

Subject:

International Relations

Title:

Determinants of Indian Foreign Policy

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Abstract:

Indian foreign policy, this approach to defining determinants of India's foreign policy. It is influenced by a number of factors namely: history and culture, geography, development level, security interests and foreign relations. In addition, non-alignment, strategic autonomy, and India's active participation in multilateral forums have shaped its foreign policy. Most notably, the Indian diaspora and the soft power of the country itself served to enhance the status of India around the world as well. This paper evaluates these aspects and explains their relevance for the new Indian foreign policy of the twenty-first century.

Keywords:

Foreign Policy, India, Diplomacy, Politics

Introduction:

Indian foreign policy is a combination of India's internal and external needs, influenced by its geographical, historical, cultural, and political factors. India's foreign policy aims to safeguard national sovereignty, promote economic development, maintain regional stability, and maintain balanced relations with global powers. Historically, the principles of non-alignment and peaceful coexistence guided India's foreign policy, while currently strategic autonomy, multilateral diplomacy, and an active role in international organizations are key elements. India's geographical location and its complex relations with neighbouring countries have given priority to security concerns, while economic interests have strengthened global partnerships and trade relations. In the 21st century, India is emerging as an important player on the global stage, where the role of the Indian diaspora and soft power are also of special importance.

Historical and culture factors

Indian foreign policy is also shaped by various historical and cultural proclivities. Indian civilization and culture have affected a lot any foreign relations policy which India pursues. For example, the well inbuilt Indian belief of 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' as translated that the whole world is one family and non-violent as 'Ahimsa Paramo Dharma' is not just the ethical and cultural belonging of the nation, but functionalize as foreign policy as well. To Gandhi also belongs the credit of developing the strategy of nonviolent passive resistance of satyagraha in the course of India's struggle for independence, which later formed the basis of the country's international activity.

So, Jawaharlal Nehru's influence was important in the development of Indian foreign policy after independence with non-alignment and peace features. During the cold war, India refused to join any military alliance and associated itself with an independent foreign policy. In terms of soft geopolitics, India has projected its soft power globally through yoga, spirituality and literature. This has caused the country to be seen as a civilized and pacifist and neutral, thus affecting the shape and scope of Indian foreign policy.

Geographic location and security

Geography and security concerns largely determine India's foreign policy. India is a large land mass located in South Asia, sharing her borders with countries like Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Myanmar. These neighbouring countries are not only important to the Indian economy and

culture from a geographical aspect but are very sensitive from the security aspect as well. Its border disputes, particularly with Pakistan and China, have shaped India's foreign policy. With regard to its national security, it is most concerned with the Kashmir issue and frequent border clashes with Pakistan, and border disputes with China in Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh.

Lastly, India's maritime boundaries are an essential part of its security. The growing naval presence of China in the Indian Ocean has made India reassess its maritime security policy. Meanwhile, though terrorism is an ongoing challenge to India, one that has been especially sponsored by Pakistan, India has zeroed in on developing its defence capabilities and strategic relationship with other superpowers.

Economics interest and development

Economic interest and development have become one of the prominent determinants of Indian foreign policy. Since economic liberalization in 1991, it has remained at the top of the agenda for India to develop its economy rapidly and engage in world trade more aggressively. Indian foreign policy goals go beyond attracting foreign investment and include encouraging the country's exports, facilitating technology transfer, and improving market access. Under this, the cooperation for economic and trade has increased between India and the United States, Japan, European Union, and ASEAN.

Internationally, the country is also engaged with a significant level in multilateral organizations and includes the World Trade Organization, BRICS, and the G-20 to strengthen the participation of the country in the world economic system. In addition to this, India has also strengthened its relations with the Gulf countries and Central Asia for energy security, which is crucial to it from the standpoint of the economy. The activism of India on issues like climate change, sustainable development, and economic inequality at the global forums shows that it is not considering its economic development in isolation but as a part of the global scenario. Thus, economic interests have given a new direction to the form of Indian foreign policy.

National security and terrorism

National security and terrorism are two very important components of Indian foreign policy, which remain among the major determinants of the country's foreign policy. India has faced terrorist attacks for a long time, especially in the form of Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. Terror attacks such as 2008 Mumbai attacks and Pulwama have forced India to take stern measures against terrorism at the international level. India has attempted and made efforts at the United Nations, G-20, and other international forums to bolster co-operation against terrorism across the globe.

India's security concerns go beyond terror. Border security had been one of the pillars of India's foreign policy with repeated tensions on the India-China border, especially the war in 1962 and the recent Galwan Valley conflict. Unstable relations with a nuclear-armed neighbour, Pakistan, have also compelled India to make security a high priority. To handle these security concerns, India has enhanced defence capabilities and increased cooperation with countries like the US, Russia, France, and Israel. All these factors pertaining to national security have helped Indian foreign policy become even more diplomatic, circumspect in nature and proactive.

Relations with global powers

International relations with the world's other big powers assume a very important role in India's current and future foreign policy, considering the tremendous efforts made by India as a rising power. During the last couple of decades, particularly since the Cold War's end, diplomatic relations between India and the

United States have become remarkably strong, especially in defence, technology, and trade ties. All these factors demonstrate the excellent standing of India-US relations. Strategic partnership, its engagement with multilateral initiatives such as QUAD, and further involvement in the mutual concurrence of Indo-Pacific region are some of the examples of how the relationship stands good.

On the other hand, India has steadfastly preserved traditional and close relations with Russia. India-Russia had deep diplomatic and defence ties during the Cold War era, but these are still significant today, particularly in military cooperation and the energy sector. India and China have had highly complex and competitive relations. While business-to-business trade partnerships between the two have increased, border disputes and regional competition have maintained the relationships in a state of tension.

India's relations with the European Union, Japan, and other global powers are equally important to ensure cooperation on trade, technology, and global governance issues. Maintaining balanced and strategic relations with global powers is a major goal of Indian foreign policy to achieve all development and security objectives of India.

Non-alignment and strategic autonomy

Non-alignment and strategic autonomy have always been a core component of Indian foreign policy. As the world was divided into two major power poles-the United States and the Soviet Union-during the Cold War, India initiated the Non-Aligned Movement. This policy, founded by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was formulated to prevent India from joining any power bloc in order to remain independent in its foreign policy. This principle of non-alignment supported India to stay away from the tensions of the Cold War and protect the interests of developing countries.

At present, the Indian non-alignment has developed into strategic autonomy. Today, India lays more emphasis on independent and balanced relations with the various global powers rather than the total entry into any bloc or alliance. This policy will give freedom to India to take decisions according to its priority on changing the global conditions. India has maintained an independent foreign policy, but then it has balanced the power of the US, Russia, and China. Strategic autonomy enables India to strike a balance between multilateral cooperation and diplomatic flexibility by way of achieving its security and development goals.

International organizations and multilateralism

International organizations and multilateralism constitute vital components of Indian foreign policy whereby the influence and presence of India on world platforms heighten. The country has traditionally preferred to address global problems within the framework of multilateral institutions. The fact that India is an ardent participant in the United Nations and claims permanent membership suggests that India is willing to play a greater role in world governance.

In addition, India has been highly involved in multilateral organizations such as WTO, IMF, and WHO, in which it is trying to advance the cause of developing countries to ensure economic justice. India's role has increased incredibly at forums like BRICS, G-20, and SCO through which it enjoys opportunities to voice its opinion on global economic and security issues.

India has, through multilateralism, enhanced international cooperation in the challenges of climate change, terrorism, and global health. Active participation by India in international organizations and

multilateral forums is therefore an important facilitation of its foreign policy in global decision-making processes.

NRIs and soft power

The Indian diaspora and soft power assume significance in Indian foreign policy that help strengthen India's positive image at the world level. Among such elements of soft power is an NRI spread across the world, considerably contributing to business, politics, science and education fields in different countries. They do not act merely as carriers of Indian culture and values but also strengthen India's economic and political position at the global level.

Several policies and programs have been undertaken by the Government of India to make the association stronger with the NRIs. The 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas' and 'Know India' programs are a few of them through which efforts are being made to make the NRIs active participants in the country's progress and development. Along with this, soft power also enhanced India's cultural superiority through yoga, Ayurveda, Bollywood, and Indian literature. Soft power, therefore, paved the way for India to get established as a peaceful and inclusive nation in the international community. Through NRIs and soft power, India does not only showcase its cultural heritage but also presents it very effectively globally.

Conclusion:

Indian foreign policy is full of determinants that are complex and multidimensional. Historical experience, geographical location, economic needs, security challenges and global perspective have all shaped Indian foreign policy. India is trying to adopt balanced and prudent foreign policy as it seeks independence, self-reliance, and development. Expanding influence by India in the world stage and expansion of Indian foreign policy in the 21st century is important not only for India but for all the world.

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