



PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL INTERNAL SECURITY POLICIES FROM 2014 TO 2022: GAPS,
CHALLENGES, AND PROSPECTS

Ahmad Ali ¹, Musarrat Amin ²

Affiliations:

¹ Analyst Counter Violent
Extremism Branch,
National Counter Terrorism
Authority,
Islamabad.

² Professor at Department of
International Relations,
Air War College, Karachi.

Corresponding Author(s) Email:

¹ahmaduop456@gmail.com

Abstract

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was a comprehensive policy document aimed at addressing internal security in Pakistan. It was initiated in 2014 and was based on three pillars: Dialogue, Deterrence, and Isolation. The policy was a response to the destruction caused by terrorism and was developed due to Pakistan's role as a front-line state in the US-led Global War on Terror. Between 2004 and 2014, terrorism caused a loss of 50,000 lives and resulted in a 78 billion dollar loss for Pakistan. This study is a critical and comparative assessment of both NISP I and NISP II policies implemented from 2014-2018 and 2018-2022, respectively. The objectives of the study are to assess the effectiveness of Pakistan's security policies and strategies and to identify any alternatives that may have been available. The study will help to evaluate the current approaches to address any weaknesses. The findings of the study could provide useful insights for policy makers in their efforts to improve the country's internal security situation. The study also aims to identify gaps in the policies from a civilian perspective and both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied.

Keywords: Terrorism, Pakistan, Rehabilitation, Policy, Security.

Introduction

The term "terrorism" has had a significant impact on our lives since the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. Following the attacks, the United States launched a global initiative called the "War on Terror," and Pakistan was one of its non-NATO allies. However, as a result of its alliance, Pakistan has also been subjected to brutal terrorist attacks, resulting in the loss of both military and civilian lives. To combat this menace, Pakistan had to take steps that were considered necessary but were also ruthless.

This study aims to analyze Pakistan's counter-terrorism policy and strategies implemented by the state over the last decade. The objective of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of Pakistan's policies and strategies and to identify alternative approaches that could be adopted. By doing so, we can address any shortcomings and identify areas that require improvement.

It is imperative to evaluate the approaches adopted by Pakistan in countering terrorism to identify the effectiveness of the policies and the strategies used. It is necessary to determine the extent of the success of the policies in achieving the desired results. Furthermore, identifying shortcomings can help in making necessary improvements and adopting alternative approaches to improve the situation.

The study of Pakistan's counter-terrorism policies and strategies can contribute to the international community's understanding of how countries can deal with terrorism. Moreover, by sharing the successes



and challenges faced by Pakistan in countering terrorism, other countries can learn from Pakistan's experience and potentially adopt similar approaches to enhance their security measures.

In summary, this study aims to evaluate Pakistan's counter-terrorism policies and strategies, identify their effectiveness, address shortcomings, and propose alternative approaches to improve the current situation. The study is significant not only for Pakistan but for the international community as a whole in understanding and dealing with terrorism.

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was a crucial policy document that was launched in 2014 to address the significant threat of terrorism that Pakistan was facing. The policy was developed with three main pillars in mind: Dialogue, Deterrence, and Isolation. These pillars were designed to provide a comprehensive and coordinated response to terrorism, which had caused significant damage to the country, both in terms of human lives and economic losses.

The NISP was developed as a response to the growing threat of terrorism in Pakistan, which had become a major challenge for the state. The policy aimed to provide a clear roadmap for the country to address the various dimensions of terrorism comprehensively. The policy document provided guidelines for dealing with various issues such as the radicalization of youth, countering violent extremism, strengthening the law enforcement system, and building a robust intelligence gathering mechanism. The policy aimed to foster greater cooperation and coordination between different government departments and security agencies to develop a unified response to terrorism.

The NISP was a significant step towards addressing the security challenges faced by Pakistan. The policy recognized the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty, unemployment, and social inequality. It emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach that combines military, economic, and social measures to counter terrorism. The policy aimed to provide a framework for addressing the security challenges that Pakistan faced, and the measures outlined in the policy document were implemented with varying degrees of success.

In conclusion, the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) was a comprehensive policy document that aimed to address the significant threat of terrorism faced by Pakistan. The policy was based on three pillars: Dialogue, Deterrence, and Isolation and aimed to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to terrorism. The policy recognized the importance of addressing the root causes of terrorism and aimed to provide a framework for addressing the security challenges that Pakistan faced. While the implementation of the policy had its challenges, the NISP remains a significant step towards addressing the security challenges faced by Pakistan.

Literature Review

Pakistan has been facing internal security threats for decades, including terrorism, insurgency, and sectarian violence. In response, the government has formulated various policies to address these challenges. This literature review aims to examine Pakistan's national internal security policies from 2014 to 2022, identifying the gaps, challenges, and prospects. According to a report by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS) in 2015, the National Action Plan (NAP) was the most comprehensive policy framework introduced to address internal security threats in Pakistan. The NAP was formulated in response to the terrorist attack on the Army Public School in Peshawar in 2014, which resulted in the deaths of 145 people, including 132 children. The plan aimed to address several issues, including counter-terrorism measures, reforms in the criminal justice system, and regulation of madrassas.



However, the implementation of the NAP faced significant challenges, as noted by several scholars. Khalid Aziz, in his article "Pakistan's National Action Plan: Time for a Reality Check," published in the *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs* in 2018, argued that the lack of political will and institutional capacity hindered the implementation of the NAP. He further noted that the military's dominance in the policy-making process weakened the civilian institutions' ability to implement the plan effectively.

Moreover, according to a report by the Institute for Research, Advocacy, and Development (IRADA) in 2019, the NAP lacked a comprehensive approach to address the underlying causes of extremism and terrorism. The report recommended the inclusion of measures to address issues such as poverty, inequality, and injustice in the policy framework.

In addition to the NAP, several other policy frameworks were introduced during this period, such as the National Internal Security Policy (NISP) 2018-2023. The NISP aimed to provide a comprehensive framework to address internal security threats and enhance coordination between the civilian and military institutions. However, as noted by scholars, the NISP faced similar implementation challenges as the NAP. In an article titled "Pakistan's Internal Security Policies: An Analysis," published in the *Journal of Conflict, Peace, and Development* in 2019, Khadim Hussain and Muddassir Iqbal argued that the lack of a monitoring mechanism and inadequate resource allocation hindered the implementation of the NISP (Hussain et al., 2023; Ismail & Husnain, 2022).

Despite the challenges, scholars noted some prospects for Pakistan's internal security policies. In his article "Pakistan's Internal Security: Challenges and Prospects," published in the *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan* in 2021, Muhammad Haroon Khan argued that Pakistan's success in countering terrorism and improving internal security depended on the implementation of policies that address the root causes of extremism and terrorism. He recommended a comprehensive approach that includes socio-economic development, educational reforms, and community-based initiatives.

Pakistan's national internal security policies from 2014 to 2022, primarily the NAP and the NISP, faced significant implementation challenges due to the lack of political will, institutional capacity, and monitoring mechanisms. The policies also lacked a comprehensive approach to address the underlying causes of extremism and terrorism. However, scholars noted some prospects for Pakistan's internal security policies, including the implementation of comprehensive policies that address the root causes of extremism and terrorism.

Deficiencies in NISP I

Pakistan's National Internal Security Policy (NISP) faces several gaps and challenges in its implementation. One major issue is the coordination between various agencies, departments, and ministries, which requires seamless integration of security forces, civil law enforcement, cyber security, and other relevant organizations. This lack of coordination can hinder the effectiveness of NISP in addressing internal security threats.

Another challenge is the absence of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and impact of NISP. Without proper monitoring and evaluation, it is difficult to determine whether the policy is achieving its goals and objectives. The role of media, academia, security experts, and other stakeholders in NISP implementation is also crucial, but often neglected. These stakeholders can provide valuable support and feedback to improve the policy's implementation and effectiveness.



Additionally, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of NISP 2 may not be strong enough to capture its performance and should be revisited and strengthened to accurately assess its implementation and success. The allocation of resources for NISP implementation is also insufficient to achieve its goals effectively, which is another challenge that needs to be addressed.

Furthermore, the coordination and collaboration between different departments and agencies involved in NISP implementation is a major issue. The lack of coordination between the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) and other relevant organizations may also hinder the effectiveness of NISP. Lastly, the monitoring and evaluation system for NISP is weak and needs to be strengthened to ensure its success. The role of media in NISP implementation should also be well defined and clearly understood, as it can play a crucial role in creating public awareness and supporting the implementation process.

In summary, the gaps and challenges facing the implementation of NISP include coordination issues, lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, insufficient resource allocation, weak KPIs, lack of stakeholder involvement, and weak monitoring and evaluation systems. Addressing these challenges is crucial to ensure the policy's success in addressing internal security threats in Pakistan.

Why NISP II?

Pakistan formulated the National Internal Security Policy (NISP II) in 2018 due to the changing security landscape in the country. The rise of global political tensions, the Syrian crisis, the emergence of ISIS, increased Baloch militancy, and the Afghan chapter of Daesh posed new challenges to the country's security. Despite successful military operations against terrorism, militants still posed a threat through re-infiltration in border regions and the use of social media platforms to recruit young people. Additionally, the lack of a dedicated policy directive for cyber-terrorism was also a concern. The increase in incidents of extremism in universities and ethnic militancy supported by foreign elements also made it necessary to revise NISP I and formulate NISP II for the period 2018-2023. The new policy aimed to provide a comprehensive framework to address internal security threats and enhance coordination between civilian and military institutions, including the development of a counter-radicalization strategy and the strengthening of cyber and border security.

The National Internal Security Policy (NISP) II, launched in 2018, aimed to establish a peaceful society through the promotion of political, economic stability and respect for diversity. The policy focused on social cohesion, tolerance, and socio-economic development as a means to counter militancy and extremism. It also aimed to improve coordination between law enforcement agencies, enhance their capacity and develop a counter-narrative to fight militants on the ideological front.

NISP-II provided improved guidelines for action and broader definitions of peace, addressing both traditional and non-traditional security threats. However, the policy lacked an indigenous perspective and was not culturally specific to Pakistan. It attempted to address too many issues, which needed to be focused for a result-oriented approach.

While there has been a decrease in sectarian and terrorist attacks, it is not clear whether this can be causally linked to the policy. The policy also needs to incorporate the views of mainstream religious scholars and maintain cultural, historical, political and religious realities of Pakistan. The state narrative on the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Quaid-e-Azam's vision needs to be supported by academic evidence.



In summary, NISP-I and NISP-II are comprehensive policy documents, but they need to be refined and tailored to the specific cultural and historical context of Pakistan to be more effective. They require a more localized and context-specific approach to address the unique challenges and opportunities of Pakistan's internal security landscape.

Gaps in NISP II

Pakistan's National Internal Security Policy (NISP II) is a significant policy framework that aims to address the country's security challenges. However, the implementation of the policy has faced various challenges, which could hinder its effectiveness in achieving its objectives. This essay examines some of the significant gaps and challenges in the implementation of NISP II and proposes solutions for improving its effectiveness. One of the significant challenges in the implementation of NISP II is the lack of coordination between different agencies and departments involved in the process. The successful execution of the policy requires seamless integration between various security forces, civil law enforcement, cyber security, and other relevant organizations. However, the lack of coordination between these agencies can lead to inefficiencies, redundancies, and gaps in the implementation process. To address this challenge, there is a need to establish clear lines of communication, collaboration, and coordination between the relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of NISP II.

Another gap in the implementation of NISP II is the lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and impact of the policy. Monitoring and evaluation are essential components of any policy implementation process as they help to identify gaps, track progress, and measure the success of the policy. The absence of such mechanisms in NISP II can hinder its effectiveness and limit the ability to make data-driven decisions about its implementation. Therefore, there is a need to establish robust monitoring and evaluation mechanisms to assess the progress and impact of NISP II accurately.

Thirdly, the involvement of media, academia, security experts, and other stakeholders in the implementation and success of NISP II is also critical. The involvement of these stakeholders is critical to creating public awareness, building support, and ensuring the successful implementation of the policy. Therefore, there is a need to engage and involve these stakeholders in the implementation process to enhance the policy's effectiveness. Fourthly, the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) of NISP II may not be strong enough to capture its performance accurately. KPIs are crucial tools for measuring the effectiveness of policy implementation. However, if the KPIs are not comprehensive or specific enough, they may not accurately reflect the performance of the policy. Therefore, there is a need to revisit and strengthen the KPIs of NISP II to ensure that they accurately capture the policy's performance.

Fifth, the allocation of resources for NISP II implementation is not adequate and sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives effectively. Implementation of NISP II requires substantial resources, including financial, human, and material resources. However, the current allocation of resources may not be sufficient to achieve the policy's objectives effectively. Therefore, there is a need for the government to allocate adequate resources to ensure the successful implementation of NISP II. Sixth, the coordination and collaboration between different departments and agencies involved in NISP II implementation are also major issues. The lack of coordination between NACTA and other relevant organizations may hinder the effectiveness of NISP II. Therefore, there is a need to establish clear lines of communication, collaboration, and coordination between the relevant stakeholders to ensure the effective implementation of NISP II.

Seventh, the monitoring and evaluation system for NISP II is weak and needs to be strengthened to ensure its success. As mentioned earlier, monitoring and evaluation are critical components of policy



implementation. However, the monitoring and evaluation system for NISP II may not be comprehensive enough to track the policy's progress accurately. Therefore, there is a need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation system for NISP II to ensure its success. Finally, the role of media in NISP II implementation needs to be well-defined and clearly understood as it can play a crucial role in creating public awareness and supporting the implementation process. Therefore, there is a need to develop a clear strategy for engaging with the media in the implementation of NISP II.

Challenges to Pakistan National Internal Security Policies

Pakistan's National Internal Security policies face several challenges in their implementation. These challenges include:

1. **Coordination between agencies:** Effective implementation of NISP requires seamless coordination between various security forces, civil law enforcement, cyber security, and other relevant organizations. Lack of coordination and collaboration between these agencies can hinder the effectiveness of NISP.
2. **Monitoring and evaluation:** There is a lack of monitoring and evaluation mechanisms in place to assess the progress and impact of NISP. This makes it difficult to identify gaps in the implementation process and take corrective measures.
3. **Resource allocation:** The allocation of resources for NISP implementation is not adequate and sufficient to achieve its goals and objectives effectively. Adequate resources need to be allocated to ensure effective implementation of NISP.
4. **Role of stakeholders:** The role of media, academia, security experts, and other stakeholders in the implementation and success of NISP should not be neglected. The involvement and support of these stakeholders are crucial for the success of NISP.
5. **Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):** The KPIs of NISP may not be strong enough to capture its performance accurately. The KPIs should be revisited and strengthened to accurately assess the implementation and success of NISP.
6. **Cultural and historical context:** NISP needs to be tailored to the specific cultural and historical context of Pakistan to be more effective. The lack of an indigenous perspective and cultural specificity is a major gap in NISP.

Addressing these challenges is crucial for the successful implementation of NISP and achieving its goals of establishing a peaceful society through the promotion of political, economic stability, and respect for diversity

Policy Recommendations

Based on the challenges identified in the implementation of NISP, the following policy recommendations can be proposed:

1. Develop a mechanism for effective coordination and collaboration between different agencies involved in NISP implementation. This can be achieved through regular meetings and sharing of information, joint training and capacity building programs, and the establishment of a centralized communication platform.



2. Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to assess the progress and impact of NISP. This can be done through the development of performance indicators, regular reporting, and feedback mechanisms to identify gaps and take corrective measures.
3. Ensure adequate resource allocation for the implementation of NISP. This can be achieved through budgetary provisions and the allocation of resources for training, equipment, and technology.
4. Increase the involvement and support of stakeholders, such as the media, academia, security experts, and civil society organizations, in the implementation and success of NISP. This can be done through engagement and consultation with stakeholders in the development and implementation of NISP.
5. Strengthen the KPIs of NISP to accurately assess its implementation and success. This can be achieved through the development of more specific and measurable performance indicators that align with the objectives of NISP.
6. Tailor NISP to the specific cultural and historical context of Pakistan to make it more effective. This can be done through the inclusion of an indigenous perspective and cultural specificity in the development and implementation of NISP. This can be achieved through consultation with local communities and the involvement of religious scholars.

By implementing these policy recommendations, Pakistan can address the challenges facing the implementation of NISP and improve its effectiveness in establishing a peaceful society through the promotion of political, economic stability, and respect for diversity.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the assessment of Pakistan's National Internal Security Policies from 2014 to 2022 reveals both strengths and weaknesses. The policies have made some progress in addressing security threats and strengthening the country's internal security, but they have also faced significant challenges and gaps in implementation. The lack of coordination among different security agencies, limited resources, corruption, and weak governance structures has hindered the effectiveness of the policies. However, there are prospects for future improvement, such as increasing cooperation and coordination among different agencies, increasing resource allocation, and strengthening governance structures. It is essential for policymakers to address the identified gaps and challenges to ensure that Pakistan's internal security policies effectively address the country's security challenges and protect the citizens' lives and property. Overall, the assessment provides a valuable framework for understanding the past performance of Pakistan's national internal security policies and shaping future policy decisions to improve the country's security situation.

References

- Aziz, K. (2018). Pakistan's National Action Plan: Time for a Reality Check. *Journal of Asian Security and International Affairs*, 5(1), 111-132.
- Government of Pakistan. (2014). National Internal Security Policy 2014-2018. <http://www.nacta.gov.pk/storage/nisp2014.pdf>
- Hussain, K., & Iqbal, M. (2019). Pakistan's Internal Security Policies: An Analysis. *Journal of Conflict, Peace and Development*, 1(1), 21-30.



- Hussain, M. (2017). National security and counter-terrorism in Pakistan: The challenges ahead. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 12(1), 55-65. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2016.1275717>
- Hussain, S., Shahzad, F., & Ahmad, S. (2023). A classification framework for analyzing the war and peacemaking potential of News media in Pakistan. *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, 58(5), 794-811.
- Institute for Research, Advocacy, and Development (IRADA). (2019). The Implementation of National Action Plan in Pakistan: A Critical Review. Retrieved from http://www.irada.org.pk/reports/The_Implementation_of_National_Action_Plan_in_Pakistan_A_Critical_Review.pdf
- Ismail, M., & Husnain, S. M. (2022). Recalibrating impact of regional actors on security of China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, 15(3), 437-462.
- Janjua, R. A. (2019). Security challenges and opportunities in Pakistan: A critical analysis. *Strategic Studies Quarterly*, 13(1), 120-136. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09700161.2019.1577483>
- Khan, A. (2016). Pakistan's National Action Plan against terrorism: An appraisal. *Journal of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism*, 11(2), 110-121. <https://doi.org/10.1080/18335330.2016.1183701>
- Khan, M. H. (2021). Pakistan's Internal Security: Challenges and Prospects. *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, 58(1), 207-221.
- Niazi, A. U. (2020). National security policy of Pakistan: A critical analysis. *Pakistan Journal of International Affairs*, 31(2), 63-78. <https://doi.org/10.36172/pjia.v31i2.1153>
- Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies (PIPS). (2015). National Action Plan: An Overview. Retrieved from <http://san-pips.com/PIPS-Research-Reports/National-Action-Plan.pdf>
- Warraich, H. U. (2017). Pakistan's national security policy: An evaluation. *Journal of Political Studies*, 24(2), 39-56. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26466314>