

**Question :- Define the concept of Strategic Culture and highlight the major determinants of Pakistan's Strategic Culture.**

### **1) Introduction :-**

Strategic culture refers to the set of shared beliefs, values, and assumptions that influence the strategic behaviour of a nation or organization. It is often considered a framework through which states interpret their security environment, guide military doctrine and develop foreign policies. Pakistan's strategic culture is shaped by its historical experiences, geopolitical position and national security concerns. Pakistan's strategic culture also reflects the influence of its relationship with the US and China, as well as its role in regional security dynamics.

### **2) Defining the concept of Strategic Culture :-**

Strategic culture is defined as:-

“nation's traditions, values, attitudes, patterns of behaviour, habits, symbols, achievements and ways of adapting to the environment.”

(Ken Booth)

### 3) Defining Pakistan's Strategic Culture:-

Pakistan's strategic culture refers to the set of beliefs, values, historical experiences, and geopolitical realities that shape the country's approach to security, defense and foreign policy.

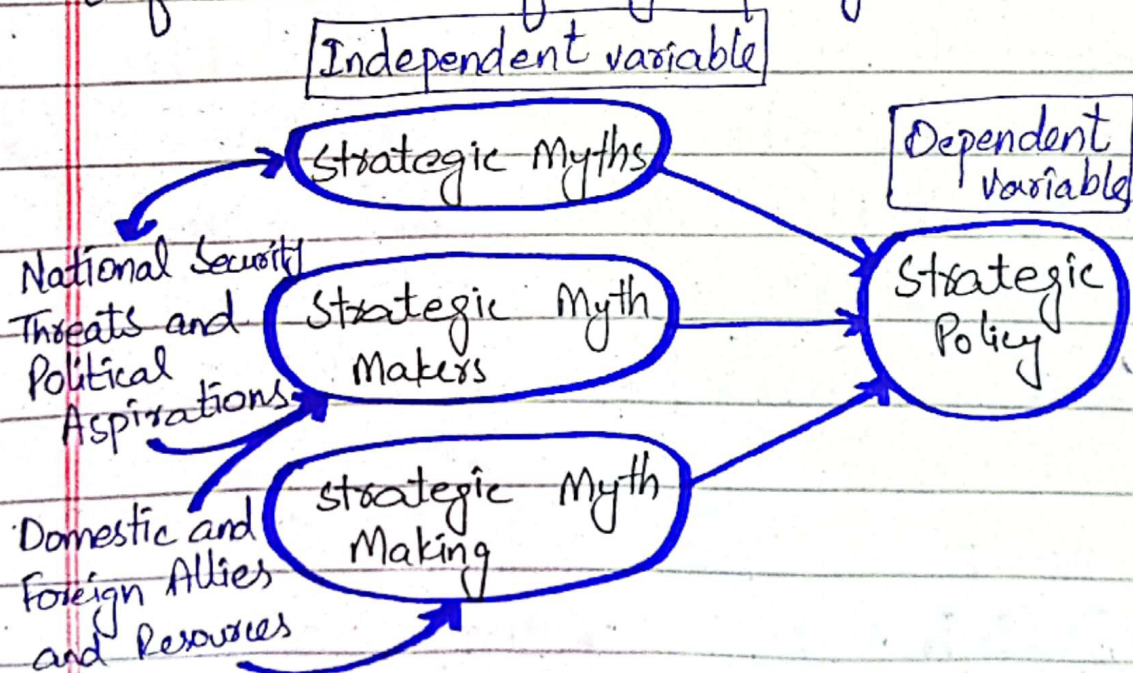


Fig: Pakistan's Strategic Culture

Pakistan's strategic culture is characterized by 4 beliefs:-

- i) Pakistan is an insecure and incomplete state.
- ii) Afghanistan is a source of instability.
- iii) India seeks to dominate and destroy Pakistan.
- iv) Indian aspirations for regional hegemony must be resisted.

#### 4) Determinants of Pakistan's Strategic Culture:-

The determinants of Pakistan's strategic culture shape its security policy, defense strategies and international relations. Following are key determinants of Pakistan's strategic culture:-

##### 4.1) Historical Experience:-

Pakistan's history, especially its creation and subsequent conflicts with India, plays a crucial role in shaping its

Strategic culture.

## i) Partition & Creation of Pakistan:-

The partition of India and subsequent migration of millions of people created a deep sense of insecurity in Pakistan.

The loss of territory, particularly Kashmir, during **1947-48** Kashmir War, entrenched the perception of India as a primary threat. The partition and loss continue to shape Pakistan's military posture, emphasizing deterrence and territorial defense.

## ii) India-Pakistan Wars:-

Pakistan's two major wars with India (**1965 and 1971**) further reinforced the importance of military readiness. The 1971 war was particularly traumatic for Pakistan, fostering a strong belief in need for military capability.

## 4.2) Geopolitical Location:-

Pakistan's strategic location at the

crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East adds complexity to its security concerns.

### **Example:- Afghanistan and the "War on Terror"**

Pakistan's strategic location next to Afghanistan has placed it at the heart of regional security issues. The impact of the Taliban and ongoing instability in Afghanistan are critical to Pakistan's strategic decision-making.

### **4-3) Military Dominance:-**

The Pakistan military, particularly the Army, has been a central institution in shaping the country's strategic culture. Its involvement in decision-making and defense of nation has resulted in a military-centric national strategic outlook.

**For example:- The Role of Nuclear Weapons**

Pakistan's pursuit of nuclear weapons in response to India's nuclear program is a key aspect of its military-oriented strategic culture. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine emphasizes "minimum credible deterrence."

#### 4.1) Ideological and Religious Factors:-

Islam has played a significant role in shaping Pakistan's identity and strategic outlook. The country was created as a homeland for Muslims in the sub-continent and its Islamic identity continues to influence its strategic culture.

##### i) Islamic Identity:-

Pakistan's identity as a Muslim-majority state and its ties to the broader Islamic world influence its foreign policy and security outlook.

##### For example:-

Pakistan has historically sought support from Arab countries,

especially **Saudi Arabia**, and has aligned itself with Islamic solidarity in global security matters.

## ii) Jihadist Elements:-

The involvement of Pakistan in supporting militant groups in Afghanistan during Soviet invasion (1979-89) has influenced Pakistan's strategic culture, particularly its approach to asymmetric warfare.

## 4-5) Internal Security Concerns:-

Internal security concerns significantly shape Pakistan's strategic culture. These issues affect both Pakistan's domestic policies and its approach to defense and foreign relations.

## i) Terrorism and Militancy:-

The rise of Islamist militant groups within Pakistan, including those operating in Afghanistan and Kashmir, has shaped Pakistan's security policies.

## ii) Baloch Insurgency and Ethnic Tensions:-

These also contribute to Pakistan's strategic culture. Managing these internal conflicts requires military and political responses that are often shaped by national security priorities.

## 5) Conclusion:-

Pakistan's strategic culture is influenced by a combination of historical experiences, military traditions, ideological factors, geopolitical realities and security concerns. The complex strategic culture continues to guide Pakistan's responses to regional and global security challenges.

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