even as the nature and form of those connections evolve.

India's civil-military relations make sure that the military is under civilian rule. Before the British took over, the king was in charge of the government, the courts, and the military. During the long time that the British ruled India, relationships between civilians and the troops grew. India changed to a federal parliamentary democracy after it got its freedom. The President is the Commander in Chief. By putting civilian leaders and bureaucrats in charge of national security strategy, India was able to keep the military under civilian control. When it comes to how the government and the military work together, India is unique among post-colonial countries. Even though India is so big and has a large, diverse population with problems like illiteracy, poverty,

and differences based on caste, region, etc., it has been able to set up a democratic government with the conduct of free and fair elections and civilian control over the military. In modern India, there haven't been any big fights between the government and the troops. One area where civilian and military officials have had different ideas is about how much and what kind of role the military should play in making decisions about national security. The civilian administration has always thought it was their job to make policy decisions about national security problems. The military's role has been limited to carrying out the policy decisions made by the civilian administration.

Civil-Military Relations in Pakistan: Military Dominance over Civilian

In Pakistan, civilian governments encounter several obstacles that make it hard for them to exert full control over the political systems. The countries get independence in 1947 separated from India. Since then, the death of political leaders had led to political instability which the military control over the government. Hasan-Askari Rizvi writing in *Armed Forces and Society* argues that there is no way for a civilian administration in Pakistan to function effectively without the backing of the Army given that the country is so deeply divided, so saturated with sophisticated weapons, so brutalized by civic violence and so overrun by the growth of narcotics (Rizvi, 1998, pp. 96–113).

Pakisatn'sCMR worsened when the principal constituent get-together was broken down by the senator general, Ghulam Muhammad, under President, General Ayub Khan's guidance in 1954. Ayub Khan demonstrated to debilitate civilian organizations. He forced the military's authority through his control of the state and its governmental issues(Siddiqa, 2007).Smruti S. Pattanaike has argued, the decision about national security and the management of the military at the highest levels have always been a joint effort by civilian and military institutions in democracies. However, civilians had little influence on military and national security (Pattanaik, 2000).HasanAskari Rizvi defines, there has been an increase in the induction of Pakistani military personnel into civilian institutions, relief and rescue efforts following natural disasters, public welfare projects utilizing the army's organizational and technological resources, and the fight against terrorism (Rizvi, 1998, pp. 96–113).

Since the political elite couldn't handle problems with national security well enough, they couldn't show that they were more important than the military. The ruling elite's political effectiveness was hurt by the growing number of people who didn't trust them in politics and the worsening of their credibility crisis. Some of them started to look to the military, as well as to their political opponents, to help them get ahead. This gave the top military leaders more power in negotiations, which made it easy for them to take on a bigger role in the government (Rizvi, 1998, pp. 96–113). Stephen P. Cohen in his article, *'The Militaries of South Asia'* has stated that each of the three long-lasting military regimes-that of Ayub Khan, Zia ul-Haq, and Pervez Musharraf has left the country in worse shape than it was in before the coup(Brass, 2010).Therefore, military dominance in politics is a common feature of the state of Pakistan and the nature of irresponsible and self-aggrandizing politics in Pakistan is given.

Pakistan is a normal example of a praetorian state in a developing country, which means that the military always has a plan ready to take over the government. Pakistan has been a country since 1947. Since then, it has tried to improve its civilian democracy, but for most of its history, it has either been ruled by the military or has been controlled by the military. Since it became independent, Pakistan has been run by the military for more than 30 years. Even when they were not in charge, the military kept a strong grip on politics and national security by working behind the scenes. This is also because Mohammad Ali Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan, the first two leaders of Pakistan's government, have died since the country got its freedom. Since Pakistan became independent, there have been four big coups. The Pakistan Army has ruled the country for 33 of the 73 years since it became independent. In Pakistan, there isn't a political system or accountability because there isn't an elected government. This limits civil liberties and causes violence, which leads to the military getting involved in politics. After Jinnah and ZA Bhutto died, there were no more popular and strong civilian leaders. This made it hard for the political leaders to keep parties like the Muslim League and Pakistan People's Party together. Under these conditions of weak political leadership, widespread bad governance, corruption, and a security threat from India, the Pakistani military was able to have a bigger say in the country's politics.

Civil-Military Relations in Bangladesh: From Military Supremacy to Civilian Control

In Bangladesh, the political parties have been divided between the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and

the AwamiLeague with the society also deeply divided along political lines. Many have argued that such a culture has an impact on governance, professionalism, and institution-building in Bangladesh. It appears that the military is allowed to conduct its operations without interference. However, the military is subject to both objective and subjective checks and balances. According to Mohammad Karim, this could have an effect on the dedication and competence of military leaders at the strategic and operational levels (Karim, 2019, pp. 75–96).

Karim defined "conceptualize a comparative framework on the CMR at both political and strategic level in the context of major South Asian states"(Karim, 2016, pp. 277–297). EmajuddinAhamed in his article defined "The nature of the political system at independence and the emergence of the military as the ruling elite"(Ahmed, 2004, pp. 101–118). He also argued that "Democracy hopes that only political parties can maintain the emerging consensus and compromise" (Ahmed, 2004, pp. 101–118).

Bangladesh's armed forces are a result of the country's freedom war. They took part in the fighting, which was led by the civilian government in exile. This is a unique example of how the government and the military work together. Armed forces made them worried about the future role of the state and the reorganisation of the military in the time after freedom. Under the charismatic guidance of Sheikh Mujib Rahman, the military in Bangladesh supported the newly built democratic framework by following a civilian direction. Since Bangladesh got its freedom, there have been two major coups. From 1975 to 1990, when General Ziaur Rahman and General Ershad were in charge, the military became an important political force. Since Bangladesh got its freedom 49 years ago, the Bangladesh Army has been in charge for 15 of those years. After the general elections in 1991, Bangladesh went back to being a parliamentary government. Because of this, the civilians now have more power over the military in Bangladesh than the military does.

Civil-Military Relations in Sri Lanka

There has been a lengthy and essentially uninterrupted history of democratic rule in Sri Lanka under the CMR. The military in Sri Lanka, a country in South Asia, is subservient to the civilian government. Two failed coup attempts occurred in these nations in 1962 and 1996. After Sri Lanka gained its freedom, the armed forces

had to deal with the tumult that it had sown(Silva, 2001, p. 5). According to Stephen P. Cohen, civilian militarism occurs when regular people start acting and thinking like soldiers(Silva, 2001, pp. 18–21).Since 1991, when civilian political leaders in Sri Lanka have the military to intervene in and settle factional fights, the country has been in a new stage of CMR.(Burger, 1992, p. 1).

Sri Lanka's CMR ties were shaped by the Liberation Tiger of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) led separatist insurgency after 1990. The military elite devotion to the political regime was tested by internal and international civilian leaders(Wijayaratne, 2015).After the 2009 conflict, civilian officials changed the military's focus from counterinsurgency to national development. The military's rule nation-building programs under the Ministry of Defence strengthened military involvement across the country, but civilian authorities' subjective control and institutional process limited its impact. Thus, military privileges did not secure civilian supremacy.

Conclusion

After many postcolonial republics gained their independence, a democratisation process began in South Asia. There are generally highs and lows in terms of democratisation and civilian power in this area. Nonetheless, after achieving independence, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka all rebuilt democratic governments, albeit with different civilian control and military domination. Different authors have provided extensive definitions of the theory or concept of CMR, each from their unique vantage point. Civilian control of the military and the efficient use of the military under civilian authority has been theorized for democracies. There are certain states in South Asia where democracy is flourishing, as evidenced by the fact that their most recent elections were held without major controversies. In democratic South Asian countries like India, civilian governance is supreme over the military, and the military has shown little to no interest in politics since independence. The Indian government has recently implemented measures to better utilise military brass in strategic planning. When compared to India, Pakistan's CMR is moving in the opposite direction, towards military supremacy in the political, economic, and strategic spheres. The CMR has shifted power in Bangladesh from the military to the civilian government. Sri Lanka's military is also under civilian command. Finally, in India, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, the civilian government oversees the military,

but this is not the case in Pakistan, where the military continues to exert undue influence.

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