

Understanding Soft Power in India–Pakistan Relations: A Case Study of the Kartarpur Corridor

Utkarsh Sanjay Nikoshe

Ph. D Research Scholar, Amity Institute of International Studies (AIIS)- Amity University Noida,
Uttar Pradesh, India

Dr. Sukhwant Singh Bindra

Professor, Director Research, Amity Institute of International Studies (AIIS) and Amity Institute of Public
Policy at Amity University Noida, Uttar Pradesh, India

Abstract:

One of the most important characteristics of the India–Pakistan relationship besides conflict is the presence of soft power mechanisms. Amongst numerous mediums of co-optive power such as sports cuisine, language, religion that exist between the two nations, a recent bilateral initiative is the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor. Research has shown that the corridor promotes cultural harmony and provides socio-economic advantages to both countries. However, an aspect of the Corridor which current studies do not address is that it also harnesses significant religious sentiments which can boost soft power cooperation between New Delhi and Islamabad. Therefore, an attempt has been made in this paper to understand how the corridor elevates soft power dynamics between India and Pakistan by acting as a platform for Sikhs and others. The study has been conducted through a qualitative methodology and data was analysed through content analysis. The findings from this study point out that the Corridor's historical legacy, presence of sacred relics, its association with the life of Guru Nanak when coupled with the modern visa-free access system, the corridor transcends into from a religious site into a cross-border hub which can be benevolent for both India and Pakistan, especially to the researchers.

Keywords:

Soft Power, Kartarpur Corridor, India–Pakistan Relations, Sikhism.